

Grammar

Determiners

eBook

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Determiners

Determiners are that part of the sentence that provides extra information about the noun. Similar to the adjectives, they are used to provide information such as proximity, quantity, relationship, and definiteness. Although they might seem to be similar to adjectives, they do have their differences. Unlike adjectives, determiners are placed before a noun or a noun phrase and introduce the noun to the reader. On the other hand, adjectives provide additional or extra information about the noun.

Another difference that determiners and adjectives have is that adjectives can be classified as per their intensity, but determiners cannot be classified. E.g. the adjective 'fat' can be classified into 'fatter' and 'fattest' but the determiner 'enough' cannot be classified. Determiners also indicate that the speaker is talking about a specific thing.

The final point of difference is that adjectives are additional in a sentence whereas determiners are necessary.

Chapter 2: Types of Determiners

2.1 Articles

Articles are of three types 'a', 'an' and 'the'. The article 'the' is called a definite article because it tells about a particular noun that is stated in the text. Articles 'a' and 'an' are considered as indefinite articles because they refer to a class of noun that is mentioned in the sentence.

The indefinite articles have the similar function, but cannot be interchanged in a sentence. The article 'a' is used before a noun that starts with a consonant (e.g., a ball; a gun; a telescope), while the article 'an' is used before the noun that starts with a vowel or the noun which starts with the sound of a vowel (e.g., an elephant; an MLA; an onion).

Examples:

- *The Taj Mahal* is a symbol of love.
- John is *an Engineer*.
- Elena is *a student* of commerce

2.2 Quantifiers

Quantifiers are words that express the quantity. They are the answer to questions such as, 'How much?' or 'How many?' Some of the quantifiers are *few, a few, the few, many, little, a little, the little, enough, most, much, some, any etc.*

Examples:

- Sherry has *enough food for my family.*
- We have *no time left.*
- Rita has a *few friends whom she can trust.*

Interrogatives

The interrogatives are used to ask questions. The three examples of interrogative determiners are: *what, whose, and which.*

Examples:

- *What vegetables* do you want on your pizza?
- *Which car* do you prefer?
- *Whose picture* are you looking at?

Chapter 3: Introduction to Modals

A modal is a type of helping verb that expresses obligation, permission, possibility or ability. Modals when used with a preposition 'to', form Modal phrases. These Modal phrases are used similarly as the Modals. Unlike other verbs modal verbs do not change their form, i.e. they do not have past participle or singular plural forms. They do not need a helping verb to complete them. The modals and Modal Phrases in English are:

1. Can/could/be able to
2. May/might
3. Shall/should/ought to
4. Must/have to
5. Will/would

Let's study these in details:

1. CAN

'Can' is a modal used to express permission, ability, request and possibility. Let's see an example for all the above uses.

Examples:

- a) Can I Go outside and play, please?

- b) He can speak multiple languages.
- c) Can you pass that book, please?
- d) It can get very cold in Norway.

The first example here shows permission is being sought. The second example expresses the ability of a person to speak different languages. Next example is being used to show that a person is requesting the other person to pass on something and the last example shows the possibility of change in weather.

2. COULD

‘Could’ is a modal used in past tense to express a polite request, permission, ability and possibility. Let’s see an example for each of these uses.

Examples:

- a) Could you pass that book, please?
- b) Could I go outside and play, please?
- c) He could speak multiple languages.
- d) It could get very cold in Norway.

The first example here shows polite request being made. Next example shows polite permission being sought. The third example expresses the ability of a

person to speak different languages in the past. And the last example shows the possibility of change in weather.

3. MAY

'May' is used to express possibility and permission. Following examples illustrate the same:

Examples:

- a) He may come to class today.
- b) May I go to drink water?

The first example shows possibility and the next one shows permission.

4. MIGHT

'Might' is used to express possibility and very polite permission. The situation, in this case, is less possible than in the case of 'may'. The following are examples of the same:

Examples:

- a) He might come today.
- b) Might I have your attention for a moment?

The first example shows possibility which is less in this case than in 'may' and the next one shows very polite permission.

5. MUST

'Must' expresses necessity, possibility and advice or recommendation. Let's understand these with examples:

Examples:

- a) He must go to school today.
- b) He must be hungry.
- c) You must go and watch this play.

Example 'a' here denotes that the action is necessary to be performed. The second example shows a possibility and the last one depicts strong advice being given.

Must is also used to express prohibition, but in that case, we pair up 'must' with 'not'. Let's see an example:

- a) You must not touch my phone.

But this prohibition is stronger than the one made in case of 'may not'.

Example:

a) You may not touch my phone.

6. OUGHT TO/ SHOULD

'Ought to' / 'Should' is used to express advice and obligation. The only difference is that 'ought to' presents stronger advice or obligation than 'should'. Following sentences explain the same:

Examples of 'Ought to':

- a) You ought to follow the traffic rules.
- b) You ought to respect your elders.

Examples of 'Should':

- a) You should follow the traffic rules.
- b) You should respect your elders.

Both the cases above show advice and obligation, but one can notice the intensity of the advice and obligation is more in case of 'ought to'.

7. WOULD

'Would' represents a request and habits in the past.

Examples:

- a) Would you please pass those keys?
- b) Sometimes he would talk very loudly.

The requests made using 'would' are politer than the request made using 'will'.