**The use of articles (1)**

***From English Grammar in Context Advanced – MacMillan 2015***

**Article use depending on context…**

When we refer to **something we have already mentioned** we use the **definite article**

**Ex:** First I grate some cheese, then I sprinkle the cheese into the sauce.

**A noun can be made definite by the details which follow it,** this is called post modification.

Ex: There's a tower over there. / Yes, it's the tower of London.

**Some things are definite because they are already known to the people** talking about them.

Ex: Jim is at the pub (=the one we usually go) / Could you pass me the vegetables, please? (=these ones on the table).

**Groups and classes**

**An example of a thing, instrument etc, uses *a/an***.

Ex: A barometer is used to measure air pressure.

**We use *a/an* for one element of a class of things or people.**

Ex: Peter is a German. Maria is a teacher. – This is an electric shaver.

**We use *a/an* for one element of a set of known things**

Ex: They’ve bought a Picasso (=a work of art) - This is a Henry Moore sculpture.

**We use *zero article* with plurals and uncountables, when they refer to a class of things or people in general**.

Ex: Teachers often work very long hours. / Water is becoming a scarce resource. / Girls are better at learning foreign languages than boys.

**These can be made specific, then you need *the*.** e.g. by the details which follow.

Ex: The water tastes funny (=the water from the tap) / The girls in my class learn fast (=these particular girls)

**A singular noun to describe a class of things uses “*the*”.**

Ex: The bicycle is becoming increasingly popular. / The whale is in danger of extinction.

**Ideas**

**Abstract ideas use *zero article*.**

Ex: Health is one of the most important things in life.

**Note that an abstract noun can be made specific by what comes after it, then you need *the*.**

Ex: The health of millions of people maybe at risk

**Numbers and measurements**

**With rates and speeds use *a/an.***

Ex: The car was going at 50 km an hour. / The rent is £500 a month.

**Use *a/an* for large whole numbers, fractions with singular nouns, and distances**.

Ex: a hundred – a million – a third – a fifth – two and a half – a kilo – a metre and a half.

**People**

**We use *zero article* with names of people, unless we specify the person.**

Ex: Tom lives in Bristol. / Is he the Tom Davies you went to school with?

**We can use *a/an* with names when we mean a person called ‘…’**

Ex: Is there a Tom Davies staying here?

**We can use *a/an* with the names of groups, when they are clearly plural**

Ex: the Democrats

**However, if a proper name comes before the noun, there will be *zero article***.

Ex: Euro MPs – Manchester United supporters.

**Names of music groups vary a great deal and may not fit general rules.**

Ex: The Who - Primal Scream.

**Many groups of people are described by *the+singular adjective.***

Ex: the unemployed – the dead – the poor – the rich – the young – the old.

**Cities, towns, streets, places**

**Use *zero article* with proper names, though *the* is used when there is post modification with *of*.**

Ex: I live in Allen Road, in Bristol, in an area called Redland. – Oxford university – the University of Oxford.

**Use *the* with the names of shops and places with a general reference**

Ex: at the cinema / the supermarket / in the garden / in the mountains / at the beach.

**Other places vary. If they begin with the name of a place or person, then they tend to use *zero article*.**

Ex: London Bridge / Waterloo station / Madame Tussaud’s. BUT NOTE: the London eye

**Otherwise they use *the.***

Ex: the Golden Gate Bridge / the Hard Rock Café / the Odeon cinema.

**Note that a place name can also be used as an adjective, in which case we could use *the*.**

Ex: the London rush-hour can cause long delays.

**Some other cities have adjective forms** e.g. Paris / Parisian – Rome / Roman

**Unique objects**

***The* is used with some familiar objects when we think of them as the only one.**

Ex: The sun was setting over the sea. The moon rose in the sky.

**Illness etc**

***a/an* is used with a headache, a cold, etc.**

Ex: have you got a cold / a headache / a toothache / an earache?

**Most illness words use *zero article*.**

Ex: she’s suffering from appendicitis. She caught Covid-19 last summer.

**Exclamation**

**use *a/an* in the expressions “What a…!” / “Such a …!”. We use “What a…!” when we are surprised or impressed by something.** Ex: What a fantastic site! What an awful room!

**We use “Such a …!” for emphasis with singular nouns.** Ex: This is such a great film! He is such an interesting person!

**Exercises**

1. **Complete the text with the or zero article**
2. The survival of ……………… most large mammals is being put at risk by ……………… global warming.
3. Is ……………… person you were talking about ……………… Jane Small you knew at ……………… University?
4. ……………… foreigners often have ……………… trouble getting used to ……………… Scottish climate.
5. ……………… decoration in ……………… small bedroom is really pleasing but I don’t like ……………… colour of ……………… curtains.
6. I missed …………… beginning of ……………… film so I didn’t understand ……………… plot until halfway through.
7. …………… experts disagree as to whether …………… men are …………… better drivers than …………… women.
8. ………… most of ………… people I know don’t always get on with ………… other people ………… first time they meet them.
9. What exactly is ……………… difference between ……………… rhythm of a piece of music and ……………… tune?
10. Helen has gone to ………… library to get ………… information she needs for ………… project she’s doing at school.
11. I don’t know why you always put ……………… sugar in your coffee if you’re trying to lose ……………… weight.
12. **Complete the text with a/an or the or leave a blank for zero article.**

**George Orwell**

………… author George Orwell (1903-1950 / real name Eric Blair) was ………… English novelist, critic and political and cultural commentator. He was best known for ………… novels Animal Aarm and Ninet-Eighty-Four, ………… both of which were written and published towards ………… end of his life. He chose …………… name George Orwell in ………… early 1930s, when his first book Down and Out in Paris and London, was published. This book describes what it was like to be ………… poor and ………… homeless in Britain and also described ………… time he spent in Paris working in ………… kitchen of ………… high-class hotel. Orwell’s father was ………… civil servant in India and Orwell grew up in ………… middle class family. He was ………… pupil at Eaton, ………… well-known English school, and as his family could not afford to send him to ………… university, he joined ………… Indian Imperial police. He learnt ………… lot about ………… British Empire but came to hate ………… job and in 1927 he resigned and decided to become ………… writer. He worked as ………… school teacher and in ………… bookshop. He wrote………… book about poverty in northern England (The Road to Wigan Pier) and also fought for …………… Republican side in ………… Spanish Civil War. He developed ………… career as ………… journalist and reviewer and during ………… Second World War, he made ………… regular broadcasts on ………… BBC. He died of ………… tuberculosis in 1950 at ………… age of 46.

1. **Complete the sentences with a/an or the.**
2. ……………… tiger is ……………… animal which struggles to survive in ……………… modern world.
3. I need ……………… kilo and ……………… half of minced beef but I want all ……………… fat taken off please
4. …………… art gallery used to own …………… Picasso but it was stolen in …………… daring daylight robbery.
5. …………… first thing students need to appreciate is that …………… laboratory can be …………… dangerous place.
6. We spent ………… week in Paris and had ………… great time going up ………… Eiffel tower and taking ………… trip along ………… Seine and on ………… small boat.
7. Tom Gibson, ………… architect mainly responsible for ………… design of ………… new building lives on ………… farmhouse in ………… country.
8. ……… rent is €1000 ……… month because………… apartment is in ……… most expensive part of ……… city.
9. I can never understand …… US elections because I’m not sure I know …… difference between …… Democrats and …… Republicans.
10. ……… worst thing about travelling on ……… motorway is that if there is ……… accident; there is usually ……… huge traffic jam.
11. My dad is down at ……… pub having ……… drink with……… other members of ……… pub-quiz team.
12. **Complete this text with a/an, the or zero article**

For some years, ……… global warming, which is ……… gradual heating of ……… Earth was ……… topic of ……… heated debate in ……… scientific communities. But today, ……… consensus among ……… researchers is that ……… phenomenon is real and is caused by ……… human activity, primarily ……… burning of fossil fuels, that pump ……… carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into ……… atmosphere. ……… scientists have found that ……… number and severity of ……… extreme weather events, which include ……… high or low temperatures and intense storms, are ……… effective measure of ……… climate change and ……… global warming. Indeed it is now agreed that global warming will have ……… far-reaching and, in many cases, devastating consequences for ……… planet.