# Use of articles

mindmap by D.Potter - 17.10.2014
freely adapted from Practical English Usage by M.Swan
and other support materials

**SOMETHING**

**Do you know WHICH I mean?**

**No**

- a / an
  - indefinite article
    - singular countable noun
      - unspecified
      - mentioned for the 1st time
      - exclamations
        - ***What a day!***
      - names of professions
        - a manager
      - any one member of a class
        - I would like to live in an old house (= any old house)
      - classifying and defining
        - A glider is a plane with no engine
      - the plural form means the same
        - ***There's no such thing as a free lunch***
        - There's no such thing as free lunches
      - measuring, meaning 'per'
        - Three times a day
        - rates, prices, kilos, etc
      - some fixed expressions
        - to be an old hand at something
      - meaning possessive
        - ***A friend of mine***

**Probably...**

- zero article
  - uncountable noun
    - coffee
    - chocolate
  - plural
    - countable
      - general
        - Taxi drivers are dangerous
  - mass
  - common expressions
    - place
      - ***at / from work***
    - time
      - by day
      - at night
    - movement
      - by car
      - ***on foot***
    - double expressions
      - with knife and fork
      - from top to bottom
      - husband and wife
    - both
    - all
    - names of illnesses
  - abstract nouns
    - Life is hard
    - ***I like jazz***
    - It's terrible weather
    - She speaks good English
    - Disaster struck
  - 🙂 some fixed expressions
    - to come to power
    - ***on Tv***
    - to save face
    - to jump to conclusions
    - to take part in sth
  - names (proper nouns)
    - Winston Churchill
  - names of most countries
    - England
    - Russia
  - ⚠️ geographical names
    - lakes
    - single mountains
    - streets
      - They live on High Street
    - continents
      - Europe

***general knowledge & shared experience***

- ⚠️ geographical names
  - oceans
    - the Atlantic Ocean
  - rivers
  - compass points
    - the North
  - collective countries
    - ***the UK***
    - the Russian Federation
  - mountain ranges
    - the Alps

**Yes**

- definite article
  - the
    - mentioned before
    - mentioned later in the same sentence
      - ***The client I met this morning is rich***
    - what you mean is clear from the context
      - *I'll meet you at the airport*
      - *In the automotive industry the trend has been ...*
    - unique thing
      - the Sun
      - the Mercedes 'A class'
    - 🙂 fixed expressions
      - (in) the internet
      - the press
      - ***on the radio***
      - to waver in the face of problems
    - superlative form
      - the best thing
      - the same problem
    - the 'well-known'
      - to make clear it is the person we're both thinking of
      - ***the ever-popular Volkswagen***
      - I like poems by Shakespear, the playwright
    - an adjective referring to a group
      - ***the English, the rich, the poor, the disabled***
    - classes
      - the Mercedes 'A class'
      - the automotive industry
    - titles
    - musical instruments
      - ***to play the piano***