

## ARTICLES

### Definition of Articles

An **article** is a word used to modify a noun, which is a person, place, object, or idea. Technically, an article is an **adjective**, which is any word that modifies a noun. Usually adjectives modify nouns through description, but articles are used instead to point out or refer to nouns. There are two different types of articles that we use in writing and conversation to point out or refer to a noun or group of nouns: definite and indefinite articles.

### Definite Article

Let's begin by looking at the **definite article**. This article is the word *the*, and it refers directly to a specific noun or groups of nouns. For example:

- the freckles on my face
- the alligator in the pond
- the breakfast burrito on my plate

Each noun or group of nouns being referred to - in these cases freckles, alligator, and breakfast burrito - is direct and specific.

### Indefinite Articles

**Indefinite articles** are the words *a* and *an*. Each of these articles is used to refer to a noun, but the noun being referred to is not a specific person, place, object, or idea. It can be any noun from a group of nouns. For example:

- a Mercedes from the car lot
- an event in history

In each case, the noun is not specific. The Mercedes could be any Mercedes car available for purchase, and the event could be any event in the history of the world.

### Article Usage with Examples

Properly using a definite article is fairly straightforward, but it can be tricky when you are trying to figure out which indefinite article to use. The article choice depends on the sound at the beginning of the noun that is being modified. There is a quick and easy way to remember this.

If the noun that comes after the article begins with a vowel sound, the appropriate indefinite article to use is 'an.' A **vowel sound** is a sound that is created by any vowel in the English language: 'a,' 'e,' 'i,' 'o,' 'u,' and sometimes 'y' if it makes an 'e' or 'i' sound. For example:

- an advertisement on the radio (this noun begins with 'a,' which is a vowel)
- an element on the periodic table (this noun begins with 'e,' which is also a vowel)

If the noun that comes after the article begins with a consonant sound, the appropriate indefinite article to use is 'a.' A **consonant sound** is a sound that comes from the letters that are not the vowels in the English language.

For example: a tire on my car (the noun the article modifies begins with 't,' which is a consonant)

*Choose the correct definite or indefinite article: "the", "a", "an" or "x" (zero article).*

1. I bought **a** pair of shoes.
2. I saw **a** movie last night.
3. They are staying at **a** hotel.
4. Look at **the** woman over there! She is a famous actress.
5. I do not like **X** basketball.
6. That is **the** girl I told you about.
7. **The** night is quiet. Let's take a walk!
8. **The** price of gas keeps rising.
9. John traveled to **X** Mexico.
10. Juan is **X** Spanish.
11. I read **an** amazing story yesterday.
12. My brother does not eat **X** chicken.
13. **X** love is such **a** beautiful thing.
14. I live in **an** apartment. **The** apartment is new.
15. I would like **a** piece of cake.
16. I was in **a** Japanese restaurant. **The** restaurant served good food.
17. Sara can play **the** guitar.