

# Adjectives and Articles

## The Adjective

**2c.** An **adjective** is a word that is used to modify a noun or a pronoun.

A noun or pronoun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

To *modify* a word means to describe the word or to make its meaning more definite. An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun by telling *what kind*, *which one*, *how much*, or *how many*.

**WHAT KIND?** **German** pen pal, **happy** dog, **green** grass

**WHICH ONE OR ONES?** **third** bus stop, **those** lockers, **every** desk

**HOW MUCH? OR HOW MANY?** **some** fruit, **four** quarters, **no** shoes

Sometimes an adjective comes after the word it modifies.

**EXAMPLES** The kitten, **energetic** and **playful**, chased a butterfly. [The adjectives *energetic* and *playful* describe *kitten*.]

The butterfly is **yellow**. [The predicate adjective *yellow* describes *butterfly*.]

**NOTE** Remember that proper adjectives, such as *German* and *Canadian*, are capitalized.

**EXERCISE A** Underline each adjective in each of the following sentences. Some sentences may contain more than one adjective. Do not underline *a*, *an*, or *the* in this exercise.

**Examples** 1. The story, short and suspenseful, entertained me. [*Short* and *suspenseful* describe *story*.]

2. Some students enrolled in the French class. [*Some* describes *students*. *French* describes *class*.]

1. In the box lay beautiful gems. [Which word describes *gems*?]
2. The clean table was shiny. [Which words describe *table*?]
3. Shelby lent ten dollars to a good friend.
4. That frog lives in a small pond.
5. A new student has joined the seventh grade.
6. The artist, creative and successful, opened a gallery.
7. Few people have climbed to the top of the icy mountain.
8. A piece of African art was hanging above the large fireplace.
9. The enthusiastic audience applauded each act of the play.
10. No points were scored until several minutes had passed.

## Articles

The adjectives *a*, *an*, and *the* are called **articles**. *A* and *an* are called **indefinite articles** because they refer to any member of a general group.

- *A* is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound.
- *An* is used before a word beginning with a vowel sound.

**EXAMPLES** *A* mosquito bit me. [*Mosquito* begins with a consonant sound.]

*An* umbrella shields you from a rain shower. [*Umbrella* begins with a vowel sound.]

The circus clown rode *a* unicycle. [Even though *u* is a vowel, the word *unicycle* begins with a consonant sound. Do you hear the *y* sound?]

I'll meet you in *an* hour. [Even though *h* is a consonant, the word *hour* begins with a vowel sound. The *h* is not pronounced.]

*The* is called the **definite article** because it refers to someone or something in particular.

**EXAMPLES** *The* mosquito bit me. [A specific mosquito bit me.]

May I borrow *the* umbrella? [I want to borrow a specific umbrella.]

**EXERCISE B** Underline all of the articles in the following sentences. Some sentences may have more than one article.

**Examples** 1. Could you pass me an envelope and a pen? [*An envelope* refers to any envelope.

*A pen* refers to any pen.]

2. I pulled the book from my backpack. [*The book* refers to a specific book.]

11. Megan found the bracelet under her desk. [Which word makes *bracelet* specific?]

12. Philip sketched a motorcycle on his notebook. [Which word makes *motorcycle* not specific?]

13. A light bulb in the kitchen has burned out.

14. There is an owl on the top branch of that tree.

15. I offered the cold fruit juice to my friend.

16. The treasure map had an X drawn on it in black ink.

17. My entry in the contest received an honorable mention.

18. I sing in a choir in my church.

19. Janice sliced a banana into the bowl of cereal.

20. Our hotel room was on an upper floor.