

5 the, a/an



1 Pronunciation of the

We pronounce *the* with /ə/ before consonant sounds (b, d, k, t, s, etc.):

the book, the sports teacher

We pronounce *the* with /i:/ before vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u):

the apple, the English teacher

2 Use of the

We use *the* when there is only one of something:

The sun is very hot today. (There's only one sun.)

Jamie's in *the garden*. (We only have one garden.)

Don't forget to lock *the front door*. (There's only one front door on our house.)

Can I see *the manager*? (There's only one manager.)

We DON'T use *the* before plural or uncountable nouns when we talk about things or people in general:

I like children. (children in general)

Milk is good for you. (milk in general)

Compare:

I like the children. (the children in that family)

The milk tastes horrible. (the milk in that bottle)

3 the or a/an?

We use *the*, not *a* or *an*, when it is clear which person or thing we are talking about.

Compare:

I need to get a bus to the station.
(I don't know which bus.)

The number 2 bus goes to the station.
(We know which bus.)

Let's go to a restaurant this evening.
(There is more than one restaurant.)

Let's go to the restaurant in Dean Street.
(We know which restaurant.)

Would you like a biscuit?
(There is more than one biscuit.)

Jason had the last biscuit!
(We know which biscuit.)

We use *a* or *an* when we use a noun for the first time, and *the* when we use it again:

I bought a new coat and a dress yesterday. The coat is really warm.

'There's a really nice new café in the village.'

'Oh, do you mean the café with tables outside? Yes, it's great.'

Practice

1 Choose the correct sentence, A or B for each picture.



- A Shall I open a window?
B Shall I open the window? ✓



- A Can I borrow a pen?
B Can I borrow the pen?



- A I like a red dress.
B I like the red dress.



- A Can you pass me a dictionary?
B Can you pass me the dictionary?



- A I'm going to buy an umbrella.
B I'm going to buy the umbrella.



- A Would you like a chocolate ice cream?
B Would you like the chocolate ice cream?

2 Write *a*, *an* or *the*. Write – if we don't need *a*, *an* or *the*.

- 0 We're going shopping to buy new computer.
1 We can't use computer in my office. It's not working.
2 Can you answer phone? I'm in bathroom.
3 Are you going to kitchen? Can you get me apple?
4 'Do we need onions?' 'Yes, and pasta. Can you get pasta from Italian shop near the station?'
5 Look at moon. What a beautiful evening!

3 GRAMMAR IN USE Choose the correct words in *italics* in the email.

✉

—
□
X

Subject Our news

Australia is amazing – it's our third week here and everything is going well.
 We moved into (0) *a* the lovely apartment last week and we're really enjoying it.
 (1) *A* / *The* apartment is huge – it's got four bedrooms so (2) *a* / *the* children can
 have (3) *a* / *the* bedroom each, which they love. We're only ten minutes from
 (4) *a* / *the* sea so we go swimming a lot. We're going to (5) *a* / *the* party next
 weekend – that will be fun – a lot of people are going and (6) *a* / *the* party will be
 on the beach. There's (7) *a* / *the* very good restaurant very close to (8) *a* / *the*
 apartment, and we eat there once or twice a week.
 Come and see us soon! We're here for a year, so ...