Articles, quantifiers and determiners

The presentation is divided into three levels:

⬤ = *Lower-intermediate/Intermediate*

⬤ = *Upper-intermediate*

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countability

Look at the nouns:

BOX, DOG, CUSTOMER

1 box, **2** box**es**, **3** box**es** …
1 dog, **2** dog**s**, **3** dog**s** …
1 customer, **2** customer**s**, **3** customer**s** …

*If you can count them (they are **individuals**), they are **COUNT NOUNS**.*

MILK, SNOW, LOVE

~~1 milk, 2 milks, 3 milks,…~~
~~1 snow, 2 snows, 3 snows, …~~
~~1 love, 2 loves, 3 loves,…~~

*If you can't count them (they are part of a **mass** or are **abstract nouns**), they are **NON-COUNT NOUNS**.*

countability

Which nouns are count and which are non-count?

ADVERTISEMENT, ADVICE, COMPLAINT, DEPARTMENT, EMPLOYEE, EQUIPMENT, EXPERIENCE, INFORMATION, MONEY, OFFICE, SERVICE, STAFF

COUNT	NON-COUNT
ADVERTISEMENT / ADVERTISEMENTS	ADVICE / ~~ADVICES~~
COMPLAINT / COMPLAINTS	EQUIPMENT / ~~EQUIPMENTS~~
DEPARTMENT / DEPARTMENTS	EXPERIENCE / ~~EXPERIENCES*~~
EMPLOYEE / EMPLOYEES	INFORMATION / ~~INFORMATIONS~~
OFFICE / OFFICES	MONEY / ~~MONEYS~~
SERVICE / SERVICES	STAFF / ~~STAFFS~~

*'Experiences' can be used in plural, but then it means "zážitky"

much, many, few, little

Read the questions and answers:

How **many** customers came to the party?

Only a **few** customers came.

There were **fewer** customers than last time.

There were **the fewest** customers that have ever come to our parties.

*Use **many → more → the most** and **few → fewer → the fewest** with **COUNT NOUNS**.*

How **much** snow was there in the Alps last year?

There was really **little** snow.

There was **less** snow than the year before.

There was **the least** snow in history.

*Use **much → more → the most** and **little → less → the least** with **NON-COUNT NOUNS**.*

this, that, these, those

This person is happy.

(singular, close to the speaker)

That person is happy.

(singular, far from the speaker)

These people are happy.

(plural, close to the speaker)

Those people are happy.

(plural, far from the speaker)

the indefinite article

A/AN

A dog

'**A**' is used with consonants (b, d, f, m, etc.).

An apple

'**An**' is used with vowels (a, e, i, o, u).

Pronunciation matters!

A university [ˌjuːnɪˈvɜːsəti]

An hour [ˈaʊər]

the definite article

THE

the dog

[ðə] with consonants

the apple

[ði, ðiː] with vowels

Spelling doesn't change, but pronunciation does.

use of articles – singular

Look at the sentences:

A customer bought shoes in our shop.

 We don't know yet who the person is specifically.

*We use **the indefinite article** for **unspecified** or **unknown** people/things that are **count** and **singular**.*

The customer paid by credit card.

 We already know who the person is (= the one who bought shoes in our shop).

*We use **the definite article** for **specific** or **known** people/things that are **count** and **singular**.*

*Singular count nouns **always** need either a definite or an indefinite article.*

use of articles – plural

Look at the sentences:

Ø Customers buy shoes in our shop.
We mean a group of people, customers in general => no article (the **zero article**).

*We **don't use an article** for **unspecified** or **unknown** people/things that are **count** and **plural**.*

The customers are always satisfied.
We mean the specific customers who buy shoes in our shop.

*We use **the definite article** for **specific** or **known** people/things that are **count** and **plural**.*

use of articles – non-count nouns

Look at the sentences:

Ø Milk is good for your bones.
  We mean all milk in general => no article.

*We **don't use an article** for **unspecified** or **unknown** substances/ideas which are **non-count**.*

You can drink **the** milk I bought today – it's in the fridge.
  We mean specific milk (which I bought today).

*We use **the definite article** for **specific** or **known** substances/ideas which are **non-count**.*

use of articles

*For **singular count** nouns:*

Open **a** window.

*Using **the indefinite article** means that there are more windows and you can open any one of them.*

Open **the** window.

*Using **the definite article** means that there is only one window and it is clear which the speaker wants you to open.*

use of articles

*For **plural count** nouns (also applies to **non-count** nouns):*

Open **the** windows.

*Using **the definite article** means that there are more windows, and the speaker wants you to open all of them.*

Open **some** windows.

*Using "**some**" means that there are more windows, and it doesn't matter how many or which ones you decide to open.*

indefinite article – summary

Basic rules for using the indefinite article:

*The indefinite article **a/an** is used with an **unspecified** (or indefinite) member of a group or category (**count, singular**).*

- a window   (*one of all windows in the world, in a room, in a building…*)
- a boy   (*one of all boys in the world, in a classroom…*)
- a nice day   (*one of all nice days in history*)

definite article – summary

Basic rules for using the definite article:

*The definite article **the** is used with a **specified** (or definite) member or **specified** members of a group or category (**count, singular** or **plural**) and with **specified non-count** nouns.*

- the workers in our team
- the snow in our garden

***The** is also used with a **unique** person/thing – everyone knows which one we talk about because there is only one.*

- the sun (*the solar system only has one sun*)
- the sky (*our planet only has one sky*)
- the floor (*a room only has one floor*)
- the top (*a page/a box/etc. only have one top*)
- the president (*a country only has one president*)

*   **BUT** with names: Ø President Obama, Ø Queen Victoria…*

no article – summary

Basic rules for using no article:

*We **don't use any article** if we talk about **all members** of a group or category (**count, plural**), or if we talk about **unspecified non-count** nouns.*

Ø Consumers like Ø low prices.   (*all consumers in the world, all low prices*)

Ø Vegetarians don't eat Ø meat.   (*all vegetarians, all kinds of meat*)

practice

Read the text and decide which articles to use to complete it.

I met __a__ client in __a__ restaurant yesterday. __The__ restaurant was full

client and restaurant are mentioned for the first time   *the restaurant was mentioned before*

of __Ø__ people, so there weren't enough tables. He joined me and we drank

people in plural and in general, not a specific group

__Ø__ red wine with our dinner. __The__ wine was extremely delicious. Then we

non-count, mentioned for the first time   *we already know which wine*

wanted to pay, so I talked to __a__ waiter, but it wasn't __the__ waiter who took

one of the waiters, not a specific one   *the specific waiter*

care of us during __the__ evening. After we paid, we took __a__ walk and

the specific evening when the story happened   *mentioned for the first time*

watched __the__ moon move across __the__ sky.

there is only one moon   *there is only one sky*

the indefinite article

Look at the sentences:

She's **an** accountant.

He's **a** systems analyst.

Use the **indefinite article** *with* **jobs** *(in singular).*

He won **a** million dollars. = He won **one** million dollars.

I found **a** euro on the ground.   = I found **one** euro on the ground.

Use the **indefinite article** *instead of* **"one"**.

She can write twenty pages **a** day.   = She can write twenty pages **per** day.

The car went 220 km **an** hour. = The car went 220 km **per** hour.

Use the **indefinite article** *instead of* **"per"**.

the indefinite article

Look at the sentences:

She's **an** American.

He's **a** German.

*Use the **indefinite article** with **nationalities** (in singular).*

(1) He's a French**man**.
(2) She's a **Spaniard**. (a person from Spain)

*If the nationality adjective ends in **–ish**, **–ch** or **–ese**, it cannot be used by itself as a noun representing a person. **–man**, **–woman** or **–person** has to be added (1), or a special word is used (2).*

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the indefinite article

Look at the sentences:

I drink a lot of **Ø** coffee.

Non-count nouns are used **without an article** if we talk about the substance in general.

I have **a** coffee every morning. = *I have **one cup of** coffee.*

*We can use an **indefinite article** with **non-count nouns** if we want to talk about **one container** (glass/box/mug/bottle...).*

That man is **Ø** Mr Smith.

Names are usually used **without an article**.

There's **a** Mr Smith waiting for you.

*We can use an **indefinite article** with **names** if we want to express that we know the name of the person, but the person themselves is unknown to us.*

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the definite article

Look at the sentences:

This is **the** best cafe in the town.

*Use the **definite article** with **superlatives** (there is always only one superlative thing/person).*

This is **the** first time I've been to Brighton.

*Use the **definite article** with **ordinal numbers** (the first, the second, the hundredth... => there is always only one in that place).*

She plays **the** drums.
*Use the **definite article** with **musical instruments**.*

The police are looking for a missing girl.
Germany is a member of **the** EU.
*Use the **definite article** with **organisations** and **institutions**.*

the definite article

Look at the sentences:

I'm going to **the** United Kingdom for a holiday.

I really love **the** Netherlands.

*Use the **definite article** with **countries** with **state**, **kingdom** or **republic** in the name, or with **country names in plural**.*

She would like to climb in **the** Himalayas.

I spent last summer in **the** Bahamas.

Never swim in **the** Nile!

*Use the **definite article** with **geographical names**: mountain ranges, groups of islands, rivers, seas, oceans, and canals.*

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the definite article

Look at the sentences:

Let's go see **the** Mona Lisa at **the** Louvre.

*Use the **definite article** with well-known **buildings** or **works of art**.*

We're staying at **the** Ritz.

They have great beer in **the** King's Head.

*Use the **definite article** with **hotels, pubs,** and **restaurants**.*

I read **the** Washington Post every morning.

*Use the **definite article** with **newspapers.***

the definite article

Look at the sentences:

"I saw George Clooney in the street."

"**The** George Clooney?"

*'**The**' in the second sentence conveys the meaning of '**the real one**'. It is usually pronounced [ði/ ði:] for emphasis even if the first sound is a consonant.*

The rich should give up some of their wealth to help **the** poor.

*The combination '**the + adjective**' is used to describe a group of people with that characteristic.*

The Jacksons always invite **the** Tooleys to spend Thanksgiving with them.

*The **definite article** is used with family names in plural to describe the whole family.*

the zero article

Look at the sentences:

Ø Berlin is the capital of Ø Germany.

Don't use an article *with **cities** and **countries** (exception: the Hague).*

Ø Lake Ontario is the smallest of the Great Lakes.

Archeologists are trying to uncover the mystery of Ø Easter Island.

Ø Mount Everest is an attractive tourist destination.

Don't use an article *with **individual lakes**, **islands**, and **mountains** (exception: the Matterhorn).*

Where is the boundary between Ø Europe and Ø Asia?

Don't use an article *with **continents** (exception: the America**s**, meaning North America + South America).*

the zero article

Look at the sentences:

I was never good at Ø chemistry when I was at school.

Can you play Ø tennis?

Don't use an article *with* **subjects at school** *and* **sports**.

Do you speak Ø Chinese?

Ø Italians are such enthusiastic people.

Don't use an article *with* **languages** *and* **plural nationalities** *(general meaning).*

Ø Spanish people like to have a siesta in the afternoon.

The Spanish like to have a siesta in the afternoon.

If you want to talk about people whose nationality adjectives end in **-ch**, **-ish**, *or* **-ese**, *use either* Ø + **adjective** + **people**, *or* **the** + **adjective**.

the zero article

Look at the sentences:

Have you visited **Ø** Southern France? ***BUT the*** *south **of** France*

Estonia is located in **Ø** Northern Europe. ***BUT the*** *north **of** Europe*

Don't use an article *with geographical names containing adjectives made from south, north, east, and west.*

Ø IBM is a good employer.

Did you send the application to **Ø** Google?

Don't use an article *with **names of companies**.*

*(Exception: the definite article has to be used if it is a part of the official name of the company, e.g. '**Ø** Coca Cola' vs '**The** Coca Cola Company', '**Ø** Ford' vs '**The** Ford Motor Company'.)*

practice

Read the text and decide which articles to use to complete it.

I work as __a__ sales representative. I am currently __the__ third highest

job *ordinal number*

performer in the company because for last 6 months I have been selling

200 products __a__ month. I got __a__ hundred dollars as a reward. __The__ best

per month *one hundred* *superlative*

employee got a trip to __the__ Philippines. I'm thinking of learning to speak

country name in plural

__Ø__ German to be able to make sales in __Ø__ Germany and __Ø__ Austria and

language *countries*

improve my position.

determiners:
another, other, the other

Look at the sentences:

Would you like **another** cup of coffee?

*Another is used with **singular nouns** to express "**one more**".*

There were many **other** recruiters visiting the job fair besides us.

*Other is used with **plural nouns** or **non-count nouns** to express "**additional**" or "**different ones**".*

Half of the staff kept the deadline. **The other** half needed an extension.
I ate my lunch in my office. **The other** managers went out to eat.

*The other with a **singular noun** is used to express "**the second of the two**".*

*The other with a **plural noun** or **non-count noun** is used to express "**the rest of a specific group**".*

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determiners: the others, others

Look at the sentences:

Some of our clients like discounts. **The other clients** prefer good customer service.

The other clients *means the rest of the group of our clients: those who are not impressed by discounts.*

Some of our clients like discounts. **The others** prefer good customer service.

To talk about the rest of the group without repeating the noun, **the others** *can be used.*

Some clients like discounts. **Other clients** prefer good customer service.

Other clients *is less specific, the sentence is a general statement.*

Some clients like discounts. **Others** prefer good customer service.

Other clients *can be substituted by* **others***, which means "the rest of an unspecified group of clients" (which is usually all clients in the world).*

practice

Read the sentences and decide which of the determiners below to use to complete them.

ANOTHER, OTHER, THE OTHER, THE OTHERS

1. I can't make the deadline. I need __**another**__ day.

2. He is very uncooperative, but __**the other**__ team members are easy to work with.

3. This pen stopped writing. Can I have __**another / the other**__ one?
   (one more, additional)   *(if there's a choice of 2)*

4. You can find deadline dates and __**other**__ information in this document.

5. Only two members of the team showed up for work; __**the others**__ were all off sick.

6. __**Other**__ websites seem boring compared to our excitingly designed e-shop.

quantifiers:
little, a little, few, a few

Look at the sentences:

He has **a little** experience, so he will need **little** supervision.
some, a small amount   *not much, almost none*

> little/few = málo

> a little = trochu
> a few = několik, pár

"Little" used **with the indefinite article** has a **positive** meaning.
"Little" used **without the indefinite article** has a **negative** meaning.

A few employees stay at work until 8 pm, but **few** do any actual work.
some, a small number   *not many, almost none*

"Few" used **with the indefinite article** has a **positive** meaning.
"Few" used **without the indefinite article** has a **negative** meaning.

practice

Read the sentences and decide which of the quantifiers LITTLE, A LITTLE, FEW, A FEW to use to complete them.

1. The brainstorming wasn't very successful, but we did come up with **a few** ideas.

2. It's always work, work, work – I have **little** time to do anything else.

3. All you need to quit your job is **a little** courage.

4. **Few** people are prepared to work hard for a low salary.

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quantifiers:
both, neither, either, all, no, any

Both (the) cats **are** asleep.
(one and also the other – plural, used with plural verb)

Neither cat **is** awake.
(not one nor the other – singular, used with singular verb)

Either cat can wake up any second.
(one or the other – singular, used with singular verb)

All (the) cats in the basket **are** kittens.
(every member of the group – plural, used with plural verb)

No cat in the basket **is** an adult.
(not one member of the group – singular, used with singular verb)

Any cat in the basket can become your pet.
(one member of the group, doesn't matter which one – singular, used with singular verb)

practice

Read the sentences and decide which of the quantifiers BOTH, EITHER, NEITHER, ALL, NO, ANY to use to complete them.

1. ___**Any**___ colleague can help you if you ask; everyone is really nice here.

2. I bought ___**both**___ products because I couldn't decide between the two of them.

3. We are happy to say that ___**no**___ client complained about our products.

4. Buses number 44 and 52 leave from this stop. ___**Either**___ bus will take you to the city centre.

5. I interviewed two applicants. ___**Neither**___ candidate had the proper qualifications, so we had to keep looking.

6. ___**All**___ employees got a bonus this month. There were no exceptions.

quantifiers as nouns and with 'of'

Look at the sentences:

We have two IT specialists.

Either IT specialist can help you with your software problem.   => *used as an adjective with a noun*

Either can help you with your software problem.   => *used as a noun by itself*

Either of the IT specialist**s** can help you with your software problem.

 => *used as a noun with 'of' + a specific group of people/things in plural*

Either of them can help you with your software problem.

 => *used as a noun with 'of' and a personal pronoun*

*The same rules apply to **both**, **neither**, **all**, and **any**.*

We have three projects to finish, and we don't have time.

No project will be finished on time.   => *'**no**' is used as an adjective with a noun*

None will be finished on time.   => *'**none**' is used as a noun by itself (with verb in singular or plural)*

None of the project**s** will be finished on time.

 => *'**none**' is used as a noun with 'of' + a specific group of people/things in plural*

None of them will be finished on time.   => *'**none**' is used as a noun with 'of' and a personal pronoun*

*If you want to express the idea of '**not one member of the group (of three or more)**' as a **noun**, use **none**.*

quantifiers: all, every, each

Look at the sentences:

I spent **all** morning preparing the presentation. => *'**all**' = the whole*

I give a presentation **every** morning.
 => *'**every**' is used with time expressions to show how often something happens*

Every CEO wants to make a profit. => *CEOs seen as a group*

Each manager supervises a team of 20 people. => *managers seen as single individuals*

Each supervises a team of 20 people. => *'**each**' can also be used as a noun*

Each of them supervises a team of 20 people.

=> *'**each**' can be used with 'of' + specific group in plural /personal pronoun*

He held **a** file in **each** hand.

=> *'**each**' is used with **two** to mean "(in) one and also (in) the other": the noun is in singular, but the meaning is "He held one file in one hand and another one in the other hand."*

*Every and each are always used with **verbs in singular form**.*

practice

Read the sentences and decide which of the quantifiers ALL, EVERY, EACH, NONE to use to complete them.

1. __**Every** / **Each**__ team member has to work towards the common goal.

Every => all of them, as a group / Each => the members individually

2. We bought a uniform for __**each**__ of our employees.

3. We have to invest in language courses, as from all the managers, __**none**__ can speak English.

4. We didn't get any sleep yesterday because we worked __**all**__ day and night to keep the deadline.

5. There is a motivational meeting __**every**__ morning in this company.

6. __**None**__ of what he said was true; they were all lies.

7. The team members got a task: __**each**__ has to interview 5 people about their buying preferences.

quantifying non-count nouns

Look at the sentences:

If you want **Ø** advice, talk to your supervisor.

'Advice' is an example of a non-count noun. It doesn't have a plural, and you can't count it.

He gave me **some** advice.

*If you want to talk about unspecified advice, use **some**.*

The advice he gave me really helped.

*If you want to talk about specific advice, use **the**.*

Let me give you **a piece of** advice/**one piece of** advice.
He gave me three **pieces of** advice, and none of them helped me.

If you want to quantify advice (make it countable) despite it being non-count, you can use a countable expression, which will enable you to express quantity or plural.

*Other examples of countable expressions: an **article of** clothing, an **item of** news, a **bar of** chocolate, an **act of** kindness...*

count/non-count nouns

Look at the sentences:

We do a lot of **business** with Asian countries. *('business' = trading activities)*

She owns **a** successful **business**. *('a business' = a company)*

He has too much **work** these days. *('work' = what one does in one's job)*

I love the **works** of Shakespeare. *('a work' = a piece of art)*

The candidate didn't have sufficient **experience**.

('experience' = the skill one gained through practice)

He talked about his **experiences** from World War 2.

('an experience' = an event or activity in one's life)

Some non-count nouns can be used as count ones with a change in meaning.

making generalisations

*There are several options of article use if you want to say something about **all the things/people** referred to by a noun.*

A wolf is not really a dangerous animal.

The wolf is not really a dangerous animal.

Wolves are not really dangerous animals.

*These can be used **interchangeably** without a significant change in meaning.*

article tips for Czech speakers

Although Czech doesn't have articles, there are expressions that are used to convey the same meaning.

She bought **a** handbag. => Koupila si **nějakou** kabelku.

*Whenever you would use "**nějaký**", "**nějaká**", "**nějaké**" with a noun in Czech, use* **a/an** *in English.*

*(**Be careful**: "nějaký" in singular is expressed by* **a/an**; *"nějaký" in plural is expressed by* **some**. ***Never mix them!**)*

The handbag fell apart after a week.   => **Ta** kabelka se po týdnu rozpadla.

*Whenever you would use "**ten**", "**ta**", "**to**" with a noun in Czech, use* **the** *in English.*

sources

Pictures:

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