

Apuntes: los artículos

c. Uses of the Articles

The definite article is used:

- before the names of languages and other subjects of study, unless the subjects of study follow *hablar*, *en*, or *de*.

El japonés es una lengua. *Japanese is a language.*

Estudio el español. *I study Spanish.*

La física es difícil. *Physics is difficult.*

BUT

El habla español. *He speaks Spanish.*

Escriben en francés. *They write in French.*

Mi libro de historia está en casa. *My history book is at home.*

- before titles (except when speaking directly to a person).

El señor Pardo es alto. *Mr. Pardo is tall.*

La doctora Pérez está aquí. *Dr. Pérez is here.*

BUT

Buenas tardes, señor Pardo. *Good afternoon, Mr. Pardo.*

- before the following geographic names.

la América Central *Central America*

el Canadá *Canada*

la América del Norte *North America*

los Estados Unidos *the United States*

la América del Sur *South America*

el Perú *Peru*

la Argentina *Argentina*

el Japón *Japan*

la Florida *Florida*

la China *China*

BUT

Alemania *Germany*

Inglaterra *England*

España *Spain*

Italia *Italy*

Europa *Europe*

México *Mexico*

Francia *France*

Rusia *Russia*

NOTE: Current usage tends to omit the definite article before the names of countries.

Vivo en Estados Unidos. *I live in the United States.*

- before the days of the week, to express the English word on.

No voy a la escuela los domingos. *I don't go to school on Sundays.*

- before the words *escuela*, *clase*, and *iglesia* when they follow a preposition.

Voy a la escuela. *I'm going to school.*

Están en la iglesia. *They are in church.*

- before parts of the body and articles of clothing.

Se lava las manos. *She washes her hands.*

Se pone la blusa. *She puts on her blouse.*

7. before the names of seasons.
Hace calor en el verano. *It's hot in summer.*
8. before nouns in a general or abstract sense.
Los libros son útiles. *Books are useful.*
La altura me espanta. *Height frightens me.*
9. before nouns of weight or measure.
Cuesta diez centavos la libra. *It costs ten cents a pound.*

10. before certain time expressions and when expressing the time of day.

el mes próximo *next month*
la semana pasada *last week*
Es la una. *It's one o'clock.*
Te llamaré a las cinco y media. *I'll call you at five thirty.*

11. The indefinite article is used to express the English word *a (an)*.

Tengo un hermano. *I have a brother.*

12. The indefinite article is omitted before a noun expressing nationality, profession, or occupation when it follows the verb *ser*.

Tomás es alemán. *Tomás is German.*
Ese hombre es panadero. *That man is a baker.*
Ella va a ser médica. *She's going to be a doctor.*

BUT

If the noun is modified, the indefinite article is used.

Deseo ser un ingeniero bueno. *I want to be a good engineer.*

d. Omission of the Articles

1. The definite article is omitted:

a. before a noun in apposition.
Lima, capital del Perú, es
una ciudad interesante. *Lima, the capital of Peru, is an interesting city.*

b. with names of rulers.
Carlos Quinto fue un rey español. *Charles the Fifth was a Spanish king.*

2. The indefinite article is omitted:

a. before an unmodified noun expressing nationality, religion, rank, or occupation following the verb *ser*.
Soy norteamericano. *I am an American.*
¿Es Ud. protestante? *Are you a Protestant?*
Carolina es princesa. *Carolina is a princess.*
Reymundo es dentista. *Reymundo is a dentist.*

BUT

Es un abogado famoso. *He is a famous lawyer.*

- b. with the following words:

cien:	cien dólares <i>a hundred dollars</i>
cierto/a:	cierta persona <i>a certain person</i>
mil:	mil habitantes <i>a thousand inhabitants</i>
otro/a:	otro alumno <i>another student</i>
qué:	¡Qué lástima! <i>What a pity!</i>
tal:	tal hijo <i>such a son</i>