

English Grammar

“There is no article without a noun, but there are some nouns without articles.”

One who knows grammar.



Countable and uncountable nouns.

A noun can be:

countable

I eat an apple every day.
(singular)

I like apples. (plural)

You can use **a/an** with singular countable nouns:

a sofa a pupil a stick

You can use plural countable nouns alone: I like plums.
Letters will be received.

You can use **some** and **any** with plural countable nouns: I got some keys.
Did you see any birds outside?

We use **many** and **few** with plural countable nouns:
We didn't have many pictures.
I have a few papers to sign.

uncountable

I eat bread every day.
I like bread.

You cannot use **a/an** with uncountable nouns: sand salt pepper

But you can use **a ... of**:

a drop of water a game of golf

You can use uncountable nouns alone (without **the/my/some** etc.):
People need salt.
They still don't have electricity.

You can use **some** and **any** with uncountable nouns:
They gave some blood. We don't have any space left.

We use **much** and **little** with uncountable nouns:
We have much work to do.
They had a little petrol left.



Countable and uncountable nouns.

Nouns that can be:

countable

uncountable

A potato or potato?

Some nouns can be countable or uncountable.

I'm peeling ~~the potatoes~~.
Sue baked **a cake** for David.
Nancy was eating **an apple**.
Someone threw **a stone** at the police.
There is ~~a hair~~ on your shirt.

Would you like some **potato**?
Have some **cake**!
Is there **apple** in this salad?
The house is built of **stone**.
I must brush my **hair**.

A sport or sport?

Often the countable noun is specific, and the uncountable is more general.

Rugby is **a sport**. (=a particular sport)
That's **a nice painting** over there!
We heard **a sudden noise** outside.
John Lennon had **an interesting life**.

Do you like **sport**? (=sport in general)
Jim is good at **painting**.
Constant **noise** can make you ill.
Life is complicated sometimes.

Countable and uncountable nouns.

Nouns that can be:

countable

uncountable

A paper or paper?

Some nouns can be countable or uncountable with different meanings.

I bought **a paper**. (= a newspaper)

I'll have **a glass** of orange juice.

Have you got **an iron**? (for clothes)

I switched all **the lights** on.

I've been to France many **times**.

The journey was **a great**

experience.

I run **a small business**. (a company)

We found **a space** in the car park

I need some **paper** to write on.

I bought a piece of **glass** for the window.

The bridge is made of **iron**.

There's more **light** by the window.

I can't stop. I haven't got **time**.

He has enough **experience** for the job.

I enjoy doing **business**. (buying and selling)

There is no **space** for the piano in here.

A coffee or coffee?

Words for drinks are usually uncountable. But when we are ordering or offering drinks, we can say a cup of... or a

Some nouns can be countable when we are talking about a particular kind or about different kinds.

Two **coffees**, please.

Chianti is **an Italian wine**. (kind of wine)

The use of **plastics** has greatly increased.

(= the use of different kinds of plastic)



Coffee is more expensive than **tea**.

Wine is not served in McDonalds.

A/an and the

(uncountable)

Alan goes only with singular noun.

He left **a case**.

(singular)

He left **some cases**.

(plural)

He left **some luggage**.

(uncountable)

luggage.

He needed **the**

(plural)

He needed **the cases**.

(singular)

He needed **the case**.

and uncountable nouns.

singular and plural

The goes both with

When the story first mentions smth the noun has **a or an**.

But when the same thing is mentioned again, the noun has **the**.



A/an and the

We use **a/an** +
someone/something when we
aren't saying which one.

*A man booked into a hotel.
He left a case behind.*

We use **the** + noun or
he/she/it when we know
which one.

*He didn't return to the hotel.
The case contained clothes.*



A/an and the

We use **a/an** and *the* when we aren't saying which one, and we use **the** when we know which one.

A tourist arrived in Cheltenham to look around **the town**.

When there is only one thing in the context, we use **the**. We normally say: **the country, the earth, the environment, the government, the moon, the ozone layer, the Prime Minister, the sea, the sky, the sun, the weather, the cinema, the theatre, the newspaper, the police.**



A/an and the



We use **a/an** to describe something:

It was **a lovely day**.

-to classify something:

The play was **a comedy**.

-to say what someone's job is:

-Nick is **a car salesman**.

But we use **the** with a superlative.

It's **the biggest hotel** in town.

This is **the best photo**.



The + plurals and uncountables

We use plurals and uncountables without **the** with general meaning:

Cars are expensive to buy.

Elephants are intelligent animals.

I don't understand computers.

You always need money.

Oil is used in every machine around.

We use plurals and uncountables with **the** with specific meaning:

The cars had both broken down.

We saw the elephants in the zoo.

The computers crashed at work.

Mary put the money in her purse.

Look at the oil on your sweater.



The + plurals and uncountables

We use plurals and uncountables without **the** with general meaning:

This man went to prison two years ago.

School is over at half past three.

***Steve is at college.
(He is a student there.)***

***David is in hospital.
(He is a patient.)***

***Sue is going to church
(to a service.)***

We use plurals and uncountables with **the** with specific meaning:

The boy went to the prison to see his father.

The school is a mile from here.

The meeting was at the college.

Melanie waited in the hospital for news.

We wanted to look round the church.



The + plurals and uncountables

We use plurals and uncountables without **the** with general meaning:

***In bed, go to bed
(to rest or sleep)***

At home, go home, come home, leave home

***At sea (=sailing),
Go to sea (as a sailor)***

***In town, go into town,
leave town***

***At work, go to work,
leave work***

We use plurals and uncountables with **the** with specific meaning:

***Sit on the bed,
make the bed***

In the house, to the house, in the home

On the sea, by the sea, at the seaside, on the coast

***The town center, the city,
the village***

***The office,
the factory***



Articles with phrases of time

Phrases of time are usually without **a/an** or **the**.

*We are meeting on **Friday** for **lunch**.*

But we use **a/an** or **the** if there is a phrase or clause after Friday, lunch, etc.

*It was **the Friday** before she went to Australia.*

We normally use article if there is an adjective.

*We had **a good lunch**.*

Years, seasons, months.

I was born in **1986**.

We play cricket in
summer.

Winter always depresses
me.

I will start the course
in **September**.

That was **the year**

I was

born.

It was **the winter** of 1995
when things started to
go
wrong for the company.

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Special times.

We go away at

Christmas.

Easter is early this year.

I'll be home for

Thanksgiving.

We had **a wonderful**

Christmas.

I started work here **the**

Easter before

last.

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Days of the week.

Yes, **Thursday** will be

convenient.

I'll see you on **Tuesday**
evening.

The storm was on **the**
Thursday of that
week.

We went surfing at **the**
weekend.

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Parts of the day and night.

I can't sleep at **night**.
I prefer to travel by **day**.
I must get to bed before
midnight.
We were at the beach at
sunset.
I hope to get there
before **dark**.

It's warmer
in **the day**.
Someone got up in **the**
night.
We're meeting in **the**
morning.
They arrived at the hotel in
the evening.
It was **a beautiful sunset**.
I couldn't see in **the**
dark.

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Meals.

I'll see you at **breakfast**.

We have **supper** at
about 8.

I'm going out after **lunch**.

We had **a quick
breakfast**.

The supper David
cooked

was
excellent.

The meal was very nice.

?

Quite a, such a, what a, etc.

After **quite**, **such**, and **what** we can use a phrase with **a/an**. There is often an adjective as well, e.g. *such a good team*.

A/an goes before **very**, **fairly**, **really** etc.
It's *a very* good house.
It's *a fairly* long walk.

A/an is used after **such** in the meaning of **so**.
It was *such an easy* test. (the test was so easy)
It's *such a long* time since I saw you.

The were *such a lot* of people.

In an exclamation we can use **what a/an** with a singular noun.
What *a good* idea!



Place names with and without *the*

We do not use “*the*” with names of people. The same way, we do not usually use it with **names of places**:

Continents

Africa

Europe

South America

Countries

Russia

Germany

Switzerland

⊘ *The Netherlands, the USA, the Canary Islands (plurals) Republic (the Irish republic), kingdom (the United Kingdom), federation (the Rus.Fed.)*

States, regions

Alaska

Siberia

Central Africa

⊘ *The West, the Riviera, the Middle East, the Midlands, the South of France*

Islands

Cyprus

Majorca

Rhode Island

⊘ *Plural islands with “the” : the Bermuda Islands*

Cities, towns, Suburbs, villages

Moscow

Helsinki

Los Angeles

⊘ *The Hague, the Bronx, the West End of London*

Mountains, hills.

Everest

Etna

North Hill

⊘ *Hill ranges and mount ranges have the: the Alps, the Rockies*

Place names with and without *the*

We do not use **“the”** with names of people. The same way, we do not usually use it with **names of places**:

Lakes

Lake Michigan

Coniston Water

⊘ *Seas, oceans, rivers, canals have “the” (the Atlantic Ocean, the Thames, the Suez)*

**Roads, streets,
Squares, parks**

Morgan Rd

Fifth
avenue

Central park

⊘ *Exceptions: the High street, The Avenue, The Strand, The Mall
Main and numbered roads have “the”: the Bath road, the A5, the M6*

Bridge

Tower Bridge

Brooklyn Bridge

⊘ *Exceptions: the Golden Gate Bridge, the Severn Bridge (=the bridge over river Severn)*

**Stations, airports,
Important buildings**

Waterloo
(station)

Orly
(airport)

Merton college
Lambeth museum

⊘ *Exceptions with “of” or with a noun or adj.: the University of York, the White House*

**Theatres, cinema
Hotels, galleries**

possessives
St.Martin’s theater

In the US names with center
Lincoln center

⊘ *But: the Globe (theatre), the Plaza (cinema), the Dorchester (hotel), the Tate (gallery)*

**Shops,
restaurants**

Bloomingdale’s
(shopping center)

Matilda’s
restaurant

⊘ *Exceptions: names with a noun the Body Shop, the Studio Cafe*

