

Articles

A and *an* are indefinite articles.

A is used when mentioning something for the first time (a client walked into the office).

An is used in the same circumstances but only where the following word begins with a vowel (an attorney walked into the office).

The is the definite article. It is used:

- when referring to something already mentioned before (the client then sat down)
- when referring to something that is the only one of its kind (the sun)
- when referring to something in a general rather than specific way (the Internet has changed our way of life).

In some circumstances, articles should be omitted (zero article). For example, when a sentence links two parallel adjectival phrases, the article should be omitted from the second phrase. Here is an example:

The judge ruled that Cloakus Ltd was a validly registered and an existing company.

In addition, when using certain abstract nouns in a general, conceptual sense, it is not necessary to use an article to precede the noun. For example:

In the event of conflict between the definitions given in appendix 1 and the definitions given in the contract, the contract shall prevail

There is no need here to precede *conflict* with *a*, since *conflict* is used in a general conceptual sense. However, when referring to a specific conflict, articles should be used, as in the opposing factions took part in the conflict.

Exercises Correct these sentences by adding articles as appropriate.

- (1) Parties signed contract today after having discussed price.
- (2) Lawyer about whom I spoke arrived at meeting too late to advise about amount of damages company could get.
- (3) If there is telephone call for me about case, put it through.
- (4) Client said that Roggins was inefficiently run and unprofitable company.
- (5) Mobile phone has revolutionised way in which firm does business.

Uncountable nouns

Some nouns in English are uncountable. In other words, they are not used with *a* or *an* and do not have *plural* forms. For example, the word *information*, as in the phrase *I need some information*.

In order to refer to a particular number of an uncountable noun, especially one, you can join the noun to a word that is itself countable, or use a countable synonym instead. Here are some examples:

Uncountable noun	A particular number
data	A piece/item of data
equipment	a piece of equipment
litigation	a litigation matter a case a claim
machinery	a piece of machinery a machine
software	a piece of software an application a program
training	a training course a training programme

Prepositions

Prepositions are words used with a noun or pronoun which show place, position, time or method. Prepositions such as *to, in, from, between, after, before* etc. normally come before a noun or pronoun and give information about how, when or where something has happened (she arrived before lunch, I travelled to London). The preposition *between* should be followed by an object pronoun like *me, him* or *us* instead of a subject pronoun such *I, she* and *we*. It is therefore correct to say : This matter is between you and me and wrong to say: This matter is between you and I. The main problem for the non-native speaker is remembering which preposition to use (the matter of COLLOCATION!!). There are no clear rules to follow in this respect, but some examples of common usages are set out below:

The parties **to** this agreement...

The goods must be delivered **to** the purchaser.

A fine was imposed **on** the offending party.

The commencement/termination **of** this agreement...

The price list set out **in** Schedule 1...

Royalties will be paid **in** accordance **with** this agreement **for** a period **of** five years.

The goods must be delivered **within** 14 days.

The Company agrees **to** provide training **for** service personnel.

The agreement may be terminated **by** notice.

An arrangement **between** the Seller and the Buyer...

It is agreed that the goods will be collected **from** the Seller's warehouse **at** 21 Redwoods Road.

It is agreed that the goods will be collected from the Seller's warehouse **in/on** Redwoods Road.

Interest will be charged **on** any unpaid instalments **after** the expiration **of** a period **of** 28 days **from** the date hereof.

He was charged **with** murder.

The property **at** 2 Pond Road is sold **with** vacant possession.

Exercises

Replace the missing prepositions in the gaps in the following sentences.

(1) Ten units must be delivered _____ the buyer _____ 30 November.

(2) This agreement can be terminated _____ giving not less than 14 days' notice _____ writing.

(3) Rent will be paid _____ accordance _____ this agreement.

(4) This is an agreement _____ the parties to the contract.

(5) The goods are to be moved _____ the defendant's warehouse no later _____ 28 August.

(Forum Legal:English by lawyers for lawyers)