

'the ' or not 'the'....?**1. Prison , hospital, college, church:**

He went to prison 3 years ago

In the US school is over at 3.30

David is in hospital

She goes to church on Sundays

Ann has gone to the prison to visit her father

The school is a mile from here

Melanie waited at the hospital for news

We looked round the church, but it was closed

⇒ ***'the' is used when we talk about a specific building.*****2. Note the following expressions:**

In bed; to go to bed

At home; to go home

At sea; to go to sea

In town (NB: downtown)

At work

Breakfast is served in the kitchen

To sit on the bed; to make the bed

In the house

By the sea

In the town centre, in the city, village

In the office

The breakfast was very good

3. 'The' is not used for general (generic) meanings, uncountable nouns (notions):

Cars are great polluters.

I like music.

Irish history is fascinating.

Society is going through a crisis.

Exc: The Germans oppose the idea of military strikes. (nationalities) ('Germans': also possible).

*Note: Room 105, page 78, chapter 2, World War II (+numbers)***4. 'The' is used for specific meanings:**

We saw the elephants at the zoo

The music was too loud

The history of Ireland is fascinating (NB: Irish history)

The novel as a genre emerged in the 18th century.

5. Special uses of 'the':

- The tiger is an endangered species (species). *Note: Man is a dangerous animal.*
- The Internet is a prodigious invention. (modern technological inventions) exc.: They saw the tsunami on TV (but: they bought a new TV – *object.*)
- She plays the flute ('the' with musical instruments, not for sports: she plays tennis).
- The poor/ the rich/ the homeless... (*adjectives turned into nouns*)
- The beautiful (id) (concept)
- The English like their queen. (id) (nationals)

'the ' or not 'the'....?**6. 'The' is used when there is only one of the things we are talking about:**

- planets: the earth; the moon; here comes the sun (NB: Jupiter, Mars)
- the government, the Prime Minister, the President, the Queen (NB: President Bush; Queen Elisabeth II – here the person is named)
- the environment, the ozone layer (but: nature, society = concepts)
- the police (are), the army, the church, the family, the media, the press: *institutions*

7. Place names: roads, streets, squares, parks, cities, countries ...

- **Most place names do not have 'the'**: Oxford Street, Fifth Avenue, Central Park, New Orleans, California, Europe.
- *But*: The United States is a big country. He lives in the Bahamas. The Irish republic, the United Kingdom: **'the'** is used with country names which are a **combination of various common names**, or **plural names**, or words like **'republic'** and **'kingdom'**. He has left the Riviera for the Middle East. **'The'** is used with **regions**.
Exc.: The Hague, The Bronx, The Mall, the London road (the road to London), the M6, the A5 (numbered roads).
Theatres, museums, cinemas have **'the'**: The Globe; the Tate; The Plaza.

8. "The" is used in front of seas and oceans, rivers, mountain ranges.

The Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, the Rhône, the Himalaya.

But "The" is **not** used with **lakes** (Lake Michigan) or **single mountains** (Mount Everest).

9. The ... of: *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a play by Oscar Wilde.

NB: We do not use 'the' with a possessive: John's country house.

A, an**1. an/a**

'a' is used with words beginning with a consonant (a history book), 'an' with words beginning with a vowel.

BUT:

- A university, a ewe, a euphemism ("u sound")
- An hour, an honest man, an heir, an honourable agreement ('h' is not pronounced)
NB: half an hour; a quarter of an hour
- An MP, an FBI agent

2. Note the specific use of a:

She is a student at Imperial College.

She works as a researcher.

They can't live without a car.

What a great film! It's such a great film.

3. A / one:

- He gave his son a sweet # He gave him one sweet (a unique sweet).
- He won a/one hundred dollars, a/one thousand pounds...
- One day/ one evening/ one night somebody rang at the door.
- The salesman went from one house to another.