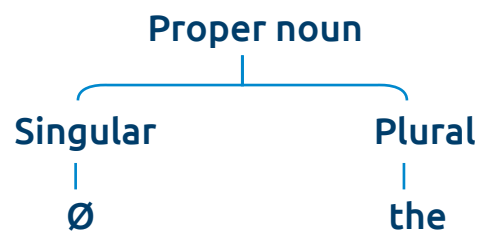
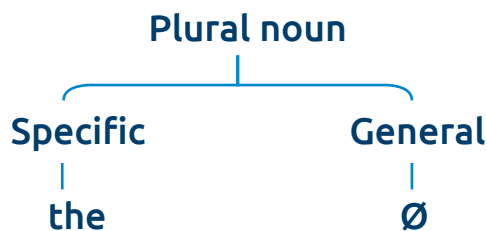
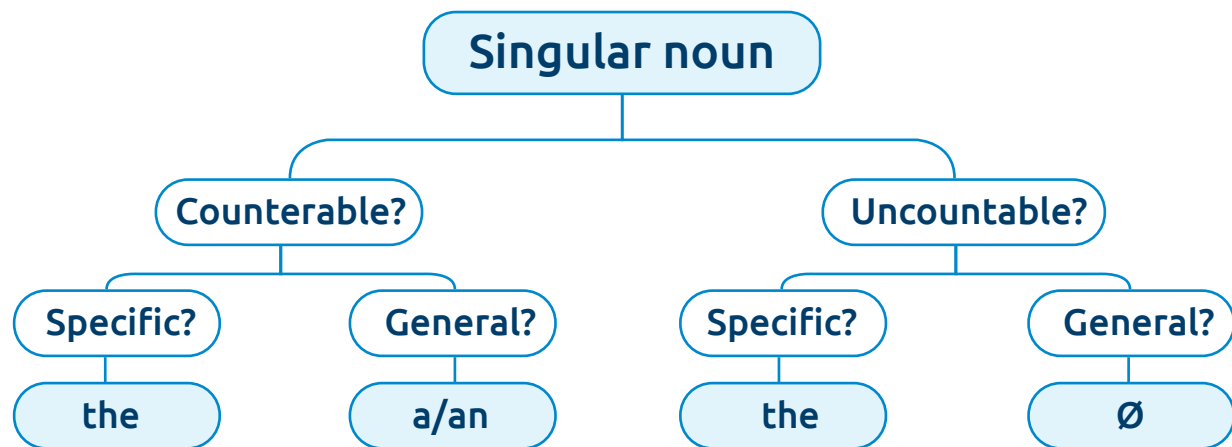


Quick Guide: Use of Articles



“Specific” (or definite) = known to both:”

Writer and Reader
OR
Speaker and Listener

Understanding the quick guide to articles

Countable/uncountable nouns

Nouns can generally be divided into either countable or uncountable.

Countable nouns can be either singular or plural. In a language learner’s dictionary, they are usually marked as [C]. Examples of countable nouns include:

Singular Form	Plural Form
pen	pens
child	children
expense	expenses
Certainty	certainties

Uncountable nouns do not have singular or plural forms. In a language learner’s dictionary, they are usually marked as [U]. An example of an uncountable noun is the word rice: although rice grains are countable, we cannot talk about rices. Other examples of uncountable nouns include:

wisdom chaos anger oxygen peace

Some nouns, however, can be both countable and uncountable, depending on the context. Some of these nouns include:

Hope

We live in hope of a better tomorrow.
She shared her hopes for the future.

Hair

Ivan has thick black hair.
Recently, he has noticed a few grey hairs.

Childhood

Childhood should be a happy time for everyone.
Hannah's childhood was a happy one.

Specific/general (articles)

In determining which, if any, article should be used, you need to ask the question:

Am I referring to something specific or general?

Specific (refers to a particular member/s of a group)	General (refers to all members of a group)
The students were working hard for their exams.	Students have a reputation for playing hard and studying only when necessary.
I couldn't get the car to start.	A car is a necessary part of modern life.

Proper nouns

A proper noun is the name of a person or a particular thing. Proper nouns are always written with a capital letter.

Generally, the definite article (the) is not used with most singular proper nouns; for example, you would not refer to your friend Anna as "the Anna". We do, however, use the definite article for proper nouns in the plural form: we would refer to Anna's family as "the Wilsons". Other examples include:

Canada
Jamaica
(Mount) Everest
Toronto Island

The United States of America
The Bahamas
The Himalayas
The Thousand Islands

There are exceptions to the above; it is advisable that you memorize whether or not the proper nouns you use regularly need the definite article.

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