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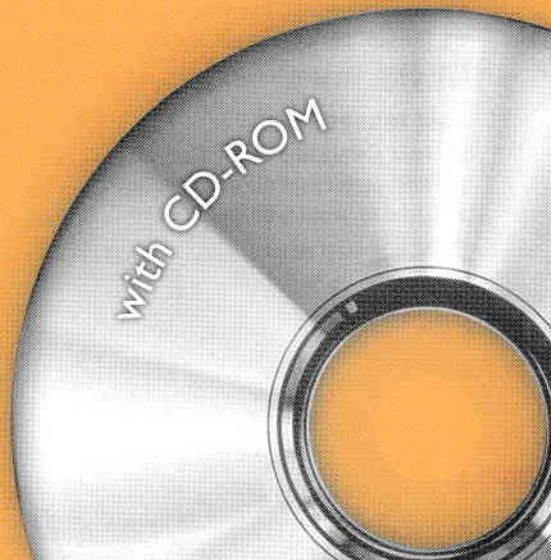
**THIRD EDITION**



# Grammar Practice

for Upper Intermediate Students

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with Elaine Walker and  
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## GRAMMAR

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#### Nouns, determiners, articles

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## 1 Articles

### Definite or indefinite meaning?

- We use the indefinite article *a/an* + singular countable noun to refer to any one of a kind or group, or when a noun is mentioned for the first time: *I'd like **an apple**. Anne's **a doctor**. I've got **a cold/headache**. I met **a nice girl** on holiday.*
- We use the definite article *the* + countable, uncountable or plural noun when the noun refers to something specific or unique, or to something already mentioned: *Let's go to **the park**. What's **the capital** of your country? **The weather's** awful. Which is the longest river in **the world**? **The boy** I met is called Andrew.*

### General meaning

- We use zero article (no article) + plural countable noun or uncountable noun to make generalisations: *I like **cats** better than **dogs**. **Water** contains **oxygen**. Modern **life** is stressful.* (Not ~~*The modern life is stressful.*~~)
- We can also use *a/an* to refer to all examples of the same kind: ***A doctor** earns more than **a teacher**.* (= all doctors, all teachers)
- We can use *the* to refer to a whole class:
  - before singular nouns for species, inventions and musical instruments: ***The whale** is a mammal. Who invented **the computer**? I play **the piano**.*
  - before plural nationality adjectives and some adjectives with plural meaning: ***the Americans the Japanese the rich the old***
- We use *the* before superlative adjectives: ***the best the most expensive***

### Other uses of articles

- We use *a/an* with expressions of quantity and frequency: ***a half a couple a million** €2 **a kilo** (= per kilo) 50 km **an hour** (= in an hour) twice **a week***
- We use *the* with plural names of countries, oceans/seas, rivers, deserts, mountain ranges, groups of islands and regions: ***the United States the Pacific the North Sea the Thames the Sahara the Alps the Maldives the Middle East***
- We also use *the* with names of hotels, cinemas, theatres, museums and newspapers: ***the Hilton the Odeon Cinema the National Theatre the Natural History Museum the Times***
- We use zero article with names of continents and most countries, states, cities/towns, mountains, lakes, streets/roads, parks, shops, restaurants and some magazines: *Europe Spain California Paris Mount Everest Lake Ontario Oxford Street Hyde Park Harrods Hello Magazine*
- We also use zero article with meals, games, sports, subjects, languages, some illnesses and institutions (unless referring to a specific one): *lunch chess tennis maths Italian sunburn cancer school university prison*

➤ **For prepositional phrases, see Unit 82.**

**1a** Complete the sentences. Use *a, an* or *the*.

- o Have you seen ..... *the* newspaper? I can't find it anywhere.
- 1 I got my sister ..... CD and ..... new book for her birthday. I don't think she liked ..... CD, though.
- 2 Is this ..... first time you've stayed at ..... Hilton?
- 3 She started her career as ..... teacher but now she's ..... journalist.
- 4 Is ..... Nile or ..... Amazon ..... longest river in ..... world?
- 5 I took ..... bus and then ..... train to the airport. .... bus was on time but ..... train was late.
- 6 Several million visitors ..... year are attracted to ..... ski slopes on ..... Alps.
- 7 I'll meet you outside ..... post office. I'll be there in ..... quarter of ..... hour.
- 8 We lived in ..... Netherlands before moving here. But before that we worked in ..... Middle East.

**1b** Complete the essay. Use *the* or zero article (-).

### Urban life past and present

(0) ..... young people tend to think that (1) ..... life was more difficult for (2) ..... people in the past. Of course, (3) ..... lives our parents led were different from (4) ..... lives we lead today. For example, they couldn't rely as much on (5) ..... modern technology as we do. When my parents were young, (6) ..... computers were as big as a room and (7) ..... mobile phone hadn't been invented yet!

On the other hand, I don't think there were as many social problems in those days. This is partly because (8) ..... family was very important. For instance, (9) ..... families took care of (10) ..... old and weak so (11) ..... homelessness wasn't (12) ..... problem that it is today. In fact, in many ways (13) ..... life was better in the past.

**1c** Complete the sentences. Use *a, the* or zero article (-).

- o In my opinion, ..... education should be free.
- 1 ..... education I got at school was excellent.
- 2 I'd like my children to have ..... good education.
- 3 ..... car is expensive to own and run but it's a reliable form of transport.
- 4 Unfortunately, ..... car is a major cause of air pollution and global warming.
- 5 In some cities ..... cars have been banned from the centre.

- There are two main types of noun: common nouns and proper nouns.
- A common noun is any noun that is not the name of a particular person, place or thing. Common nouns can be countable or uncountable: *a queen boys sugar*
- A proper noun names an individual person, place or thing and is spelt with a capital letter. Proper nouns include:
  - the names of people and titles when we are referring to specific people: *Helen Mr Smith the President (of France) the Queen (of Sweden)*
  - places: *Thailand Vancouver the Tower of London*
  - nationalities and languages: *British Turkish Venezuelan*
  - days and months (but not seasons): *Monday July*
  - titles of books, newspapers, films, paintings, etc: *Crime and Punishment the Daily Telegraph The Lord of the Rings the Mona Lisa*
  - religions and festivals: *Buddhism/Buddhist Christianity/Christian Islam/Muslim Easter Ramadan*

▶▶ See Appendix 1: Punctuation rules, page 199.

## PRACTICE

### 2 Re-write the sentences. Use capital letters where necessary.

- 0 I went to buckingham palace today. It was great.  
*I went to Buckingham Palace today. It was great.*  
 .....
- 1 It's open to visitors daily in the summer, from august to september.  
 .....
- 2 I took the train to london and then the underground to victoria station. It's a short walk from there.  
 .....
- 3 Fortunately, I speak german so I was able to join a group of tourists from germany, who were being shown round by a guide.  
 .....
- 4 Have you met my sister jane? She's studying at the university of manchester.  
 .....
- 5 She's coming home for christmas and then she's returning to manchester for new year's eve.  
 .....
- 6 Would you like to come with us to see *titanic* at the odeon cinema on wednesday?  
 .....
- 7 Did you hear about grace's promotion? She's taken over as head of the european division of the company.  
 .....
- 8 That's great news! Does this mean she'll be moving to paris before the autumn?  
 .....

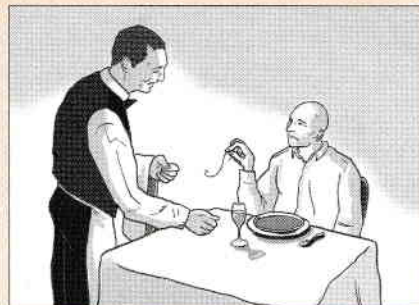
## 3 Countable and uncountable nouns

- Countable nouns have a singular and plural form. Singular countable nouns can be used with *a/an*: *an appointment* → *two appointments*
- Uncountable nouns don't have a plural form and can't be used with *a/an*. They are followed by a singular verb. They refer to substances we think of as a mass or to abstract ideas: *bread water air life love wealth happiness*
- Some common uncountable nouns are: *accommodation, advice, beauty, behaviour, bread* (and other types of food), *English* (and other languages), *equipment, exercise, food, furniture, health, information, knowledge, luggage, maths* (and other subjects), *money, music, news, permission, progress, research, scenery, steel* (and other metals), *success, traffic, travel, trouble, water* (and other liquids), *weather, work*: *I'd like some information.*
- Some *-ing* words for activities are also uncountable: *dancing, running, swimming*: *Swimming is one of the best forms of exercise.*
- We can use countable noun + *of* to count many uncountable nouns:
  - 300 grams of cheese a kilo of sugar a litre of milk*
  - a bottle of shampoo a can of cola a carton of juice a cup of coffee a glass of water a jar of jam a tin of olives a tube of toothpaste*
  - a bar of chocolate a piece of advice/equipment/furniture a handful of rice a loaf of bread a sheet of paper a slice of bread a spoonful of honey*
- Some nouns can be countable or uncountable, often with a change of meaning.

Uncountable noun	Countable noun
<b>Beauty</b> is only skin deep.	She's <b>a beauty</b> . (= a beautiful woman)
The napkins are made from linen <b>cloth</b> .	He wiped the table with <b>a clean cloth</b> .
Do you like your <b>coffee</b> black or white?	I'd like <b>a coffee</b> . (= a cup of coffee)
She has long dark <b>hair</b> .	There's <b>a hair</b> in my soup. (= one hair)
I don't eat <b>chicken</b> .	I bought <b>a chicken</b> for dinner.
I have <b>experience</b> in management.	I had <b>a bad experience</b> at work today.
Move over – I need more <b>room</b> .	There's <b>an empty room</b> next door.
There's plenty of <b>space</b> to study.	Sue cleared <b>a space</b> on her desk to work.
They're busy and haven't got <b>time</b> .	They had <b>a good time</b> .
He started <b>work</b> when he was fourteen.	He owns the collected <b>works</b> of Shakespeare.



You have beautiful **hair**.



There's **a hair** in my soup.

**3a Complete the conversations. Use the nouns in the box and a/an where necessary.**

cloth cloth experience experience glass glass  
noise ~~room~~ room university education

- 0 **A:** Is there going to be enough ..... *room* ..... in the fridge for all this food?  
**B:** Don't worry – it's a large family-size fridge.
- 1 **A:** Could I have ..... of water, please?  
**B:** Sure. Sorry. I've spilled it. Would you hand me ..... to wipe it up, please?
- 2 **A:** I see you don't have .....  
**B:** No, but I have years of ..... managing a business.
- 3 **A:** Nice suit. Is it silk?  
**B:** According to the label, it's made of fine woollen .....
- 4 **A:** I was really frightened last night. I was sure I heard ..... downstairs.  
**B:** I had ..... like that once and I called the police straightaway.
- 5 **A:** I need ..... for the night. Have you got any vacancies?  
**B:** Yes, you're in luck. There's one free on the top floor.
- 6 **A:** What's happened? There's ..... all over the floor.  
**B:** Oh, one of the kids kicked a football through the window again.

**3b Complete the leaflet. Use the nouns in the box and a/an where necessary.**

appointment classes exercise information progress swimming  
~~time~~ time up-to-date equipment valuable advice work

We're open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. so if you can't find (0) ..... *time* ..... to work out during the day, you can fit us in before or after you go to (1) ..... However, do try and make (2) ..... to consult one of our qualified instructors at (3) ..... that's convenient for you. They will give you (4) ..... about choosing the best exercise programme. Then once you start your programme, they will also help you make (5) ..... towards becoming fitter and healthier.

Our gymnasium has a full range of (6) ..... for running, cycling and weightlifting. Or, if you prefer (7) ....., try our Olympic size pool. We also have day and evening (8) ..... in yoga and Pilates for those who would like a gentler form of (9) ..... For more (10) ..... about what we offer, you can phone, e-mail or drop by and see us!

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## 4 Singular and plural nouns

- Most countable nouns have a singular and a plural form.
- To form the plural, we add -s to most nouns. There may also be other spelling changes: *event* → *events* *tomato* → *tomatoes* *opportunity* → *opportunities* *knife* → *knives* *wolf* → *wolves*
- Some nouns have an irregular plural: *child* → *children* *foot* → *feet* *man* → *men* *mouse* → *mice* *person* → *people* *tooth* → *teeth* *woman* → *women*
- Some nouns borrowed from other languages also have an irregular plural: *crisis* → *crises* *phenomenon* → *phenomena*
- Some countable nouns have the same form in the singular and plural: *aircraft* → *aircraft* *deer* → *deer* *fish* → *fish* *sheep* → *sheep*
- Some nouns end in -s in both the singular and plural: *crossroads* → *crossroads* *means* → *means* *series* → *series* *species* → *species*
- Some nouns that end in -s are uncountable and are followed by a singular verb: *athletics*, *economics*, *maths*, *measles*, *news*, *physics*: **Maths is** my best subject.
- Some nouns are only plural and are followed by a plural verb. These include:
  - nouns ending in -s for things with two parts: *binoculars*, *glasses*, *jeans*, *pyjamas*, *scissors*, *shorts*, *trousers*. To count these nouns, we can use a *pair of*: **These jeans are** too big for me. **This pair of jeans is** too big for me.
  - other nouns ending in -s: *belongings*, *clothes*, *congratulations*, *earnings*, *remains*, *outskirts*, *surroundings*: **Where are** your **belongings**?
- Some nouns can have a different meaning when they are in the plural.

Singular/Plural	Plural
She hurt her <b>arm</b> .	They carried <b>arms</b> . (= weapons)
Don't challenge his <b>authority</b> !	The <b>authorities</b> are worried about the problem.
Cheese has a high fat <b>content</b> .	The <b>contents</b> of the letter are a secret.
The <b>premise</b> of the novel is that there is life on other planets.	The company's <b>premises</b> are in the city centre.
Canada has vast natural <b>resources</b> , including oil.	He has considerable inner <b>resources</b> .
The operation restored his <b>sight</b> .	Let's go into town and see the <b>sights</b> .
You can go out on one <b>condition</b> : that you're home by midnight.	The <b>conditions</b> inside the prison were terrible.
<b>Travel</b> broadens the mind.	He wrote a book about his <b>travels</b> in the Far East.

- Collective nouns refer to groups of people: *army*, *audience*, *class*, *committee*, *community*, *company*, *crew*, *family*, *gang*, *government*, *group*, *orchestra*, *police*, *staff*, *team*. They can be followed by a singular or plural verb: *The school staff is* excellent. (= the group as a whole) *Our staff are* here to help. (= each individual in the group)

➔ See Appendix 2: Spelling rules, page 200.