

The Definite Article



Use	Example Sentence
The second time you talk about something	A man and a dog were walking. The man and the dog ...
It's clear what you're talking about	Can you close the door?
Prepositional noun The + Noun + Preposition	The interest in the situation was huge
Definite Noun + Adjective Clause (<i>The + Noun + That + Adjective Clause</i>)	The woman that served me was an old friend
Only one exists	The Earth has 7 billion people
Places in town and specific names of places	I'm going to the supermarket
The superlative	That is the biggest building
Ordinal Numbers EXCEPTIONS: a) <i>Ordinal numbers as time sequencers e.g. First, you need to chop the onions. Second, you need to chop the garlic.</i> b) <i>Ordinal numbers as adjectives e.g. First place goes to John. Second place goes to Mary.</i>	My birthday is on the 24 th of April
Musical instruments	He plays the piano
Groups of people (<i>The + adjective</i>)	The unemployed can receive benefits
Institutions	I work for the police
Nations <i>Groups of islands and countries with the word kingdom, united, union or republic in their names</i> <i>*See additional list of these countries</i>	The United Kingdom uses the pound
Rivers, oceans, seas, deserts	The River Nile is in Egypt
Newspapers	I read the Guardian newspaper
Family names	Do you know the Stephenson family?
Institutions	I work for the police
Times of the day *EXCEPTION: At night	I have breakfast in the morning
Prepositions (in, on, at, to, from) + Compass direction	The sun rises in the east and sets in the west
Specific time periods	I'd love to have experienced life in the 1920's
Before same	I have the same watch at you
Body parts with direct objects	She hit me in the face

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Times first time you talk about something	A man and a dog were walking Is there an orange in the fridge?
Jobs	He's a doctor She's a lawyer
Nationalities (as a noun) <i>* Nationalities as adjectives have no article</i>	I'm a Brit He's a Spaniard
Religions (as a noun) <i>* Religions as adjectives have no article</i>	She's a Catholic He's a Muslim
Expressions with what	What a shame! What a beautiful day!
Expressions meaning per/for each	I have English class four times a week I'm driving my car at 30 miles an hour
Single letters and numbers	She got an A in her exam How did you do in your exam? I got an 8!
Comparative noun phrases <i>*EXCEPTION: Double comparative. This uses the definite article instead e.g. The hotter the day, the more tired you become</i>	He's a better singer than her She's a more beautiful person than you
Expressions of quantity	I've got a few pencils in my hand Is there a bit of milk left?

The Zero Article

Use	Example Sentence
Next and last <i>*EXCEPTION: When next and last are used as ranking words, we use the definite article instead. E.g. The next album will be called Blue Sky.</i>	Next year, we're going to France Last weekend I visited my grandma
Plural or uncountable nouns	I love flowers She likes chocolate
With the words home, work, school, church, university, bed, college, class, jail	Let's go to school I'll see you later at church
With names of hospitals, schools, churches, shopping centres	I was born in London hospital I went to Queen Margaret's School
Meals	When do you want dinner? What is for breakfast?
Days of the week	It's Monday My favourite day is Saturday
Months of the year	This month is July My birthday is in October
Names of streets and roads	I live on Culver Road Turn left at Rover Street
Abstract Nouns	Knowledge is power Love is all around
Countries and cities	I lived in Spain Madrid is the capital of Spain
Lakes, mountains and islands	Mount Everest is tall Lake Victoria's source is the River Nile
Languages <i>*EXCEPTION: When used as an adjective directly before the word language. E.g. The English language is widely spoken.</i>	English is a widely spoken language I speak French, German, English and Spanish
Go, walk, move + compass direction	We moved north of the city because it was prettier We went south on the motorway
Diseases <i>*EXCEPTIONS: the flu, the mumps, the measles, the chicken pox</i>	Cancer kills millions of people every year Dementia affects many people