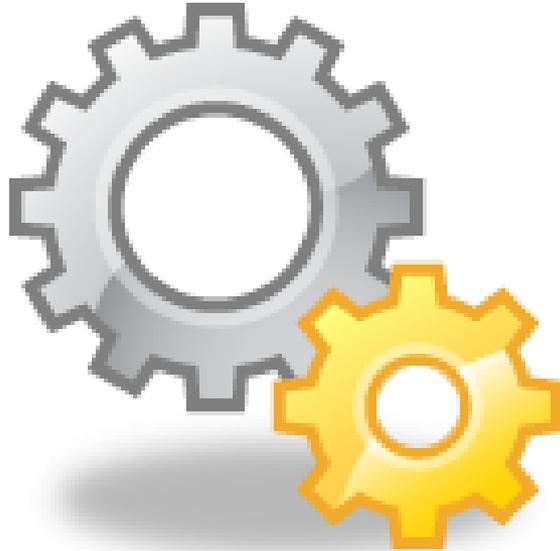


How articles work:
a (an), the, some, \emptyset (no article)



Using A (AN) or no article with count nouns*

Speaking in general, when the count noun (banana) is a symbol of a whole group (all the bananas in the world):

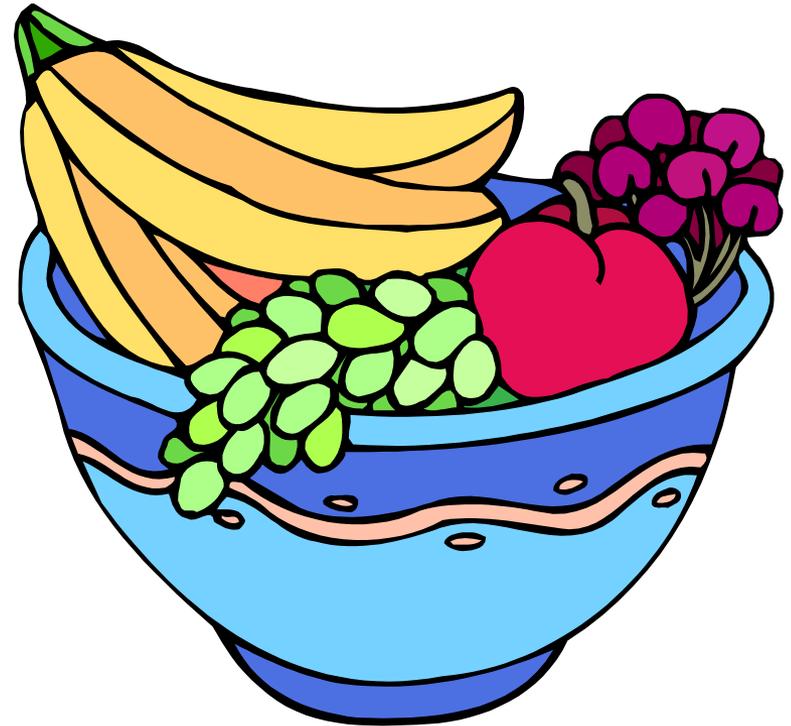
You can

1) use the single count noun with A or AN.

A banana is yellow.

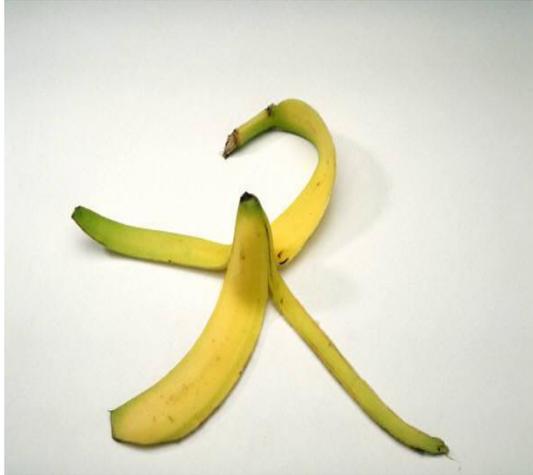
2) Use the plural of the noun.

Bananas are yellow.



*A count noun is something you can count: one banana, two bananas. How about air? One air, two airs? –No way!

Using A (AN) or SOME



When speaking about **one or more actual bananas** out of a whole group of bananas, **you can use A or some**. This is not about bananas *in general*.

I ate *a* banana.

I ate *some* bananas.

Again, these are actual bananas, not bananas in general, but *not specifically identified* bananas.

Not “this banana,” or “that banana,” or “the banana you gave me.”

That’s on the next page: use of the article **THE**.

Using THE

When both the speaker and the listener are thinking about the same specific thing, you can use THE.

Thank you for *the* banana.

Thank you for *the* bananas.

(You know which bananas I'm talking about.)



Helpful tips for using articles

(1) *The* sun is bright today.

Please open *the* door. Here is *the* teacher.

Use *the* when you know the listener is thinking about the same thing or person—or **when there is usually only one** of these things around (only one sun in the sky, only one door in the room, only one teacher for the class). More than one? Use *this* or *that* or a possessive.

(2) Yesterday I saw *some* dogs. *The* dogs were chasing *a* cat. *The* cat was chasing *a* mouse. *The* mouse ran into *a* hole. *The* hole was very small.

Use *the* the second time you mention a noun. In the example above,

“*Some* dogs” changes to “*the* dogs” because we’ve already heard about the dogs.

“*A* cat” changes to “*the* cat” because we already know which cat.

(3) *Remember*: do **not** use a singular count noun without an article, *this/that*, or a possessive: a car, *this* car, *that* car, *my* car.

Which one will you choose?
A, AN, SOME, THE, no article

1. _____ tomatoes originally came from South America.
2. _____ tomato is actually _____ fruit, not _____ vegetable.
3. _____ tomatoes you gave me were delicious.
4. There are _____ tomatoes in _____ refrigerator. Please get them for me.
5. Can you find them? They are next to _____ eggs.
6. _____ eggs have a lot of fat.
7. I need _____ egg for this muffin recipe.