This chart was abridged by Tusa Shea from Ann Raimes and Sarah Norton, *Keys for Writers*, First Canadian Edition (Scarborough, Ontario: International Thomson Publishing, 1998), 300-304. The CAC (formerly TWC), University of Victoria, 2012. This copy is made solely for the use by a student, staff member, or faculty member for private study. Any other use may be an infringement of copyright if done without securing the permission of the TWC at UVic.
Articles and Nouns: Flow Chart

1. **PROPER NOUNS** name a specific person, place, or thing and begin with a capital letter. They do not take an article. For example: Abraham Lincoln, New York City, etc.

   You wouldn’t say: We took a vacation to the New York City.

*Exceptions to this rule include names of buildings, museums, seas, oceans, rivers, deserts, historical periods, and some countries, for example: the United States, the neoclassical period, the Getty Museum.

1. **COMMON NOUNS** do not begin with a capital letter: cup, dog, computer, bus, essay, etc. Common nouns are either specific or non-specific.

2. **SPECIFIC COMMON NOUNS** take the article “the.”

   You would say: The cup in your hand is too full.

3. **NON-SPECIFIC COMMON NOUNS** use the article “a or an” or they take no article, depending on whether they are count or non-count.

4. **NON-SPECIFIC COMMON NON-COUNT NOUNS** are usually abstract nouns such as boredom, freedom, fear, etc. They cannot be counted and are rarely pluralized. Non-count nouns do not take an article.

   You wouldn’t say: I was suffering from the boredom.
   You wouldn’t say: I had a lot of a freedom as a child.
   But you would say: I was motivated by fear.

5. **NON-SPECIFIC COMMON COUNT NOUNS** are either singular or plural. If a non-specific count noun is singular it takes “a or an.” If it is plural, it takes no article.

   You would say: I saw a dog at the park.
   You wouldn’t say: I saw a dogs at the park.
   But you would say: I saw dogs at the park.

Circle all the incorrect uses of articles:

1. During my trip to the Spain, I never experienced a boredom.
2. A computer is a useful tool. The one I have is fairly new.
3. There are many great works of the art at Museum of Modern Art in New York.
4. Bus left early and I experienced the anger.
5. My sister bought the new house, but she regretted it when she found out that a basement flooded every winter.

Fill in the articles:

1. My cat follows me everywhere; she acts more like ____ dog.
2. I have ___ fear of spiders.
3. Please don’t feed ___ monkeys.
4. We took a tour of ___ legislature.

This chart was abridged by Tusa Shea from Ann Raimes and Sarah Norton, *Keys for Writers*, First Canadian Edition (Scarborough, Ontario: International Thomson Publishing, 1998), 300-304. The CAC (formerly TWC), University of Victoria, 2012. This copy is made solely for the use by a student, staff member, or faculty member for private study. Any other use may be an infringement of copyright if done without securing the permission of the TWC at UVic.