

Practice Exercises: Using Articles
Adapted from Perdue OWL and Focus on Editing (Fox)

1. A vs An

*Indefinite Articles are "a" and "an." They apply when you're talking about **any** member of a group. Fill in the blank with "a" or "an."*

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. __a__ blue house | 11. __a__ current |
| 2. __an__ imagination | 12. __an__ elephant |
| 3. __a__ girl | 13. __a__ plum |
| 4. __an__ orange | 14. __a__ computer |
| 5. __a__ used car | 15. __an__ ocean |
| 6. __a__ happy birthday | 16. __an__ example |
| 7. __an__ uncle | 17. __a__ rock |
| 8. __an__ antelope | 18. __a__ bookshelf |
| 9. __a__ husband | 19. __an__ honorable man |
| 10. __an__ opera singer | 20. __an__ interesting man |

2. Indefinite and Definite Articles

*Definite Articles (**the**) indicate a specific member of a group. Decide if you need an indefinite article ("a" or "an") or a definite article ("the"), and fill in the blank appropriately.*

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| 1. The farmer bought __AN__ ox to help till his field. | 8. Please give me __THE__ piece of pie to the left of the cake in the display. |
| 2. __THE__ school on my street is progressive. | 9. __AN__ energetic person would be fun to spend time with. |
| 3. Mrs. Geremia is __AN__ Italian woman. | 10. __THE__ color of the paint I'm using is pink. |
| 4. I borrowed __A__ marker from your bag of crayons and markers. | |
| 5. One of the dancers said, "__THE__ instructor is late today." | |
| 6. I want __AN__ orange from that bucket. | |
| 7. My friend is learning to play __THE__ flute at her school. | |

3. Geographical Place and Proper Nouns: When Can You Skip Articles?

Some proper nouns, like countries, cities, lakes, single mountains, and streets do not need an article. Others, general places like regions, oceans, deserts, mountain ranges and peninsulas need "the" before them. Fill in the blank if you need an article, leave it blank if you do not.

1. ____ Albania
2. __THE__ Pacific Ocean
3. ____ Lake Champlain
4. ____ Albany, NY
5. __THE__ Sahara Desert
6. ____ Lake George
7. __THE__ Nile River
8. __THE__ Alps
9. ____ Mount Everest
10. ____ Kansas
11. __THE__ Middle East
12. ____ Brandywine St NW

4. Editing a Paragraph

All of the articles have been taken out of these paragraph, fill in the blanks with the appropriate article or leave it blank if you do not need an article. You do not need an article for certain geographical locations, general terms, years, and uncountable nouns.

Alexander Hamilton (January 11, 1755 or 1757 – July 12, 1804) was **A** Founding Father of **THE** United States, chief staff aide to General George Washington, one of the most influential interpreters and promoters of **THE** U.S. Constitution, **THE** founder of the nation's financial system, and **THE** founder of The New York Post. As **THE** first Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton was **THE** primary author of the economic policies of the George Washington administration. Hamilton took the lead in, the establishment of **A** national bank, **A** system of tariffs, and friendly trade relations with Britain. He owned **A** large library and was generally considered **AN** honorable man despite being involved in a famous sex scandal.

Intermittent civil wars have broken out since ____Sudan won its independence in ____1956, culminating in large conflicts: **the** first Sudanese civil war, civil unrest in **the** Blue Nile region and South Kordofan, and the violence in ____Darfur. Along with scarce resources, conflicts have been fueled by **the** political, economic, religious and cultural marginalization of ____minority groups by the government in ____ Khartoum, the capital city. In addition, conflicts between nomadic tribes in Sudan and between nomadic herders and farmers are often sparked by disputes over scarce resources such as grazing land and drinking water.