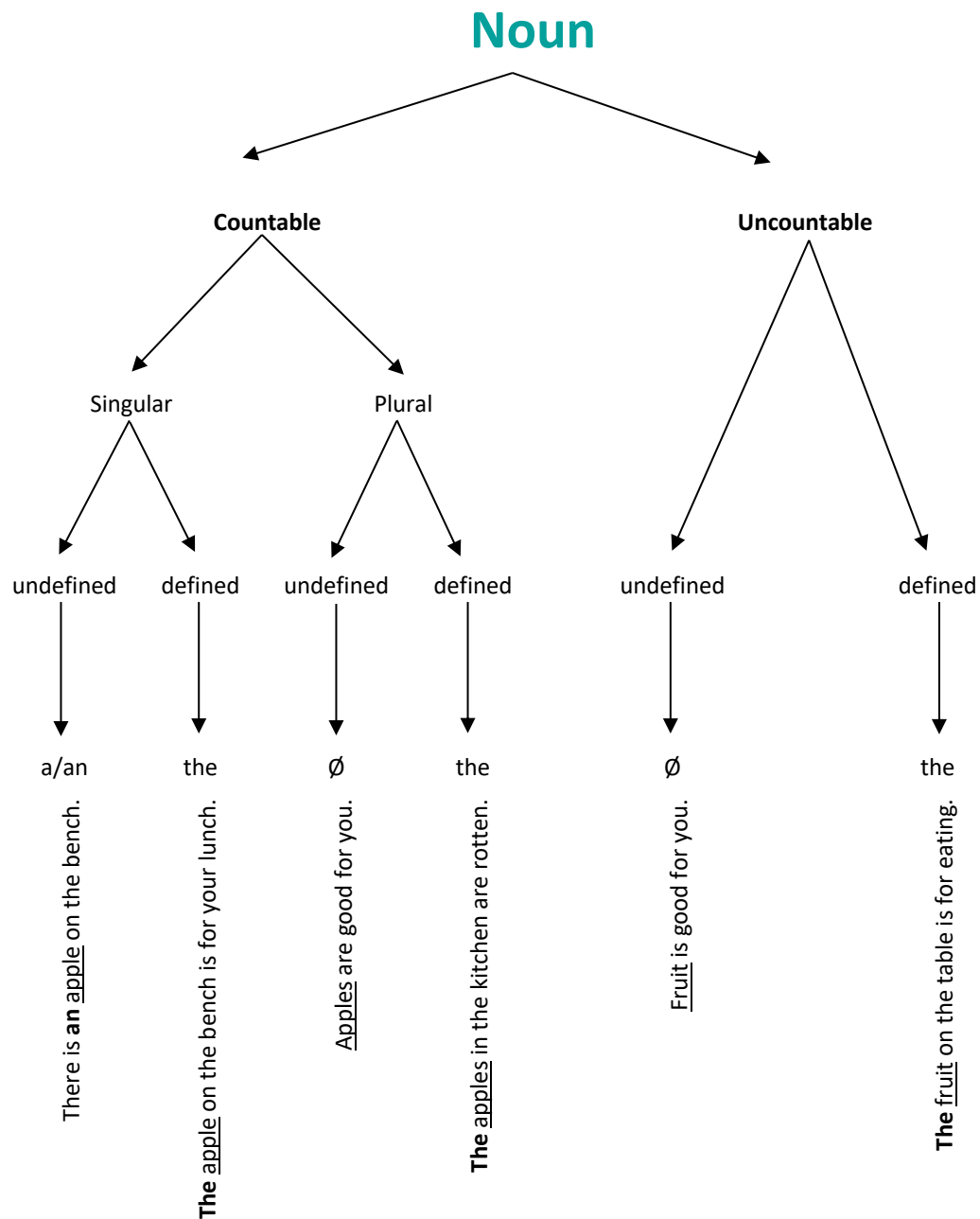




ARTICLES: A/AN/THE

Articles flowchart

Here's a flowchart that can help in deciding which article to use. Use a dictionary to check if a noun is countable or uncountable



Note:

- Singular countable nouns always need articles unless they have another determiner: his/her, any, etc.



Related resources:

Checklist of Grammar Problems
Some Rules of 'the'

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When to use *a / an*

- Use *a* or *an* when a singular, countable noun is not known to the reader or listener.

A cat is on the couch.

A cat is correct if you have not already mentioned the cat previously. *Cat* is a countable noun. You can add an 's' to the word cat. This means it is countable.

- Use *a* before singular countable nouns that begin with a consonant: *a* cat, *a* radio, and before the hard *u*: *a* uniform.
- Use *an* before singular countable nouns that begin with a vowel: *an* apple, *an* elephant, and before the silent *h*: *an* hour.

When to use *the*

- Use *the* when the noun (singular or plural, countable or uncountable) is already familiar to the reader or listener.

The cat is on the couch again.

The cats are on the couch again

- Use *the* when the noun (singular or plural, countable or uncountable) is defined.

The students at Victoria are good critical thinkers.

The fruit in the bowl is fresh.

When not to use an article

- Don't use articles with plural nouns when you are generalising:

Cats are animals

- Don't use articles with uncountable nouns when you are generalising:

Pollution often leads to poor *health*.