

## 3.9 Articles

1 We use **articles** *a/an* and *the* or no article in different situations.

2 We use the **indefinite article** *a/an* when we **don't specify exactly** which thing we are talking about – for example, if the thing is **one of many**. We also use *a/an* when we mention something for **the first time**.

1 Have you got **a pencil** I can borrow, please?

2 They haven't had **a holiday** in ages.

3 He's just bought **a new car**. It's **a sports car**.

4 Would you like **a cup** of tea?

3 We use *a* **before** a **consonant** sound and *an* **before** a **vowel** sound.

**a** bag    **a** Euro    **a** horse    **a** hotel    **a** university    **a** unicorn    **a** yoga class

**an** app    **an** egg    **an** hour    **an** Indian curry    **an** orange    **an** umbrella

## 3.9 Articles

1 We use the **definite article** *the* when **both** the speaker and listener **know exactly which thing** they are referring to.

1 How did **the exam** go yesterday?

We both know you did an exam yesterday.

2 We use the **definite article** *the* when it is clear which **specific thing** is being referred to. This is often because we have both **mentioned it before** or there is **only one** of this thing.

1 What would happen if **the Earth** stopped spinning?

There is only one planet Earth.

2 Do you remember **the strange man** we saw on **the bus** yesterday?

There was only one strange man we both saw on the bus yesterday.

We both know which bus we were on together yesterday.

© Oxford University Press

## 3.9 Articles

1 We use the **definite article** *the* with **superlative** forms.

1 Well, it's **the largest spider** I've ever seen!

2 What's **the most frightening thing** that's ever happened to you?

2 We also use the **definite article** *the* with the following:

Category	Example
rivers, oceans, seas	How long is <b>the Thames</b> ? How deep is <b>the Dead Sea</b> ?
valleys, deserts, mountain ranges	It hasn't rained in <b>the Atacama desert</b> for decades. Several countries border <b>the Andes</b> .
groups of islands, plural country names	Which countries are in <b>the British Isles</b> ? How many states make up <b>the United Arab Emirates</b> ?
buildings such as theatres, galleries, museums, hotels	Have you ever been to <b>the Prado museum</b> in Madrid? I'd like to go to <b>the Ritz</b> for my 50th birthday!

© Oxford University Press

## 3.9 Articles

**1** We use **no article** with **plural** and **uncountable nouns** when we talk about something in general.

1 Do you prefer going to **museums** or **art galleries**?

2 There's no point having lots of **money** if you haven't got your **health**!

**2** We usually use **no article** with names of states, singular countries, continents, lakes, parks and individual mountains, or with neighbourhoods, streets, towns and cities.

1 He'd love to go to **Egypt** and see the pyramids.

2 I'm not sure if the most densely populated part of **New York** is **Manhattan**.

3 It's a long drive from **Lake Titicaca** to **Machu Picchu**, but not impossible in a day!

## 3.9 Practicing Articles

1 Complete the sentences with *a*, *an*, *the* or (–) no article.

1 We've never been to \_\_\_\_\_ Europe.

2 Human activity has had \_\_\_\_\_ huge effect on \_\_\_\_\_ Gobi Desert, among others.

3 We went to \_\_\_\_\_ amazing concert last night. \_\_\_\_\_ music was out of this world!

4 Did you enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ wedding? I bet \_\_\_\_\_ bride and groom looked gorgeous!

5 How long does it take to do \_\_\_\_\_ university degree in your \_\_\_\_\_ country?

6 What's \_\_\_\_\_ longest time you've ever been away from \_\_\_\_\_ home?