

# Determiners

Determiners are the words that are used or placed before a Noun to determine or fix its meaning. Singular Nouns always need a determiner but in the Plural Nouns, the determiner is optional.

There are about 50 different determiners in English language which fall under the following categories :

1. Articles—a, an, the
2. Demonstratives—this, that, these, those
3. Possessives—my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, Ram's
4. Interrogatives—what ? which ? whose ? how ?
5. Distributors—each, every, either, neither
6. Quantifiers—some, any, no, few, a few, many, much, each, every, etc.
7. Numbers—one, two, three, forty etc.
8. Ordinals—first, second, last, next, etc.
9. Multipliers—double, twice, three times, etc.
10. Fractions—half, a third, two fifths.
11. Others—both, several, each, every, next, other, another, neither etc.

**Determiners are used :**

- to state the unit/number of people, things or other nouns.
- to state possessives.
- to specify someone or something.
- to state how things or people are distributed.
- to state the difference between nouns.

## USE OF DETERMINERS

### 1. ARTICLE DETERMINERS :

An article is a determiner that signals the coming of a Noun. We have two kinds of articles *i.e.*,

(i) Definite (ii) Indefinite

**A and An are the Indefinite Articles because they do not refer to a particular person, animal or thing.** These articles are used with Singular Countable Nouns.

'A' is used before a consonant and 'an' is used before a vowel. Both 'A' and 'An' are the abbreviated form of the Objective 'One'. *e.g.*,

- (1) An apple grows on a tree.      (2) A teacher is a man or a woman.

**The is called the Definite Article because it refers to a particular person, animal or thing. *e.g.*,**

*The watch which my uncle gave me is costly.*

**Use of 'A' and 'An'**

1. **A or An** is used before a singular countable noun, e.g.,  
I saw *a* lion in the zoo.
  2. **A** is used before nouns beginning with a consonant sound, e.g.,  
a boy, a beggar, a room, a girl.
  3. **An** is used before nouns beginning with a vowel sound.  
an apple, an elephant, an accident, an hour, an owl, an umbrella, an egg.
- If an adjective precedes the noun, a or an is used according to the initial i.e., beginning sound of the adjective e.g.,**  
a good girl, an intelligent sister, a rotten orange, an unhappy boy but a university, a uniform, a one rupee note etc.

**'A' or 'An' is used**

1. **Before a singular countable noun when it is mentioned for the first time, e.g.,**
  - (i) It is *a* picture of S.C. Bose.
  - (ii) I am sipping *a* cup of tea.
2. **Before a singular countable noun representing a class ; e.g.,**
  - (i) *A* rose is *a* beautiful flower i.e., All roses are beautiful.
  - (ii) *A dog is a* faithful animal.
3. **In the sense of 'anyone' or 'certain' ; e.g.,**
  - (i) There is *a pen on* the table.
  - (ii) *A* patient is standing outside.
4. **When we speak of a thing for the first time ; e.g.,**
  - (i) There lived *a* priest in the temple.
  - (ii) *Androcles* lived in *a* cave.
5. **We use 'an' before the names of jobs, nationalism and beliefs ; e.g.,**
  - (i) He is *an* advocate.
  - (ii) He is *an* M.L.A.
  - (iii) I am *an* Indian by birth.
6. **Before positive and comparative degrees ; e.g.,**
  - (i) This is *a* small well in our village.
  - (ii) This is *a* bigger question.
7. **A or An is used in certain phrases like ;**  
*a few, a lot of, a little, a good deal of, a great many and many a*
  - (i) Gopal has *a few* words to say.
  - (ii) There is *a little* ink in the inkpot.
  - (iii) *A great many* men come here.
8. **A or An must be used after 'such' which is applied to a countable singular noun ; e.g.,**
  - (i) Ram is such *a* fool.
  - (ii) It is such *an* hour.
9. **In its numerical sense of one ; e.g.,**
  - (i) A rupee has *a* hundred paise.
  - (ii) Sixty minutes make *an* hour.
10. **In expressions of price, speed etc.**
  - (i) Oranges are sold thirty rupees *a* kilo.
  - (ii) The car was running at *a* speed of 80 kilometres *an* hour.

11. To denote certain meanings ; e.g.,  
 (i) Birds of *a* feather flock together. (*same*)  
 (ii) This moneylender is *a* Shylock. (*one like*)
12. 'An' is used before a mute or an aspirated 'h' e.g.,  
*an* honest boy, *an* hour
13. 'An' is used before an individual letter spoken with a vowel sound e.g.,  
 My son is *an* M.P.

#### OMISSION OF THE ARTICLE :

1. Nouns of material, e.g.,  
 (i) Gold is more precious than silver.  
 (ii) The cylinder was filled with oxygen.
2. Abstract nouns, e.g.,  
 While there is life, there is hope.
3. With proper nouns, e.g., Christmas, Diwali, Cricket, Kolkata, China etc.  
 Eden lived in a village in Russia.
4. Before certain words such as home, hospital, church, court, prison, school, games and parts of the body e.g.,  
 (i) The patient is in Panth Hospital.  
 (ii) We would like to visit Thomas Church.  
 (iii) The criminal was put in prison.

**Note :** When we use the article *a* before a proper noun, it becomes common noun.

#### Use of 'The' (Definite Article)

'The' is used :

1. When we speak of a thing already mentioned ; e.g.,  
 (i) That is *a* table.  
 (ii) That is *an* ink-pot.  
 (iii) *The* ink-pot is on *the* table.
2. When we mention a particular thing or one well-known to us ; e.g.,  
 (i) This is *the* watch that I bought yesterday.  
 (ii) He went to *the* railway station to see off his uncle.  
 (iii) *The* Principal is on leave today.
3. Before a common noun in the singular number to indicate a whole class ; e.g.,  
 (i) *The* dog is a faithful animal.  
 (ii) *The* lion is the king of the jungle.
4. Before common nouns which are the names of unique things ; e.g.,  
 (i) *The* earth revolves round the sun.  
 (ii) Mar. has reached *the* moon.
5. Before names of rivers, oceans, mountains, seas, gulfs, canals, islands etc.  
 (i) *The* Ganga is a sacred river of India.  
 (ii) *The* Himalayas lie in the north of India.  
 (iii) *The* West Indies lie in *the* Atlantic Ocean.

6. Before the names of sacred books, newspapers, magazines ; e.g.,
- (i) My mother reads *the Gita* every day.  
(But if the author's name is mentioned before the name of the book, *the* is not used; as *Valmiki's Ramayana*).
  - (ii) He reads *The Tribune*.
7. Before the names of trains, ships and famous buildings and musical instruments ; e.g.,
- (i) *The Ganga Express* is late by ten minutes.
  - (ii) *The Taj* stands on the bank of *the Yamuna*.
  - (iii) *The veena, the piano*.
8. Before proper, material or abstract nouns when they are used in a particular sense ; e.g.,
- (i) Dr. Kalam was *the Newton* of India.
  - (ii) *The water* of this spring is very hot.
  - (iii) I was sorry for *the mistake* I had committed.
9. Before a noun made definite by the addition of a qualifying word, phrase or clause ; e.g.,
- (i) *The green* pen is mine. *The blue* one is Madhu's.
  - (ii) *The boy standing at the door* is my brother.
  - (iii) *The man, who came here in the morning*, is a lawyer.
10. Before adjectives used as nouns ; e.g.,
- (i) This is a school for *the blind*. (i.e., the blind persons)
  - (ii) *The rich* should help *the poor*.
  - (iii) *The injured* were given first aid.
11. Before adjectives in the superlative degree ; e.g.,
- (i) Honesty is *the best* policy.
  - (ii) Yesterday was *the hottest* day of the year.
12. Before an adjective in the comparative degree when selection is intended ; e.g.,  
Of the two novels, which is *the better*.
13. Before the parts of the body in place of possessive adjectives ; e.g.,  
I caught him by *the neck*. (not *his neck*)
14. As an adverb with comparative degree ; e.g.,
- (i) *The more, the merrier*.
  - (ii) *The higher* you go, *the cooler* it is.
15. With ordinal (showing position or order in a series) ; e.g.,
- (i) I was *the last* man to go.
  - (ii) *The first* chapter of this book is out of course.
16. Before a noun (with emphasis) to give the force of a superlative ; e.g.,
- (i) Kapil Dev was *the man* of the match. (the best man)
  - (ii) This is *the book* on *the* subject. (the best book)
17. Before a common noun to give it the meaning of an abstract noun ; e.g.,  
Sonu owed his wonderful writings to *the poet* in him. (his poetic quality)
18. Before nouns which name the inhabitants of a country collectively, but not before the names of their language ; e.g.,
- (i) *The English* often fought *the French*.
  - (ii) *The Russians* launched the first earth satellite.
  - (iii) More people in India know *English* than *French*.
19. Before place names containing the word union or united ; e.g.,  
*The Union of India, the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A.*

**OMISSION OF THE ARTICLE :**

The article is omitted :

**1. Before plural common nouns used in a general sense ; e.g.,**

- (i) *Children* are fond of toffees.
- (ii) *Boys* are stronger than girls.

**But 'the' is used before such nouns when they are specified ; e.g.,**

- (i) Have *the children* been left ? (particular children)
- (ii) *The girls* of this class have got more marks than *the boys*. (particular girls and boys)

**2. Before proper nouns ; e.g.,**

- (i) *Delhi* is **the** capital of *India*.
- (ii) *Tagore* was a great poet.

**When the article is used before proper nouns, they become common nouns ; e.g.,**

- (i) Mumbai is **the** *Manchester* of India. (i.e., a great manufacturing city)
- (ii) He behaved like a *Hitler*. (i.e., a dictator like Hitler)

**3. Before abstract nouns used in a general sense ; e.g.,**

- (i) *Death* spares none.
- (ii) *Beauty* is short-lived.

**But when such a noun is particularised, an article is used before it ; e.g.,**

- (i) *The death* of an innocent child excites pity.
- (ii) Who does not admire *the beauty* of the Taj ?

**4. Before material nouns ; e.g.,**

- (i) He takes *tea* in the morning.
- (ii) This table is made of *fibre*.

**When the materials are specified, we use 'the' with them ; e.g.,**

- (i) *The milk that he takes* is adulterated.
- (ii) *The wood that the carpenter used* was of a fine quality.

**5. Before a noun used in its widest sense :**

- (i) *Man* is mortal.
- (ii) *Fruit* is very expensive these days.

**6. Before school, college, hospital, market, church, prison when these places are visited for their primary purpose ; e.g.,**

- (i) The child goes to *school*.
- (ii) If you are ill, you must go to *hospital*.
- (iii) My mother went to *market* to buy apples.

**But when these places are visited for any other purpose, the is used ; e.g.,**

- (i) My mother went to *the school* to see *the* Principal.
- (ii) I went to *the hospital* to see my brother.

**7. Before names of relations like father, mother, uncle, aunt and also cook and nurse meaning 'our cook', 'our nurse' ; e.g.,**

- (i) *Father* gave me a beautiful pen.
- (ii) *Cook* has left the job.

- GRAMMAR
8. **Before the names of languages, arts and science, subjects, distances, games ; e.g.,**
- Hindi is our official language.
  - Sleeping gives us rest.
  - Physics is his favourite subject.
  - Cancer is a fatal disease.
  - I called Sonu to share tennis with me.
9. **Before predictive nouns denoting position that is normally held at one time by one person only ; e.g.,**  
Dr. R.K. Mittal became Principal of the college in 2005.
10. **Before the names of the meals when they are used as part of daily routine ; e.g.,**  
He had no lunch today.  
**When the name of a meal refers to a particular meal, a social function, or the food, 'the' is used before it.**  
Why didn't you attend the birthday party ?
11. **In some prepositional phrases i.e., preposition noun ; e.g.,**  
by road; by air; by water; by bus; by train; by steamer; on foot; on horseback; by day; at night; at day break ; at sunrise; at noon; at sunset; at home, in hand.
12. **In some verbal phrases; verb + object ; e.g.,**  
To send word, to give ear, to lose heart, to set sail, to catch fire, to have home.
13. **Before names of festivals ; e.g.,**
- Diwali falls on the 5<sup>th</sup> November this year.
  - Christmas falls on 25<sup>th</sup> of every December.

### DO YOURSELF-1

Fill in the blanks with 'a' or 'an'. Put a cross (x) where no article is needed :

- Pollution has become \_\_\_\_\_ biggest problem.
- I went to see \_\_\_\_\_ Mittal's in \_\_\_\_\_ evening.
- We are country in need of \_\_\_\_\_ honest, as well as laborious worker.
- This is \_\_\_\_\_ book that I wanted to read.
- We shall be back from \_\_\_\_\_ school in \_\_\_\_\_ hour.
- Delhi is situated on \_\_\_\_\_ bank of \_\_\_\_\_ river Yamuna.
- Rashmi wants to become \_\_\_\_\_ Principal of \_\_\_\_\_ Hindu Institute.
- You should never be in \_\_\_\_\_ hurry.
- He always feels at \_\_\_\_\_ home here with you.
- He played \_\_\_\_\_ friendly match with me yesterday.
- You must wait for \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity to see her.

### DO YOURSELF-2

Fill in the blanks with correct option :

Once I saw (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (a/an) lecturer of Delhi University. All of (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (the/a) sudden, he stumbled against (c) \_\_\_\_\_ (the/a) pebble because of his high speed (d) \_\_\_\_\_ (some/a) few students were also following him to attend to his lecture. Immediately he got up and even (e) \_\_\_\_\_ (the/all) students too ran up for his help. He thanked them but he went on as usual. In (f) \_\_\_\_\_ (a/the) mean time, he neared (g) \_\_\_\_\_ (his/the) college gate and I took (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (the/a) decision to interrogate him but failed.

**DO YOURSELF-3**

Fill in the blanks with 'a' or 'an' or 'the' :

1. Please give me \_\_\_\_\_ umbrella as it is raining intorrents.
2. I daily read \_\_\_\_\_ Gita in \_\_\_\_\_ morning.
3. He cannot spare even \_\_\_\_\_ inch of this plot.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ dog is \_\_\_\_\_ faithful animal.
5. Give me \_\_\_\_\_ apple \_\_\_\_\_ orange and \_\_\_\_\_ banana for \_\_\_\_\_ beggar.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ little knowledge is \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous thing.
7. He met \_\_\_\_\_ blind beggar in \_\_\_\_\_ way.
8. Khanak is at \_\_\_\_\_ loss to understand what to do.
9. Our government is initiating steps against \_\_\_\_\_ inflation.
10. My brother is \_\_\_\_\_ lecturer in this college.
11. Do you like to have \_\_\_\_\_ egg ?

**2. DEMONSTRATIVE DETERMINERS :**

*This, that* are the demonstrative determiners alongwith their plurals—*these* and *those*. They can be used both as adjectives and as pronouns. They point to somebody or something. 'This' and 'these' refer to nearby things while 'that' and 'those' refer to distant ones.

- Examples :
1. *This* is my book.
  2. *These* are the fresh fruits.
  3. My scooter is better than *that* of your.
  4. *Those* wooden legs are meant for sale.

**3. POSSESSIVE DETERMINERS :**

The word 'possessive' shows that a certain thing or person belongs to someone. The words *my, our, your, his, her, their, its, they* are the possessive determiners.

- Examples :
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. We must serve <i>our</i> country.           | 2. This is <i>my</i> new house.                 |
| 3. You must obey <i>your</i> parents.          | 4. She must do <i>her</i> duty.                 |
| 5. He lost <i>his</i> keys while playing.      | 6. The girls are sitting on <i>their</i> seats. |
| 7. The dog threw <i>its</i> food on the floor. |   |

Keep in mind the given table :

<i>Personal Pronouns (subject)</i>	<i>Possessive (adjective)</i>	<i>Possessive (pronoun)</i>
I	my	mine
We	our	ours
You	your	yours
He	his	his
She	her	hers
It	its	—
They	their	theirs

**4. INTERROGATIVE DETERMINERS :**

*What, which* and *where* are the interrogative determiners.

- Examples :
1. *What* is your best among these toys ? (specify one or more thing)

2. *Which* of the shirt you like the most ? (choice between one or more)
3. *Where* have you been in the day ?
4. *Whose* book is this ?

**Note :** (a) **What** is used to ask a person to specify one or more things, people or places that form an indefinite number.

(b) **Which** is used to ask a person to specify *one or more things*, people or places that form a limited number.

(c) **Whose** is used to ask which person something belongs to or is associated with.

### 5. DISTRIBUTIVE DETERMINERS

These include : **either, neither, each, every and none.**

(a) **Either** : It has two different meanings—

(a) any of the two different things or persons *e.g.*,  
We can meet on Sunday or Saturday.  
*Either* day is suitable.

(b) *both* : There were high-rising fences on either side. (both the sides)

(b) **Neither** : It is the opposite of either. It means *not the one nor the other*. *e.g.*,  
*Neither* flat fulfills my requirement.

**Both 'either' and 'neither' take a singular verb.**

(c) **Each** :

(i) **It is used when we think of people or things separately, one by one.**  
I asked *each* boy and got no answer.

(ii) **'Each' is used for a small number preferably two. e.g.**,  
*Each* side of the plot has the same length.

(d) **Every** :

(a) **It is used when we think of people or things as a group. e.g.**,

(i) I know *every* line of this song by heart.

(ii) *Every* member supported me.

(b) **The verb following 'each' and 'every' is usually singular. e.g.**,  
*Each* boy was given a problem.

(e) **'None' means 'not any' or 'not one' e.g.**,  
*None* could solve this puzzle.

### 6. DETERMINERS OF QUANTITY :

These include—**much, many, some, any, each, every, few, little, a little, enough, whole etc.**

(a) **Many** denotes a large number and is used before countable nouns in the plural number *e.g.*,

There were *many* residents in the meeting.

(b) **Much** denotes a large quantity and is used before uncountable nouns. *e.g.*,

How *much* sugar do you want ?

**Note :** Mostly both the determiners are used in Negative and Interrogative sentences.

**Note :** In Affirmative Sentences, 'Much' is generally replaced by 'a lot of', 'a large quantity of', 'a good deal of', 'a great deal of', 'plenty of', and 'Many' is replaced by 'a number of', 'a lot of', 'lots of', 'plenty of' etc. *e.g.*,

(i) I got **a lot of** support from my relative.

(ii) There is **plenty of** food for everyone.



**'Many a' is used with singular nouns. It takes a singular verb.**

**'The many'**—It means the masses *i.e.*, the large number of ordinary people. *e.g.*,

- (i) *Many a* man saw the function.
- (ii) The Jat Rally was attended by the *many* people of Rajasthan.

**'Some' and 'Any'** : Both refer to quantity and number.

**Some is used in 'affirmative' sentences. *e.g.*,**

He gave me *some* useful books.

**'Any' is generally used in 'negative sentences' *e.g.*,**

I did not have *any* misconception about you.

**Both 'some' and 'any' can be used in interrogative sentences. *e.g.*,**

(i) I forgot my purse. Can you give me *some* money ?

(ii) Do you require *any* help in this matter ?

**We can use 'some' before singular nouns to mean 'certain'. *e.g.*,**

(i) This labour will pay you *some* day.

(ii) I think I have seen you *some* where.

**Little, a little, the little, few, a few, the few**

**'Little', 'a little', 'the little' denote quantity and are used before uncountable nouns.**

**'Few', 'a few', 'the few' denote number and are used before countable nouns in plural number. *e.g.*,**

• **Little** It is used in the negative sense.

She has *little* money. (hardly any, no)

• **A little** at least some (though not much)

I have *a little* money at my house.

• **The little** The whole quantity, though very little.

The *little* milk that I had was taken by the baby.

• **'Few' means almost none. It is used in the negative sense *e.g.*,**

I live alone. So I have *few* requirements.

• **'A few'—at least some, though not many *e.g.*,**

We bought *a few* articles from the newly opened shop.

• **'The few'—all of them, though very few *e.g.*,**

*The few* friends who met me yesterday gave me good blessings.

**'More' and 'Most'**—*More* is used before plural and uncountable nouns and refers to quantity or amount of something which is greater than another quantity. *e.g.*,

*'More'* workers will be needed to press the factory owner.

**'Most' indicates nearly all of a group or amount *e.g.*,**

*'Most'* of the students failed in the compartment examination.

**'Less' and 'fewer'** : **'Less'** is used to refer to an amount of something that is smaller than, another amount.

**'Fewer' is used to refer to a group of things which is smaller than another group *e.g.*,**

(i) Mamta spends *less* time in studies.

(ii) There are *fewer* girls for music.

## SOME MORE DETERMINERS

Read these sentences :

- One — One should do *one's* duty.
- Two — There are *two* shirts for you.
- Enough — This is *enough* tea for me.
- First — He stood *first* in the class.
- Second — He is standing in the *second* line.
- Next — You will be the *next* after this patient.
- All — *All* of you can take one jug.
- Both — We *both* went to see our retired Principal.
- Other — *Other* can also sleep on this sofa.
- Another — I have *another* spare room with me.
- Forty — There are *forty* students in Arts.

### PART-I

#### DO YOURSELF-1

The following passage has underlined errors related to determiners. Edit them by choosing from the appropriate options :

It should be (a) my best endeavour to work laboriously to obtain (b) a highest percentage of marks. (c) Many depends on our expert teachers (d) that teach us and offer us their written notes. We all know that (e) the efficient educator puts (f) the deep impact on (g) their students how far he may be. Further we should read (h) whose books which are written by master minds.

- |               |            |             |               |
|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| (a) (i) your  | (ii) our   | (iii) his   | (iv) her      |
| (b) (i) some  | (ii) an    | (iii) much  | (iv) the      |
| (c) (i) more  | (ii) much  | (iii) some  | (iv) a little |
| (d) (i) whose | (ii) those | (iii) who   | (iv) this     |
| (e) (i) an    | (ii) a     | (iii) much  | (iv) our      |
| (f) (i) our   | (ii) his   | (iii) their | (iv) that     |
| (g) (i) his   | (ii) her   | (iii) many  | (iv) more     |
| (h) (i) the   | (ii) that  | (iii) those | (iv) our      |

#### DO YOURSELF-2

The following passage has errors and these have been underlined. Edit the passage correctly by choosing the correct word from the given options :

Rhythm has (a) the immense influence of affecting (b) the minds. Whenever we happen to hear (c) a rhythmic beat of drums, the witch-doctors of Africa can hypnotize (d) many Africans of a specific tribe and create in them the lust to kill (e) ourselves.

An important American play named Emperor Jones, shows (f) a flight of a strong negro through deep forests. Similarly the beating makes them rouse (g) her superstition to reach to full climax. It is (h) her barbaric tradition.

- |                 |              |                  |               |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| (a) (i) a       | (ii) an      | (iii) some       | (iv) much     |
| (b) (i) their   | (ii) our     | (iii) your       | (iv) more     |
| (c) (i) the     | (ii) my      | (iii) some       | (iv) one      |
| (d) (i) more    | (ii) some    | (iii) any        | (iv) a lot of |
| (e) (i) herself | (ii) himself | (iii) themselves | (iv) myself   |