**When to use *a*, when to use *the*, and when to use neither of them**

**“a” 🡪 one out of many**

e.g. “a girl in class five” 🡪 there is more than one girl in class five, and she is one of them.

e.g. “I lent Isaac a red pen” 🡪 I have more than one red pen, and I gave him one.

*\*I don’t need to give extra information about the object, because* ***any*** *one of that object is OK.*

**“the” 🡪 a *specific* one, (～その)**

e.g. “the girl in class five” 🡪 there is only one girl in class five. I’m talking about her.

e.g. “This is the year that I will win the strongman contest.” 🡪 It is specifically this year that I will win; not last year, not next year, not in 2051. *This* specific year.

*\*I need to give extra information about the object, so people know* ***which one*** *I am talking about.*

**Don’t use “a” nor “the” if:**

1. The object is a name
   * “I gave a pen to the Isaac.” ×
   * “She played soccer in a Fukiai high school.” ×
2. There is more than one object
   * “He went to the store to buy a five items.” ×
   * “He went to the store to buy the five items.” △
     + If we have already mentioned five specific items (if the reader knows *which* five items we are talking about), then “the” is ○. If it’s any five items, or we don’t know *which* five items, then it’s ×.

Summary:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | one of many (not specific) | specific one |
| 1 object | a | the |
| 2+ objects | — | the\* / — |

\**only* *if* we know which ones

*Let’s try!*

In the sentences below, write “a” or “the” or leave it blank so the sentences are correct.

1. Last week, he climbed \_\_\_\_ mountain in the Himalayas.
2. Satoru gave me \_\_\_\_\_ small sculpture for White Day.
3. People use telescopes to see \_\_\_\_ constellations.
4. We will beat \_\_\_\_ baseball team from Kagikou.
5. I will not make \_\_\_\_\_ same mistake that I made on the last exam.
6. \_\_\_\_ Basia should have taught us this at \_\_\_\_\_ beginning of this year.
7. I studied harder than ever, so this is \_\_\_\_ test on which I will get a perfect score.
8. She works as \_\_\_\_ firefighter in Sapporo.