

2.4

USE OF ENGLISH

Accuracy with articles

I can use abstract nouns with and without a/an.

1 **SPEAKING** When you need advice or help, who do you ask? Do you ever look on online forums? Why?/Why not?

2 Read the three forum exchanges. In pairs, decide what the logical order is in each of them.

- A
- a Thanks – you were **a great help** – it all makes sense now.
 - b I need **help** with my Maths. I don't have a hope of getting it done on my own. Anybody out there have a moment to spare?
 - c Yeah, call me. I'm doing it too.

- B
- a Oh no! **Sleep** is so important. When I'm stressed out, I sometimes use breathing exercises to help me relax and I usually get a good night's sleep after that.
 - b Thanks. I'll try that. My granddad, who has a good understanding of human behaviour, always says 'A good laugh and **a good sleep** are the two best cures.' 😊
 - c Help! All of a sudden, I'm very stressed about my exams and I can't sleep.

- C
- a Why don't you write about a holiday? You can say what you learnt and how you couldn't have learnt that in a class.
 - b Great idea! I think I'll write about our trip to Paris – that was **an amazing experience** and **an excellent education**. I learnt more French in two days than I had in two years. LOL
 - c I have to write an essay about the importance of **experience** and **education** – I haven't got a clue where to start. Any ideas?

3 Read the LANGUAGE FOCUS. In your notebook, complete the examples with the words and phrases in blue from Exercise 2.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Abstract nouns with and without a/an

Some **abstract nouns** (such as *hope, knowledge, love, pleasure*) can refer to either a general concept or a specific situation or example. When talking about a **general concept**, *a/an* is not used before the noun. When referring to a **specific situation/example**, *a/an* can precede the noun. In this case, the noun is generally modified by an adjective or phrase.

General concept

I need **'help**.

² ? is so important.

The importance of

³ ? and ⁴ ? .

Specific situation/example

You were ⁵ ? .

A good laugh and ⁶ ? are the best cures.

That was ⁷ ? and ⁸ ? .

Note: Some abstract nouns have a plural form (*love/loves, hope/hopes, pleasure/pleasures*) while others do not (*knowledge*).

Eating at that café is always **a pleasure**.

Eating is one of life's great **pleasures**.

He has **a good knowledge** of many things.

NOT *He has many knowledges*.

4 Read the message exchange. In your notebook, write the correct forms of the words in the box and *a, an* or $\emptyset$ (no article) for each gap.

(charity education experience
help help hope love pleasure)

Hi Jen. Thanks again. You really were such ¹ **a help** last night. I wouldn't have had ² ? of doing it without you.

No problem. It was ³ ? . You know Science is one of my great ⁴ ? . 😊 And I need to ask you a favour actually. I need to interview someone with ⁵ ? doing volunteer work.

Well, I haven't done any in a while. The last time was about a year ago when I worked for ⁶ ? that works with animals. It was ⁷ ? though – it left me with a first-class knowledge of cats. ;)

I'm sure you learnt a lot. 😊 Are you in a hurry? Could I ask you some questions now?

Yes, sure, glad to be of ⁸ ? . Call me now.

5 In your notebook, write the correct forms of the phrases underlined in Exercises 2 and 4 for each gap.

- 1 I really need to get a good night's sleep – otherwise I can't do anything the next day!
- 2 When he ? , he likes to read computer advice in forums.
- 3 I ? – I always know how my friends will react.
- 4 I haven't studied French ? , so I ? how to do the assignment.
- 5 I wanted to help her with her exam preparation, but I was ? to get home.
- 6 He has ? German. He is practically fluent.
- 7 He ? finishing his exam before the time was up.
- 8 ? , she felt totally relaxed and knew she would be fine.

6 Follow the instructions below.

- Write a message to your partner asking for advice on something you'd like help with.
- Use at least three nouns from the LANGUAGE FOCUS and two of the phrases underlined in Exercises 2 and 4.
- Exchange your messages. Did you get good advice?

Use of English page 121