

Unit 53: NOUNS WITHOUT THE OR A

Sometimes we do not use **the** or **a / an / some / any** at the beginning of a noun phrase; we use nothing at all.

1 With names

With most names of people, places and times (Unit 48).

2 Talking generally

We all need **water** to live. NOT *the* water
Life is hard. NOT *the* life
Doctors cure sick people. NOT *the* doctors

BUT **The** water in this bottle is dirty. (Unit 52)
He has had **a** good life. (Unit 54)

3 Identifying

With mass nouns: It's **coffee**.
and plural nouns; We are **students**.
BUT with singular nouns: I am **a** student / It is **a** cup.

4 Talking about meals

He has **breakfast** at six. NOT *the* breakfast
Why don't you stay for **lunch**? NOT *the* lunch

5 Talking about illnesses

I think I've got **flu**. NOT *the* flu

6 After prepositions

When we are talking about:
travelling We went by **bus**. NOT *the* bus

some places He was in **bed**. NOT *the* bed
 They went to **school** early. NOT *the* school
 She's in **hospital** with a broken leg.
 Also with **church, prison, university**

some times of day at night at midnight at sunrise
 BUT in **the** morning in **the** afternoon

BUT use **the** if you are saying which.

We went by **the 7:45** bus.

She's in **the hospital on Yonge Street**.

NOTICE: **The**, or **a / any / some / any**, or nothing? (Unit 54)