



## Articles

Articles identify nouns in either a general or a specific manner and can help indicate number.

### A/An

- Used to identify a noun that is indefinite.  
*Example: "A car" is referring to any car, not one specific car.*
- Used with singular, countable nouns.  
*Example: "A book" means only one book.*
- A is used before a noun beginning with a consonant (or consonant sound as in "a user" where the vowel "u" sounds like "you").
- An is used before a noun beginning with a vowel.  
*Example: a man, an elephant.*
- If the noun is modified by an adjective, the choice of article depends on the first sound of the adjective.  
*Example: an enormous book, a large apple.*

### The

- Used to identify a noun that is definite (a specific member of a group), or a noun that has already been identified in a previous phrase, or that the speaker and listener have discussed before.  
*Example: "I want to buy the dog" means that there is a specific dog the person wants to buy.*  
*"Did you enjoy the book?" The is used because the book has already been discussed.*
- The is often used with adjectives like *first, last, right, best* or *only*, or when a person, place or thing is unique (there is only one – i.e. the sun).
- The is used for non-countable nouns.  
*Example: Water cannot be counted: "I swam in the water"*
- The may be used with singular or plural nouns.

### No Article

- Used to express a generic (or general) meaning.  
*Example: "germs are dangerous" (germs in general)*
- The article *some* can also be used instead of no article use when describing a plural-count noun. It means "a portion, but not all".  
*Example: "I like some of my classes"*
- As well, *no article* is used when a noun *names* streets, cities, provinces, countries, continents, lakes, parks, mountains, languages, sports, holidays, or universities and colleges without *of* in the name.  
*Example: No article would be used when saying the name Sheridan College, but the article the must be used when referring to a name that includes of:*

"I study at Sheridan College. Where do you study?"

"I study at **the** University **of** Western Ontario."