

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**?
- 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 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)
- I didn't like **the coffee we had after dinner**.
(= specific coffee)

Exercises

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

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

(the) basketball	(the) grass	(the) patience	(the) people
(the) questions	(the) meat	(the) information	(the) hotels
(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 It's better to tell the truth. Telling _____ usually causes problems.

9 We couldn't find anywhere to stay in the town. _____ were full.

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 Apples / The apples are good for you.

3 Look at apples / the apples on that tree! They're very big.

4 Women / The women live longer than men / the men.

5 I don't drink tea / the tea. I don't like it.

6 We had a very good meal. Vegetables / The vegetables were especially good.

7 Life / The life is strange sometimes. Some very strange things happen.

8 I enjoy holidays / the holidays by the sea.

9 How much money does the government spend on education / the education?

10 Who are people / the people in this picture?

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 rooms / the rooms are very small.

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 don't like films / the films that don't have happy endings.

17 Someone gave me a book about history / the history of modern art / the modern art.

18 Rob and Louise 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.