

Grammar in depth: (Articles)

- **a/an (indefinite articles)**
 - The form “a” is used before a word beginning with a consonant or with a vowel with a consonant sound
e.g. a man, a hat, a university, a European, a one-way street
 - The form “an” is used before words beginning with a vowel, or words beginning with a mute “h”
e.g. an apple, an island, an uncle, an egg, an onion, an hour
 - **Exceptions:** an ID, and SOS, an X-ray ...
- **Use of a/an**
 - Before a singular noun which is countable, *e.g.* they live in a flat, He bought an ice-cream.
 - With a noun complement *e.g.* she will be a teacher, he is an actor.
 - In expressions of price, speed ... etc *e.g.* 5 pounds a kilo, 1£ a meter, 16 kilometers an hour, 4 times a day (a/an -> per)
 - In exclamations before singular/ nouns:
Such a long queue!
What a pretty house!
But
Such long queues
What pretty houses (Plural nouns -> no articles)
- **Omission of a/an**
 - *Before plural nouns:* *e.g.* a book is on the table but books are on the table, she ate an orange but he ate oranges.
 - *Before uncountable nouns:*
 - *Nouns of substances:* bread, glass, tea, gold, water, coffee, oil ...
 - *Abstract nouns:* Advice, fear, knowledge, death, help, information, news, happiness ... etc.
 - *Before names of meals:* *e.g.* we have breakfast at 8:00, we have dinner at 9:00 pm
- **The (Definite article)**
 - “The” is the same for singular and plural and for all genders:
e.g. the boy/ the girl/ the boys / the girls
 - We use “the” before a noun made definite by the addition of phrase or clause,
e.g. The girl in blue, the man with the hat, the boy that I met, the place where I met him ...
 - Before superlatives and first, second ... etc
e.g. The first day, the second day, the only day ...
 - Before certain proper names of seas, rivers, group of islands, chains of mountains, deserts
e.g. The Atlantic Oceans, The Alps, The Sahara, The Nile
 - Before names consisting of nouns + of + noun
e.g. The Gulf of Mexico, The United States of America, The Cape of Good Hope
 - Adj + noun
e.g. The Arabian sea, The new forest ...
- **Omission of “the”**
 - Before names of places or before names of people
e.g. Algeria, London, George ... etc
 - Before abstract nouns: *e.g.* joy and happiness are all, men fear death ...
 - Before names of meals, games, and parts of the body

- e.g.* they usually have eggs for breakfast, he plays golf/football, raise your right hand ...
- “the” is omitted before “home” when it used alone
e.g. He is at home, I will go home
 - Before bed, church, hospital, school, university, prison ...etc
e.g. I usually go to bed early, she is at school
 - Before “work” (place of work)
e.g. He is in his way to work, He is at work ...

Exercise 1:

Put “a” or “an” in the spaces:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) <i>an</i> unreasonable decision | 8) <i>an</i> elephant |
| 2) <i>a</i> unit of work | 9) <i>a</i> BBC program |
| 3) <i>an</i> Honorable man | 10) <i>a</i> Universal problem |
| 4) <i>a</i> UFO | 11) <i>an</i> X-ray |
| 5) <i>a</i> FIFA | 12) <i>a</i> T-shirt |
| 6) <i>a</i> NATO | 13) <i>an</i> H-Bomb |
| 7) <i>a</i> happy girl | 14) <i>a</i> eucalyptus tree |

Exercise 2:

Make sentences combining words from (I) and (II) add a connecting verb (to be) in the present simple or past simple or (to become) and a, an, or the:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Barcelona | was the (4) | 1. Largest island in the world |
| 2. Le Monde | is a (7) | 2. Member of the European Union |
| 3. France | is a (2) | 3. President of the South Africa in 1994 |
| 4. Ghana | became a (8) | 4. Site of the 1992 Olympic games |
| 5. Wall street | is an (6) | 5. Only constructed object visible from space |
| 6. Nelson Mandela | was/became the (3) | 6. Important financial center |
| 7. The great wall of China | is the (5) | 7. Newspaper published in France |
| 8. Greenland | is the (1) | 8. Republic in 1957 |

Exercise 1: complete the text below with the appropriate tenses (Simple Present / Present Continuous)

- Every Monday, Sally (drive) *drives* her kids to football practice.
- Usually, I (work) *work* as a secretary at ABT, but this summer I (study) *am studying* French at a language school in Paris. That is why I am in Paris.
- Shhhhh! Be quiet! John (sleep) *is sleeping* .
- Don't forget to take your umbrella. It (rain) *is raining* .
- I hate living in Seattle because it (rain, always) *always rains* .
- I'm sorry I can't hear what you (say) *are saying* because everybody (talk) *is talking* so loudly.
- Justin (write, currently) *is currently writing* a book about his adventures in Tibet. I hope he can find a good publisher when he is finished.
- Jim: Do you want to come over for dinner tonight?
Denise: Oh, I'm sorry, I can't. I (go) *am going* to a movie tonight with some friends.
- The business cards (be, normally) *are normally* printed by a company in New York. Their prices (be) *are* inexpensive, yet the quality of their work is quite good.
- This delicious chocolate (be) *are* made by a small chocolatier in Zurich, Switzerland.