

ZERO ARTICLE

Nouns with zero articles

Uncountable or plural nouns when used for a generalisation

Proper nouns

People, places and institutions such as: lakes, mountains, islands, streets, parks, churches, temples, universities, hospitals

Days of the week

Months

Holidays

Languages

Religion

Certain times

Here are some rules:

Use **zero article (-)** with:

- The names of most countries, cities and continents: *Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Warsaw, Beijing, Europe, Asia*
- Geographical areas in adjective phrases: *I live in (-) north-west Egypt, (-) eastern France*
- The names of single mountains and lakes: *Mount Kilimanjaro, Lake Titicaca*
- Exact days, months and times: *on (-) Friday, in (-) March, at (-) 7 o'clock*
- Some prepositional phrases of place: *at (-) home, at (-) work, in (-) bed, at (-) sea*

Use **the** with:

- Countries with plural names or with Republic or Kingdom in the name: *The United Arab Emirates, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom*
- Geographical areas in noun phrases: *I live in the north-west of Egypt, in the east*
- The names of rivers, seas, oceans and mountain ranges: *The Mississippi, The Black Sea, The Atlantic, The Urals*
- Parts of the day: *in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening*
- Most prepositional phrases of position and place: *at the top, on the left, at the office/bank/cinema*

Take note: school/university, etc.

There is a special rule for these places: school, university, college, hospital, prison, church. Compare these examples:

*The children go **to school** by bus. I go **to the school** to help twice a week.*

*Ben's studying maths **at university**. He works in the canteen **at the university**.*

*She was **in hospital** for three weeks. Is there a shop **in the hospital**?*

If someone is at the place because they are a student / are sick / a prisoner, etc, we don't use **the**. If they are there for another reason, or we are talking about the building, we use **the**.