

### Before uncountable nouns

We do not use articles before uncountable and abstract nouns used in a general sense.

Honey is sweet. (NOT The honey is sweet.)

Sugar is bad for your teeth.

Wisdom is better than riches.

Virtue is its own reward.

Note that uncountable nouns take the article the when used in a particular sense.

Would you pass the sugar? (= the sugar on the table)

### Before plural countable nouns

We do not use articles before plural countable nouns used in a general sense.

Children usually rush about.

Computers are useful machines.

Note that plural nouns take the article the when they are used in a particular sense.

Where are the children? (Which children? Our children)

### Before proper nouns

We do not use articles before the names of countries, people, continents, cities, rivers and lakes.

India is a democratic country. (NOT The India ...)

Paris is the capital of France. (NOT The Paris ...)

### Before the names of meals

We do not use articles before the names of meals.

Mother is cooking lunch.

Dinner is ready.

We use a when there is an adjective before breakfast, lunch, dinner etc. We use the when we are talking about a particular meal.

I had a late dinner yesterday.

The lunch we had at the restaurant was very good.

Before languages

We do not use articles before the names of languages.

Can you speak English? (NOT Can you speak the English?)

They speak French at home.

Before school, college, university, church, bed, hospital, prison etc.

His dad is still in hospital.

We learned English at school.

He is at university.

The is used before these words when the reference is to the building or object rather than to the normal activity that goes on there.

I met her at the church. (Here the reference is to the building and not to the activity that is going on there.)

I went to the hospital to see my friend.