

# Meeting 3: Grammar

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# Why is grammar important?

Errors may create

- misunderstandings
  - Mr. Engineer **serve** as a staff engineer on Fancy Project.
    - serves or served?
  - Ms. Engineer performed **on-site bridge inspection** for the contract.
    - **an** inspection or multiple inspections?
- unclear meaning
  - The project also included installing new street lighting and traffic signals, are coordinated with the traffic signals on Main Street and Central Street as well as provide and interconnection for the railroad crossing signals.

# Why is grammar important?

- choppy reading
  - Project transformed the existing mid-1960's concrete dining hall into an inspiring venue. The key was turning the center of the building's 20,000-sf main level into a single, open kitchen ringed with flexible cooking stations. LEED Gold certified.
  - Renovation and upgrade of 112,000-sf, two-building residence hall complex and Stetson Hall, a three-building residence hall complex of approximately 190,000 sf. Serves as a gateway between Huntington Ave and adjacent neighborhood of student housing.
- Proofread.
- Write complete sentences.

# Grammar: typical errors

- Function words and functional elements:
  - verb tense (e.g. past tense *-ed*)
  - subject-verb agreement (3<sup>rd</sup> person *-s*)
  - number marking (plural *-s*)
  - article use (*the, a/an*)

# Verb tense

- Why is it relevant?
  - Writing and updating reports
  - Turning design plans into as-built plans
  - Updating project write-up's
  - Others?
- Most important verb tenses
  - Present tense: Simple Present vs. Present Progressive
  - Past tense: Simple Past vs. Present Perfect
- Note: Active vs. Passive Voice > next class
  - Green **developed** three conceptual improvement plans.
  - Three conceptual improvement plans **were developed**.

# Verb tense

## Present Tense: Simple Present vs. Present Progressive

	Simple Present	Present Progressive
Form	<i>Green <b>provides</b> civil and structural engineering services.</i>	<i>Green <b>is (currently) providing</b> design services for Fancy Project.</i>
Use	general facts and existing conditions	ongoing activities
Signal words	<i>regularly, frequently, often generally, usually, typically</i>	<i>currently</i>

- The roadway **is** a Collector Road and **traverses** residential and agricultural areas.
- In practice, the operational capacity of a parking lot **is typically** approximately 90% of the total number of spaces. When the parking utilization **exceeds** 90%, drivers will *often* need to circulate through the parking lot to find the remaining vacant parking spaces.
- Green **is working** closely with MassDOT to resolve the problems.
- The bridge/roadway **is being** designed in accordance with MassDOT standards.

# Verb tense

## Past Tense: Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

	Simple Past	Present Perfect
Form	<i>Green <b>completed</b> ten assignments.</i>	<i>Green <b>has completed</b> ten assignments.</i>
Use	an activity at a specific point or period of time in the past	an activity at an unspecified time in the past with relevance to the present
Signal words & phrases	<i>in (July) 2017/ on July 19, 2017/ three years ago</i>	<i>since/ over the years/ to date/ so far</i>

Present Perfect: What does 'relevance to the present' mean?

- MassDOT **has known** about the problems for years. (But it still persists.)
- Mr. Engineer **has served** as Project Manager for many MassDOT projects. (He is an experienced Project Manager.)
- Our designs **have won** many awards. (Trust us. We know what we are doing.)

# Verb tense

## Past Tense: Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

	Simple Past	Present Perfect
Form	<i>Green <b>completed</b> ten assignments.</i>	<i>Green <b>has completed</b> ten assignments.</i>
Use	an activity at a specific point or period of time in the past	an activity at an unspecified time in the past with relevance to the present
Signal words	<i>in (July) 2017/ on July 19, 2017/ three years ago</i>	<i>since/ over the years/ to date/ so far</i>

- The project *is substantially complete* and **has been** well received as evidenced by the increased usage of the park-and-ride facility and improved traffic operations along US Route 2.
- Green **has grown** substantially *during the last ten years*.
- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation **has begun** using evaluation criteria to measure the wide range of benefits that potential transportation investments may accrue for the Commonwealth. The evaluation criteria **were** initially developed by the Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) *in 2015* and **have since been** updated.
- *Since the last Special Member Inspection, dated December 23, 2016*, the north half the bridge **has been** demolished and the westbound traffic **has been** redirected onto portions of the new structure north of the existing bridge.

# Verb tense

## Past Tense: Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

- Green **completed** ten (10) assignments under this contract.
- Green **has completed** ten (10) assignments under this contract (and is currently working on the eleventh).
  
- More than 80 assignments **were** involved in all contracts.
- More than 80 assignments **have been** involved in all contracts (so far).
  
- The Town **opted** to proceed with traffic signalization (rather than the roundabout option).
- The Town **has opted** to proceed with traffic signalization (rather than the roundabout option).
  
- Green **prepared** a conceptual plan for the intersection and roadway improvements, which was submitted to MassDOT and was used as a base for immediate steps to improve the intersection.
- Green **has completed** the 25% design for the project, and the project is currently being advanced through the MassDOT design process.

# Verb Tense

## Past Tense: Simple Past vs. Present Perfect

- Remember: Only the Simple Past is used with words and phrases indicating a specific point or period of time in the past, not the Present Perfect.
- The installation of the water main ~~has been~~ **was** successfully completed in April 2017. Landscape and pavement restoration **have started**, and construction will be completed by July 2017.

# Verb Tense

**Tense shift (Present > Past): Make sure to use the right verb form.**

Previous bridge inspection report:

- Bridge E-12-004=M-12-018 (4E9) **carries** three lanes in each direction of State Route 16 (Revere Beach Parkway) over the Malden River between the Cities of Everett and Medford.

Current bridge inspection report:

- **Originally**, Bridge E-12-004=M-12-018 (4E9) **carried** three lanes in each direction of State Route 16 (Revere Beach Parkway) over the Malden River between the Cities of Everett and Medford. Since the last Special Member Inspection dated December 23, 2016, the north half the bridge **has been demolished** and the westbound traffic **has been redirected** onto portions of the new structure north of the existing bridge.

Design plan:

- **Install** erosion and sediment control measures prior to start of work on site.

Record drawing:

- **Installed** erosion and sediment control measures prior to start of work on site.

# Verb tense

**Make sure to use verb tenses consistently.**

- Mr. Engineer **was** a team member for the project. His responsibilities ~~include~~ **included** performing the inspection, preparing the inspection report, and performing load rating calculations.
- The proposed bridge **is** a simple span bridge using Northeast Extreme Tee (NEXT) beams and integral abutment. Ms. Engineer **worked** as a structural engineer for this project and **was** responsible for the final design of the substructure. Her responsibility also ~~includes~~ **included** the preparation of quantity and cost estimate and final plans.

**But:**

- Design features **included** a new exterior ramp to provide accessibility to the rear of the building that **meets/met** Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) requirements.
- Green **designed** a subsurface stormwater management system that **mitigates/mitigated** peak rates of runoff for the 2-, 10-, and 100-year storm events and **meets/met** the City of Cambridge's recharge and 65% phosphorous reduction requirements.

# Verb tense: summary

## Remember:

- Use the Simple Past for activities at a specific point or period of time in the past.
- Use the Present Perfect for activities at an unspecified time in the past.
- Use verb tenses consistently when shifting from present to past tense. (But note where verbs remain in the present tense.)

- Function words and functional elements:
  - ✓ verb tense (e.g. past tense *-ed*)
  - **subject-verb agreement (3<sup>rd</sup> person -s)**
  - number marking (plural -s)
  - article use (*the, a/an*)

# Subject-verb agreement

## What is it?

- 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s: Fancy Project includes ...
- *is vs. are*: Green **is** responsible for ...
- *was vs. were*: Mr. Engineer **was** the Project Manager for Fancy Project.
- *has vs. have*: Ms. Engineer **has** many years of experience.

## Why is it important?

- Avoid potential misunderstandings and ambiguities.
- Mr. Engineer **serve** as a team member on this inspection. **Bridges includes** the Maurice J. Tobin Memorial Bridge, the Longfellow Bridge, and the Gilmore Bridge. His responsibilities include preparing the inspection, performing the inspection, and preparing the report utilizing 4D software.
- The proposal shall contain a staffing plan with resumes that **identify/identifies** the Principal-in-Charge, the Project Manager, and key personnel who will work on the design and site evaluation as well as an organizational chart of the team.

# Subject-verb agreement

**3<sup>rd</sup> person –s is never with plural subjects.**

- The fixed bearings **has** minor rusts.
  - The fixed bearings ~~has~~ **have** minor rusts.
  - The fixed bearings **has** minor rusts.
- Spans 1 & 5 ~~was~~ **were** not accessible by barge, as the ground was filled and graded for construction work. Spans 2 & 4 ~~has~~ **have** limited access due to heavy construction debris and ~~was~~ **were** visually inspected from the boom lift.
- Mr. Engineer's tasks ~~includes~~ **include**s coordinating and performing the inspections and preparing the bridge inspection reports using MassDOT's 4D software.
- Bridges ~~includes~~ **include**s Maurice J. Tobin Memorial Bridge, The Longfellow Bridge, and Gilmore Bridge.

Compare:

- Mr. Engineer's experience **includes** ...
- Mr. Engineer's responsibilities/tasks **include** ...

# Subject-verb agreement

**The verb agrees with the subject, not the object.**

- Mr. Engineer's bridge rating experience on this contract ~~include~~ **includes** steel and prestressed concrete multi-beam, reinforced concrete t-beam structures, concrete rigid frames, thru-girders, and concrete slab structures as well as concrete culverts. ... Work under these open-ended contracts, and four others as a subconsultant, ~~have~~ **has** included a total of 37 assignments, including 112 bridge load ratings to date.

Exception:

- Included in the design **is/are**...

# Subject-verb agreement

The verb agrees with the head of the subject but not necessarily with the noun immediately preceding it.

- Abatement of hazardous or contaminated materials **is** not included in the scope of work for this agreement. Services associated with airfield design (e.g., runway and taxiway design) **is are** also not included in the scope of work for this agreement.
- The Littleton Board of Selectmen **were was** presented the Town's proposed 2016 Complete Streets Plan and gave a ringing endorsement this past Monday evening.
- The bridge superstructure had severe losses and **were was** in poor condition. Field measurements were documented for the section loss on the beams, and a reduction in member capacities **were was** considered in the analysis, and the structure **was** modeled in AASHTOWare Bridge Rating software. This structure **has** extremely low governing load ratings with exterior beams having zero bearing capacity for web buckling and crippling due to extensive and continuous lower web holes past the face of the bearing.

# Subject-verb agreement

**If the subject consists of multiple constituents, the verb is plural.**

- The existing pavement and the gravel subbase ~~was~~ **were** removed and replaced at all sites.
- Ms. Engineer's technical ability, ability to keep projects on schedule and within budget, anticipation of potential design concerns, and ability to create proper recommendations and solutions ~~has~~ **have** earned her a reputation of excellence with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and many Massachusetts municipalities' Department of Public Works agencies.

Exception:

- Green's President and Principal-in-Charge of this project **was** present at the ceremony.
  - one person

# Subject-verb agreement

## Titles and proper names

Even if they are formally plural, they are treated like singular and require 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s.

- Green International Affiliates **was** the prime consultant for the project.
- “GEI Consultants **brings** to our clients a refreshing blend of technical expertise, collaborative spirit and innovation that is rare in our profession.”
- “Bergmeyer Associates **balances** work and play knowing that personal passions and connections with family, friends, and community make us more engaged and perceptive designers.”
- “Beacon Architectural Associates **shapes** environments that achieve a perfect balance between beauty and utility for people like you.”
- The Complete Streets philosophy is not to have the private motor vehicle disappear, but instead to open up “avenues” in a safer manner to those that may have found it difficult to travel from point A to B in the past. Complete Streets also **becomes** a tool in encouraging and accommodating an active transportation lifestyle.

# Subject-verb agreement

## Collective nouns

**staff**: both singular and plural > meaning difference; if singular, use 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s

Compare:

- “Ellana Construction Consultants **is** a certified Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) construction consulting firm providing four core services consisting of cost management, project controls, owner representation, and professional training services to a wide range of A/E/C industry clients. Our staff **includes** architects, engineers and construction experts poised to provide quality cost estimating, scheduling, administration, and project cost control services at all stages of design and construction.”
- Our staff (which includes architects, engineers, and construction experts) **are** poised to provide quality cost estimating, scheduling, administration and project cost control services at all stages of design and construction.

# Subject-verb agreement

## Collective nouns

**data**: formally plural (sing. *datum*) but may be used as singular; if singular, use 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s

- The environmental data **provides** the contractor with information related to specific soil management and disposal.
  - o.k.
- The environmental data **provide** the contractor with information related to specific soil management and disposal.
  - preferred

# Subject-verb agreement

## Collective nouns

**Criteria:** always plural, hence never used with 3<sup>rd</sup> person -s

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has begun using evaluation criteria to measure the wide range of benefits that potential transportation investments may accrue for the Commonwealth. The evaluation criteria **were** initially developed by the Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) in 2015 and **have** since been updated. ... MassDOT understands that it is difficult to meaningfully apply the economic impact criteria that ~~was~~ **were** established and needs a robust methodology.

# Subject-verb agreement: summary

## Remember:

- **3<sup>rd</sup> person –s is never with plural subjects.**
- The verb agrees with the subject, not the object.
- The verb agrees with the head of the subject but not necessarily with the noun immediately preceding it.
- If the subject consists of multiple constituents, the verb is plural.
- Titles and proper names are treated like singular and require 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s.

- Function words and functional elements:
  - ✓ verb tense (e.g. past tense *-ed*)
  - ✓ subject-verb agreement (3<sup>rd</sup> person *-s*)
    - **number marking (plural *-s*)**
    - article use (*the, a/an*)

# Number marking

## What is it?

- Plural –s
- Irregular plural forms

## Why is it important?

- Avoid potential misunderstandings and ambiguities.
- Ms. Engineer performed **on-site bridge inspection** for the contract.
  - **an** inspection?
  - multiple inspections?

# Number marking

## Plural marking on nouns with complex modifiers

Compare:

- A fracture critical inspection was performed in conjunction with the routine and special member **inspection**.
  - [routine and special member] **inspection**
- A fracture critical inspection was performed in conjunction with the routine and special member **inspections**.
  - [routine] and [special member] **inspections?** = [routine inspection] and [special member inspection]
- Green's services for this project included ... a complete hydrologic and hydraulic **analysis** of the bridge site.
  - [hydrologic and hydraulic] **analysis**
- Green performed the hydrologic hydraulic **analyses** for ... Bridge.
  - [hydrologic] and [hydraulic] **analyses** = [hydrologic analysis] and [hydraulic analysis]

# Number marking

## Plural marking on nouns with complex modifiers

- Green provided survey, design, and construction phase services for the Route 9 at Oak Street and Overbrook Drive **Intersections** (Improvement Project).
  - Route 9 at Oak Street intersection & Route 9 at Overbrook Drive intersection
- There is a speed restriction for trucks and buses weighing over 10 tons in both the *eastbound and westbound* **directions**.
- There is a speed restriction for trucks and buses weighing over 10 tons in the *eastbound* **directions direction**.
- The bridge carries three lanes in each direction. ... Numerous trucks and buses were observed using the center and left travel **lanes**.
- **Spans** 1 and 5 consist of steel rolled beams with a concrete deck. **Spans** 2 and 4 are above the east and west bascule piers, which form the counterweight pits, and consist of two floorbeams (**Floorbeams 5 and 6**), stringers and a concrete deck.
- Refer to **Sketches** 1 through 3 and **Photos** 1 through 6.
- See **Tables** 1 and 2 and **Figures** 1 through 3.
- Some of our municipal clients include the **Cities** of Boston, Chelsea, and Peabody and the **Towns** of Littleton, Wilmington, Ashland, and Arlington among others.

# Number marking

## Plural marking to indicate distributive rather than collective meaning

- Abutters were concerned about project impacts to their **property/properties**.
- The Whitcomb Avenue and Bruce Street project included the realignment and minor widening of each roadway to meet current MassDOT and AASHTO requirements for their respective design **speeds** and functional **classifications**.

# Number marking

## Irregular plural forms and exceptional uses

- criterion – criteria
  - addendum – addenda
  - alumnus/alumna – alumni
  - medium – media
  - memorandum – memoranda/memorandums
  - phenomenon – phenomena
  - analysis – analyses
  - Do not use the plural form for the singular.
- 
- Mr. Engineer is a UMass Lowell ~~alumni~~ **alumnus**.
  - But: Several of our engineers are UMass Lowell **alumni**.

# Number marking

## **Irregular plural forms and exceptional uses**

- Singular nouns that may have plural meanings (collective nouns):  
staff, committee, audience, crowd, family, couple
- Plural nouns that may be used like singular:  
data

# Number marking

## Count nouns vs. non-count nouns

Only count nouns have plurals:

- road – roads
- bridge – bridges
- traffic sign/signal – traffic signs and signals

Mass nouns (often materials or substances) are non-count and hence singular:

- water, wastewater, stormwater
- But these can be used with units of measurement in the plural:
- The leak released 100 million gallons of water per day into the Charles River.
  
- steel, concrete, asphalt, soil, bedrock, fill
- But these are sometimes used in the plural by ‘insiders’ in the specific discipline to mean ‘types of ...’, e.g. steels, soils etc.

# Number marking

## Count nouns vs. non-count nouns

Some abstract nouns are always non-count and hence singular

- experience, knowledge, access, drainage, stormwater management, quality, support, traffic, parking, safety, transportation, scope, research, progress, information
- rust, wear-and-tear, rot
  - result states?
- spalling (but: spalls), cracking (but: cracks), permitting (but: permits), flooding (but: floods), modeling (but: models)
  - process?
- corrosion, erosion, pollution
  - both process and result state?

# Number marking

## Nouns ending in –cs: usually plural

statistics, hydraulics, politics

- Statistics **is** an interesting field.
  - when referring to area of study or expertise
- (The) Statistics **show**...

## Units of measurement: usually singular

temperature, velocity, density, (roadway) width(s), (design) speed(s)

- Expressing **temperature** in degrees Fahrenheit, rather than Celsius, makes no sense to me.
- The material disintegrates at high **temperatures**.
  - used to mean ‘degrees’

# Number marking

## Further nouns that are usually singular but sometimes used in the plural

- Green is responsible for the **design/designs** of improvements to XYZ road.
- Our **designs** have won many awards.
  
- We are currently providing design services for the **repair/repairs** of the XYZ Bridge.
- The bridge has undergone many **repairs**.

# Number marking: summary

## Remember:

- Use the plural with nouns that have complex modifiers.
- Use the plural to indicate distributive meaning.
- Beware of irregular plural forms.
- **Only count nouns have plurals.**
- Mass nouns are non-count and hence singular.
- Certain abstract nouns are non-count and hence singular.

- Function words and functional elements:
  - ✓ verb tense (e.g. past tense *-ed*)
  - ✓ subject-verb agreement (3<sup>rd</sup> person *-s*)
  - ✓ number marking (plural *-s*)
  - **article use (*the, a/an*)**

# Article use

## What is it?

- definite article *the*
- indefinite article *a/an*
- They indicate whether a noun has a specific or non-specific reference.

## Why is it relevant?

### Notes (informal writing):

- omission of articles and other function words ('telegraphic style') is o.k.
- Example: Project included design of bridges and roadways.

### Reports (formal writing):

- complete sentences, including articles where needed, are required
- Example: **The** project included **the** design of bridges and roadways.

# Article use

## Overview of article use

	Specific reference > definite article ( <i>the</i> )	Non-specific reference > indefinite article ( <i>a/an</i> ) or $\emptyset$
<b>Count nouns - singular</b>	the project the inspection	a project an inspection
<b>Count nouns - plural</b>	the projects the inspections	$\emptyset$ projects $\emptyset$ inspection
<b>Non-count nouns – only singular</b>	the steel the information	<del>a</del> steel/ some steel/ a ton of steel <del>an</del> information/ some information/ a piece of information
<b>Non-count nouns – no plural</b>	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$

- Non-count nouns are never used with the indefinite article *a/an* and never used with plural –s.

# Article use

## Use of the definite article *the*

- **Rule: Use *the* with most nouns whose specific identity is known to the reader.**

Use *the* if the noun refers to a unique person, place, or entity

- Ms. Engineer is **the** Project Manager/Project Engineer for the project.
- Mr. Engineer is **a** staff civil/structural engineer for the project.
- Mr. Engineer is responsible for assisting in the design of temporary traffic control setups and phasing and the preparation of TMPs in accordance with **the** latest MUTCD for review and approval by **the** Department of Recreation and **the** City of Boston.

Let's revise:

- As a prime consultant for BWSC Water Main Corrosion Study, Green led a highly qualified team of specialty consultants.

# Article use

## Use of the definite article *the*

Use *the* if the noun is followed by a phrase or clause that restricts its identity (e.g. *of-phrases*)

Let's revise:

- Ms. Engineer was responsible for design of the reconstruction of Main Street.
- Mr. Engineer also assisted in completion of bid documents for the construction contracts.
- As part of a team led by XYZ Engineers, Ms. Engineer was Green's Project Engineer, responsible for development of an existing conditions base map, including underground utility plotting in support of the sewer separation design project.
- Mr. Engineer's duties included reviewing available record information and previous studies, preparing test pit location plans, supervising field testing work, and preparing permit applications with the Boston Park Department, DCR, and MassDOT, which included design of traffic management plans and detours.

# Article use

## Use of the definite article *the*

Use *the* if the noun is preceded by a superlative such as *best* or *most*

- Green teamed up with subconsultants to investigate sites, test soils, and select **the** best suitable parcels for potential Green Infrastructure.

Use *the* if the noun has been previously mentioned

- *Field measurements* were documented for the section loss on the beams ... At the time of **the** *field visit*, it was noticed that four timber blocks had been installed on top of the abutment seats below the end diaphragms located between the outer two beam flanges at each corner of the bridge.

Revise:

- The purpose of the supplemental inspection was to verify the bridge condition. Supplemental inspection focused on evaluating previously identified areas of concern.

# Article use

## Use of the definite article *the*

Use *the* if the noun's reference is clear from the context or the situation

- As a Structural Engineer/Team Member for the assignment, Mr. Engineer's tasks included performing **the** inspection and preparing **the** bridge inspection report using MassDOT's 4D software.

Do not use *the* with names

- Ø America, Ø Littleton, Ø Green International Affiliates
- **the** United States of America, **the** Town of Littleton, **the** Merrimack River Bridge
- Town Hall (institution) vs. **the** town hall (building)
- The structure is a two level, vertical lift steel truss bridge that carries U.S. Route 1/**the** abandoned U.S. Route 1 (upper level) and a Central Maine and Quebec railroad track (lower level).

# Article use

## Use of the indefinite article *a/an*

- **Rule: Use *a/an* with singular count nouns whose specific identity is NOT known to the reader.**

Meaning:

- 'one of/among (several/many)'
- 'any (one)'

Compare:

- Ms. Engineer was **the** Project Manager for Green's MassDOT Statewide Bridge Inspection Contract.
- Mr. Engineer was **a** Team Leader for 10 assignments under Green's MassDOT Statewide Bridge Inspection Contract.

# Article use

## Use of the indefinite article *a/an*

Revise:

- The engineering services included the design of new parking lot, a new driveway to relocate the existing entrance to the adjacent YMCA building, and new walkways and sidewalks per ADA/MAAB standards.
- The funding will be used to construct a new sidewalk and repair an existing sidewalk, providing new, safe connection to the middle and elementary schools.
- [bridge project] The rating was controlled by interior stringer which had losses and rated below statutory. An alternate load path method was used in determining the rating of adjacent interior stringer, in a situation if the interior stringer with losses completely fails. It was recommended that interior stringer with losses be considered for replacement. The size and rating of replacement stringer was provided as well.

# Article use

## How *a/an* and *the* work together

- ... Some of **the** .../ Most of **the** .../ One of **the** .../ Many of **the** ...
- ... **the** existing ... **a** new ...

This bridge replacement project involves the demolition of **the** existing bridge and the construction of **a** new single span structure.

- **A** .... **The** ...

**A** barge with **a** 60 foot manlift was used to access **the** underside of **the** deck, superstructure, and bascule piers of Span 3. Spans 1 & 5 were not accessible by **a** barge as **the** ground was filled and graded for **a** construction work. **A** boom lift provided by **the** construction crew was used to inspect Spans 1 & 5. Spans 2 & 4 have **a** limited access due to **a** heavy construction debris and were visually inspected from **the** boom lift.

# Article use: summary

## Remember:

- Non-count nouns are never used with the indefinite article *a/an* and never used with plural *-s*.
- Use *the* with most nouns whose specific identity is known to the reader.
- Use *a/an* with singular count nouns whose specific identity is NOT known to the reader.