

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.



0 A Shall I open a window?
B Shall I open the window?



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



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



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



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



5 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 *a* 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.

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 ...