

UNIT 1

Articles and uncountables

No article is used when generalising (with plural, abstract and uncountable nouns) but **the** or **a/an** is used when talking about particular examples. The definite article **the** is used when it is clear which noun we mean, whereas the indefinite article **a/an** is used when a noun is referred to for the first time.

Singular countable nouns must always have an article (or possessive), except in the following cases: prepositions with *home, school, college, university, church, work, class, hospital, prison, bed, sea, breakfast, lunch, supper, dinner*.

Note also:

- *at night, on foot, by car/bus/tube* etc. (means of transport), *to/in/from town* (when referring to the town we live in, a local large town or the capital), *go to sleep* and *go home*

Notice the difference between *She's in prison* (she's a prisoner) and *She's in the prison* (she either works there or is visiting).

The article is also omitted in certain double expressions:

- *from top to bottom, on land and sea, hand in hand, face to face*

The indefinite article **a/an** is normally used to indicate someone's profession:

- *He wants to train as a psychotherapist.*

A Complete the sentences by putting *the, a/an* or no article (–) into the spaces.

- 1 You remember my sister Jane? ____ one who has always been afraid of ____ spiders?
- 2 She's been studying ____ architecture at ____ university for ____ last three years.
- 3 At ____ moment she's researching into ____ work of Le Corbusier. Don't you know him? He's ____ well-known French architect.
- 4 She's pretty busy in ____ daytime, but she finds she's at ____ bit of ____ loose end at night, so ____ last year she joined ____ film club.
- 5 ____ club members can watch ____ films at ____ very low prices, in ____ disused warehouse on ____ other side of ____ town.
- 6 So when she gets home from ____ college, she usually goes straight over there by ____ bike, and has ____ drink and ____ sandwich before ____ film starts.
- 7 One evening she was in such ____ hurry to get there that she had ____ accident.
- 8 She was knocked down by ____ car and had to spend two months in ____ hospital.
- 9 When I went to visit her, I was shocked to find her swathed in ____ bandages from ____ head to ____ toe.
- 10 But luckily her injuries looked worse than they really were, and she managed to make ____ very speedy recovery.

The is also used with

- a** a unique person or object: • *the President* • *the North Pole*
- b** musical instruments • *He plays the guitar.*
- c** some adjectives with plural meanings • *the rich*
- d** nationality adjectives, ships, geographical areas, most mountain ranges, oceans, seas, rivers, deserts, hotels, cinemas, theatres, plural names of countries, island groups, regions
- e** when talking about a whole species: • *the African elephant*

No article is used when talking about continents, most countries, towns, streets, etc. (except *the High Street*), lakes, and the main buildings of a particular town:

- *Kingston Town Hall*

The is not used with *most* except with the superlative:

- *most people* • *the most incredible sight*

B Correct the sentences if necessary. Tick any which are already correct.

- 1 Tony had always wanted to explore the foothills of Himalayas.
- 2 So when he was offered an early retirement package by his firm, he decided to take advantage of the opportunity.
- 3 First he needed to get really fit, so he spent a month training in Lake District.



- 4 When he could run up Buttermere Fell without stopping, he considered he was ready.
- 5 He booked a trip with a well-known trekking company and flew out to the Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.
- 6 His group were planning to trek in Annapurna region, but unfortunately Nepalese were beginning to get worried about the amount of damage being done to their ancient mountains by the constant pummelling of climbers' feet.
- 7 So they temporarily suspended permission for foreigners to climb or use the footpaths in the area.
- 8 Group leader was very apologetic, but he laid on rafting on River Trisuli and sightseeing in the capital.
- 9 After a few days, the authorities lifted their ban, and Tony was able to trek through some of world's most beautiful scenery, with breathtaking views of the Mount Everest and Kanchenjunga.
- 10 At night, group were accommodated in the simple village rooms and ate with Nepalese.
- 11 Most of group were more experienced trekkers than Tony, and several of them had visited Himalayas before.
- 12 All in all, Tony reckoned it was most exciting experience he'd ever had, and vowed to return to the Nepal at very first opportunity.

UNIT 1

The indefinite article **a/an** cannot be used with uncountable nouns. Most nouns in English are either countable or uncountable, but the following may be used countably or uncountably:

- *cold, country, taste, wine, coffee, tea, cake, cheese, work, hair, life, death*

C Decide whether the nouns in *italics* are being used countably (C) or uncountably (U).

- 1 I'll have a *coffee* while I sort my papers out.
- 2 It's a matter of *life* and *death*.
- 3 They've always dreamed of living in the *country*.
- 4 Celebrities and critics flooded into the West End to see Harold Pinter's latest *work*.
- 5 I like a bit of *cheese* after my main course.
- 6 The reason he's so bogged down at *work* is that he's had a heavy *cold* for the last fortnight.
- 7 His *death* came as a terrible shock to his colleagues.
- 8 She's furnished the flat with such *taste*, hasn't she!

Note especially these **uncountable nouns**:

- *furniture, luggage, news, information, progress, knowledge, research, advice*

Many and **(a) few** are used with countables, **much** and **(a) little** with uncountables.

D Match the two halves of the sentences correctly.

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|---|--|
| 1 Scientists have made little | A spanner, if I promise to return it tomorrow. |
| 2 It is doubtful whether we have enough | B applicants for that job, are there? |
| 3 I don't suppose there are many | C news about my sister? |
| 4 I can guarantee he'll give you some | D progress in their research into the common cold. |
| 5 The examiner asked both | E natural gas for the next fifty years. |
| 6 I had to check every | F the candidates to sit down. |
| 7 I was hoping you could let me have a | G excellent advice. |
| 8 She's so well-groomed – she never has a | H hair out of place. |
| 9 He hasn't got much | I single connection, before I found the fault. |
| 10 Could you let me know if there's any | J luggage, has he? |