

## Articles

Why are you packing **a** suitcase?

I'm going to **the** airport. **The** airport bus will arrive in **a** minute. It'll be **an** amazing trip!

Are you going on **a** trip?



The boy is participating in pretend play.

### Grammar in Context

Theme: Leisure and entertainment

Words by Theme



Read the following postcard and answer the questions.

Hi Jessica,

[1] Guess what? I'm now travelling<sup>1</sup> in **Moscow, the capital of Russia!** It's cold here. Luckily, I've brought with me **a down coat** and **① a hat!**

[2] I've visited **the Kremlin.** It's **an enormous complex** with **palaces and churches.** I've joined **a tour**<sup>2</sup>. It lasted for **② an hour.** **The guide**<sup>3</sup> explained to us that **the Russian royal family** used to live there. It's now **the residence** and **the office** of **the president of Russia.**

[3] I've tried **borscht**<sup>4</sup> in **a restaurant** near **③ a university.** I love **the beef** and **vegetables** in it. Some **locals**<sup>5</sup> told me that they once tried something similar in **cha chaan tengs**<sup>6</sup> when they visited **Hong Kong.** Do you know which **soup** they were talking about?

[4] Gosh, I've just received **④ an urgent email** from **work.** Talk soon.

Love,  
Oliver



Flat B, 2/F  
Prosperity Building  
14 Garden Road  
Kwun Tong  
Kowloon, Hong Kong

1. Read paragraph 3. Which types of nouns are the words in bold?

Singular nouns	Plural nouns	Uncountable nouns	Proper noun
_____	_____	borscht	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Underline the correct answers.

- (i) The letter *h* in ( ① / ② ) is silent, so we use the article ( *a* / *an* ).
- (ii) The letter *u* in ( ③ / ④ ) is pronounced like *you*, so we use the article ( *a* / *an* ).
- (iii) We do not use any articles before ( uncountable / proper ) nouns.

PART 1 *a* or *an*

We use the indefinite articles *a* or *an* when we talk about:

Situations	Examples
A person, thing or place for the first time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is <b>a temple</b> on <b>a mountain</b> in the east.</li> <li>I have <b>an umbrella</b> with <b>an unconventional design</b>.</li> </ul>
One of a group of people, things or places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Jupiter</b> is <b>a planet</b> in the solar system.</li> <li><b>Mr Norman</b> is <b>an architect</b>.</li> </ul>

It is one of the planets in the solar system.

There are many architects. He is one of them.

We use *a* or *an* before singular countable nouns, depending on the initial sound of the words.

Articles	Used before words that begin with ...	Examples
<i>a</i>	a consonant sound	<i>a king</i> <i>a lorry driver</i>
	a letter starting with a consonant sound	<i>a DVD</i> <i>a PS5</i>
	the letter <i>u</i> starting with a consonant sound (like <i>you</i> )	<i>a union</i> <i>a university</i>
<i>an</i>	a vowel sound	<i>an owl</i> <i>an eggplant</i>
	a letter starting with a vowel sound	<i>an ATM</i> <i>an ID card</i>
	the letter <i>h</i> that is silent	<i>an hour</i> <i>an heir</i>

## Error Diagnosis

Whether to use *a* or *an* depends on the sound of the first letters of the nouns instead of the spellings.

I received a unexpected gift today. It is an unique toy. It is an one-eyed monster! ❌

I received an unexpected gift today. It is a unique toy. It is a one-eyed monster! ✅

a vowel sound

a consonant sound (like *you*)

a consonant sound (like *won*)



## Exercise 1.1

Put the correct words in the correct bags.

a  
an

+

idea   dentist   uniform   Octopus card   universal language   early train  
hill   DSE exam   honest person   MTR station   wheel   uncle

a

a dentist

an

an idea



## Exercise 1.2

Daniel is reading the first chapter of a story. Complete the chapter using *a* or *an*.

### The Magic Hourglass

Harper was interested in fortune-telling. She wished she could look into the future.

One day, she walked past the shop window of (1) \_\_\_\_\_ an \_\_\_\_\_ antique store and (2) \_\_\_\_\_ hourglass attracted her. She entered the store and saw (3) \_\_\_\_\_ old man with (4) \_\_\_\_\_ crystal ball in his hand. ‘Hello! I’d like to buy the hourglass,’ she said to the old man.

‘Sure, it’s (5) \_\_\_\_\_ unique and useful tool,’ he said.

When she returned home, she turned over the hourglass. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ image then popped up out of nowhere, showing her what would happen in (7) \_\_\_\_\_ hour — (8) \_\_\_\_\_ car was going to hit her. Being horrified, she rushed back to the store with the hourglass.

The old man put down (9) \_\_\_\_\_ antique book and asked her with (10) \_\_\_\_\_ mysterious smile, ‘Do you still want to know the future?’



## PART 2 *the*

We use the definite article *the* in the following situations.

Situations	Examples
We have already mentioned a person, thing or place	<i>I borrowed two <b>books</b> from the library. <b>The one</b> about orphans was heartrending.</i>
The listener knows which person, thing or place we are referring to	<i><b>The horror film</b> has achieved a worldwide box-office gross of over \$2.8 billion.</i>
There is only one of a person, thing or place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i><b>The sun</b> sank slowly below the horizon.</i> <b>There is only one sun.</b></li> <li>▪ <i><b>The Avenue of Stars</b> is located along <b>the Victoria Harbour</b>.</i></li> </ul>
There is specific information to point out or explain which person, thing or place we are referring to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i><b>The people</b> of this country are welcoming.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>My sister blew out <b>the candles</b> on the cake.</i></li> <li>▪ <i><b>The feast</b> that Mr Baker hosted was sumptuous.</i></li> </ul>

relative clause

adverbial

We can use *the* before both countable (singular or plural) and uncountable nouns.

- *I like playing Monopoly. **The game** is interesting.* (singular)
- ***The tiger** is the zodiac sign standing for strength and energy.* (singular)
- *Did you play with **the kids** next door?* (plural)
- *Clean **the dirt**, please.* (uncountable)

It refers to all tigers.



## Reminder!

We also use *the* with the following:

Times of the day	<i>in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening</i>
Musical instruments	<i>the piano, the clarinet, the guitar, the violin</i>
Groups of people	<i>the elderly, the poor, the disabled, the sick, the Wongs, the Chinese</i>
Ordinal numbers	<i>the second floor, the twentieth of October</i>

We cannot use *the* with proper nouns, except with the following:

Certain names of locations	<i>the Seine (a river), the Pacific (an ocean), the Himalayas (a mountain range), the New Territories, The Peak</i>
Certain country names	<i>the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Philippines</i>
Names of buildings	<i>the Hong Kong Science Museum, the Louvre, the National Gallery</i>



### Exercise 2.1

Fill in the blanks using *a, an* or *the*.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ students of Class 3C are going to raise funds for \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ poor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ tulip is \_\_\_\_\_ national flower of \_\_\_\_\_ Netherlands.
- Alex suffers from \_\_\_\_\_ unusual disease. His doctor is searching for \_\_\_\_\_ cure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ terrible explosion occurred in \_\_\_\_\_ Middle East last month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ confidential report revealed that \_\_\_\_\_ UFO appeared ten years ago.
- To celebrate \_\_\_\_\_ national day of France, \_\_\_\_\_ Louvre offered free admission to \_\_\_\_\_ public.
- Mr Smith is \_\_\_\_\_ orphan and \_\_\_\_\_ last living member of \_\_\_\_\_ Smiths. \_\_\_\_\_ earthquake killed his parents thirty years ago.
- On \_\_\_\_\_ fourth day of the adventure camp, we went into \_\_\_\_\_ abandoned house in \_\_\_\_\_ evening and got lost in \_\_\_\_\_ maze of rooms in \_\_\_\_\_ house.



### Exercise 2.2

Edward is reading a news report. Complete the report using *a, an* or *the*.

CLASSROOM NEWSPAPER 15 MAY 20XX

Top News

#### Ten Students Caught Cheating in Public Exams

Ten candidates have been caught cheating in (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ HKDSE exams and have been penalised, according to (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

'(3) \_\_\_\_\_ candidates stored information in their digital watches and read it during the exams,' said Wong Tai-tak, one of (4) \_\_\_\_\_ spokespersons of the HKEAA. 'As technology advances, more ingenious ways of cheating have been spotted. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ candidate has copied (6) \_\_\_\_\_ entire text from the internet using the watch. It is (7) \_\_\_\_\_ offence. (8) \_\_\_\_\_ consequences can be very serious. You could be disqualified.'

(9) \_\_\_\_\_ 'cheating watches' are available on different e-commerce platforms. There is (10) \_\_\_\_\_ model on eShop on sale for HKD\$750.

## PART 3 Zero article

We do not use any articles before nouns when we are talking about:

Situations	Examples		
Names of people	<i>Charles Kao revolutionised the field of fibre optics.</i>		
Most geographical names	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Canada is a culturally diverse country in North America.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The headquarters of the government is on Harcourt Road.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The fastest woman to conquer Mount Everest is from Hong Kong.</i></li> </ul>		
Festivals, months and days	<i>I'm having a family gathering this Sunday. It's Mother's Day.</i>		
Languages and subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>speak English / German</i></li> <li>▪ <i>study art / geography</i></li> </ul>	Means of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>by bus / train / MTR</i></li> <li>▪ <i>on foot</i></li> </ul>
Meals	<i>have breakfast / lunch</i>	Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>go to university / church</i></li> <li>▪ <i>at work / school / home</i></li> <li>▪ <i>in bed / prison / school</i></li> <li>▪ <i>kind(s) / type(s) / sort(s) of insect(s) / disease(s)</i></li> </ul>
Sports	<i>play squash / tennis / badminton</i>		
Certain time	<i>at night / noon / dawn</i>		

### Let's compare

Zero article	the
<p><b>To talk about a purpose</b></p> <p><i>The dying victim was rushed to hospital.</i> (to receive treatment)</p>	<p><b>To talk about a place to visit</b></p> <p><i>The hospital in this district has been full.</i> (the hospital building)</p>
<p><b>To refer to something in general</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Children love potato chips in particular.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>We had mushroom omelettes for breakfast.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>I watch TV every day.</i> (TV programmes)</li> </ul>	<p><b>To talk about a specific item</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The potato chips I bought have expired.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The breakfast we had together was delightful.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The TV was on sale.</i> (a television set)</li> </ul>



### Exercise 3.1

Rewrite the sentences. Insert or delete the articles *a*, *an* or *the* where necessary.

- The dogs are the loyal companions to the humans.  
Dogs are loyal companions to humans.
- The Jack was found guilty and spent the rest of his days in a prison.
- There are incredible mosques in an Istanbul, the largest city in the Turkey.
- Both the Tuen Mun and the Tin Shui Wai are in New Territories.
- Chloe went the home late, so she had a dinner at the midnight.
- The polar bears live in Arctic, polar region to the north of Earth.



## Exercise 3.2



Lucy is writing an email to Jennifer. Complete the email by circling the best answers.

**Subject:** My first auction

Send |


Hi Jennifer,

How's it going? Sorry that I haven't been in touch with you for such a long time. I've been doing an internship at Wilson's Auction House for the past few months, so I've been quite busy.

(1) experience at the auction house was eye-opening. I witnessed (2) extremely rare blue diamond being sold for (3) USD\$47.5 million at an auction on (4) Children's Day. Do you know that diamonds are actually a kind of (5) stone? How can stones be that expensive? Chinese billionaire Mr Thomas Liu, the winning bidder, won (6) diamond for his young daughter, who's still at (7) school. Could you imagine possessing a 15-carat diamond when you're only (8) child? I've always been fascinated by (9) gemstones, especially rare blue diamonds. Their colour comes from (10) element in the structure of crystals. I wish I could become (11) auctioneer one day and participate in running auctions!

How's life? How are your final exams going? I'll travel to (12) Boston next month. It'd be wonderful to catch up!

Love,  
Lucy



(1) A. A

B. An

 C. The

D. X

(2) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(3) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(4) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(5) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(6) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(7) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(8) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(9) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(10) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(11) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X

(12) A. a

B. an

C. the

D. X



### Brain Breaks

What does a stone want to be when it grows up?

Answer: a gem



## Grammar Wrap-up

Luca is reading an online article. There are 15 mistakes. Correct the mistakes. Put <sup>a</sup> to insert *a*, *an* or *the*. Cross them out where appropriate.



### K-pop stars cast <sup>a</sup> spell on Hong Kong teenagers

‘Annyeonghaseyo!’ the members of a South Korean boy band, ABS, greeted their fans in ~~the~~ Hong Kong. Near 1,000 fans cheered for them. ABS is not the only Korean band that has stolen the hearts of the young people in our city. Actually, Korean pop (K-pop) has swept Hong Kong, the Japan and many other parts of the world.

K-pop is special music genre. It is well-known for its fusion of two or more genres, such as pop, rock and hip hop. It is usually catchy and light-hearted. We can frequently find the English phrases in its lyrics. Korean pop stars often dance with music.

When asked why they like K-pop so much, Hong Kong teenagers showed great enthusiasm. ‘The music is upbeat!’ Jason, long-time fan of ABS, said. ‘I listen to it when I’m walking to school, doing revision and playing the basketball. I’m also learning music production in studio now.’

While some fans are captivated by music, others focus on the visual elements. ‘The girl group I like has strong fashion sense,’ Tracy Lee, a fan of Red Cotton, said. ‘I find out what they wear and buy similar clothes. I want to have urban style like them.’ K-pop has tremendous influence on Korean fashion trends. For example, the sales of chunky sneakers that Red Cotton love to wear when they are not on stage went up by 30 per cent over past year.

With gorgeous appearance, skilled dance moves and the catchy music to spice up their appeal, it is no wonder that K-pop stars enjoy such popularity around the world.



### More to take away

tremendous (adj.) = very big, fast or powerful

appeal (n.) = the quality in someone or something that makes them attractive or interesting

## Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Leisure and entertainment

You are writing a magazine article about Kyushu, Japan. Complete the article using *a*, *an* or *the*. Write *X* if no article is needed.

Words by  
Theme



# Kyushu: a Tranquil<sup>1</sup> and Calming Destination

To many people, autumn may not be the best season to visit Kyushu (literally *nine provinces*), (1) \_\_\_\_\_ island located in the south of Japan. Red leaves have all fallen and (2) \_\_\_\_\_ snow has not settled yet. However, if you are looking for a little peace, you might still consider travelling to Kyushu in (3) \_\_\_\_\_ November.

It would be a good idea to start with Fukuoka, which is the first stop for most travellers since there is (4) \_\_\_\_\_ airport. It features many historical sites. One of the most famous ones is (5) \_\_\_\_\_ shrine. It attracts both tourists and (6) \_\_\_\_\_ locals. (7) \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese students make offerings and buy amulets at (8) \_\_\_\_\_ shrine in the hope of passing exams.



After exploring some cultural attractions, nothing would be better than taking (9) \_\_\_\_\_ rest by immersing<sup>4</sup> yourself in (10) \_\_\_\_\_ onsen, the Japanese name for a hot spring<sup>5</sup>. The most popular ones are situated in (11) \_\_\_\_\_ Yufuin, a small and tranquil town not far from Fukuoka. Also, it is relaxing to stroll<sup>6</sup> on the streets in Yufuin. There are a lot of intriguing<sup>7</sup> shops. You can buy souvenirs<sup>8</sup> there. You can go there by (12) \_\_\_\_\_ train or bus, but (13) \_\_\_\_\_ train tickets are usually expensive in Japan.



If you have more time, you should travel a bit further to the south — Kagoshima and Miyazaki. You would be enthralled by (14) \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful and peaceful landscapes<sup>9</sup>. Kyushu definitely has more to offer than you expect.
















More to take away

amulet = an object worn to protect against evil, disease or unhappiness

We use *a* or *an* to introduce a new idea. We use *the* when we have known or understood an idea already. We do not use any article before an uncountable or a plural noun when we are talking about an idea in general, as well as in many other situations.

- An old man died in a car accident in Wong Tai Sin. (indefinite article)
- A heatwave swept across Europe and some people died due to the unbearable heat. (definite article)
- South America has become a popular travel destination recently. (zero article)

George is writing a review on the mobile game *Crazy Camping*. Complete the review with the help of the given words. Insert the correct articles where necessary.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|   free-to-play social simulation game |  to visit different places indicated on maps       |
|  craft market has been added  |  <i>Crazy Camping</i> was first one to break spell |
|  mobile phones have become necessity for most people  |  have fun and relaxing time                        |
|  to obtain ornaments   |  especially in United States and Japan             |
|  this creates large virtual space   |  if they team up and build enormous fire         |
|  it takes six hours for fruits to grow back   |  dialogues among characters                      |

## *Crazy Camping*—the fastest-selling mobile game of all time

Developed by the Sakimoto Company and released in June 20XX, the mobile game *Crazy Camping* has enjoyed overwhelming success worldwide. As (1) a free-to-play social simulation game, it has attracted more than 10 million players over the past years.



For years, video games have dominated the game market, (2) \_\_\_\_\_. However, as (3) \_\_\_\_\_, consumer electronic companies



and game developers started to make more mobile games. At first, players were reluctant to play mobile games due to the limited screen size. They always played games on their TVs or computers.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

In *Crazy Camping*, players can build their own campsites and decorate them with different

ornaments. (5) \_\_\_\_\_, they have to accomplish various tasks.

For example, they have to catch fish, pick fruits, build campfires and collect cotton. They also have to communicate with other campsite builders and respond to their requests. Players would get a rare diamond (6) \_\_\_\_\_.



### What's good about *Crazy Camping*?

*Crazy Camping* has taken the mobile game market to the next level because the game allows players

(7) \_\_\_\_\_ . Players can navigate in any way they like. (8) \_\_\_\_\_

and opens up endless possibilities. (9) \_\_\_\_\_

to the game recently. Players can ask craftsmen to design handicrafts using the materials that they have collected. Another interesting feature is that players can customise their characters' appearances and costumes. All these make the game enjoyable.



### What's bad about *Crazy Camping*?

Although *Crazy Camping* is a well-designed game, there is still room for improvement. For instance, the movements of the characters are not smooth enough. (10) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ are too clumsy. Besides, after the characters have picked the fruits, (11) \_\_\_\_\_.

All in all, if you would like to (12) \_\_\_\_\_, you should play

*Crazy Camping*, an entertainment revolutionising the market.



### More to take away

accomplish (v.) = to succeed in doing something

navigate (v.) = to find the direction

revolutionise (v.) = to change how people do things or think completely