**Module-1, Determiners**

**Learning objectives:**

1. To enable students to comprehend the concepts of determiners.
2. To develop their understanding for different types of determiners and their usage.
3. To enable them to understand the correct order of determiners.

**Key terms:** *definite and indefinite determiners, possessive, quantifiers, predeterminers, central determiners, post-determiners.*

**Determiners:**

*(i)We have enough time.*

*(ii)This house is mine.*

*(iii) The performance was fantastic.*

*(iv)What a beautiful weather it is!*

In the above examples, the words ‘*enough*’, ‘*this*’, ‘*the*’, and ‘*what’, ‘a*’ are placed at the beginning of the noun/noun phrase *time, house, performance, beautiful weather* to refer to those nouns. These words are called determiners.

Determiners are words or group of words which are generally placed at the beginning of a noun or noun phrase (henceforth, NP) to show the kind of reference (definite, indefinite, possessive, demonstrative, quantifying) a noun phrase has. A concrete noun will always carry a determiner with it.

Example: I saw a dog on the roof.

~~I saw dog on the roof~~.

Note: *Determiners are functional elements of structure and not formal*[*word classes*](https://www.thoughtco.com/word-class-grammar-1692608)*.*

**The ordering of determiners:**

Determiners are always placed inside a noun phrase before the noun they determine. Determiners always precede adjectives in a noun phrase. When there is more than one determiner in the same noun phrase, the determiner is placed in a specific order.

Depending on their relative position before a noun, we distinguish three classes of determiners.

**1.Group 1 Determiners:**

1. All, both, and half: *All (the) students, both these rooms, half an hour*
2. The multipliers: double, twice, thrice, five times, etc.: *Double the rate, four times his salary*
3. The fractions: one-third, one-fifth

*I finished in one third(of) the time my friend took.*

1. Such, what: *Such a view!*

*What a beautiful picture*!

**2. Group 2 Determiners:**

* articles: *a, an, the*
* possessive determiners: *my, your, his* etc.
* demonstrative determiners*: this, that, these, those*

**(a)Articles:** *a, an, the.*

[Articles](http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules-and-tips/definite-and-indefinite-articles.html) are among the most common of the determiners.

**The indefinite article:** *a, an.*

It is used when we talk about things in general and the referent is not specific. Examples:

*(i)Can you sing a song, please?*

*(ii)He was wearing a blue jacket****.***

In these examples, the sentence is talking about song or blue jacket in general, meaning any song and any blue jacket.

Articles ‘a’ and ‘an’ are not used with plural or uncountable nouns.

*(iii)I need a water. (incorrect)*

*(iv)I need a glass of water. (correct)*

**The definite article:** *the*.

It is used when we talk about a specific person, place, or thing. Examples:

*(i)Can you sing the song, please?*

*(ii)He was wearing the blue jacket****.***

Here the speaker is referring to a particular song and a particular blue jacket. It's not a general category. The referent is specific.

Article ‘The’ is used with singular, plural, or uncountable nouns.

**(b)Possessive determiners:** *my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose.*

Possessive determiners are used with nouns to indicate possession.

The possessive determiners come before a noun and make noun phrase definite whereas, possessive pronouns (mine/yours etc.) replace previously mentioned noun.

Examples:

*(i)My name is Radha and I am looking for my**books*. (possessive det)

*(ii)Their performance is better than yours. (possessive pronoun)*

**(c) Demonstrative determiners:** *this, that, these, those*.

Demonstrative determiners show that the referents are ‘near’ or ‘distant’ (this-that, these-those) and singular or plural (this-these, that-those).

Examples:

*(i)He does not want to go to that(det) restaurant.*

*(ii)They ordered this(det) cake.*

*(iii)They ordered this (demonstrative Pro).*

**3. Group 3 Determiners:**

1. Cardinal numerals: two, three, fifty:

*my five pens*, *her two roommates*

1. Ordinal numerals: first, second, last, next: *the first**page, the last year*
2. Quantifiers: several, most, little:

*few people, some**students,**a large number of people*

Note: *In a series of determiners generally the group 1 determiners come first, group 2 determiners come second and group 3 determiners come in the last position. All these determiners can occur individually.*

**Quantifiers:** A quantifier or quantifying determiner is a word or phrase which is used before a noun to show the amount or quantity. It can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns. Examples:

*(i) She has lots of friends.*

*(ii)They have got no money.*

*(iii)I want some mangoes, please.*

**Quantifiers used with both countable and uncountable nouns:** all, no, some, any, more, most, a lot of, lots of, enough, less**.**

*(i)All the students performed their best.*

*(ii)No decision has been taken yet*.

*(iii)All you need is to get enough books.*

*(iv)He makes less salary than his father does. (correct)*

*(v)He makes less salary. (incorrect)*

**Some and Any:**

Some is used in positive statements and it can also be used in interrogatives for offers and requests.

*(i)I want to read some novels.*

*(ii)I want some orange juice.*

*(iii)Would you like some cookies?*

*(iv)Can I have some extra cheese, please?*

While ‘any’ is used in negative and interrogative sentences.

*(v)She has not received any mails yet.*

*(vi)Do you have any friends who speak French?*

**Quantifiers used only with countable nouns:**

*(not) many, several, each, both, either, neither, (a) few, fewer, a couple of, hundreds of, thousands of.*

*(i)Not many people attended the seminar.*

*(ii)He doesn’t have many friends.*

*(iii)It took him several minutes to respond*.

*(iv)There were fewer cars on the road due to lockdown.*

*(v)There are fewer assignments than you think.*

*(vi)They’ll be back in a couple of minutes*.

*(vii)There were thousands of people at the conference*.

**Much and Many**

Much is used with singular uncountable nouns and many with plural nouns.

*(i)There aren’t many scholars in that team.*

*(ii)Is there much poverty in that locality?*

*(iii)He has many friends*.

**Each and Every**

Every and each are used with singular nouns to mean all.

*(i)Each student was given questions to solve.*

*(ii)He goes swimming every week.*

Each and every are used alongside each other for emphasis.

*(iii)She took each and every opportunity to excel.*

*(iv)She thanked each and every person present there.*

**Both, Either and Neither**

Both, either, neither are used to talk about two people or things. Nouns with ‘both’ take plural verb but nouns with either and neither take a singular verb. Neither is used to make a negative statement.

*(i)Both the questions were correct.*

*(ii)I don’t like either house.*

**Quantifiers used only with uncountable nouns:**

*(not) much, a bit of, a little, a great deal of, a good deal of.*

*(i)There was not much difference between the two.*

*(ii)Can I have a bit of salt, please?*

*(iii)She spent a good deal of time planning presentation.*

**Use of articles with quantifiers:**

'a/an' is used with several quantifiers, like

* a little
* a few
* a lot of

no article is also used with

* little
* few
* lots of

'a little' or 'little' is used with an uncountable noun.

'a few' or 'few' is used with a plural countable noun.

Both have slightly different meanings 'a little' or 'a few', means a small amount, but it's enough:

*(i)I have a little money, enough for the lunch at least*.

On the other hand, 'little' or 'few' also mean negligible amount:

*(ii)I have**little money. I really can’t afford to go out for lunch*.

However, 'a lot of' means the same as 'lots of'. A lot of and lots of can both be used with plural countable nouns and with singular uncountable nouns.

*(iii)They have got lots of assignments to finish.  
(iv)There was a lot of money in the purse.*

*(v)There aren’t a lot of options.*

*(vi)We don’t have a lot of time.*

**Reference:**

Leech, G. N., & Svartvik, J. (2015). *A communicative grammar of English*. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.