THE DEFINITE ARTICLE (HOW TO USE 'THE' IN ENGLISH)

In English, we simply use THE, for the masculine, feminine or neutral, or even for the singular or plural.

We say that 'the' is a definite article because it defines something specific. On the contrary, a/an are indefinite articles because they indicate something non-specific.

- the bike
- the bikes
- the boy
- the boys

Did you know that 'the' is the most used word in English language?

WHEN TO PUT 'THE'?

THE is used in the following cases:

TO DESIGNATE A GROUP OF PEOPLE

- the elderly
- the poor
- the Canadians

THE DECADES

- This is a plane from the 1930's.
- She was born in the eighties.

TO DESIGNATE THINGS THAT EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT

- the stars
- the earth
- the sun
- the moon

GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES: OCEANS, RIVERS, ISLAND GROUPS, AND MOUNTAIN RANGES

- the Hudson River
- the Indian Ocean
- the Pacific Ocean
- the Himalayas
- the Nile
- the Alps
- the Rocky Mountains
- the Arctic
- the Dead sea

©Englishfornoobs.com
**SURNAMES IN THE PLURAL**

- the Simpsons (= the Simpson family)

**WITH THE NAMES OF MONUMENTS**

- the Eiffel Tower
- the Louvre

**WITH THE NAMES OF NEWSPAPERS**

- the New York Times
- the Guardian
- the Sun

**COUNTRY NAMES IN THE PLURAL**

- the United States of America
- the United Kingdom
- the Netherlands
- the Philippines

⚠ The agreement is generally in the singular:

- The USA is a very big country.

**Definite article (the) or indefinite (a/an)?**

See the following example:

- Can we go to the park? => specific, we already know the park where we want to go.
- Can we go to a park? => non-specific, it could be any park.

**When Not to use 'the'?**

**WITH THE NAMES OF COUNTRIES AND CONTINENTS**

- She’s just returned from Italy.
- Russia is a very big country.
- Asia is bigger than Africa.

**WITH THE LANGUAGE NAMES**

- French is spoken in Switzerland.
- English uses many words of Latin origin.
- Japanese is a beautiful language.

**WITH THE NAMES OF THE MEALS**

- I like to eat breakfast in the morning. [I like to eat **the** breakfast in the morning. = FALSE]
- Lunch is my favorite meal. [**the** lunch is my favorite meal = FALSE]

©Englishfornoobs.com
WITH TITLES COMBINED WITH A NAME

- President Trump is traveling to China.
- Prince Charles is Queen Elizabeth's son.

We can say 'The Queen visited Paris for the first time' because we don't say her first name.

WITH PROFESSIONS

- He'll probably study medicine.
- Engineering is a well-paid career.

WITH UNCOUNTABLE NAMES

- Bread is an important food in France.
- Milk is often added to tea in England.
- War is destructive.

WITH THE NAMES OF MOUNTAINS, LAKES AND ISLANDS

- He lives near Long Island.
- Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world.
- Have you been to Lake Tahoe?

WITH STREET NAMES, STATIONS AND AIRPORTS

- Victoria Station is in the centre of London.
- Can you show me where is Oxford Street?
- They're flying into Charles de Gaulle.

WITH PUBLIC PLACES

- Go to school [go to the school = FALSE ]
- Go to work [go to the work = FALSE ]
- Go to hospital [go to the hospital = FALSE ]

⚠ We also say

- Stay in bed [stay in the bed = FALSE ]
- Be at home [be at the home = FALSE ]

NOTE

For the seasons, you can put or not put THE, both are correct. We can say:

- in summer
- in the summer

©Englishfornoobs.com