

Articles are short words placed before nouns. There are several articles primarily used in English: **a/an**, **the**, and **some**. Additionally, sometimes it's correct to use **no article** at all.

### Singular Nouns

elephant



### Plural Nouns

elephants



### Noncount Nouns

milk



## General

### A/An

I saw **a** baby elephant.

I saw **an** elephant.

Create your own example:

### [no article]/Some

I hang out with elephants.

I hang out with **some** elephants.

Create your own example:

### [no article]/Some

I drank milk.

I drank **some** milk.

Create your own example:

## Specific

### The

I saw **the** elephant with **the** red hat.

Create your own example:

### The

I talked to **the** elephants that I met at **the** fair.

Create your own example:

### The

I drank **the** milk that you left out for **the** elephants.

Create your own example:

## EXCEPTIONS, ANNOYANCES & ODDITIES



Names of people usually don't get articles. Places, titles, and organizations, however, do.

I am not **the** Jamie Fine until I'm famous . . . but you may still celebrate **the** King of Pop.



Mountain chains, island groups and other collections need articles, but single examples do not.

You hiked **the** Rockies, but avoided **[the]** Mount Everest and visited **[the]** Coney Island instead.



Use 'the' before things that are unique where there's only one of them.

**The** world is huge, but **the** sky is bigger. **The** Internet tells me **the** climate is changing and **the** environment is affected by **the** travel industry.



Monuments, museums and institutions get articles unless they're possessive.

She visited **the** Met, **the** Statue of Liberty and **the** Brooklyn Bridge, but skipped **[the]** Macy's.



Names of most countries, cities, and continents don't get 'the' either, unless they're plural.

You visited **[the]** Japan and flew from **[the]** NYC, stopping in **[the]** Antarctica along the way.



If the name of the country, city, and continent is plural, you need the article, THE.

You traveled to **the** Bahamas and **the** UAE from **the** USA.

Exceptions: The Dominican Republic, The Czech Republic (when in doubt, do some research)



Geographical features usually need the article 'the' unless they're lakes or bays.

You visited **the** Mojave Desert, **the** Black Forest, and **the** Indian Ocean, but skipped **[the]** Lake George.



When using cardinal directions, add 'the' before the direction (or add -ern to the direction).

He visited Albany, in eastern New York, not Buffalo, which is in **the** west.



NO articles are used with holidays, special days of the year, or days of the week, unless specificity is an essential element of the communication.

I'll see you on Saturday. (NO article=next Saturday)  
They came on **a** Saturday. (a=not emphasizing exact day)



'The'+ adjective (without a noun) is used to talk about groups of people.

Bring out **the** tired, **the** stressed, **the** weak and **the** weary—it's midterm time!



Periods of time always get 'the' before them.

**The** Renaissance, some argue, was more artistically productive than **the** Ice Age.



Nouns that are both countable and uncountable use articles depending on the context.

Where's my **[no article]** shampoo? I need **a** good shampoo! **The** shampoo is under **the** sink.

Note: See 'Noncount/Count Nouns' Handout