

■ 5.1.2 Contractions of the definite article

Certain prepositions combine with the definite article in contracted forms if the article is not stressed, e.g. **am** = **an**

+ **dem**:

Ich warte **am** Kiosk auf dich. *I'll wait for you at the kiosk.*

An **dem** Kiosk habe ich eine *I waited for one hour at that kiosk.*

Contractions commonly used in spoken and written German are:

<i>preposition</i>	<i>+ dem</i>	<i>+ der</i>	<i>+ das</i>
an	am	–	ans
auf	auf'm*	–	aufs
bei	beim	–	–
durch	–	–	durchs
für	–	–	fürs
in	im	–	ins
über	überm*	–	übers
um	–	–	ums
unter	unterm*	–	unders
von	vom	–	–
zu	zum	zur	–

* colloquial use only

■ 5.1.3 The indefinite article

	<i>singular</i>		
	<i>masculine</i>	<i>feminine</i>	<i>neuter</i>
<i>nom.</i>	ein Mann	eine Frau	ein Buch
<i>acc.</i>	einen Mann	eine Frau	ein Buch
<i>dat.</i>	einem Mann	einer Frau	einem Buch
<i>gen.</i>	eines Mann(e)s	einer Frau	eines Buch(e)s

The indefinite article has no plural form. The following have the same pattern as the indefinite article in the singular:

- **kein (no), irgendein (any)** when used with a noun
- all possessive adjectives: **mein (my), dein (your), etc.** (see 14.3.2)

For the declension of adjectives following the indefinite article (or words which have the same pattern) see 9.2.2.

5.2 Use of articles

In most contexts English and German use the definite and indefinite article in similar ways. This section highlights instances where usage differs.

■ 5.2.1 Use and omission of the definite article

a Abstract nouns

Nouns referring to an abstract idea as a general or familiar concept are generally used with the definite article, whereas it is normally omitted in English:

Die Kindheit vergeht so *Childhood passes so quickly.*
schnell.

Die Eifersucht machte ihm *He suffered a lot from jealousy.*
sehr zu schaffen.

However, abstract nouns are used without the article where

- the noun refers to the abstract idea in a specific context:
Das erfordert Kraft. *That takes (some) strength.*
Unter Geschwistern gibt es *You'll always find (some) jealousy amongst brothers and sisters.*