

# 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 specific 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 thirty years. (*not* The life)
- ☐ Do you like **classical music** / **Chinese food** / **fast cars**?
- ☐ My favourite sport is **football/skiing/athletics**.
- ☐ My favourite subject at school was **history/physics/English**.



We say '**most** people / **most** books / **most** cars' etc. (*not* the most ...):

- ☐ **Most** hotels accept credit cards. (*not* The most hotels)

B

We use **the** when we mean specific things or people.

Compare:

*In general* (without **the**)

- ☐ **Children** learn from playing.  
(= children in general)
- ☐ I couldn't live without **music**.
- ☐ All **cars** have wheels.
- ☐ **Sugar** isn't very good for you.
- ☐ **English people** drink a lot of tea.  
(= English people in general)

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

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

C

The difference between 'something in general' and 'something specific' is not always very clear.

Compare:

*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)

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

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

75.1 Choose four of these things and write whether you like them or not:

- |        |       |                       |            |                        |
|--------|-------|-----------------------|------------|------------------------|
| boxing | cats  | fast food restaurants | football   | <del>hot weather</del> |
| maths  | opera | small children        | rock music | zoos                   |

Begin each sentence with one of these:

- 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

75.2 Complete the sentences using the following. Use **the** where necessary.

- |                             |             |                              |              |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| <del>(the) basketball</del> | (the) grass | (the) patience               | (the) people |
| (the) questions             | (the) meat  | <del>(the) information</del> | (the) shops  |
| (the) history               | (the) water | (the) spiders                | (the) lies   |

- 1 My favourite sport is basketball.
- 2 The information we were given wasn't correct.
- 3 Some people are afraid of .....
- 4 A vegetarian is somebody who doesn't eat .....
- 5 The test wasn't very difficult. I answered ..... without difficulty.
- 6 Do you know ..... who live next door?
- 7 ..... is the study of the past.
- 8 George always tells the truth. He never tells .....
- 9 It was late when we arrived in the town, and ..... were shut.
- 10 ..... in the pool didn't look very clean, so we didn't go for a swim.
- 11 Don't sit on ..... It's wet after the rain.
- 12 You need ..... to teach young children.

75.3 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 I don't drink tea / the tea. I don't like it.
- 7 We had a very good meal. Vegetables / The vegetables were especially good.
- 8 Life / The life is strange sometimes. Some very strange things happen.
- 9 I like skiing / the skiing, but I'm not very good at it.
- 10 Who are people / the people in this photograph?
- 11 What makes people / the people violent? What causes aggression / the aggression?
- 12 All books / All the books on the top shelf belong to me.
- 13 Don't stay in that hotel. It's very noisy and beds / the beds are very uncomfortable.
- 14 A pacifist is somebody who is against war / the war.
- 15 First World War / The First World War lasted from 1914 until 1918.
- 16 I'd like to go to Egypt and see Pyramids / the Pyramids.
- 17 Someone gave me a book about history / the history of modern art / the modern art.
- 18 Ron and Brenda got married, but marriage / the marriage didn't last very long.
- 19 Most people / The most people believe that marriage / the marriage and family life / the family life are the basis of society / the society.