

Grammar

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9.1 ARTICLES

Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific. Consider the following examples:

- (i) After the long day, the cup of tea tasted particularly good.
By using the article 'the', it has been shown that it was one specific day that was long and one specific cup of tea tasted good.
- (ii) After a long day, a cup of tea tastes particularly good.
By using the article 'a', a general statement has been created, implying that any cup of tea would taste good after any long day.

9.1.1 The Definite Article

The definite article is the word 'the'. It limits the meaning of a noun to one particular thing. For example, your friend might ask, "Are you going to the party this weekend?" The definite article tells you that your friend is referring to a specific party that both of you know about. The definite article can be used with singular, plural, or uncountable nouns. Below are some examples of the definite article 'the' used in context:

- (i) Please give me the hammer.
- (ii) Please give me the red hammer as the blue one is too small.
- (iii) Please give me the nail.
- (iv) Please give me the large nail as it is the only one strong enough to hold this clock.
- (v) Please give me the hammer and the nail.

9.1.2 The Indefinite Article

The indefinite article takes two forms. It's the word *a* when it precedes a word that begins with a consonant. It's the word *an* when it precedes a word that begins with a vowel. The indefinite article indicates that a noun refers to a general idea rather than a particular thing. For example, you might ask your friend,

"Should I bring a gift to the party?" Your friend will understand that you are not asking about a specific type of gift or a specific item. "I am going to bring an orange pie," your friend tells you. Again, the indefinite article indicates that she is not talking about a specific orange pie. Your friend probably doesn't even have any pie yet. The indefinite article only appears with singular nouns. Consider the following examples of indefinite articles used in context:

- (i) Please hand me a book; any book will do.
- (ii) Please hand me an autobiography; any autobiography will do.

9.1.3 Exceptions

1. Choosing A or An

There are a few exceptions to the general rule of using *a* before words that start with consonants and *an* before words that begin with vowels. The first letter of the word *honor*, for example, is a consonant, but it's unpronounced as consonant. In spite of its spelling, the word *honor* begins with a vowel sound. Therefore, we use *an*. Consider the example of the sentence below:

1. **Incorrect:** My mother is a honest woman.

Correct: My mother is an honest woman.

- Similarly, when the first letter of a word is a vowel but is pronounced with a consonant sound, use *a*, as in the sample sentence below:

2. **Incorrect:** He is an United States senator.

Correct: He is a United States senator.

This concept also holds true with acronyms and abbreviations: an LCD display, a UK-based company, an HR department, a URL, an M.L.A.

9.1.4 Article Before an Adjective

Sometimes an article modifies a noun that is also modified by an adjective. The usual word order is article + adjective + noun. If the article is indefinite, choose *a* or *an* based on the word that immediately follows it. Consider the following examples for reference:

(i) Eliza will bring a small gift to Sophie's party.

(ii) I heard an interesting story yesterday.

Uncountable nouns are nouns that are either difficult or impossible to count. Uncountable nouns include intangible things (e.g. information, air), liquids (e.g. milk, wine), and things that are too large or numerous to count (e.g. equipment, sand, wood). Because these things can't be counted, you should never use *a* or *an* with them—remember, the indefinite article is only for singular nouns. Uncountable nouns can be modified by words like *some*. Consider the examples below for reference:

Incorrect: Please give me a water.

Water is an uncountable noun and should not be used with the indefinite article.

Correct: Please give me some water.

However, if you describe water in terms of countable units (like bottles), you can use the indefinite article.

- Please give me a bottle of water.
- Please give me an ice cream.
- Please give me an ice cube.
- Please give me some ice.

Note that depending on the context, some nouns can be countable or uncountable (e.g. hair, noise, time):

- We need a light in this room.
- We need some light in this room.

9.1.5 Using Articles with Pronouns

Possessive pronouns can help identify whether you're talking about specific or non-specific items. As we've seen, articles also indicate specificity. But if you use both a possessive pronoun and an article at the same time, readers will become confused. Possessive pronouns are words like; *his, my, our, its, her, and their*. Articles should not be used with pronouns. Consider the examples below:

- Why are you reading the my book?

The and *my* should not be used together since they are both meant to modify the same noun. Instead, you should use one or the other, depending on the intended meaning:

- Why are you reading the book?
- Why are you reading my book?

9.1.6 Omission of Articles

Occasionally, articles are omitted altogether before certain nouns. In these cases, the article is implied but not actually present. This implied article is sometimes called a "zero article." Often, the article is omitted before nouns that refer to abstract ideas. Look at the following examples:

Incorrect: Let's go out for a dinner tonight.

Correct: Let's go out for dinner tonight.

Incorrect: The creativity is a valuable quality in children.

Correct: Creativity is a valuable quality in children.

Many languages and nationalities are not preceded by an article. Consider the example below:

Incorrect: I studied the French in high school for four years.

Correct: I studied French in high school for four years.

Sports and academic subjects do not require articles. See the sentences below for reference:

Incorrect: I like to play the baseball.

Correct: I like to play baseball.

Incorrect: My sister was always good at the mathematics.

Correct: My sister was always good at mathematics.

9.1.7 Exercise

Correct the following sentences:

1. Give me an honest opinion on this matter.
2. I have read *Mahabharata*.
3. *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are epics of India.
4. I always speak truth.
5. A red and white cow are grazing in the field.
6. His wife is a M.Sc.
7. Learn to write in a idiomatic language.
8. This is the best book under sun.

9. Fourth chapter of this book is very interesting.
10. Mr. Banerjee whom you met last night is my uncle.
11. This is best dinner I have ever had.
12. Who is best-dressed politician in the country ?
13. She is most attractive girl I have ever met.
14. He drove his car at hundred kilometre hour.
15. Higher you go, cooler it is.
16. She is best respected woman in the town.
17. Water of many Indian rivers is regarded as sacred.
18. She is taller of the two girls.
19. She caught him by his arm.
20. Oranges are sold by dozen.

9.2 PREPOSITIONS

A prepositional phrase is a group of words containing a preposition, a noun or pronoun object of the preposition, and any modifiers of the object. Prepositions indicate relationships between other words in a sentence. In fact, prepositions tell you where something is or when something happened. Usually, prepositions are words which begin the prepositional phrases.

The following words are the most commonly used prepositions:

About	Below	Excepting	Off	Towards
Above	Beneath	For	On	Under
Across	Beside(s)	From	Onto	Underneath
After	Between	In	Out	Until
Against	Beyond	In front of	Outside	Up
Along	But	Inside	Over	Upon
Among	By	In spite of	Past	Up to
Around	Concerning	Instead of	Regarding	With
At	Despite	Into	Since	Within
Because of	Down	Like	Through	Without
Before	During	Near	Throughout	With regard to
Behind	Except	Of	To	With respect to

9.2.1 Types of Prepositions

Prepositions indicate direction, time, location, and spatial relationships, as well as other abstract types of relationships.

Direction: Look *to* the left and you'll see our destination.

Time: We've been working *since* this morning.

Location: We saw a movie *at* the theatre.

Space: The dog hid *under* the table.

1. Simple Prepositions

Simple prepositions are words like at, for, in, off, on, over, and under. These common prepositions can be used to describe a location, a time or place.

Some examples of common prepositions used in sentences are:

- He sat *on* the bed.
- There is some milk *in* the fridge.
- She was hiding *under* the chair.
- The cat jumped *off* the table.
- He drove *over* the bridge.
- She lost her ring *at* the party.
- The book belongs *to* Amy.
- They were sitting *by* the tree.
- We are running *in* the gym today.
- The sun is *above* the clouds.
- She lives *near* the stadium.
- He goes to work *by* bus.
- She drew the picture *with* a crayon.
- He swam *at* the pool.
- I walked *down* the street.
- We located the key *for* the main gate.
- She drove *to* the store.
- The car went *through* the tunnel.
- I got a package *from* my relative.
- She put the flowers *by* the window.
- The food was placed *on* the table.

2. Double Prepositions

Double prepositions are two simple prepositions used together. Some examples are into, upon, onto, out of, from within.

- Once *upon* a time, there was a beautiful princess.
- The baby climbed *onto* the table.
- It is *up to* us to find the answer.
- The loud noise came *from within* the stadium.
- She never leaves *without* her phone.
- The bird *sat atop* the oak tree.
- The caterpillar turned *into* a butterfly.
- I was unable to get *out of* the appointment.

3. Compound Prepositions

Compound prepositions are similar to double prepositions but are generally created by prefixing a preposition to a noun, adjective or adverb like about, across, among, beside, before, above, along, inside, between, around, behind, below, beneath, etc.

- She sat *beside* Marie.
- I attended a quick meeting *before* leaving for the day.

- A terrible storm raged *across* the mountains.
- My dog ran *along* the track with me.
- He found a penny *beneath* the couch.
- He was *between* jobs at the moment.
- My car is parked *behind* the store.
- There was a tunnel running *underneath* the city.

4. Participle Prepositions

Participle (or participial) prepositions have endings such as -ed and -ing such as considering, pending, concerning, provided.

- She is interested in anything *concerning* horses.
- He works one job *during* the day and another at night.
- The dog kept *following* him home.
- All the neighbours were there *including* the new one.
- The principal was asking questions *regarding* her behaviour.
- *Considering* his age, he did a great job.
- He was *frustrated* at the situation.
- The teacher said no talking *during* class.

5. Phrase Prepositions

Phrase prepositions include a preposition, an object and the object modifier. Examples include phrases like because of, by means of, with regard to, and on behalf of.

- I am attending the seminar *on behalf of* my boss and colleagues.
- The baseball game was cancelled *because of* the bad weather.
- *On account of* the snow, our flight was delayed.
- *For the sake of* the children, do not use slang words.
- He succeeded *by means of* determination.
- We did not win *in spite of* practicing so hard.

9.2.2 Ending a Sentence with a Preposition

The old claim that it's wrong to end a sentence with a preposition has been utterly ignored. It's not true and it never was true. Those who always insist that a preposition can't end a sentence often end up with stilted and unnatural sentences. Few examples are:

- There's no one else to hide behind. (Grammatically correct and natural)
- There's no one else behind whom to hide. (Grammatically correct, but unnatural)
- Where did you come from? (Grammatically correct and natural)
- From where did you come? (Grammatically correct, but unnatural)

9.2.3 Exercise

Correct the following sentences:

1. She gets upto six in the morning.
2. Her presentation is inferior than my presentation.
3. The train is running back its scheduled time.
4. He stood among his father and mother.
5. They sat in the ground.