

Adjectives and Articles

The Adjective

2c. An **adjective** is a word that is used to modify a noun or a pronoun.

A noun or pronoun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

To *modify* a word means to describe the word or to make its meaning more definite. An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun by telling *what kind, which one, how much, or how many*.

WHAT KIND? **German** pen pal, **happy** dog, **green** grass

WHICH ONE OR ONES? **third** bus stop, **those** lockers, **every** desk

HOW MUCH? OR HOW MANY? **some** fruit, **four** quarters, **no** shoes

Sometimes an adjectives comes after the word it modifies.

EXAMPLES The kitten, **energetic** and **playful**, chased a butterfly. [The adjectives *energetic* and *playful* describe *kitten*.]

The butterfly is **yellow**. [The predicate adjective *yellow* describes *butterfly*.]

NOTE Remember that proper adjectives, such as *German* and *Canadian*, are capitalized.

EXERCISE A Underline each adjective in each of the following sentences. Some sentences may contain more than one adjective. Do not underline *a*, *an*, or *the* in this exercise.

Examples 1. The story, short and suspenseful, entertained me. [*Short* and *suspenseful* describe *story*.]

2. Some students enrolled in the French class. [*Some* describes *students*. *French* describes *class*.]

1. In the box lay beautiful gems. [Which word describes *gems*?]
2. The clean table was shiny. [Which words describe *table*?]
3. Shelby lent ten dollars to a good friend.
4. That frog lives in a small pond.
5. A new student has joined the seventh grade.
6. The artist, creative and successful, opened a gallery.
7. Few people have climbed to the top of the icy mountain.
8. A piece of African art was hanging above the large fireplace.
9. The enthusiastic audience applauded each act of the play.
10. No points were scored until several minutes had passed.

Articles

The adjectives *a*, *an*, and *the* are called **articles**. *A* and *an* are called **indefinite articles** because they refer to any member of a general group.

- *A* is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound.
- *An* is used before a word beginning with a vowel sound.

EXAMPLES **A** mosquito bit me. [*Mosquito* begins with a consonant sound.]

An umbrella shields you from a rain shower. [*Umbrella* begins with a vowel sound.]

The circus clown rode **a** unicycle. [Even though *u* is a vowel, the word *unicycle* begins with a consonant sound. Do you hear the *y* sound?]

I'll meet you in **an** hour. [Even though *h* is a consonant, the word *hour* begins with a vowel sound. The *h* is not pronounced.]

The is called the **definite article** because it refers to someone or something in particular.

EXAMPLES **The** mosquito bit me. [A specific mosquito bit me.]

May I borrow **the** umbrella? [I want to borrow a specific umbrella.]

EXERCISE B Underline all of the articles in the following sentences. Some sentences may have more than one article.

Examples 1. Could you pass me an envelope and a pen? [*An envelope* refers to any envelope.

A pen refers to any pen.]

2. I pulled the book from my backpack. [*The book* refers to a specific book.]

11. Megan found the bracelet under her desk. [Which word makes *bracelet* specific?]

12. Philip sketched a motorcycle on his notebook. [Which word makes *motorcycle* not specific?]

13. A light bulb in the kitchen has burned out.

14. There is an owl on the top branch of that tree.

15. I offered the cold fruit juice to my friend.

16. The treasure map had an X drawn on it in black ink.

17. My entry in the contest received an honorable mention.

18. I sing in a choir in my church.

19. Janice sliced a banana into the bowl of cereal.

20. Our hotel room was on an upper floor.