

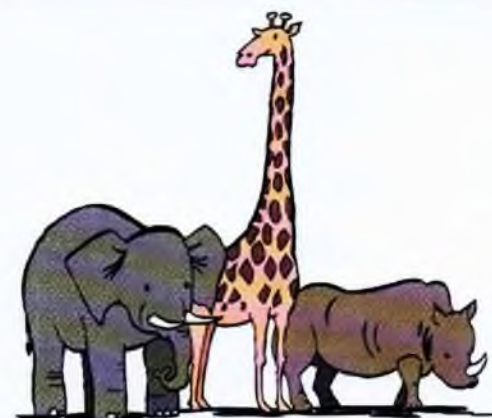
The 4 (the giraffe / the telephone / the piano etc. ; the + adjective)

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).