Articles (the, a, an)

Articles are used to signal and/or clarify a noun. The three articles in English are a, an, and the.

When to Use an Article
- Articles are used when describing a specific noun. They are left out when talking about general nouns.
  - General noun: I like books.
  - Specific noun: I like the book about rabbits.

A, An: These articles are indefinite since they describe a less specific noun.
- A is used before a noun beginning with a consonant; an is used before a noun beginning with a vowel or words with a vowel sound.
  - Example: a hat
    - an honest man (honest has a vowel sound)
- A/An are used with the first introduction of a singular noun.
  - Example: I found a pair of earrings that match my new dress.
- When referring to a singular noun in a general way, use the indefinite article.
  - Example: A lack of knowledge will not get an applicant hired.

The: This article is definite because it describes a specific noun.
- The is used to clarify nouns and eliminate other interpretations of the sentence’s meaning.
  - Example: My dad is the oldest member of my family.
- The can be followed by both singular and plural nouns.
  - Example: The cats are sleeping.
  - The mouse ate some cheese.

Tips:
Be sure that once a noun has been introduced, the definite article the is used before the same noun later in the same sentence or paragraph.
- Example: I have two cats, a gray female and a white male. I found the gray female as a stray two years ago.