

Common expressions without articles

In some common fixed expressions of place, time and movement countable nouns are normally treated as uncountables, without articles. Here are the most common expressions of this kind:

To school / at school / in school / from school

To university / at university / from university (GB)

To university / in university / from university (US)

To / at / in / into / from church

To / in / into / out of bed / prison

To / at sea

To / in / from town

At / from home

Leave home / school / university / college

Start school / university / college

Enter school / university / college

To / in / into / out of hospital

To / at / from work

By car / by bus / by bicycle / by plane / by train / by boat

On foot

By radio / phone / letter / mail

In some cases, place nouns are used with articles. There is usually a difference of meaning. For example, when we say *at the university*, we are referring to the building, not to the activities going on there.

Compare:

John has to go to hospital. He has got heart problems. (as a patient.)

I went to the hospital to see James. (Here we are referring to the bricks and mortar structure.)

Notes

In American English, the words *hospital* and *I* are always used with articles.