ARTICLES

GENERAL		SPECIFIC	
a	1. INDEFINITE: for <u>any</u> one thing 2. Nouns starting with a consonant *sound*, even if the noun starts with a vowel *letter*, e.g., "<u>a</u> unit" because "unit" starts with a \y\ sound.	**the**	DEFINITE: 1. for the <u>identified</u> object(s), one or many 2. for the <u>identified</u> collective (group) or mass, e.g., "class," "team," "water," "dust"
an	1. INDEFINITE: for <u>any</u> one thing 2. Nouns starting with a vowel <u>sound</u>, even if the noun starts with a consonant *letter*, e.g., "<u>an</u> hour."	**the**	
some		**the**	
good, better		**the best**	superlatives
		in the west	directions
(no article)			1. for plural nouns about a group <u>in general</u> or <u>all</u> members of it 2. for a collective (group) or mass <u>in general</u> 3. mealtimes <u>in general</u>, e.g., breakfast, lunch, dinner

The listener knows which one you are talking about after you mention it once.	
I ate <u>a</u> sandwich. <u>The</u> sandwich was good. I'd like <u>a</u> ham sandwich, please. … *(later)* <u>The</u> ham sandwich (that I ate) was good. I ate <u>some</u> soup. <u>The</u> soup was good.	

The listener and everyone else around you is familiar with what you are talking about.	
<u>The</u> moon is beautiful tonight. *(a unique part of the landscape)*	<u>the</u> sun, <u>the</u> stars, <u>the</u> ocean
Your bag is in <u>the</u> kitchen. *(a part of your home)*	
I'm going to <u>the</u> school. *(a building with a street address)*	**BE CAREFUL!** *(without "the")* *"I'm going <u>to school</u>" = "I'm going to the place where I study."*
I need to go to <u>the</u> grocery store. *(the store I usually go to)*	I need to stop by <u>a</u> grocery store on my way home. *(which grocery store is not important)*
Are you going to <u>the</u> library right now? *(the library I usually go to)*	There is <u>a</u> library at Walnut (Street) and Stanford (Road). *(which library is not important)*
<u>The</u> new hotel is huge! *(the hotel everyone is talking about)*	There is <u>a</u> hotel you might like by the beach. *(There are a lot of hotels by the beach. You don't know which one yet.)*
<u>The</u> computer is a wonderful tool. *(an invention everyone uses or knows about)*	I have to buy <u>a</u> new computer. *(which brand is not important)*
I want to learn how to play <u>the</u> guitar. *(a musical instrument that people learn to play)*	I want to buy <u>a</u> guitar. *(which brand is not important)*