## ARTICLES

1. The words a or an and the are called Articles. They come before nouns.

1. There are two Articles - a (or an) and the.

1. A or an is called the Indefinite Article, because it usually leaves indefinite the person or thing spoken of; as, A doctor; that is, any doctor.

1. The is called the Definite Article, because it normally points out some particular person or thing; as,

He saw the doctor; meaning some particular doctor. The indefinite article is used before singular countable nouns, e.g.

A book, art orange, a girl

The definite article is used before singular countable nouns, plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns, e.g., The book, the books, the milk

## A or An

1. The choice between a and an is determined by sound. Before a word beginning with a vowel sound an is used; as,

An ass, an enemy, an ink-pad, an orange, an umbrella, an hour, an honest man. An heir.

It will be noticed that the words hour, honest, heir begin with a vowel sound, as the initial consonant h is not pronounced,

1. Before a word beginning with a consonant sound a is used; as,

A boy, a reindeer, a woman, a yard, a horse, a hole, also a university,, a union, a European, a ewe, a unicorn, a useful article.

because these words (university, union, etc.) begin with a consonant sound, that of yu. Similarly we say,

A one-rupee note, such a one, a one-eyed man.

because one begins with the consonant sound of w.

109. Some native speakers use an before words beginning with h if the first syllable is not stressed

An hotel (More common: a hotel)

an historical novel (More common: a historical novel)

## Use of the Definite Article

110. The Definite Article the is used-

When we talk about a particular person or thing, or one already referred to (that is, when it is clear from the context which one already referred to (that is, when it is clear from the constant which one we mean); as,

The book you want is out of print. (Which book? The one you want.)

Let's go to the park. (= the park in this town)

The girl cried, (the girl = the girl already talked about)

1. When a singular noun is meant to represent a whole class; as, The cow is a useful animal.

[Or we may say, "Cows are useful animals."] The horse is a noble animal.

The cat loves comfort.

The rose is the sweetest of all flowers.

The banyan is a kind of fig tree.

[Do not say, "a kind of a fig tree". This is a common error.]

The two nouns man and woman can be used in a general sense without either article.

Man is the only animal that uses fire.

Woman is man's mate.

But in present-day English a man and a woman (or men and women) are more usual. A woman is more sensitive than a man.

(3) Before some proper names, viz., these kinds of place-names:

1. oceans and seas, e.g. the Pacific, the black Sea
2. rivers, e.g. the Ganga, the Nile
3. canals, e.g. the Suez Canal
4. deserts, e.g. the Sahara
5. groups of islands, e.g. the West Indies
6. mountain-ranges, e.g. the Himalayas, the Alps
7. a very few names of countries, which include words like republic and kingdom (e.g. the Irish Republic, the United Kingdom) also: the Ukraine, the Netherlands (and its seat of government the Hague)

1. Before the names of certain books; as,

The Vedas, the Puranas, the Iliad, the Ramayana.

But we say-

Homer's Iliad, Valmiki's Ramayana.

1. Before names of things unique of their kind; as, The sun, the sky, the ocean, the sea, the earth.

[Note-Sometimes the is placed before aCommon noun to give it the meaning of an Abstract noun; as, At last the wamor(the warlike or martial spirit) in him was thoroughly aroused.]

1. Before a Proper noun when it is qualified by an adjective or a defining adjectival clause; as,

The great Caesar : the immortal Shakespeare.

The Mr. Roy whom you met last night is my uncle.

1. With Superlatives; as,

The darkest cloud has a silver lining.

This is the best book of elementary chemistry.

1. With ordinals; as,

He was the first man to arrive;l

1. Before musical instruments; as, He can play the flute.

1. Before an adjective when the noun is understood; as, The poor are always with us.

1. Before a noun (with emphasis) to give the force of a Super lative; as, The Verb is the word (= the chief word) in a sentence.

1. As an Adverb with Comparatives; as, The more the merrier.

(= by how much more, by so much the merrier) The more they get, the more they want.

## Use of the Indefinite Article

111. The Indefinite Article is used- (1) In its original numerical sense of one; as, Twelve inches make a foot.

Not a word was said.

A word to the wise is sufficient.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

(2) In the vague sense of a certain; as,

A Kishore Kumar (= a certain person named Kishore Kumar) is suspected by the police.

One evening a beggar came to my door.

(3) In the sense of any, to single out an individual as the representative of a class; as, A pupil should obey his teacher.

A cow is a useful animal.

(4) To make a common noun of a proper noun; as,

A Daniel comes to judgement! (A Daniel = a very wise man)

## Omission of the Article

112. The Article is omitted-

(1) Before names of substances and abstract nouns (i.e. uncountable nouns) used in a general sense; as,

Sugar is bad for your teeth.

Gold is a precious metal.

Wisdom is the gift of heaven.

Honesty is the best policy.

Virtue is its own reward.

Note:- Uncountable nouns take the when used in a particular sense (especially when

qualified by an adjective or adjectival phrase or clause); as, Would you pass me the sugar? (= the sugar on the table) The wisdom of Solomon is great.

I can't forget the kindness with which he treated me.

(2) Before plural countable nouns used in a general sense; as, Children like chocolates.

Computers are used in many offices.

Note that such nouns take the when used with a particular meaning; as, Where arc the children? (= our children)

1. Before most proper nouns (except those referred to earlier), namely, names of people

(e.g. Gopal, Rahim), names of continents, countries, cities, etc. (e.g. Europe, Pakistan, Nagpur), names of individual mountains (e.g. Mount Everest), individual islands, lakes, hills, etc.

1. Before names of meals (used in a general sense); as, What time do you have lunch?

Dinner is ready.

Note: We use a when there is an adjective before breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc. We use the when we specify.

I had a late lunch today.

The dinner we had at the Tourist Hotel was very nice

1. Before languages; as, We are studying English.

They speak Punjabi at home.

1. Before school, college, university, church, bed, hospital, prison, when these places are visited or used for their primary purpose; as, I learnt French at school.

We go to church on Sundays.

He stays in bed till nine every morning.

My uncle is still in hospital.

Note- The is used with these words when we refer to them as a definite place, building or object rather than to the normal activity that goes on there; as,

The school is very near my home.

I met him at the church.

The bed is broken.

I went to the hospital to see my uncle.

1. Before names of relations, like father, mother, aunt, uncle, and also cook and nurse, meaning 'our cook', 'our nurse', as,

Father has returned.

Aunt wants you to see her.

Cook has given notice.

1. Before predicative nouns denoting a unique position, i.e., a position that is normally held at one time by one person only; as,

He was elected chairman of the Board.

Mr. Banerji became Principal of the College in 1995.

1. In certain phrases consisting of a transitive verb followed by its object; as, to catch fire, to take breath, to give battle, to cast anchor, to send word, to bring word, to give ear, to lay siege, to set sail, to lose heart, to set foot, to leave home, to strike root, to take offence.

(10) In certain phrases consisting of a preposition followed by its object; as,

at home, in hand, in debt, by day, by night, at daybreak, at sunrise, at noon, at sunset, at night, at anchor, at sight, on demand, at interest, on earth, by land, by water, by river, by train, by steamer, by name, on horseback, on foot, on deck, in jest, at dinner, at ease, under ground, above ground.