

## The 3 (children / the children)

A

When we are talking about things or people in general, we do *not* use **the**:

- I'm afraid of **dogs**. (*not the dogs*)  
(**dogs** = dogs in general, not a specific group of dogs)
- Doctors** are usually paid more than **teachers**.
- Do you know anybody who collects **stamps**?
- Crime** is a problem in most big cities. (*not The crime*)
- Life** has changed a lot in the last thirty years. (*not The life*)
- Do you like **classical music** / **Chinese food** / **fast cars**?
- My favourite sport is **football/skiing/athletics**.
- My favourite subject at school was **history/physics/English**.



We say '**most people** / **most books** / **most cars**' etc. (*not the most ...*):

- Most shops** accept credit cards. (*not The most shops*)

B

We use **the** when we mean specific things or people.

Compare:

<i>In general (without <b>the</b>)</i>	<i>Specific people or things (with <b>the</b>)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Children</b> learn from playing. (= children in general)	<input type="checkbox"/> We took <b>the children</b> to the zoo. (= a specific group, perhaps the speaker's children)
<input type="checkbox"/> I couldn't live without <b>music</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/> The film wasn't very good, but I liked <b>the music</b> . (= the music in the film)
<input type="checkbox"/> All <b>cars</b> have wheels.	<input type="checkbox"/> All <b>the cars in this car park</b> belong to people who work here.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sugar</b> isn't very good for you.	<input type="checkbox"/> Can you pass <b>the sugar</b> , please? (= the sugar on the table)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>English people</b> drink a lot of tea. (= English people in general)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>The English people I know</b> drink a lot of tea. (= only the English people I know, not English people in general)

C

The difference between 'something in general' and 'something specific' is not always very clear.

Compare:

<i>In general (without <b>the</b>)</i>	<i>Specific people or things (with <b>the</b>)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> I like working with <b>people</b> . (= people in general)	<input type="checkbox"/> I like <b>the people I work with</b> . (= a specific group of people)
<input type="checkbox"/> I like working with <b>people who say what they think</b> . ( <i>not all people, but 'people who say what they think' is still a general idea</i> )	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you like <b>coffee</b> ? (= coffee in general)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you like <b>strong black coffee</b> ? ( <i>not all coffee, but 'strong black coffee' is still a general idea</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't like <b>the coffee we had after dinner</b> . (= specific coffee)

## Exercises

75.1 Choose four of these things and write whether you like them or not:

bananas	boxing	cats	crowds	fast food	horror movies
<del>hot weather</del>	maths	opera	snow	supermarkets	zoos

Begin each sentence with one of these:

I like ... / I don't like ...

I don't mind ...

I love ... / I hate ...

I'm interested in ... / I'm not interested in ...

- I don't like hot weather very much.
- 
- 
- 
- 

75.2 Complete the sentences using the following. Use **the** where necessary.

<del>(the) basketball</del>	(the) grass	(the) patience	(the) people
(the) questions	(the) meat	<del>(the) information</del>	(the) hotels
(the) history	(the) water	(the) spiders	(the) lies

- My favourite sport is basketball.
- The information we were given wasn't correct.
- Some people are afraid of .....
- A vegetarian is somebody who doesn't eat .....
- The test wasn't very difficult. I answered ..... without difficulty.
- Do you know ..... who live next door?
- ..... is the study of the past.
- It's better to tell the truth. Telling ..... usually causes problems.
- We couldn't find anywhere to stay in the town. .... were full.
- ..... in the pool didn't look very clean, so we didn't go for a swim.
- Don't sit on ..... It's wet after the rain.
- You need ..... to teach young children.

75.3 Choose the correct form, with or without **the**.

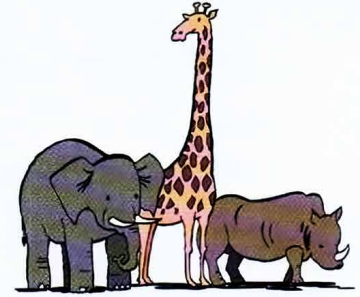
- I'm afraid of dogs / ~~the dogs~~. (dogs is correct)
- Apples / The apples are good for you.
- Look at apples / the apples on that tree! They're very big.
- Women / The women live longer than men / the men.
- I don't drink tea / the tea. I don't like it.
- We had a very good meal. Vegetables / The vegetables were especially good.
- Life / The life is strange sometimes. Some very strange things happen.
- I enjoy holidays / the holidays by the sea.
- How much money does the government spend on education / the education?
- Who are people / the people in this picture?
- What makes people / the people violent? What causes aggression / the aggression?
- All books / All the books on the top shelf belong to me.
- Don't stay in that hotel. It's very noisy and rooms / the rooms are very small.
- A pacifist is somebody who is against war / the war.
- First World War / The First World War lasted from 1914 until 1918.
- I don't like films / the films that don't have happy endings.
- Someone gave me a book about history / the history of modern art / the modern art.
- Rob and Louise got married, but marriage / the marriage didn't last very long.
- Most people / The most people believe that marriage / the marriage and family life / the family life are the basis of society / the society.

# 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:

<b>the young</b>	<b>the rich</b>	<b>the sick</b>	<b>the injured</b>
<b>the old</b>	<b>the poor</b>	<b>the disabled</b>	<b>the dead</b>
<b>the elderly</b>	<b>the homeless</b>	<b>the unemployed</b>	

**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).

# Exercises

**76.1** Answer the questions. Choose the right answer from the box. Don't forget **the**. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1	2	3	4
<i>animals</i> tiger elephant rabbit cheetah giraffe kangaroo	<i>birds</i> eagle penguin swan owl parrot pigeon	<i>inventions</i> telephone wheel telescope laser helicopter typewriter	<i>currencies</i> dollar peso euro rupee rouble yen

- 1 a Which of the animals is tallest? the giraffe
- b Which animal can run fastest? .....
- c Which of these animals is found in Australia? .....
- 2 a Which of these birds has a long neck? .....
- b Which of these birds cannot fly? .....
- c Which bird flies at night? .....
- 3 a Which of these inventions is oldest? .....
- b Which one is most recent? .....
- c Which one was especially important for astronomy? .....
- 4 a What is the currency of India? .....
- b What is the currency of Canada? .....
- c And the currency of your country? .....

**76.2** Put in **the** or **a**.

- 1 When was the telephone invented?
- 2 Can you play ..... musical instrument?
- 3 Jessica plays ..... violin in an orchestra.
- 4 There was ..... piano in the corner of the room.
- 5 Can you play ..... piano?
- 6 Our society is based on ..... family.
- 7 Martin comes from ..... large family.
- 8 ..... computer has changed the way we live.

**76.3** Complete these sentences using **the** + the following:

injured    poor    rich    sick    unemployed    ~~young~~

- 1 The young ..... have the future in their hands.
- 2 Ambulances arrived at the scene of the accident and took ..... to hospital.
- 3 Life is all right if you have a job, but things are not so easy for .....
- 4 Helen has been a nurse all her life. She has spent her life caring for .....
- 5 In England there is an old story about a man called Robin Hood. It is said that he robbed ..... and gave the money to .....

**76.4** What do you call the people of these countries?

	<i>one person (a/an ...)</i>	<i>the people in general</i>
1 Canada	<u>a Canadian</u>	<u>Canadians</u>
2 Germany	.....	.....
3 France	.....	.....
4 Russia	.....	.....
5 China	.....	.....
6 Brazil	.....	.....
7 England	.....	.....
8 and your country	.....	.....