Practice Exercises: Using Articles
Adapted from Perdue OWL and Focus on Editing (Fox)

1. A vs An
Indefinite Articles are "a" and "an." They apply when you’re talking about any member of a group. Fill in the blank with “a” or “an.”

1. ____ blue house
2. ____ imagination
3. ____ girl
4. ____ robber
5. ____ used car
6. ____ uncle
7. ____ happy birthday
8. ____ antelope
9. ____ husband
10. ____ opera singer
11. ____ current
12. ____ elephant
13. ____ plum
14. ____ computer
15. ____ ocean
16. ____ example
17. ____ rock
18. ____ orange
19. ____ honorable man
20. ____ interesting man

2. Indefinite and Definite Articles
Definite Articles (the) indicate a specific member of a group. Decide if you need an indefinite article (“a” or “an”) or a definite article (“the”), and fill in the blank appropriately.

1. The farmer bought ____ ox to help till his field.
2. ____ school on my street is progressive.
3. Mrs. Geremia is ____ Italian woman.
4. I borrowed ____ marker from your bag of crayons and markers.
5. One of the dancers said, "____ instructor is late today."
6. I want ____ orange from that bucket.
7. My friend is learning to play ____ flute at her school.
8. Please give me ____ piece of pie to the left of the cake in the display.
9. ____ energetic person would be fun to spend time with.
10. ____ color of the paint I’m using is pink.
3. Geographical Place and Proper Nouns: When Can You Skip Articles?

Some proper nouns, like countries, cities, lakes, single mountains, and streets do not need an article. Others, general places like regions, oceans, deserts, mountain ranges and peninsulas need “the” before them. Fill in the blank if you need an article, leave it blank if you do not.

1. ____ Albania
2. ____ Pacific Ocean
3. ____ Lake Champlain
4. ____ Albany, NY
5. ____ Sahara Desert
6. ____ Lake George
7. ____ Nile River
8. ____ Alps
9. ____ Mount Everest
10. ____ Kansas
11. ____ Middle East
12. ____ Brandywine St NW

4. Editing a Paragraph

All of the articles have been taken out of these paragraph, fill in the blanks with the appropriate article or leave it blank if you do not need an article. You do not need an article for certain geographical locations, general terms, years, and uncountable nouns.

Alexander Hamilton (January 11, 1755 or 1757 – July 12, 1804) was ___ Founding Father of ___ United States, chief staff aide to General George Washington, one of the most influential interpreters and promoters of ____ U.S. Constitution, ___ founder of the nation's financial system, and ___ founder of The New York Post. As ___ first Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton was ___ primary author of the economic policies of the George Washington administration. Hamilton took the lead in, the establishment of ___ national bank, ___ system of tariffs, and friendly trade relations with Britain. He owned ___ large library and was generally considered ___ honorable man despite being involved in a famous sex scandal.

Intermittent civil wars have broken out since ___ Sudan won its independence in ___ 1956, culminating in large conflicts: ___ first Sudanese civil war, civil unrest in ___ Blue Nile region and South Kordofan, and the violence in ___ Darfur. Along with scarce resources, conflicts have been fueled by ___ political, economic, religious and cultural marginalization of ___ minority groups by the government in ___ Khartoum, the capital city. In addition, conflict between nomadic tribes in Sudan and between nomadic herders and farmers are often sparked by disputes over scarce resources such as grazing land and drinking water.