

8-6 GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE USAGE

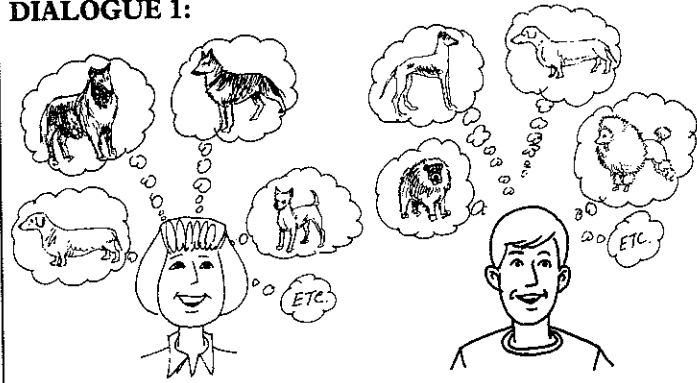
	USING A OR Ø (NO ARTICLE)	USING A OR SOME		USING THE
SINGULAR COUNT NOUNS	<p>(a) A dog makes a good pet. (b) A banana is yellow. (c) A pencil contains lead.</p> <p>A speaker uses a with a singular count noun when s/he is making a generalization. In (a): The speaker is talking about any dog, all dogs, dogs in general.</p>	<p>(j) I saw a dog in my yard. (k) Mary ate a banana. (l) I need a pencil.</p>	<p>A speaker uses a with a singular count noun when s/he is talking about one thing (or person) that is not specific. In (j): The speaker is saying, "I saw one dog (not two dogs, some dogs, many dogs). It wasn't a specific dog (e.g., your dog, the neighbor's dog, that dog). It was only one dog out of the whole group of animals called dogs."</p>	<p>(s) Did you feed the dog? (t) I had a banana and an apple. I gave the banana to Mary. (u) The pencil on that desk is Jim's. (v) The sun is shining. (w) Please close the door. (x) Mary is in the kitchen.</p> <p>The is used in front of: singular count nouns: <i>the dog</i> plural count nouns: <i>the dogs</i> noncount nouns: <i>the fruit</i></p> <p>A speaker uses the (not a, Ø, or some) when the speaker and the listener are thinking about the same specific thing(s) or person(s). In (s): The speaker and the listener are thinking about the same specific dog. The listener knows which dog the speaker is talking about: the dog that they own, the dog that they feed every day. There is only one dog that the speaker could possibly be talking about. In (t): A speaker uses the when s/he mentions a noun the second time. First mention: <i>I had a banana . . .</i> Second mention: <i>I gave the banana . . .</i> In the second mention, the listener now knows which banana the speaker is talking about: the banana the speaker had (not the banana John had, not the banana in that bowl).</p>
PLURAL COUNT NOUNS	<p>(d) Ø Dogs make good pets. (e) Ø Bananas are yellow. (f) Ø Pencils contain lead.</p> <p>A speaker uses no article (Ø) with a plural count noun when s/he is making a generalization.* In (d): The speaker is talking about any dog, all dogs, dogs in general. Note: (a) and (d) have the same meaning.</p>	<p>(m) I saw some dogs in my yard. (n) Mary bought some bananas. (o) Bob has some pencils in his pocket.</p>	<p>A speaker often uses some** with a plural count noun when s/he is talking about things (or people) that are not specific. In (m): The speaker is saying, "I saw more than one dog. They weren't specific dogs (e.g., your dogs, the neighbor's dogs, those dogs). The exact number of dogs isn't important (two dogs, five dogs); I'm simply saying that I saw an indefinite number of dogs."</p>	<p>(y) Did you feed the dogs? (z) I had some bananas and some apples. I gave the bananas to Mary. (aa) The pencils on that desk are Jim's. (bb) Please turn off the lights.</p>
NONCOUNT NOUNS	<p>(g) Ø Fruit is good for you. (h) Ø Coffee contains caffeine. (i) I like Ø music.</p> <p>A speaker uses no article (Ø) with a noncount noun when s/he is making a generalization.* In (g): The speaker is talking about any fruit, all fruit, fruit in general.</p>	<p>(p) I bought some fruit. (q) Bob drank some coffee. (r) Would you like to listen to some music?</p>	<p>A speaker often uses some** with a noncount noun when s/he is talking about something that is not specific. In (p): The speaker is saying, "I bought an indefinite amount of fruit. The exact amount isn't important information (e.g., two pounds of fruit, four bananas and two apples). And I'm not talking about specific fruit (e.g., that fruit, the fruit in that bowl.)"</p>	<p>(cc) The fruit in this bowl is ripe. (dd) I drank some coffee and some milk. The coffee was hot. (ee) I can't hear you. The music is too loud. (ff) The air is cold today.</p>

*Sometimes a speaker uses an expression of quantity (e.g., **almost all**, **most**, **some**) when s/he makes a generalization: *Almost all dogs make good pets. Most dogs are friendly. Some dogs have short hair.*

In addition to **some, a speaker might use **several**, **a few**, **a lot of**, *etc.* with a plural count noun, or **a little**, **a lot of**, *etc.* with a noncount noun. (See Chart 8-1.)

□ EXERCISE 10: Discuss SPEAKER A's use of articles in the following dialogues. Why does SPEAKER A use *a*, *some*, *the*, or \emptyset ? Discuss what both SPEAKER A and SPEAKER B are thinking about.

DIALOGUE 1:



A: **A dog** makes a good pet.

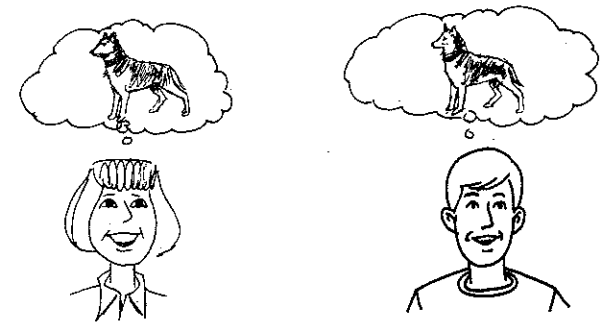
B: I agree.

DIALOGUE 2:



A: I saw **a dog** in my yard.

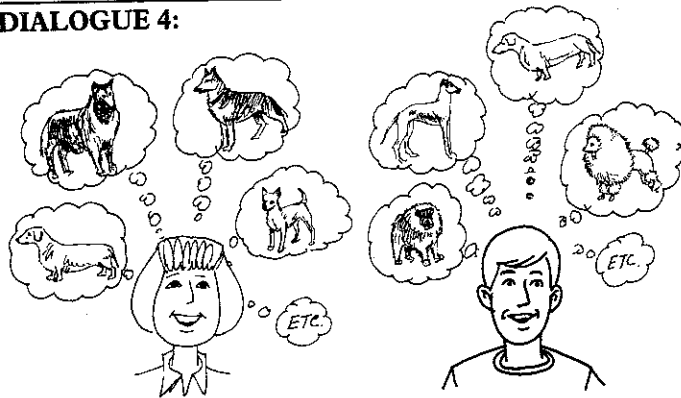
DIALOGUE 3:



A: Did you feed **the dog**?

B: Yes.

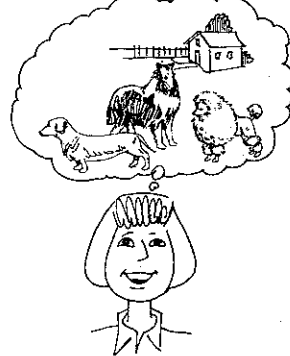
DIALOGUE 4:



A: **Dogs** make good pets.

B: I agree.

DIALOGUE 5:



A: I saw **some dogs** in my yard.

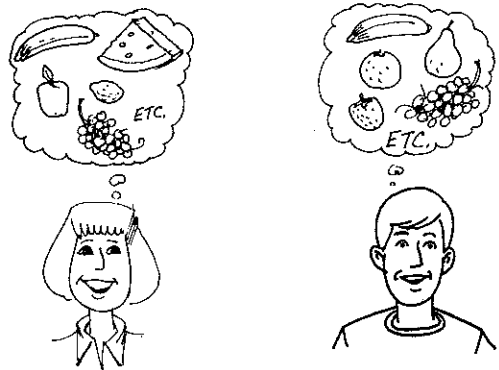
DIALOGUE 6:



A: Did you feed **the dogs**?

B: Yes.

DIALOGUE 7:



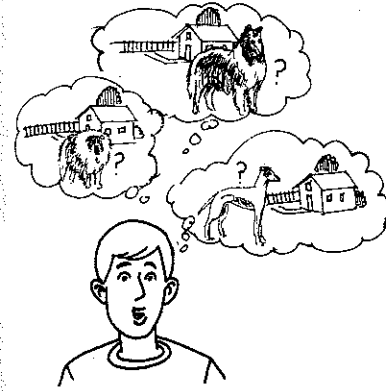
A: **Fruit** is good for you.

B: I agree.

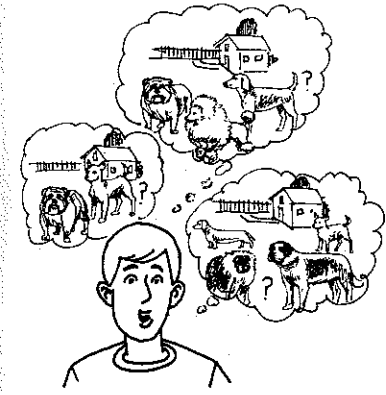
DIALOGUE 8:



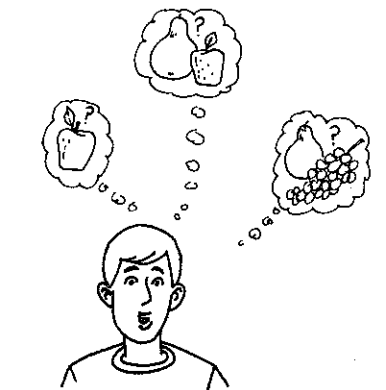
A: I ate **some fruit**.



B: Oh?

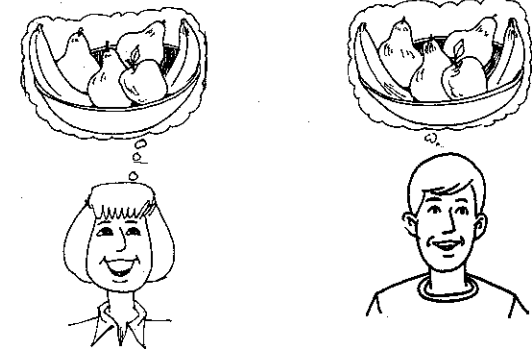


B: Oh?



B: Oh?

DIALOGUE 9:



A: **The fruit** in this bowl is ripe.

B: Good.

□ EXERCISE 11: Here are some conversations. Try to decide whether the speakers probably use *the* or *a/an*. * Are the speakers thinking about the same objects or persons?

1. A: Do you have a car?
B: No. But I have a bicycle.
2. A: Do you need the car today, honey?
B: Yes. I have a lot of errands to do. Why don't I drive you to work today?
A: Okay. But be sure to fill the car up with gas sometime today.
3. A: Did you have a good time at _____ party last night?
B: Yes.
A: So did I. I'm glad that you decided to go with me.
4. A: What did you do last night?
B: I went to _____ party.
A: Oh? Where was it?
5. A: I bought _____ table yesterday.
B: Oh? I didn't know you went shopping for furniture.
6. A: Have you seen my keys?
B: Yes. They're on _____ table next to _____ front door.
7. A: Is Mr. Jones _____ graduate student?
B: No. He's _____ professor.
8. A: Where's _____ professor?
B: She's absent today.
9. A: Would you like to go to _____ zoo this afternoon?
B: Sure. Why not?
10. A: Does San Diego have _____ zoo?
B: Yes. It's world famous.
11. A: Where do you live?
B: We live on _____ quiet street in the suburbs.

*A is used in front of nouns that begin with a consonant sound: *a book, a dog, a pencil*. An is used in front of nouns that begin with a vowel sound: *an apple, an elephant, an idea, an opinion, an uncle, an hour*.

12. A: I'm hungry and I'm tired of walking. How much farther is it to _____ restaurant?
B: Just a couple of blocks. Let's cross _____ street here.
A: Are you sure you know where you're going?
13. A: Did Bob find _____ job?
B: Yes. He's working at _____ restaurant.
A: Oh? Which one?
14. A: Did you feed _____ cat?
B: Yes. I fed him a couple of hours ago.
15. A: Does Jane have _____ cat?
B: No, she has _____ dog. She doesn't like cats.
16. A: Where's Dennis?
B: He's in _____ kitchen.
17. A: Do you like your new apartment?
B: Yes. It has _____ big kitchen.

□ EXERCISE 12: Complete the sentences with the given nouns. Use *the* for specific statements. Do not use *the* for general statements.

1. *flowers* a. The flowers in that vase are beautiful.
b. Flowers are beautiful.
2. *mountains* a. _____ are beautiful.
b. _____ in Colorado are beautiful.
3. *water* a. _____ consists of hydrogen and oxygen.
b. I don't want to go swimming today. _____ is too cold.
4. *information* a. _____ in that book is inaccurate.
b. An encyclopedia is a source of _____.
5. *health* a. _____ is more important than money.
b. Doctors are concerned with _____ of their patients.

6. *men* a. _____ generally have stronger muscles than _____.
- women* b. At the party last night, _____ sat on one side of the room and _____ sat on the other.
7. *problems* a. Everyone has _____.
- b. Irene told me about _____ she had with her car yesterday.
8. *happiness* a. I can't express _____ I felt when I heard the good news.
- b. Everyone seeks _____.
9. *vegetables* a. _____ are good for you.
- b. _____ we had for dinner last night were overcooked.
10. *gold* a. _____ is a precious metal.
- b. _____ in Mary's ring is 24 karats.

EXERCISE 13: Add *the* if necessary. Otherwise, make the symbol Ø to show that no article is necessary.

- Please pass me *the* butter.
- Ø butter is a dairy product.
- John, where's _____ milk? Is it in _____ refrigerator or on _____ table?
- _____ milk comes from cows and goats.
- Tom usually has _____ wine with dinner.
- Dinner's ready. Shall I pour _____ wine?
- I'm studying _____ English. I'm studying _____ grammar.
- _____ grammar in this chapter isn't easy.
- _____ chemistry is my favorite subject.

- Do you like _____ weather in this city?
- _____ copper is used in electrical wiring.
- _____ air is free.
- _____ air is humid today.
- _____ windows are closed. Please open them.
- _____ windows are made of _____ glass.
- We usually have _____ meat for dinner.
- _____ meat we had for dinner last night was tough.
- People used to use _____ candles for _____ light, but now they use _____ electricity.

EXERCISE 14: Use *a/an/some* or *the* in the following. REMINDER: Use *the* when a noun is mentioned for the second time.

- Yesterday I saw *a* dog and *a* cat. *The* dog was chasing *the* cat. _____ cat was chasing _____ mouse. _____ mouse ran into _____ hole, but _____ hole was very small. _____ cat couldn't get into _____ hole, so it ran up _____ tree. _____ dog tried to climb _____ tree too, but it couldn't.
- Yesterday I bought _____ clothes. I bought _____ suit, _____ shirt, and _____ tie. _____ suit is gray and comes with a vest. _____ shirt is pale blue, and _____ tie has black and gray stripes.
- Yesterday I saw _____ man and _____ woman. They were having _____ argument. _____ man was yelling at _____ woman, and _____ woman was shouting at _____ man. I don't know what _____ argument was about.
- I had _____ soup and _____ sandwich for lunch. _____ soup was too salty, but _____ sandwich was pretty good.

5. A: I saw _____ accident yesterday.
 B: Oh? Where?
 A: On Grand Avenue. _____ man in _____ Volkswagen drove through a stop sign and hit _____ bus.
 B: Was anyone hurt in _____ accident?
 A: I don't think so. _____ man who was driving _____ Volkswagen got out of his car and seemed to be okay. His car was only slightly damaged. No one in _____ bus was hurt.
6. A: What did you do last weekend?
 B: I went on _____ picnic Saturday and saw _____ movie Sunday.
 A: Did you have fun?
 B: _____ picnic was fun, but _____ movie was boring.

□ EXERCISE 15: Complete the sentences with *a*, *an*, *some*, *the*, or \emptyset .

1. A: Do you like _____ fruit?
 B: Very much.
2. A: I'm hungry.
 B: Would you like _____ fruit? How about _____ apple?
3. A: _____ fruit we bought at the market was fresh.
 B: That's the best place to buy _____ fruit.
4. _____ gas is expensive nowadays.
5. _____ gas at Mack's Service Station is cheaper than _____ gas at the Shell Station.
6. I need _____ gas. Let's stop at the next service station.
7. Kathy bought _____ radio. She likes to listen to _____ music when she studies.
8. A: Would you please turn _____ radio down? _____ music is too loud.
 B: No problem.

9. A: Do you see _____ man who is standing next to Janet?
 B: Yes. Who is he?
 A: He's _____ president of this university.
10. A one-dollar bill has the picture of _____ president of the United States. It's the picture of George Washington.
11. A: What did you buy when you went shopping?
 B: I bought _____ blouse and _____ jewelry.
 A: What color is _____ blouse?
 B: Red.
12. A: Where's my bookbag?
 B: It's on _____ floor over there, in _____ corner next to _____ sofa.
13. We need to buy _____ furniture. I'd like to get _____ sofa and _____ easy chair.
14. _____ furniture is expensive these days.
15. _____ vegetarian doesn't eat _____ meat.
16. Last week I read _____ book about _____ life of Gandhi.
17. I enjoy _____ life.
18. A: Let's go swimming in _____ lake today.
 B: That sounds like _____ good idea.
19. _____ lake is a body of _____ water that is smaller than _____ sea but larger than _____ pond. _____ ocean is larger than _____ sea.
20. During our vacation in Florida, we walked along _____ beach in front of our hotel and looked at _____ ocean.
21. People can drink _____ fresh water. They can't drink _____ seawater because it contains _____ salt.
22. I had _____ interesting experience yesterday. _____ man in _____ blue suit came into my office and handed me _____ bouquet of _____ flowers. I had never seen _____ man before in my life, but I thanked him for _____ flowers. Then he walked out _____ door.