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Articles: *the* before general concepts

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a Many people are worried about the bad effects of mobiles on brain.
b Many people are worried about the bad effects of mobiles on the brain.
- 2 a We need to look at factors such as the availability of health care.
b We need to look at factors such as availability of health care.

We use *the* before nouns which describe a general type of thing rather than a specific example of that thing:

*These are problems for students living away from **the family**.*

*We don't know the effects of such chemicals on **the body**.*

*The role of **the student** at university level varies greatly from country to country.*

*Most of our business is carried out over **the telephone**.*

The is also used before abstract nouns which describe a situation, a quality, a process or a change. These words are often followed by *of something*:

*There is a problem with **the availability** of clean water in some villages.*

The distribution of income is uneven in most countries.

*On the whole, **the standard of** living is better in urban areas.*

*Many residents complained about **the frequency** of bus services.*

*This advance was brought about by **the development** of antibiotics.*

*He made a number of recommendations for **the improvement** of staff training.*

★ We use *the development/improvement, etc.* of something to describe a general process of change, but *developments/improvements, etc.* in something to describe specific changes:

*We try to keep up-to-date with new **developments in** information technology.*

2 Correct the mistake below.

Doctors always stress importance of a balanced diet.



Doctors always stress

3 Are these sentences right or wrong? Correct those containing mistakes.

- 1 A diet high in cholesterol is bad for heart.
- 2 The introduction of computerised systems led to an increase in unemployment.
- 3 We all benefit from development of new technologies.
- 4 We were unhappy about quality of the food available.
- 5 Last year the airline saw a 20% improvement in delays.
- 6 There have been changes in the relationship between the teacher and the student.
- 7 Rates vary depending on standard of accommodation you choose.
- 8 She focused on the role of a family in a child's education.