

## A/An

We use an with words that begin with a vowel sound:

*an egg, an apple*

We use an with words that begin with a silent 'h':

*an hour*

### Exercise 1

Fill each gap with **a** or **an**.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ elephant b. \_\_\_\_\_ park c. \_\_\_\_\_ umbrella d. \_\_\_\_\_ artist  
e. \_\_\_\_\_ hospital f. \_\_\_\_\_ idea g. \_\_\_\_\_ leg h. \_\_\_\_\_ arm i. \_\_\_\_\_ foot

**A/An** means 'any one'. We use it with a singular count noun when talking about the noun for the first time:

*I bought a dress.*

*I went to a bookshop.*

When we talk about the noun for a second time, we use '**the**':

*The dress is red.*

*The bookshop had some interesting books.*

### Exercise 2

Fill each gap with **a**, **an** or **the**.

- a. I went to see \_\_\_\_\_ movie yesterday. I enjoyed \_\_\_\_\_ movie.  
b. I visited \_\_\_\_\_ farm and saw cows and \_\_\_\_\_ goat. \_\_\_\_\_ goat ate my hat.  
c. It was very sunny so I bought \_\_\_\_\_ hat. When I put \_\_\_\_\_ hat on, it started raining.

We also use **a/an** if we are talking about someone's occupation.

*A busdriver drives a bus.*

*He is an astronaut.*

We use **a/an** in these expressions:

*a little, a lot, a few, a couple of, a hundred, a thousand, a million, four times a day, seven days a week, fifty kilometers an hour, a quarter past two*

(**A/An** are called **indefinite articles**.)

## The

We use the:

when there is only one of something:

*the sun, the sea (Other examples: the north, the south, the right, the moon, the rain, the ground).*

when the listener knows which thing or things we are talking about:

*I saw the kind busdriver yesterday. He said hello. (You know which driver I am talking about.)*

*I am going to the party now. I'll be late. (You know which party I am talking about.)*

(**The** is called a **definite article**.)

### Exercise 3

Fill each gap with **a**, **an** or **the**.

- I went to London and saw \_\_\_\_\_ Queen of England.
- Last night I saw \_\_\_\_\_ moon and \_\_\_\_\_ few stars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ woman who lives in \_\_\_\_\_ white house visited me last night.

We also use the:

with seas and rivers: *the Pacific Ocean, the Waikato River*

newspapers: *the Australian*

in countries which have 'States' 'Kingdom' etc. in them: *the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates etc.*

before a superlative adjective: *the biggest elephant at the zoo*

in some expressions: *in the morning, at the weekend etc.*

### Zero article

We do not use **a/an** or **the**:

with meals: *breakfast, lunch dinner*

in these expressions: *last week, this month, next Tuesday etc.*

with the names of towns, cities and most countries: *Brighton, Paris, Shanghai, Bangkok, Vietnam, Singapore, Kenya*

with mountains: *Mt. Vesuvius, Table Mountain*

with languages: *French, Swahili*

with these: *by bus/taxi/train/plane/car to/at school, at/to work*

before plural nouns and uncountable nouns when we are talking about things in general: *Elephants are very strong. Rice is a very healthy food.*

(When we use nothing (no **a/an** or **the**), we call it the **zero article**.)

### Exercise 4

Fill each gap with a, an, the or nothing (-).

- I live in \_\_\_\_\_ Sydney, \_\_\_\_\_ Australia but my boyfriend lives in \_\_\_\_\_ small town in \_\_\_\_\_ Canada.
- On Monday I came to \_\_\_\_\_ school by \_\_\_\_\_ bus because it was \_\_\_\_\_ wet day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mount Everest is \_\_\_\_\_ highest mountain in \_\_\_\_\_ world.
- We went to \_\_\_\_\_ new restaurant yesterday for \_\_\_\_\_ dinner. A waiter was rude to me so I asked for \_\_\_\_\_ manager. \_\_\_\_\_ manager told \_\_\_\_\_ waiter to say sorry to me.
- I have \_\_\_\_\_ dog called Rusty. He doesn't like \_\_\_\_\_ cats, but he loves \_\_\_\_\_ sausages.

### Answer Key:

#### Exercise 1

a. an elephant, b. a park, c. an umbrella, d. an artist, e. a hospital, f. an idea, g. a leg, h. an arm, i. a foot.

#### Exercise 2

a. a, the, b. a, a, the, c. a, the

#### Exercise 3

a. the, b. the, a, c. the, the

#### Exercise 4

a. (-), (-). a. (-), b. (-), (-), a, c. (-), the, the, d. a, (-), a, the, the, the, e. a, (-), (-).

