**How to Use Articles (a/an/the)**

**I. What are articles?**   
Articles are adjectives, so they come before nouns.

English has two articles: **the** & **a/an**.

* **the** = definite article
* **a/an** = indefinite article

**II. Using “a/an”**

1) **A/An** is used before **non-specific** nouns.

Example A. "Let's read **a** book."   
 -I mean *any* book. I don’t have just one specific book that I   
 want. Honest, any book is good!

Example B.“Jina really wants **a** dog.”   
 *-Any* dog. She doesn’t know yet what dog she likes.

Example C. “Omar saw **an** elephant at the zoo yesterday.”   
 -It is not a specific elephant. It is general.

2) **a/an** show a membership in a group:

Example A. I am **a** teacher.

Example B. Sunita is **an** Indian.

**Note:**  
 -Use “a” before a noun starting with a consonant:   
 Example A. a car…a mountain…a deer… a student

-Use “an” before a noun starting with a vowel.   
 Example b. an ant…an egg…an inn…an owl…an umbrella

**III. Using “the”**

**1) The** is used before **specific** nouns.

Example a.  *“*I want to read **the** Spider-man book.”  
 -Not just any book, but the one about Spider-man.  
 Example b. “Jina wants **the** cute dog in the pet store.”   
 -Here, we're talking about a *specific* dog.  
 Example c. "I saw **the** elephant at the zoo."   
 -Probably there is only one elephant at the zoo.   
 Example d. “I saw **the** elephant with big ears named Max.  
 -This sentence tells about a specific elephant.

**IV. Articles with Count & Noncount Nouns  
  
 1) The** can be used with noncount nouns, or sometimes omitted.   
 Example a. “**The** water is hot in the tub.”  
 -It is specific water in a bathtub.   
 Example b. “**Water is good after running**.”  
 -It is water. Any water.

**2)** "**A/an**" can be used **only** with count nouns.  
 Example a. "I need **a** bottle of water."   
   
**V. Geographical use of “the”**  
 1) Do not use **the** before the names of most countries,   
 cities, streets, lakes, mountains, continents or islands.   
 Examples. England, Mecca, Main Street, Mount Everest

2) Do use **the** before the names of rivers, oceans, points   
 on the globe, geographical areas, or deserts  
 Examples. ***the*** *Middle East*, ***the*** *Sahara,* ***the*** *Gulf*

**VI. Omission of Articles (No** articles)  
 1) Don’t use articles before the names of languages,   
 nationalities*,* sports, or school subjects.  
 Examples. *French, English, baseball*, *biology,*