

# 6 Uses of *the* and *a/an*

Excuse me, where's the cinema?

It's in Oxford Street. Go along here and turn right.

## 1 Words with *the*

We usually use *the* with

times of the day	<i>in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening (but at night)</i>
musical instruments	<i>I play the piano. Does she play the guitar?</i>
names of newspapers	<i>The Times, The Sun, The New York Times</i>
the media	<i>the radio, I saw it on the Internet.</i>
shops/places in a town	<i>the bank, the cinema, the post office, the supermarket, the chemist's, the station</i>
names of museums, cinemas, theatres, hotels	<i>the Guggenheim Museum, the Odeon Cinema, the Drury Lane Theatre, the Savoy Hotel</i>
locations	<i>on the left/right, in the middle, on the coast/border, in the east/north/south/west</i>
countries with plural names and with Republic, Kingdom	<i>the Netherlands, the United States, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom</i>
names of oceans, seas, rivers, mountain ranges	<i>the Pacific Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Thames, the Amazon, the Himalayas, the Andes</i>



We don't usually use *the* with *watch TV*:

✓ *I'm watching TV.* ✗ *I'm watching the TV.*

## 2 Words without *the*, *a* or *an*

We don't use *the*, *a* or *an* with

times, days and months	<i>at midday, on Monday, in January</i>
meals	<i>What time is breakfast?</i>
sports	<i>basketball, tennis, football</i>
transport and communication	<i>by train, by bus, by email, by phone</i>
languages, school subjects	<i>English, Spanish, Turkish, art, history</i>
most magazines	<i>Newsweek, Hello Magazine</i>
roads, streets, squares and parks	<i>Park Lane, Oxford Street, Times Square, Central Park</i>
airports and stations	<i>Manchester Airport, Victoria Bus Station, Penn Station</i>
most countries and continents	<i>Spain, Japan, Turkey, Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa</i>
cities, towns and states	<i>Paris, Sydney, Johannesburg, California</i>
mountains, hills and lakes	<i>Mount Everest, Lake Ontario</i>
names and titles	<i>John, Susan, Mr Smith, Professor Sinclair, Uncle Jack</i>



We don't use *the*, *a* or *an* for: *at home, at work, in bed*

Compare:

*He plays the guitar.* but *He plays football.*

*She works at the bank.* but *She works at Manchester Airport.*

## Practice

### 1 Find the correct names from the lists on page 12. Include *the* where necessary.

0 a lake in Canada *Lake Ontario* ..... 4 a university teacher .....  
1 a newspaper from the US ..... 5 a river in South America .....  
2 a city in Europe ..... 6 a park in New York .....  
3 a hotel in London ..... 7 a mountain range in Asia .....

### 2 Match the two parts of the sentences.

0 My sister's very musical. She plays the .....  
1 My brother isn't very good at .....  
2 We don't like our children staying out late at .....  
3 I hate getting up early in the .....  
4 The school bell always rings at .....  
5 We usually take our summer holiday in .....  
6 Are there any good films at the .....  
7 On Friday evenings I usually watch .....

A night.  
B July.  
C midday every day.  
D TV.  
E piano and the violin.  
F cinema this week?  
G football.  
H morning.

### 3 Complete the sentences with the words and phrases from the box. Add *the* if necessary.

0 My favourite newspaper is ..... *The Times* .....  
1 The highest mountain in the world is .....  
2 Juliette Binoche's first language is .....  
3 George Bush was president of ..... from 2000 to 2008.  
4 Cannes is a lovely French town on .....  
5 Too many people go to work by .....  
6 We always have ..... together at eight o'clock.  
7 You can buy this medicine at .....  
8 There's a really good exhibition on at .....

breakfast  
car  
chemist's  
Guggenheim Museum  
Mount Everest  
Mediterranean Sea  
French  
The Times  
United States

### 4 GRAMMAR IN USE There are six more mistakes with *the*, *a* or *an* in the conversation.

Find and correct them.

BRAD Are you enjoying your time here?  
ANNA Oh, yes. *The London* is a beautiful city.  
BRAD What have you seen?  
ANNA Well, I've been to a British Museum – that's fantastic – and I really like Regent's Park. It's very peaceful.  
BRAD Mmm, it is, isn't it? Are you studying here?  
ANNA Yes, I'm studying the English and the history.  
BRAD Oh, I see. Where are you living?  
ANNA In an apartment with some friends.  
BRAD When did you come here?  
ANNA In the October, and I'm staying for a year.  
BRAD Do you have much time to travel in United Kingdom?  
ANNA Oh yes, I try to. But everything is so expensive here – every time I go to supermarket I spend about £40.00.

