

The is used before

- nouns which are unique. *the Earth, the Colosseum*
- names of cinemas (*The Plaza*), hotels (*The Savoy*), theatres (*The Palladium*), museums (*The Prado*), newspapers/magazines (*The Independent*) **but:** (*Time*), ships (*The Cutty Sark*), institutions (*The British Council*), galleries (*The Tate Gallery*)
- names of rivers (*the Nile*), seas (*the Black Sea*), groups of islands/states (*the Shetland Isles, the USA*) mountain ranges (*the Himalayas*), deserts (*the Sahara desert*), oceans (*the Atlantic*), canals (*the Manchester Canal*) and names or nouns with "of". (*the Valley of the Kings, the Garden of Gethsemane*)
Note: *the equator, the Arctic/Antarctica, the South of France, the South/West/North/East*
- musical instruments, dances. *the piano, the samba*
- names of families (*the Hunters*), nationalities ending in -sh, -ch or -ese (*the English, the Dutch, the Japanese etc*). Other plural nationalities are used with or without the. (*the North Americans, the Austrians etc*)
- titles (*the Patriarch, the Duchess of Windsor, the King*). **but:** "The" is omitted before titles with proper names. *King Carlos*
- adjectives used as plural nouns (*the young, the unemployed, the homeless, the blind etc*) and the superlative degree of adjectives/adverbs. *He's the most friendly boy in the group.*
- **Note:** "most" used as a determiner followed by a noun, does not take "the".
Most people like swimming. but: Of all European countries, Greece has the most ancient monuments.
- the words: beach, cinema, city, coast, country(side), earth, ground, jungle, radio, pub, sea(side), sky, station, shop, theatre, village, weather, world etc but not before "man". eg. *She went to the library to return some books.*
Note: "the" is optional with seasons. (*the*) summer
- morning, afternoon, evening, night. *I'll be home late in the evening. but: at night, at noon, at midnight, by day/night, at 4 o'clock etc*
- historical references/events. *the Russian Revolution, the Renaissance, the Cold War (but: World War II)*
- only, last, first (used as adjectives).
He was the first person to arrive.

The is omitted before

- proper nouns. *I'll see Ann tomorrow.*
- names of sports, games, activities, days, months, holidays, colours, drinks, meals and languages (not followed by the word "language"). *He plays football well. He likes red. We speak German. but: The ancient Greek language is hardly used now.*
- names of countries (*England*), **but:** *the Argentine, the Netherlands, (the) Sudan, the Hague, the Vatican City, cities (London), streets (Carnaby Street), but: the High Street, the Strand, the Mall, the A11, the M4 motorway), squares (Trafalgar Square), bridges (Tower Bridge but: the Bridge of Sighs, the Forth Bridge, the Severn Bridge, the Golden Gate Bridge), parks (Central Park), stations (Euston Station), individual mountains (Kilimanjaro), islands (Sicily), lakes (Lake Victoria), continents (Africa)*
- possessive adjectives. *That isn't your pen.*
- two-word names whose first word is the name of a person or place. *John F. Kennedy Airport, Windsor Castle but: The White House, (because the first word "White" is not the name of a person or place)*
- pubs, restaurants, shops, banks and hotels which have the name of their founder and end in -s or -'s. *Woolworth's, Lloyds Bank, Tom's Bar but: the Red Lion (pub) (because "Red Lion" is not the name of a person or place)*
- bed, church, college, court, hospital, prison, school, university, when we refer to the purpose for which they exist. *John went to hospital. (He is a patient.) but: His mother went to the hospital to see him last week. (She went to the hospital as a visitor.) Work (= place of work) never takes "the". She is at work.*
- the words home, Father/Mother when we talk about our own home/parents.
Father is at home.
- means of transport: by bus/by car/by train/by plane etc but: in the car, on the bus/train etc.
She travelled by bus. but: She caught the 5 o'clock bus.
- We say: flu/the flu, measles/the measles, mumps/the mumps **but:** *He's got malaria.*