



Articles and Other Determiners



Determiners go before nouns. There are four kinds of determiners:

- Articles (*a, an, the*)
- Quantifiers (*a lot of, a few, some, etc.*)
- Demonstrative Adjectives (*this, that, these, those*)
- Possessive Adjectives (*my, your, his, etc.*)



Use *a* or *an* (the indefinite article) with singular count nouns to express a general meaning. Use *a* or *an* when the thing you are referring to is not specific, and the reader does not know what you are referring to.

- I bought **a** book last night. (We don't know which book.)
- You should bring **an** umbrella. (It doesn't matter which umbrella you bring.)



A noncount noun usually cannot occur with *a* or *an*.

Homework takes a lot of my time.

Not

A homework takes a lot of my time.



A count noun is always preceded by *a*, *an*,
the or another determiner.

I ate **an / the / your** apple.

Not

I ate apple.



No article (\emptyset) is used with plural count nouns and noncount nouns to express general meaning.

- **Movies** are my favorite way to relax.
- I think that **honesty** is important.



Generally, do not use articles with proper nouns—names of people, places, and things.

Luis is originally from Caracas, Venezuela, but now he lives in the United States.



The (the definite article) is used to express specific meaning with all three kinds of nouns—singular, plural, and noncount. In this case, the reader knows which thing you are referring to in your writing.

- The assignment in history is interesting.
- The door was locked.
- The trains are often crowded at this time of day.
- He gave us **the** information that we needed.



Use the definite article *the* in the following cases:

1. with superlatives (*the best, the cheapest, the most, the least, etc.*)

The **fastest** runner finished in 10 minutes.

2. with ordinal numbers (*the first, the second, etc.*)

I didn't understand **the second** question.

3. with *same*

We have **the same** math class this semester.

She made **the same** mistakes as I did.



In general, select *a*, *an*, or no article when using a noun for the first time and the (or another determiner) every time afterwards.

- I put *a* book in your room. *The* book is on your desk.
- We saw *a* great movie last night. *The* movie was about space aliens.
- They bought furniture last night. *The* furniture will be delivered tomorrow.



See summary chart of article usage.



Correct the errors involving articles.

1. My sister read the good book last week.
2. I took an exam yesterday. An exam was hard.
3. Albert Einstein had intelligence necessary to change the 20th century.
4. Parents teach their children about the life.
5. I answered last question incorrectly.



Use quantifiers before nouns to indicate an amount or number.

- We bought **two** books and **several** magazines.
- My neighbors have **a lot** of children.



Quantifiers that can be used with plural count nouns include:

- few
- a few
- several
- some
- many
- a lot of / lots of



Note the difference between *few* and *a few*:

- She has **few** friends. (meaning: She has almost not friends.)
- She had **a few** friends before. (meaning: She had some or a small number of friends.)



Quantifiers that can be used with noncount count nouns include:

- little
- a little
- some
- much
- a lot of / lots of



Note the difference between *little* and *a little*:

- He gave me **little** help. (meaning: He gave almost no help or not enough.)
- He gave me **a little** help. (meaning: He gave me some, or a small amount, of help.)



Any often replaces *some* in questions and negative statements.

- Did you have *any* problems with the assignment?
- No, I didn't have *any* problems, but *some* questions were tricky.



Much is often used with noncount nouns in questions and negative statements. It is unusual in affirmative statements. Use a *lot of* instead of *much* in affirmative statements.

Did you get **much** sleep last night?

No, I didn't get **much** sleep, but the night before I got **a lot of** sleep.



Each and *every* are followed by singular count nouns and singular verbs.

- Every student meets with a counselor once a year.
- Every college charges a different amount for books.



Each of and *one of the* are followed by plural count nouns. The verb remains singular.

- Each of the students **plans** to take the final.
- One of the students **is** not finished yet.



Demonstrative Adjectives

Use *this* and *that* with singular count nouns and with noncount nouns. Use *these* and *those* with plural count nouns.

- This **test** is very difficult.
- That **furniture** looks beautiful in your house.
- These **courses** are at the beginning level.
- Did you pay a lot for **those shoes**?



Possessive Adjectives

The possessive adjectives are:

- my
- your
- his
- her
- its
- our
- their



Possessive Adjectives

Use possessive adjectives before nouns.

They can come before any kind of noun.

- My parents live in Cairo.
- We need to include their information in the report.



Important!

Don't confuse the possessive adjective *its* with *it's*, the contraction of *it is*.

Its (the college's) teachers are the best in the city.
It's (it is) the best college in the state.



Another and Other

Use *another* with singular count nouns. It means “one in addition to the one(s) already mentioned.”

- My older brother lives in Los Angeles, and I have **another brother** living in New York.



Another and Other

Use *other* with plural count nouns and with noncount nouns. It means “more or several more in addition to the one(s) already mentioned.”

- I've already finished, and **other students** have finished too. (some in addition to me, but not all)
- He found **other information** for his paper.



Another and Other

Use *the other* with singular or plural count nouns. It means “the rest of a specific group.”

- I finished, and **the other student** finished, too.
- I finished, and all **the other students** finished, too. (all the students)



Correct the errors with determiners.

1. We took each tests at the end of a chapter.
2. We didn't buy many clothing at the mall.
3. We didn't see some wildflowers on our walk.
4. Each of the English paper is worth 100 points.
5. Can I make an appointment on other day?