

## USE OF DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLES

1. Use a definite article (el, los, la, las) to single out a specific person, place, etc. For illustration purposes the articles will be underlined.
  - Las plumas están en la mesa. (The pens are on the table.)
  - La profesora Ugalde está en su oficina. (Professor Ugalde is in her office.)
  - El bolígrafo está en la mesa. (The pen is on the table.)
  - El señor Arriagada está aquí. (Mr. Arriagada is here.)
  - Los exámenes no son difíciles. (The exams are not difficult.)
2. Nouns used in a general sense are preceded by the definite article.
  - El hombre es un animal inteligente. (Man is an intelligent animal.)
  - Me gustan los carros modernos. (I like modern cars.)
3. Use before each noun in a series.
  - Pongan los libros, los papeles y las plumas en el suelo. (Put the books, papers, and pens on the floor.)
  - Visitó al hermano y al padre de su amigo. (Note: al = a + el) (He visited his friend's brother and father.)
4. The definite article is used with titles that indicate social position or profession. The article is omitted when directly addressing that person.
  - El profesor Sánchez es de Puerto Rico. (Professor Sanchez is from Puerto Rico.)
  - El presidente Clinton es de Arkansas. (President Clinton is from Arkansas.)
  - “¿Cómo está, profesor Sánchez?” (How are you, professor Sanchez?)
5. Use the masculine plural form before the last name of a family when referring to the whole family.
  - Los García ya no viven aquí. (The Garcia family (Garcias) no longer lives here.)
6. The definite article (not a possessive adjective; my, yours, his, hers, etc.) is generally used with parts of the body and articles of clothing in Spanish.
  - María tiene las manos limpias. (María's hands are clean.)
  - Tengo frío porque no traje el abrigo. (I am cold because I didn't bring my coat.)
7. The definite articles are used with days of the week, seasons of the year, and telling time.
  - No trabajo el sábado. (I don't work on Saturday.)
  - Los sábados miro caricaturas. (On Saturdays I watch cartoons.)
  - La primavera es mi estación favorita. (Spring is my favorite season.)
  - Es la una de la tarde. (It is one o'clock in the afternoon.)

**Note: Do not use the definite article with months.**
8. Spanish uses the definite article with the words **más** (more) and **menos** (less) to form the superlative. (When comparing more than two items.)
  - Carlos es el (estudiante) más inteligente del grupo. (Note: del = de + el) (Carlos is the most intelligent of the group.)

- Su casa es la más vieja. (His house is the oldest.)
- El estudiante flaco es el menos preparado. (The thin student is the least prepared.)

9. Use before geographic names (oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, deserts, etc.)

- En la frontera entre los dos países queda el lago Titicaca. (Lake Titicaca is located on the border between the two countries.)

**Note: The definite article is generally not used with names of countries or cities.**

**Note:** There are only two contractions in Spanish.

**a + el = al**

**de + el = del**

**but do not contract the following:**

**a la**

**de la**

**a los**

**de los**

**a las**

**de las**

### **Use of Indefinite Articles (un, unos, una, unas)**

1. Used to refer to entities not specified.

- Hay una niña en la cocina. (There is a girl in the kitchen.)
- Debes comprar una computadora. (You should buy a computer.)

2. Plural forms are used to express “some, few, several.”

- En la mesa hay unos libros nuevos. (On the table are a few new books.)

3. Use after “sin, con” and with negative expressions to emphasize the number.

- No tiene ni un solo amigo. (He doesn't have a single friend.)
- No ha dicho ni una palabra. (She hasn't said a single word.)
- Mi esposa no me deja con un centavo. (My wife doesn't leave me with one cent.)

### **Use of the Neutral Article (Lo)**

1. Use “lo” before adjectives, possessive adjectives, and perfect participle forms to change the adjectives and perfect participle forms to nouns.

- Lo bueno de esto es que nos permite practicar. (Bueno is an adjective) (The good thing about this is that it permits us to practice.)
- Todo lo mío es tuyo. (Everything that is mine is yours.) (Mío is a possessive adjective)
- Lo escrito presenta una historia de una época. (Escrito is the participle form) (What has been written presents a history of an epoch.)