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Faculty of Economics, Commerce and Management Sciences

Commerce Department



Module: English

Branch: Commercial Sciences

Level: Second year Bachelor

Lecture 01: The Definite and Indefinite Articles (a/an/the)

- ▶ **a/an** = indefinite article that refers any noun.
- ▶ **The** = definite article that refers to a certain or specific noun.

For example:

- “Let’s see **a** movie” means any movie. (Indefinite)
- “Let’s see **the** movie” means a certain movie. (Definite)

1)-The use of “a”:

- ▶ “A” is used in front of singular countable nouns (a person, animal, or thing), which are not specific.
- ▶ We do not use “a” before uncountable or plural nouns.
- ▶ If a noun starts with a consonant sound (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, etc), “a” comes before the noun.

Eg: a dog, a boy, a teacher, a girl, a lesson, etc.

2) - The use of “an”:

- ▶ “An” used in front of singular countable nouns which are not specific.
- ▶ We do not use “an” before uncountable or plural nouns.
- ▶ If the noun starts with a vowel sound (a, i, o, u, e), “an” comes before the noun.

Eg: an umbrella, an image, an hour, an author, an owl, etc.

3)- The use of “the”:

- ▶ “The” is used when something we are talking about is clear.

For example: **The sun** comes up every day.

- ▶ “**The**” is used when there is only one of a particular thing.

Eg: We went to **the most expensive city** in the world.

▪ The + adjective

- ▶ “**The**” is used with some adjectives (without a noun).

For example: **the young, the old, the sick** (The meaning is always plural). Eg: Do you think that **the rich** should give money to **the poor**?

▶ “**The**” is used with most nationality words which refer to the people of a specific country. For example: **the Canadians, the Japanese.**

▶ *Certain nouns use “the”:*

- Names of rivers, oceans and seas: **the Mississippi, the Atlantic.**

- Points on the globe: **the Equator, the South Pole.**

- Geographical areas: **the Middle East, the West**, as well as **deserts, forests, gulfs, and peninsulas.**