

ARTICLES

1. **A** or **an** does not refer to a particular person or thing. It leaves indefinite the person or thing spoken of.

For example: I saw a doctor. (means I saw any doctor)

2. **An** is used before a word beginning with vowel sound (please note a word beginning with vowel sound and not necessarily a vowel itself).

For example: an ass, an enemy, an inkstand, an orange, an umbrella, an hour.

3. **An** is placed before an abbreviation if the first letter of an abbreviation is F, H, L, M, N, S or X.

For example:

(a) An MBA was required he post.

(b) An SAO is an officer of high rank

4. **A** is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound.

For example: a boy, a woman a horse, a one-rupee note, a university, a European (both university and European begin with a consonant sound of 'yu')

5. **A** and **an** are used with words 'few' and 'little' if they refer to a small number or a small amount. Words 'few' and 'little' without the articles means almost none.

For example:

(a) We have little time to spare. (means almost no time)

(b) We have a little time to spare. (means some time)

(c) Few persons were present at the meeting. (means almost no one was present)

6. **A** is used in the following senses:

(A) In its original numerical sense of one.

For example:

(a) Not a word was said.

(b) A word to the wise is sufficient.

(c) In the vague sense of a **certain time**.

(d) In the sense of any, to single out an individual as the representative of a class.

For example: A pupil should obey his teacher.

(e) To make a common noun of a proper noun.

For example: A Daniel came to judgement. (A Daniel = A very wise man)

7. **The** points out a particular person or thing or thing or someone or something already referred to.

For example:

(a) I saw the doctor. (means I saw some particular doctor)

(b) The book you want is out of print.

8. **The** is used with names of gulfs, rivers, seas, oceans, groups of islands and mountain ranges.

For example:

The Persian Gulf, The Red Sea, The Indian Ocean, The British Isles, The Alps

9. **The** is used before the name of certain books.

For example: The Vedas, The Puranas, The Ramayana.

But we never say 'The Valmiki's Ramayana'. **The** is not used when the name of a book is mentioned along with the author's name. So, 'Valmiki's Ramayana' is correct.

10. **The** is used before the names of things unique of their kind.

For example: the sun, the sky, the ocean, the sea.

11. **The** is used before a plural common noun if it refers to a particular group among the class and not the whole class.

For example: Drive away the cows from the field.

12. **The** is used before a proper noun only when it is qualified by an adjective.

For example: The great Rani of Jhansi, the immortal Kalidas.

13. **The** is used before superlatives.

For example:

- (a) Sachin was the best batsman in the world.
- (b) The best person should win.

14. **The** noun if emphasis is laid on the use of such a noun. Here, noun can be proper or abstract noun

- (a) the time for doing it.
- (b) occasion to help the distressed.

15. **The** is used with ordinals.

For example:

- (a) He was the first student to finish his homework.
- (b) The second chapter of the book is very interesting.

16. **The** is used before an adjective when the noun is understood.

For example:

- (a) The poor are always with us. (Here poor means poor people which is understood.)
- (b) The weak and the strong. (Here weak means weak people and strong means strong people.)

17. No article is used before a common noun when it refers to all the members of the class.

For example:

- (a) Man is mortal.
- (b) Fish has high protein content.
- (c) What kind of flower is it?

18. The is used before a common noun to give it the meaning of an abstract noun.

For example: The devil in him begins its misdeeds now and then.

19. No article is used before the names of materials such as gold, stone, wine, iron, wheat, wood, cloth.

For example:

- (a) Gold is a precious metal.
- (b) Wheat grows in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh,
- (c) Iron is a useful metal.

Note: But it is correct to say

For example: An iron is a useful gadget.

Because here we are not taking about material iron, but the object which is used to make clothes smooth.

20. No article is used before proper nouns.

For example:

- (a) Delhi is the capital of India.
- (b) Newton was a great philosopher.

But consider the following examples where an article is used before a proper noun.

- (a) This man is a second Newton.
- (b) Bombay is the Manchester of India.

Here Newton and Manchester are not used as proper nouns but as common nouns. The first sentence means that this man is as great as Newton and the second sentence means that Bombay is a great manufacturing city like Manchester.

21. No articles are used before a common noun used in its widest sense.

For example:

- (a) The science has developed much in the past hundred years. (Incorrect)
- (b) Science has developed much in the past hundred years. (Correct).

22. No article is used before the noun following 'Kind of':

For example:

- (a) What kind of a hobby is this? (Incorrect)
- (b) What kind of hobby is this? (Correct)

23. No article is used before abstract nouns.

For example:

(a) Wisdom is the gift of heaven.

(b) Honesty is the best policy.

But consider the following examples where an article is used before an abstract noun.

(a) The wisdom of Solomon is famous.

(b) I cannot forget the kindness with which he treated me.

Here the article is used before the abstract noun as the abstract noun has been qualified by an adjective or adjectival clause.

24. No article is used before languages, subject of arts and science.

For example:

(a) We are studying English.

(b) Geometry is the toughest subject I have ever studied.

25. No article is used before words such as school, college, church, bed, table, hospital, market, prison.

For example:

(a) I went to school till last year.

(b) I have never been to hospital.

But an article is used before these words when reference is made to a definite place.

26. No article is used before the name of relations like father, mother, aunt, uncle.

For example: Mother would like to see you.

But if someone else's mother is being talked about then **the** should be used.

For example: The mother would like to see you.

27. Article should not be used before positions that are held at one time by one person only.

For example:

(a) S D Sharma was elected the president of the country. (Incorrect)

(b) S D Sharma was elected president of the country. (Correct)

28. Please consider this sentence

(a) I have a black and white cat.

Here I mean that I have one cat that is partly black and partly white.

Now, consider its sentence

For example: I have two cats one is black and the other white.

Hence the rule is that when two or more adjectives qualify the same noun, the article is used before the first adjective only. But when they qualify different nouns, the article is used before each adjective separately.

Consider one more example.

(a) The President and Chairman is absent.

(b) The President and the Chairman are present.

Sentence a means that only one person is acting as president as well as chairman.

Sentence b means that two different persons are acting as the President and the Chairman and both the persons are present.

