Articles

Articles With Common Nouns

**Indefinite Article: A or An**

Shows class or group

*Ex: This is a textbook.*

*This is an apple.*

Note: Use “a” when the word following it begins with a consonant sound; use “an” when the word following it begins with a vowel sound.

Singular

*Ex: A textbook is useful*

*An apple is healthy.*

**Definite Article: the**

Identifies the noun

*Ex: The textbook is large.*

Specific

*Ex: The history textbook is large.*

Identifiable to reader and writer

*Ex: The sun is hot.*

An adjective identifies the noun as one of a kind

*Ex: The best book is Gone With the Wind.*

**No Article**

Plural

*Ex: Books are useful.*

Uncountable

*Ex: Milk is rich in Vitamin D.*

**Articles with Proper Nouns**

**Definite Article: the**

Plural family names

*Ex: The Smiths left.*

States, cities, and universities introduced by a common noun

*Ex: The city of Dallas*
Oceans, rivers, mountains, and public buildings
Ex: **The** Pacific Ocean

**No Article**

Singular names of people
Ex: Jeff left school.

States, cities, and universities not introduced by a common noun
Ex: Dallas Baptist University is on the right.

Adapted from *Writing Clearly: An Editing Guide* by Janet Lane and Ellen Lange. (Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1993).

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