

Grammar & Punctuation: Articles

Articles (or determiners) are used before nouns for clarity.

“**The**” is a definite article and refers to a particular item:

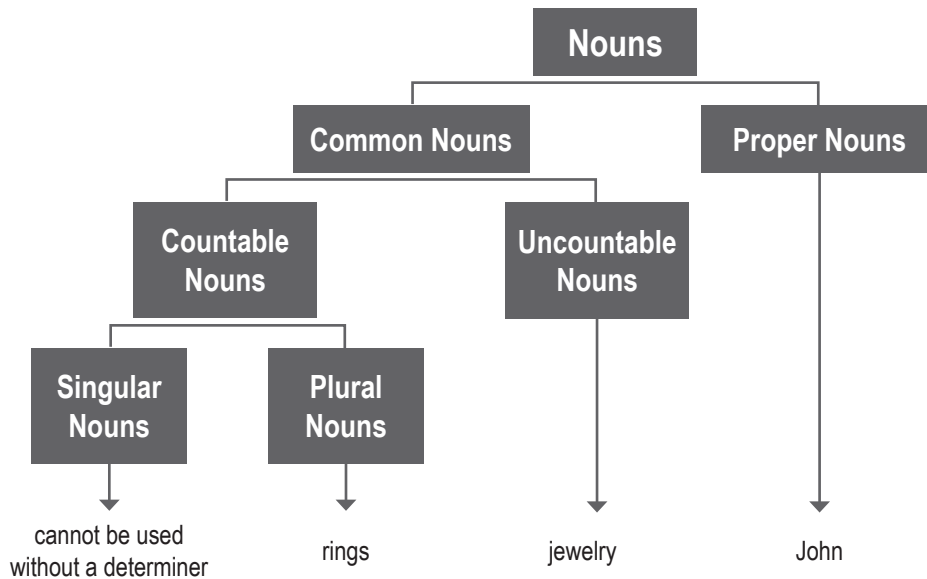
The studies, however, illustrated several health risks associated with artificial sweeteners (Dalton & Fool, 2010).

“The” refers to specific studies that are cited here.

“**A/an**” is an indefinite article and refers to any item within a group of possible items:

A study needs to be done on the effects of artificial sweeteners on adolescents.

“A” refers to any study that might be done in the future on this topic.



Any kind of this item	a ring	some rings	some jewelry	
One particular item	the ring	the rings	the jewelry	
With “this,” “that,” etc.	this ring that ring	these rings those rings	this jewelry that jewelry	
With a number	one ring	three rings ten rings		a proper noun cannot take a determiner unless it is part of the name (e.g., The United States)
With a pronoun	your ring my ring John’s ring	your rings my rings John’s rings	your jewelry my jewelry John’s jewelry	
With “a lot” or “lots”		a lot of rings lots of rings	a lot of jewelry lots of jewelry	
With “many,” “much,” etc.		many rings a few rings	much jewelry a little jewelry	