

A & an - indefinite article (Part 2)

Last week you could have found on this web site general information on the use the indefinite article in English, together with an exercise on the use of **a** or **an** before a noun phrase.

If you are willing to expand your knowledge of the use of the indefinite article and thus improve your command of English, please read the following examples of other cases when **a** or **an** are used in English

1. Before certain expressions of quantity, for example *a few, a little, a lot of, a number of, a great many, a great deal of, a couple of, a dozen*, etc.

- **A** large number of people have applied for this position.
- They asked me **a** few questions.
- These flowers are only 2 euros **a** dozen.

2. After pre-determiners *such, what, rather* and *quite*, and before singular countable nouns.

- We had to wait quite **a** long time at the bank.
- There was such **a** long line at the check out desk!
- What **an** innovative and inspiring team!

3. Before words referring to nationality, religion or political groups.

- I think the mayor is **a** Protestant.
- Last month **an** American took over as chief executive of Alcatel.
- The new president should be **a** Democrat who knows about the work ethic and cutting costs.

4. Before names of meals when they are preceded by an adjective or when they are special meals given to celebrate something or in someone's honour.

- I usually take **a** packed lunch to work.
- 31.5% employees said their workplace was organising **a** special lunch for Christmas.
- I'm going to do my shopping this afternoon because tomorrow I'm giving **a** dinner for friends.

5. Before *Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss* + surname when a person is a stranger to the speaker.

- Yesterday I had a visit from **a** Mr Popple from the Charity Organisation Society.
- **A** Mrs O'Connor called to confirm the delivery date.
- The Chairman asked the council manager to contact **a** Mr R. Smith to see whether it would be a role he would be interested in taking on.

A Complete with **a** or **an** if necessary.

1. My new colleague will be the account manager for ___ number of prospects.
2. In the UK the monarch is still the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and needs to be ___ Anglican to fulfil this role
3. The ADSL service is available via ___ number of service providers.
4. Because of staff holidays the service of ___ lunch in the canteen will be suspended from Monday, 5 August to Sunday, 18 August.
5. It wasn't easy to find ___ Englishman in Italy with international retail experience.

6. No trademark of Boxith may be used after such ____ products have been incorporated into any other material.
7. It's a good idea to go to ____ few banks and look for the best deal for what you want.
8. The training put my ____ little problem into perspective.
9. What ____ important day for our organisation!
10. Charles Barry is ____ Democrat who wants to cut social security.

Key: 1. a, 2. an, 3. a, 4. /, 5. an, 6. / (do not use the indefinite article before plural nouns), 7. a, 8. / (do not use the indefinite article with a possessive adjective), 9. an, 10. a

B Complete the following sentences with an indefinite article where and if necessary.

1. Her husband works in the property market, handling property transactions worth couple of millions of pounds.
2. Independent record stores enjoyed modest revival last year.
3. Could you tell Mrs O'Carrol that I'll call her back?
4. Quite high percentage of people buying PC also buys certain other hardware accessories.
5. The hotel can provide you with hearty breakfast.
6. Getting building permit takes little patience and lot of paperwork.
7. I was invited to dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.
8. American profits were also hit by Chinese slowdown.
9. For most citizens, liberty means the freedom to practise their religious or political beliefs.
10. It's quite new product and we have strong indications that we will see big uplift in resulting sales.

Key: 1. worth a couple of millions, 2. enjoyed a modest revival, 3. /, 4. quite a high percentage; buying a PC, 5. with a hearty breakfast, 6. Getting a building permit takes a little patience and a lot of paperwork., 7. invited to a dinner, 8. hit by a Chinese slowdown, 9. / (do not use the indefinite article before uncountable and plural nouns or with a possessive adjective), 10. quite a new product; a bit uplift