

GRAMMAR

Determiners

Determiners

Determiners are words that help a reader or listener understand the noun being discussed. If a noun already has another determiner, it does not need an article. Look out for these!

Demonstratives: THIS and THAT



He sat on **that** bench.

The tree is in the foreground of **this** drawing.

Possessives: WHOSE, MY, YOUR, ITS, THEIR, HIS, and HER

You should go to the park with **your** uncle.

The tree still has **its** leaves.

Their park is so beautiful.

He acts like it is **his** bench.

She finally found **her** lost child sitting on the bench.



Interrogatives: WHICH, WHAT, WHOSE



Which park is shown in this drawing?

What kind of tree is that?

Whose uncle is sitting by the pond?

Quantifiers: MANY, FEW, SEVERAL, SOME, etc.

Numerals: ONE, TWO, THREE, etc.

There are **many** benches in this park.

Two people normally share that bench at lunch.



What is an article? Basically, an article is a special type of determiner. Like all adjectives of this kind, articles modify nouns. Thus, every time you look at a noun, ask yourself, “Which article, if any, should I use?”

THE

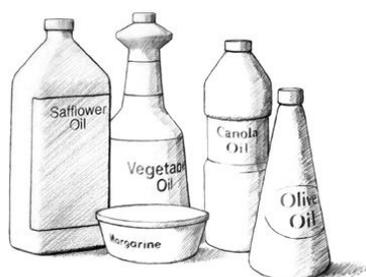
A

AN

Ø

Definite Article: THE

The definite article is used to refer to *specific nouns*. A noun is considered specific if the reader or listener can determine which specific item the sentence is talking about.

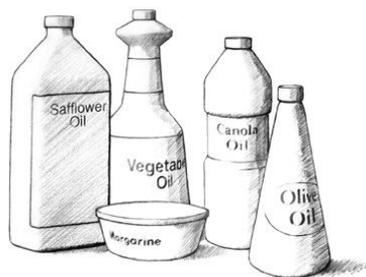


Example: Please pass me **the** bottle of safflower oil.

In the image to the left, the reader can determine *which* bottle of oil the writer is talking about because there is *only one* bottle of safflower oil.

Indefinite Article: A/AN

The indefinite article is used to refer to *non-specific singular nouns*. A noun is considered non-specific if the reader or listener cannot determine which item the sentence is talking about.



Example: Please pass me **a** bottle of oil.

In the image to the left, the reader cannot determine *which* bottle of oil the writer is talking about because *all* of the bottles contain oil. Most likely, the writer has no preference.

No Article Needed: Ø

There are no articles used with *non-specific plural* or *non-specific non-count nouns*. Because many English nouns have both a count and non-count form that varies with different meanings, pay close attention to which definition of the word you are using.



Example: Please pass me ___ oil.

In the image to the left, the reader cannot determine *which* oil the writer is talking about because *all* of it is oil.

Moreover, “oil” is a non-count noun.