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# Determiners

Determiners are words that modify nouns. In other words, determiners are words that can be used before nouns to determine or to modify their meaning. Determiners function like adjectives. They are also called as fixing words.

## Characteristics of Determiners

*Characteristics of determiners are as follows*

- A determiner may determine or fix a place, person or thing.
- A determiner may identify two or more persons or things.
- A determiner may precede numerals or objects.
- A determiner may indicate a quantity or amount.

## Classification of Determiners

*Determiners can be classified into*

1. **Articles** A, an, the.
2. **Demonstrative Adjectives** This, that, these, those.
3. **Quantifiers** A quantifier is a word or phrase which is used before a noun to indicate the amount or quantity. *Types of quantifiers are as follows*
  - (i) **Definite** One, two, hundred, ..., first, second, both etc.
  - (ii) **Indefinite** Some, many, much, enough, few, a few, all, little, a little, several, most etc.
  - (iii) **Distributive** Each, every, all, either, neither.
  - (iv) **Difference** Another, other.
  - (v) **Comparative** More, less, fewer.
4. **Possessives** My, your, his, her, its, our, their, mine, hers, yours, ours, theirs etc.



## Determiners and Kinds of Nouns With Which They are Used

- A, an, each, everyone, another and either are used with singular countable nouns.
  - This and that are used with uncountable nouns/singular countable nouns.
  - These and those are used with uncountable nouns/plural countable nouns.
- A little, a lot of, a great deal of, much are used with uncountable nouns.
- More, most, a lot of, enough, adequate, some are used with uncountable nouns/plural countable nouns.
- A few, several, many, both are used with plural nouns.
- The, some, any, my, her, your, our, their, its, which, whose, what are used with any type of noun.

## 1. Articles—A, An, The

Articles are used before nouns. 'A' is used before a noun starting with a consonant sound and 'An' is used before a noun starting with a vowel sound. 'The' is used before singular countable nouns, plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

### Use of Indefinite Articles : A/An

'A' is used before a noun beginning with a consonant sound.

e.g. a woman, a horse, a university  
(Here woman, horse and university are words beginning with a consonant sound.)

'An' is used before a noun beginning with a vowel sound.

e.g. an orange, an egg, an elephant, an hour  
(Here orange, egg, elephant and hour are words beginning with a vowel sound.)

### How to Use 'A' and 'An'

- The use of 'a' and 'an' is determined by sound. The following words begin with a vowel, but not with a vowel sound. A unique thing, a one rupee coin, a European, a unicorn, a university, a useful thing, a union.  
So here 'a' is used.
- On the other hand, with the following words, 'an' is used although they begin with a consonant.
- An hour, an honest man, an heir to the throne, an MCA. Here, the sound is the criterion to decide whether a/an will be used.

## Use of Definite Article : The

'The' is used before singular countable nouns, plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns. Uncountable nouns do not have plural forms, e.g. we cannot say 'sugars', we will say 'the sugar'.

'The' is used

- I. While talking about a particular person or thing or one already referred to (that is, when it is clear from the context which one do we mean).  
e.g. The book you want is not available.
- II. When a singular noun represents the whole class.  
e.g. The dog is a faithful animal.
- III. Before some proper names that denote physical features.
  - (i) Oceans and seas e.g. The Pacific ocean, The Arabian Sea
  - (ii) Rivers e.g. The Yamuna, The Thames
  - (iii) Canals e.g. The Suez Canal
  - (iv) Deserts e.g. the Thar Desert, the Sahara Desert.
  - (v) Group of islands e.g. the West Indies, the Netherlands
  - (vi) Mountain ranges e.g. the Himalayas, the Satpura Ranges
  - (vii) A few names of countries, which include words like States, Republic or Kingdom e.g. The People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the USA, the Republic of Korea, the Hague etc.
- IV. Before the names of religious or mythological books.  
e.g. the Vedas, the Puranas, the Mahabharata  
(but we say Homer's Iliad, Valmiki's Ramayana).
- V. Before the names of things which are unique or one of their kind.  
e.g. the Sun, the Moon, the Pacific Ocean
- VI. Before a proper noun, when it is qualified by an adjective or a defining adjectival clause.  
e.g. The Great Caesar, the King of Rome  
The Mr Verma whom you met last night is my boss.
- VII. With superlative degrees.  
e.g. This is the worst performance I have ever seen.
- VIII. With ordinals.  
e.g. He was the first man to walk on the Moon.
- IX. Before musical instruments.  
e.g. He can play the tabla very well.
- X. Before an adjective when the noun is understood.  
e.g. The rich always exploit the poor. (Here the word 'people' is understood.)
- XI. As an adverb with comparatives.  
e.g. The more money we have, the more we want.



## Omission of Article 'The'

- Before material, abstract and proper nouns used in a general sense.  
e.g. (a) Honesty is the best policy. (*not The honesty....*)  
(b) Sugar tastes sweet. (*not The sugar....*)  
(c) Paris is the capital of France. (*not The Paris....*)
- Before plural countable nouns used in a general sense.  
e.g. Children like toys.
- Before names of people.  
e.g. Rohit.
- Before names of continents, countries; cities etc  
e.g. Europe, Pakistan, Nagpur.
- Before names of individual mountains  
e.g. Mount Everest.
- Before names of meals used in a general sense.  
e.g. Dinner is ready.
- Before languages and words like school, college, university, church, hospital.  
e.g. (a) I learn English at school.  
(b) My uncle is still in hospital.
- Before names of relations, like father, mother etc  
e.g. Father is still not at home.
- In certain phrases consisting of preposition followed by its object.  
e.g. At home, in hand, by night, in case, on foot, by train, on demand etc.

## 2. Demonstrative Adjectives (This, That, These, Those)

### I. That (in case of plural, those)

- (a) It is used to avoid the repetition of the preceding noun(s).  
e.g. • My bat is better than **that** of my friend.  
• Our soldiers are better equipped than **those** of Pakistan.
- (b) It refers to person(s) or thing(s) far from the speaker.  
e.g. • Get **that** dog out of here.  
• **Those** houses are for sale.

### II. This (in case of plural, these)

- (a) It refers to person(s) or thing(s) near the speaker.  
e.g. • **This** book is very interesting.  
• **These** flowers are very beautiful.

## 3. Quantifiers

'Some', 'many', 'a lot of' and 'a few' are examples of quantifiers. Quantifiers can be used in affirmative sentences, questions, requests or commands with both countable and uncountable nouns.

- e.g. • There are **some** books on the desk.  
• He's got only **a few** dollars.  
• How **much** money have you got?  
• There is **a large** quantity of fish in this river.  
• He's got **more** friends than his sister.

Some quantifiers can go only with countable nouns (e.g. friends, people, cups), some can go only with uncountable nouns (e.g. sugar, tea, money, advice), while some can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

Examples of quantifiers are given below

Only with Uncountable Nouns	With both Countable and Uncountable Nouns	Only with Countable Nouns
a little	no, none, not any	a few
a bit of	some, all	a number of
—	any	several
a great deal of	a lot of, lots of	a great number of
a large amount of	plenty of	a large number of

Usage of quantifiers are as follows

### I. Use of few/a few and little/a little

#### (a) Few, a few and the few.

Few emphasises the lack of something.

- e.g. There are **few** sweets left in the jar.  
(We should be careful not to eat them too quickly because they are almost finished.)

A few emphasises that something still remains.

- e.g. We still have **a few** minutes left before the class gets over. Do you have any questions?  
(We still have some time, so we should use it.)

#### (b) Little, a little and the little

Little emphasises the lack of something.

- e.g. We have **little** money right now; we should go out for dinner another day.  
(We should be careful and use the money wisely because we don't have much.)

A little emphasises that something still remains.

- e.g. There's **a little** ice-cream left; who will eat it?  
(There's not enough ice-cream left to put back in the freezer, so it should be eaten.)



## II. Use of much and many

- (a) We use **much** with singular uncountable nouns and **many** with plural nouns.

e.g. • I haven't got **much** change; I've only got a hundred rupee note.  
• Are there **many** campsites near your place?

- (b) We usually use **much** and **many** with interrogative sentences and negative sentences.

e.g. • Is there **much** unemployment in that area?  
• How **many** eggs have not been used in this cake?  
• Do you think **many** people will come?  
• The rain was pouring down in torrents but there wasn't **much** wind.

## III. Use of more, less and fewer

(comparative determiners)

- (a) We use **more** or **less** before singular uncountable nouns by adding **than** after it, or for an additional or lesser quantity of something.

e.g. • I do **more** work than Suresh.  
• Please give me some **more** salad.  
• Satish does **less** work than me.  
• I want **less** salad than Mahesh.

- (b) We use **fewer** before plural countable nouns to refer to a group of things smaller than another.

e.g. • **Fewer** students succeeded in passing than last year.  
• We had **fewer** computers a year ago.

## IV. Use of each and every (distributive determiners)

- (a) We use **each** for two or more than two items and **every** for more than two items. Both of these are followed by singular countable nouns and singular verbs.

e.g. • **Each** of the two boys has won a prize.  
• **Every** student in the school is present today.

- (b) We use **each** when the number in the group is limited or definite, but **every** is used when the number is indefinite or unknown.

e.g. • **Each** student in my class was promoted.  
• **Every** person in the world has a parent.

## V. Use of most, several and all

- (a) We usually use **most** with plural uncountable nouns.

e.g. • **Most** of the people can be trusted.  
• **Most** of the time I am not at home.

- (b) We usually use **several** with plural nouns, but it refers to a number which is not very large. (i.e. less than most)

e.g. • **Several** people were crushed in the stampede.  
• **Several** people lost their lives in the Tsunami.

- (c) **All** requires a plural verb when used with a countable noun, but requires a singular verb with an uncountable noun.

e.g. • **All** are going to Delhi.  
• **All** that glitters is not gold.

## VI. Use of another and other

We use **another** only with singular countable nouns, whereas **other** can be used with singular countable, plural countable or uncountable nouns.

e.g. • Bring me **another** knife, as this one is blunt.  
• I would prefer the **other** house.  
• The **other** students went back home.  
• He is a better human being than most **others**.

## VII. Use of either and neither

- (a) We use **either** to refer to two things, people, situations etc. It may mean one or the other of two or each of the two.

e.g. I don't agree with **either** Ram or Shyam.

- (b) We use **neither** with only singular countable nouns and a singular verb. **Neither** is the negative of **either**.

e.g. **Neither** of the two boys passed the exam.

## 4. Possessives (My, Your, His, Her, Its, Our, Their etc)

Possessive determiners or possessive adjectives tell us who owns something. We use a possessive determiner before a noun to show who owns the noun we are talking about. They come in front of any other adjectives.

e.g. • This is **your** book.  
• That is **our** beautiful house.

We use different possessive determiners depending on who owns the thing we are talking about.

Subject	Possessive Determiner	Used with Type of Noun
I	my	first person singular
We	our	first person plural
You	your	second person singular/plural
They	their	third person plural
He	his	third person singular masculine
She	her	third person singular feminine
It	its	third person singular neuter

**My, her, his** and **its** are used with singular nouns, while **our** and **their** are used with plural nouns. **Your** can be used with either singular or plural nouns, depending on the sense.

e.g. • This is **my** book. • The dog licked **its** paw.  
• Which is **their** car?  
• All three of you, have you done **your** homework?



# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

I Fill in the blanks with appropriate determiners.

- A. 1. There are ..... books in the library.
2. Have you ever had ..... high fever?
3. .... National Health Service was set up in Britain in 1946.
4. In ..... countries, you have to pay for the medical treatment.
5. My brother is ..... dentist.
6. Only ..... houses were spared by the earthquake.
7. You must learn ..... English everyday to improve your language.
8. There isn't ..... bread in that tin.
9. Sometimes ..... patience and advice help more than medicine.
10. Could you bring me ..... books I left in the garden?

- B. 1. She gave a cookie to ..... child.
2. I've got to solve ..... math problems before I go to sleep.
3. .... Cherries are delicious.
4. My mother doesn't drink ..... coffee.
5. I always keep ..... money in my wallet for emergencies.
6. They were bored because there was ..... to do.
7. We invited ..... friends over to our house for a party.
8. .... of the cakes had been baked the day before.
9. .... the children went to their respective classes.
10. I invited Ram and Sheila to the party, but ..... of them came.

II Fill in the blanks with suitable determiners.

- A. 1. I admit that I don't have ..... knowledge of the subject. I'll have to spend ..... time reading.
2. May I taste ..... of the soup that you cooked this morning? How ..... pepper did you put in?

3. When Sapna realised that she still had ..... time left, she gave me ..... assistance with ..... work.
4. I took ..... apple from ..... refrigerator and ate it.
5. The man complained that ..... boys were stealing ..... of his mangoes.
6. Are there ..... sandwiches for you? If there aren't, I'll make ..... more for you.
7. There are ..... people at the theatre. I don't think we can get ..... tickets.
8. .... children in the Kindergarten are given ..... cup of milk and ..... biscuits during the break.
9. .... goats have wandered into the garden and damaged ..... plants. The gardener couldn't catch ..... of them.
10. "How ..... tablets have you taken?" The doctor inquired. "I've taken ..... of them, doctor. I don't have ..... more."
- B. 1. .... of the answers that ..... girls gave were wrong. .... of them has passed the test.
2. "Won't you buy ..... welfare lottery tickets, sir?" the boy asked. "I have ..... here that you can choose from."
3. .... books are ..... ? They have been lying on ..... desk for a long time but ..... of the girls have claimed them.
4. He has got ..... debts to settle, but he hasn't got ..... money.
5. You can do ..... better if you put in ..... more effort.
6. They encountered ..... difficulties because only ..... of them were really experienced at mountaineering. The rest only had ..... experience.
7. There was ..... accident near ..... central market this morning. .... car hit ..... scooter and ..... man on ..... scooter was killed.
8. A cup of tea may seem ..... ordinary thing to ..... of us in India. But drinking tea is ..... ritual which is taken very seriously in ..... Japanese homes.



9. .... people came to .... site where the revolutionary general was to be hanged. When I asked if he had .... desire, .... smile came on .... dry lips and he nodded his head.

10. It was .... grand occasion for .... children. .... of them had won prizes and .... parents felt proud. .... of them introduced their parents to their teachers.

### III. Fill in the blanks with appropriate determiners to complete the passage.

A. Traditionally, Ilkal saris were made using natural indigo dyes then, in the 1970s, (1) ..... (a/an/the) synthetic German indigo replaced (2) ..... (this/those/these/those) vat dyeing process. Today, this has given way to natural based dyes. The famed and centuries old indigo dyeing is now on the verge of extinction. As the new generation steps into more profitable avenues, the skyline of Ilkal is fast changing too. "The (3) ..... (more/most/much/a little) profitable business in the area now is granite", states (4) ..... (a/an/the/any) Weaver. With (5) ..... (that/this/their/ those) stone being available in

plenty (6) ..... (their/here/there/ somewhere) a number of granite selling agencies and chimneys of granite possess units are spreading all over.

As more and (7) ..... (much/more/many/some) of town's younger citizens step into newer ventures like that of selling stones, the loom may become a mere memory. It will be a sad day for (8) ..... (more/much/many/most) people.

B. Unfortunately, (1) ..... (a lot/few) of the companies which we sent offers to showed interest in our products.

Last month was a good month for the company. We found (2) ..... (many/ more/much) new customers and also added to our profit.

We have to speed up, there is very (3) ..... (few/little) time to finish the project.

There were (4) ..... (fewer/all) people than usual in the supermarket to buy our product.

It will take me (5) ..... (a little/neither) time, but I'm sure that everyone will learn how to use the new software eventually.

I have (6) ..... (many/little) money but more time than I did ten years ago.

## Answers

I A. 1. many

3. The

5. a

7. a little

9. a little

B. 1. each

3. These

5. some

7. a few

9. All

2. a

4. many

6. a few

8. any

10. those

2. some

4. much

6. little

8. Most

10. neither

3. Whose, these, the, none

4. many, much

5. much, a little

6. many, a few, a little

7. an, the, a, a, the, the

8. an, some, a, many

9. Many, the, any, a, his

10. a, many, some, their, Some

III A. 1. the

3. most

5. this

7. more

B. 1. few

3. little

5. a little

2. this

4. a

6. here

8. many

2. many

4. fewer

6. little

II A. 1. much, more

3. a little, some, my

5. a few, some

7. many, any

9. Several, the, any

B. 1. Some, the, None

2. a few, several

2. a little, much

4. an, the

6. any, some

8. The, a, some

10. many, all, any