Grammar Reference

Grammar Reference Part 1: Indefinite and Definite Articles

An article is a word like *a*, *an*, or *the* that helps give more information about a noun. Articles go directly before the noun they are defining (*article* + noun or *article* + adjective + noun).

Example: ***The* car** was clearly very expensive.
She always wanted ***a* little sister**.
He was ***the* picture** of ***a* perfect boyfriend**.

Use indefinite articles ***a*** or ***an*** with generic or unspecified nouns. Generic nouns are unspecified and usually refer to an entire type or group of things. Use indefinite articles ***a*** and ***an*** when mentioning a singular, countable, not specific noun for the first time.

Example: ***A* tree** is an important part of the environment.
I bought ***a* new car** last week.

Do not use an indefinite article with plural nouns or noncount nouns that are generic, not specific, or being mentioned the first time.

Example: **Trees** are an important part of the environment.
Clean water is an important part of the environment.

Definite articles are used when talking about specific nouns. Use the definite article ***the*** when the noun has been specified already.

Example: I planted ***a* tree** this past weekend. ***The* tree** was small, but it will grow in time.
I bought ***a* new car** last week. ***The* car** smells so nice!

When making a general statement, do not use an article with plural or noncount nouns.

Example: **Technology** can already identify thought patterns in **human brains**.
DNA offers the longest duration for **digital storage**.

However, it is important to remember that there are some exceptions that DO NOT use **the** before: single countries, streets, cities, lakes, islands, and mountain peaks. Although, we do use **the** before: rivers, oceans, seas, mountain ranges, plural countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, etc.), and deserts.

Grammar Reference Part 2: *-ing* Clauses

To express two actions performed by the same person or thing in a single sentence, we can include an *-ing* clause. And *-ing* clause contains an *-ing* participle. These clauses are also known as reduced adverb clauses.

With the two actions, one action either happens <u>during</u> another action or <u>at the same time</u> as the other action.

Example: *Opening* the file from my friend, my computer crashed.
My computer crashed *opening* the file from my friend.
Trying to stay calm, I gave the presentation as best as I could.
I gave the presentation as best as I could *trying* to stay calm.

When one action happens before another action, use *having + past participle*.

Example: *Having received* several texts from here, I became extremely worried.
I knew I had to do really well on the exam *having seen* my current low score in the class.

We can also express reasons or explanations for actions using *-ing* clauses.

Example: *Being* too embarrassed to tell her I love you in
             front of my friends, I whispered.
             Seeing that I am very clumsy, I tripped and
             cracked the screen on my new phone.

When *-ing* clauses begin a sentence, the **agent** of the *-ing*
clause must be the **subject** of the main clause that follows.

Example: Trying hard to finish **my** essay, **I** noticed it was
             starting to rain.
NOT: ~~Trying hard to finish my essay, it was starting to rain.~~

             Doing yard work, **he** got dirt all over his clothes.
NOT: ~~Doing yard work, his clothes got very dirty.~~