



ENGLISH GRAMMAR 2 INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Unit 72 – A/an and the

tienganh



A / an and the

INTRODUCTION

A

I had **a sandwich** and **an apple** for lunch.

The sandwich wasn't very good, but **the apple** was nice.



JOE

Joe says 'a sandwich', 'an apple' because this is the first time he talks about them.

Joe now says 'the sandwich', 'the apple' because we know which sandwich and which apple he means – **the sandwich** and the apple he had for lunch.

Compare **a** and **the** in these examples:

- EX1: **A man** and **a woman** were sitting opposite me. **The man** was American, but I think **the woman** was British.
- EX2: When we were on holiday, we stayed at **a hotel**. Sometimes we ate at **the hotel** and sometimes we went to **a restaurant**.

A / an and the

THE OR A / AN

B

- ❖ We use **the** when we are thinking of a specific thing. Compare a/an and the:
 - EX3: Tim sat down on **a chair**. (*maybe one of many chairs in the room*)
Tim sat down on **the chair** nearest the door. (*a specific chair*)
 - EX4: Do you have **a car**? (*not a specific car*)
I cleaned **the car** yesterday. (= *my car*)
- ❖ We use **a/an** when we say what kind of thing or person we mean. Compare:
 - EX5: We stayed at **a very cheap hotel**. (*a type of hotel*)
The hotel where we stayed was very cheap. (*a specific hotel*)

A / an and the

THE

C

- ❖ We use **the** when it is clear which thing or person we mean. For example, in a room we talk about **the light / the floor / the ceiling / the door / the carpet** etc. :
 - EX6: Can you turn off **the light**, please? (= the light in this room)
 - EX7: I took a taxi to **the station**. (= the station in that town)
 - EX8: (in a shop) I'd like to speak to **the manager**, please. (= the manager of this shop)
 - ❖ We also say '(go to) **the bank / the post office**':
 - EX9: I have to go to **the bank** and then I'm going to **the post office**.
(The speaker is usually thinking of a specific bank or post office.)
 - ❖ and '(go to) **the doctor / the dentist**':
 - EX9: Clare isn't well. She's gone to **the doctor**.
 - EX10: I don't like going to **the dentist**.
- Compare **the** and **a**:
- EX11: I have to go to the bank today.
Is there a bank near here?
 - EX12: I don't like going to the dentist.
My sister is a dentist.

A / an and the

ONCE A WEEK

D

- ❖ We say ‘**once a week / three times a day / £1.50 a kilo**’ etc. :
 - EX13: I go to the cinema about **once a month**.
 - EX14: ‘How much are those potatoes?’ ‘**£1.50 a kilo.**’
 - EX15: Helen works eight hours **a day**, six days **a week**.

tienganh Ivy

A / an and the

TÓM TẮT

1. Chúng ta dùng **A / an** (nghĩa là **một**) để giới thiệu một người, hoặc một đồ vật, nghĩa là khi đề cập đến nó lần đầu tiên trong một ngữ cảnh. *I had **a sandwich** and **an apple** for lunch.*
2. Khi tiếp tục nói về người hay sự vật đó trong cùng ngữ cảnh, chúng ta dùng **the**, nghĩa là **the** được dùng để chỉ một người hoặc sự vật cụ thể, xác định được. ***The sandwich** wasn't very good, but **the apple** was nice.*
3. Tương tự như vậy, khi nghĩ về một người hay vật cụ thể nào đó, chúng ta dùng **the**, còn khi nói về người / vật thuộc một **loại** nào đó, chúng ta dùng **a/an**. *I cleaned **the car** yesterday (= my car)*
4. Chúng ta cũng dùng **the** khi ngữ cảnh giúp người nghe hiểu rõ người hay vật mà chúng ta muốn đề cập đến. *Can you turn off **the light**, please? (= the light in this room.)*
5. Khi nói về tần suất, chúng ta dùng **a / an**. *Helen works eight hours **a day**.*