



Articles

Articles refer to: **a, an, the**. They come before a noun and can be definite or indefinite.

Definite article

the refers to something specific:

Lucy received **the** gold medal in gymnastics. She was in **the** best soccer club.

Indefinite article

a and **an** are not specific and refer to *one* of many:

John was given **an** award in assembly. He had **a** sandwich for lunch.

Using a

- **a** is used if *the noun* following it starts with a consonant:
a bear, a dog, a computer
- **a** is used if *any other word* following it starts with a consonant:
a big apple, a green olive, a very big elephant

Exceptions:

before *one* eg **a one-day** event

Using an

- **an** is used if *a noun or any other word* following it starts with a vowel (a,e,i,o,u):
an apple, an elephant, an umbrella, an oval
an interesting person, an old friend, an exciting book
- **an** is often used when the word following it begins with a consonant *which sounds like a vowel or is silent*:
an honourable deed, an hour's time, an heir to the estate, an x-ray machine

Exceptions:

a used car, **a** useful person, **a** ewe (female sheep)

Visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_articles for some useful information about articles.