

Session 2

Most of us love to talk about our holidays and travels – and in English, that means using articles. So, when and how should we use them? In this session, Emma hears some more travellers' tales as we explore the rules of the articles **a**, **an** and **the**.

Activity 2

When to use 'the'

Some rules for using 'the'

We all have a favourite place we'd like to travel to - maybe to see a famous historic site, to trek in the mountains or just to lie on a beach and sunbathe.

And to describe these places, we need to use the word **the**. Let's look at some of the rules.

Explanation:

We use **the**:

1) **Before singular nouns** that we have already mentioned with **a/an**:

*We saw **an elephant**. **The elephant** was standing under some trees.*

2) **Before singular, plural or uncountable nouns** when we say exactly which person or thing we mean:

*I love **the coffee shop in George Street**.*

***The people in my new office** are really nice.*

*Where's **the brown sugar**?*

BUT: We **don't** use **the** before plural and uncountable nouns when we are talking about **things in general**:

***Children** need plenty of **exercise** and **fresh air**.* (children in general; exercise in general; fresh air in general)

***Sugar** isn't very good for you.* (sugar in general)

3) We also use **the** before **singular, plural or uncountable nouns** when it is clear which person or thing we mean:

*I'm going to **the supermarket**.* (the one we always go to)

***The children** are upstairs.* (our children)

*Could you shut **the door**?* (the door of this room)

4) We also use **the** before **singular nouns** when there is **only one** of the noun:

***The sun** is shining and there aren't any clouds in **the sky**.*

To do

Let's practise. Listen to these people making plans to visit Italy and then try the next activity.



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Next

We've discussed using **a**, **an** and **the** in different situations. But there's more. Here are some sentences from John and Sally's conversation: do you know the rules about these articles?

(-) Padua's in **(-) north-west Italy**, isn't it?

...it's more in **the north-east**.

The nearest airport to Padua is in Venice.

We'll show you these rules in Session 3. And there's more information about articles in 6 Minute Grammar on the next page, when Finn talks about his trip to Cambodia and gets to meet an elephant - that's **an elephant!**

