

Lesson 25: **A, An, The**

LEARN

- The special adjectives *a*, *an*, and *the* are called **articles**. These small words come before nouns.

a raccoon **an** otter **the** animals

- The articles *a* and *an* refer to any person, place, or thing. The article *the* refers to a specific person, place, or thing.

An elephant can run faster than **a** person.

The runner crossed **the** finish line at noon.

- Use *a* before a singular noun that begins with a consonant sound.
I found **a** book of interesting facts.
- Use *an* before a singular noun that begins with a vowel sound.
Each fact described **an** animal.
- Use *the* before both singular and plural nouns.
The facts about **the** insect surprised me.



PRACTICE

A Some sentences have more than one article. Circle each article, and write it on the line. The first one is done for you.

1. It is impossible for a pig to look up into the sky.
2. A sleeping bear in winter can go 100 days without water.
3. An ostrich never buries its head in the sand.
4. There are more than 20 muscles in the ear of a cat.
5. An insect buzzes because of the movement of its wings.
6. A cockroach can run one meter per second.
7. The pattern of a zebra's black-and-white stripes is formed by its hair.

a, the

A

An, the

the, a

An, the

A

The, a

8. **A** snail can sleep for three years.
9. Wolves don't howl more often when **the** moon is full.
10. **A** shark's mouth has six to twenty rows of teeth.

_____ **A** _____
 _____ **the** _____
 _____ **A** _____

B Write the article in parentheses that correctly completes each sentence.

1. **An** elephant flaps its ears to stay cool. (A, An)
2. The Chow Chow is **a** dog with a blue tongue. (a, the)
3. Some spiders can spin **a** web in 30 minutes. (a, an)
4. A koala is not **a** bear. (a, the)
5. It is **a** relative of the kangaroo. (a, an)
6. Females carry their young in **a** pouch. (a, an)
7. A zorilla is **an** animal that looks like a skunk. (a, an)
8. Zorillas, like skunks, use odor as **a** defense. (a, an)
9. The American buffalo is not **a** buffalo at all. (a, the)
10. It is **a** bison. (a, an)
11. An Andean condor can have **a** wingspan of 10 feet. (a, an)
12. It is one of the largest flying birds in **the** world. (a, the)
13. The world's smallest mammal is **a** bat. (a, an)
14. This tiny bat is the size of **a** bumblebee. (a, an)
15. **An** ostrich is a bird that does not fly. (A, An)



Zorilla

C Sean wrote a report about how certain animals communicate their emotions. In this part of the report, he used five articles incorrectly. Use the proofreading marks in the box to correct the errors.

Use *a* before a singular noun that begins with a consonant sound. Use *an* before a singular noun that begins with a vowel sound.

Does ^{an}~~a~~ animal have emotions? That's not easy to answer. How could we tell if animals did feel ^{an}~~the~~ emotion? After all they can't talk. Sometimes, however, animals do express feelings through body language.

For example, if ^a~~the~~ dog has misbehaved, it might turn its head sideways and show its neck. It might also crouch down and lift its front paw to show you it is sorry. Wolves, which are wild relatives of dogs, might also show these two types of body language.

Wolves live in ^a~~the~~ pack with one strong leader. Pack members use body language to show that they recognize their leader. To your dog you are ^{the}~~a~~ leader of the pack, so it uses the same kind of body language with you.

Proofreading Marks

- ^ Add
- Period
- ~ Take out
- ≡ Capital letter
- / Small letter



Did you correct five mistakes with articles?



D Write a sentence about each animal below. In each sentence use an article before the animal's name, and use the information given in parentheses. After writing your sentence go back and add an adjective to each sentence. The first one is done for you. **Answers will vary. Sample answers are given.**

1. blue whale (weighs up to 200 tons)



A blue whale weighs up to 200 tons.

(A) big blue whale weighs up to 200 tons.

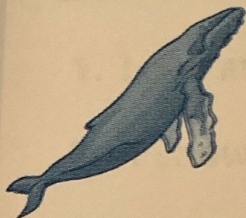
2. butterfly (flaps its wings five times per second)



A butterfly flaps its wings five times per second.

(A) fluttering butterfly flaps its wings five times per second.

3. humpback whale (can eat one ton of food per day)



The humpback whale can eat one ton of food per day.

(The) hungry humpback whale can eat one ton of food per day.

4. opossum (sleeps 19 hours per day)



An opossum sleeps 19 hours per day.

(An) old opossum sleeps 19 hours per day.

5. hummingbird (can fly backward)



The hummingbird can fly backward.

(The) colorful hummingbird can fly backward.

back to the sentences you wrote.

underline each article you used.

underline each adjective you added.