

Practicing Article Usage

EXERCISE 1. In these dialogues, decide whether the speakers would probably use **a**, **an** or **the**.

1. A: I have an idea. Let's go on a picnic Saturday.
B: Okay.

2. A: Did you have fun at the picnic yesterday?
B: Sure did. And you?

3. A: You'd better have A good reason for being late!
B: I do.

4. A: Did you think THE reason Mike gave for being late was believable?
B: Not really.

5. A: Where's my blue shirt?

B: It's in THE washing machine.

A: That's okay. I can wear A different shirt.

6. A: I wish we had A washing machine.

B: So do I. It would make it a lot easier to do our laundry.

7. A: Can you repair my car for me?

B: What's wrong with it?

A: THE radiator has A leak, and one of THE windshield wipers doesn't work.

B: Can you show me where THE leak is?

8. A: What happened to your bicycle? THE front wheel is bent.

B: I ran into A parked car when I swerved to avoid A big pothole in the street.

A: Did you damage THE car?

B: A little.

A: What did you do?

B: I left A note for THE owner of THE car.

A: What did you write on THE note?

B: My name and address. I also wrote AN apology.

9. A: Have you seen my boots?

B: They're in THE closet in THE front hallway.

EXERCISE 2. Complete the sentences with **a, an, the, or Ø** (zero article). Capitalize where necessary.

1. Ø Beef is a kind of Ø meat.

2. The beef we had for dinner last night was excellent.

3. Jim is wearing a straw hat today.

4. Jim likes to wear Ø hats.

5. A hat is AN article of clothing.

6. Ø hats are Ø articles of clothing.

7. THE brown hat on that hook over there belongs to Mark.

8. Everyone has Ø problems in Ø life.

9. My grandfather had A long life.

10. That book is about THE life of Helen Keller.

11. Tommy wants to be AN engineer when he grows up.

12. The Brooklyn Bridge was designed by AN engineer.

13. John Roebling is THE name of THE engineer who designed the Brooklyn Bridge. He died in 1869 from AN infection before THE bridge was completed.

14. Ø people wear Ø jewelry to make themselves more attractive.

15. THE jewelry Diana is wearing today is beautiful.

EXERCISE 3. Complete the sentences with **a, an, the, or Ø** (zero article). Capitalize where necessary.

1. We need to get **A** new phone.
2. Alex, would you please answer **THE** phone?
3. **Ø** people use **Ø** plants in many different ways. Plants supply us with oxygen. They are a source of **Ø** lifesaving medicines. We use plant products to build **Ø** houses and to make **Ø** paper and **Ø** textiles.
4. When you look at **A** sandy shore, it might seem practically empty of **Ø** animals. This appearance is deceptive, however. Beneath **THE** surface, the sand is full of **Ø** life. It is teeming with **Ø** crabs, **Ø** shrimp, **Ø** worms, **Ø** snails, and **Ø** other kinds of **Ø** marine animals.
5. Our children enjoyed going to the beach yesterday. When they dug in **THE** sand, they found various kinds of **Ø** animals. Susie found **A** crab, and so did Johnny. **THE** crab Johnny found pinched him, which made him cry. But he had **A** good time at **THE** beach anyway.
6. The biggest bird in the world is the ostrich. It eats just about anything it can reach, including **Ø** stones, **Ø** glass, and **Ø** keys. It can kill **A** person with one kick.
7. Do you ever gaze into **Ø** space and wonder if **Ø** other life forms exist in **Ø** universe?
8. **Ø** most mirrors are made from **Ø** glass to which **A** thin layer of **Ø** silver or **Ø** aluminum has been applied.
9. In **A** recent newspaper article, I read about **AN** Australian swimmer who was saved from **A** shark by **A** group of dolphins. When **THE** shark attacked **THE** swimmer, **THE** dolphins chased it away. They saved **THE** swimmer's life.
10. I heard on the radio that there is **Ø** evidence that **Ø** dolphins suffer in captivity. Dolphins that are free in **Ø** nature live around 40 years. Captive dolphins live **AN** average of 12 years. It is believed that some captive dolphins commit **Ø** suicide.
11. **Ø** phonograph records have become old-fashioned. They have been supplanted by **Ø** compact discs, which are commonly referred to as CDs.
12. Look. There's **A** fly walking on **THE** ceiling. It's upside down. Do you suppose **THE** fly was flying rightside up and flipped over at the last second, or was it flying upside down when it landed on **THE** ceiling?