**ZERO Article “-“**

## **ZERO Article with Plural and Uncountable Nouns**

### **General meaning**

* cars, people
* life, water

### **Abstract nouns**

* education, happiness, music

## **ZERO Article with Singular Countable Nouns**

### **Names**

**People**: Mary, Bill, Josef

**Places**: Jupiter, Russia, Bangkok, Heathrow Airport, Cambridge University, Waterloo Station

**Streets**: Oxford Street, Wall Street, Picadilly Circus

**Languages**: English, Russian

**Academic subjects**: History, Law, Physics

**Days, months**: Monday, November

### **Games and Sports**

football, chess

### **Meals**

breakfast, lunch, dinner

### **Noun + Number**

platform 3, room 7, page 44

### **Routine Places**

in bed, at home, to school, to work

### **Movement or Transport**

on foot, by car, by bus, by air

### **Newspaper Headlines, Notices, User Guides**

Plane Crashes On House, Keep Area Clean, Insert battery

# INDEFINITE ARTICLE A(An)

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Examples:

* I need **a** phone. Not a specific phone, any phone
* Mark wants **a** bicycle. Not a particular bicycle, a bicycle in general
* Do you have **a** driver's license? In general

#### **Remember, using a or an depends on the sound that begins the next word.**

* **a** + singular noun beginning with a consonant: ***a*** boy; ***a*** car; ***a*** bike; ***a*** zoo; ***a*** dog
* **an** + singular noun beginning with a vowel: ***an*** elephant; ***an*** egg; ***an*** apple; ***an*** idiot; ***an*** orphan
* **a** + singular noun beginning with a consonant sound: ***a*** user (sounds like 'yoo-zer,' i.e. begins with a consonant 'y' sound, so 'a' is used); ***a*** university; ***a*** unicycle
* **an** + nouns starting with silent "h": ***an*** hour
* **a** + nouns starting with a pronounced "h": ***a*** horse
  + In some cases where "h" is pronounced, such as "historical," you can use **an**. However, **a** is more commonly used and preferred.

**Use A(AN) when talking about a thing which is new, unknown, or introduced to a listener for the first time. Also use A(AN) when you are asking about the existence of something.**

Examples:

* I have **a** car. The car is being introduced for the first time.
* Tom is **a** teacher. This is new information to the listener.
* Is there **a** dictionary in your backpack? Asking about the existence of the dictionary

Similarly, use A(AN) to introduce what type of thing we are talking about.

Examples:

* That is **an** excellent book. Describing the kind of book
* Do you live in **a** big house? Asking about the kind of house
* I ate **a** thick, juicy steak. Describing the kind of steak

**REMEMBER: You cannot use A(AN) with plural nouns because A(AN) means "one" or "a single".**

Examples:

* I saw **a**bears in Yellowstone National Park. **Not Correct**
* I saw bears in Yellowstone National Park. **Correct**

**DEFINITE ARTICLE “THE”**

**THE** is called a definite article. "Definite" means "specific". Use THE when talking about something which is already known to the listener or which has been previously mentioned, introduced, or discussed.

Examples:

* I have a cat. **The** cat is black.
* There is a book in my backpack. **The** book is very heavy.
* Do you know where I left **the** car keys? The listener knows which specific car keys you are talking about.
* Do you own a car? Is **the** car blue? You assume they do have a car after asking about it in the first sentence.
* Nobody lives on **the** Moon. The Moon is known to everyone.

**IMPORTANT: You can use THE with both singular nouns and plural nouns.**

Examples:

* I saw **the** bear in Yellowstone National Park.**Correct**
* I saw **the** bears in Yellowstone National Park. **Correct**

**Many clauses and phrases make the noun known to the listener by telling the listener which person or thing we are talking about. Let's look at an example sentence:**

Can you give me **the** book *on the table*.

**We use *THE* in this sentence because the phrase "on the table" tells the listener which book we are referring to. We are not talking about other books, we are talking about a specific book that the listener can see or already knows about. Learning to recognize such identifying clauses and phrases will help you use *THE* correctly.**

Examples:

* Did you read **the** book *which I gave you*?
* He didn't like **the** movie *that you suggested*.
* He loved **the** dessert *with chocolate and cherries*.
* **The** phone *on my desk* belongs to Ken.
* Did you know **the** man *who was talking to Leonie*?

**HOWEVER:** *Not all clauses and phrases make the noun known to the listener. Some are simply descriptive. They add extra information, but they do not tell the listener which specific thing we are talking about.*

Examples:

* He bought **the** house *with a big backyard*. *This combination tells the listener which specific house he bought.*
* He bought **a** house *with a big backyard*. *This combination tells the listener what kind of house he bought, but not the specific house he bought.* <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/540/01/>