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The articles: *a/an* and *the*

158 Summary

ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN

*The Royal Society for **the** Prevention of Accidents held **an** exhibition at Harrogate, in **the** north of England. Some shelves were put up to display **the** exhibits. During **the** exhibition, **the** shelves fell down, injuring **a** visitor.*

We use *a/an* only with a singular noun, but we can use *the* with any noun. We also use *some* as a plural equivalent of *a/an*.

Some shelves were put up.

We can also sometimes use a noun on its own without an article.

Accidents can happen.

The form of the articles • 159

We use *a* before a consonant sound and *an* before a vowel sound.

a visitor *an* exhibition

The basic use of the articles • 160

A/an is the indefinite article, and *the* is the definite article. We use *the* when it is clear which one we mean. This can happen in three different ways. Firstly, by repetition: we say **an** exhibition when we first mention it, but **the** exhibition when it is mentioned again, when it means 'the exhibition just mentioned'. Secondly, when there is only one: **the** captain. And thirdly, because a phrase or clause after the noun makes clear which one is meant: **the** woman *sitting behind us*.

A/an to describe and classify • 161

We use *a/an* to describe and classify.

*This is **a** nice place. 'The Economist' is **a** magazine.*

The article in generalizations • 162

Articles can also have a general meaning.

***The** bicycle is a cheap means of transport.*

*There is lots to interest **a** visitor.*

A plural or uncountable noun on its own can also have a general meaning.

Accidents can happen.

A/an or *one*? • 163

We can use either *a/an* or *one* with a singular noun. *One* puts more emphasis on the number.

A/an, some and a noun on its own • 164

We use *a/an* only with a singular noun. With plural or uncountable nouns we use *some* or the noun on its own.

Singular: *A shelf* was put up.
 Plural: *(Some) shelves* were put up.
 Uncountable: *(Some) furniture* was brought in.

Sugar or the sugar? • 165

With an uncountable or plural noun we often have a choice between, for example, *music* (general) and *the music* (specific).

Music usually helps me relax. *The music* was far too loud.

OVERVIEW: a/an, some and the • 166**A singular noun on its own • 167**

We use a singular noun on its own only in some special patterns.

Articles with school, prison etc • 168

I hope to go to university.

Articles in phrases of time • 169

You should get the letter on Thursday.

Names of people • 170

Names of people normally have no article.

Place names and the • 171

Some place names have *the*. We say *Kennedy Airport* but *the Classic Cinema*.

Ten pounds an hour etc • 172

There is a special use of *a/an* in phrases of price, speed etc.

A nursing home costs £400 a week.

159 The form of the articles

- 1 Before a consonant sound the articles are *a* /ə/ and *the* /ðə/. Before a vowel sound they are *an* /ən/ and *the* /ði/.

a + consonant sound

a shelf /ə/ + /ʃ/

a visitor /ə/ + /v/

a big exhibition /ə/ + /b/

the /ðə/

the shelf /ə/ + /ʃ/

an + vowel sound

an accident /n/ + /æ/

an exhibition /n/ + /e/

an interesting display /n/ + /ɪ/

the /ði/

the accident /ɪ/ + /æ/

It is the pronunciation of the next word which matters, not the spelling. Note especially words beginning with *o*, *u* or *h*, or abbreviations.

<i>a one-day event</i> /ə/ + /w/	<i>an only child</i> /n/ + /əʊ/
<i>a union/uniform/university</i> /ə/ + /j/	<i>an umbrella</i> /n/ + /ʌ/
<i>a European country</i> /ə/ + /j/	<i>an error</i> /n/ + /e/
<i>a holiday</i> /ə/ + /h/	<i>an hour</i> /n/ + /aʊ/
<i>a U-turn</i> /ə/ + /j/	<i>an MI5 agent</i> /n/ + /e/

NOTE

- a With some words we can either pronounce *h* or not, e.g. *a hotel* /ə/ + /h/ or *an hotel* /n/ + /əʊ/. Also: *a/an historic moment*, *a/an horrific accident*. Leaving out /h/ is a little formal and old-fashioned.
- b In slow or emphatic speech we can use *a* /eɪ/, *an* /æn/ and *the* /ði:/.
And now, ladies and gentlemen, a /eɪ/ *special item in our show.*
 When *the* is stressed, it can mean 'the only', 'the most important'.
Aintree is the /ði:/ *place to be on Grand National Day.*
 For *the* /ði:/ *Ronald Reagan*, • 170(2) Note a.

160 The basic use of the articles

1 HOVERCRAFT STOWAWAY

*A hovercraft flying at 40 mph was halted in rough seas when a stowaway was discovered - on **the outside**. He was seen hiding behind a life raft to avoid paying **the £5 fare** from Ryde, Isle of Wight to Southsea. **The captain** was tipped off by radio. He stopped **the craft** and a crewman brought **the stowaway** inside. **A Hover travel spokesman** said: 'It was a very dangerous thing to do. **The ride** can be bumpy and it would be easy to fall off.'*

(from *The Mail on Sunday*)

When the report first mentions a thing, the noun has *a/an*, e.g. *a hovercraft* and *a stowaway* in the first sentence. When the same thing is mentioned again, the writer uses *the*.

*He stopped **the craft** and a crewman brought **the stowaway** inside.*
The means that it should be clear to the reader which one, the one we are talking about.

The difference between *a/an* and *the* is like the difference between *someone!* *something* and a personal pronoun.

*Police are questioning a man/someone about the incident. **The man/He** was arrested when he arrived at Southsea.*
A man/someone is indefinite; *the man/he* is definite.

NOTE

- a For *a/an* describing something, e.g. *It was a very dangerous thing to do*, • 161.
- b We sometimes see a special use of *the* at the beginning of a story. This is the first sentence of a short story by Ruth Rendell.
*A murderer had lived in **the** house, **the** estate agent told Norman.*
 This puts the reader in the middle of the action, as if we already know what house.

2 The context is important in the choice of *a/an* or *the*. Take this example from *Hovercraft Stowaway* in (1).

***The captain** was tipped off by radio.*

We use *the* here even though this is the first mention of the captain. Because we are talking about a hovercraft, it is clear that *the captain* means the captain of the hovercraft. We use *the* for something unique in the context - there is only one captain.

A car stopped and the driver got out.

You'll see a shop with paintings in the window.

We know which window - the window of the shop just mentioned.

Now look at these examples.

A hovercraft crossing the English Channel was halted in rough seas.

The Prime Minister is to make a statement.

The sun was shining. We were at home in the garden.

I'm just going to the post office.

Could I speak to the manager? (spoken in a restaurant).

I can't find the volume control. (spoken while looking at a stereo)

There is only one English Channel, one Prime Minister of a country, one sun in the sky, one garden of our house and one post office in our neighbourhood. So in each example it is clear which we mean.

We often use *the* when a phrase or clause comes after the noun and defines which one is meant.

Ours is the house on the corner.

I'd like to get hold of the idiot who left this broken glass here.

But if the phrase or clause does not give enough information to show which one, we use *a/an*.

He lives in a house overlooking the park.

We cannot use *the* if there are other houses overlooking the park.

We often use *the* when an of-phrase follows the noun.

We came to the edge of a lake.

The roof of a house was blown off in the storm.

Steve heard the sound of an aircraft overhead.

NOTE

But we can use *a/an* before a phrase of quantity with *of*.

Would you like a piece of toast?

We normally use *the* in noun phrases with superlative adjectives and with *only*, *next*, *last*, *same*, *right* and *wrong*.

The Sears Tower is the tallest building in the world.

You're the only friend I've got.

I think you went the wrong way at the lights.

NOTE

a *An only child* is a child without brothers or sisters.

b For *next* and *last* in phrases of time, e.g. *next week*, • 169(8).

We use *the* in a rather general sense with some institutions, means of transport and communication, and with some jobs.

This decade has seen a revival in the cinema.

I go to work on the train. Your cheque is in the post.

Kate has to go to the dentist tomorrow.

Here *the cinema* does not mean a specific cinema but the cinema as an institution. *The train* means the train as a means of transport.

Also *the countryside, the doctor, the establishment, the media, the (news)paper, the police, the press, the seaside, the working class(es).*

NOTE

Television and radio as institutions do not take an article.

*Donna has got a job in **television**/in **radio**.*

But compare *watch television/see it on television* and *listen to the radio/hear it on the radio*.

When we talk about the physical things, we use the articles in the normal way.

*There was **a television/a radio** on the shelf.*

*Harry turned on **the radio/the television**.*

6 *A/an* can mean either a specific one or any one.

*I'm looking for **a pen**. It's a blue one.* (a specific pen)

*I'm looking for **a pen**. Have you got one?* (any pen)

***A hovercraft** was halted in rough seas yesterday.* (a specific hovercraft)

*The **quickest way** is to take **a hovercraft**.* (any one)

7 Here is an overview of the basic uses of the articles.

a/an

Not mentioned before

*Do you want to see **a video**?*

(We don't say which video.)

Not unique

*We watched **a film** about wildlife.*

(There are other films about wildlife.)

the

Mentioned before

*Do you want to see **the video**?*

(= the video we are talking about)

Unique in context

*Are you enjoying **the play**?*

(spoken in a theatre)

Phrase or clause defines which

*I watched **the film** you videoed.*

(You videoed one film.)

161 *Alan* to describe and classify

1 A singular noun phrase which describes something has *a/an*, even though it is clear which one is meant.

*This is **a big house**, isn't it? Last Saturday was **a lovely day**.*

*You are **an idiot**, you know. It's **a long way** to Newcastle.*

2 We also use *a/an* to classify, to say what something is.

*What kind of bird is that? ~ **A blackbird**, isn't it?*

*The Sears Tower is **a building** in Chicago.*

This includes a person's job, nationality or belief.

*My sister is **a doctor**. NOT *My sister is doctor*.*

*The author of the report is **a Scot**.*

*I thought you were **a socialist**.*

*Mr Liam O'Donnell, **a Catholic**, was injured in the incident.*

NOTE

We can also use an adjective of nationality (e.g. *American, Scottish*) as complement.

*The author of the report is **an American/is American**.*

*My grandfather was **a Scot/was Scottish**. NOT *He was Scot*.*

For nationality words, • 288.

162 The article in generalizations

This paragraph contains some generalizations about animals.

ANIMAL NOSES

*As with other parts of its equipment, **an animal** evolves the kind of nose it needs. **The hippo** has grown its ears and eyes on the top of its head, and its nostrils on top of its nose, for lying in water. **Camels and seals** can close their noses; they do it in the same way but for different reasons. **The camel** closes its nose against the blowing sand of the desert, and **the seal** against the water in which it spends most of its time.*

(from F. E. Newing and R. Bowood *Animals And How They Live*)

For generalizations we can use a plural or an uncountable noun on its own, or a singular noun with *a/an* or *the*.

Camels can close their noses.

A camel can close its nose.

The camel can close its nose.

These statements are about all camels, camels in general, not a specific camel or group of camels. We do not use *the camels* for a generalization.

1 Plural/uncountable noun on its own

Blackbirds have a lovely song. **Airports** are horrible places.

People expect good service. **Time** costs money.

This is the most common way of making a generalization.

2 *Alan* + singular noun

A blackbird has a lovely song.

A computer will only do what it's told to do.

An oar is a thing you row a boat with.

Here *a blackbird* means any blackbird, any example of a blackbird. We also normally use *a/an* when explaining the meaning of a word such as *an oar*.

3 *The* + singular noun

The blackbird has a lovely song.

What will the new tax mean for **the small businessman**?

Nobody knows who invented **the wheel**.

Can you play **the piano**?

Here *the blackbird* means a typical, normal blackbird, one which stands for blackbirds in general.

We also use *the* with some groups of people described in economic terms (*the small businessman, the taxpayer, the customer*), with inventions (*the wheel, the word processor*) and with musical instruments.

NOTE

Sports and games are uncountable, so we use the noun on its own: *play tennis, play chess*. Compare *play the piano and play the guitar*. For American usage, • 304(3).

4 **The**+ adjective

We can use *the* before some adjectives of nationality and before some other adjectives to make generalizations.

The French love eating in restaurants. • 288(3)

What is **the World Bank** doing to help **the poor**? • 204

163 **Alan or one?**

- 1 *Alan* and *one* both refer to one thing, but *one* puts more emphasis on the number.

*The stereo has **a** tape deck.* (You can record on it.)

*The stereo has **one** tape deck.* (You can't use two tapes.)

- 2 We use *one* for one of a larger number. It often contrasts with *other*.

One shop was open, but the others were closed.

One expert says **one** thing, and another says something different.

We use *one* in the of-pattern.

One of the shops was open.

- 3 We use *one* in adverb phrases with *morning*, *day*, *time* etc.

One morning something very strange happened.

One day my genius will be recognized.

- 4 We use *a/an* in some expressions of quantity, e.g. *afew*, *a little*, *a lot of*, *a number of*, • 177. And we can sometimes use *a* instead of *one* in a number, e.g. *a hundred*, • 191(1) Note b.

164 **Alan, some and a noun on its own**

- 1 We use *a/an* only with a singular noun. *Some* + plural or uncountable noun is equivalent to *a/an* + singular noun.

Singular: *There's **a** rat under the floorboards.*

Plural: *There are **some** rats under the floorboards.*

Uncountable: *There's **some** milk in the fridge.*

some rats = a number of rats; *some milk* = an amount of milk

But we can sometimes use a plural or uncountable noun on its own.

*There are **rats** under the floorboards.*

*There's **milk** in the fridge.*

Leaving out *some* makes little difference to the meaning, but *rats* expresses a type of animal rather than a number of rats.

- 2 To classify or describe something, • 161, or to make a generalisation, • 162, we use *a/an*+ singular noun or a plural or uncountable noun on its own.

Singular: *That's **a** rat, not a mouse.* *A **rat** will eat anything.*

Plural: *Those are **rats**, not mice.* ***Rats** will eat anything.*

Uncountable: *Is this **milk** or cream?* ***Milk** is good for you.*

165 *Sugar or the sugar?*

- 1 We use an uncountable or plural noun on its own for a generalization and we use *the* when the meaning is more specific.

Sugar is bad for your teeth. Children don't like long walks.
Pass the sugar, please. Can you look after the children for us ?
Without oil, our industry would come to a halt.

The oil I got on my trousers won't wash out.

Here *sugar* means all sugar, sugar in general, and *the sugar* means the sugar on the table where we are sitting.

We often use abstract nouns on their own: *life, happiness, love, progress, justice.*

Life just isn't fair.

But a phrase or clause after the noun often defines, for example, what life we are talking about, so we use *the*.

The life of a Victorian factory worker wasn't easy.

- 2 Compare these two patterns with an abstract noun.

I'm not an expert on Chinese history.
I'm not an expert on the history of China.

The meaning is the same. Other examples: *European architecture/the architecture of Europe, American literature/the literature of America.* Also: *town planning/the planning of towns, Mozart's music/the music of Mozart.*

- 3 A phrase with *of* usually takes *the*, but with other phrases and clauses we can use a noun without an article.

Life in those days wasn't easy.
Silk from Japan was used to make the wedding dress.

Life in those days is still a general idea; *silk from Japan* means a type of material rather than a specific piece of material.

166 Overview: *a/an, some and the*

Not specific:

I need a stamp for this letter.
I need (some) stamps for these letters.
I need (some) paper to write letters.

Specific but indefinite, not mentioned before:

There's a stamp in the drawer.
There are (some) stamps in the drawer.
There's (some) paper in the drawer.

Specific and definite, we know which:

The stamp (I showed you) is valuable.
The stamps (I showed you) are valuable.
The paper (you're using) is too thin.

Describing or classifying:

This is a nice stamp/a Canadian stamp.
These are nice stamps/Canadian stamps.
This is nice paper/wrapping paper.

Generalizations:

A stamp often tells a story.
This book is a history of the postage stamp.
This book is a history of postage stamps.
How is paper made ?

67 A singular noun on its own

We cannot normally use a singular noun on its own, but there are some exceptions.

- 1 Before some nouns for institutions. • 168
*How are you getting on at **college**?*
 - 2 In some phrases of time. • 169
*The concert is on **Thursday**.*
 - 3 In some fixed expressions where the noun is repeated or there is a contrast between the two nouns.
*I lie awake **night after night**.*
*The whole thing has been a fiasco from **start to finish**.*
 - 4 In a phrase with *by* expressing means of transport. • 228(5b)
*It's quicker **by plane**.*
 - 5 As complement or after *as*, when the noun expresses a unique role.
*Elizabeth was crowned **Queen**.*
*As **(the) chairman**, I have to keep order.*
- NOTE
We use *a/an* when the role is not unique.
As a member of this club, I have a right to come in.
- 6 With a noun in apposition, especially in newspaper style.
***Housewife** Judy Adams is this week's competition winner.*
 - 7 In many idiomatic phrases, especially after a preposition or verb.
in fact** for **example** give **way
But others can have an article.
in a hurry** on **the whole** take **a seat
 - 8 Names of people have no article, • 170, and most place names have no article, • 171.
 - 9 We can sometimes leave out an article to avoid repeating it. • 13(3)
*Put the knife and **fork** on the tray.*
 - 10 We can leave out articles in some special styles such as written instructions. • 45
*Insert **plug** in **hole** in **side panel**.*

168 Articles with *school, prison* etc

We use some nouns without *the* when we are talking about the normal purpose of an institution rather than about a specific building.

***School** starts at nine o'clock.*

***The school** is in the centre of the village.*

*The guilty men were sent to **prison**.*

*Vegetables are delivered to **the prison** twice a week.*

Here *school* means 'school activities', but *the school* means 'the school building'.

- 2 There are a number of other nouns which are without *the* in similar contexts.
*I'm usually in **bed** by eleven.*
***The bed** felt very uncomfortable.*
*In **bed** means 'sleeping/resting', but *the bed* means a specific bed.*

- 3 We use an article if there is a word or phrase modifying the noun.
*The guilty men were sent to **a high-security prison**.*
*Mark is doing a course at **the new college**.*

NOTE

When the noun is part of a name, there is usually no article. • 171

*The guilty men were sent to **Parkhurst Prison**.*

- 4 Here are some notes on the most common nouns of this type.

<i>bed</i>	<i>in bed, go to bed (to sleep); get out of bed, sit on the bed, make the bed</i>
<i>church</i>	<i>in/at church, go to church (to a service)</i>
<i>class</i>	<i>do work in class or for homework</i>
<i>court</i>	<i>appear in court; But explain to the court</i>
<i>home</i>	<i>at home; But in the house; go/come home</i>
<i>hospital</i>	<i>in hospital (as a patient) (USA: in the hospital); taken to hospital (as a patient); But at the hospital,</i>
<i>market</i>	<i>take animals to market; But at/in the market; put a house on the market (= offer it for sale)</i>
<i>prison</i>	<i>in prison, go to prison (as a prisoner); released from prison; Also in jail etc</i>
<i>school</i>	<i>in/at school, go to school (as a pupil)</i>
<i>sea</i>	<i>at sea (= sailing), go to sea (as a sailor); But on the sea, near/by the sea, at the seaside</i>
<i>town</i>	<i>in town, go to town, leave town (one's home town or a town visited regularly); But in the town centre</i>
<i>university</i>	<i>(studying) at university, go to university (to study); But at/to the university is also possible and is normal in the USA. Also at college etc</i>
<i>work</i>	<i>go to work, leave work, at work (= working/at the workplace); But go to the office/the factory</i>

NOTE

We do not leave **out** *the* before other singular nouns for buildings and places, e.g. *the station, the shop, the cinema, the theatre, the library, the pub, the city, the village.*

169 Articles in phrases of time

In a phrase of time we often use a singular noun without an article.

in winter on Monday

But the noun takes *a/an* or *the* if there is an adjective before the noun or if there is a phrase or clause after it.

***a** very cold winter*

***the** Monday before the holiday*

***the** winter when we had all that snow*

1 Years

*The party was formed in **1981**. in **the year 1981***
*The war lasted from **1812 to 1815**.*

2 Seasons

*If **winter** comes, can **spring** be far behind?* ***the winter** of 1947*
*We always go on holiday in **(the) summer**.* ***a marvellous summer***

3 Months

***June** is a good month to go away. That was **the June** we got married.*
*The event will be in **March**.*

4 Special times of the year

*I hate **Christmas**.* *It was **a Christmas** I'll never forget.*
*Americans eat turkey at **Thanksgiving**.* *Rosie saw her husband again **the Easter** after their divorce.*

5 Days of the week

***Wednesday** is my busy day. I posted the letter on **the Wednesday** of that week.*
*Our visitors are coming on **Saturday**.* *This happened on **a Saturday** in July.*
I'll see you at the weekend.

6 Parts of the day and night

*They reached camp at **sunset**.* *It was **a marvellous sunset**.*
*We'll be home before **dark**.* ***I can't see in the dark**.*
*At **midday** it was very hot.* *in/during **the day/the night/the morning/the afternoon/the evening***
*at **night, by day/night***

NOTE

In phrases of time we normally use these nouns on their own; *daybreak, dawn, sunrise; midday, noon; dusk, twilight, sunset; nightfall, dark; midnight*. But we use *a/an* or *the* for the physical aspect, e.g. *in **the dark***.

7 Meals

***Breakfast** is at eight o'clock. **The breakfast** we had at the hotel wasn't very nice.*
*I had a sandwich for **lunch**.* *Bruce and Wendy enjoyed **a delicious lunch** at Mario's.*

NOTE

We cannot use *meal* on its own.
***The meal** was served at half past seven.*

8 Phrases with *last* and *next*

*These flats were built **last year**.* *The flats had been built **the previous year**.*
*We're having a party **next Saturday**.* *They were having a party **the following Saturday**.*

NOTE

We can use *the* with *next day*.

(**The next day**, *the young man called again*.)

But we use *the next week/month/year* mostly to talk about the past.

Seen from the present: *tomorrow* *next week* *next year*

Seen from the past: (*the next day*) *the next/following week* *the next/following year*

170 Names of people

A person's name does not normally have **the** in front of it.

I saw Peter yesterday.

Mrs Parsons just phoned.

We can address or refer to a person as e.g. *Peter* or *Mr Johnson*, or we can refer to him as *Peter Johnson*. The use of the first name is informal and friendly.

We use **Mr** /'mɪstə(r)/ for a man, **Mrs** /'mɪsɪz/ for a married woman and **Miss** /mɪs/ for an unmarried woman. Some people use **Ms** /mɪz/ or /mæz/) for a woman, whether married or not. We cannot normally use these titles without a following noun. NOT *Good morning, mister*.

A title is part of a name and has no article.

Doctor Fry **Aunt Mary** **Lord Olivier**

NOTE

a Some titles can also be ordinary nouns. Compare *I saw Doctor Fry* and *I saw **the** doctor*.

b A title + of-phrase takes *the*, e.g. **the Prince of Wales**.

c We use *the* to refer to a family, e.g. **the Johnson family/the Johnsons**.

2 But sometimes we can use a name with an article.

There's a Laura who works in our office. (= a person called Laura)

A Mrs Wilson called to see you. (= someone called Mrs Wilson)

The Laura I know has dark hair. (= the person called Laura)

The gallery has some Picassos. (=some pictures by Picasso)

NOTE

a Stressed *the* /ði:/ before the name **of** a person can mean 'the famous person'.

*I know a Joan Collins, but she isn't **the** Joan Collins.*

b We can sometimes use other determiners.

*I didn't mean **that** Peter, I meant the other one.*

our Laura (= the Laura in our family)

171 Place names and *the*

- 1 Most place names are without *the*: *Texas*, *Calcutta*. Some names take *the*, especially compound names, but some do not: ***the Black Sea*** but *Lake Superior*. Two things affect whether a place name has *the* or not. They are the kind of place it is (e.g. a lake or a sea), and the grammatical pattern of the name. We often use *the* in these patterns.

of-phrase: ***the Isle of Wight***, ***the Palace of Congresses***

Adjective: ***the Royal Opera House***, ***the International School***

Plural: ***the West Indies***

But we do not use *the* before a possessive.

Possessive: ***Cleopatra's Needle***

There are exceptions to these patterns, and the use of *the* is a matter of idiom as much as grammatical rule.

NOTE

- a Look at these uses of *a/an* and *the* before a name which normally has no article.
There's a Plymouth in the USA. (= a place called Plymouth)
The Plymouth of today is very different from ***the Plymouth*** I once knew.
Amsterdam is the Venice of the North. (= the place like Venice)
- b Even when a name has *the* (on ***the Isle of Wight***) the article can still be left out in some contexts such as on signs and labels. On a map the island is marked *Isle of Wight*.

- 2 Here are some details about different kinds of place names.

- a Continents, islands, countries, states and counties

Most are without *the*.

a trip to Europe *on Bermuda* *a holiday in France* *through Texas*
in Hampshire *New South Wales*

Exceptions are names ending with words like *republic* or *kingdom*.

the Dominican Republic ***the UK***

Plural names also have *the*.

the Netherlands ***the Bahamas*** ***the USA***

NOTE

Other exceptions are ***the Gambia*** and ***the Ukraine***.

- b Regions

When the name of a country or continent (*America*) is modified by another word (*Central*), we do not use *the*.

Central America *to North Wales* *South-East Asia* *in New England*

Most other regions have *the*.

the South ***the Mid-West*** ***the Baltic*** ***the Midlands*** ***the Riviera***

- c Mountains and hills

Most are without *the*.

climbing (Mount) Kilimanjaro *up (Mount) Everest*

But hill ranges and mountain ranges have *the*.

in the Cotswolds *across the Alps*

NOTE

Two exceptions are ***the Matterhorn*** and ***the Eiger***.

d Lakes, rivers, canals and seas

Lakes are without *the*.*beside Lake Ontario*Rivers, canals and seas have *the*.

on **the** (River) Aire **the** Missouri (river) building **the** Panama Canal
the Black Sea in **the** Pacific (Ocean)

e Cities, towns, suburbs and villages

Most are without *the*.*in Sydney* *Kingswood, a suburb of Bristol* *at Nether Stowey*NOTE Exceptions are *The Hague* and *The Bronx*.

f Roads, streets and parks

Most are without *the*.

off Station Road *in Baker Street* *on Madison Avenue*
along Broadway *in Regent's Park* *around Kew Gardens*

But some road names with adjectives have *the*.**the** High Street **the** Great West Road

NOTE

a We use *the* in this pattern.**the** Birmingham road (= the road to Birmingham)We also use *the* with some main roads in cities.**the** Edgware Roadb We use *the* with by-passes and motorways.**the** York by-pass **the** M6 (motorway)c Other exceptions are **the** Mall and **the** Strand.

g Bridges

Most bridges are without *the*.*over Brooklyn Bridge* *Westminster Bridge*

But there are many exceptions.

the Humber Bridge (=the bridge over the River Humber)

h Transport facilities; religious, educational and official buildings; palaces and houses

Most are without *the*.

to Paddington (Station) *at Gatwick (Airport)* *St Paul's (Cathedral)*
at King Edward's (School) *from Aston (University)* *Norwich Museum*
Leeds Town Hall *behind Buckingham Palace* *to Hanover House*

Exceptions are names with of-phrases or with an adjective or noun modifier.

the Chapel of Our Lady **the** American School **the** Open University
the Science Museum

Theatres, cinemas, hotels, galleries and centres

Most have *the*.

at the Apollo (Theatre) the Odeon (Cinema) to the Empire (Hotel)
in the Tate (Gallery) near the Arndale Centre the Chrysler Building

Possessive forms are an exception.

Her Majesty's Theatre at Bertram's Hotel

NOTE

In the US names with *center* are without *the*.
near Rockefeller Center

Shops and restaurants

Most are without *the*.

next to W.H. Smiths shopping at Harrods just outside Boots
eating at Matilda's (Restaurant)

Exceptions are those without the name of a person.

the Kitchen Shop at the Bombay Restaurant

NOTE

Most pub names have *the*.
at the Red Lion (Inn)

172 *Ten pounds an hour etc*

- 1 We can use *a/an* in expressions of price, speed etc.

Potatoes are twenty pence a pound.
The speed limit on motorways is seventy miles an hour.
Roger shaves twice a day.

NOTE *Per* is more formal, e.g. *seventy miles per hour*.

- 2 In phrases with *to* we normally use *the*, although *a/an* is also possible.

The car does sixty miles to the gallon/to a gallon.
The scale of the map is three miles to the inch/to an inch.

- 3 We can use *by the* to say how something is measured.

Boats can be hired by the day.
Carpets are sold by the square metre.