

The (3) (children / the children)

A

When we are talking about things or people in general, we do not use **the**:

- I'm afraid of **dogs**. (*not* the dogs)
(dogs = dogs in general, not a particular group of dogs)
- Doctors are paid more than teachers.
- Do you collect **stamps**?
- **Crime** is a problem in most big cities. (*not* the crime)
- Life has changed a lot in the last 30 years. (*not* the life)
- Do you often listen to **classical music**? (*not* the classical music)
- Do you like **Chinese food / French cheese / Swiss chocolate**?
- My favorite sport is **football/skiing/running**. (*not* the football / the skiing, etc.)
- My favorite subject in school was **history/physics/English**.



We say **most people / most books / most cars**, etc. (*not* the most – see also Unit 85A):

- **Most people** like George. (*not* the most people)

B

We use **the** when we mean particular things or people. Compare:

In general (without **the**)

- **Children** learn a lot from playing.
(= children in general)
- I often listen to **music**.
- All **cars** have wheels.
- **Sugar** isn't very good for you.
- Do **Americans** drink much tea?
(= Americans in general)

Particular people or things (with **the**)

- We took **the children** to the zoo. (= a particular group, perhaps the speaker's own children)
- The movie wasn't very good, but I liked **the music**. (= the music in the movie)
- All **the cars** in this parking lot belong to people who work here.
- Can you pass **the sugar**, please? (= the sugar on the table)
- Do **the Americans** you know drink tea?
(= only the Americans you know, not Americans in general)

C

The difference between "something in general" and "something in particular" is not always very clear. Compare these sentences:

In general (without **the**)

- I like working with **people**.
(= people in general)
- I like working with **people who are lively**. (not all people, but "people who are lively" is still a general idea)
- Do you like **coffee**? (= coffee in general)
- Do you like **strong black coffee**? (not all coffee, but "strong black coffee" is still a general idea)

Particular people or things (with **the**)

- I like **the people** I work with.
(= a particular group of people)
- Did you like **the coffee** we had after dinner last night? (= particular coffee)

Exercises

72.1 Choose four of these things and write whether you like or dislike them:

baseball	boxing	cats	fast-food restaurants	hot-weather
math	opera	rock music	small children	zoos

Begin your sentences with:

I like ... / I don't like ... I don't mind ...
I love ... / I hate ... I'm interested in ... / I'm not interested in ...

1. I don't like hot weather very much.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

72.2 Complete the sentences using one of the following. Use *the* where necessary.

(the) basketball-	(the) grass	(the) history	(the) hotels
(the) information-	(the) lies	(the) meat	(the) patience
(the) people	(the) questions	(the) spiders	(the) water

1. My favorite sport is basketball.
2. The information we were given wasn't correct.
3. Many people are afraid of _____.
4. A vegetarian is somebody who doesn't eat _____.
5. The test wasn't very hard. I answered all _____ easily.
6. Do you know _____ who live next door?
7. _____ is the study of the past.
8. Brian always tells the truth. He never tells _____.
9. We couldn't find anywhere to stay downtown. All _____ were full.
10. _____ in the pool didn't look very clean, so we didn't go swimming.
11. Don't sit on _____. It's wet from the rain.
12. You need _____ to teach young children.

72.3 Choose the correct form, with or without *the*.

1. I'm afraid of dogs / the dogs. (*dogs* is correct)
2. Can you pass salt / the salt, please? (*the salt* is correct)
3. Apples / The apples are good for you.
4. Look at apples / the apples on that tree! They're very big.
5. Women / The women live longer than men / the men.
6. We had a very nice meal. Vegetables / The vegetables were especially good.
7. Life / The life is strange sometimes. Some very odd things happen.
8. I like skiing / the skiing, but I'm not very good at it.
9. Who are people / the people in this photograph?
10. What makes people / the people violent? What causes aggression / the aggression?
11. All books / All the books on the top shelf belong to me.
12. Don't stay in that hotel. It's very noisy, and beds / the beds are very uncomfortable.
13. A pacifist is somebody who is against war / the war.
14. First World War / The First World War lasted from 1914 until 1918.
15. Ron and Brenda got married, but marriage / the marriage didn't last very long.
16. Most people / The most people believe that marriage / the marriage and family life / the family life are the foundation of society / the society.