ARTICLES
GRAMMAR

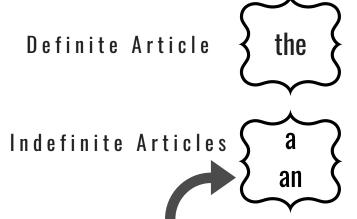**RAW TIPS**

WHAT IS AN ARTICLE?

An **article** introduces a noun. There are many different types of articles, but the most common are:

Definite Article — { the }

Indefinite Articles — { a an }

Use "an" before words that start with vowels!

USING ARTICLES

Generally, any singular noun in English requires an **article** to introduce it. You can think of it as being polite to singular nouns!

Example: For lunch, I ate **a** sandwich.

Example: For lunch, I ate **the** sandwich that I bought from the LPC cafeteria.

There are some nouns, however, that are tricky. In order to use the correct article, you need to determine what kind of noun you have.

TYPES OF NOUNS

Most good dictionaries will indicate if a noun is **countable** or **uncountable**. This is important for determining whether or not to use an article.

Count (Countable) Nouns

Count nouns have a singular and plural form and can be counted: **one cat/two cats...** To use articles with count nouns, follow these rules:

If you are writing about something in general, use the plural form with no article: In general, **cats** enjoy lurking on city streets, hunting mice and birds.

If you are writing about one in a group of many or a non-specific noun, use "a" or "an": As I crossed the street yesterday, **a** black cat emerged from the shadows.

If you are writing about a specific count noun that is known to the reader, use "the": When I tried to approach **the** black cat, it ran away swiftly and silently.

Remember to use "the" with superlatives!

the first
the most
the best

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Noncount (Uncountable) Nouns

Noncount nouns have no plural form and cannot be counted: **milk/money/maturity...** To use articles with noncount nouns, follow these rules:
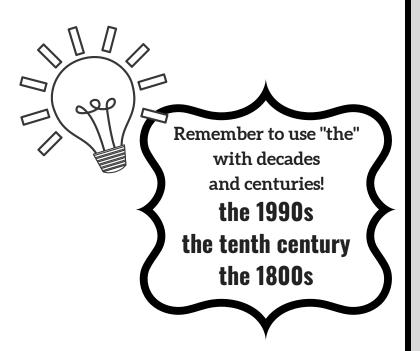
If you are writing about something in general, use no article: I don't have enough **information** to make a good decision. Good **information** is hard to find these days.

You cannot use "a" or "an" with noncount nouns. You must use a quantifier if you wish to talk about a specific noncount noun:
* **a** piece of information
* **a** cup of milk
* **a** bottle of soda

If you are writing about a specific noncount noun that is known to the reader, use "the": The information that I got from our orientation was useful.

In the example above, the adjective clause **"that I got from our orientation"** lets the reader know that this is specific information and not just information in general.

Remember to use "the"
with decades
and centuries!
**the 1990s
the tenth century
the 1800s**

PRACTICE WITH ARTICLES

Look at the sentences below and fill in the correct article: the/a/an/0 (no article).

1. Did you read ____ book that was assigned by ____ professor last week?

2. Yes, but I don't like ____ topic that we are reading about. I find it difficult to relate to.

3. Really? I enjoy reading about ____ women's rights, especially since my mother was ____ activist for ____ women's rights in ____ 1970s.

4. Sure, I understand that it's ____ important topic to study, but I still feel a little bit uncomfortable discussing it, and ____ assigned reading is too political for me.

5. I respect your point, but I still find it fascinating. I'm planning to do ____ research project that will relate our readings to ____ activism for _____ women's rights after ____ year 2000.

Answers: 1) the/the 2) the 3) 0/an/0/the 4) an/the
5) a/0/0/the