

Nouns and Articles

Nouns and Articles – Study Notes

1. What Is a Noun?

Category	Definition	Examples
Common noun	General name for a person, place, thing, or idea	<i>teacher, city, book, happiness</i>
Proper noun	Specific name; always capitalized	<i>*Maria, Paris, The Great Gatsby, Eiffel Tower</i>
Concrete noun	Can be perceived by the senses	<i>apple, music, dog</i>
Abstract noun	Intangible concept or feeling	<i>freedom, love, justice</i>
Collective noun	Names a group acting as a unit	<i>team, flock, audience</i>
Countable noun	Has singular & plural forms; can be quantified	<i>car / cars, child / children</i>
Uncountable (mass) noun	No plural; measured with a unit of quantity	<i>water, information, rice</i>

Key points

- Nouns function as subjects, objects, complements, or objects of prepositions.
 - Possessive forms are made by adding 's (singular) or ' (plural).
 - Many nouns can shift categories (e.g., *chicken* as an animal = countable, *chicken* as meat = uncountable).
-

2. What Are Articles?

Articles are a specific type of determiner that signal definiteness, indefiniteness, or generic reference. English has **three** articles:

Article	Type	Typical use
a	Indefinite	Before a singular, countable noun that is not previously identified.
an	Indefinite	Same as a, but used before vowel sounds (e.g., <i>an apple, an hour</i>).

Nouns and Articles

Article	Type	Typical use
the	Definite	Before a noun that is specific, previously mentioned, or uniquely identifiable.

2.1 Indefinite Articles (*a / an*)

- **Introduce new information:** “I saw **a** dog in the park.”
- **Refer to any member of a class:** “She wants **an** orange.”
- **Used with singular, countable nouns only.**
- **Special cases:**
 - *A* before words that start with a consonant **sound**, not necessarily a consonant letter (e.g., *a university* – pronounced /ju?/).
 - *An* before words that start with a vowel **sound**, even if the first letter is a consonant (e.g., *an hour* – silent *h*).

2.2 Definite Article (*the*)

- **Specific reference:** “Please close **the** door.” (the door we both know)
- **Unique entities:** “**The** sun rises in the east.”
- **Superlatives and ordinal numbers:** “She is **the** tallest student.” “He finished **the** first chapter.”
- **Geographical names (often):**
 - *The* + plural country names: **the** United States, **the** Philippines
 - *The* + mountain ranges, rivers, seas, oceans: **the** Himalayas, **the** Nile, **the** Pacific
 - *The* + deserts, islands groups: **the** Sahara, **the** Bahamas
- **With adjectives to refer to a class:** “**The** elderly need support.” (all elderly people)

2.3 Zero Article (No article)

- **Plural countable