

How to use the Zero article in English

In English, it is sometimes not necessary to put an article a,an or the in front of certain names.

(NOTE: some English teachers use the Ø symbol in their lesson to show when not to put an article)

Articles are not used **in the following cases**:

Talk about generalities, general truths, or give your opinion

(you will notice that all names are in the plural)

- I hate cakes. (we're talking about cakes in general)
- I love music.
- I like chocolate.
- Planes travel faster than cars.
- Japanese is the language spoken in Japan.
- I think history is boring.
- Sharks are dangerous animals.

Abstract names

- Love is a good thing.
- War is terrible.

Colors

- Steel is very strong.
- Red is my favorite color.

Materials

- This table is made of glass.
- This bridge is made of steel.

Meals, food and beverages

- I have coffee for breakfast.
- In Spain, dinner is served at 10pm.

The place, the direction

- to go to work
- I go to church every Sunday
- to get home

- to be in bed
- to go into hospital
- from left to right
- go to university
- go to church

⚠ we say: to go to the toilet

⚠ Do not mistake:

- She goes to school every day. (The school as an institution, in the general sense)
- She lives next to the school. (a particular school)

Languages

- I like English.
- She can speak Japanese.

Activities

- He plays football.
- I like tennis.

Continents, countries, streets, mountains and lakes (singular)

- Africa
- I'm visiting Italy next month.
- Lake Michigan
- Grafton Street
- Mount Everest

⚠ We use the with some names of countries, rivers, islands and seas (the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, the British Isles...)

Before the titles (functions, status) followed by the person's name

- Doctor Parker
- Queen Elizabeth
- Prince William
- King Louis XV
- President Sarkozy

Ex: President Trump has visited a museum in Paris.

In front of the days, the months

- Sarah goes to the swimming pool on Tuesday.
- August is usually very hot.
- I love Fridays.

⚠ Time and weather

- It's spring !
- at night
- Next year I'm going to Sri Lanka (not: ~~the~~ next year)

⚠ but we say: in **the** evening