Articles: A, An, The
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The definite article the and the indefinite articles a and an signal that a noun follows. The noun may follow immediately after the article or after the modifiers between them.

- the candidate
- a sunset
- an apple
- the qualified candidate
- a spectacular sunset
- an enormous apple

1. A or an usually means one, but can also mean any one. Use a or an to precede a singular count noun whose specific identity is unknown.
   (Remember, count nouns refer to persons, places, or things that can be counted: one girl, two apples, three pencils. Noncount nouns refer to things or ideas that cannot be counted: water, patience, furniture, air, love.)

   a. Use the article a before all consonant sounds, including long u, sounded h, and o when it has the sound of w.

   - a uniform
   - a day
   - a grade
   - a house
   - a book
   - a one-week delay

   b. Use the article an before all vowel sounds (not necessarily vowel letters) except long u and before words beginning with silent h.

   - an essay
   - an x-ray
   - an hour
2. Use the definite article the with most nouns whose identity is known. Usually, the identity will be clear for one of the following reasons:

a. The noun has been previously mentioned.
   - She brought plenty of money. I saw the money in her hand.

b. A phrase or clause following the noun limits its identity (makes it specific).
   - The girl I told you about is standing over there.

c. A superlative (such as best or most) makes the noun’s identity specific.
   - Susan was the best athlete at Riverdale High School.

d. The noun describes a unique person, place, or thing.
   - The sun shines every day in Southern California.

e. The context or situation makes the noun’s identity clear.
   - When I stood up, I accidentally kicked the chair.

*Remember, do not use the with plural or noncount nouns that mean "all" or "in general"; do not use the with most proper nouns.*

- Many people in other parts of the world prefer the rice to all other grains.
- The Bob Glover is working tonight at the restaurant.
- The Japan is my favorite place to visit.