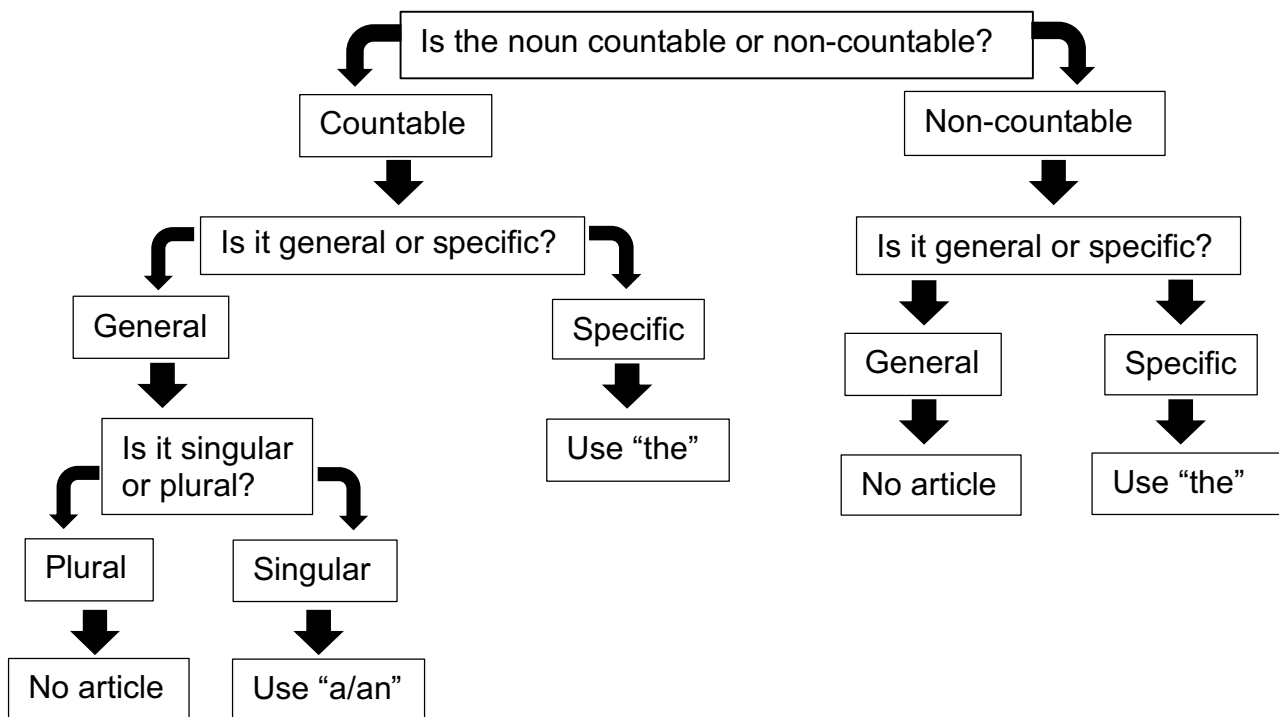




Articles

DOES MY NOUN NEED AN ARTICLE?



*DEFINITION OF TERMS

Countable Nouns can be made plural. If you can put numbers in front of it to count it, then it is a countable noun.

One apple, two apples, three apples = Correct

I have some apples = Correct

(“Apple” is a countable noun because it has a plural form.)

Non-countable Nouns cannot be made plural and they cannot be counted.

One milk, two milks, three milks = Incorrect

I have some milks = Incorrect

I have some milk = Correct

(Milk is a non-countable noun because it does not have a plural form. However, a *container* of milk is countable and can be made plural.)

General Nouns refer to ANY or ALL members within that noun group.

I sat in a chair – The word "chair" is not referring to a specific chair, but ANY chair within the noun group of chairs. Therefore, "chair" in this sentence is general.

I love apples – "Apples" in this sentence is general because it is referring to ALL types and kinds of apples within that noun group.

Specific Nouns only take the article "the."

1. Nouns are specific when the noun is narrowed down to a specific or particular member within that noun group.

I just read the saddest book. – There are many books, but only one book is the author's definition of the "saddest."

The president of my school gave a public address today. – There are many presidents but only one president of "my school;" therefore, we know that "president" in this sentence is specific.

2. General nouns can also become specific. If a general noun is mentioned more than once in a piece of writing, it becomes specific.

I live in a small town. However, the town is full of life. – The first time "town" is mentioned, it is general because we don't know which town it is. But the second time the noun is mentioned it is specific because now we know you are talking about the town you live in.

I walked into my classroom and sat in a chair. The chair was cold and hard. – The first time "chair" is mentioned we don't know anything about it, so it is general; it is referring to ANY type or kind within that noun group. But the second time "chair" is mentioned it becomes specific because now we have a reference for which chair you are referring to.

OTHER ARTICLE RULES

DO NOT use an article if a noun is preceded by a determiner or possessive (my, his, Bob's, mom's, those, these, that, some, etc.).

He took the pens. = Correct

He took some pens. = Correct

He took the some pens. = Incorrect

DO NOT use an article before names of most countries (except some, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines), languages, nationalities, sports, or academic subjects.

We lived in Spain and learned to speak Spanish. = Correct

I am from the United States. = Correct

I love living in North America. = Correct

College football is my preferred sport. = Correct

I am majoring in computer science. = Correct