

34 Articles 1

Is **a shark** responsible for cutting **Internet access** to millions of people across **China**? It's one possible explanation for how **a \$1.4 billion cable** linking **China to the western U.S.** was cut. Another possibility is that **a fisherman** may have cut **the cable** by mistake.

(Yahoo Business News website)

A Articles

- *A/an* is called the indefinite article, and we use it to introduce new information. *The* is called the definite article, and we use it when the listener knows which person or thing we are talking about.
'No article' is the noun by itself, without an article. We use no article when we want to speak generally.
- Compare:
*I read **an interesting report** last week.* ('report' is mentioned for the first time)
*Have you read **the report** I gave you?* (the listener knows which report)
Reports are sent out four times a year. (speaking generally)

B A/an

- We use *a/an* to introduce new information. The listener does not know which person or thing we are talking about.
- We use *a/an* to refer to something for the first time.
*We must have **a meeting** next week.*
*I have **an idea** I'd like to discuss.*
- We use *a/an* to refer to one of a group of things.
*Can you pass me **a paper clip** from that box by your side?*
- We use *a/an* to describe someone's job, but not areas of business.
*Fiona used to be **a teacher**, but now she's in management training.*
- We use *a/an* to describe something.
*It's **an interesting idea**.* *Cairo is **a very big city**.* *This is **a better product**.*
- We use *a/an* in expressions of measurement. *Per* can also be used.
*twice **a/per** month* *3,000 units **an/per** hour* *We charge £100 **an/per** hour*
- *A/an* mean 'one', so we cannot use *a/an* with plurals or uncountable nouns.
*Can you give me **some information**?* (NOT ~~an information~~)

C A or an?

- We use *a* in front of a consonant sound, and *an* in front of a vowel sound.
consonant sounds: *a manager, a job, a university, a one-way street, a European law*
vowel sounds: *an idea, an employer, an hour, an MBA*
- In a similar way, *the* is pronounced /ðə/ before a consonant sound and /ði:/ before a vowel sound.

D The

- We use *the* for old information. It is clear which person or thing we are talking about.
*Six banks are interested in buying a stake in Peru's Banco Latino. Three are North American banks, one is a major Spanish institution, another is Ecuadorean and the other is Peruvian. **The six** have been invited to study Latino's books and bid by the end of March.* (Business News Americas website)
- We often know which one because we mentioned it before, using *a/an*.
*We must have **a meeting** next week. **The meeting** should focus on the auditors' report.*
*I went to **an interesting show** last week. It was **the Paris Spring Collection**.*
- Sometimes we know which one because it is clear from the situation, or it is shared knowledge from the lives of the speaker and listener.
*Where's **the newspaper**?* (we know which one from the situation)
***The meeting** will begin at ten.* (both the speaker and listener know which meeting)
Note that in this case we can use *the* to refer to something for the first time.
- We use *the* when there is only one of something. It is clear which one we are talking about.
*I'll speak to **the boss** when he gets back.*
- We use *the* with nationalities and other groups.
*I really admire **the Italians** for their sense of design.*
*The government is trying to do more to help **the poor**.*
- unit 37 ● We use *the* with superlatives.
*This is **the best** quality material we have in stock.*

E No article

- No article is used when we are talking generally.
*The first issue of the Agency Magazine features an article called **'Health and safety at work – A question of costs and benefits?'**.* (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work website)
- **PLURAL NOUNS**
Compare:
*I sent **the emails** this morning.* (we know which emails)
*I usually reply to **emails** within 24 hours.* (emails in general)
- **UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS**
Compare:
***The information** in this report gives us **the power** to target our advertising.* (we know which information and power)
***Information** is power.* (information and power in general)
***The insurance business** is doing well.* (we know which business)
***Business** is going well at the moment.* (business in general)
***The negotiating** was a lot easier last time.* (we know which negotiating)
***Negotiating** with suppliers takes a lot of time.* (negotiating in general)
- A common mistake is to use *the* with plural nouns and uncountable nouns used in a general way.
Small companies often grow faster. (NOT ~~The small companies~~)
For me, football is like life. (NOT ~~For me, the football is like the life.~~)
- unit 35 ● We use no article for most companies, countries, states and cities.
*I work for **HBSC** in **Hong Kong**.*
***Los Angeles** is in **California**.*

34 Practice

Exercise 1 A B D

Underline the correct words.

- 1 Where's *a/the* fax they sent this morning? I can't find it.
- 2 I have *an/the* appointment at *a/the* bank.
- 3 I had *a/the* very good holiday. *A/The* weather was marvellous.
- 4 I've been working so hard that I need *a/the* break.
- 5 They are *a/the* largest manufacturer of light bulbs in *a/the* world.
- 6 *A/The* presentation was *a/the* great success.
- 7 Can I give you *a/the* lift to the station?
- 8 I think I need *a/the* new pair of glasses.
- 9 We need to reach *a/the* decision as soon as possible.
- 10 There must be *an/the* answer to *a/the* problem.
- 11 Mike is *an/the* accountant. He works on *another/the* other side of town.
- 12 His office is *a/the* biggest one in *a/the* building.
- 13 Where is *a/the* document that we were looking at just now?
- 14 *The Portuguese/The Portuguese people* are very good negotiators.

Exercise 2 A B C E

Put either *a/an* or a dash (–) to show no article.

- 1 money makes the world go round.
- 2 Sheila drives French car.
- 3 Rita works in insurance agency in Lisbon.
- 4 health is the most important thing in life.
- 5 This is good time for sales of new cars.
- 6 This is the number to call for information.
- 7 I've got colleague who is systems analyst.
- 8 product knowledge is very important for sales representative.
- 9 He is engineer. He studied engineering at university.
- 10 We produce full sales report four times year.

Exercise 3 A B C D E

Put either *a/an*, *the* or a dash (–) to show no article.

- 1 The Italians have given us lot of business.
- 2 most people thought that it was very good product.
- 3 I like to drink glass of wine in evening.
- 4 I wish I could speak English like English.
- 5 As soon as Helen gets off plane, ask her to give me call.
- 6 smoking is not permitted in this area.
- 7 There's visitor at reception desk.
- 8 When I arrived at airport, I had drink and waited for flight.
- 9 I want action, not words.
- 10 person with MBA usually gets good job.
- 11 I'll get you coffee from machine.
- 12 Marie comes from France.

Exercise 4 A B C D

40 Complete this article with either *a/an*, *the* or a dash (–) to show no article.

HOW CLEAN IS THEIR MONEY?

'Money laundering' is (1) the name given to one of (2) world's biggest financial problems: moving money that has been obtained illegally into (3) foreign bank accounts so that (4) people do not know where it has come from. Putting (5) value on money laundering is of course very difficult, but the International Monetary Fund estimate that (6) year, equivalent to about 4% of gross world product. (7) problem has grown hand-in-hand with (8) globalisation, and particularly with (9) lifting of capital controls and (10) development of (11) international payment systems. These allow money to be moved in (12) seconds between banks in different parts of the world who know very little about each other. (13) international payment system is crucial to (14) stability of the world's financial markets, but it also provides (15) opportunity for criminals to hide their money. Private banking is (16) best-known laundering channel. Clients of these banks are wealthy people who want their affairs handled with discretion, especially because they want to minimise (17) amount of (18) tax they pay. In these banks there is (19) culture of 'don't ask; don't tell'. And (20) biggest problem within (21) private banking is offshore banks. There are around 5,000 offshore banks controlling about \$5 trillion in assets, and some have no physical presence in any location.

Exercise 5 A B C D E

41 Complete this interview between a journalist and the CEO of Biotec, a biotechnology company. Use either *a/an*, *the* or a dash (–) to show no article.

JOURNALIST: Can you begin by telling me (1) little about (2) the recent changes at (3) Biotec?

CEO: Well, as you know, last year we made (4) decision to move our operations to (5) Cambridge, because it's very important for (6) biotechnology companies to recruit (7) scientists from (8) best universities. Er, we're in (9) very competitive jobs market here in Cambridge, and we motivate our employees by offering them (10) attractive salaries and (11) excellent working conditions. We've built up (12) excellent team, and we're doing some very important research in (13) field of (14) gene therapy.

JOURNALIST: Many people say that (15) biotechnology promises more than it delivers. Is that true at Biotec?

CEO: That may be true in general, but (16) biotechnology that we do is already producing (17) results. Last year we made (18) small profit for (19) first time, and (20) revenue is increasing rapidly. Also, we've recently made (21) distribution deal with (22) large pharmaceutical company. They have the marketing skills that we lack, and (23) partnership is working well for both sides. Our aim next year is to enter (24) American market, and we're confident of (25) success.

A Place names and no article

- In general, no article is used for continents, countries, states, islands, mountains, lakes, cities, parks, roads, streets, squares, palaces, castles, cathedrals, stations and airports.
Europe/Asia France/China California/Lazio Crete/Madeira
Mont Blanc/Mount Everest Lake Lucerne/Lake Michigan Tokyo/Budapest
Central Park/Hyde Park Fifth Avenue/Church Street Trafalgar Square/Times Square
Buckingham Palace Windsor Castle Milan Cathedral Grand Central Station Orly Airport

B Place names and the

- Note that all the following use *the*:
 - Plurals: *the Alps, the Bahamas, the Netherlands*
 - Adjective + place: *the Red Sea, the Middle East, the West End*
(But NOT if the place is the name of a country or continent: *France, South-East Asia*)
 - Phrases with 'of': *the Houses of Parliament, the South of France*
 - Political constitutions: *the Irish Republic, the United Kingdom (the UK), the US*
 - Rivers and canals: *the Amazon, the Loire, the Suez Canal*
 - Oceans and seas: *the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean*
 - Roads with numbers: *the M6 (motorway), the A1*
 - Theatres and galleries: *the Globe (Theatre), the Uffizi (Gallery)*
 - Hotels: *the Marriott (Hotel)*
 - Famous buildings: *the Eiffel Tower, the Taj Mahal, the White House*

C Special uses of the

- We use *the* with:
 - International institutions: **The United Nations, The World Bank, The IMF**
 - Adjectives to refer to a group: **The unemployed** do not receive enough help.
 - the ... of a/the ... : **the end of an era, the start of the project**
 - Some time phrases: **in the past, at the moment, in the future** (but at present),
the 1960s (decades), **the 21st century** (centuries)
 - Points of the compass: **in the north/east/south/west, in the south-west**
 - Playing instruments: **I play the piano/guitar.**
 - Job titles and official titles: **The Marketing Director, the Prime Minister** said ...
(But NOT title + name: *Prime Minister Tony Blair* said ...)
 - City Snapshots: *a monthly guide for the business traveler.* (asia-inc magazine website)
 - Hypo Alpe-Adria-Bank** has been highly successful in **Croatia** over the past four years. According to **Dr. Wolfgang Kulterer, the Chairman of the Board**, this success is due to concentrating business activities on **the Alpine-Adriatic market** and choosing good business partners. (cebd website)

D Special uses of 'no article'

- We use no article with:
 - Company names: *I work for Accenture.*
 - Years, months, days: *in 2001, in July, on Thursday*
 - Special times of the year: *at Christmas/Easter*
 - Some parts of the day: *at night/midnight/sunset* (BUT *the morning, the afternoon*)
 - Means of transport (in general): *by car/taxi/train/bus, on foot* (BUT *on the train to Rome*)
 - Meals (in general): *Dinner is at 7.30.* (BUT *There was a dinner at the conference*)
- Note the use of 'preposition + no article' with certain buildings, when the purpose of the building is more important than the place itself. Compare:
 - I spent two days in hospital.* (the speaker is not interested in which one)
 - My company supplies equipment for the hospital.* (one specific hospital)
- Other words of this type which use 'preposition and no article' are:
 - in/to** hospital/prison/bed/class/court
 - at/to** work/school/university/sea/home
- Note how we use 'home':
 - be at home, go home* (NOT ~~go to home~~)

E General and specific meanings

- When we use a plural noun or an uncountable noun on its own it has a general meaning. When we put *the* in front it has a specific meaning.
 - Cars** are much safer these days. **The cars** we make are built to last.
 - I don't understand spreadsheets.** **The spreadsheets** for March and April are here.
 - People** can be difficult. **The people** in my office are all very friendly.
 - I prefer fish to meat.** **The fish** I had for lunch was superb.
 - Money** makes the world go round. **Have you got the money** I gave you?
 - How's business?** **The clothing business** is very competitive.
 - Taxis** in Singapore are abundant and reasonably priced, but hard to find during rush hours, when it rains and between 11 pm and midnight. **The taxis from the airport to the central business district** cost around \$12. (asia-inc magazine website)

35 Practice

Exercise 1 A B C D

Underline the correct words.

- 1 We went to *Pisa/the Pisa* and saw *Leaning Tower/the Leaning Tower*.
- 2 *Crete/The Crete* is very beautiful at this time of year.
- 3 My son is in *hospital/the hospital* and can't go to *school/the school*.
- 4 You can go from *Heathrow/the Heathrow* by *underground/the underground*.
- 5 *Helmut Kohl/The Helmut Kohl* was *Chancellor/the Chancellor* who helped to reunite *Germany/the Germany*.
- 6 We flew over *Alps/the Alps* and saw *Mont Blanc/the Mont Blanc*.
- 7 In *near future/the near future* videoconferences will replace many meetings.
- 8 I'm tired! Thank goodness it's time to go *home/to home*.
- 9 *New York/The New York* is in *United States/the United States*.
- 10 I usually have *lunch/the lunch* at about one.
- 11 I used to work for *Deutsche Bank/the Deutsche Bank* in *City of London/the City of London* at *start/the start* of my career.
- 12 My son wants to go to *university/the university* after his exams.
- 13 Do you know *Lake Windermere/the Lake Windermere*? It's in *Lake District/the Lake District*, in *north-west/the north-west* of *England/the England*.
- 14 I bought this suit from *Bond Street/the Bond Street*.
- 15 The Government should do more to help *the poor/the poor people*.
- 16 On our trip to *UK/the UK* we toured around *south-east/the south-east* and visited *Canterbury Cathedral/the Canterbury Cathedral*.
- 17 They wouldn't pay, so we took them to *court/the court*.
- 18 *John/The John* is at *work/the work* at *moment/the moment*.
- 19 We travelled to *Italy/the Italy* by *car/the car*.
- 20 *Danube/The Danube* is the main river in *Central Europe/the Central Europe*.

Exercise 2 E

In each pair of sentences, fill in one space with *the* and the other space with a dash (–) to show no article.

- 1 a) profits are increasing across every division of the company.
b) The profits we made last year were up in comparison to the year before.
- 2 a) information in your report will be very useful to us.
b) information about the Kazakh market is hard to find.
- 3 a) visitors should sign their name in the book at reception.
b) visitors from Germany will be arriving at ten.
- 4 a) This magazine article gives advice about which stocks to buy.
b) Thank you for advice you gave me last week.
- 5 a) bonds I have are all long-term investments.
b) bonds are a safe investment when interest rates are falling.
- 6 a) French exports to the rest of Europe are up 4% this year.
b) French are world leaders in the luxury goods market.
- 7 a) management is an art, not a science.
b) management are blaming the unions for the breakdown in negotiations.

Exercise 3 B C D

Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- 1 Tracey is the team leader.
Tracey is the leader of the team.
- 2 Your goods are on a ship at the moment.
At the moment your goods are sea.
- 3 The meeting has ended.
This is meeting.
- 4 Brighton is at the bottom of a map of England.
Brighton is south of England.
- 5 Do you have the Internet at your house?
Do you have the Internet home?
- 6 We walked to the station.
We went to foot.
- 7 We employ 250 people at the moment.
We employ 250 people present.
- 8 Daniel is still in his office.
Daniel is still work.

Exercise 4 A B C D E unit 31

Complete the following texts with either *the* or a dash (–) to show no article. This exercise includes some revision of unit 31.

A

(1) Argentina is one of (2) most deregulated markets in (3) world. (4) privatisation process started in (5) 1990s, and has included sectors such as (6) telecommunications, (7) utilities and (8) financial services. (9) Argentine telecoms market was fully deregulated in (10) November 2000 and there are now (11) five million cellular lines and six million homes with (12) cable television services. (13) water was decentralised before being privatised. (14) Aguas Argentinas, (15) local water supply company for (16) city of Buenos Aires and all (17) municipalities in (18) Greater Buenos Aires, is (19) largest privatised water utility in (20) world.



B

Imagine a country that continues for 4,200 km from (21) dry deserts in (22) north, through (23) industrial and agricultural heartland in (24) centre, to (25) lakes and forestry plantations in (26) south, and finally to (27) ends of (28) earth in (29) Patagonia and Antarctica. Welcome to (30) Chile! It's a very diverse country, with (31) Pacific Ocean to one side and (32) Andes to (33) other – you can swim in (34) sea and ski in (35) mountains all in (36) same day. There are (37) business opportunities in many areas, and (38) financial services sector is (39) most sophisticated in (40) Latin America.

