

The (4) (the giraffe / the telephone / the piano, etc.; the + Adjective)

A

Study these sentences:

- The giraffe is the tallest of all animals.
- The bicycle is an excellent means of transportation.
- When was the telephone invented?
- The dollar is the currency (= the money) of the United States.

In these examples, the . . . does not mean one particular thing. The giraffe = one particular type of animal, not one particular giraffe. We use the (+ *singular countable noun*) in this way to talk about a type of animal, machine, etc.

In the same way we use the for musical instruments:

- Can you play the guitar?
- The piano is my favorite instrument.

Compare a:

- I'd like to have a guitar.
- We saw a giraffe at the zoo.

B

The + *adjective*

We use the + *adjective* (without a noun) to talk about groups of people, especially:

the young	the old	the elderly	
the rich	the poor	the unemployed	the homeless
the sick	the disabled	the injured	the dead

The young = young people, the rich = rich people, etc.:

- Do you think the rich should pay more taxes to help the poor?
- The homeless need more help from the government.

These expressions are always *plural* in meaning. You cannot say "a young" or "an unemployed."

You must say a young man / an unemployed woman, etc.

Note also that we say the poor (*not* the poors) / the young (*not* the youngs), etc.

C

The + *nationality*

You can use the with some nationality adjectives to mean "the people of that country":

- The French are famous for their food. (= the people of France)

In the same way you can say:

the Dutch the Spanish the British the English the Irish

Note that the French / the English, etc., are plural in meaning. We do not say "a French / an English." We say a Frenchman / an Englishwoman, etc.

You can also use the + nationality words ending in -ese (the Chinese / the Sudanese, etc.):

- The Chinese invented printing.

These words can also be singular (a Japanese / a Sudanese / a Vietnamese).

Also: the Swiss / a Swiss (plural or singular)

With other nationalities, the plural noun ends in -s. For example:

a Mexican → Mexicans an Italian → Italians a Thai → Thais

With these words (Mexicans, etc.), we do not normally use the to talk about the people in general (see Unit 72).

Exercises

73.1 Answer the questions by choosing the right answer from the box. Don't forget *the*. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1 animals tiger elephant rabbit cheetah giraffe kangaroo	2 birds eagle penguin swan owl parrot robin	3 inventions telephone wheel telescope cell phone helicopter typewriter	4 currencies dollar peso euro rupee won yen
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1. a) Which of the animals is the tallest? the giraffe
- b) Which animal can run the fastest? _____
- c) Which of these animals is found in Australia? _____
2. a) Which of these birds has a long neck? _____
- b) Which of these birds cannot fly? _____
- c) Which bird flies at night? _____
3. a) Which of these inventions is the oldest? _____
- b) Which one is the most recent? _____
- c) Which one is especially important for astronomy? _____
4. a) What is the currency of India? _____
- b) What is the currency of Portugal? _____
- c) What is the currency of your country? _____

73.2 Put in *the* or *a* where necessary. If the sentence is already complete, leave an empty space (-).

1. When was the telephone invented?
2. Can you play _____ musical instrument?
3. Jill plays _____ violin in an orchestra.
4. There was _____ piano in the corner of the room.
5. Can you play _____ piano?
6. The basic unit of our society is _____ family.
7. Michael comes from _____ large family.
8. When was _____ paper first made?
9. _____ computer has changed the way we live.

73.3 Complete these sentences using *the* + one of these adjectives:

injured poor rich sick unemployed young

1. The young _____ have the future in their hands.
2. Ambulances arrived at the scene of the accident and took _____ to the hospital.
3. Life is all right if you have a job, but things are not so easy for _____.
4. Julie has been a nurse all her life. She has spent her life caring for _____.
5. In England there is an old story about a man called Robin Hood. It is said that he took money from _____ and gave it to _____.

73.4 What do you call the people of these countries?

	one person (a/an . . .)	the people in general
1. Canada?	<u>a Canadian</u>	<u>Canadians</u>
2. Germany?	_____	_____
3. France?	_____	_____
4. Russia?	_____	_____
5. China?	_____	_____
6. Brazil?	_____	_____
7. Japan?	_____	_____
8. <i>and your country?</i>	_____	_____