

**About this script**

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**关于台词的备注:**

请注意这不是广播节目的逐字稿件。本文稿可能没有体现录制、编辑过程中对节目做出的改变。

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**Q & A of the Week: The 定冠词 The**

Jo: Welcome to Question and Answer of the Week from BBC Learning English where we answer your questions about the English language. I'm Jo and with me today is Feifei.

Feifei: Hello there. 今天我们要来回答来自青岛的 Victoria 提出的问题。

Jo: Yes, she told us she has some knowledge about the article *the* but still finds it difficult to use. Can we help? In English *the*, *a* and *an* are called articles.

Feifei: 冠词, Victoria 说她觉得英语冠词让她有些头疼, 那我们能帮帮她吗?

Jo: Well, here's English teacher Alex Gooch, who says it's not unusual to have problems with this aspect of the English language.

Feifei: 他给我们比较了定冠词 *the* 和不定冠词 *a*, *an* 之间的区别。

**Insert**

*Almost all students of English find our articles difficult. The basic rule is that we use a or an for countable nouns, when we're introducing them for the first time.*

*For example, we might say: I watched a film yesterday.*

*This is the first time the film has been mentioned, and the listener doesn't know which film we're talking about, so we use a.*

*The is used when we're discussing something and we expect that the listener already knows which thing we're talking about.*

*For example: I watched a film yesterday, but it wasn't as good as the film we watched last week.*

*We say the film we watched last week because this film isn't something new. We already know about this film because we watched it last week.*

Feifei: 听完上面的这些解释后 Victoria 你也不用太着急, 看来对定冠词迷惑的不只你一人。

Jo: Almost all students of English find our articles difficult. He says the basic rule is to use *a* or *an* for countable nouns, when we're introducing them for the first time.

- Feifei: 可数名词。可数名词有单数形式和复数形式，也就是说一个可以数得清的东西。
- Jo: So for example pen - we say one pens two pens. Apple - one apple, two apples.
- Feifei: 不过像 wind 风就是不可数名词。我们不说 one wind, two winds – 而我们只说 wind. 像风 wind 牛奶 milk 这样的名词就是不可数名词。Alex 说我们用 a 或 an 来形容首次出现在一个对话中的可数名词。
- Jo: So when a countable noun is introduced into the conversation for the first time you would use a or an. He gave us the example - I watched a film yesterday.
- Feifei: 刚刚这个例子里提到了电影，那么电影这个可数名词是第一次在这个谈话中出现，所以用 a 来修饰。To mention 提到。
- Jo: I watched a film yesterday. Now the is used when we're discussing something and we expect the listener already knows which thing we're talking about. Alex uses the example - I watched a film yesterday but it wasn't as good as the film we watched last week.
- Feifei: 当说话一方和听者都知道彼此说的一件事情或一个东西的时候我们就会用 the. To expect 期待，预计。所以我们可以说 I watched a film yesterday but it wasn't as good as the film we watched last week. 因为上周看的那部电影在上面的对话中已经提过，对于谈话双方来说都不陌生了。Listen to Alex again.

### Insert

*Almost all students of English find our articles difficult. The basic rule is that we use a or an for countable nouns, when we're introducing them for the first time.*

*For example, we might say: I watched a film yesterday.*

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*The is used when we're discussing something and we expect that the listener already knows which thing we're talking about.*

*For example: I watched a film yesterday, but it wasn't as good as the film we watched last week.*

*We say the film we watched last week because this film isn't something new. We already know about this film because we watched it last week.*

- Jo: On this week's BBC Learning English Question and Answer of the Week we're answering Victoria's question about the. She wants us to help her understand how to use it. Have a listen to these sentences.

### Insert

- *The book you gave me last weekend was so exciting.*
- *I need to find a book about Beijing.*

Jo: So in the first example, *the* is used because we know which book is being talked about.

Feifei: 是的，我知道你给的是哪本书。第二个例子里用了 *a* 是因为不知道究竟是哪本关于北京的书。Listen to this example. Squirrel 松鼠。

### Insert

- *I saw a squirrel in the garden this morning.*
- *Really?*
- *Yeah, I think the squirrel was looking for a nut under the apple tree.*

Jo: Let's we look at the ways *the* and *a* were used there. I saw *a* squirrel in *the* garden. *A* squirrel because we haven't seen the squirrel before – it's new to us.

Feifei: 但是他说了 *the garden* 因为从上下文种可以判断出来是在这个人家自己的花园看到了松鼠。

Jo: But then things change. I think *the* squirrel was looking for a nut under *the* apple tree. We use *the* here because it's the second mention of the squirrel.

Feifei: 名词第二次出现 – 这次我们知道了是哪只松鼠，因为刚才在花园里看到了一只松鼠。

Jo: And he was looking for *a* nut under *the* apple tree.

Feifei: Nut 坚果。这里用了 *a nut* 是因为这是名词第一次出现；而又说了 *the apple tree* 是因为上面提到过了花园，根据上下文逻辑判断应该可以推测出这个苹果树是在这个人家的花园里，而不是在其它地方。I guess using *the* and *a* is something you just do naturally, isn't it Jo?

Jo: As a native speaker, yes, but Alex Gooch from earlier in the programme is going to leave us with some advice in using articles and getting them right.

### Insert

*The only really effective way to learn how to use articles in English well is practice. When you've listened to enough spoken English, and read enough English written down, you will gradually start to develop a feeling and intuition for which is the correct article to use in a particular situation.*

Jo: So the best way to learn is to practice.

Feifei: 练习。Alex 说当你听了还有看了很多英语后，逐渐的自然就会培养出语感，和一种直觉 intuition.

Jo: You will gradually start to develop a feeling or intuition for which is the correct article – *the*, *a* or *an* – in a particular situation. Good luck!

Feifei: 是的，熟能生巧，记得多多练习！非常感谢你的问题 Victoria. 如果你有任何英语语言学习方面的问题，欢迎发邮件给我们，邮箱地址是 [questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk](mailto:questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk).

Jo: Or check out other questions on our website [www.bbcchina.com.cn](http://www.bbcchina.com.cn). Bye for now.

**Feifei:** 感谢收听，下次再会！