

Unit 73 The (2)

a Study these sentences:

- **The rose** is my favourite flower.
- **The giraffe** is the tallest of all animals.

In these examples **the ...** doesn't mean one particular thing. **The rose** = roses in general, **the giraffe** = giraffes in general. We use **the** + a *singular countable noun* in this way to talk about a type of plant, animal etc. Note that you can also use a plural noun without **the**:

- **Roses** are my favourite flowers. (*but not* 'The roses ...' - see **Unit 74**)

We also use **the** + a *singular countable noun* when we talk about a type of machine, an invention etc. For example:

- When was **the telephone** invented?
- **The bicycle** is an excellent means of transport.

We also use **the** for musical instruments:

- Can you play **the guitar**? (*not* 'Can you play guitar?')
- **The piano** is my favourite instrument.

b The + adjective

We use **the** with some adjectives (without a noun). The meaning is always plural. For example, **the rich** = rich people in general:

- Do you think **the rich** should pay more taxes?

We use **the** especially with these adjectives:

the rich	the old	the blind	the sick	the disabled	the injured
the poor	the young	the deaf	the dead	the unemployed	

- That man over there is collecting money for **the blind**.
- Why doesn't the government do more to help **the unemployed**?

These expressions are always plural. You cannot say 'a blind' or 'an unemployed'. You have to say 'a blind **man**', 'an unemployed **woman**' etc.

c The + nationality words

You can use **the** with some nationality adjectives when you mean 'the people of that country'. For example:

- **The French** are famous for their food. (= the French people)
- Why do **the English** think they are so wonderful? (= the English people)

You can use **the** in this way with these nationality words:

the British	the Welsh	the Spanish	the Dutch
the English	the Irish	the French	the Swiss

Also with nationality words ending in **-ese** (**the Japanese** / **the Chinese** etc.) With other nationalities you have to use a plural noun ending in **-s**:

(**the**) **Russians** (the) **Italians** (the) **Arabs** (the) **Scots** (the) **Turks**

For **the** see also **Units 71, 72** and **74-77**.