Simple Article Adjectives

A, An, and The…when to use them

# Explanation

The words *a*, *an*, and *the* are called **article adjectives** and always signal to the reader that a “countable” noun is coming in a sentence. Most nouns are countable, such as pencils, professors, or states. Some nouns, usually “idea nouns,” are not countable, such as happiness or dependability. Nouns name a person, place, thing, or idea in a general or specifi*c* way. There are two types of articles, the **indefinite**articles *a* and *an*,and the **definite** article *the.* Indefinite articles are used to make clear “only one,” or when “one among many” is meant. So, *a* and *an* are used with general nouns that name categories of persons, places, things, or even ideas. Before a consonant sound, *a* is used, and before a vowel sound, *an* is used. Definite article *the* is used with specific nouns that identify specific persons, places, things, or ideas.

# Examples

*A plant* was blooming in *the* *pot*.

* An **indefinite** article is used with a general noun to show any type of plant was blooming; then, a **definit*e*** article is used with a specific noun to refer to a specific pot.

There was *an example* used by the professor that I didn’t understand.

* An **indefinite** article is used with a general noun to show a single example was not understood. Since the word *example* begins with a vowel, the adjective *an*, rather than *a*, is used.

How quickly *the day* ended.

* A **definite**article is used with a specific noun to refer to a specific day.

# Exercises

*Decide if the article adjective* **a, an,** *or* **the** *would be used in the following sentences:*

1. I tore my jeans on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rusty nail that was sticking out of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ old shed.
2. Having \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ new car made \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ trip to New York even more enjoyable.
3. Did you have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ good time at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ local beach?
4. We walked along \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ beach for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hour. (hint: the word *hour* begins with a vowel sound)
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ restaurant had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ best food!