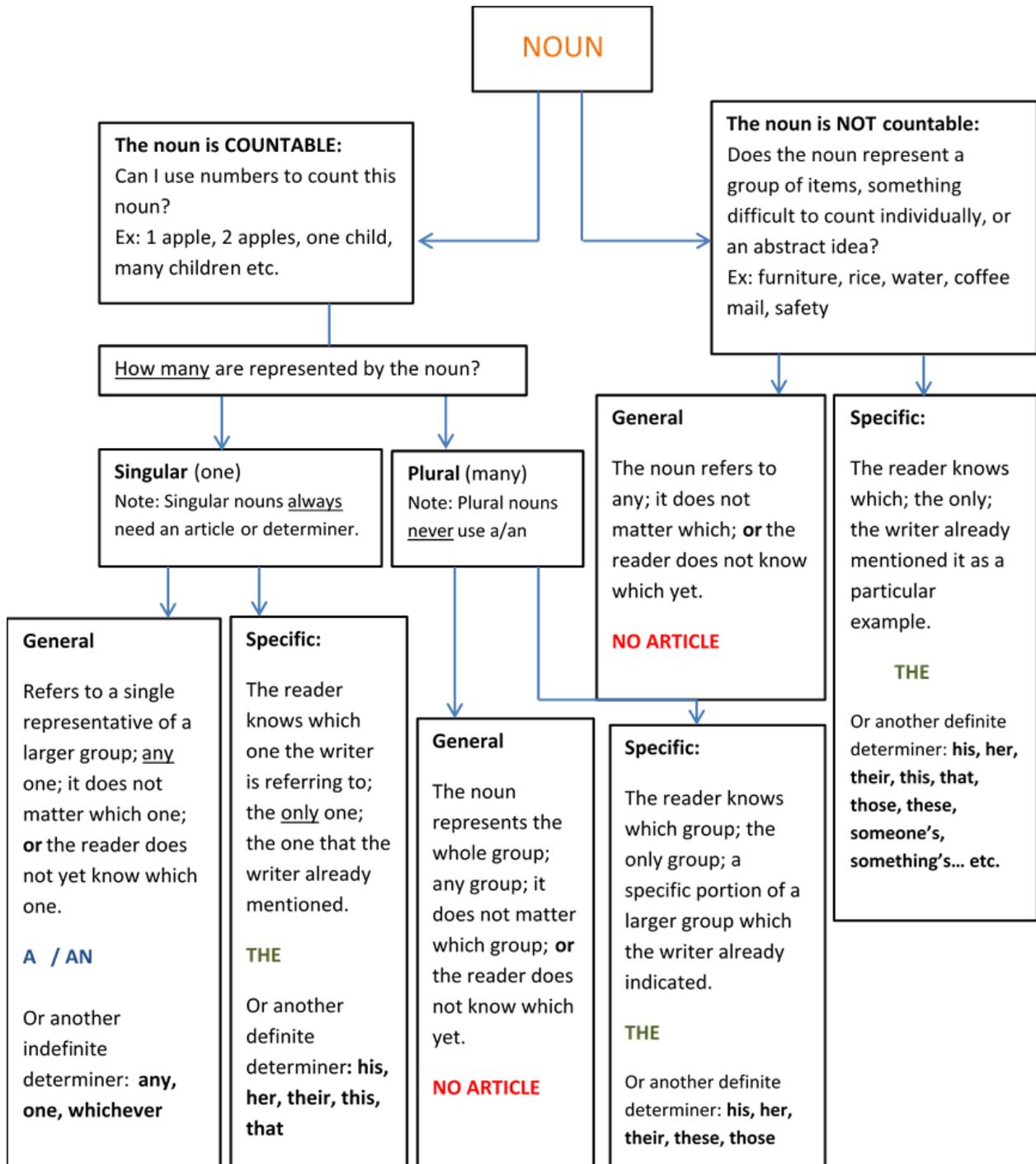


# Proofreading for Articles

Since articles (**a**, **an**, **the**) are used to make **nouns** (people, places, things, or concepts) definite (by using **the**) or indefinite (using **a**, **an**, or no article), to figure out if you've used articles correctly, you should start by looking closely at the nouns used in your writing.

Although there are some exceptions to these rules, follow this **flow chart** to help you find and correct article errors with most nouns:



# Some Rules for Article Usage

## Use THE

...before superlative adjectives	the <u>highest</u> mountain, the <u>best</u> result, the <u>most</u> commonly used resource, the <u>prettiest</u> sunrise
...and ordinal numbers	the <u>first</u> thing, <u>the</u> second part, the <u>last</u> item
...before <i>same</i>	At the <u>same</u> time, the <u>same</u> idea, the <u>same</u> thing
...before adjectives if you are referring to a whole group of people with the same characteristic	The elderly, the Japanese, the disenfranchised, the afflicted
...with decades or groups of years	The seventies, the fifties, the post-war era
...with nouns that are defined in the sentence or made specific in an immediate clause or phrase	the person with red-hair, the girl who spoke Italian, the one on the right
...with unique geographical areas and oceans or rivers	the Pacific, the Sahara, the Arctic, the Amazon, the Mississippi River
...with names of countries that indicate a group of states, provinces, or islands	The Seychelles, The United States of America, The Netherlands, The Caribbean Islands, The UK

## Use A/AN

<b>A</b> before a consonant sound (and some words beginning with –un)	a friend, a <b>p</b> uppy, a <b>t</b> hin scarf, a <b>c</b> ostly situation, a unicorn, a university
<b>AN</b> before a vowel sound (including silent –h)	an <b>h</b> our, an <b>a</b> pple, an <b>u</b> gly sweater, an <b>a</b> wkward situation

## Do NOT use any article:

...before abstract nouns (i.e., attitudes, emotions, diseases, holidays, languages, religions, philosophies, studies)	Henri loves art history. Marion had recovered from pneumonia. My friend follows Buddhism.
...before <b>proper nouns referring to:</b>	
people, real or fictional	Marie Curie, Batman, Oscar the Grouch
place names (i.e., countries, continents, states, provinces, cities, towns, islands)	Germany, Asia, Wisconsin, New Brunswick, Sardinia
the names of parks	Everglades National Park, Central Park
the names of mountains	Mount Everest, Mount Rainer
lakes, ponds, small bodies of water	Lake Victoria, Dawson's Creek
political or religious leaders	Prime Minister Trudeau, Pope Francis