
Articles a – an – the

Introduction

1) Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific.

*I'm a nurse. **The** hospital I'm working in is huge.*

2) English has two types of articles: indefinite *a/an* and definite *the*.

The indefinite article takes two forms – *a/an*. Use the indefinite article *a* when it precedes a word that begins with a consonant sound. Use the indefinite article *an* when it precedes a word that begins with a vowel sound.

Check the sound, not just the letter

a table, an umbrella, a university, an honest person

The indefinite article *a* indicates that a noun refers to a general idea rather than a particular thing.

What does a fox say?

We use *a/an* when the listener does not know which person or thing we are talking about.

Helen's brother works in a factory. I don't know which factory exactly.

If we refer to something for the first time, it will be new information for the listener so we use *a/an*. When referencing the same thing again use *the* because now the listener knows what we are talking about.

*I bought a new computer. It's really great! **The** computer is much better than my previous one.*

The definite article is the word *the*. It limits the meaning of a noun to one particular thing. We use *the* when it is clear which thing or person we are talking about.

***The** cake is in the fridge. I know that Kate made it.*

We use the definite article *the* with:

a) nationalities and other groups.

the French, the Italians, the old, the poor

b) time.

in the past, in the future (but at present)

c) superlatives.

You are the first one!

d) musical instruments.

I played the piano as a kid.

e) countries which are a group or plural.

the U.S., the U.K., the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands

f) names of ships.

We sailed on the Claudia.

g) oceans.

the Pacific, the Atlantic

h) rivers.

the Amazon, the Nile

Note that we use zero articles with plurals and uncountable nouns when we are generally talking about something.

Dogs are not allowed in that shop. (*We are talking about dogs in general.*)

The dogs next door were barking at night. (*We are talking about particular dogs.*)

Short Story Dialogue

– Liz, can I get you anything?

– **A cup of coffee** would be nice. I feel extremely exhausted. I haven't thought that flying over **the Atlantic** would be **the worst trip** I've ever taken. And you know that I hate **train rides the most!**

– Well, **the flight** was delayed too so you were stuck **at the airport for a longer period of time.**

– I am just hoping that **in the near future** we'll build **a teleport**. Then traveling from **the U.S. to the Netherlands** won't take that long!

– I wish it were like that! Here is **your coffee.**

– Thank you!

Independent Practice - Articles a – an – the

1) Fill in the gaps with *a, an, the*. Sometimes no article is needed.

- a. dog that bit me ran away. wounds were treated by doctor. Dr. Smith is professional!
- b. Rabbits are small mammals in family Leporidae.
- c. Love is wonderful thing.
- d. Olivia is English teacher. She's not working at present.
- e. I didn't want to go to parking lot so I went home on foot. It was only 15 minute walk.

Independent Practice: Answers - Articles a – an – the

1) Fill in the gaps with *a*, *an*, *the*. Sometimes no article is needed.

- a. **The** dog that bit me ran away. **The** wounds were treated by **the** doctor. ..-. Dr. Smith is **a** professional!
- b. ..-. Rabbits are ..-. small mammals in **the** family Leporidae.
- c. ..-. Love is **a** wonderful thing.
- d. ..-. Olivia is **an** English teacher. She's not working at ..-. present.
- e. I didn't want to go to **the** parking lot so I went ..-. home on ..-. foot. It was only **a** 15 minute walk.

Demonstratives this – that – these – those

Introduction

1) Demonstratives are words that show which person or thing is being referred to.

***This** is Hugh, and **that** is Kevin.*

2) Demonstratives show where an object, event, or person is in relation to the speaker. They can refer to a physical or a psychological closeness or distance.

	Near the speaker	Far from the speaker
Adverbs	<i>here</i>	<i>there</i>
Demonstrative with singular and uncountable nouns	<i>this</i>	<i>that</i>
Demonstrative with plural countable nouns	<i>these</i>	<i>those</i>

Demonstratives can be placed before the noun or the adjective that modifies the noun.

***That old man** stole my purse!*

***These oranges** are delicious!*

Demonstratives can also appear before a number by itself when the noun is understood from the context.

*I'll take **this one**, please. = I'll take *this watermelon*, please.*

Demonstratives can be used by themselves when the noun they modify is understood from the context.

***Those** aren't yours. Put them back. = *Those shoes* aren't yours. Put them back.*

When talking about events, the near demonstratives are often used to refer to the present while the far demonstratives often refer to the past.

***This situation** is quite unstable.*

***That event** made me realise how important my family is to me.*

Short Story Dialogue

– Good morning! How can I help you?

– Hi! I'm looking for a formal dress. Could you help me find one?

– Yes, of course! Maybe we could try **this one**? We got **this dress** only a day ago. I'm sure that you'll be **the only one** wearing it.

– Honestly, I don't really like **this colour**. Maybe you could show me **that one over there**? I like the print a lot.

– Surely! And what about the shoes?

– I have a picture on my phone. I want **something like that**. I think **those ones** are quite similar.

– You have an excellent taste! Let me get **those** for you.

Independent Practice - Demonstratives this – that – these – those

1) Fill in the gaps with **this** or **these**.

a. Hey, why are you scared? – ! (pointing at a snake very close).

b. Which bags are yours? – ones. Could you help me with them? (The bags are next to her)

c. You are always late. – is not true! I am right on time! (responding to the statement that was just said)

d. Harry Potter? movie is my absolute favourite! (holding the movie in his hands)

e. people are boring! I might leave the party early. (talking about the people around her)

f. Is Mr. Jones? – No, is Mr. Adams. Mr. Jones is over there. (asking about the person very close to them)

g. is for me? I'm so touched! (receiving a gift)

h. tickets are so expensive! I don't know if I can afford them. (talking about tickets right in front of them)

i. is unbelievable. I can't understand why they did to her. (talking about something that just happened)

g. are the books you asked for. (handing him the books)

Independent Practice: Answers - Demonstratives this – that – these – those

1) Fill in the gaps with *this* or *these*.

- a. Hey, why are you scared? – **This!** (pointing at a snake very close).
- b. Which bags are yours? – **These** ones. Could you help me with them? (The bags are next to her)
- c. You are always late. – **This** is not true! I am right on time! (responding to the statement that was just said)
- d. Harry Potter? **This** movie is my absolute favourite! (holding the movie in his hands)
- e. **These** people are boring! I might leave the party early. (talking about the people around her)
- f. Is **this** Mr. Jones? – No, **this** is Mr. Adams. Mr. Jones is over there. (asking about the person very close to them)
- g. **This** is for me? I'm so touched! (receiving a gift)
- h. **These** tickets are so expensive! I don't know if I can afford them. (talking about tickets right in front of them)
- i. **This** is unbelievable. I can't understand why they did **this** to her. (talking about something that just happened)
- g. **These** are the books you asked for. (handing him the books)