

# Articles



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# Objectives

**By the end of this lecture, the student will be able to,**

Differentiate between different types of articles.

Master when and how articles are used and/or omitted.

**Prerequisites:**

Students must have background knowledge on articles.

Students must know how to use definite and indefinite articles.

# Introduction



This chapter will tackle English articles

- It will present the issue of articles in details. First, it will show the indefinite articles **a /an**, their use, and omission with all the exceptional cases. This part of the chapter will end with a set of activities to check if students got the input. Second, with regard to the definite articles, the first chapter will provide information on form, use and the omission of **The**. again, this part part will tackle some exercises on definite articles.

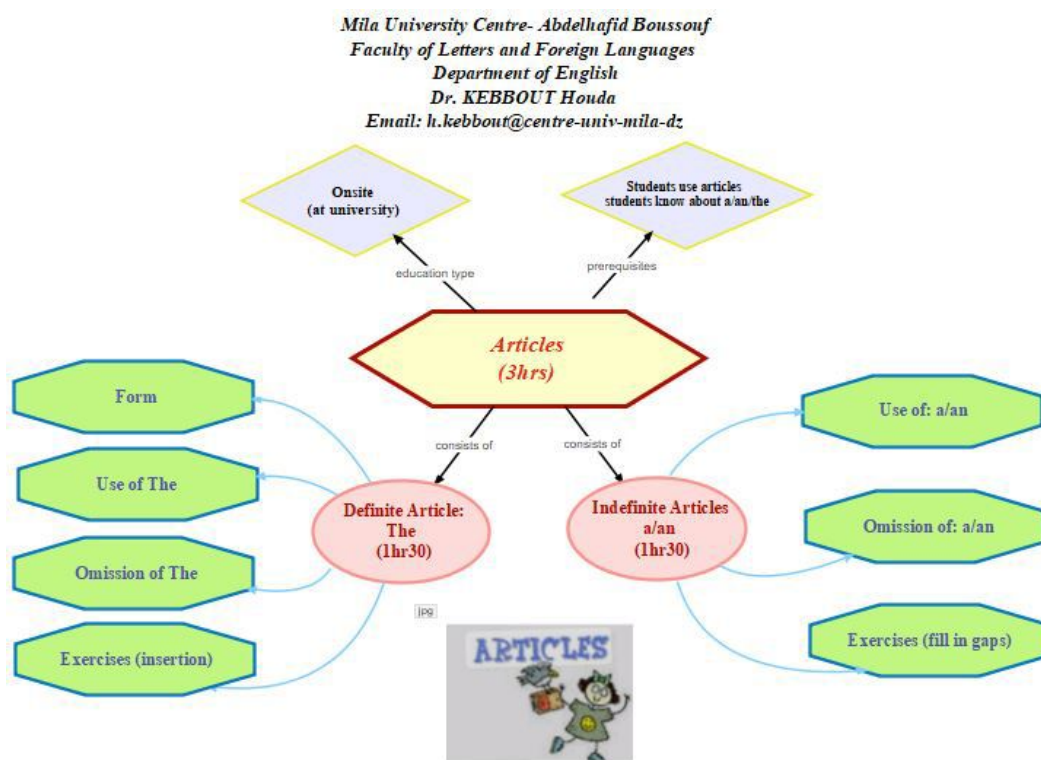
# Articles

I

## Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to,

- Differentiate between both types of articles.
- Define the cases of where and when to use articles.
- Comprehend on where and when to omit articles.



*Mind Map for Articles*

## 1. The Indefinite Articles: a / an

- The form **a** is used before a word beginning with **a consonant**, or **a vowel with a consonant sound**.

- The form **an** is used before words beginning with a **vowel (a, e, i, o, u)** or words beginning with a **mute h**.

## 1.1. Use of a/an

### Note

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#### **a/an is used:\***

1. Before a **singular noun** which is **countable** (i.e. of which there is more than one) when it is **mentioned for the first time** and represents no particular person or thing
2. Before a singular countable noun which is used as an example of a **class of things**
3. With a **noun complement**. This includes names of **professions**
4. In certain **expressions of quantity**
5. With **certain numbers**
6. In expressions of **price, speed, ratio** etc
7. In **exclamations** before singular, countable nouns
8. a can be placed **before Mr/Mrs/Miss + surname**

### Example

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Clear examples are:

1. I need a visa., they live in a flat, he bought an ice-cream.
2. A car must be insured = All cars/Any car must be insured.  
A child needs love = All children need/Any child needs love.
3. It was an earthquake., she'll be a dancer., he is an actor.
4. A great many, a dozen, a great deal of.
5. A hundred, a thousand
6. A half holiday, a half portion, a half share With 1/3 1/4, 1/5 etc, a third, a quarter
7. What a pretty girl!
8. a Mr Smith, a Mrs Smith, a Miss Smith

## 1.2. Omission of a/an

### Note

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#### **a/an is omitted:\***

1. Before **plural nouns**
2. Before **uncountable nouns**
3. Before **names of meals**, except when these are preceded by an adjective
4. The article is also used when it is a **special meal** given to celebrate something or in someone's honour

### Example

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to instantiate,

- The plural of a dog is dogs, and of an egg is eggs
- We have breakfast at eight  
He gave us a good breakfast



### *Complement: a/an and one*

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- When counting or measuring **time, distance, weight** etc we can use either a/an or one for the singular.
- In other types of statement **a/an** and one **are not normally interchangeable**, because one + noun normally means 'one only/not more than one' and a/an does not mean this



### *Example*

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- £1 = a/one pound  
£1,000,000 = a/one million pounds
- A shotgun is no good (It is the wrong sort of thing )  
One shotgun is no good (I need two or three )

## 2. The Definite Article : The

### 2.1. Form

#### *Reminder*

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**The** is the same for singular and plural and for all genders

#### *Example*

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- The boy/ the girl/ the day
- The boys/ the girls/ the days

### 2.2. Use of The

#### *Note*

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1. When **the object or group of objects** is **unique** or considered to be unique
2. Before **a noun which has become definite** as a result of being mentioned a second time:
3. Before a **noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause**:
4. Before **a noun** which by reason of locality can represent only **one particular thing**
5. Before **superlatives** and **first, second** etc. used as adjectives or pronouns, and only.

#### *Example*

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- The earth, the sea, the sky, the equator, the stars
- His car struck a tree; you can still see the mark on the tree
- The girl in blue the man with the banner, the boy that I met, the place where I met him
- The postman (the one who comes to us), the car (our car), the newspaper (the one we read).
- The first (week), the best day, the only way

#### *Extra*

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1. **The + singular noun can represent a class of animals or things.\***
2. **The + adjective** represents **a class of persons**.
3. **The** is used before other **proper names** consisting of adjective + noun or noun + of + noun
4. **The** with names of people has a very limited use:
  - The + plural surname can be used to mean 'the family'
  - The is used before titles containing (the Duke of York)
  - Letters written to two or more unmarried sisters jointly may be addressed The Misses + surname (The Misses Smith).

#### *Example*

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- The whale is in danger of becoming extinct.
- The old = old people in general
- The Atlantic, the Netherlands, the Sahara
- The City, the Mall



- The Gulf of Mexico, the United States of America
- The Arabian Sea, the New Forest
- The National Gallery, the Tower of London

## 2.3. Omission of The

### Note

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#### The definite article is not used:\*

1. **Before abstract nouns** except when they are used in a particular sense
2. After a noun in the possessive case, or a possessive adjective
3. Before **names of meals**
4. Before **names of games**
5. Before **parts of the body** and **articles of clothing** as these normally prefer a possessive adjective

### Example

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- Men fear death, but The death of the Prime Minister left his party without a leader
- The boy s uncle = the uncle of the boy
- The Scots have porridge for breakfast but  
The wedding breakfast was held in her father s house
- He plays golf
- I patted his shoulder, I patted him on the shoulder

### Extra

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1. Note that in some European languages the definite article is used before **indefinite plural nouns** but that in English **the** is never used in this way .
2. **Nature** where it means the spirit creating and motivating the world of plants and animals etc is used without **the**
3. Omission of **the** before **home, before church, hospital, prison, school** etc and before **work, sea and town**

### Example

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- Women are expected to like babies (i e women in general)
- If you interfere with nature you will suffer for it
- He is at home,  
we go, to bed to sleep, to hospital as patients, to church to pray, to prison as prisoners,  
to court as litigants, to school/college/university to study.

### Complement: Online Video on articles

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<https://youtu.be/uU-RbEEolw0>



# Bibliography



Thompson, A.J. & Martinet, A.V. (1986). *A Practical English Grammar*. Oxford University Press

