

The Articles

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CAUTION! Even after you learn all the principles behind the use of these articles, you will find an abundance of situations where choosing the correct article or choosing whether to use one or not will prove chancy. Icy highways are dangerous. The icy highways are dangerous. And both are correct.

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The moon circles the earth.

The is required when the noun it accompanies refers to something in the abstract:

The United States has encouraged the use of the

A newspaper has an obligation to seek out and tell the truth.

In a subsequent reference to this newspaper, however, we will use the definite article:

There are situations, however, when the newspaper must determine whether the public's safety is jeopardized by knowing the truth.

Another example:

"I'd like a glass of orange juice, please," John said.

"I put the glass of juice on the counter already," Shiela replied.

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- A beagle makes a great hunting dog and family companion.
- An airedale is sometimes a rather skittish animal.
- The golden retriever is a marvelous pet for children.
- Irish setters are not the highly intelligent animals they used to be.

The difference between the generic indefinite pronoun and the normal indefinite pronoun is that the latter refers to any of that class ("I want to buy a beagle, and any old beagle will do.") whereas the former (see beagle sentence) refers to all members of that class.

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- Geographical places: the Sound, the Sea of Japan, the Mississippi, the West, the Smokies, the

("She plays badminton and basketball."), and academic subjects ("She's taking economics and math. Her major is Religious Studies.")

When they are generic, non-count nouns and sometimes plural count-nouns are used without articles. "We like *wine* with our dinner. We adore Baroque *music*. We use *roses* for many purposes." But if an "of phrase" comes after the noun, we use an article: "We adore the music of the Baroque." Also when a generic noun is used without an article and then referred to in a subsequent reference, it will have become specific and will require a definite article: "The Data Center installed computers in the Learning Center this summer. The computers, unfortunately, don't work.