

The 4 (the giraffe / the telephone / the piano etc. ;
the + adjective)

A

Study these sentences:

- ☐ The giraffe is the tallest of all animals.
- ☐ The bicycle is an excellent means of transport.
- ☐ When was the telephone invented?
- ☐ The dollar is the currency of the United States.

In these examples, **the** ... does not mean one specific thing.

The giraffe = a specific type of animal, not a specific giraffe.

We use **the** in this way to talk about a type of animal, machine etc.In the same way we use **the** for musical instruments:

- ☐ Can you play the guitar?
- ☐ The piano is my favourite instrument.

Compare **a** and **the**:

- ☐ I'd like to have a piano. but I can't play the piano.
- ☐ We saw a giraffe at the zoo. but The giraffe is my favourite animal.

Note that we use **man** (= human beings in general / the human race) without **the**:

- ☐ What do you know about the origins of man? (not the man)

B

The + adjective

We use **the** + adjective (without a noun) to talk about groups of people. For example:

the young	the rich	the sick	the injured
the old	the poor	the disabled	the dead
the elderly	the homeless	the unemployed	

The young = young people, the rich = rich people etc. :

- ☐ Do you think the rich should pay higher taxes?
- ☐ We need to do more to help the homeless.

The young / the rich / the injured etc. are plural in meaning. For example, you cannot say 'a young' or 'the injured' for one person. You must say 'a young person', 'the injured woman' etc.

Note that we say 'the poor' (not the poors), 'the young' (not the youngs) etc.

C

The + nationality

You can use **the** + nationality adjectives that end in **-ch** or **-sh** (the French / the English / the Spanish etc.). The meaning is 'the people of that country':

- ☐ The French are famous for their food. (= the people of France)

The French / the English etc. are plural in meaning. We do not say 'a French / an English'.

You have to say a Frenchman / an Englishwoman etc.

We also use **the** + nationality words ending in **-ese** (the Chinese / the Sudanese / the Japanese etc.):

- ☐ The Chinese invented printing.

But these words can also be singular (a Chinese, a Japanese etc.).

Note also: a Swiss (singular) and the Swiss (= the people of Switzerland)

With other nationalities, the plural noun ends in **-s**. For example:

an Italian → Italians a Mexican → Mexicans a Turk → Turks

With these words (Italians etc.), we do not normally use **the** to talk about the people in general (see Unit 75).

Exercises

Unit
76

76.1 Answer the questions. Choose the right answer from the box. Don't forget **the**. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1	2	3	4
<i>animals</i> tiger elephant rabbit cheetah giraffe kangaroo	<i>birds</i> eagle penguin swan owl parrot pigeon	<i>inventions</i> telephone wheel telescope laser helicopter typewriter	<i>currencies</i> dollar peso euro rupee rouble yen

- 1 a Which of the animals is tallest? the giraffe
b Which animal can run fastest? _____
c Which of these animals is found in Australia? _____
- 2 a Which of these birds has a long neck? _____
b Which of these birds cannot fly? _____
c Which bird flies at night? _____
- 3 a Which of these inventions is oldest? _____
b Which one is most recent? _____
c Which one was especially important for astronomy? _____
- 4 a What is the currency of India? _____
b What is the currency of Canada? _____
c And the currency of your country? _____

76.2 Put in **the** or **a**.

- 1 When was the telephone invented?
- 2 Can you play _____ musical instrument?
- 3 Jessica plays _____ violin in an orchestra.
- 4 There was _____ piano in the corner of the room.
- 5 Can you play _____ piano?
- 6 Our society is based on _____ family.
- 7 Martin comes from _____ large family.
- 8 _____ computer has changed the way we live.

76.3 Complete these sentences using **the** + the following:

injured poor rich sick unemployed young

- 1 The young have the future in their hands.
- 2 Ambulances arrived at the scene of the accident and took _____ to hospital.
- 3 Life is all right if you have a job, but things are not so easy for _____.
- 4 Helen has been a nurse all her life. She has spent her life caring for _____.
- 5 In England there is an old story about a man called Robin Hood. It is said that he robbed _____ and gave the money to _____.

76.4 What do you call the people of these countries?

	<i>one person (a/an ...)</i>	<i>the people in general</i>
1 Canada	<u>a Canadian</u>	<u>Canadians</u>
2 Germany	_____	_____
3 France	_____	_____
4 Russia	_____	_____
5 China	_____	_____
6 Brazil	_____	_____
7 England	_____	_____
8 and your country	_____	_____