

Using Articles - Exceptions When Using "the"

Here you can learn about

- **major exceptions when writing *the*.**

This sheet is linked to Information Sheet 2: Using Articles – The Basics. An associated work sheet is also available.

Common Special Cases for Using/Not Using *the*

- Use *the* with
 - a superlative adjective/adverb, e.g., *he is the tallest in the class*
 - when referring to certain topics, e.g., entertainment-related (*the cinema, the pub, the shops*), transport-related (*the bus, the airport*), musical instruments (*the piano*), scientific instruments and inventions (*the printer*)
 - when referring to the physical environment (*the sea, the wind, the weather*).
- Although *the* is not commonly used for proper nouns (the nouns in English that start with a capital letter), here are some exceptions.
 - united countries, e.g., *the United States of America*;
 - large regions/deserts e.g., *the Sahara*;
 - peninsulas, e.g., *the Iberian Peninsula*;
 - oceans/seas/gulfs, e.g., *the Pacific*;
 - canals/rivers, e.g., *the Suez Canal*;
 - mountain ranges, e.g., *the Alps*;
 - groups of islands, e.g., *the Orkneys*.
 - political bodies, e.g., *the Labour Party*
 - hotels, e.g., *the Hilton*
 - newspapers, e.g., *the Daily Mirror*
- Don't use *the* in the following instances
 - When referring to an 'institution' (e.g., hospital, church, school, college ...) when you want to imply the person is part of that institution, e.g., *she is still at university, she goes to church*.
 - When referring to meals, e.g., *she is eating lunch*



- When referring to time, e.g., *next week*, *at noon*. *The weekend* is one of the few exceptions here.
- When you have used a possessive determiner, e.g., *our experiment*, or *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, e.g., *These results*
- Before *both* and *all*, e.g., *we followed all instructions*
- With jobs and positions, e.g., *he was elected as deputy speaker*.
- When the noun is followed by a categorizing letter or number, e.g., *Section 2*.

The following diagram sketches the basics of how to use articles

