

Uses of the definite article

To talk about a particular person or thing

The definite article the is used to talk about a particular person or thing.

The book you want is out of print. (Which book? The one you want.)

Let's go to the park. (Which park? May be the one in the town.)

The definite article the is also used to talk about a person or thing that has already been referred to.

I saw a girl in the park. The girl was crying. (Which girl? The one I saw in the park.)

Before a singular noun meant to represent the whole class

When a singular noun is meant to represent a whole class to which it belongs, it is used with the definite article the.

The cow is a useful animal. (Here the singular noun cow represents a whole class.)

The rose is the sweetest of all flowers.

The spider has eight legs.

Note that these sentences can also be written using a plural noun without any article.

Cows are useful animals.

Roses are the sweetest of all flowers.

Spiders have eight legs.

Before the names of certain books

Examples are: The Vedas, The Illiad

Before superlative adjectives

The definite article the is used before superlative adjectives.

She is the best person I have seen.

Which is the highest mountain in the world?

Before ordinal numbers

Who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize?

Uses of the definite article

The first half of the film is more interesting than the second half.

Before musical instruments

He can play the flute.

As an adverb with comparatives

The more the merrier.

The more they get, the more they want.

The higher you climb, the cooler it gets.