Articles *The* and *A*

**Objectives**

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Identify the articles *the* and *a*.
- Use the correct article in sentences.
- Write using the articles *the* and *a*.

**Preparation**

**Materials Needed**
- Chart paper and markers
- Articles *The* and *A* (BLM 3)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

**Advanced Preparation**

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the Articles chart and the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

### 1. Focus

**Explain Articles**

**Say:** The words *the* and *a* are called articles. They are used with a noun to help you know if the noun is referring to something definite, or specific, or if it is referring to something that is not definite or not specific. For example, if I say, “Give me the book,” I’m referring to a specific book. But if I say, “Give me a book,” I could mean any book. Let’s look at how we use articles.

Display the following chart on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definite Article—<em>The</em></th>
<th>Indefinite Article—<em>A</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dog is black and white.</td>
<td>I want a dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is nice.</td>
<td>A teacher will help you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example Articles Chart**

Point to the first sentence in the left column of the chart and read it aloud. **Say:** Look at this sentence. The word *dog* is the noun in this sentence. I’m talking about a specific dog that is black and white, so I use the article *the*.

Point to the first sentence in the right column of the chart and read it aloud. **Say:** Now look at the second sentence. I’m not talking about a specific dog in this sentence, so I use the article *a*.

**Say:** Now let’s look at the noun *teacher* in the next two sentences. The first sentence is about a definite or specific teacher. The second sentence is referring to any teacher and not to a definite or specific teacher.

**Model Using Articles**

Display the modeling text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the example aloud to students.

**Say:** When writers write procedural text, they often use the articles *the* and *a* to talk about the materials or ingredients needed to make something. I’m going to underline the articles in this example of a procedural text.

First, pour your favorite cereal into a bowl. Next, add some freshly washed grapes to the bowl. After that, peel a banana and slice it with a knife.

**Modeling Text**
**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Beginning ELs will need a great deal of support and practice to become familiar with the use of the articles **the** and **a**. Place two yellow pencils on the table. **Say:** I need a pencil. Can you give me a pencil? (Take the pencil.) I have a pencil. Have students repeat the sentence. Write it on paper and circle the article **a**.

Now add a red pencil and two yellow pencils. Point to the red pencil. **Say:** I need the red pencil. Can you give me the red pencil? (Take the red pencil.) I have the red pencil. Have students repeat the sentence. Write it on paper and circle the article **the**.

Repeat with other groups of objects in the classroom: books, erasers, rulers, etc.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair students with fluent English speakers. Encourage them to work together to write two sentences using the article **the** and two sentences using the article **a**. Ask students to read each sentence to you to make sure they understand how to use the articles **the** and **a**.