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ARTICLES: A/AN, THE, Ø (1)

1 - Use A and/or An

A or an means one person or thing. Use them:

- before singular nouns: I saw **a** plane.
- before the name of a job: My sister is **an** air traffic controller.

Use **a** before consonant sounds: **a** plane, **a** runway, **a** clearance. (This includes letters u or eu when they are pronounced y (/j/): **a** university, **a** euro).

Use **an** before vowel sounds. These words usually start with a, e, i, o, u: **an** aircraft, **an** aerodrome, **an** idea. Also use **an** with words that start with the letter h when the h is not pronounced: **an** hour, **an** honour.

2 - Use The

- before singular nouns that we have already mentioned with a/an: We saw a plane. **The** plane was at the holding point.
- before singular, plural or uncountable nouns when it is clear which person or thing we mean: The plane was at **the** holding point (of **the** runway in use).
- before nouns when there is only one: **The** sun is shining.
- before countries with plural names or with Republic or Kingdom in the name: **The** Netherlands, **The** United Kingdom.
- before the names of rivers, seas, oceans and mountain ranges: **The** Thames, **The** Atlantic, **The** Alps.
- before parts of the day: in **the** morning.

3 - Use Ø

- when talking about things in general: Pilots are highly trained professionals, I like playing tennis.
- before the names of most countries, cities and continents, single mountains and lakes: Germany, Beijing, Europe, Mount Everest.
- before exact days, months and times: on Friday, in June, at midnight.
- before a noun expressing a general concept: I am studying social Darwinism.

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