

a (indefinite article)

Form

Use

singular countable nouns (not specific)

Example

*I need to get **a** new coat.*

an (indefinite article)

Form

Use

instead of a when the next word begins with a vowel sound

Example

*I don't have enough money for **an** expensive dress.*

Watch out!

Whether we use a or an with a word depends on the sound, not the spelling. Be careful with the following words and phrases.

• an honest person • an hour • a euro • a uniform

the (definite article)

Form

Use

singular countable nouns (specific)
plural countable nouns (specific)
uncountable nouns (specific)

Example

*Let's go to **the** new shopping centre.
Where are **the** books I ordered?
I gave the shop assistant **the** money and then left.*

No article (zero article)

Form

Use

plural countable nouns (general)
uncountable nouns (general)

Example

*Prices have gone up a lot recently.
Fresh fruit is really good for you.*

Special rules

Form

Use

Example

places

the: seas (**the** Atlantic), rivers (**the** Amazon), areas (**the** Antarctic), some countries (**the** USA, **the** UK), public buildings (**the** theatre), **the** Earth, **the** world, **the** sky, **the** moon, **the** sun, **the** sea, **the** environment
no article: towns and cities (Moscow), most countries (France), continents (Europe), streets (Baker Street), planets (Mars)

activities

a/an: have **a** job, work as **a** ...
the: on **the** radio, **the** media, play **the** piano
no article: go to work, on TV, go shopping, play tennis, listen to music, go to work, go to school, be at school, be at university, school subjects (maths)

time

the: in **the** morning/afternoon/evening, on **the** 20th March, in **the** 1950s
no article: days (Thursday), months (May), years (2009), at night

people

the: **the** King, **the** Prime Minister, **the** army, **the** navy, **the** police, **the** Germans, **the** English
no article: become king, he's English, speak English

A Complete using *a*, *an* or *the*.

- 1 We had really good science lesson at school today.
- 2 I found unusual insect on the wall outside our house.
- 3 It's your birthday next week. Are you going to have party?
- 4 We waited for hours, but we finally saw Queen.
- 5 Why don't we listen to radio?
- 6 Have you got euro I could borrow?
- 7 Mum has gone to bank, but she'll be back soon.
- 8 Where have you been? I've been waiting for over hour!

B Write an article in each gap where necessary. If an article is not necessary, put a dash (-).

I had (1)
 really bad day on (2) Tuesday.
 I bought (3) new game on CD-ROM for my computer,
 but (4) game didn't work properly. I took it back to
 (5) shop on (6) North Street, but
 (7) manager blamed me! He pointed to
 (8) scratch on (9) CD-ROM
 and said I'd done it. I couldn't believe it! I had
 to buy (10) new one!

C Circle the extra word in each sentence.

- 1 Do you think we will ever send a person to the Mars?
- 2 When you go to the London, don't forget to see the London Eye.
- 3 When we use the cars, we damage the environment.
- 4 I'm not telling a lies! It's the truth.
- 5 I'm looking for a teacher who can teach me the German.
- 6 Ray needs a warm hat and a new coat for his visit to the Russia.
- 7 Dad has gone to a work and forgotten the car keys.
- 8 Some people have an unusual pets, such as lions or tigers.

- D** In each sentence there is a word missing. Put an arrow (↑) to show where the missing word should go and write the word.

- 1 English music was popular in America in 1960s.
- 2 Would you prefer to read book or watch television?
- 3 We had maths at school yesterday and our teacher gave us surprise test!
- 4 Peter joined police and caught ten thieves in his first month!
- 5 Gordon wanted to be writer, so he studied English at university.
- 6 Suddenly, two UFOs appeared in sky over Washington.

- E** Rewrite the sentences correctly, adding articles where necessary.

- 1 We had great time in USA.
.....
- 2 Let's go to Belgium for week this summer.
.....
- 3 Where's money I gave you on fifteenth of last month?
.....
- 4 I'd like to join army and become soldier.
.....
- 5 For Christmas, I got book, DVD and latest CD by my favourite band.
.....
- 6 They say that English drink lot of tea.
.....
- 7 I heard song on radio that I really liked.
.....
- 8 Do Japanese and other people in Asia eat cheese?
.....

- F** Underline ten mistakes in the dialogue and correct them.

Gary: It's the lovely day, isn't it? Let's walk down to a shops and look around.

Helen: That's an good idea. I'll just have a look in a kitchen and see what we need.

Gary: I got a milk yesterday, so we don't need any more. We might need a bread, though.

Helen: Okay. Bread ... oh, and the packet of sugar. After shopping, we could go to a new market in a town centre and see what they have.

Gary: Right. You get your coat and I'll get a car keys.