

Topic 9. Examine article functions.

The article appears more frequently than any other type of part of speech. Articles compose about fifteen percent of all words.

Because the article appears so simple, ubiquitous, and regular, many grammatical treatments give short attention to it. The article is not a sexy word.

However, on further inspection, the function of the article is more nuanced. The article is critical to meaning, despite its apparent simplicity.

The article has numerous functions. The article may itself convey meaning as a word. At other times, the article indicates the grammatical relationship between other words, and conveys little meaning as a word itself.

The article may fulfill multiple grammatical functions simultaneously.

The article may convey meaning itself.

The *specific* article indicates that an object or quality is a particular case, for example, ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐκλεκτῆ κυρία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ‘from the elder, to the special lady and **the** children’ 2 John 1:1, καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ‘we have fellowship with **the** father’ 1 John 1:3. τοῦ ἄρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ ‘**the** judgment begins with the house of God’ 1 Peter 4:17.

The *generic* article indicates that a thing or concept represents a class of things, for example, βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ‘I want **men** to pray everywhere’ 1 Timothy 2:8, ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ‘however, if we live in **the** light’ 1 John 1:7. ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος ‘**the** grass withers’ 1 Peter 1:24.

The *substitute* article takes the place of a substantive, functioning like a substitute word, for example, ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ‘but **he** spoke to them’ John 4:32, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ‘you have known **the one who exists** from the beginning’ 1 John 2:14, οἱ μὴ ὁμολογοῦντες ἰησοῦν χριστὸν ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί ‘**they deny** that Jesus the messiah physically lives’ 2 John 1:7, ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ ἀσίᾳ ‘**everyone** in Asia abandoned me’ 2 Timothy 1:15. This is often the case with articles associated with participles.

The *possessive* article denotes ownership, for example, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ‘the father’s son’ 2 John 1:3, ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς προγόνους ‘they must repay their parents’ 1 Timothy 5:4.

The article may function as a grammatical marker.

The *thing-maker* turns a participle into a thing, for example, πᾶς ὁ προάγων ‘some of them have gone too far’ 2 John 1:9, ὁ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ‘he gave himself as a ransom’ 1 Timothy 2:6. οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ‘not only to those who are good’ 1 Peter 2:18.

The *impersonal* article identifies the grammatical role, gender, and number of an impersonal action, for example, μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν ‘owe nothing to anyone, except to love each other’ Romans 13:8. τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς ‘this is the word which has been preached to you’ 1 Peter 1:25.

The *indeclinable* article specifies the role of an indeclinable thing, for example, μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν ‘have a good reputation with outsiders’ 1 Timothy 3:7.

The *slave-marker* connects a slave to its master, for example, κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς ‘he joins his evil conduct’ 2 John 1:11, τὰ ἔργα τὰ καλὰ πρόδηλα ‘good deeds are obvious’ 1 Timothy 5:25.

The *master-marker* connects a master to its slave, for example, διὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τὴν μένουσαν ἐν ἡμῖν ‘this is because we stick to the truth’ 2 John 1:2, τὰ ἔργα τὰ καλὰ πρόδηλα ‘good deeds are obvious’ 1 Timothy 5:25.

The *demonstrative* article identifies clauses that are dependent and attributive to a demonstrative substitute, for example, δικαιοθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι ‘he makes us righteous by that mercy’ Titus 2:7.

The *predicate* article distinguishes the predicate from the subject or a complement from an object, for example, αὕτη ἡ ἐντολὴ ἐστὶν ‘this is the command’ 2 John 1:6, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος ‘the matter is faithful’ 1 Timothy 3:1. τί τὸ τέλος ‘what will be the end?’ 1 Peter 4:17.