ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Articles (A, An, The) MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 2

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Explanations

1. Don’t stay outside in _____ cold; come in by _____ fire.
✔ **A) the / the**
We say **the cold** for the cold weather outside, and **the fire** for the particular fire in the room that both people know about. Not **a fire**, because the speaker means the fire that is already burning in the house.

2. It’s _____ pity that my birthday comes only once _____ year.
✔ **C) a / a**
It's a pity is a fixed expression. In frequency phrases we use **a** to mean 'each' or 'per': **once a year**, **twice a week**.

3. _____ boy was shy and always looked down when _____ grown-ups spoke to him.
✔ **B) the / _____**
The boy is a particular boy the story is about. **Grown-ups** means adults in general, so we use the plural with no article. Not **a**, because **a** is never used with a plural noun.

4. There was _____ good restaurant near _____ cinema and Joan decided to have _____ dinner there.
✔ **D) a / the / _____**
A good restaurant is mentioned for the first time. **The cinema** is a particular cinema the reader knows about. Names of meals usually take no article: **have dinner**, **have lunch**. Not **have a dinner**, because we only use **a** when an adjective describes the meal, e.g. **a delicious dinner**.

5. Kate ate _____ meat with _____ vegetables for _____ second course.
✔ **A) _____ / _____ / the**
Meat is uncountable and **vegetables** is a general plural, so neither takes an article here. **The second course** uses **the** because of the ordinal number **second**.

6. I’ll never forget _____ first time I saw _____ real American Christmas tree.
✔ **D) the / a**
We say **the first time** because ordinal numbers such as **first** take **the**. **A real American Christmas tree** is one example of that kind of tree, so it takes **a**. Not a zero article, because **tree** is a singular countable noun.

7. “_____ English cannot make _____ good coffee,” she thought, leaving _____ restaurant.
✔ **E) the / _____ / the**
The English (the + nationality adjective) means the people of England as a group. **Coffee** is uncountable and used in a general sense here, so it takes no article. **The restaurant** is the particular place she is leaving. Not **English** without **the**, because on its own it means the language.

8. At _____ first it was difficult for her to drive _____ car in _____ London.
✔ **A) _____ / the / _____**
At first is a fixed phrase with no article. **The car** is her particular car. Names of cities take no article: **in London**.

9. _____ few days later I entered _____ reading room of _____ public library.
✔ **A) A / the / the**
A few days later is a fixed expression meaning 'some days later'. **The reading room** and **the public library** are particular places, so both take **the**. Not **few days** without **a**, because **few** alone means 'not many'.

10. _____ book is always _____ acceptable gift.
✔ **A) A / an**
A book means any book, a book in general. We use **an** before a vowel sound: **an acceptable gift**. Not **a acceptable**, because **acceptable** starts with a vowel sound.

11. Sofia is _____ capital of _____ Bulgaria.
✔ **C) the / _____**
The capital is the only capital of the country, so it takes **the**. Most country names take no article: **Bulgaria**, **France**, **Japan**.

12. Many years ago _____ Tower of London was _____ fortress.
✔ **E) the / a**
Names with an **of** phrase usually take **the**: **the Tower of London**, **the Bank of England**. **A fortress** means one of many fortresses, so it takes **a**. Not a zero article before **Tower**, because the **of London** part makes it **the Tower of London**.

13. _____ youth of Great Britain wants to have _____ better life for _____ British people.
✔ **B) the / a / the**
The youth of a country means its young people as a group. **A better life** takes **a** because an adjective describes **life**. **The British people** means the people of the country as a whole.

14. _____ Moon has no _____ light. It is bright because _____ Sun shines on it.
✔ **A) The / _____ / the**
The Moon and **the Sun** are unique, so they take **the**. After **no** we use no article: **no light**, **no money**.

15. _____ shortest people in _____ world and _____ tallest people in _____ world live in _____ Africa.
✔ **A) The / the / the / _____**
Superlatives take **the**: **the shortest**, **the tallest**. **The world** is unique, so it also takes **the**. Names of continents take no article: **Africa**, **Asia**.

16. Hope is _____ good breakfast, but _____ bad supper.
✔ **A) a / a**
This is a saying by Francis Bacon. When an adjective describes a meal, we use **a**: **a good breakfast**, **a bad supper**. Not **an**, because **bad** starts with a consonant sound.

17. I always wear sunglasses when I go to _____ beach. _____ sun bothers my eyes.
✔ **A) the / the**
We usually say **go to the beach**, just like **go to the cinema**. **The sun** is unique, so it takes **the**. Not **go to beach**, because **beach** is a singular countable noun and needs an article.

18. She ordered _____ fried chicken with _____ green salad and black coffee for _____ dessert.
✔ **A) _____ / _____ / _____**
Fried chicken and **green salad** are food in general here, used as uncountable nouns, so they take no article. We say **for dessert** (also **for breakfast**, **for lunch**) with no article. Not **for the dessert**, because the phrase is fixed.

19. My aunt lived on _____ ground floor of _____ old house on _____ River Thames.
✔ **A) the / an / the**
The ground floor is a particular floor of the house. **An old house** is mentioned for the first time, and we use **an** before a vowel sound. Rivers always take **the**: **the River Thames**, **the Nile**.

20. On New Year's Eve some of _____ pupils stayed at _____ school later than usual.
✔ **A) the / _____**
Some of the pupils uses **the** because it means part of a particular group. **At school** has no article when it means being there to study. Not **a**, because **a** cannot go before a plural noun like **pupils**.

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