What is an article? Basically, an article is an adjective. Like adjectives, articles modify nouns. Thus, every time you look at a noun, ask yourself, “Which article, if any, should I use?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>AN</th>
<th>Ø</th>
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**Definite Article: THE**
The definite article is used to refer to *specific nouns*. A noun is considered specific if the reader or listener can determine which specific item the sentence is talking about.

Example: *Please pass me the bottle of safflower oil.*
In the image to the left, the reader can determine *which* bottle of oil the writer is talking about because there is only *one* bottle of safflower oil.

**Indefinite Article: A/AN**
The indefinite article is used to refer to *non-specific singular nouns*. A noun is considered non-specific if the reader or listener cannot determine which item the sentence is talking about.

Example: *Please pass me a bottle of oil.*
In the image to the left, the reader cannot determine *which* bottle of oil the writer is talking about because *all* of the bottles contain oil. Most likely, the writer has no preference.

**No Article Needed: Ø**
There are no articles used with *non-specific plural* or *non-specific non-count nouns*. Because many English nouns have both a count and non-count form that varies with different meanings, pay close attention to which definition of the word you are using.

Example: *Please pass me ___ oil.*
In the image to the left, the reader cannot determine *which* oil the writer is talking about because *all* of it is oil. Moreover, “oil” is a non-count noun.
Determiners
Determiners are words that help a reader or listener understand the noun being discussed. If a noun already has another determiner, it does not need an article. Look out for these!

Demonstratives: THIS and THAT

He sat on that bench.
The tree is in the foreground of this drawing.

Possessives: WHOSE, MY, YOUR, ITS, THEIR, HIS, and HER

Whose drawing is this? (ArcMel.com)
Sitting in the park is my favorite thing.
You should go to the park with your uncle.
The tree still has its leaves.
Their park is so beautiful.
He acts like it is his bench.
She finally found her lost child sitting on the bench.

Interrogatives: WHICH, WHAT, WHOSE

Which park is shown in this drawing?
What kind of tree is that?
Whose uncle is sitting by the pond?

Quantifiers: MANY, FEW, SEVERAL, SOME, etc.
Numerals: ONE, TWO, THREE, etc.

There are many benches in this park.
This is one of several beautiful views.
Two people normally share that bench at lunch.