

Articles: Singular and Non-count Generic Nouns

USE: **Singular concrete generic nouns** use “A/AN” when an individual member of the noun class is being referred to in relation to a singular noun phrase.

*Examples: A marathon runner needs **a good pair of shoes**.*

*A cordless phone uses **a battery for power**.*

Singular abstract generic nouns can also be used with “A/AN” if they refer to one individual at a time.

*Example: An/The elephant uses **its trunk** for many things.*

NOT: *An elephant is endangered because of over-hunting and loss of habitat.*

Non-count generic nouns do not require articles, even when they are used with modifiers.

Example: Coffee is a popular drink.

Colombian coffee is delicious.

Hawaiian coffee is one the most expensive varieties.

Check (✓) the GENERIC sentence in each pair.

1. a. My neighbour has *a sports car*.
b. *A sports car* can be fast and dangerous.
2. a. I am growing *a vegetable garden* in my backyard.
b. Having *a vegetable garden* can help save money on groceries.
3. a. *A dog* is very loyal to its owner.
b. When I was a child, I had *a dog*.
4. a. *A doctor* uses a stethoscope to check patients’ hearts.
b. *A doctor* examined me right away when I arrived in the emergency room.

Correct the errors in the following GENERIC sentences. Each sentence has one error with articles.

1. The rice is a staple food in many parts of Asia.
2. A wolf lives in Northern Ontario.
3. A tea is the most popular drink in the world.
4. A cat is nocturnal.
5. The good student reviews his or her lessons regularly.