**Definite/indefinite Article Notes**

The difference between definite articles and indefinite articles can be  
observed in the following two sentences:

*Give me the chocolate chip cookie.  
Give me a cookie, please.*

Imagine a plate full of cookies. There are peanut butter cookies, sugar cookies, gingerbread cookies, and one chocolate chip cookie.

The first sentence speaks of a particular (or definite) cookie:

*Give me****the****chocolate chip cookie.*

The second sentence speaks of any of a number of cookies (or an indefinite cookie):

*Give me****a****cookie, please.*

The difference between the definite and indefinite articles is the difference between talking about a specific cookie, or any old cookie at all.

*the cookie  
a cookie*

In English, the definite article is the word “the” regardless of whether the noun it introduces is singular or plural.

*the cookie  
the cookies*

In Spanish, the definite article has 4 forms, depending on whether the noun is masculine, feminine, singular or plural.

**el gato -** the male cat **los gatos -** the male cats

**la gata -** the female cat **las gatas -** the female cats

**Note:** The masculine plural definite and indefinite articles (los, unos) are also used to indicate a group of mixed sex. Thus, “los gatos” could refer to a group of 10 male cats, or it could refer to a group of 9 female cats and one male cat.

The 4 forms of the definite article are:

**el**

masculine singular

**la**

feminine singular

**los**

masculine plural

**las**

feminine plural

In English, the indefinite article is the word “a,” “an,” or “some.”

*a cookie  
an apple  
some books*

In Spanish, the indefinite article has 4 forms, depending on whether the  
noun is masculine, feminine, singular or plural.

**un gato -** a male cat **unos gatos -** some male cats

**una gata -** a female cat **unas gatas -** some female cats

**Note:** Remember, as long as the group of creatures has at least one male member, the masculine plural article is used. Thus, “unos gatos” could refer to a group of 10 male cats, or it could refer to a group of 9 female cats and one male cat.

The 4 forms of the indefinite article are:

**un**

masculine singular

**una**

feminine singular

**unos**

masculine plural

**unas**

feminine plural

Here are the definite and indefinite articles together:

**el, un**

masculine singular

**la, una**

feminine singular

**los, unos**

masculine plural

**las, unas**

feminine plural

Each of the following has a different meaning:

**el gato**

the male cat

**los gatos**

the male cats (or a mixed group)

**la gata**

the female cat

**las gatas**

the female cats

**un gato**

a male cat

**unos gatos**

some male cats (or a mixed group)

**una gata**

a female cat

**unas gatas**

some female cats

“Un” and “una” can mean “one,” “a,” or “an.”

**un libro**

one book, a book

**una pluma**

one pen, a pen

**una manzana**

one apple, an apple