



Answers

1. b) experience
2. a) an experience
3. d) glass
4. b) a glass
5. a) a paper
6. c) beauty
7. d) a beauty
8. c) a time
9. a) the tiger
10. c) A dog
11. b) Arctic terns
12. b) the elephant
13. c) a Rembrandt
14. a) an Einstein
15. d) a Monet
16. d) —
17. a) the
18. c) a
19. b) —
20. d) the



Explanations

1. “experience” (b)

Here 'experience' is uncountable, meaning general knowledge or skill gained over time. 'Five years of experience' is a fixed collocation. Compare with 'an experience' (countable), which means a single event.

2. “an experience” (a)

'An experience' (countable) refers to a single event or occasion. The structure 'described X as an experience that...' introduces it as one notable event. 'A experience' is incorrect because 'experience' begins with a vowel sound.

3. “glass” (d)

'Glass' without an article refers to the material. 'A glass' means a drinking vessel, and 'glasses' means eyewear or drinking vessels — neither fits the context of sculpting materials.

4. “a glass” (b)

'A glass of water' uses the countable meaning of 'glass' (a drinking vessel). The indefinite article 'a' is correct because this is a new, non-specific request. 'Glass' alone (uncountable, the material) doesn't work with 'of water'.

5. “a paper” (a)

'A paper' (countable) means an academic article or study. Without an article, 'paper' would refer to the material. 'The paper' would imply a previously mentioned specific paper, but 'recently published' introduces new information.

6. “beauty” (c)

'Beauty' without an article is an uncountable abstract noun meaning the quality of being beautiful. 'A beauty' (countable) would mean a beautiful person, which doesn't fit 'was considered an essential quality'.

7. “a beauty” (d)

'A beauty' (countable, informal) means 'a beautiful thing or place'. The pattern 'described X as a beauty' uses the countable form. 'Beauty' alone (uncountable) would need a different structure, such as 'described its beauty'.

8. “a time” (c)

'A time' (countable) means a period or era. 'There was a time when...' is a standard expression meaning 'there once existed a period when...'. 'Time' alone (uncountable) means time in general, and 'There was time' would need 'enough' or similar.

9. “the tiger” (a)

In formal and scientific writing, 'the + singular noun' is the preferred way to refer to an entire species: 'the tiger', 'the blue whale'. While 'a tiger' is grammatically possible for generic statements, the stem specifies 'formal scientific writing', where 'the tiger' is the standard convention. 'Tigers' cannot be used here because the singular verb 'is' requires a singular subject.

10. “A dog” (c)

'A dog' refers to any typical member of the species — it makes a generalisation by highlighting an individual example. 'Dogs' (plural) would require a plural complement ('companions'), but the sentence has singular 'companion'. 'Dog' without an article is ungrammatical as a subject.

11. “Arctic terns” (b)

Zero article + plural noun ('Arctic terns') is used for generic statements about a species as a whole. The plural verb 'migrate' and pronoun 'their' require a plural subject. 'The Arctic tern' (formal generic singular) would need 'migrates'. 'The Arctic terns' would refer to a specific group, not the species generally.

12. “the elephant” (b)

'The elephant' is the formal generic form, referring to the entire species. The phrase 'as a species' signals that we are discussing the category, not an individual. 'Elephants' (plural) would require 'play' instead of 'plays'. 'Elephant' without an article is ungrammatical as a subject.

13. “a Rembrandt” (c)

'A Rembrandt' means 'a painting by Rembrandt' — using 'a + proper noun' to categorise something as a work by that person. 'Rembrandt' alone would refer to the person himself. This pattern also applies to other artists: 'a Picasso', 'a Monet'.

14. “an Einstein” (a)

'An Einstein' means 'someone like Einstein' — a person of comparable genius. 'Einstein' alone would mean the actual person (who is deceased). 'Einsteins' (plural) doesn't match the singular 'someone' that follows.

15. “a Monet” (d)

'A Monet' means 'a genuine painting by Monet', categorising the artwork by its creator. 'Monet' without an article would refer to the artist as a person, not a painting. 'The Monet' would imply a specific, previously identified painting, but here the authentication is confirming its authenticity as a work by Monet.

16. “—” (d)

No article is needed with uncountable nouns used in a general sense. 'Iron' here refers to the material as a whole, not a specific piece. Compare with 'an iron' (a clothes iron) or 'the iron' (a specific piece of iron).

17. “the” (a)

'The + adjective' is used to refer to a group of people: the unemployed (= unemployed people), the elderly, the homeless. This is a formal construction common in journalism and academic writing. Without 'the', 'unemployed' cannot function as a noun.

18. “a” (c)

'A complete unknown' uses the indefinite article because 'unknown' functions as a countable noun meaning 'an unknown person'. After 'being', we need an article: 'being a complete unknown'. 'An' is incorrect because 'complete' starts with a consonant sound /k/.

19. “—” (b)

'Social media' is typically used without an article, similar to other uncountable/mass nouns referring to general concepts. 'The social media' would sound unnatural in this context. Compare with other technology terms: 'television has changed society' (not 'the television').

20. “the” (d)

'The news' is required here because the relative clause 'that the board had been waiting for' identifies specific news, making it definite. 'News' is an uncountable noun, so 'a news' and 'an news' are both incorrect. Without 'the', the sentence would lack the definite reference established by the post-modifier.