

## Understanding Articles in English

How we talk about nouns (things):

plural singular	(shops) (shop)	countable uncountable	(book) (food)	common proper	(table) (United Kingdom)	abstract	(love)
<b>a, an (1)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• singular countable nouns</li><li>• unknown / first mention</li><li>• general</li><li>• <b>an</b> is the same as <b>a</b> but we use it before a vowel sound</li></ul>		<b>the (1 or more)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• countable nouns – singular or plural</li><li>• known / later mentions</li><li>• specific things</li><li>• specific uncountable / plural nouns</li><li>• specific abstract nouns</li><li>• use <b>the</b> when you both know what is being talked about</li><li>• use <b>the</b> before superlative adjectives and ordinal numbers</li><li>• pronounced <i>thii</i> before vowel sounds</li></ul>		<b>no article (*or “some”)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• uncountable nouns*</li><li>• plural nouns*</li><li>• abstract nouns*</li><li>• proper nouns</li><li>• things when you are talking in general</li></ul>			

- We often need to write an article before a noun – *but not always!*
- There are only 3 articles – **a**, **an**, and **the** – but they cause a lot of errors
- the** is the most common word in written English; **a** is #6 and **an** is #32 (*Talk a Lot Foundation Course p.3.9*)
- Some languages don't have articles, e.g. Polish; in English we need them to help make the rhythm and give more information
- Use **some** with plural countable nouns and with uncountable nouns; use **any** in question and negative forms
- Some nouns can be both countable and uncountable depending on the situation, e.g. cheese
- An article goes before a noun modifier, e.g. an adjective or intensifier, e.g. "a horse"; "a big horse"; "a really big horse"
- We can use a possessive adjective (e.g. my, your, our, etc.) or a determiner (e.g. this, that, these, those) instead of an article

*Unfortunately, there are a lot of exceptions to these rules! You should read English often to see the repeating patterns*