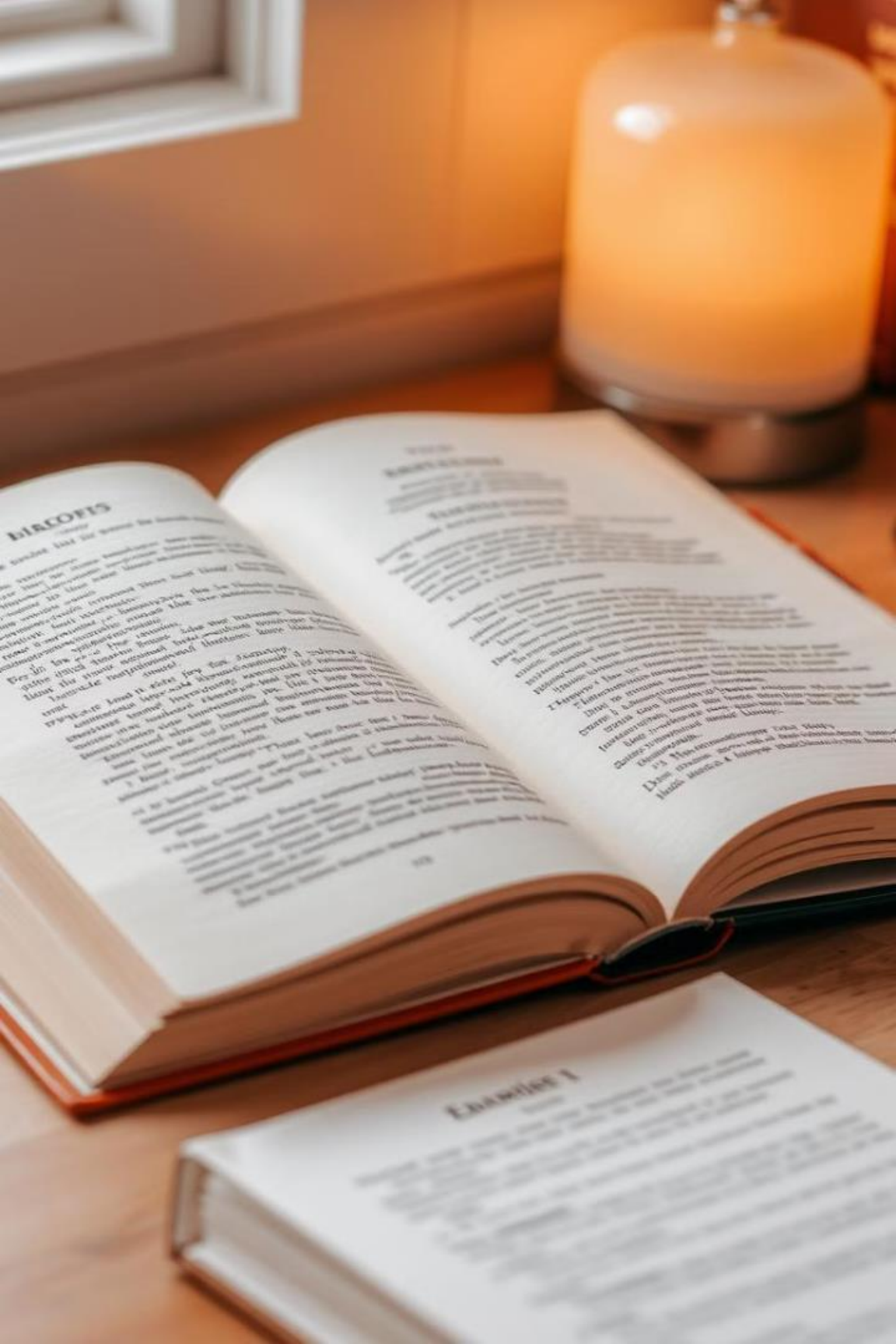




The Definite and Indefinite Articles

- Definite article
- Indefinite article
- No article
- Countable and uncountable nouns



Introduction to Articles

1

Definite Article

The definite article '**the**' refers to a specific noun or thing.

2

Indefinite Article

'A' and 'an' are used to refer to a non-specific, generalised noun.

The Definite Article 'the'

Specific Reference

The definite article is used when referring to a particular person, place or thing.

Unique Entities

'The' is used with unique nouns like the Eiffel Tower or the sun.

Superlatives

'The' is used with superlative adjectives like the biggest, the most beautiful.

Ordinal Numbers

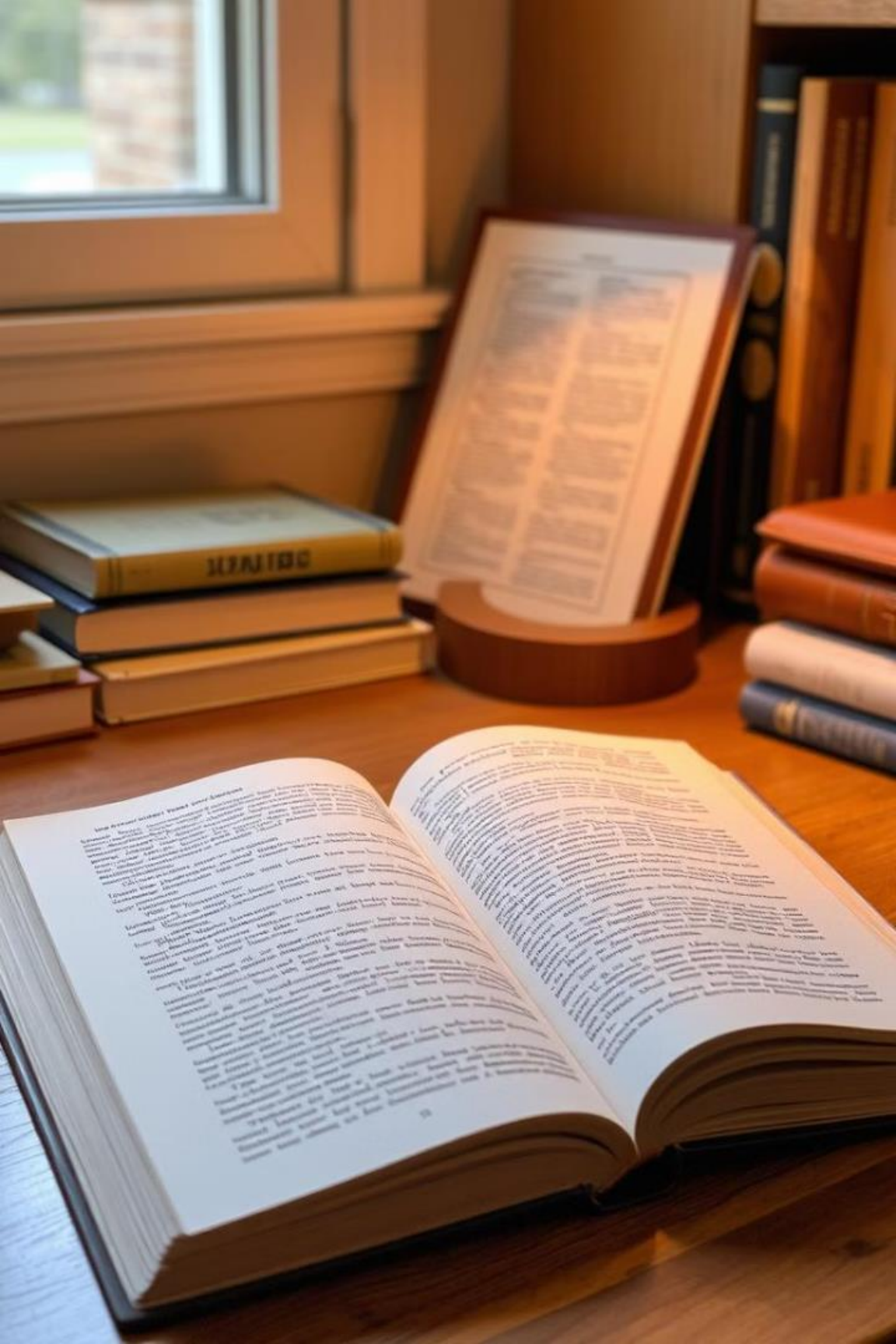
'The' is used with ordinal numbers like the first, the second, the third.

the

- **Something specific:** She gave me **a** T-shirt, but **the** T-shirt is much too big for me, I'm afraid
- Musical instruments, inventions, animal species:
- *Who invented the printing press?*

the

- **the** cinema
- **the** theatre
- **the** town/city centre
- **the** sun
- **the** moon
- **the** earth/planet/world
- **the** government
- **the** police
- **the** army
- **the** media
- **the** Italians, etc.
- **the** rich
- **the** poor
- **the** old
- **the** rain
- **the** wind
- **the** weather
- **the** sea
- **the** coast
- **the** past
- **the** present
- **the** future



The Indefinite Article 'a/an'

Non-Specific Reference

'A/an' is used to refer to a non-specific, generalised noun.

Introducing New Items

'A/an' is used when introducing a new person, place or thing.

Quantifying Singulars

'A/an' is used with singular countable nouns.

a/an

- £ 1.50 a kilo; 60 miles an hour; once a week
- **Definitions:** a kangaroo is an Australian animal
- **What + countable noun:** What a lovely day!



Differences Between 'the' and 'a/an'

1

'The'

Definite article, referring to a specific person, place or thing.

2

'A/an'

Indefinite article, referring to a non-specific, generalised noun.

3

Unique vs General

'The' for unique entities, 'a/an' for introducing new items.

Omitting Articles

1 Plural Nouns

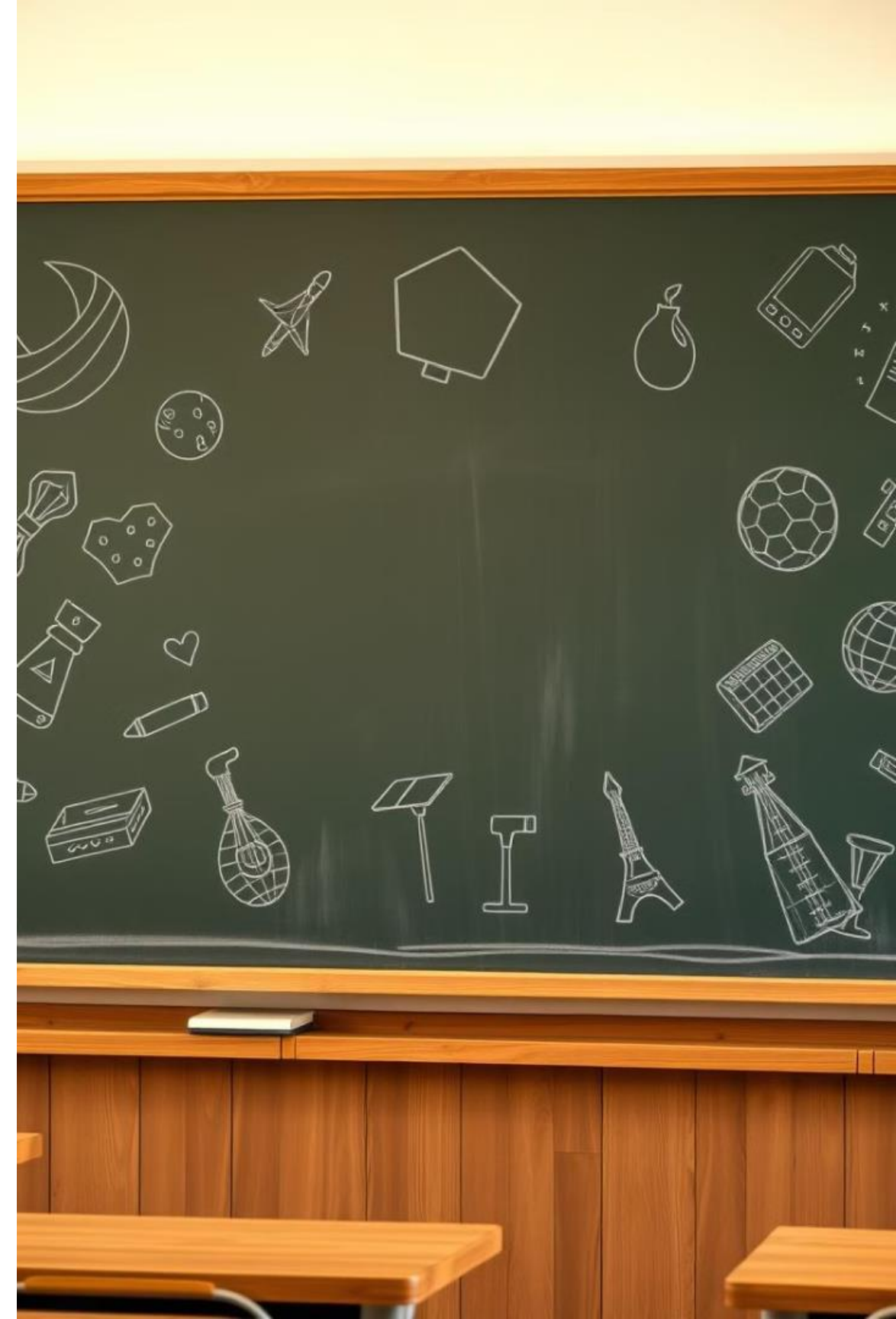
Articles are usually omitted when using plural nouns.

2 Uncountable Nouns

Articles are also omitted with uncountable nouns like 'music', 'information'.

3 Proper Nouns

Articles are typically omitted with proper nouns like personal names and place names.



No article

- By car/bus/bike etc.
- On foot
- At/from/to + home/work/university
- In town/hospital/prison
- Most place names (but there are many exceptions!)

Countable and uncountable nouns

- Countable nouns have both singular and plural forms: file, program, system
- Uncountable have only the singular form: software, music, robotics, multimedia, networking, storage
- Uncountable nouns are used with singular verbs:
 - Politics is a dirty business
- We can't use a/an or add -s with uncountable nouns:
 - ~~a furniture~~ ~~some advices~~

Countable and uncountable nouns - determiners

- Countable nouns: many, few, a few: many versions of...
- Uncountable: much, a little, little, a great deal of: I have a little time...

Uncountable nouns

- bread
- cheese
- milk
- pasta
- rice
- salt
- fur
- cotton
- metal
- paint
- plastic
- soap
- wool
- travel
- transport
- traffic
- baggage
- luggage
- equipment
- research
- Evidence
- homework
- health
- progress
- fun
- leisure
- weather
- maths
- physics
- economics
- athletics
- trousers
- pants
- shorts
- scissors
- glasses

Uncountable nouns

- we sometimes 'count' uncountable nouns:
- *We need some tea.* BUT *Two teas, please!* (= cups of tea)
- *I love cake!* BUT a birthday cake (= a separate item)
- Chicken is expensive at the moment. BUT I bought a free-range chicken today.
- He's got grey hair. BUT You've got a hair on your collar. (= a single hair)
- Experience is essential for this job. BUT I had an unusual experience on holiday.
- Business is tough these days! BUT She owns a small business in Mexico. (= a company)
- I'm looking for work. BUT This is a work by Van Gogh. (= a work of art, a painting)
- Time is money. BUT We had a great time.

Uncountable nouns

- No a/an: ~~a robotics~~
- We can also use expressions to count or separate uncountable nouns
- A **piece** of (e.g. news/advice) and an **item** of (e.g. clothing/ luggage)

Exercise: add a/an/the/ Ø

- Linux is (1) _____ operating system and it was initially created as (2) _____ hobby by a young student, Linus Torvalds, at the University of Helsinki in Finland. Version 1.0 of the Linux Kernel* was released in 1994. (3) _____ Kernel, at the heart of all Linux systems, is developed and released under GNU General Public License, and its source code is freely available to everyone.
- Apart from the fact that it's freely distributed, (4) _____ Linux's functionality, adaptability and robustness has made it the main alternative for proprietary Unix and Microsoft operating systems. IBM, Hewlett-Packard and other giants of the computing world have embraced Linux and support its ongoing development. More than (5) _____ decade after its initial release, Linux is being adopted worldwide, primarily as (6) _____ server platform. Its use as a home and office desktop operating system is also on the rise. The operating system can also be incorporated directly into (7) _____ microchips in a process called (8) _____ embedding, and it is increasingly being used this way in appliances and devices.

*The Kernel provides a way for software and other parts of the OS to communicate with hardware.

- Esteras, R. (2008): Infotech English for Computer Users. 4th Edition. CUP

Exercise: add a/an/the/ Ø

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Countable or uncountable?

- computing
- entertainment
- interface
- technology
- security
- spyware
- information
- email

Countable or uncountable?

COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE	BOTH
interface	computing	entertainment
email	security*	technology
	spyware	
	information	



Literature

Images generated by Gamma

<https://www.butte.edu/departments/cas/tipsheets/grammar/articles.html>