

# Articles

## Definite, Indefinite and No Article

### The Indefinite Article – A / AN

We use A/AN with:

**1. Singular nouns and the first time we refer to a person, animal or thing.**

- a child
- an elephant
- a television

**2. We don't use A/AN with possessive pronouns, demonstratives or cardinal numbers.**

- My shirt is dirty.
- This car is expensive.
- One person is in the reception.

**3. We use ONE (or more) instead of A/AN when the number is important.**

- There is only one exit from the airport.

### What is the difference between A and AN?

**A** is used when the next word begins with a consonant sound (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k etc).

- a book
- a table
- a clock
- a university (because the beginning of university sounds like YOU-niversity)

**AN** is used when the next word begins with a vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u).

- an apple
- an elephant
- an umbrella
- an hour (because the H is silent)

**ENGLISH GRAMMAR** **A - AN** *Woodward ENGLISH*

**The difference between A and AN**

**A** and **AN** have the same meaning. **A** and **AN** are indefinite articles. The difference depends on the sound at the beginning of the next word.

When the next word starts with a **CONSONANT** SOUND **A**

When the next word starts with a **VOWEL** SOUND **AN**

**a** book   **a** frog   **an** apple   **an** orange  
**a** car   **a** lemon   **an** egg   **an** umbrella  
**a** dog   **a** truck   **an** insect   **an** actor

**BE CAREFUL!** The **SOUND** of the letter is important

**a** house   BUT   **an** hour   The **H** at the beginning of **hour** is **silent**.  
**an** uncle   BUT   **a** university   The **U** at the beginning of **university** sounds like **YOU**.

This rule applies to all words after **A** or **AN** (including adjectives, adverbs...)

**a** cold day   **an** easy lesson  
**a** very crazy person   **an** interesting class

[www.grammar.cl](http://www.grammar.cl)   [www.woodwardenglish.com](http://www.woodwardenglish.com)   [www.vocabulary.cl](http://www.vocabulary.cl)

## The Definite Article – THE

We use THE with:

**1. A singular or plural noun when it is clear/obvious which person or thing we are talking about.**

- There is a lamp in my bedroom. (we mention the lamp for the first time)
- The lamp is next to the desk.

**2. Anything which we identify immediately.**

- We watched the new Brad Pitt movie last night.

**3. Musical instruments (the violin, the guitar, the drums, the flute, the piccolo).**

- She plays the piano.

**4. Something that is unique or there is only one.**

- the sun
- the moon
- the internet.

**5. Names of rivers, seas, oceans, mountain ranges and deserts (always in capitals).**

- The Mississippi River
- The Black Sea

- The Andes
- The Sahara Desert

## 6. Directions (cardinal points).

- the west
- the south-east
- the north-west.

## No Article

We use no article with:

1. When we refer to general ideas, plurals or uncountable nouns we do not use THE.

- Religion is an important issue. (*NOT* The religion is an important issue)
- Mexican food is spicy. (*NOT* The Mexican food is spicy).

2. Names of people, books and plays (unless it is part of the title).

- I have read *Romeo and Juliet*.

3. Towns, cities, states and countries.

- Cape Town
- Montana
- Vietnam

(Exceptions – The USA, The UK, The Netherlands, The Czech Republic, The Philippines).

4. Lakes, single islands, continents or mountains.

- Lake Victoria
- Jamaica
- Asia
- Mt Fuji

5. Planets

- Mars
- Jupiter
- Saturn

6. Sports or games

- soccer

- tennis
- skiing
- monopoly

## 7. Meals

- breakfast
- lunch
- dinner
- supper