



Section 2: Known and Unknown

Section 2 Part 1: Explanation

We use 'a / an' (for singular countable nouns) when we think the listener or reader WON'T know which thing or person we are talking about. We use 'the' when we think the person listening WILL know which thing or person we mean.

It's not important if the person who is speaking knows which one. The important thing is if the person who is listening knows or not. For example:

- I bought **a** blue sweater yesterday (the speaker knows which sweater, but the listener doesn't, so we use 'a').
- We went to **a** lovely café (the speaker knows which one but the listener doesn't, so we use 'a').

Sometimes the person who is speaking doesn't know which one exactly (and neither does the listener). Instead, the speaker is talking about any member of a certain group – it doesn't matter which one. We still use 'a/an', because the listener doesn't know which one. For example:

- I'd like **a** cup of tea (the speaker doesn't know which one, neither does the listener. It doesn't matter which particular cup of tea).
- I need to see **a** doctor (any doctor, neither the listener nor the speaker are thinking about a particular doctor).
- Could you pass me **a** pen please? (any pen, the speaker doesn't know which one).

On the other hand, we CAN'T use 'a / an' with uncountable or plural nouns. If the listener doesn't know which plural or uncountable noun, we use 'no article'.

- I'd like chips.
- Get me coffee.

(In this case we often use 'some'. See [Appendix 3](#))

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

Remember:

- If the listener knows which one, we use 'the' (with any kind of noun).
- If the listener doesn't know which one:
 - we use 'a /an' with singular countable nouns.
 - we use 'no article' with plural countable nouns or uncountable nouns.

Section 2 Part 2: Known because we already talked about it

The listener might know which one we mean because we've already talked about the thing in our conversation (or piece of writing).

- I bought an apple and an orange. **The** apple was delicious.

We use 'an apple' and 'an orange' at first because we think the person listening won't know which apple or which orange we are talking about.

But the second (or third or fourth...) time we talk about something, we can use 'the' because the listener knows which one. He or she knows because we've already said which one – it's the apple that I bought yesterday and not another apple.

Exercise 1

Put in 'a' or 'the':

1. He gave me _____ clock and _____ picture as a wedding present. _____ clock belonged to his grandmother.
2. I took _____ suitcase and _____ backpack on holiday. _____ suitcase was much more useful.
3. John broke _____ vase when he was in Marie's house. _____ vase was over 100 years old.
4. Julie read _____ book and _____ magazine. She said _____ book was quite boring though.
5. I washed _____ white shirt and _____ red top together. Now _____ shirt is pink.

[Click here for answers](#)

We can't use 'a' or 'an' with uncountable nouns or plural countable nouns (see [Appendix 2](#) if you need more information about countable and uncountable nouns). In these cases, if we are introducing something for the first time that our listener doesn't know about, we use 'no article', not 'a/an'. (We can also use 'some' or another word that tells us the amount depending on the situation: see [Appendix 3](#))

- I bought beef, vegetables and milk. **The** beef was very good.
- Her house is full of DVDs and books. **The** books are mostly about Africa.

 Exercise 2

Choose 'a/an' or 'no article' (Ø):

(Remember, all of these are being introduced for the first time and we think the listener doesn't know which one(s) we mean. We use 'a/an' with singular uncountable nouns, and 'no article' with plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns)

1. She gave us _____ bread and _____ orange juice. The orange juice was delicious.
2. I got _____ book and _____ magazine from the library.
3. We watched _____ films and _____ TV programmes all night. The films were better.
4. She offered us _____ piece of cake or _____ biscuits.
5. We had _____ broccoli and _____ cheese for dinner.
6. I dropped _____ glass and two bowls. They all broke.
7. We cooked _____ spaghetti and _____ bacon. John had bought the spaghetti in Rome.
8. She has _____ black umbrella and I have _____ blue one. The blue one is much bigger.
9. We had _____ piece of pie and _____ potatoes for lunch. The pie was very good indeed.
10. I took _____ bottle of wine and _____ box of chocolates to the party.
11. I drank _____ cup of coffee and ate _____ biscuits. The biscuits had been made by my mother.
12. She returned _____ shoes and _____ dress to the shop because they were damaged.
13. Ruth has _____ son and _____ two daughters. One of the daughters is in my class.
14. They drank _____ water and _____ tea.
15. At the weekend, I crashed my bike into _____ car.
16. I moved into _____ new flat last month. It's really lovely.
17. Could you get _____ milk and _____ newspaper when you are at the shop?
18. I had _____ pasta and _____ glass of wine last night. The pasta was really good.
19. I spilled _____ coffee on the sofa and I dropped _____ jug of milk on the floor.
20. John has _____ orange chairs and _____ green carpet!

[Click here for answers](#)

This is also true when we introduce something and then use a different word to talk about the same thing:

- A female student came in. **The** girl... ('The girl' is the same person as 'a female student' so we have already introduced her).

Section 2 Part 3: Known because we mentioned something connected

We can also use 'the' to talk about things which we haven't talked about directly in the previous conversation but which we can understand from something else we've said. In the example below, we know that houses usually have doors:

- We arrived at a house. **The** door was open.

(In this case we know 'the door' is the door of the house we've just talked about. We think the listener will understand which door we mean, but we use 'a' when we introduce the house because we don't think the listener will know which house we mean).

- I wanted to buy a new coat but **the** price was too high.

(When you buy something, there's usually a price, so we think the listener will understand that we mean the price of the coat).

Exercise 3

Put in 'a/an' or 'the':

1. They stopped for _____ picnic. However, _____ lemonade was warm.
2. We had _____ lovely meal together. Julie brought _____ dessert.
3. I bought _____ new dress, but I was annoyed to find that _____ zip was broken.
4. I sat down on _____ chair but _____ leg suddenly broke.
5. We went to _____ party. _____ music was very loud.

[Click here for answers](#)

Section 2 Part 4: The listener / reader might know which one we mean because it's obvious from the physical situation near us

Sometimes the listener knows which one we mean because of the place we are in. We might be able to see the thing we are talking about. For example:

- Pass me **the** glass (if there's only one glass we can see, then the listener knows which one, because there's no other choice).

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

On the other hand, if there is more than one, the listener probably doesn't know which one I mean, so I have to use 'a / an':

- Please close **the** window (only one is open).
- Please close **a** window (three are open: I want you to close any one of them).

If there is more than one and we want them all, we can still use 'the':

- Close **the** windows (there are three windows open, but I want you to close all of them).

The situation we are in could also be something bigger, like the town, city or country we are in. For example:

- You can buy apples in **the** supermarket (the supermarket in our town).
- **The** library is on Main Street (the library in our town).

Exercise 4

Put in 'a/an' or 'the' (this exercise only has singular countable nouns)

1. Could you pass me _____ book (there's only one).
2. Could you pass me _____ book (any book is okay).
3. I'd like _____ spoon (there are lots in the drawer).
4. I'd like _____ spoon (there's only one on the table).
5. She took _____ chair from the dining room (there are lots of chairs in the dining room).
6. She took _____ chair from the dining room (there's only one chair in the dining room).
7. He handed me _____ fork (there was only one).
8. He handed me _____ fork (there were several).
9. He picked me up at _____ station (there is one station in our town).
10. He picked me up at _____ station (I can't remember which station).
11. Would you mind opening _____ door? (I mean the door of the room we are in).
12. He walked into _____ door and hit his head (The listener doesn't know which door – it could be any door).
13. She fell into _____ river (there's one river in our town).
14. She fell into _____ river (the listener doesn't know which river – it could be any river in the country).
15. I drank _____ cup of coffee (she made me one cup of coffee).
16. Could you buy me _____ cup of coffee? (any one is fine).
17. We met in _____ bookshop (there is only one bookshop in our town).
18. We met in _____ bookshop (it could be any bookshop).
19. I had dinner in _____ Chinese restaurant (there's one near our house).
20. I had dinner in _____ Chinese restaurant (there are hundreds in London and you don't know which one).

[Click here for answers](#)

Exercise 5

Put in 'the' or 'no article' (Ø) (this exercise only has uncountable and plural nouns):

1. Can you pass _____ salt? (I mean salt which is on the table where we are sitting).
2. Could you get _____ salt when you are at the supermarket? (any salt is okay).
3. Earlier today I bought _____ wine. (you don't know which wine).
4. Please put _____ wine in the fridge (there's a bottle of wine on the table).
5. I bought _____ apples earlier (there is a bowl of apples on the table).
6. Can you get _____ apples for the pie? (any apples are okay).
7. _____ water doesn't taste good (I mean the water in our flat).
8. She dropped _____ water all over the floor (I don't know what particular water).
9. Can you put _____ boxes on this shelf? (any boxes – at the moment I'm not thinking of any particular ones).
10. Can you pick up _____ boxes (there are four boxes on the floor and I want you to pick up all of them).

[Click here for answers](#)

Section 2 Part 5: It's obvious which one we mean because we say so in the sentence

Sometimes the listener knows which one because we make it clear in our sentence, by using certain grammar or vocabulary.

1: Relative Clauses

We can use different grammatical structures to say which one we mean. One which we often use is a relative clause. For example:

- John knows **the** girl who I met yesterday

Remember, it needs to be clear which one we mean from the relative clause. If it's not obvious, and the listener doesn't know which one we're talking about, we can still use 'a' even if we use a relative clause. For example:

- I saw John talking to **a** girl who I met last night.
(Even though there is a relative clause, we still don't know exactly which girl – I met several girls last night, so we can use 'a').
- I saw John talking to **the** girl who I met last night.
(I met only one girl last night).

2: Prepositional Phrases

We often use prepositional phrases (on the table, by the station) to say which one we mean. For example:

- Pass me **the** book on the table (there's only one book on the table, so it's clear which one we mean).
- I often go to **the** supermarket by the station.

Be careful – we only use 'the' with a prepositional phrase if it tells us which one.

Exercise 6

Put in 'the' if the listener knows which one from the rest of the sentence, use 'a/an' if the listener doesn't know:

1. Let's meet in _____ café.
2. Let's meet in _____ café next to my flat.
3. Do you want _____ cup of coffee I've just bought?
4. Do you want _____ cup of coffee?
5. John's going out with _____ French girl we met last week.
6. John's going out with _____ French girl.
7. I bought _____ new laptop.
8. I bought _____ laptop that I told you about.
9. Pass me _____ glass next to your hand, please.
10. Pass me _____ glass, please.
11. Julie crashed her bike into _____ tree.
12. Julie crashed her bike into _____ only tree in her garden.
13. She ate _____ cake I had just finished making.
14. She ate _____ cake.
15. He played _____ piece of music.
16. He played _____ piece of music that we were discussing yesterday.
17. Can you give me _____ piece of paper on my desk?
18. Can you give me _____ piece of paper?
19. David had dinner in _____ restaurant.
20. David had dinner in _____ restaurant he usually goes to.

[Click here for answers](#)

3: 'The back of' etc

Another grammatical structure that tells us which one is 'of' phrases that talk about a certain part of something. Because something only has one back, for example, we use 'the' when we talk about it, as the listener must know which one we mean. For example:

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

the back of	I wrote her number on the back of my notebook.
the front of	The front of the dress was blue.
the middle of	She sat down in the middle of the floor.
the top of	He stood at the top of the stairs and waited.
the bottom of	The answers are at the bottom of the page.
the edge of	I tripped on the edge of the pavement.
the beginning of	At the beginning of the book, she is living in Paris.
the end of	They got married at the end of the film.
the height of	What's the height of Mount Fuji?
the length of	He ran the length of the football pitch.
the size of	I was amazed at the size of his house.
the weight of	I can't guess the weight of the cake.
the title of	What's the title of the film we saw last week?
the price of	The price of flats here is very high.

4: Superlatives

Another grammatical structure that tells us which one is a superlative.

If we use a superlative (**the tallest** student in the class) then there is obviously only one (or one group) of the thing we are talking about. There is one student who is the tallest in the class, and because it's clear which one we mean, we can use 'the':

- She's **the** most beautiful girl I've ever seen.
- It's **the** best café in London.
- John and Lisa are **the** most intelligent students here.
- This bowl is **the** biggest.

5: Certain Adjectives

There are some adjectives which are often used to talk about only one thing (or one group of things). For example, if I say 'the first bus' I use 'the' because only one bus can be first, so the listener knows which one I mean.

Here's a list of some adjectives we often use with 'the':

same	He was wearing the same t-shirt as me.
next	Let's get on the next train that comes.
last	We caught the last bus home.
first / second /	She bought the first dress she found.
third ...	I'd like the second cake on the shelf.
only	Coffee is the only thing I want now.
right	It's the right answer.
wrong*	I'm afraid that's the wrong bottle.
usual	We went to the usual restaurant.

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

*I know it is a bit strange to talk about the wrong answer when there are usually lots of wrong answers to any question, but we do!

(We don't use 'the' when we are using these words alone to order ideas in a sentence. First, you mix the flour and the water. Next, ...)

6: 'Next' and 'last' with time expressions:

However, be careful about 'next' and 'last' when they are used with time expressions – in this case they usually don't take 'the'. When 'next week' means 'the week after this one' we don't need 'the':

- I'm going to visit my brother next week (NOT: ~~the next week~~)

When 'last week' means 'the week before this one', we don't need 'the':

- I saw David last week (NOT: ~~the last week~~)

This is the same for similar expressions like: 'next month', 'next year', 'last month', 'last year', 'last night', 'last summer', 'next winter'. It's also true with days, like 'next Tuesday', 'last Sunday')

- I saw the new film last month (not: ~~the last month~~)
- We're going on holiday next month (not: ~~the next month~~)
- She will graduate next year (not: ~~the next year~~)
- I went on holiday to Bolivia last summer (not: ~~the last summer~~)

('Last' has two meanings. It can mean, 'coming at the end' (opposite of first) – in this case, we need 'the', as only one thing (or group of things) can come at the end. Second, 'last' can mean 'previous / the one before today' like last week, last month. In this case we use 'no article')



Exercise 7

Decide if we need 'the' or 'no article' (Ø):

1. I'm going on holiday _____ next week.
2. We'll get on _____ next bus.
3. She has _____ same t-shirt as me.
4. I arrived in New York _____ last month.
5. We ate in _____ usual place.
6. Shall we meet at _____ same time tomorrow?
7. I can't believe he ate _____ last chocolate!
8. I'm going on holiday _____ next Friday.
9. This is _____ first time I've been to Europe.
10. She started college _____ last year.

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11. I managed to get _____ only taxi there.
12. That's _____ right answer!
13. We went to the cinema _____ last Sunday.
14. He's always getting _____ wrong idea.
15. What are you doing _____ next month?
16. She asked directions from _____ next person she saw.
17. We didn't see John at all _____ last week.
18. He's _____ only person from Colombia in his office.
19. She arrived at the station early, and got on _____ first train to Cambridge.
20. Call me _____ next Tuesday.

[Click here for answers](#)

Two more points:

- 1: With 'last / next + time' we can use either 'the' or 'no article':
 - (The) next time we go out, I'll bring my umbrella.
 - (The) last time I saw her, she looked really tired.
- 2: When we use 'in' with 'next', like 'in the next year', we use 'the', and the phrase has a different meaning.
 - Next year = the year after this one:
I'm going to Russia next year.

BUT:

- In **the** next year = between now and one year from now:
I'll finish my thesis in the next year. (If today is the 1st of June 2011, I will finish between now and the 1st of June 2012).

In the same way:

- Next week = the week after this one:
Can we meet next week?

BUT:

- In **the** next week = between now and one week from now:
She'll arrive in the next week, but I'm not sure exactly when. (If today is Tuesday, she will arrive at some time between now and next Tuesday).

Section 2 Part 6: Unique things

In the section about the physical situation, we saw that we can use 'the' when the listener knows which one we mean because of the room or building or town we are in. If there is only one of something in the room, for example, we can use 'the' because it's clear which one we mean. For the same reason, we can use 'the' with nouns when there is only one in the country we are in.

- **The** Queen was on television yesterday (if I am in England when I say this, you will understand that I mean the Queen of England).
- I think we should support **the** government (I mean the government in our country).

Sometimes, there is only one of something on Earth, or even in the universe. We use 'the' with these words, as it's clear which one we mean. For example, we use 'the' with 'sun' as there's only one sun (close to us, anyway!) and everybody knows which one we mean.

- **The** sun was very hot that day.

In the same way, we often use 'the' if there is only one group of something:

- I loved learning about **the** planets in school.

Here is a list of some words that are often used like this:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. the sun | Don't look directly at the sun. |
| 2. the moon | She could see the moon from her bedroom window. |
| 3. the stars | The stars are difficult to see clearly. |
| 4. the sky | The sky was a lovely shade of blue. |
| 5. the universe | The universe is vast. |
| 6. the planets | I would love to visit the planets. |
| 7. the world | It's the best city in the world. |
| 8. the solar system | The alien travelled to the edge of the solar system. |
| 9. the earth | The earth looks small from space. |
| 10. the equator | The equator goes through Ecuador. |
| 11. the north pole | The north pole is surrounded by snow. |
| 12. the past | It must have been difficult to live without electricity in the past. |
| 13. the future | Can you imagine what life will be like in the future? |
| 14. the present | There's no time like the present. |
| 15. the internet | I looked the word up on the internet. |
| 16. the environment | We need to think about protecting the environment. |

How to Use ‘A’ and ‘The’

We also use ‘the’ with time periods (like ‘the twentieth century’) because there is only one of them. We say ‘the sixties’, ‘the eighteenth century’, ‘the Middle Ages’:

- They were the most popular pop group in **the** sixties.
- What was it like to live in **the** Middle Ages?
- The French revolution was in **the** eighteenth century.

We also usually use ‘the’ with grammatical terms such as ‘the definite article’, ‘the past simple tense’ and so on – we imagine that there is only one of these things (at least in the language we are talking about).

- Put these sentences into **the** present tense.
- You need to use **the** definite article if the listener knows which one you mean.

Section 2 Summary:

Section 2 Part 1:	We use ‘a/an’ (or ‘no article’ for uncountable and plural nouns) when we think the listener doesn’t know which one we’re talking about, but we use ‘the’ when we think the listener does know.
Section 2 Part 2:	The listener might know which one because we’ve already talked about it.
Section 2 Part 3:	The listener might know because we’ve already talked about something that is related.
Section 2 Part 4:	The listener might know because it’s clear from the room or building we’re in.
Section 2 Part 5:	The listener might know which one because we say which one in the rest of the sentence: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We use a relative clause2. We use a prepositional phrase3. We use an expression like ‘the back of’4. We use a superlative5. We use certain adjectives6. (Be careful about ‘next’ and ‘last’)
Section 2 Part 6:	The listener might know which one because the thing or person is unique.

 **Exercise 8: Section 2 Review A**

Choose 'a / an', 'the' or 'no article' (Ø):

1. I had _____ cup of coffee for breakfast.
2. I met a man and a woman last night. _____ woman was from Mexico.
3. She bought _____ new laptop.
4. I had _____ bread and cheese for lunch.
5. It's not good for your eyes to look directly at _____ sun.
6. Where's _____ shop that John works in?
7. Meet me _____ next week.
8. They went for a walk and looked at _____ moon.
9. It's on _____ back of the page.
10. She gave me _____ last chocolate.
11. Could you pass me _____ glass (any one is fine).
12. She bought _____ laptop that her brother recommended.
13. I had lunch in a lovely restaurant. _____ main course was excellent.
14. She arrives in New York _____ next month.
15. Julie has _____ sister and two brothers.
16. Please pass me _____ coffee on the table (there is one coffee and one table near us)
17. I need _____ book (there is one book near us)
18. John is _____ tallest in his family.
19. He ate _____ chips at the restaurant.
20. She wants to sit in _____ armchair (there is only one armchair in this room)
21. We rented _____ car on holiday.
22. She walked into a beautiful house. _____ kitchen was near _____ front door.
23. I'd really like _____ new computer.
24. She got _____ new shoes last weekend.
25. My brother is in _____ middle of the photo.

[Click here for answers](#)

 **Exercise 9: Section 2 Review B**

Choose 'a / an', 'the' or 'no article' (Ø):

1. William is _____ cutest baby in London.
2. Let's start again from _____ beginning of the song.
3. I bought _____ new dress.
4. We got in _____ first taxi.
5. Can I borrow _____ pen? It doesn't matter which one.
6. Which is your favourite city in _____ world?
7. He was wearing _____ same t-shirt as his brother.
8. We visited Canada _____ last year.
9. I'll meet you in _____ usual place.

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

10. This is _____ only dress I could find.
11. She lives near _____ equator, so the weather is very hot.
12. He bought a pen and some paper in the shop. _____ pen was red.
13. She crashed her bicycle into a car, and broke _____ windscreen.
14. Could you give me _____ piece of paper?
15. Everest is _____ highest mountain in the world.
16. She came to San Francisco _____ last December.
17. I had _____ cup of tea and _____ biscuit. They were both delicious.
18. I'll see you _____ next Tuesday.
19. Please pass _____ salt (there is one salt cellar on our table)
20. Have you read _____ book that I lent you?
21. I'm going to look on _____ internet.
22. I love looking at _____ planets on a clear night.
23. We ate _____ sandwiches and drank _____ water.
24. I bought a new dress. It has a pattern on _____ sleeves.
25. Journalists often talk about _____ environment these days.

[Click here for answers](#)

Answers to Section 2

Answers to Exercise 1:

1. He gave me **a** clock and **a** picture as a wedding present. **The** clock belonged to his grandmother.
2. I took **a** suitcase and **a** backpack on holiday. **The** suitcase was much more useful.
3. John broke **a** vase when he was in Marie's house. **The** vase was over 100 years old.
4. Julie read **a** book and **a** magazine. She said **the** book was quite boring though.
5. I washed **a** white shirt and **a** red top together. Now **the** shirt is pink.

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Answers to Exercise 2:

1. She gave us **Ø** bread and **Ø** orange juice. The orange juice was delicious.
2. I got **a** book and **a** magazine from the library.
3. We watched **Ø** films and **Ø** TV programmes all night. The films were better.
4. She offered us **a** piece of cake or **Ø** biscuits.
5. We had **Ø** broccoli and **Ø** cheese for dinner.
6. I dropped **a** glass and two bowls. They all broke.
7. We cooked **Ø** spaghetti and **Ø** bacon. John had bought the spaghetti in Rome.
8. She has **a** black umbrella and I have **a** blue one. The blue one is much bigger.
9. We had **a** piece of pie and **Ø** potatoes for lunch. The pie was very good indeed.
10. I took **a** bottle of wine and **a** box of chocolates to the party.
11. I drank **a** cup of coffee and ate **Ø** biscuits. The biscuits had been made by my mother.
12. She returned **Ø** shoes and **a** dress to the shop because they were damaged.
13. Ruth has **a** son and **Ø** two daughters. One of the daughters is in my class.
14. They drank **Ø** water and **Ø** tea.
15. At the weekend, I crashed my bike into **a** car.
16. I moved into **a** new flat last month. It's really lovely.
17. Could you get **Ø** milk and **a** newspaper when you are at the shop?
18. I had **Ø** pasta and **a** glass of wine last night. The pasta was really good.
19. I spilled **Ø** coffee on the sofa and I dropped **a** jug of milk on the floor.
20. John has **Ø** orange chairs and **Ø** green carpet!

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Answers to Exercise 3:

1. They stopped for **a** picnic. However, **the** lemonade was warm.
2. We had **a** lovely meal together. Julie brought **the** dessert.
3. I bought **a** new dress, but I was annoyed to find that **the** zip was broken.
4. I sat down on **a** chair but **the** leg suddenly broke.
5. We went to **a** party. **The** music was very loud.

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Answers to Exercise 4:

1. Could you pass me **the** book (there's only one).
2. Could you pass me **a** book (any book is okay).
3. I'd like **a** spoon (there are lots in the drawer).
4. I'd like **the** spoon (there's only one on the table).
5. She took **a** chair from the dining room (there are lots of chairs in the dining room)
6. She took **the** chair from the dining room (there's only one chair in the dining room)
7. He handed me **the** fork (there was only one)
8. He handed me **a** fork (there were several)
9. He picked me up at **the** station (there is one station in our town)
10. He picked me up at **a** station (I can't remember where the station was)
11. Would you mind opening **the** door? (I mean the door of the room we are in)
12. He walked into **a** door and hit his head (The listener doesn't know which door – it could be any door)
13. She fell into **the** river (there's one river in our town)
14. She fell into **a** river (the listener doesn't know which river – it could be any river in the country)
15. I drank **the** cup of coffee (she made me one cup of coffee)
16. Could you buy me **a** cup of coffee? (any one is fine)
17. We met in **the** bookshop (there is only one bookshop in our town)
18. We met in **a** bookshop (it could be any bookshop)
19. I had dinner in **the** Chinese restaurant (there's one near our house)
20. I had dinner in **a** Chinese restaurant (there are hundreds in London and you don't know which one)

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Answers to Exercise 5:

1. Can you pass **the** salt? (I mean salt which is on the table where we are sitting)
2. Could you get **Ø** salt when you are at the supermarket? (any salt is okay)
3. Earlier today I bought **Ø** wine. (you don't know which wine)
4. Please put **the** wine in the fridge (there's a bottle of wine on the table)
5. I bought **the** apples earlier (there is a bowl of apples on the table)
6. Can you get **Ø** apples for the pie? (any apples are okay)
7. **The** water doesn't taste good (I mean the water in our flat)
8. She dropped **Ø** water all over the floor (I don't know what particular water)
9. Can you put **Ø** boxes on this shelf? (any boxes – at the moment I'm not thinking of any particular ones)
10. Can you pick up **the** boxes (there are four boxes on the floor and I want you to pick up all of them)

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Answers to Exercise 6:

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

1. Let's meet in **a** café.
2. Let's meet in **the** café next to my flat.
3. Do you want **the** cup of coffee I've just bought?
4. Do you want **a** cup of coffee?
5. John's going out with **the** French girl we met last week.
6. John's going out with **a** French girl.
7. I bought **a** new laptop.
8. I bought **the** laptop that I told you about.
9. Pass me **the** glass next to your hand, please.
10. Pass me **a** glass, please.
11. Julie crashed her bike into **a** tree.
12. Julie crashed her bike into **the** only tree in her garden.
13. She ate **the** cake I had just finished making.
14. She ate **a** cake.
15. He played **a** piece of music.
16. He played **the** piece of music that we were discussing yesterday.
17. Can you give me **the** piece of paper on my desk?
18. Can you give me **a** piece of paper?
19. David had dinner in **a** restaurant.
20. David had dinner in **the** restaurant he usually goes to.

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Answers to Exercise 7:

1. I'm going on holiday **Ø** next week.
2. We'll get on **the** next bus.
3. She has **the** same t-shirt as me.
4. I arrived in New York **Ø** last month.
5. We ate in **the** usual place.
6. Shall we meet at **the** same time tomorrow?
7. I can't believe he ate **the** last chocolate!
8. I'm going on holiday **Ø** next Friday.
9. This is **the** first time I've been to Europe.
10. She started college **Ø** last year.
11. I managed to get **the** only taxi there.
12. That's **the** right answer!
13. We went to the cinema **Ø** last Sunday.
14. He's always getting **the** wrong idea.
15. What are you doing **Ø** next month?
16. She asked directions from **the** next person she saw.
17. We didn't see John at all **Ø** last week.
18. He's **the** only person from Colombia in his office.
19. She arrived at the station early, and got on **the** first train to Cambridge.
20. Call me **Ø** next Tuesday.

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Answers to Exercise 8 (Section 2 Review 1):

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

1. I had **a** cup of coffee for breakfast.
2. I met a man and a woman last night. **The** woman was from Mexico.
3. She bought **a** new laptop.
4. I had **Ø** bread and cheese for lunch.
5. It's not good for your eyes to look directly at **the** sun.
6. Where's **the** shop that John works in?
7. Meet me **Ø** next week.
8. They went for a walk and looked at **the** moon.
9. It's on **the** back of the page.
10. She gave me **the** last chocolate.
11. Could you pass me **a** glass (any one is fine).
12. She bought **the** laptop that her brother recommended.
13. I had lunch in a lovely restaurant. **The** main course was excellent.
14. She arrives in New York **Ø** next month.
15. Julie has **a** sister and two brothers.
16. Please pass me **the** coffee on the table (there is one coffee and one table near us)
17. I need **the** book (there is one book near us)
18. John is **the** tallest in his family.
19. He ate **Ø** chips at the restaurant.
20. She wants to sit in **the** armchair (there is only one armchair in this room)
21. We rented **a** car on holiday.
22. She walked into a beautiful house. **The** kitchen was near **the** front door.
23. I'd really like **a** new computer.
24. She got **Ø** new shoes last weekend.
25. My brother is in **the** middle of the photo.

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Answers to Exercise 9 (Section 2 Review 2):

1. William is **the** cutest baby in London.
2. Let's start again from **the** beginning of the song.
3. I bought **a** new dress.
4. We got in **the** first taxi.
5. Can I borrow **a** pen? It doesn't matter which one.
6. Which is your favourite city in **the** world?
7. He was wearing **the** same t-shirt as his brother.
8. We visited Canada **Ø** last year.
9. I'll meet you in **the** usual place.
10. This is **the** only dress I could find.
11. She lives near **the** equator, so the weather is very hot.
12. He bought a pen and some paper in the shop. **The** pen was red.
13. She crashed her bicycle into a car, and broke **the** windscreen.
14. Could you give me **a** piece of paper?
15. Everest is **the** highest mountain in the world.
16. She came to San Francisco **Ø** last December.
17. I had **a** cup of tea and **a** biscuit. They were both delicious.
18. I'll see you **Ø** next Tuesday.

How to Use 'A' and 'The'

19. Please pass **the** salt (there is one salt cellar on our table)
20. Have you read **the** book that I lent you?
21. I'm going to look on **the** internet.
22. I love looking at **the** planets on a clear night.
23. We ate **Ø** sandwiches and drank **Ø** water.
24. I bought a new dress. It has a pattern on **the** sleeves.
25. Journalists often talk about **the** environment these days.

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