Some Rules about Articles Part 1

Articles in writing are hard to understand, and use properly. Let’s look at some rules and use them in a short writing lesson.

Articles: the, a/an, some

Rule #1. Writing about single countable nouns: first time A, second time THE.

I saw a dog yesterday.
The dog was playing with a cat.
The cat was big and black.

Rule #2: For plural nouns use SOME and THE.

There were some cats on the wall.
The cats were eating some dead fish.
The fish came from a garbage can

Rule #3: Use THE when the reader understands the countable noun which you are talking about.

1. You should not look directly at the sun.
2. I went to the airport to pickup my friend.
3. Can you tell me where I can find the bathroom?
4. Do you want to me to turn on the heater?
5. The delivery man rang the doorbell.

Rule #4: Use THE when the reader knows the plural noun. Compare these pairs of sentences. What is the difference?

I love to eat oranges.
The oranges in the basket are fresh.

People should not drink milk.
The milk on the table is too old to drink.

Ham is my favorite food at Thanksgiving.
The ham in the basket smells great.
Part 2 Practice

A, And or The?

1. There is ________ rainbow in ________ sky.
2. Who is ________ woman in ________ hall?
3. ________ doctor gave Barry ________ IV.
4. Jennifer opened ________ door to let ________ dog in.
5. Kevin is ________ only child in ________ family.
6. What’s ________ largest mammal in ________ world?
7. There’s ________ bird in ________ tree.
8. Doug is writing ________ letter to her niece.
9. June has ________ brother and ________ sister.
10. They reached ________ top of ________ mountain in 2 hours.
11. ________ cherries are sweet.
12. ________ cherries from Argentina don’t taste good.

Add articles if required.

Gary lives in ________ house with his mom, dad and brother, Jack. ________ house has three bedrooms, ________ kitchen, two bathrooms and ________ big backyard. John’s father works for ________ software company. His mom runs ________ small business at home. She spends her day talking on ________ telephone, calling clients and writing ________ reports. His brother is ________ high school student but he helps with ________ housework. He likes using ________ vacuum cleaner and washing ________ dishes. Every Saturday morning, Gary has the same routine. He eats ________ oranges for breakfast. He thinks ________ oranges from California are the best. Every Saturday, he gets ________ allowance for helping with ________ chores.
Dogs and Sausages