WHAT ARE ARTICLES?

- A, An, or The
- They announce nouns
- They are noun markers or determiners
- They always come before nouns
STEPS TO USING ARTICLES PROPERLY

- Identify what type of noun you are dealing with
- Decide whether the noun you are working with is specific or nonspecific
- Know the difference between the three articles
INDEFINITE ARTICLES

- A and An

- Used with nouns that are not specific
  - A pen
  - A box
  - A book
    - Not a specific pen or book, but any pen or book
INDEFINITE ARTICLES, CONT.

- **A**
  - Means among a lot of others
    - A rocket
    - A mailbox
    - A person

- **An**
  - Means among a lot of others
  - Precedes nouns beginning with a vowel sound (a,e,i,o,u)
    - An elephant
    - An airplane
    - An accident
    - An FBI Agent
The

Refers to a specific noun

- The coffee cup
- The shoe
- The concert
COUNT NOUNS

- Nouns that can be counted

- Can be in singular or plural form

  - One bunny
  - Two cookies
  - Four kids
  - Ten magazines
NON-COUNT NOUNS

- Nouns that cannot be counted or made plural

- Nouns that always appear in singular form
  - Weather
  - Information
  - Gasoline

- May be countable in another language but not in English
Some nouns can be used as both count and non-count nouns

- I will drink a water

OR

- I will drink water
In general do not use articles when using plural or non-count nouns

- Correct: Elephants live longer than zebras

- Incorrect: *The* elephants live longer than *the* zebras (unless one is referring to a specific elephant or zebra)
GERUNDS

- A present participle used as a noun
  - The \(-ing\) form of the verb

- Not preceded by \textit{the}
  - Correct: Running is difficult.
  - Incorrect: The running is difficult.
The gerund is used in a specific sense

The gerund does not have a direct object

- Designing fabric is a fine art.
  - *Designing* is a gerund, so *the* is not used

- The designing fabric is a fine art.
  - *Fabric* is a direct object of *designing* so *the* should not be used.

- The designing of fabric is a fine art.
  - *The* is used because fabric is the object of the preposition *of* and *designing* is meant in a specific sense
Rule 1: A noun is specific and requires *the* when it names something unique or generally known.

- The stars lit his way.

  - Because *stars* is a generally known noun, it is a specific noun in the context of this sentence.

Rule 2: A noun is specific and requires *the* when it names something used in a representative or abstract sense.

- The termite is actually a fascinating insect.

  - Because *termite* is a representative reference rather than a reference to a particular termite, it is a specific noun in the context of this sentence.
Rule 3: A noun is specific and requires *the* when it names something defined elsewhere in the same sentence or in an earlier sentence.

- The disease malaria is a serious threat in some parts of the world.
  - The word *malaria* means a specific disease.

- The face in the painting startled me.
  - *In the painting* defines exactly which face is meant, so *face* is a specific noun in this context.

- I know a good place to eat. The place is around the corner.
  - *Place* is not specific in the first sentence, so its uses *a*. In the second sentence, *place* has been made specific by the first sentence, so it uses *the*.

Rule 4: A noun is specific and requires *the* when it names something that can be inferred from the context.

- The chef is excellent.
  - If this sentence follows the two sentences about a place in Rule 3 above, then *chef* is specific in this context.
PROPER NOUNS THAT USE THE

Nouns with the pattern *the...of...

- *The United States of America* (plural states)
- *The Fourth of July* (specific day in July)
- *The University of Virginia* (a specific University)

Plural proper nouns

- *The Smoky Mountains*
- *The Great Lakes*
- *The Los Angeles Dodgers*
- *The Black Keys*
- *The Galapagos Islands*
Collective Proper Nouns (nouns that name a group-one word representing multiple people or things)

- The Justice League
- The Sierra Club

Some (but not all) geographical features

- The Amazon River
- The Atlantic Ocean
- The Sahara Desert

Two Countries and One City

- The Congo
- The Sudan
- The Hague
GENERAL RULES FOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES PRECEDED BY THE

- Do not use the before the name of:
  - most countries or territories (e.g. Canada, China, New Zealand)
  - towns, cities or states (e.g. Ottawa, Paris, California)
  - streets (e.g. Front Street, Lakeview Avenue, Dogwood Crescent)
  - lakes (e.g. Lake Ontario, Lake Placid, Bear Lake)
  - bays, where the term bay comes after the name (e.g. the Hudson Bay)
  - mountains (e.g. Mount Everest, Mount Kilimanjaro)
  - continents (e.g. North America, Africa)
  - islands (e.g. Fiji Islands, Prince Edward Island)

- Do use the before the name of:
  - rivers, oceans, seas (e.g. the Mississippi River, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean)
  - bays, where the term bay comes first (e.g. the Bay of Fundy, the Bay of Bengal)
  - gulfs and peninsulas (e.g. the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula)
  - mountain ranges (e.g. the Rockies, the Dolomites, the Laurentians)
  - points on the globe (e.g. the Equator, the North Pole)
  - geographical areas (e.g. the Middle East, the South)
  - deserts and forests (e.g. the Gobi Desert, the Black Forest)