

NDA ENGLISH (GAT) HIGH-YIELD REVISION NOTES

Chapter: Articles (Rules, Exceptions, Exam Traps & 12 Practice Questions)

1. Core Trap: Phonetic Selection (A vs. An)

Articles are governed strictly by the **initial sound** of the word, not just the alphabetical spelling.

- **Use "A" before Consonant Sounds:**

- Standard consonant sounds: *a boy, a pen, a book*
- Vowel letters pronounced with a consonant sound (/ju:/ or /w/): *a European, a university, a unique book, a uniform, a unit, a universal problem, a one-eyed man, a one-rupee note*

- **Use "An" before Vowel Sounds:**

- Pure vowel sounds: *an apple, an umbrella, an elephant, an ass*
- Silent initial 'h': *an hour, an heir, an honest person, an honourable man, an honorary post*
- Abbreviations starting with letters producing an initial vowel sound (/e/, /æ/): *an M.P., an M.L.A., an S.P., an S.D.O., an F.I.R., an X-ray, an LL.B. graduate*
(Contrast with consonants: *a B.A., a B.Sc., a D.S.P.*)

2. Definite Article "The" – High-Frequency Rules

Definite Article ("The")	Zero Article (Omission)
Mountain Ranges: <i>The Himalayas, The Alps</i>	Individual Peaks: <i>Everest, K2, Mount Abu</i>
Group of Islands: <i>The Andamans, The West Indies</i>	Individual Islands: <i>Java, Ceylon, Sicily</i>
Rivers, Oceans, Gulfs: <i>The Ganga, The Indian Ocean, The Persian Gulf</i>	Lakes: <i>Lake Superior, Dal Lake</i>
Descriptive / Union / Plural Nations: <i>The USA, The UK, The Netherlands, The UAE, The Sudan</i>	Standard Country / City Names: <i>India, France, Delhi, London, Great Britain</i>
Monuments & Scriptures: <i>The Taj Mahal, The Gita, The Ramayana, The Bible</i>	Author Preceding Title: <i>Valmiki's Ramayana, Homer's Iliad</i>

Structural & Stylistic Usage of "The"

- **Parallel Comparison (Double Comparative):**

Formula: The + comparative..., the + comparative...

Example: *The higher you climb, the colder it becomes. / The sooner, the better.*

- **Comparative of Choice (Out of Two):**

Use "the" before the comparative degree when comparing two specific entities.

Example: *She is **the weaker of the two** sisters.*

- **Noun in Apposition & Specific Office:**

Example: *Netaji, **the** hero of Modern India, ought to be remembered.*

- **Abstract Quality in a Common Noun:**

Example: *The judge in him (sense of justice); The mother in her (maternal instinct).*

- **Adjective Representing an Entire Class (Plural Verb):**

Formula: The + Adjective = Plural Noun

Example: *The rich **are** not always happy. / The injured **were** admitted immediately.*

- **Proper Noun Used as a Common Standard of Comparison:**

Example: *Kalidas is **the Shakespeare** of India. / Surdas is **the Milton** of India.*

3. High-Yield UPSC Traps: Word Order & Adverbs

Pattern 1: Rather / Quite + a/an + Noun | *It is rather a nuisance. / It is quite an interesting book.*

Pattern 2: So / Too / As / How + Adjective + a/an + Noun | *He is **as weak a boy as** his brother. (NOT: as a weak boy)*

Pattern 3: Such + a/an + Adjective + Noun | *It was **such a cold night** that...*

4. Omission of Articles (Zero Article Traps)

- **Primary vs. Secondary Purpose of Institutions:**

School, college, church, temple, hospital, prison, market, bed:

- **Primary Purpose (No Article):** *He was sent to **prison** after conviction. / She goes to **bed** at 10 PM.*
- **Secondary / Physical Building ("The"):** *The father went to **the school** to meet the principal.*

- **Uncountable, Material & Abstract Nouns in General Sense:**

*Gold is a precious metal. / Honesty is the best policy. / He gave me **advice** (NOT: an advice).*

*(Exception: When qualified: **The honesty of** my brother is unquestionable; **The tea of** Assam is famous).*

- **Meals & Modes of Transport:**

*He takes **breakfast** at 8 AM. / He travels **by air** / **by train** (NOT: by the air, by a train).*

- **Elected / Appointed Posts:**

*After verbs like elect, appoint, make, select, nominate: The committee appointed him **Captain**. (NOT: the Captain)*

5. Repetition of Articles & Subject-Verb Agreement

- **Single Individual Holding Two Titles (Singular Verb):**

*The Chairman and Managing Director **is** attending the conference.*

- **Two Distinct Individuals (Plural Verb):**

*The Chairman and **the** Managing Director **are** attending the conference.*

- **Ordinals:**

*The first and **the second chapter** are difficult. (Singular noun with repeated 'the')*

*The first and **second chapters** are difficult. (Plural noun with single 'the')*

6. NDA-Pattern Practice Drill: Spotting the Error

Directions: In each question below, a sentence is divided into three parts: (a), (b), and (c). Find the part with an error. If there is no error, choose (d).

1. The young cadet was declared (a) / as the most eligible candidate (b) / for an honorary post in the academy. (c) / No error (d)
2. Dr. Radhakrishnan was (a) / a more famous philosopher (b) / than a politician. (c) / No error (d)
3. It was such cold a night (a) / that the sentry on duty (b) / could hardly hold his rifle straight. (c) / No error (d)
4. The officer instructed his troops (a) / to travel by the train (b) / to reach the forward post before dusk. (c) / No error (d)
5. The Everest is the highest peak (a) / in the world and attracts (b) / mountaineers across the globe. (c) / No error (d)
6. She is the weaker (a) / of two sisters, yet she managed (b) / to clear the physical fitness assessment. (c) / No error (d)
7. The commanding officer gave him (a) / an useful advice regarding (b) / troop deployment during combat. (c) / No error (d)
8. The Chairman and the Managing Director (a) / of the defense enterprise (b) / is attending the annual conference today. (c) / No error (d)
9. He was sent to the prison (a) / for two years after being convicted (b) / of treason against the state. (c) / No error (d)
10. Higher you climb (a) / the steep mountain pass, (b) / the colder it becomes. (c) / No error (d)
11. The committee appointed (a) / Captain Vikram Batra (b) / as the commander of the assault unit. (c) / No error (d)
12. The injured was admitted (a) / to the military hospital (b) / immediately after the skirmish. (c) / No error (d)

7. Detailed Answer Key & Explanations

1. (d) No error

Honorary starts with a silent 'h', giving a vowel sound (/ɒnərəri/). Hence, *an honorary post* is correct.

2. (c) Error in part (c): **than a politician** → **than politician**

When two titles or qualities belonging to the same individual are compared, do not repeat the indefinite article before the second noun.

3. (a) Error in part (a): **such cold a night** → **such a cold night (or so cold a night)**

Word-order rule: Such + a/an + adjective + noun OR So + adjective + a/an + noun.

4. (b) Error in part (b): **by the train** → **by train**

Modes of transportation preceded by the preposition *by* take zero article (*by air, by train, by bus, by sea*).

5. (a) Error in part (a): **The Everest** → **Everest / Mount Everest**

Mountain ranges take *the* (*The Himalayas*), but individual peaks (*Everest, K2, Nanda Devi*) take zero article.

6. (b) Error in part (b): **of two sisters** → **of the two sisters**

In the comparative of choice between two entities, *the* is mandatory before both the comparative degree and the numeral: *the weaker of the two sisters*.

7. (b) Error in part (b): **an useful advice** → **useful advice (or a piece of useful advice)**

Advice is an uncountable noun and cannot be preceded directly by *a/an*. Also, *useful* begins with a consonant sound (/ju:/).

8. (a) Error in part (a): The Chairman and the Managing Director → The Chairman and Managing Director

The singular verb *is* in part (c) indicates one person holding two designations. Using *the* before both titles indicates two separate individuals, requiring a plural verb.

9. (a) Error in part (a): sent to the prison → sent to prison

When institutions like *prison*, *school*, *church*, *hospital* are used for their primary purpose (here, serving a sentence as a convict), no article is used.

10. (a) Error in part (a): Higher you climb → The higher you climb

Double comparative structure requires parallel articles: The + comparative..., the + comparative....

11. (c) Error in part (c): as the commander → as commander (or appointed ... commander)

Nouns denoting an official rank or office following verbs like *appoint*, *elect*, *crown*, *make* omit the article.

12. (a) Error in part (a): The injured was → The injured were

When *the* precedes an adjective to represent a whole class of persons (The + adjective), it functions as a plural noun and takes a plural verb (*The rich are...*, *The injured were...*).