

Eastside Literacy Tutor Support
Student Handout - Use of Articles

How to Use English Articles

A	A thing = any thing (use “a” for a noun that begins with a consonant).
An	An object = any object (use “an” for a noun that begins with a vowel).
The	The object = some specific object (any noun).
(no article)	No article is needed for certain locations and activities that are part of daily life: home, school, work, church, class, lunch, etc.

Examples

I want to drive a car. (Any car will do. I don't want to walk!)

I want to drive the car. (It's the car we are in, or the car we own.)

I need to go to a store. (Any store will do.)

I need to go to the store. (It's the store we usually go to - such as a grocery store that is nearby.)

I see a child. (Used the first time that we refer to this child; the child is unknown to us.)

I see the child. (Refers to the child we have just spoken of, or someone we expect.)

I drove past a school. (I've never seen that school before.)

I drove past the school where my son goes. (I know that specific school.)

My son goes to school here. (No article necessary since it is his regular school.)