

Determiner

A determiner is a word which typically forms the first element in a noun phrase. Examples are: the, my, this, much, any, those etc. A determiner limits the meaning of a noun phrase in some way. Although determiners come at the beginning of noun phrases, they are not adjectives.

Every week

Each boy

That girl

My dad

There are two main types of determiners.

Group A determiners and Group B determiners

Group A determiners

Group A determiners help to identify things. Examples are:

Articles: a/an, the

Possessives: my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, one's, whose etc.

Demonstratives: this, that, these, those

Note that the possessives my, your, his etc., are strictly determiners, and not pronouns.

Nevertheless, some traditional grammars still label them as possessive pronouns.

We cannot put two group A determiners together. We can say my cat, that cat or a cat, but not a my cat, the my cat, or my that cat.

In order to put together the meanings of a possessive and article / demonstrative, we have to use the structure a/this ... of mine/yours/ theirs etc.

Group B determiners

Most Group B determiners are quantifiers. They say how much or many we are talking about.

Determiner

Examples are:

some, any, no

each, every, either, neither

much, many, more, most, little, less, least, enough, several etc

all, both, half

what, whatever, which, whichever

one, two, three, etc.

Some Group B determiners are used with singular nouns (e.g. each), some with plurals (e.g. many) and some with uncountable nouns (e.g. much). There are also some determiners which are used with more than one kind of noun (e.g. which)