



Definite and Indefinite Articles

When we refer to articles within English Grammar we are referring to the words: **a**, **an**, and **the**. These are further categorized into definite and indefinite articles. In this article, we will be looking at both these forms as well as their corresponding examples.

Definite article—the

This is used in front of singular, plural, countable and non-countable nouns.

1. It can be used in reference to a noun that is specific or has previously been specified in a context. For example:
 - Kindly close the window.
 - I liked the book you recommended.
2. Used in reference to a noun that is unique. For example:
 - The river Nile is in Egypt.
 - Give thanks to the Lord.
3. Used to highlight a natural occurrence. For example:
 - The sunsets are at 8pm during fall.
 - The rainfall is mild this monsoon.
4. Used to indicate a past time period. For example:
 - Rubina was very gullible in the past
 - Rock music clubs were all the rage in the 90s.
5. Used to refer to members of a family. For example:
 - I invited the Mirzas for lunch
 - This herbal balm was pioneered by the Bakhshis.



Indefinite articles—a and an

An is used in front of singular countable nouns that begin with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or vowel sound.

For example:

An airplane, an orange, an ink pen, an umbrella.

A is used before singular countable nouns that start with a consonant (all other alphabets except vowels).

For example:

A table, a chair, a pencil, a billboard, a marker.

1. Used to refer to non-specific singular nouns. For example:
 - Rabia is a student.
 - I have a book in my bag.
2. Used before collective nouns and measurements. For example:
 - A liter
 - A gallon
 - A dozen
3. Used to refer to a singular noun followed by a modifier
 - The boy was wearing a striped shirt.
4. Used in relation to adverbial phrases of degree, intensity or amount. For example:
 - Samina felt a little unhappy.
 - If he is feeling a little dizzy, he can take a break.



Practice Exercise

Select the correct article in the following sentences.

1. Did you bring _____ (a, an, the) letters?
2. The helicopter landed on _____ (a, an, the) helipad.
3. The recipe calls for _____ (a, an, the) liter of milk.
4. Rahim was excited about crafting _____ (a, an, the) origami duck.
5. I would love to consult one of _____ (a, an, the) faculty members.
6. The way the organization treats its staff is such _____ (a, an, the) shame.
7. Have you been to _____ (a, an, the) food street in Nazimabad?
8. Can I have _____ (a, an, the) fork please?
9. What _____ (a, an, the) incredible performance by the band!
10. She will be back in _____ (a, an, the) hour.

Answers

1. the
2. **a** (if you're referring to a non-specific helipad) or **the** (if it's specific).
3. a
4. an
5. the
6. a
7. the
8. a
9. an
10. an