

THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE: ANSWER GUIDE

1.1 FORM: A OR AN?

1. an ant
2. an egg
3. an Indian
4. a university
5. an understanding
6. an hour
7. a hotel
8. a house
9. an upset
10. an interesting idea
11. an open door
12. an hors d'oeuvres
13. a universal truth
14. a uniform
15. a holiday
16. a useful gadget
17. a union
18. a unicycle
19. an honour
20. a unicorn
21. an M.P.
22. a Member of Parliament
23. a unit
24. a history of clocks
25. a U.N. member
26. a United Nations member
27. an R.C.
28. a Roman Catholic
29. a Hindu
30. an undertaker

1.2 INDEFINITE ARTICLE: SINGULAR

1. In a suburban street, a door opened.
2. A man hurried to the station to catch a train to the city.
3. A dog will gnaw a bone; a cat will eat a herring.
4. A teacher has a classroom to teach a student in.
5. An office needs a computer, a fax machine and a telephone.
6. A lively tune cheers a person up.
7. A businessman needs to know a foreign language.
8. A roses is a rose is a rose.
9. A child likes a present.

1.5 A(N) USED IN EXPRESSIONS OF QUANTITY

1. It is a 100 miles from here to there.
2. It will take more than one and a half hours to drive there.
3. Give me a kilo of apples, half a kilo of satsumas, and a quarter of a kilo of peppers.

4. He took a lot of trouble over the job.
5. I'll have a little jam on my toast.
6. The new product generated a lot of interest, but only a few people bought it.
7. She bought a small loaf of bread and a large bottle of red wine.
8. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.
9. All I have for breakfast is a slice of toast and a cup of black coffee.

1. a spoonful of medicine... three times a day
2. a kilo of apples... a bunch of radishes
3. a lot of time... a great deal of money
4. a little difficulty... A lot of hard work
5. a plate of porridge... a glass of whisky
6. a pint of beer

1.6 UNCOUNTABLES

The following are normally uncountable and do not take (or rarely take) the indefinite article.

2. health ambition
3. materialism bread information truth flour
4. marmalade music furniture radium
5. sailing luggage tea geography equality news liberty
6. milk patience golf dust poetry
7. garbage cream daytime advice craziness engineering sugar dirt abstraction

1. A library is full of books.
2. Butter goes on bread.
3. He spread a pat of butter over a slice of bread and put jam on it.
4. Cats will drink milk.
5. A cat will drink a saucer of milk.
6. A house is sometimes built of brick.
7. The burglar used a brick to break a window.
8. An eagle is a bird.
9. An eye can be brown or blue.
10. We saw a movie on television.
11. An orange has vitamins in it.
12. Orange is a bright colour.
13. A child goes to school.
14. Some people put sugar in a cup of tea.
15. What would you like for tea?
16. A modern office block is built of glass and concrete.
17. A city road is a noisy place.
18. A cat is a kind of animal.
19. A German speaks German.
20. French is a difficult language.
21. A room has a door and a window.
22. I would like a drink of coffee.
23. Money is the cause of evil.



1.7 COUNTABLE OR UNCOUNTABLE?

1. The house was built of brick.
He tripped over a brick.
2. Windows are made of glass.
I'd like a glass of lager.
3. I need a paper to find out what's on.
Paper is made from wood pulp.
4. He pressed the creases out with an iron.
They used an iron to build the bridge.
5. The English and Germans drink beer.
I'd like a beer.
6. He picked up a stone from the beach.
A sculptor works with stone.
7. The balloon was filled with gas.
Carbon dioxide is a gas.
8. All work and no play is not much of a life.
What is life?
9. He died of cancer.
The politician said that unemployment was a cancer destroying the fabric of society.

1. We have bacon and egg for breakfast.
2. We had a slice of bacon and an egg for a change.
3. That student speaks English well.
4. Scotsman will sometimes speak an English so different from received pronunciation it is impossible to understand him.
5. Mr Jones has a bad temper.
6. He suffers from high blood pressure.
7. A school should have tradition.

1.8 A(N) WITH EXCLAMATIONS

Suggestions:

1. What a roadhog!
2. What a beautiful day!
3. What a surprise!
4. What a noise!
5. What a stupid thing to do!
6. What awful weather!
7. What a row!
8. What a disaster!
9. What a good idea!

1.9 TEST YOURSELF

1. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
2. An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.
3. There was a unicorn at the bottom of the garden.
4. Shall we have an hors d'oeuvres (starter) or go straight to the main course?
5. An owl hooted; an insect buzzed; the sun set.
6. What shall we have for tea?
7. "Let's see," said the waitress. "That's a tea, a milk, and a beer."
8. Patience is a virtue.
9. Hope springs eternal.
10. He hasn't a hope, not a chance.
11. Life is what you make it.
12. Some people lead a life of ease; others, a dog's life.
13. He talks a lot of nonsense.
14. What a surprise to see you!
15. What a pity you couldn't come!
16. What patience a mother has to show.
17. The first little pig built his house of straw; the second, of wood; the third, of brick.
18. What sort of coffee do you prefer? I prefer a continental blend.
19. Agoraphobia is a fear of open spaces.
20. In the darkness, a door clicked shut, a voice moaned, a chain rattled: she screamed with fear.
21. A drowning man will clutch at a straw.
22. A liar is someone who tells an unpleasant truth.
23. A lisp is to call a spade a thpade.
24. A woman's mind is cleaner than a man's because she changes it more often.
25. A man who lives in a glass house should not throw a stone.
26. Insure yourself against fire, theft and loss.
27. Charity is a thing that begins at home, and usually stays there.
28. Man is the only animal that can be a fool.
29. A woman is just a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke.
30. It's a good rule never to send a mouse to catch an elephant.

