**Articles**

An article is one of three words (a, an, or the) that are used with nouns to limit or give definiteness to the application of a noun.

**General Rule:**

Use “the” if the specific identity of the noun is known to both the speaker and the listener. “The” can be used with any noun and is called the definite article. If the specific identity of the noun is not known to both the speaker and the listener, use “a” or “an”. They can only be used for countable nouns. “A” and “an” are called the indefinite articles.

Definite Article: I need to read the book.

(a particular book)

Indefinite Article: I need to read a book.

(any book will do)

Other Examples: I will bring a cake to the party.

(any cake to a specific, known party)

I will bring the cake to the party.

(a specific cake to a specific, known party)

***Use “an” before a vowel sound, “a” before a consonant sound: an apple, a peach. In words beginning with h, if the h is silent, the word begins with a vowel sound: an hour, an honorable deed. If the h is pronounced, the word begins with a consonant sound: a hospital, a hymn, a hotel.

**Exercise:**

Fill in the blanks with the correct article.

Many people are jealous of me because of ____ location of my house. I live on ____ private beach in ____ beautiful house with ___ gorgeous view. ___ beach is clean, and ____ water is crystal clear. When my friends come to visit, we lay out on ____ beach without disturbance from any neighbors. On clear, windy mornings, ___ waves roll in to ____ beach and look as though they are actually going to come up to ____ house.

**Proofreading:**

The trick is learning how to spot your own errors in your essays.

- For the most part, proper nouns are not preceded by an article. Some exceptions are the USA, the Nile River, and other rivers, oceans, seas, and lakes.
- For a common noun:
  1. Determine whether it is countable or non-countable.
  2. See if the noun has a specific reference for the writer and the reader.
  3. All countable, singular nouns have an article or other form of determiner.
  4. “A”/“an” are never used with non-countable nouns.
  5. Some nouns can be countable or non-countable. For nouns such as this, if it is used in a general sense, do not use an article.