

# Grammar Articles

## Correct Use of an Article in English – or Not? (Handout)

Which article – or none? It depends on the type of noun and the context – general (G) or specific (S).

	Correct Sentences	Incorrect Sentences	Correct?	Context:
1.	SINGULAR [a]	This is a book.	✓	G
2.	COUNTABLE [an]	This is an book.	✗	
3.	NOUNS [the]	This is the book.	✗	
4.		This is the book that I bought.	✓	S
5.		This is book	✗	
6.		This is some book.	✗ ('book' is singular)	
7.	*other determiner [o/d*]	This is her book.	✓	S

*Rules: there must be a **determiner** before this type of noun; a / an = 1; an = before a vowel sound; general context = a / an; specific context = the*

8.	PLURAL [a]	I like a apples.	✗	
9.	NOUNS [an]	I like an apples.	✗	
10.		I like the apples.	✗	
11.		I like the apples from our garden.	✓	S
12.		I like apples.	✓	G
13.		I like some apples.	✓	S
14.		I like those apples.	✓	S

*Rule: general context = no article; specific context = the, or other determiner [o/d]*

15.	UNCOUNTABLE [a]	I ate a spaghetti.	✗	
16.	NOUNS – [an]	I ate an spaghetti.	✗	
17.	REAL [the]	I ate the spaghetti.	✗	
18.		I ate the spaghetti with a fork.	✓	S
19.		I ate spaghetti.	✓	G
20.		I ate some spaghetti.	✓	S
21.		I ate that spaghetti.	✓	S

*Rule: general context = no article; specific context = the, or other determiner [o/d]*

22.	UNCOUNTABLE [a]	I need a freedom.	✗	
23.	NOUNS – [an]	I need an freedom.	✗	
24.	ABSTRACT [the]	I need the freedom.	✗	
25.		I need the freedom to travel.	✓	S
26.		I need freedom.	✓	G
27.		I need some freedom.	✓	S
28.		I need more freedom.	✓	S

*Rule: general context = no article; specific context = the, or other determiner [o/d]*

29.	PROPER [a]	I've been to a Madrid twice.	✗	
30.	NOUNS [an]	This is an Emily's bicycle.	✗	
31.		We walked beside the River Thames.	✓	S
32.		I've never met the Duke of Kent.	✓	S
33.		They bought sandwiches at Waitrose.	✓	S
34.		I can speak some Italian.	✓	S
35.		Jamie arrived in his Saab.	✓	S

*Rule: no article unless the noun is part of an adjective + noun phrase, e.g. 'the Atlantic Ocean', or a 'the x of x' phrase, e.g. 'the Statue of Liberty'.*