

## **DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLES**

### ***BASIC RULES: A / AN / THE / NO ARTICLE***

#### **A / AN (indefinite article)**

**Use a/an** when you mention somebody/ something for the first time or say who / what somebody/ something is.

Examples:

1. My neighbor just bought a dog. The dog is an Alsatian.
2. That is an unusual pair of shoes.
3. They bought a new car.

#### **THE (definite article)**

**Use the** when it is clear who/ what somebody/ something is; for example, when it has been mentioned before or it is unique.

**Use the** with time periods. Do not use an article with “night”.

Examples:

1. He got into the car and drove to the courthouse.
2. I saw a cat. The cat was tiny.
3. John read a book. The book was good.
4. Bob skis in the winter.
5. Mary sleeps in the afternoon.
6. My brother works at night.

#### **NO ARTICLE**

**Don't use an article** to speak in general with plurals and uncountable nouns, or in phrases like at home / work, go home / to bed, next / last week, etc.

Examples:

1. Men are taller than women.
2. I don't like sports or classical music.
3. I stayed at home last weekend.

**Be careful with the use of articles in the following cases:**

**1) INSTITUTIONS (school, college, prison, jail, church, etc.)**

With **school, college, prison, jail, church, etc.** **don't use an article** when you are talking about the institution and its usual purpose.

**Use an article: a/ an or the** to talk about the building.

**Exception: She is in the hospital.**

Examples:

1. My son is in high school.
2. They are building a new high school in town.
3. They spent ten years in jail for fraud.

**2) GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

**We don't usually use the with:**

a) Most countries, continents, regions ending with the name of a state/ country/ continent; individual islands, states, provinces, towns, cities.

**Exceptions:** the US/ United States, the UK, the Philippines, the Czech Republic.

b) Streets, roads, parks, stores, restaurants.

**Exceptions:** Highways and numbered roads.

**We usually use the with:**

a) Mountain ranges, oceans, seas, rivers, canals, deserts, island groups.

b) The names of theaters, hotels, museums, galleries, buildings, monuments.

**Exception:** We don't use the before proper names of lakes.

Examples:

1. North America is a big continent.
2. When were you last in the UK?
3. The Trans-Canada highway.
4. The Danube River flows into the Black Sea.
5. The Metropolitan Museum is located on Fifth Avenue in New York.
6. Romeo and Juliet is playing at the Globe Theater.
7. We didn't have time to visit the National Gallery.
8. Mount Fuji is in Japan.
9. Lake Windermere is in the Lake District.

## **EXERCISES**

### **I. Fill in the blanks using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Amazon is longer than \_\_\_\_\_ Mississippi river.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ White House is on \_\_\_\_\_ Pennsylvania Avenue.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ people are generally honest.
4. There was \_\_\_\_\_ woman waiting for you. I asked her to come back tomorrow.
5. Mr. Jones is \_\_\_\_\_ energetic man.
6. Kristin doesn't work on \_\_\_\_\_ weekends. She works on \_\_\_\_\_ Mondays.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ river which is polluted is not safe for fishing.
8. It is not difficult to play \_\_\_\_\_ guitar.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ northern part of China is very cold.
10. My sister had \_\_\_\_\_ x-ray of her arm taken.
11. Who invented \_\_\_\_\_ light bulb?
12. The conference will be held at \_\_\_\_\_ Regis Hotel.
13. The victim was taken to \_\_\_\_\_ Hackensack Hospital.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ computers are really useful tools.
15. I ate \_\_\_\_\_ breakfast at seven o'clock.

### **II. Choose the correct alternative in each sentence:**

1. In a welfare state we must take care of ....  
 a. the old                      b. olds                      c. old                      d. the olds
2. I love ... music, especially ... 18<sup>th</sup>-century music.  
 a. the/ the                      b. the/ -                      c - /an                      d. - /the
3. ... my favorite vegetable.  
 a. This carrot is                      b. A carrot                      c. The carrots are                      d. Carrots are
4. ... apple a day keeps ... doctor away.  
 A. - /a                      b. The /a                      c. An / -                      d. An /the

5. We had a lovely evening at ....  
 a. Watsons      b. the Watsons'      c. Mr. Watson      d. the Mr. Watsons'
6. Well. If it's a good story. I'll listen with ... pleasure.  
 a. a      b. the      c. -      d. my
7. Their parties were ....  
 a. good fun      b. good funs      c. the good fun      d. a good fun
8. The ball hit her on ... nose.  
 a. a      b. -      c. the      d. its
9. He asked the chemist to give him something for ... bad toothache.  
 a. -      b. a      c. that      d. the
10. ... cheese in that shop isn't very good.  
 a. a      b. -      c. Any      d. The
11. ... have a peculiar sense of humor.  
 a. An English      b. English      c. The English      d. Englishes
12. We eat ... soup with ... spoon.  
 a. a /a      b. - / -      c. - /a      d. the/ th
13. The students have lessons three times ... week.  
 a. a      b. -      c. the      d. on
14. Have you ... money left?  
 a. some of      b. a      c. the      d. any
15. It's nice if a child can have ... own room.  
 a. the      b. -      c. its      d. an
16. There were many dogs in the park. One dog was ..... Labrador.  
 a. -      b. a      c. one      d. the
17. I have never seen .... UFO.  
 a. -      b. one      c. a      d. the

18. I went to ... sea during my holiday and I rented ..... bungalow near the beach.

- a. the/the                      b. the/-                      c. -/a                      d. the/a

19. I had ... fish and ... chips for lunch.

- a. the/the                      b. a/a                      c. -/-                      d. any

20. I work with my hands. I am ... car mechanic.

- a. a                      b. any                      c. -                      d. the

21. I heard ... knock on ... door.

- a. a/a                      b. a/the                      c. -/a                      d. a/-

22. There's ... difficult crossword in ... *Times*.

- a. a/ -                      b. -/a                      c. a/the                      d. the/the

23. Susan doesn't like ... cakes sold in ... local bakery

- a. the/the                      b. -/the                      c. the/-                      d. the/a

24. We go to ... church with..... children every Sunday.

- a. the/the                      b. -/the                      c. the/-                      d. a /the

25. ... greatest invention of the 20th century is ... computer.

- a. the. -                      b. -. the                      c. the/ the                      d. -. -

26. The highest mountain in ... world is in ... Himalayas.

- a. a. the                      b. -. the                      c. the. -                      d. the/the

**III. Complete the conversation using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:**

A: Shall we have \_\_\_\_\_ lunch now or later?

B: Let's have it now. Let's go to that café in \_\_\_\_\_ South Street – the one near \_\_\_\_\_ Pizza Express. My neighbors, \_\_\_\_\_ Armstrongs, often go there and they say it's very good.

A: All right. I went there with \_\_\_\_\_ Jamie once, a long time ago. It was quite nice.

B: Ok. I just want to stop at a newsagent's. I want to get \_\_\_\_\_ *Times*. There's a good article in it about Costa Rica. It's an amazing place. they say that there are about \_\_\_\_\_ million different species of animals and plants there.

A: Really? That's a lot.

B: I saw a program about it on \_\_\_\_\_ TV once and I was fascinated by it. I'd love to go there and see all the birds and animals.

A: Have you always been interested in \_\_\_\_\_ natural history?

B: Yes, I really love it.

**IV. Fill in the blanks using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:**

1. I have \_\_\_\_\_ uncle who lives in \_\_\_\_\_ home for \_\_\_\_\_ elderly. He is \_\_\_\_\_ honest man. He used to be \_\_\_\_\_ FBI agent. He once saved \_\_\_\_\_ one-year-old boy from \_\_\_\_\_ fire. He has many interesting stories.

2. He told me that he once met \_\_\_\_\_ alien from \_\_\_\_\_ space. This alien didn't need \_\_\_\_\_ oxygen to live; it didn't have \_\_\_\_\_ nose. That's \_\_\_\_\_ hard story to believe. I'm not sure he was telling me \_\_\_\_\_ truth. Maybe he isn't so honest, after all.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Stress can make \_\_\_\_\_ life unpleasant. In \_\_\_\_\_ day, I work at \_\_\_\_\_ office. \_\_\_\_\_ people I work with are busy, and \_\_\_\_\_ work we do isn't easy.

4. When I drive to \_\_\_\_\_ work, \_\_\_\_\_ highways are usually really busy. If there's \_\_\_\_\_ accident during \_\_\_\_\_ rush hour, it can be \_\_\_\_\_ chaos on the roads.

5. I don't watch \_\_\_\_\_ TV. I get \_\_\_\_\_ information and \_\_\_\_\_ news, etc., from \_\_\_\_\_ Internet. I don't often go to \_\_\_\_\_ cinema, either. I'm interested in \_\_\_\_\_ finance. I heard \_\_\_\_\_ Euro is losing value, compared to \_\_\_\_\_ US dollar.

6. I like Japan. \_\_\_\_\_ Crime is quite low there. When I fly to Japan, I usually fly to \_\_\_\_\_ Narita Airport. The last time I was in Japan, I climbed \_\_\_\_\_ Mount Fuji. It was fun. I am tall. \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese are generally shorter than I am.

**ANSWER KEY**

I. Fill in the blanks using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:

1. THE / THE

2. THE / --

3. --

4. A

5. AN

6. -- / --

7. A

8. THE

9. THE

10. AN

11. THE

12. THE

13. --

14. --

15. --

II. Choose the correct alternative in each sentence:

1. A

2. D

3. D

4. D

5. B

6. C

7. A

- 8. C
- 9. B
- 10. A
- 11. C
- 12. C
- 13. A
- 14. D
- 15. C
- 16. B
- 17. C
- 18. D
- 19. C
- 20. A
- 21. B
- 22. C
- 23. A
- 24. B
- 25. C
- 26. D

**III. Complete the conversation using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:**

A: Shall we have ----- lunch now or later?

B: Let's have it now. Let's go to that café in ---- South Street – the one near ---- Pizza Express. My neighbors, **THE** Armstrongs, often go there and they say it's very good.

A: All right. I went there with ---- Jamie once, a long time ago. It was quite nice.



B: Ok. I just want to stop at a newsagent's. I want to get **THE** Times. There's a good article in it about Costa Rica. It's an amazing place. they say that there are about **A** million different species of animals and plants there.

A: Really? That's a lot.

B: I saw a program about it on ---- TV once and I was fascinated by it. I'd love to go there and see all the birds and animals.

A: Have you always been interested in ---- natural history?

B: Yes, I really love it.

**IV. Fill in the blanks using an article (a/ an/ the) or no article, as it corresponds:**

1. I have **AN** uncle who lives in **A** home for **THE** elderly. He is **AN** honest man. He used to be **AN** FBI agent. He once saved **A** one-year-old boy from **A** fire. He has many interesting stories.

2. He told me that he once met **AN** alien from ---- space. This alien didn't need ---- oxygen to live; it didn't have **A** nose. That's **A** hard story to believe. I'm not sure he was telling me **THE** truth. Maybe he isn't so honest, after all.

3. ---- Stress can make ---- life unpleasant. In **THE** day, I work at **AN** office. **THE** people I work with are busy, and **THE** work we do isn't easy.

4. When I drive to ---- work, **THE** highways are usually really busy. If there's **AN** accident during ---- rush hour, it can be ---- chaos on the roads.

5. I don't watch ---- TV. I get ---- information and ---- news, etc., from **THE** Internet. I don't often go to **THE** cinema, either. I'm interested in ----finance. I heard **THE** Euro is losing value, compared to **THE** US dollar.

6. I like Japan. ---- Crime is quite low there. When I fly to Japan, I usually fly to ---- Narita Airport. The last time I was in Japan, I climbed ---- Mount Fuji. It was fun. I am tall. **THE** Japanese are generally shorter than I am.