

Unit 51: A / AN / SOME / ANY

We can use these words at the beginning of a noun phrase (Unit 45). We use **a / an** for singular nouns (a plate / an apple) and **some / any** for plurals and mass nouns (some plates / any fruit) (Unit 56).

1 A or an

Use **an** if the next word begins with **a, e, i, o, u**:

an aunt **an** exam **an** idea **an** old man **an** uncle

BUT if we say **u** as in **you**: **a** university **a** used car

Use **a** if the next word begins with any other letter:

a cousin **a** test **a** thought **a** young man **a** boat

BUT if **h** is silent: **an** hour **an** honest man

2 Some or any

Use **some** in affirmative sentences: He's got **some** news. (Unit 5)

Use **any** in negative sentences: I haven't got **any** news. (Unit 5)

We normally use **any** in questions (BUT look at Unit 9).

3 Use

a When we are talking about a noun for the first time and we do not understand which:

There is **a** man at the door. But I don't know who he is.

She bought **some** oranges. I don't know which oranges.

She didn't buy **any** apples.

A bottle of water, please. NOT *one bottle*; (Unit 59)

b Also for these words of quantity: **a few, a little, a lot of, a pair, a hundred, a thousand, a million**

and for rates: **forty kilometres an hour** (NOT *the hour*), **eighty cents a pound**

NOTICE: **a / an / some / any** or **the** or nothing? (Unit 54)

NOTICE: **something / anything** = a thing

somewhere / anywhere = a place

someone / anyone / somebody / anybody = a person