

Articles with Proper Nouns: Geographical Features and Buildings

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Oceans and seas, Rivers and canals, Deserts, Lakes (with Mount/Lake prefix), Hotels and Museums, Cinemas and Theatres, Airports and Stations, Universities (Names with 'of' vs Place names), City streets and roads, Squares and parks

In English, the use of the definite article (**the**) with proper nouns depends on the category of the place. Some names require **the**, while others use **zero article** (-).

1. Water Bodies and Natural Features

Category	Rule	Examples
Oceans & Seas	Use the	The Pacific, the Mediterranean Sea
Rivers & Canals	Use the	The Amazon, the Nile, the Suez Canal
Deserts	Use the	The Sahara, the Gobi Desert
Lakes	Use zero article (-)	- Lake Victoria, - Lake Superior
Mountains	Use zero article (-)	- Mount Everest, - Mount Fuji

*Note: We use **the** for groups of lakes (the Great Lakes) or mountain ranges (the Andes), but B1 focus is often on individual single items with the prefixes "Mount" or "Lake".*

2. Buildings and Institutions

Category	Rule	Examples
Hotels, Museums & Galleries	Use the	The Ritz, the British Museum, the Louvre
Cinemas & Theatres	Use the	The Odeon, the Globe Theatre
Airports & Stations	Use zero article (-)	- Heathrow Airport, - Victoria Station
Universities (Structure 1)	Use the with "University of..."	The University of London
Universities (Structure 2)	Use zero article (-) with "Place + University"	- Oxford University, - Harvard University

3. Urban Locations

Category	Rule	Examples
Streets & Roads	Use zero article (-)	- Oxford Street, - Fifth Avenue
Squares & Parks	Use zero article (-)	- Times Square, - Central Park

4. Points of the Compass

- We usually use **the** when talking about regions or points on a map: *The North, the South, the East, the West*.
- However, if the direction is part of the name of a country or region, rules vary (e.g., *South Africa* vs *The Middle East*).

Practice

Instruction: Complete the sentences using **the** or **-** (for no article).

1. Have you ever booked a room at _____ Hilton Hotel?
2. They are planning a hiking trip to _____ Mount Kilimanjaro next summer.
3. We arrived at _____ Kennedy Airport two hours before the flight.
4. Is _____ Lake Geneva located in Switzerland or France?
5. _____ University of Cambridge is one of the oldest universities in the world.
6. We didn't visit _____ Tate Modern art gallery when we were in London.
7. My brother is currently studying at _____ Yale University.
8. Can you tell me the quickest way to _____ Trafalgar Square?
9. The ship crossed _____ Atlantic Ocean in just five days.
10. _____ Fifth Avenue is famous for its expensive shops.
11. Did you see the new movie at _____ Apollo Theatre last night?
12. _____ Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.
13. We usually go for a walk in _____ Hyde Park on Sunday mornings.
14. The train to Paris departs from _____ Waterloo Station.
15. It is incredibly hot in _____ Sahara Desert during the day.

Answer Key

1. **the** (Hotel)
2. - (Mount + Name)
3. - (Airport)
4. - (Lake + Name)
5. **The** (University of...)
6. **the** (Gallery/Museum)
7. - (Place + University)
8. - (Square)
9. **the** (Ocean)
10. - (Street/Avenue)
11. **the** (Theatre)
12. **The** (Canal)
13. - (Park)
14. - (Station)
15. **the** (Desert)