



Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Section 1: Introduction	7
• General hints about using 'a', 'an', 'the' and 'no article'.	

Section 2: Known and Unknown

Section 2 Part 1: Explanation	8
• We use 'the' with something known and 'a' or 'an' with something unknown.	
Section 2 Part 2: Known because we already talked about it.....	9
• I bought an apple and an orange. The apple was delicious.	
Section 2 Part 3: Known because we mentioned something connected	11
• I went into my kitchen. The oven was on fire.	
Section 2 Part 4: The listener / reader might know which one we mean because it's obvious from the physical situation near us	11
• Please pass me the glass (on the table near me).	
Section 2 Part 5: We say which one mean in the sentence	13
1: Relative Clauses	13
• I bought the book that you recommended.	
2: Prepositional Phrases	14
• He took the money on the table.	
3: 'The back of' etc	14
• There's a map on the back of the page.	
4: Superlatives	15
• John is the tallest in his family.	
5: Certain Adjectives	15
• 'The same', 'the first', 'the only'.	
6: 'Next' and 'last' with time expressions:	16
• 'The next bus', but 'next week'.	
Section 2 Part 6: Unique things.....	17
• 'The sun', 'the Queen'.	
Section 2 Summary:	19

Section 3: Specific and General

Section 3 Part 1: Explanation	22
• We use 'the' or 'a' with particular things, and we use 'no article' when we are talking in general.	
Section 3 Part 2: Difficulties – how to decide if something is general or specific?....	23
• 'The art of the 14 th century' but '14 th century art'.	
Section 3 Summary:	24

Section 4: Other Uses of ‘The’

Section 4 Part 1: ‘The’ + adjective to mean the whole of a particular group.....	26
• The Japanese, the rich, the unemployed.	
Section 4 Part 2: Illnesses.....	28
• The ‘flu, the measles.	
Section 4 Part 3: ‘The’ with geographical oppositions	29
• The city, the countryside.	
Section 4 Part 4: ‘The’ with weather.....	29
• The wind, the snow.	
Section 4 Part 5: ‘The’ with entertainment	29
• The ballet, the cinema.	
Section 4 Part 6: ‘The’ with shops and other businesses	29
• The pub, the Post Office.	
Section 4 Part 7: ‘The’ with musical instruments	30
• He plays the piano.	
Section 4 Part 8: ‘The’ with transport	30
• We took the bus.	
Section 4 Part 9: ‘The’ with communication and media.....	31
• We listened to the radio.	
Section 4 Part 10: Words which are NOT exceptions.....	32
• Nature, technology, space.	
Section 4 Part 11: ‘The’ with comparatives.....	35
• The more I study, the more I know.	
Section 4 Summary:	35

Section 5: Other uses of ‘a/an’

Section 5 Part 1: We use ‘a/an’ to classify or give more information about things or people	39
1: Singular countable nouns:	39
• He’s a teacher.	
• She’s a lovely girl.	
2: Plural or uncountable nouns:.....	40
• They are teachers.	
• They are beautiful shoes.	
Section 5 Part 2: ‘There is / are’	41
• There’s a train station in my village.	
Section 5 Part 3: Exclamations.....	41
• What a lovely day!	
Section 5 Part 4: We use ‘a/an’ in expressions that tell us ‘how much’ or ‘how many’ or ‘how often’	42
• I go to a restaurant once a week.	
• She drives at 70 miles an hour.	

How to Use ‘A’ and ‘The’

Section 5 Part 5: Quantifiers	43
The difference between ‘a little’ and ‘little’ and ‘a few’ and ‘few’:	43
• She has few friends.	
• He has a little money.	
Section 5 Part 6: Numbers and amounts	44
• She won a thousand pounds.	
‘A/an’ or ‘one’?	44
• ‘I’d like a coffee’ or ‘I’d like one coffee’.	
Section 5 Summary:	45

Section 6: Other uses of ‘no article’

Section 6 Part 1: Languages	48
• They speak German.	
Section 6 Part 2: Time words	48
1: Months and days of the week:	48
• We went in January.	
2: Parts of the day:	48
• He drinks tea in the morning.	
Section 6 Part 3: Meals.....	49
• We have dinner about eight.	
Section 6 Part 4: Sports	50
• He likes playing golf.	
Section 6 Part 5: Institutions (church, university, school etc).....	50
• ‘She studies at university’ or ‘we met outside the university’.	
Section 6 Part 6: Exceptions.....	51
1: Bed	51
• I stayed in bed.	
2: Home	52
• They went home early.	
3: Work (used as a noun).....	52
• What time do you arrive at work?	
4: Town	52
• Let’s go into town this afternoon.	
Section 6 Part 7: With ‘question...’ and ‘number...’	53
• What’s the answer to question 4?	

Section 7: Idioms and fixed expressions

Section 7 part 1: Prepositional Phrases	56
• ‘In the way’, ‘for a change’.	
Section 7 part 2: Idioms, etc.....	57
• ‘Under the weather’, ‘call it a day’.	
Section 7 Summary:	58

Section 8: Proper nouns

Section 8 Part 1: Hints about proper nouns.....	60
Section 8 Part 2: Geographical names.....	60
1: NO ARTICLE	60
• Lake Geneva, Mount Fuji, India.	
2: THE	61
• The UK, the Nile, the Atlantic.	
Section 8 Part 3: Places in a city	63
1: THE	63
• The British Museum, the National Theatre.	
2: NO ARTICLE	64
• Hyde Park, Heathrow Airport.	
Section 8 Summary:	65

Section 9: Final Review Exercises

Exercise 47: Final Review 1.....	68
Exercise 48: Final Review 2.....	68
Exercise 49: Final Review 3.....	69
Exercise 50: Final Review 4.....	69
Exercise 51: Final Review 5.....	70
Exercise 52: Final Review 6.....	71
Exercise 53: Final Review 7.....	71
Exercise 54: Final Review 8.....	72
Exercise 55: Final Review 9.....	73
Exercise 56: Final Review 10.....	73

Appendix 1: Pronunciation

When to choose ‘a’ or ‘an’:.....	75
• An umbrella, a uniform.	
How to pronounce ‘the’:	75
Names of letters.....	76
• A PDF, an MP.	

Appendix 2: Countable / Uncountable

Common or Proper Nouns?.....	78
• Books, London.	
Countable and Uncountable Nouns:.....	78
List of common uncountable nouns:	79
• Homework, research, luggage.	
Special cases:.....	80
• ‘Two coffees’, ‘many cheeses’.	

How to Use ‘A’ and ‘The’

Nouns that can be either countable or uncountable:	81
• ‘I read a paper every day’ or ‘can I have some paper?’	

Appendix 3: ‘Some’ / ‘Any’ / ‘No Article’

The difference between ‘some’ and ‘no article’:	84
• ‘I bought milk’ or ‘I bought some milk’.	
The difference between ‘some’ and ‘any’:	85
• ‘You can take any bus’, ‘do you have some stamps?’	

Answers

Answers to Section 2	87
Answers to Section 3	91
Answers to Section 4	93
Answers to Section 5	98
Answers to Section 6	101
Answers to Section 7	103
Answers to Section 8	105
Answers to Section 9	109
Answers to Appendix 1	115
Answers to Appendix 2	115
Answers to Appendix 3	118