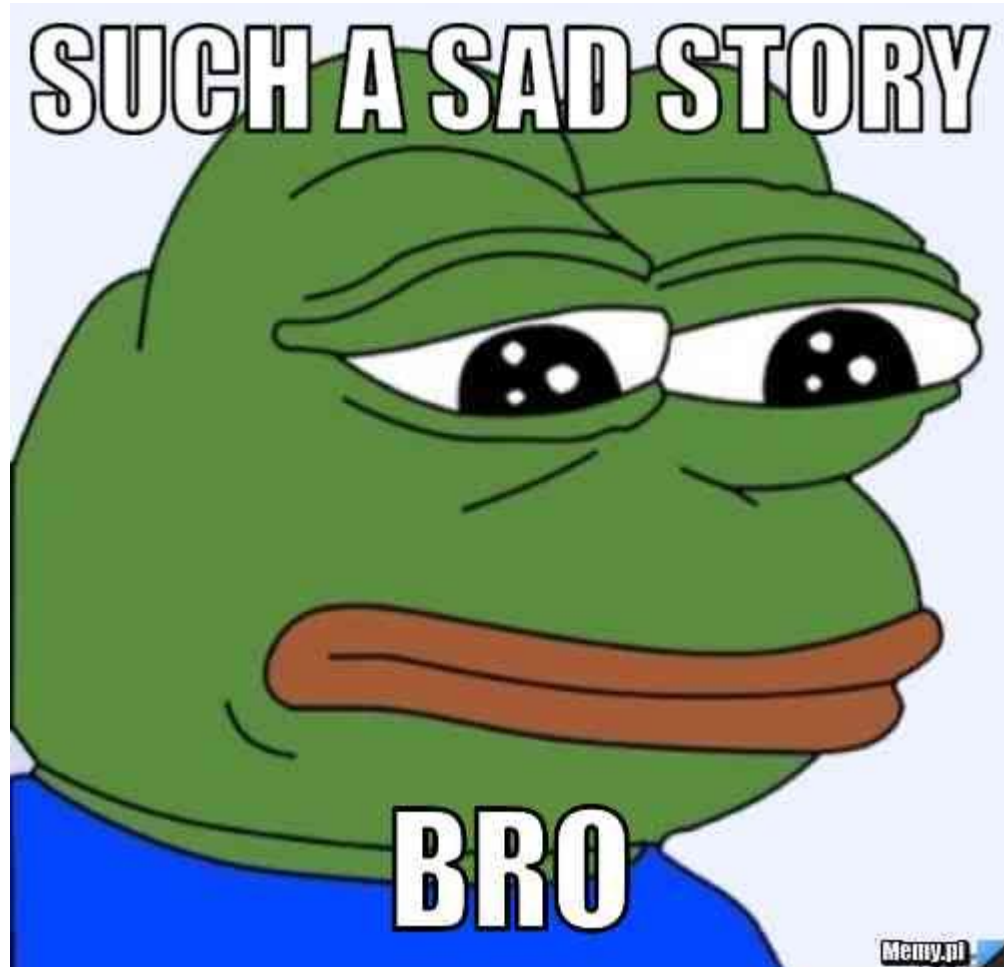


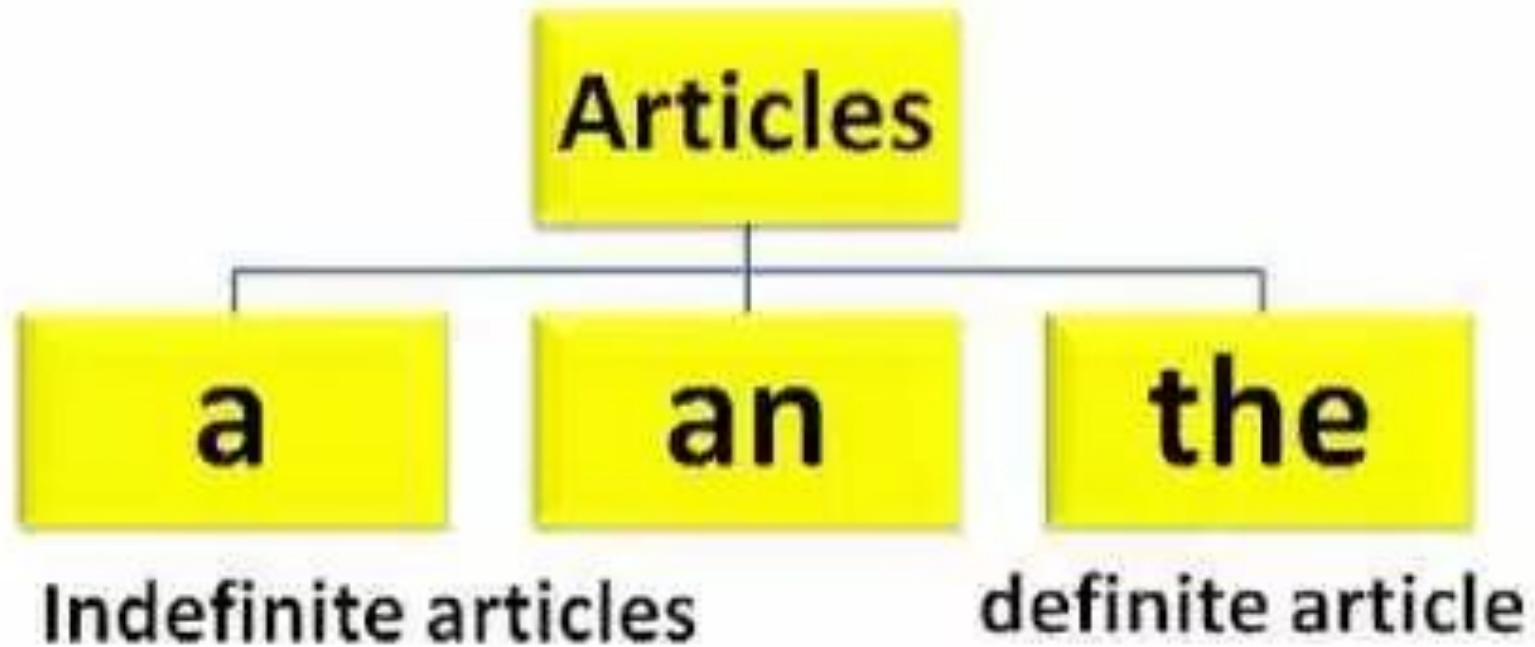
# Articles – what do I do about it?

*An apple was put on the table which a waiter  
has advised me to sit down at*

That feeling when you forget about THE in front of USA  
and don't get an American visa...



# What's the difference?



I had a sandwich and an apple for lunch.

The sandwich wasn't very good, but the apple was nice.

Joe says 'a sandwich', 'an apple' because this is the first time he talks about them.

Joe now says 'the sandwich', 'the apple' because Karen knows which sandwich and which apple he means – **the** sandwich and **the** apple that he had for lunch.



Compare **a** and **the** in these examples:

- A man and a woman were sitting opposite me. **The** man was American, but I think **the** woman was British.
- When we were on holiday, we stayed at a hotel. Sometimes we ate at **the** hotel and sometimes we went to a restaurant.

We use **the** when there is only one of something:

- What is **the** longest river in **the** world? (there is only one longest river)
- The** earth goes round **the** sun and **the** moon goes round **the** earth.
- Have you ever crossed **the** equator?
- I'm going away at **the** end of this month.

Don't forget **the**:

- Paris is **the** capital of France. (*not* Paris is capital of ...)

But we use **a/an** to say what kind of thing something is (see Unit 71B). Compare **the** and **a**:

- The** sun is **a** star. (= one of many stars)
- The** hotel we stayed at was **a** very nice hotel.

We say: **the** sky, **the** sea, **the** ground, **the** country, **the** environment.

- We looked up at all the stars in **the** sky. (*not* in sky)
- Would you like to live in **the** country? (= not in a town)
- We must do more to protect **the** environment. (= the natural world around us)

But we say **space** (without **the**) when we mean 'space in the universe'. Compare:

- There are millions of stars in **space**. (*not* in the space)
- I tried to park my car, but **the** space was too small.

We use **the** before **same** (the same):

- Your pullover is **the same** colour as mine. (*not* is same colour)
- 'Are these keys **the same**?' 'No, they're different.'

We say: (go to) **the cinema**, **the theatre**.

- I go to **the cinema** a lot, but I haven't been to **the theatre** for ages.

When we say **the cinema** / **the theatre**, we do not necessarily mean a specific cinema or theatre.

We usually say **the radio**, but **television** (without **the**). Compare:

- I listen to **the radio** a lot.                    *but*    I watch **television** a lot.
- We heard the news on **the radio**.    *but*    We watched the news on **television**.

The television = the television set:

- Can you turn off **the television**, please?

**Breakfast lunch dinner**

We do *not* normally use **the** with the names of meals (**breakfast, lunch** etc.):

- What did you have for **breakfast**?
- We had **lunch** in a very nice restaurant.
- What time is **dinner**?

But we use **a** if there is an adjective before **breakfast, lunch** etc. :

- We had **a very nice lunch**. (*not* We had very nice lunch)

**Platform 5 Room 126** etc.

We do *not* use **the** before *noun + number*. For example, we say:

- Our train leaves from **Platform 5**. (*not* the Platform 5)
- (*in a shop*) Have you got these shoes in **size 43**? (*not* the size 43)

In the same way, we say: **Room 126** (in a hotel), **page 29** (of a book), **question 3** (in an exam), **Gate 10** (at an airport) etc.

Put in the where necessary. If you don't need the, leave the space empty.

- 1 I haven't been to .....*the*..... cinema for ages.
- 2 I lay down on ..... ground and looked up at ..... sky.
- 3 Sarah spends most of her free time watching ..... television.
- 4 ..... television was on, but nobody was watching it.
- 5 Lisa and I arrived at ..... same time.
- 6 Have you had ..... dinner yet?
- 7 You'll find ..... information you need at ..... top of ..... page 15.
- 8 What's ..... capital city of Canada?



Put in a/an or the.

- 1 This morning I bought .....*a*..... newspaper and ..... magazine. .... newspaper is in my bag, but I can't remember where I put ..... magazine.
- 2 I saw ..... accident this morning. .... car crashed into ..... tree. .... driver of ..... car wasn't hurt, but ..... car was badly damaged.
- 3 There are two cars parked outside: ..... blue one and ..... grey one. .... blue one belongs to my neighbours; I don't know who ..... owner of ..... grey one is.
- 4 My friends live in ..... old house in ..... small village. There is ..... beautiful garden behind ..... house. I would like to have ..... garden like that.