

Articles: a, an, the and zero article

Choosing a, an, the or no article at all, depending on what the noun means and how it sounds.

Fill each gap with one of the words below it. Answers and the rule for every sentence are on the next page.

1. What _____ amazing idea!

a an b a c the d this

2. What _____ useful tool!

a the b a c an d this

3. I found _____ great jacket in the sale yesterday.

a an b the c a d my

4. I bought a jacket yesterday, but _____ jacket was too small.

a a b an c this d the

5. It was a lovely day and _____ sun was shining brightly.

a the b a c an d this

6. Everyone knows that _____ capital of Italy is Rome.

a a b the c an d my

7. My father always drinks _____ with his breakfast, never tea or coffee.

a milk b a milk c an milk d the milk

8. Most people think _____ are very independent animals.

a a cats b an cats c cats d the cats

9. She never has _____ left at the end of the month.

a a money b an money c the money d money

10. There's _____ university just outside the town centre.

a an b a c the d this

11. There's _____ apple in the fruit bowl if you'd like one.

a a **b** the **c** an **d** my

12. We waited for _____ hour before the bus came.

a a **b** the **c** this **d** an

Answer key

1. What **an** amazing idea!

We use an before a word that starts with a vowel sound, like amazing.

2. What **a** useful tool!

We use a before a word that starts with a consonant sound, like useful.

3. I found **a** great jacket in the sale yesterday.

The first time we mention something, we usually say a, not the.

4. I bought a jacket yesterday, but **the** jacket was too small.

We say the when we talk about the same thing again.

5. It was a lovely day and **the** sun was shining brightly.

There is only one sun, so we say the sun, not a sun.

6. Everyone knows that **the** capital of Italy is Rome.

A country has only one capital, so we say the capital.

7. My father always drinks **milk** with his breakfast, never tea or coffee.

Uncountable nouns like milk take no article when we mean the thing in general.

8. Most people think **cats** are very independent animals.

Plural nouns take no article when we talk about all of them, not particular ones.

9. She never has **money** left at the end of the month.

Money is uncountable, so it takes no article and never a or an.

10. There's **a** university just outside the town centre.

University starts with a consonant sound, so we say a university.

11. There's **an** apple in the fruit bowl if you'd like one.

Apple starts with a vowel sound, so we say an apple.

12. We waited for **an** hour before the bus came.

Hour starts with a vowel sound because the h is silent, so we say an hour.