

Let's break this down with clear, everyday examples.

? 1. Everyday Phrases: Bed, Work, and Home

For our most frequent daily routines, we **do not** use an article. We are talking about the *activity* or *state of mind*, rather than a physical object.

Category	Correct Phrase (Ø)	Avoid This Mistake	Real-World Example
Bed	go to bed / be in bed	? go to the bed	"I was so exhausted that I went to bed at 9:00 PM."
Work	go to work / be at work	? be at the work	"She usually starts work at nine and finishes work at five."
Home	go home / be at home	? go to the home	"I love staying at home on rainy Sunday afternoons."

? 2. Institutional Buildings: School, Hospital, University, & Prison

When referring to public institutions, ask yourself: *Am I here for the primary purpose of this place?*

Case A: Primary Purpose ??? Ø (No Article)

If you are there to learn, recover, or serve a sentence, leave the article out:

- **School (to study):** "My children are growing up; they **start school** this September." (*They are going there as students*).
- **Hospital (as a patient):** "After the accident, he had to **stay in hospital** for a week." (*He was receiving medical treatment*).
- **University (to study):** "She is studying chemistry. She is **at university** in London." (*She is a registered student*).
- **Prison (as an inmate):** "The thief was caught and **sent to prison** for three years." (*He is serving a sentence*).

Case B: Just Visiting or Looking at the Building ??? Use "The"

If you are visiting someone, working there temporarily, or referring to the physical building, you **must** use the:

- **School (visitor):** "I went to **the school** yesterday to meet my daughter's teacher." (*I am a visiting parent, not a student*).
- **Hospital (visitor):** "I am at **the hospital** right now. My sister just had a baby!" (*I am a visitor, not a sick patient*).

- **Prison (visitor):** “The social worker went to **the prison** to interview an inmate.” (*They are a professional visitor, not an inmate.*)

? 3. Place Names and Geography

Geographical names have very specific rules. While most individual places do not take an article, groups of places or specific bodies of water do.

? GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

?

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? ZERO ARTICLE (Ø)

- Continents (Africa, Asia)
- Most Countries (Japan, Peru)
- Cities & Towns (Tokyo, Paris)
- Lakes (Lake Victoria)
- Single Mountains (Mount Everest)

? USE "THE"

- Oceans & Seas (the Pacific)
- Plural/United Countries (the UK)
- Rivers (the Amazon, the Nile)
- Mountain Ranges (the Andes)

? When to Use NO Article (Ø)

We do not use an article for singular, individual geographic locations.

- **Continents:** Africa, Asia, Europe, South America.
 - “We went to **Europe** last summer.”
- **Most Countries:** India, Ghana, Peru, Denmark, France, Japan.
 - “She moved to **Denmark** for her career.”
- **Cities & Towns:** Hanoi, New York, Moscow, Cardiff, Tokyo.
 - “I was born in **New York**.”
- **Individual Lakes:** Lake Victoria, Lake Superior, Lake Tanganyika.
 - “We spent the afternoon by **Lake Victoria**.”
- **Individual Mountain Peaks:** Mount Everest, Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Fuji.
 - “She climbed **Mount Fuji** last autumn.”

? When to Use “THE”

We use **the** for groups of things, water systems, or countries with collective, plural, or “united” names:

- **Countries with “United”, “Republic”, or Plural Names:**
 - “He lives in **the United Kingdom**.”
 - “We are traveling to **the United States of America**.”
 - “They spent their honeymoon in **the Bahamas**.”
 - “We are visiting **the Gambia** next month.”
- **Seas, Oceans, and Rivers:**
 - “**The Nile** is the longest river in the world.”
 - “We sailed across **the Pacific Ocean** and into **the Mediterranean Sea**.”
- **Mountain Ranges (Plural Chains of Mountains):**
 - “**The Andes** and **the Himalayas** are absolutely breathtaking.”

- (Remember: Climb **Mount Everest** [no article], but hike across **the Himalayas** [use “the”]).

? 4. University Names: The Word Order Rule

Look closely at how the position of the word “University” changes which article you need to use:

Pattern 1: [City/Name] + University ??? Ø (No Article)

If the name of the place or person comes first, do not use an article.

- “She was accepted into **Harvard University**.”
- “He studies at **Cardiff University**.”
- “**Manchester University** has a beautiful campus.”

Pattern 2: The University + OF + [Name] ??? Use “THE”

If the word “University” comes first and is connected by the word “of”, you **must** use **the**.

- “She graduated from **the University of Delhi**.”
- “He is doing research at **the University of Tokyo**.”
- “Have you visited **the University of Cape Town**?”

? Practice Time: Interactive Grammar Quiz

Test your mastery of articles in common phrases and place names! Select the correct option to complete each sentence below.

? Practice Tip for Your Journal

To practice, try drawing a simple map of your daily journey. Write down the places you pass using the correct article rules. For example:

*“I leave **home** (Ø) ??? pass **the hospital** (the building) ??? cross **the River Thames** (the river) ??? arrive at **work** (Ø).”*

Write your route in the comments section below, and our team at **Advanced English Lab** will review your grammar!

Category

1. A1-A2 grammar
2. Explanations
3. Grammar

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