

CHAPTER - 8**Determiners**

You have read earlier that most pre-modifiers of the noun phrase are determiners. Now let us see how they are used.

A.(i) The Articles : a / an, the

The word *a / an* is called *indefinite article*. The words do not refer to any specific person or thing. They can be used only before singular count nouns. **A** is used before nouns beginning with *a consonant sound* whereas **an** is used before nouns beginning with a *vowel sound*.

(i) There is *a* book on the table. (We do not know anything about the book.)

(ii) Give the child *an* orange. (any orange)

The word **the** is the *definite article*. It is not usually used before uncount and count nouns in a general sense. But when we make specific reference to any uncount or count nouns, we use *the* before them.

General Reference

Water is essential for life.

Books are our good friends.

Specific reference.

The water in this pot is muddy. (uncount noun)

The books I bought yesterday are helpful.
(plural count nouns).

Please give me *the book* I lent you. (singular count noun).

(ii) **Demonstratives : this, that, these, those.** *This* and *that* can be used before both singular countable and uncountable nouns while *these* and *those* before plural count nouns only.

This pen writes well. (singular count)

This / that water is not good to drink. (uncount noun)

These / Those people are hardworking. (plural count noun)

- (iii) **Numerals** : *One, two, three* etc. are called *cardinals*. *First, second*, etc. are called *ordinals*.

Cardinals and *ordinals* can be used in a noun phrase separately or in combination.

I met *three* tourists from Japan. (cardinal)

The *first* girl was intelligent. (ordinal)

The *first two* boys were healthy. (ordinal + cardinal)

(iv) **Quantifiers** :

(a) *many, few, a few, several* are used with plural count nouns only and with plural verbs.

(b) *much, little, a little* are used with uncount nouns only and with singular verbs.

(c) *any, no, some, enough, more, less, both, all, a lot of, a great deal of* are used with both plural count and uncount nouns. They take plural verbs when they go with plural count nouns, but take singular verbs when they go with uncount nouns. *Any* and *no* can also be used with singular count nouns.

With plural countables

Many people were present there.

With uncountables.

How *much* water is left ?

There isn't *much* water left.

(*much* is used in interrogative and negative sentences generally)

There is *a little* water in the jug.

(*a little* = very less in quantity)

little=almost nothing, less than required.)

There is *some* water in the pot.

I need *more* water.

I need *a lot* of food for them.

A few children are playing.

(*a few* = less in number)

few=almost none, less than expected)

Some birds are flying.

More birds have joined them.

A lot of people are coming.

(*a lot of* is usually used in an affirmative sentence)

There are not *any* persons here.

(Also, there is not *any* person here.

There is *no* person here.)

Is there *any* water in the pot ?

- (v) **Possessives** : (a) Nominal possessives *Raja's, Meera's*, etc.
 (b) Pronominal possessives - *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*

Where are *my* books ?

Rashmi's brother is *my* friend.

(Possessives do not go with articles, demonstratives and quantifiers.)

- (vi) **Distributives** : *each, every, either, neither*.

Each child got a prize. (Each child is seen as a separate individual.)

Every child got a prize. (All are seen as part of a whole body, or group.)

Either / neither pen will do.

- (vii) **Wh-determiners** :

Which, whose, what

Which pen do you want ?

Whose children are they ?

What time is he coming here ?

What colour do you like ?

I do not know *which* person to meet.

Activity 1 :

Fill in the blanks choosing the appropriate determiners from those given in the brackets.

- (i) _____ water is clean. (this / these)
- (ii) _____ girl over there is my sister. (this / that)
- (iii) The _____ boy in the queue is from my class. (one / first)
- (iv) _____ trees were cut off. (many / much)
- (v) There isn't _____ oil in the lamp. (many / much)

- (vi) I have _____ problems now. (a few / a little)
- (vii) Can you draw _____ picture ? (any / many)
- (viii) He has _____ property. (much / a lot of)
- (ix) Give a biscuit to _____ child. (every / each)
- (x) _____ one in the meeting laughed at the joke. (each / every)

B. Sequence of Determiners

Read the following sentences and see how we can use more than one determiner in a noun phrase. They follow a definite order. Note down the order in which they come. We cannot change this order.

- (i) *My two* sons are employed. (possessive + cardinal)
- (ii) *My last two* sons are employed. (possessive + ordinal + cardinal)
- (iii) *All my two* sons are employed. (quantifier + possessive + cardinal)
- (iv) *Both my / the* sons are employed. (quantifier + possessive / article)
- (v) I have not seen *such a* bird. (such + indefinite article)

Activity 2 :

There are certain errors in the order of determiners in the following sentences. Correct the errors and rewrite the sentences in the space provided.

- (i) The two last boys in the queue came late.

Ans :

- (ii) His all sisters are doctors.

Ans :

- (iii) My both sons are in school now.

Ans :

- (iv) The one third girls will get a scholarship each.

Ans :

- (v) Five those boys belong to this class.

Ans :

- (vi) How can you tell a such thing ?

Ans :

- (vii) These all five books are new.

Ans :

- (viii) I got the double benefit.

Ans :

- (ix) He has a such little knowledge !

Ans :

- (x) The all water has become dirty.

Ans :

Activity 3 :

The writer of the passage below has made some mistakes in the use of determiners and adjectives. Underline the mistakes suggesting corrections in the right hand margin. One has been done for you as an example.

Madan Babu has a son and beautiful two daughters. (two beautiful)

His all children are good at study. Three years ago his son went to college. The two other children were still at school then. This year his both daughters are in the medical college. Madan Babu has to spend much money for their education. At the end of the month he has hardly much money left with him. He hopes, one day, his all children will get any good employment and earn a lot. He hopes he will not borrow no more from others once his children are settled.

C. The Article :

You have already learnt that *a / an* is the indefinite article and *the* is the definite article. Now let us learn more about their uses.

A. Use of a / an (The Indefinite Article)

- (i) We use *a* before singular count nouns beginning with a consonant sound : *a* boy, *a* girl, *a* chair, *a* house, *a* European, *a* university.
- (ii) before names of professions.

Mr Dash is *a* teacher.

Sunita is *a* student.

- (iii) before a singular count noun to refer to a class of some animals, trees, etc.

A tiger is a wild animal (= all tigers)

A coconut tree grows very tall. (=all coconut trees)

(* *a* tiger, *the* tiger or *tigers* refer to all tigers)

- (iv) before a particular lunch, dinner or breakfast.

We had *a* nice lunch today :

My friend hosted *a* dinner for us.

(But while making general reference to lunch or dinner we do not use any article before them.

Example : We have lunch at one o'clock every day.

My mother prepares breakfast for us.)

- (v) *A* means 'one' when we use it with numbers, units of weight or measure.

I need *a* hundred rupee.

Sugar sells thirty *rupees a* kilo.

I spend *a* quarter of my income on food.

- (vi) We use *an* before singular count nouns and abbreviations beginning with a vowel sound : *an* orange, *an* umbrella, *an* elephant, *an* hour, *an* honest man, *an* MP, *an* NCC Cadet, *an* LP school.

Activity 4 :

Fill in the blanks with *a* or *an* wherever necessary.

- (i) _____ cow gives us milk.
- (ii) Manoj is _____ honest worker.
- (iii) Are you _____ university student ?
- (iv) _____ oak tree lives very long.
- (v) I have been waiting here for _____ hour.
- (vi) _____ elephant is _____ wild animal.
- (vii) The computer is _____ useful machine.
- (viii) Capt Nayak is _____ NCC officer.

A. Use of *the* (The Definite Article)

- (i) We use *the* before a noun when we mention it for a second or subsequent times.

I have bought *a* house and *the* house is quite big.

I made a toy myself and *the* toy was liked by every one.

- (ii) We can use *the* before any noun when the hearer knows the person or thing we are talking about.

The headmaster called *the* peon and asked him to ring *the* bell.

(Here *the headmaster* and *the peon* are known to both the speaker and the hearer and *the bell* means the school bell.)

- (iii) With the superlatives.

All want to have *the best* things in life.

Meera is *the fastest* runner of all.

She is *the most* intelligent girl in the class.

- (iv) With some adjectives to indicate the general class of people. We use a plural verb with them.

The rich should help *the poor*.

(the rich = all rich people, the poor = all poor men)

The blind depend on our support. (= all blind men)

The young as well as *the old* need our care.

(the young = all young people, the old = all old people)

- (v) With some nationality adjectives to indicate the people living in that country.

The English left India in 1947.

The Japanese are very hard-working.

(*The English* means the people of England and *the Japanese* means the people of Japan. But, *English* and *Japanese*.

(without the) mean the names of two languages.)

But *a Japanese* means a person of Japanese nationality e.g., Mr. Hirohito is a Japanese.

- (vi) With names of some unique structures.

The Taj Mahal is very famous.

The Eiffel tower is in Paris.

- (vii) Before names of great books and newspapers.

The Gita, *The Bible*, *The Koran*, *The Ramayan*, *The Panchatantra*, *The Times of India*, *The Samaj*.

- (viii) Before nouns referring to a service system.

I will talk with him over *the phone*.

He is coming on *the next train*.

(But I travel *by train*.)

I listen to *the radio*. (But, I watch TV everyday.)

- (ix) Before names of musical instruments.

Mary plays the piano well.

I am learning to play the guitar.

- (x) Before names of rivers, oceans, seas and mountain ranges.
The Ganga, The Mahanadi, The Pacific, The Atlantic, The Arabian sea, The Bay of Bengal, The Gulf of Mannar, The Himalayas, The Vindhyas, etc.
 (But we do not use 'the' before names of mountains and lakes e.g.,
Mount Everest, Mount Kilimanjaro, Moint Kanchanjanga, Chilika Lake, etc.
- (xi) Before names of countries which are federations or kingdoms.
The USA (The United States of America)
The UK (The United Kingdom)
The Great Britain, The Soviet Union, etc.
The UAE (The United Arab Emirates)
 (But most countries do not take 'the' before their names e.g., India, China, Japan)
- (xii) Before names of island countries or islands made of smaller islands.
The Andamans, The West Indies,
 (But bigger island countries go without 'the' before their names, e.g., Australia, Sri Lanka, Japan, etc.)
- (xiii) Before names of astronomical bodies.
the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the space, the satellites, the planets.

Activity 5 :

Fill in the blanks with *the* if it is necessary, otherwise put a cross(x) there.

- (i) Mr Pujari is _____ headmaster of our school.
- (ii) I can see a lot of people on _____ beach.
- (iii) Mina is _____ tallest girl in our class.
- (iv) This school is meant for _____ blind and _____ deaf.
- (v) I cannot speak _____ French well.
- (vi) _____ French are artistic people.

Activity 6 :

A boy gives an account of his journey from Bhubaneswar to Kanyakumari and back. He has made some mistakes in using the articles. Underline the mistakes and write them correctly in the right hand margin against the line where they occur. One has been done for you.

We went to the station by the car and boarded the (by car) train. Travelling by the train was very enjoyable. I could see the rivers, the mountains and many other things from it. Our train rolled past the Chilika lake in hour's time. We crossed rivers like Rusikulya in Orissa and Godavari in Andhra. We saw the people working in fields on the both sides of train line. Kanyakumari provided grand scene. Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea meet at that point. In evening that day I could see sun setting on one side of sea and moon rising on the other. It was rare sight. Father told me that the Sri Lanka was only a few miles away from there. Palk Strait divided it from India. After a few days stay there, we went to Ooty which is on Nilgiri. Hills. Ooty is cool place. We enjoyed our stay there before coming to Bangalore by the bus. Bangalore is capital of Karnatak. From there we flew by the air and reached Bhubaneswar just in two hours time !

D. Nouns without articles.

There are some common nouns before which we do not use any article. The expressions are fixed. Look at the list below.

(a) **Institutions** : school, college, hospital, etc.

There are certain institutions before which we do not use *the* when we are there, or visit it for the basic purpose for which they are made. Most frequently prepositions in such expressions are *in* or *at*. When we visit these places for other purposes we use *the* before them. Compare the sentences in Column A with those in B.

Column A**(visit for the basic purpose)**school : Mihir goes *to school*.

(as a pupil to learn).

hospital : Priti is *in hospital*.

(as a patient)

church : We go *to church*on Sundays (*to pray*)bed : I go *to bed* early.

(to sleep)

Column B**(visit for other purposes)**His father accompanies him *to the school*

(not to study, but to escort him)

I am *in the hospital* to attend her.

(as an attendant.)

The tourists went *to the church*.

(as visitors)

The cat is *on the bed*

(just sitting there)

Some other nouns of this type : *class, college, university, prison, jail, town, home, sea, etc.*

b. Mode of Transport : bus, train, boat, etc.

When we talk of transport by bus, car, train, etc in a general way we do not use *the* before them. But when we talk of a specific journey by them we use *the* or *a*.

General mode of journey**Specific journey**bus : We go to school *by bus*. I took *a/the* bus to my village.train : Travel *by train* is safe. Do not get on *a/the* running train.car : I went *by car*. I came here in *a* car.Sea/air : You can go to Srilanka *by sea* or *by air* I went to Sri Lanka on *the* morning flight / ship.(But, She came all the way *on foot*.)

Some other nouns of this type : *taxi, coach, rail, boat, ship, plane, cycle, auto, etc.*

C. Specific time of the day or night : dawn, dusk, sunnrise, sunset, noon, midnight, day break, nine 'o clock, etc.

When we mention exact time of day or night we do not use '*the*' before the time mentioned. For longer durations we use '*the*'.

Exact time

It is hot *at noon*.

The sky is beautiful *at sunset*.

I get up *at six o' clock*.

Owls and bats fly *by night*.

Longer duration of time

We travelled *during the day*.

The day is cooler *in the morning*.

I got up early *in the morning*.

We rest *during the night*.

Activity 7 :

Fill in the blank with the wherever necessary. Otherwise, put a cross mark (x) in it.

- (i) I am going to _____ hospital to meet a friend.
- (ii) Did you come here by _____ bus or by taxi ?
- (iii) We started work in _____ morning and finished it in _____ evening.
- (iv) The criminal was sent to _____ prison.
- (v) Everyday I go to _____ bed at _____ ten O'clock.
- (vi) If you want to travel by _____ sea, take _____ morning ship.
- (vii) You will find the book on _____ bed.
- (viii) Birds leave their nests at _____ daybreak.
- (ix) It is hot during _____ day and cool during _____ night.
- (x) It is difficult to see at _____ night.

Activity 8 :

In the passage below a and the have been left out before some nouns. Underline the nouns and insert a or the wherever they are necessary.

Once the students of our class planned to go on picnic to Chilka. We decided to go by bus. We bought food materials we needed. We also bought wood for fuel. On way we stopped at place and got some cold drinks from shop. At picnic spot we had lot of fun. We enjoyed music and dance performed by some students. We also went to Kalijai by boat. We enjoyed boat journey very much. At noon we had our food and before evening we came back to school.