

## Rob Whyte's Writing Class: Articles and Nouns

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1. A/An with a single, general countable noun. It's not specific, we don't know which one.
  - John went to the airport in a taxi.
  - The taxi was black and yellow.

In the first sentence we use a. Why? The taxi is not specific. It's any taxi.

But, in the second sentence, we're talking about one specific taxi.

Which taxi? The taxi John was talking to the airport. That's why we use **The** in the second sentence.

Here's is another example.

- Hyun-chul wrote an email to his professor.
- The email said that Hyun-chul was going to be late for class tomorrow.

2. Don't use a/the with single non-count nouns. These are general things.

- Gasoline is expensive.
- Water is important.
- Rice is delicious.

3. But, look at these sentences. They talk about specific things. So we should use THE.

- The gasoline at ESSO Oilbank is expensive.
- The water in Victoria is clean.
- The rice in this restaurant is delicious.

4. Use **A** with counters plus non-count nouns. In these sentences, use the same rules as #1.

- I have a bottle of vinegar in my bag.
- The bottle of vinegar costs \$1.50 at HomePlus.

5. Use **THE** when the reader knows the noun you are talking about because it is unique.

- You should not look directly at **the** sun. (there is only one sun)
- Please close **the** door when you come in the class. (you come in only one door).

6. Don't use **THE** with plural nouns that mean ALL or IN GENERAL

- The LED signs are everywhere in the downtown area. (X)
- LED signs are everywhere in the downtown area.

If we make a small change, we need **THE**. Why do we use THE here?

- The LED signs in the downtown area are bright at night.

7. Usually, don't use **THE** with proper names.

- I live in the Busan. (X)
- I talked with the Professor Whyte. (X)
- The Seoul is the capital city of the Korea. (X)

## SUMMARY

	Rules	Example
1	First time you talk about a general noun: use <b>A/An</b> with a single, general countable noun. Use <b>THE</b> second time.	I saw a dog. The dog was black.
2	Don't use <b>A/THE</b> with single, general non-count noun.	Espresso coffee is delicious.
3	Use <b>THE</b> with specific non count nouns.	The espresso coffee in France is delicious.
4	Use <b>A or THE</b> with counters plus non-count nouns	I see a bottle of wine on the table. The bottle of wine comes from France.
5	Use <b>THE</b> when the reader knows which noun you are talking about.	Open the window, please.
6	Don't use <b>THE</b> with plural nouns that mean ALL or IN GENERAL.	Oranges are my favorite breakfast food.
7	Don't use <b>THE</b> with proper names.	Homeplus is a large department store.