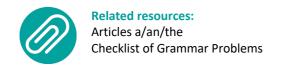


# SOME RULES OF 'THE'

Nouns			the	Examples
Countable nouns	Already mentioned or familiar		✓	She has a dog and a cat. <b>The</b> dog is very cute.
				Open <b>the</b> door.
	Noun + defining phrase		✓	the story about John
				the letter I sent you
				the butterflies of Africa
	Referring to place, time and movement in general		×	at school
				by day
				on foot
	For generalisations relating to people or science and technology		<b>✓</b>	the employee
				the dolphin
				the telegram
	Defining phrase + noun		×	African butterflies
				eighteenth-century music
	Things unique		<b>✓</b>	the sun
				the stars
	Musical instruments		<b>✓</b>	the violin
	Days/months/ seasons	general	×	on Monday; next April
		particular	✓	on <b>the</b> Tuesday after we met
	Years	particular	×	in 1980
		general	✓	in <b>the</b> 1980s
				in <b>the</b> 18 <sup>th</sup> Century
	Jobs and positions	Job titles	×	President Bush
				She is Manager of SLSS.
		Person at the position	✓	I want to see <b>the</b> Prime Minister.
				the President
Uncountable nouns	Well-defined groups of people		✓	the Japanese
				the police
				the elderly
	Physical environment	generally known	<b>✓</b>	the weather
				the sea
		abstract but generally known	×	I love nature.
Place names	Seas, mountain groups, island groups, rivers, deserts, most hotels, most cinemas and		✓	the Pacific
				the Waikato River
	theatres, most museums and art galleries			the Southern Alps
	Continents, countries, states, counties, towns, streets, lakes, public buildings, organisations		*	Africa
				New Zealand
				Wellington Airport
	Place names with common nouns like republic,		<b>✓</b>	the United States
	state, union, kingdom			the People's Republic of China





## **Articles FAQs**

#### 1. Do I need an article before an acronym?

An acronym is an abbreviation that makes a pronounceable word, for example *UNESCO* and *MAF*. These words often **DO NOT** require any articles.

### 2. Shall I put 'the' before 'UN'?

Abbreviations that cannot be pronounced as a word often require *the*. For example, we say *the UN* and *the AA*. However, there is an increasing tendency to drop the article here. When in doubt, ask a native speaker or look at your reading material for guidance.

#### 3. Why do people say 'an MED report' but 'a UN report'?

We use *an* rather than *a* because of the pronunciation of the initial consonant. *M* in *MED* is pronounced /em/, which starts with a vowel sound.

#### 4. Shall I use articles with names of illnesses?

We don't normally use articles with illnesses or diseases, for instance cancer NOT a cancer. However, temporary illnesses – mostly words with the suffix –ache, do tend to have articles, for example, a headache.