

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 usually paid more than **teachers**.
- ☐ Do you know anybody who collects **stamps**?
- ☐ **Life** has changed a lot in the last thirty years.
- ☐ 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** shops / **most** big cities' etc. (*not* the most ...):

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

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 say what they think**.
(not all people, but 'people who say what they think' 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)
- ☐ **The coffee we had after dinner** wasn't very good. (= specific coffee)

Exercises

75.1 Choose four of these things and write what you think about them:

bananas boxing cats crowds fast food horror movies
~~hot weather~~ maths opera snow supermarkets zoos

Use: I like ... / I don't like ... I think ... is/are ... I don't mind ...
 I love ... / I hate ... I'm (not) interested in ...

- 1 I don't like hot weather very much.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

75.2 Which is right?

- 1 a Apples / ~~The apples~~ are good for you. (Apples is correct)
- b Look at apples / the apples on that tree. They're very big.
- 2 a Who are people / the people in this picture?
- b It annoys me when people / the people throw rubbish on the ground.
- 3 a My memory isn't good. I'm not good at remembering names / the names.
- b What were names / the names of those people we met last night?
- 4 a First World War / The First World War began in 1914 and ended in 1918.
- b A pacifist is somebody who is against war / the war.
- 5 a He's lazy. He doesn't like hard work / the hard work.
- b Did you finish work / the work you were doing yesterday?

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

~~(the) basketball~~ (the) grass (the) patience (the) people
 (the) questions (the) meat ~~(the) information~~ (the) hotels
 (the) biology (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 hard. I answered without difficulty.
- 6 Do you know who live in the flat next to yours?
- 7 is the study of plants and animals.
- 8 It's better to tell the truth. Telling often causes problems.
- 9 We couldn't find anywhere to stay in the town. were all full.
- 10 Don't swim in this pool. doesn't look very clean.
- 11 Don't sit on It's wet after the rain.
- 12 You need to teach young children.

75.4 Which is right?

- 1 Steve is very good at telling stories / the stories.
- 2 I can't sing this song. I don't know words / the words.
- 3 Don't stay in that hotel. It's noisy and rooms / the rooms are very small.
- 4 I don't have a car, so I use public transport / the public transport most of the time.
- 5 All books / All the books on the top shelf belong to me.
- 6 Life / The life is strange sometimes. Some very strange things happen.
- 7 We enjoyed our holiday. Weather / The weather was good.
- 8 Everybody needs water / the water to live.
- 9 I don't like films / the films with unhappy endings.