

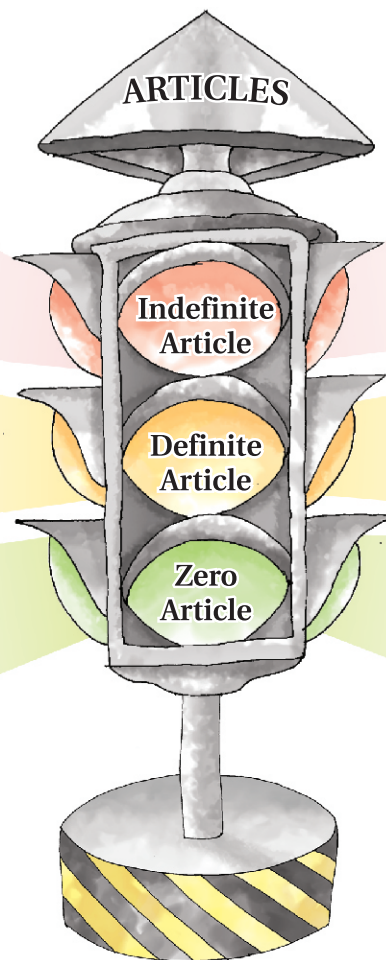
Safety with Articles



Home Page

We stop when the traffic signals on the roads of our city tell us to stop and move when they tell us to move. To avoid accidents and to have smooth traffic, we need to follow them.

Just as following the rules of the road is important for our safety, following the rules of articles is important to avoid falling into grammatical potholes. So it's important to know where to use them and where not to use them. But to follow the rules correctly, a driver first needs to know what they mean!



The adjectives 'a' or 'an' and 'the' are called articles. Articles tell us about the nouns that they precede.



Retrieve

Countable nouns are nouns that we can count by using numbers. Uncountable nouns are nouns that we cannot count by using numbers.

Fresco lives on a strange planet where countable nouns never run out of stock while uncountable nouns don't exist at all. Let's play this little game to test your grasp over countable and uncountable nouns.

Step 1: Get into two teams. Position the teams in a way that each member of Team A faces another member of Team B.

Step 2: Each member of Team A thinks of a countable noun and speaks out the sentence, 'In Fresco's world there is/are ____.' (Fill the blank with a countable noun). In the meanwhile, a member of Team B thinks of an uncountable noun and speaks out the sentence, 'In our world there is ____.' (Fill the blank with an uncountable noun).

Step 3: After each member gets a chance to speak, the teams swap the sentences. So now Team B speaks countable nouns and Team A speaks uncountable nouns.

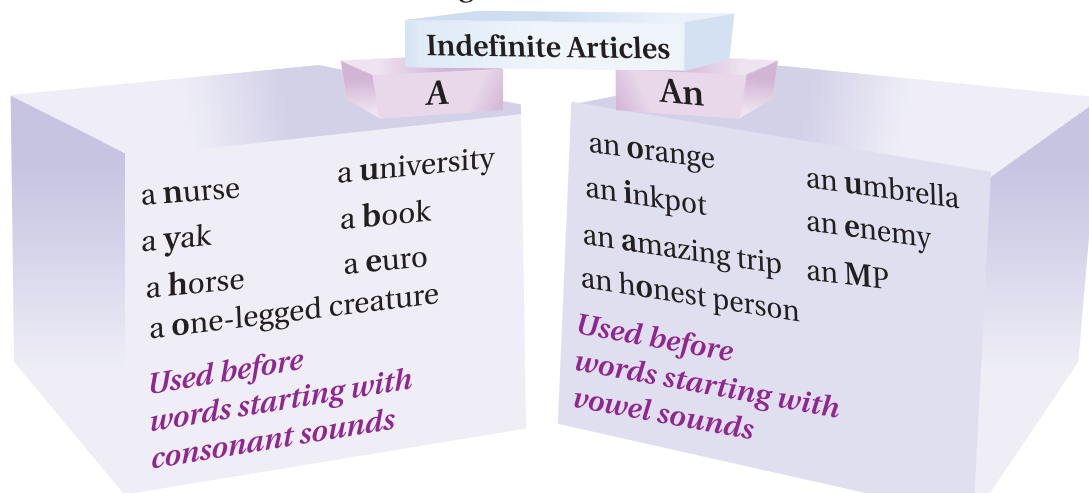
Anyone who picks a wrong noun or repeats a noun gets eliminated from her/his team. So to play the game right till the end, let your brain cells jog and keep your ears open.



Upload

Indefinite Article

Indefinite articles have two forms: 'a' and 'an'. 'A' and 'an' are used only with singular countable nouns to indicate the indefiniteness of the given noun.



If a singular countable noun is preceded by an adjective, the initial sound of the adjective determines whether the word takes 'a' or 'an' before it.

TAKE NOTE!

There are words that start with a consonant but when we pronounce them, the beginning sound is a vowel sound. For example: the word 'hour' starts with the consonant 'h' but is pronounced as 'our'. So the initial sound is a vowel sound. In the same way, there are words that start with a vowel but when we pronounce them the beginning sound is a consonant sound. For example: the word 'union' starts with the vowel 'u' but it is pronounced as 'yu-ne-yun'. So the initial sound is of the consonant 'y'.
 Never forget that it is the initial sound and not the spelling that determines whether a word would take 'a' or 'an' before it.

an hour ✓ a hour ✗
 a union ✓ an union ✗

Also,
 a bread ✗
 a loaf of bread ✓
 a tea ✗
 a cup of tea ✓
 a meat ✗
 a slice of meat ✓



Processing

1. Read the following words and write suitable indefinite articles before them.
 - a. ____ beautiful doll
 - b. ____ university degree
 - c. ____ parrot
 - d. ____ outstanding student
 - e. ____ happy occasion
 - f. ____ American leader
 - g. ____ five-rupee note

2. Circle the words that would take 'an' before them.

China, article, lamb, hour, armchairs, utility, scissors, orange-coloured suit, monkey, hole, arms, wheel, arrow, unit, tool box, street, opera, uncle, whale, truck, eggplants, shirt

3. Read the following sentences and fill in the blanks using 'a' or 'an'. Put a cross (✗) where you think neither of the two should be used.
 - a. She was reading ____ book on Buddhism.
 - b. Nobody spoke ____ word when he entered the room.
 - c. He asked me to call ____ doctor.
 - d. She gave me some money to buy ____ oranges.
 - e. He said he was ____ optimist.
 - f. She has ____ unusually long nose.
 - g. ____ aunt of mine is ____ English teacher.



Upload

Definite Article

The definite article 'the' is used to indicate the definiteness of the given noun. It is used before singular countable nouns, and uncountable and plural countable nouns when they are used in a particular sense.

She bought **an** umbrella. **The** umbrella was blue in colour.

The man we met yesterday has won the prize.

Before a particular person or thing

He was **the** first person to arrive at the venue.

Open **the** third chapter of your book.

Before ordinals used as adjectives

The rose is a kind of flower.

The dog is a faithful animal.

Before a singular noun when it is used to represent a whole class

He is **the** best football player in his school team.

I am **the** tallest boy in the basketball team.

Before the superlative form of adjectives

the Atlantic Ocean, **the** Arabian Sea, **the** Bay of Bengal

the Sahara Desert, **the** Hawaiian Islands, **the** Andes, **the** Amazon

Before names of oceans, seas, rivers, deserts, groups of islands, mountain ranges, deserts, forests and peninsulas

DEFINITE

The Earth is the third planet from **the** Sun.

I was looking up at **the** sky.

Before things that are one of a kind

The rich of the country were the ones who benefited from the policy.

The words of **the** wise should be valued.

Before adjectives when they are used to represent a particular class

She told us about **the** Great Wall of China.

We'll be going to **the** United States of America next winter.

Before names that contain 'of'

He played **the** flute while she sang.

They were all excited to see her on **the** guitar.

Before names of musical instruments when we talk about playing them

the White House, **the** Taj Mahal

the Hyatt Regency, **the** Museum of London

Before names of buildings, monuments, hotels and museums

Noun is **the** word in a sentence.

It was **the** day of my life.

Before a word to give emphasis

ARTICLE



Debug

There are certain nouns that are used both as countable and uncountable nouns. Such nouns take articles depending on their meaning. For example:

1. She has beautiful long **hair**. (Uncountable)
She found **a hair** in her cup of tea. (Countable)
2. She admitted that she had been watching **television** since morning. (Uncountable)
She requested him to turn on **the television**. (Countable)

ADVERTISING COPYWRITER

The taste of a new generation (Pepsi); **the ultimate driving machine** (BMW); **taste the thunder** (Thums Up); **the happiest place on earth** (Disneyland); **Boost is the secret of our energy** (Boost)

Do you think the meaning or impact of these defining slogans would change if the definite article is replaced by an indefinite article? What would they mean after such a change? Correct use of articles is one of the most important tools for an advertising copywriter, for her/his creative ideas to be effective.



Processing

1. Read the following sentences and insert 'the' wherever required.
 - a. President of India is expected to visit Japan in first week of April.
 - b. Do you know that Thar Desert is known as Great Indian Desert?
 - c. She was wearing green dress we saw in showroom yesterday.
 - d. Sailing through Arabian Sea at night is a wonderful experience.
 - e. She smiled and pointed at moon.
 - f. He was sitting at piano when we entered hall.
 - g. I was last person to leave examination room.
2. Read the following sentences and fill in the blanks by using appropriate articles.
 - a. _____ Sun sets in the west.
 - b. She said it was _____ great idea.
 - c. He was _____ last to arrive at the venue.
 - d. _____ man with spectacles was staring at us.
 - e. _____ Pacific Ocean covers around thirty per cent of _____ Earth's surface.
 - f. They were discussing _____ dance performance they had seen yesterday.
 - g. It was considered _____ event of the evening.
 - h. _____ poor are getting poorer and _____ rich are getting richer.
 - i. Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in _____ Alps.

- j. We went to visit _____ museum in the city.
- k. Abu Dhabi is _____ capital of the United Arab Emirates.
- l. _____ President of America lives in _____ White House.
- m. _____ Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a part of India.
3. Read the following jokes and riddles and insert appropriate articles wherever required.
- a. How is it that your essay on 'My Pet' is same as your brother's?
It is same because it's on same dog.
- b. Why didn't skeleton go to mall?
Skeleton didn't go to mall because he didn't have any body to go with.
- c. What kind of ship doesn't sink?
Friendship.
- d. Why did cat sit on computer?
Cat sat on computer to keep eye on mouse.
- e. Which is most expensive fish?
Goldfish.



Apps

Article Shopping!

- Step 1:** Get into three groups. Assign an article to each group; the first team gets 'a', the second team gets 'an' and the third team gets 'the'. Appoint a cashier for each team who carries on the required transactions.
- Step 2:** Each team gets 20 playing cards, each card being worth ₹ 10. This means that each team has an amount of ₹ 200 in hand.
- Step 3:** Each team picks a chit from the Question Box. On each chit, there is a paragraph with a few articles missing. In total, each team gets to pick 5 chits.
- Step 4:** Take a few seconds to decide which all articles are missing. If the missing article is the one assigned to your group, you can use it freely. But if it's an article that belongs to another group, you need to purchase the rights of using that article from the concerned team. If no article is needed, no purchasing needs to be done.
- Step 5:** The team with the maximum amount at the end of the activity wins the game.

Rules

- Each article is for ₹ 10. So to buy an article you need to give a card to the concerned team.
- For each correct answer you get three cards, i.e. ₹ 30 from the facilitator.
- For each wrong answer, you need to give a card worth ₹ 10 to the other two teams and the facilitator, i.e. ₹ 30 in total.

You need to align your grammar skills to your math skills to win the game...all the best to all!



Upload

Zero Article

Zero article means that no article needs to be used. The following are the occasions when no article is to be used.

Honesty is the best policy.

I don't have **money** to buy pasta.

Before uncountable nouns when they are used in a general sense

Teenagers would love this film.

Apples are good for health.

Before plural countable nouns when they are used in a general sense

Dal Lake is an important tourist place in **Asia**.

He told us to take a right turn to reach **Wall Street**.

Before names of continents, towns, cities, lakes, streets, etc.

Exception

*'The' is used with groups of lakes.
For example: the Great Lakes*

He taught us **Biology**.

Harshali didn't know how to read **English**.

Before languages and branches of knowledge

Mount Etna is the largest active volcano in Italy.

Sable Island is home to a few scientists and researchers.

Before names of singular mountains and islands

Exception

*'The' is used with chains of islands.
For example: the Canary Islands
'The' is used with mountain ranges.
For example: the Himalayas*

Z E R O

ARTICLE

Before names of important buildings when the first word is the name of a person or a place.

Exception

There are names of important buildings that start with 'the'. For example: the Royal Palace, the White House

Buckingham Palace is the residence of the British royal family.

We were driving towards **St Paul's Cathedral**.

Before the words 'home' and 'work' when they are placed directly after verbs of motion

Rukmini asked me to come **home** after **work**.

He went to **work** after lunch.

Before school, college, hospital, office, church, bed when they are referred to or used for their normal activity

Exception

'The' is used before school, church, etc. when we refer to a particular building. For example: The church near my house was built 100 years ago.

'The' is used before bed when we refer to it as a piece of furniture. For example: Why are you jumping on the bed?

I learnt French at **school**.

I usually go to **bed** by 10 o' clock.

Before names of days, months and seasons

They are going to Italy in **March**.

I'll join dance and music classes in **summer**.

Before names of meals

Exception

We use 'a' or 'an' before names of meals when they take an adjective before them. For example: They ate a heavy breakfast before going to the club.

'The' is used before a meal only when we specify it. For example: The lunch I had at home was an amazing one.

We invited her for **dinner**.

Anita and I went to our favourite restaurant for **lunch**.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

“I now invite the House by a resolution to record its approval of the steps taken and declare its confidence in the new government. The resolution: ‘That this House welcomes the formation of a government representing the united and inflexible resolve of the nation to prosecute the war with Germany to a victorious conclusion.’”*

Read these lines without the articles to see how articles can significantly alter the meaning of a sentence. Words, written or spoken, have an amazing power to build or break relationships. For a public relations officer to master the art of communication, she/he must know how to use the right words in the right order before the right person.

* Sir Winston Churchill's speech 'Blood, toil, tears and sweat'



Processing

1. Read the following sentences and circle the correct form from the ones given in italics.
 - a. He was calling *the little girl* / *little girl* in pink
 - b. She goes to *the school* / *school* every day.
 - c. He pointed at *the Arabian Sea* / *Arabian Sea* on the map.
 - d. She was *the last student* / *last student* to submit the answer sheet.
 - e. He went to *the USA* / *USA* last summer.
 - f. We went to the restaurant across the street for *the lunch* / *lunch*.
 - g. Our team is working to protect *the environment* / *environment*.
 - h. Do you go to *the church* / *church* every Sunday?
 - i. She asked me to meet her after *the work* / *work*.
 - j. Her mother had to go to *the hospital* / *hospital* to pick her up.
 - k. She was very good in *the German* / *German* at school.
2. Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles. Put a cross (✖) where no article is required.
 - a. They asked me to get _____ apple for each one of them.
 - b. She told me to get into _____ bed right away.
 - c. He asked me if I liked _____ coffee.
 - d. She rang up _____ doctor at once.
 - e. I had _____ lovely meal at _____ home.
 - f. He teaches _____ Linguistics at _____ University of Delhi.
 - g. _____ children love her stories.
 - h. Does _____ honesty always pay?
 - i. She triumphantly said, “_____ knowledge is power.”
 - j. I have seen _____ Mount Everest, but in maps.
 - k. _____ biggest problem in most towns is of _____ crime.



Copyediting Idioms!

Idioms are sayings that reflect accumulated human experiences and are built on frequently occurring situations that demonstrate human behaviour, social traits and traditions of a place. They represent lessons from life and are the cumulative wisdom of generations. Idioms also make language more interesting and vibrant. The difficult part about idioms is that any grammatical error in an idiom make it difficult to understand its meaning. Some incorrect idioms have been written on small pieces of paper and put in the bowl. Pick one such chit and correct the idiomatic expression given on that chit.

Step 1: All the learners pick one chit from the bowl. The chits contain idioms like:

Birds of feather flock together

Fool and his money are soon parted

Still tongues keep wise head

Penny saved is penny earned

Every cloud has silver lining

Add fuel to fire

Apple day keeps doctor away

Early bird gets worm

Bird in hand is worth two in bush

At drop of hat

Out of frying pan and into fire

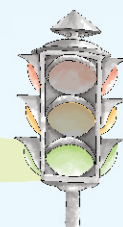
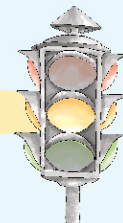
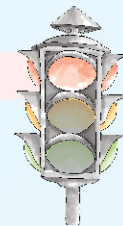
Picture is worth thousand words

When in Rome, do as Romans do

Pride goes before fall

Kill fatted calf

Steal show



Step 2: Get into pairs. Read each other's idiom, correct them by adding the appropriate article in the appropriate place, and rewrite the corrected idioms on a sheet of paper.

Step 3: Look up the meaning of the two idioms on the Internet and write their meanings too.

Step 4: Also use these two idioms in self-explanatory sentences of your own.

Step 5: Now exchange your sheet of paper with the pair sitting next to you. The other pair has to see if the copyediting has been done correctly.



Add to Favourites

Use of articles is not allowed before:

Rule 1: _____

Rule 2: _____

Rule 3: _____

Rule 4: _____



Use 'a' before:



the

Use 'the' before:

Rule 1: _____

Rule 2: _____

Rule 3: _____



Rule 5: _____ Rule 8: _____

Rule 6: _____ Rule 9: _____

Rule 7: _____ Rule 10: _____

Use 'an' before:



Rule 4: _____ Rule 8: _____

Rule 5: _____ Rule 9: _____

Rule 6: _____ Rule 10: _____

Rule 7: _____ Rule 11: _____



Scandisk

1. Read the following pairs of sentences and tick the sentences that are grammatically correct.
 - a. I like working with the honest people.
 I like working with honest people.
 - b. Would you agree with me when I say time is money?
 Would you agree with me when I say the time is money?
 - c. Do you think we should help poor?
 Do you think we should help the poor?
 - d. I heard the news on radio.
 I heard the news on the radio.
 - e. Is Sun a star?
 Is the Sun a star?
 - f. His mother said firmly, "It's time to go to bed now."
 His mother said firmly, "It's time to go to the bed now."
 - g. Although television was working, nobody had switched it on for a month.
 Although the television was working, nobody had switched it on for a month.
 - h. Not everybody goes to the university in my country.
 Not everybody goes to university in my country.
 - i. An American man I know is very good at cooking Indian delicacies.
 The American man I know is very good at cooking Indian delicacies.
 - j. People of his country cheered for him.
 The people of his country cheered for him.
2. Given below is an extract from a novel by P G Wodehouse. Read the extract, identify the incorrect use of articles, if any, and rewrite it correctly.

Alice Faraday spoke in an quiet, respectful, yet subtly authoritative voice. She was the girl of great character. The previous employers of her services as secretary had found her an jewel. To the Lord Marshmoreton she was rapidly becoming an perfect incubus. Their views on a relative importance of gardening and family histories did not coincide. To him an history of Marshmoreton family was a occupation of an idle hour: she seemed to think that he ought to regard it as a life-work. She was always coming and digging him out of an garden and dragging him back to what should have been an purely after-dinner task. It was Lord Marshmoreton's habit, when he awoke after one of his naps too late to resume work, to throw out some vague promise of 'attending to it tomorrow'; but, he reflected bitterly, a girl ought to have tact and sense to understand that this was only polite persiflage, and not to be done.

3. One fine morning Queen Bee gets a letter from the worker bees of her colony. From the tone of the letter, she senses revolt and mutiny. She immediately calls them for a meeting. Read the dialogues between Queen Bee and the worker bees, identify the incorrect use of articles. See if any articles are missing and correct or insert articles wherever required.

Queen Bee An letter I received in a morning has left no doubt in my mind that some of you have come under an evil influence of that vagrant good-for-nothing Drone.

The Drone has nothing to do with the contents of a letter. **Worker Bee 1**

Queen Bee I have to go for lunch in a hour to Edinburgh Hive. So hurry up!

Queen Bee, we want to bring to your notice our extreme dissatisfaction with a current state of affairs in our colony. **Worker Bee 2**

Queen Bee What kind of dissatisfaction?

We feed an larvae, we clean cells of an hive, we make a honey, we collect the pollen, nectar and water for an hive, we fight a predators, and we tend to needs of colony. In short you cannot sustain this life of luxury without us. **Worker Bee 3**

Queen Bee Do you realise Worker 3 that your sleek neck can be ripped apart from your body for that impudence!

I'll consider myself the martyr in a great cause of revolution. **Worker Bee 3**

Worker Bee 1 Queen Bee, all we get after working so hard is the life of never ending servitude!

You are born as workers, and it is your destiny to work. A lord has chosen you to serve me. **Queen Bee**

Worker Bee 4 Then we shall challenge our destiny. Turn it upside down and open a new opportunities for ourselves. We shall make our dream of the liberation come true.

Ha! And how do you plan to do it? I am a Queen of this hive, and I have the power to make and break laws. **Queen Bee**

Worker Bee 5 We have given you power to rule us; and if we decide not to be ruled, you cannot rule us.

We have decided to put end to your tyrannical rule. We hereby declare our colony free from the hierarchy, giving equal opportunities to all to rise up social ladder. **Worker Bee 2**

4. Smita was reading a film review when her little niece spilled a glass of water on the paper. Now some of the articles are missing. Can you help her by inserting the articles that have got erased?

Kudos to Aamir Khan for proving us wrong by giving us brilliant dekho into mysterious, magical mind of child who really doesn't know why befuddled adults are hell-bent on mutilating everything that is beautiful, innocent, free and fulsome . . . All because they feel there is no 'faayda' (profit) in it.

Ostensibly, film is about children with special needs and story revolves around efforts of dyslexic child to fit in, adjust and perform in 'normal' world where competition is the norm and regimentation the principle.

*A world where it is natural and 'normal' to rap eight-year-old knuckles and discipline with verbal abuse and physical battering, if child gets his spellings wrong, forgets to do his homework or fails to give copy book answers. But the canvas of film is so sensitive, so vast, so meaningful, it includes any and every child in its ambit. So much so, **Taare Zameen Par** becomes story of any and every child who is being robbed of his childhood by insensitive parents and teachers who believe their job is to create race-winning rats for the rat race rather than Einsteins, Edisons, Agatha Christies and Leonardo Da Vincis.*

Eight-year-old Ishaan (Darsheel) is happy-go-lucky child with fertile imagination that can see fish flying but fails to grasp the difference between B and D. When asked to solve his three times table, he confidently picks up his pencil and sees war of planets on the firmament of his mind where planet 3 smashes into planet 6 and beats it into smithereens.

Naturally, answer of 3×6 is 3 for our little genius. But that's between you and me. Berated by the teachers, his parents send kid away to boarding school and deliver him to living hell, where he faces ridicule and begins to lose all self-esteem in his effort to fit in. It takes unconventional art teacher (Aamir Khan) to bring him out of his solitary confinement and unleash a whole new energy force that blinds boring world with its colours and configurations.

... story is simple and connects instantly with every adult and child in audience, even as climax is predictable and plays heavily on your emotions. But what uplifts film is its very simplicity, sensitivity and its performances. On one hand, there is the non-filmy script which doesn't make anyone the villain . . . even adults are victims of ignorance. On other, there is the towering portrayal by young Darsheel who trapezes between lively and lost with great agility.

And holding it all deftly together — the tears and the smiles, the lows and the highs — is Aamir Khan who makes his directorial debut. Of course, second half does get bit repetitive, script needs a bit of taut editing, the trauma of lonely child seems a shade too prolonged and treatment simplistic. But film never does stop tugging at your heartstrings.

Source: The Times of India

5. Read the following rules for the correct use of articles and give an example for each rule.
- No article is used before the word 'church' when it is used for its normal activity.
 - 'The' is used before the superlative form of adjectives.
 - No article is used before plural countable nouns when they are used in a general sense.
 - 'An' is used before singular countable nouns when they start with a vowel sound.
 - No article is used before the word 'television' when it is used as an uncountable noun.
 - 'The' is usually not placed before the word 'home'.



Explorer

Look around and you would notice how products in the market are advertised through different media such as radio, television, billboards, magazines, newspapers and the Internet. No matter what the medium is, it is the catchy slogan or jingle that captures our minds. It helps in giving the product a unique identity of its own and influences the viewers to have a favourable view of it. A good grasp over language is a prerequisite for mastering the art of advertising, for easy flow of creativity has to be accompanied by it to trigger the right response in the viewers.

So here is your chance to work in groups, apply your knowledge of articles and vent your creative impulses to develop an advertisement for a product that you think would sweep the viewers off their feet and tempt them into buying what you are selling. A word of advice . . . don't lose hold of creativity, simplicity and brevity in your task.

Divide yourself into groups. Each group gets a different medium of advertising—radio, television, billboards, magazines and online. All the groups get together and decide upon a product and its name. Each group works to promote the product as per the medium of advertising assigned to them. Use your creative impulses to write a catchy slogan/jingle/story and make pictures (not required for radio) to advertise your product. Don't forget to use articles correctly while writing the slogan/jingle/script for the product. Present the advertisement before the class. As each group presents the advertisement they have made, others note the incorrect use of articles if any. Discuss incorrect use of articles and revise the rules related to articles.





Future Calling

I would tingle the world with my jingles!

Advertising Copywriter

Thinks 'out-of-the-box' and writes headlines, jingles and slogans to advertise and market products through commercials on television and radio, in newspapers, magazines, websites, etc.; helps in giving a product an identity of its own

The

My words would be the building blocks to build relations!

Public Relations Officer

Handles a company's relationship and communication with the public; gives out articles and stories to journalists and organises shows and public events to boost their company's public image

smartclass modules

Articles: Use of 'A' and 'An'
Definite and Indefinite Articles
Definite Article: The, Indefinite Articles
Indefinite Articles, Linking Feature Articles & Poetry
Assessment: Articles-Use of 'A' and 'An'
Articles: MCQ