

ARTICLES

Every singular count noun must have a determiner:

Determiners:

The car	My car	Every car	This car	One car	No car
A car	His car	Each car	That car	Any car	Some car
	The boss' car	Per car	Those cars		

Use no Article With

General plural – Elephants are big

General noncount – Fish is good for you. Education is important.

Proper names – Mary had a little lamb.

Use "A" With

Meaning one, not all. – a dog barked.

Meaning any one, not specified – a tiger is a large cat.

USE “THE” WITH...

1. Ordering – the first, the second, the third...
2. Superlatives – the best, the fastest, the tallest, the worst...
3. Unique for all – the moon, the earth
4. Unique for a given setting – the blackboard, the ceiling
5. Unique by pointing – the book, the chair
6. Unique for a given social group – Dad, can I have the car?
7. Unique by definition – the house with red windows, the girl who is sitting outside
The ____ of ____, or The ____ that ____ (defined in the sentence)
8. Unique by entailment – when talking about a house: the windows, the garden...
9. Unique by prior utterance – I saw a dog today. The dog was big and black.
10. Countries viewed as federations or unions – The USA, the United Kingdom, the Philippines...
11. Mountains/lakes if they are a set (not just one) – the Great Lakes, the Rocky Mountains, the Alps...
12. Oceans/Seas – the Mediterranean, the Pacific Ocean
13. Rivers – the Amazon, the Nile, the Mississippi River
14. Deserts – the Sahara, the Mohave Desert...
15. Some specific diseases – the flu, the mumps, a cold
16. Inventions – The electric light was invented in 1879. I heard it on the radio. I like the computer.
17. Public buildings – the post office, the library, the bank, the hospital.

Special Cases

Same – the same, the same size, the same as

Activities: school, Church, Temple, prison, TV, bed. - I go to school on Tuesdays (meaning I study). I go to the school to pick up my kids (meaning the place). I watch TV (activity). I put the flowers on the TV (in that place). I go to bed (sleep). I make the bed (close it in the morning).

Home – I'm going home. (a feeling rather than a place)

Meals – No “the” with breakfast, lunch, dinner. I ate lunch. Lunch is ready! Not “the lunch.” Use an article “a” if you add an adjective “That was a great lunch.” “I usually eat a big dinner.”