Introduction

A noun is the name of a person, an animal, a thing, or even an idea.

Examples:

Nouns in English are either:
- **Indefinite**: a woman, a man, a river, happiness, a city, an apple, an elephant, an umbrella.
- **Definite**: the woman, the man, the river, the happiness, the city, the apple, the elephant, the umbrella.

Articles

The English articles are: a, an, and the.

- “a” is used with indefinite nouns that start with a consonant letter: a girl, a garden, a river, a city.
• “an” is used with indefinite nouns that start with a vowel letter (a, e, o, i, u): an elephant, an apple, an umbrella, an angle.

However, there are some exceptions to that rule such as an hour or an honest because the “h” is not pronounced. We also say a university because of the way we pronounce the letter “u” in university.

• “a” or “an” must be used with indefinite singular count names. We have a dog and a cat.

• “a” or “an” must be used before professions’ names. I am a teacher or She is an actress.

• “a” or “an” must be used when expressing quantities: a lot of, a pair of, a little bit, a few, but not with some.

• “a” must be used when using the word “what” for exclamation: What a great day! What a beautiful scene!

• “the” is used with nouns to make them definite.

I saw a man. (Indefinite - could be any man).
I saw the man who broke the glass.

(Definite. The man who broke the glass.)
• “the” is used with all definite nouns whether singular or plural, count on non-count.

I am going to the supermarket.
We have a cat and a dog. The cat is old, but the dog is puppy.

• “the” can be used with unique nouns:


• “the” must be used with the names of hotels, theatres, museums, and newspapers:


• “the” must be before geographical names such as seas, mountains, hills, islands, or channels, as long as they are plural or compound:


• “the” must be before positional numbers:


• No definite or indefinite articles are added before names of cities, countries, streets, languages, meals, airports, or stations:

I visited Detroit. I love Lebanon. I drove by Ford Road. She speaks English fluently. I had Lunch. I flew from Heathrow airport.

- No definite or indefinite articles are added before most names proceeded by a preposition: at home, to work, in school, at university, at sea, to college, at church, in bed, on foot.
- No definite articles are added before plural or non-count names:
  Water boils at 100° C. Milk is good for you.