

(1) In American English, don't leave your nouns naked!

(2) If you have a singular noun, you need to add an article a, an, the, or another modifier

For example:

(not correct) ***I need to buy vacuum cleaner.

VACUUM CLEANER? That's a singular noun, but WHERE'S YOUR ARTICLE?



IT'S A NAKED NOUN!!

I need to buy **A** vacuum cleaner.

(not correct) **Did you see schedule

SCHEDULE? Singular noun. AND NO ARTICLE?



ANOTHER NAKED NOUN!!

Did you see **THE** schedule yet?

(not correct) **He's studying to be engineer

Singular noun: ENGINEER. AND NO ARTICLE!



ANOTHER NAKED NOUN!!

For goodness sake! Dress up your nouns! Put on some clothes!

He is studying to be **AN** engineer.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR
NOUNS NAKED!!

(3) Ask yourself - is this a specific noun or a general noun?

For example: not correct: **I need to buy vacuum cleaner

(WRONG) - I need to put an article on this!

(SO I ASK MYSELF): DOES IT MATTER WHICH VACUUM CLEANER?

If YES, then you'll use a modifier: that vacuum / your vacuum / the vacuum

But in this case, the answer is NO.

It doesn't matter which vacuum cleaner. I just have a filthy carpet! So...

Ask - Does the noun start with a CONSONANT? (If yes - use A) (If no - use AN)

In this case we have the noun **vacuum**. It starts with a consonant. We're going to use the word "a".

I need to buy **A** vacuum
cleaner.

Just, please:

DON'T LEAVE YOUR NOUNS NAKED!!

(4) Let's look at schedule.

not correct: **Did you see schedule yet?

(SO I ASK MYSELF): DOES IT MATTER WHICH SCHEDULE?

YES! It's the one we talked about last week.

A red speech bubble with a black outline, pointing to the left. Inside the bubble, the text "Did you see **THE** schedule yet?" is written in black, with the word "THE" in red.

NO! If it doesn't matter which schedule.

Just ask yourself, does "schedule" start with a CONSONANT or a VOWEL?

In this case - consonant

A red speech bubble with a black outline, pointing to the left. Inside the bubble, the text "Did you see **A** schedule yet?" is written in black, with the letter "A" in red.

Whatever you do, just:

DON'T LEAVE YOUR NOUNS NAKED!!

(5) (not correct): **He is studying to be engineer.

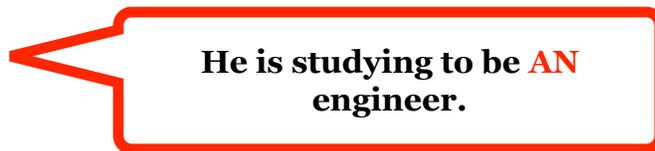
DOES IT MATTER WHICH ENGINEER?

IF YES! THEN PUT A MODIFIER: *that engineer/ this engineer / the engineer*

In this case NO, because it's just an engineer.

So, does the noun start with a CONSONANT? "ENGINEER"

In this case, NO - it's a vowel! We need to use the word "AN"



He is studying to be **AN** engineer.

But, whatever you do...

DON'T LEAVE YOUR NOUNS NAKED!!

(6) Take note that plural nouns are not naked nouns

To make the following sentence plural:

“I need to buy a vacuum cleaner”

You can say:

I need to buy vacuum cleaners.

NO MODIFIERS NEEDED!

To make the following sentence plural:

“He is studying to be an engineer”

You can say:

They are studying to be engineers.

NO ARTICLES NEEDED!

However, when you say “DID YOU SEE THE SCHEDULE YET”,

...we are talking about a definite schedule, and that schedule is important, so we want to keep the definite article when we pluralize the noun .

Did you see the schedules yet?

So, the next time you want to use a singular noun, please remember ...

DON'T LEAVE YOUR NOUNS NAKED!!

LET'S PRACTICE - SELECT THE CORRECT ARTICLE IN THE SENTENCES BELOW:

- (1) My brother is studying to be a/an/the/(no article) engineer.
- (2) A/An/The/(no article) coming Winter is going to be very cold.
- (3) I want to buy my son a/an/the/(no article) iphone.
- (4) Do you want a/an/the/(no article) piece of pizza?
- (5) The highway is totally loaded with a/an/the/(no article) cars tonight.
- (6) You need to turn in a/an/the/(no article) final project tonight.
- (7) The novel contains a/an/the/(no article) sentences that are full of description and feeling.
- (8) A/An/The/(no article) apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- (9) I need to see a/an/the/(no article) email you told me about.
- (10) The family was excited to see a/an/the/(no article) movie "Titanic".

ANSWERS:

- (11) My brother is studying to be **an** engineer.
- (12) **The** coming Winter is going to be very cold.
- (13) I want to buy my son **an** iphone.
- (14) Do you want **a** piece of pizza?
- (15) The highway is totally loaded with **(no article)** cars tonight.
- (16) You need to turn in **the** final project tonight.
- (17) The novel contains **(no article)** sentences that are full of description and feeling.
- (18) **An** apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- (19) I need to see **the** email you told me about.
- (20) The family was excited to see **the** movie “Titanic”.