

Using Articles

Some Basic Guidelines

Indefinite Articles: “A” and “An”

- Use them to refer to a **singular, non-specific, countable** thing
 - “I want a car.”
 - “I saw a pretty bird yesterday.”
 - “I would like an apple.”
- Use “An” in front of a noun, adjective, or adverb that starts with either a vowel sound or a silent “h”
 - “An hour”
 - “An opening”

Indefinite Articles: “A” and “An”

- Do **not** use an indefinite article with a non-count noun
 - “Research,” “water,” “happiness,” “hair,” “oxygen”
 - Example: “I looked at **research** on the subject.”

Definite Article: “The”

- Use it to refer to a **singular OR plural noun**; must be a **specific thing**
 - “I want the car that I saw on sale today.”
 - “I saw the pretty bird that you mentioned yesterday.”
 - “Here is the apple you asked for.”
 - “Where is the doctor with whom I am scheduled to meet?”

Do not use “the” before

- **Most countries**
 - (except countries that are plural nouns or have “republic,” “kingdom,” or “states” in their name)
- **Continents**
- **Streets**
- **Towns, cities, or states**

No Article

- You can leave out an article when referring to **non-specific non-count nouns**
 - “Information,” “hunger”
 - Example: “I need **information** about this subject.”
- You can leave out an article with **plural, non-specific count nouns**
 - “Tickets,” “sandwiches,” “signatures”
 - Example: “I took **pictures** with my camera.”