

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE - USE AND OMISSION OF "the"

1.- Omission

We do not use "THE" with the following:

1. Games and sports

I play **football** everyday

2. Subjects of study

She studies **physics** and **chemistry**.

3. Languages

We speak **English** really well.

4. Meals

What time did you have **breakfast**?

5. Clock times

At **eight o'clock**

6. Gerunds

I like **reading** whenever I can.

7. Collocations

- Bed (in, go to)
- Home (at)
- Hospital (in, go to)
- Prison (in, go to)
- University (at, go to)
- Work (at, go to)
- School (at, go to)
- Sea (at, go to)

My grandmother is **in hospital**.

I'm going **to the hospital** to take my grandmother some flowers.

8. Means of transport

BY + Noun (without "THE")

Are you going **by air** ? **By plane**? **By car**? **By road**?

2.- Use of "THE"

We use the definite article with:

1. Rivers, seas mountain ranges

The Amazon is in South America.

- We do not use "THE" for the name of a single mountain:

Everest is the highest mountain in **the Himalayas**.

2. Unique objects or people and Points of the Compass

- The sun
- The moon
- The earth
- The world
- The North
- The South
- The East
- The West
- The Pope
- The King...

3. Groups or classes of people

The young often gets impatient with their parents.

=

Young people often get impatient with their parents.

The elephant lives longer than most animals.

=

Elephants live longer than most animals

4. Time expressions

The past, the present, the future

In **the future** people may live on other planets.

3.- Use of "THE"

1. We use **"THE"** when we are talking about **something specific**, not when we are speaking in a more general sense.
 - She has just started **going to school**. **The school** (**the one she goes to**) is quite near home.
 - **Life** (general) is wonderful, but **the life that / which some people have** nowadays, is full of difficulties.
 - Many people have **problems** nowadays, but **the problems of some people in the 19th century** were terrible.
2. **Abstract nouns** normally do not take **"THE"**
 - **Honesty** is the virtue that I most admire in people.
 - I admire **the honesty that / which he showed**.

1. COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES WITH **THE/ A** if necessary:

1. _____ moon goes round _____ Earth every 27 days.
2. _____ Soviet Union was _____ first country to send a man into _____ space.
3. I'm not very hungry, I had _____ big breakfast at home.
4. I never listen to _____ radio. In fact, I haven't got _____ radio.
5. What is _____ highest mountain in _____ world?
6. It was _____ long voyage. We were at _____ sea for four weeks.
7. Look at _____ apples that are on that tree. They're very large.
8. _____ women are often better teachers than _____ men.
9. In Britain _____ coffee is more expensive than _____ tea.
10. Most people believe that _____ marriage and _____ family life are the basis of society.
11. They got married but _____ marriage wasn't very successful.
12. I know someone who wrote _____ book about _____ life of Ghandi.
13. _____ life would be very difficult without _____ electricity.
14. _____ Second World war ended in 1945.
15. Do you know _____ people who live next door.
16. Are you interested in _____ art or _____ architecture?
17. Don't stay in that hotel. _____ beds are very uncomfortable.
18. I hate _____ violence.
19. Our society has two big problems: _____ crime and _____ unemployment.
20. Ken's brother is in _____ prison for robbery.
21. What time do your children finish _____ school?
22. The other day the fire brigade had to go to _____ prison to put out the fire.
23. On _____ way to London we passed through a small village with _____ old church. We stopped to visit _____ church. It
24. After _____ work Ann usually goes _____ home.
25. When Ann was ill, we went to _____ hospital to visit her.
26. _____ British Prime Minister lives in _____ Downing Street 10.
27. Have you ever visited _____ Tower of London?
28. Is there _____ cheap hotel near here?
29. He left _____ home without informing anyone.
30. Life can be very hard for _____ poor.