

The 2 (school / the school etc.)

A

Compare school and the school:



Alison is ten years old. Every day she goes to **school**. She's at **school** now. **School** begins at 9 and finishes at 3.

We say a child goes to **school** or is at **school** (as a pupil). We are not necessarily thinking of a specific school. We are thinking of **school** as a general idea.



Today Alison's mother wants to speak to her daughter's teacher. So she has gone to **the school** to see her. She's at **the school** now.

Alison's mother is not a pupil. She is not 'at school', she doesn't 'go to school'. If she wants to see Alison's teacher, she goes to **the school** (= Alison's school, a specific building).

B

We use **prison**, **hospital**, **university**, **college** and **church** in a similar way. We do not use **the** when we are thinking of the general idea of these places and what they are used for. Compare:

- ☐ Ken's brother is in **prison** for robbery. (He is a prisoner. We are not thinking of a specific prison.)
- ☐ Joe had an accident last week. He was taken to **hospital**. He's still in **hospital** now. (as a patient)
- ☐ When I leave **school**, I want to go to **university/college**.
- ☐ Sally's father goes to **church** every Sunday. (to a religious service)

- ☐ Ken went to **the prison** to visit his brother. (He went as a visitor, not as a prisoner.)
- ☐ Jane has gone to **the hospital** to visit Joe. She's at **the hospital** now. (as a visitor)
- ☐ Excuse me, where is **the university**, please? (= the university buildings)
- ☐ Some workmen went to **the church** to repair the roof. (not for a religious service)

With most other places, you need **the**. For example, **the cinema**, **the bank** (see Units 72C and 73D).

C

Bed work home

We say **go to bed** / **be in bed** etc. (*not* the bed):

- ☐ It's time to go to **bed** now.
- ☐ Do you ever have breakfast **in bed**?

but ☐ I sat down on **the bed**. (a specific piece of furniture)

go to work / **be at work** / **start work** / **finish work** etc. (*not* the work):

- ☐ Chris didn't go to **work** yesterday.
- ☐ What time do you usually finish **work**?

go home / **come home** / **arrive home** / **get home** / **be at home** etc. :

- ☐ It's late. Let's go **home**.
- ☐ Will you be at **home** tomorrow afternoon?

D

We say **go to sea** / **be at sea** (without **the**) when the meaning is 'go/be on a voyage':

- ☐ Keith works on ships. He is at **sea** most of the time.

but ☐ I'd like to live near **the sea**.

- ☐ It can be dangerous to swim in **the sea**.

74.1 Complete each sentence using a preposition (to/at/in etc.) + one of these words:

bed home ~~hospital~~ hospital prison school university work

- 1 Two people were injured in the accident and were taken to hospital.
- 2 In Britain, children from the age of five have to go
- 3 Mark didn't go out last night. He stayed
- 4 There is a lot of traffic in the morning when everybody is going
- 5 Cathy's mother has just had an operation. She is still
- 6 When Julia leaves school, she wants to study economics
- 7 Bill never gets up before 9 o'clock. It's 8.30 now, so he is still
- 8 If you commit a serious crime, you could be sent

74.2 Complete the sentences with the word given (school etc.). Use **the** where necessary.

1 (school)

- a Every term parents are invited to the school to meet the teachers.
- b Why aren't your children at school today? Are they ill?
- c When he was younger, Ted hated
- d What time does usually start in the mornings in your country?
- e A: How do your children get home from ? By bus?
B: No, they walk. isn't very far.
- f What sort of job does Jenny want to do when she leaves ?
- g There were some people waiting outside to meet their children.

2 (university)

- a In your country do many people go to ?
- b If you want to get a degree, you normally have to study at
- c This is only a small town, but is one of the biggest in the country.

3 (hospital)

- a My brother has always been very healthy. He's never been in
- b When Ann was ill, I went to to visit her. When I was there, I met Lisa who is a nurse at
- c Peter was injured in an accident and was kept in for a few days.

4 (church)

- a John's mother is a regular churchgoer. She goes to every Sunday.
- b John himself doesn't go to
- c John went to to take some photographs of the building.

5 (prison)

- a In some places people are in because of their political beliefs.
- b A few days ago the fire brigade were called to to put out a fire.
- c The judge decided to fine the man £500 instead of sending him to

6 (home/work/bed)

- a I like to read in before I go to sleep.
- b It's nice to travel around, but there's no place like !
- c Shall we meet after tomorrow evening?
- d If I'm feeling tired, I go to early.
- e What time do you usually start in the morning?
- f The economic situation was very bad. Many people were out of

7 (sea)

- a There's a nice view from the window. You can see
- b It was a long voyage. We were at for four weeks.
- c I love swimming in