

Articles

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

The Definite Article - Introduction

There is only one definite article, namely, 'the'.

It is used to identify a specific person, place, or thing.

We also use 'the' to refer to specific plural nouns.

We can use 'the' with superlatives.

We change the pronunciation before words that start with vowel sounds.

The Definite Article – Examples #1

We use 'the' to refer to something which has already been mentioned.

- There's a new position at work. *The* job will involve some overtime.
- Yesterday, an armed man robbed the shop. *The* thief has been caught.

We use 'the' when we assume there is just one of something there, even if it has not been mentioned before.

- Shall we go for a walk in *the* woods later?
- Our house is opposite *the* library.

The Definite Article – Examples #2

We use 'the' to identify a specific person or object.

- This is *the* nurse who gave me my medicine.
- We live in *the* house at the end of *the* street.

We use 'the' to identify unique people or objects.

- *The* sun rises in the East.
- It's a beautiful day - there isn't a cloud in *the* sky.

The Definite Article – Examples #3

We use 'the' before superlatives.

- Peter is *the* best swimmer in his class.
- Nana is *the* oldest person in our family.

We use 'the' before ordinal numbers.

- Ian passed his driving test on *the* 2nd try.
- This is *the* first time I've been to China.

The Definite Article – Examples #4

We use 'the' with adjectives, to refer to a whole group of people.

- *The* French are famous for wine and cheese.
- There are many special care homes for *the* elderly.

We use 'the' with decades.

- There were some dreadful fashion mistakes in *the* 70s.
- His parents were born in *the* sixties.

The Definite Article – Examples #5

We use 'the' with the proper names of geographical areas, such as rivers, mountain ranges, groups of islands, oceans, etc.

- Our cruise down *the* Nile was most enjoyable.
- Did Hannibal really cross *the* Alps with elephants?
- It is now possible to fly across *the* Atlantic in only a few hours.
- Our neighbours went to *the* Canary Islands on holiday.

The Definite Article – Examples #6

We use 'the' with the names of famous buildings, works of art, museums, or monuments.

- *The* Mona Lisa is on display at *the* Louvre.
- *The* Washington Monument is an obelisk on *the* National Mall in Washington, D.C.

We use 'the' with the names of hotels, restaurants and pubs.

- We're going to *the* Queen's Arms after work – do you want to join us?
- It's across the road from *the* Holiday Inn.

The Definite Article – Examples #7

We change the pronunciation before words that start with vowel sounds.

- The elephant.
- The orange.
- The SMS.
- The unicorn.