UNIT 16. ZERO (ø) ARTICLE, INDEFINITE ARTICLE A/AN, DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

Adapted from:
1. ZERO (Ø) ARTICLE

a) Uncountable nouns

   *I love gazpacho.*

b) Abstract or general ideas

   *Give love a chance.*

c) Plural nouns not previously mentioned:

   *I hate buses.*
1. ZERO (Ø) ARTICLE

d) Most proper names (in singular):

- We live in Spain.
- I’ll see you in February.

e) Names of sports, meals and school subjects:

- I play tennis.
- I really enjoyed Latin at high school.
- What’s for dinner?

BUT:

- The dinner that they offered was superb.
- A superb dinner
1. ZERO (ø) ARTICLE

f) Prepositions of place (when the place plays a special role):

_Helen is in prison._
_Helen is in the prison._
(church, school, university, work, hospital)

What’s the difference between?:
_Mary is in hospital._
_Mary is at the hospital._

Go to work/be at work/start work/finish work
Go home/come home/arrive home/be at home
1. ZERO (Ø) ARTICLE

g) General means of transport
We went there by taxi/car/bus/train/plane/by sea/air/road.
We went there on a bus/in a car.

h) Next or last
week/weekend/month/year/summer/Monday:
See you next Monday.
I have loads of work to do next weekend.

i) Gerunds
Horse racing is more popular in England than fox-hunting.
2. INDEFINITE ARTICLE

A) Describing jobs
*My sister is a dentist.*

B) Singular fractions, group numbers and large numbers
*One and a half kilos*
*A dozen eggs*
*A hundred envelopes*

C) Meaning “per”
*She was doing ten times an hour.*
*She earns 2,000 euros a month.*
3. A/AN and THE

- Neil is looking for a job.
- Did Neil get the job he applied for?

We use the to talk about specific people, places, or things:

- He works in the city centre.
- My brother is in the army.
- I took a cab to the airport.
- I hate going to the dentist.
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

A) Previously mentioned items

*There are a blackboard and a table. The blackboard is not very big.*

B) Single items, whose reference is clear

- *Can you open the window, please?*
- *Dad must go to the bank to get some money and then he’s going to the post office to buy some stamps.*
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE **THE**

**C) Unique objects**

*The Earth goes round the sun.*

*London is the capital of the United Kingdom.*

But:

*The Earth is a planet.*

(there are more planets besides the Earth)
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

D) Individual items which represent a class
(the + singular noun = plural noun)
- The kangaroo is found in Australia.
- Kangaroos are found in Australia.

E) Classes of people
- The unemployed need more help from the government.
- The rich, the poor, the elderly, the dead.

F) Play + the + musical instrument
- Can you play the piano?

BUT:
- I’d like to have a piano.
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

G) National groups (The +nationality)

Can we say?:

*The Frenches are famous for their food.*
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

G) National groups (The + nationality)

Can we say?:

*The Frenches are famous for their food.
- The French are famous for their food.
- French people are famous for their food.

(the Spanish, the Dutch, the British, the Irish, the Welsh, the Chinese)

Can we say?:

- The French who sold me a villa in the Loire Valley was very rich.
- The Italian who sold me a villa in the Loire Valley was very rich.
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

G) National groups (The + nationality)

Can we say?:

*The Frenches are famous for their food.

- The French are famous for their food.
- French people are famous for their food.

(the Spanish, the Dutch, the British, the Irish, the Welsh, the Chinese)

Can we say?:

* The French who sold me a villa in the Loire Valley was very rich.
- The Frenchman who sold me a villa in the Loire Valley was very rich.
- (Frenchman/woman, Dutchman/woman, Britishman/woman, Irishman/woman, Welshman/woman, Spanishman/woman, Chineseman/woman)

- The Italian who sold me a villa in the Loire Valley was very rich.
- (An Italian/Italians, a Mexican/Mexicans, a Scot/Scots, a Turk/Turks, a Spaniard/Spaniards)
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

H) Some topographical names:

Plural names of places:
- The Netherlands
- The United States of America
- The Twin Towers

Singular names of places where the name contains a noun or of + noun
- The Dominican Republic
- The United Kingdom
- The Middle East
- The Tower of London
- The Bank of England

Names of rivers, oceans, regions, mountain ranges, groups of islands:
- The Thames
- The Mediterranean Sea
- The Canary Islands (or the Canaries)
- The Alps
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

I) Superlatives, ordinals, the same, the only:

- You’re simply the best.
- It’s the same ingredient.
- You’re the only one.
4. DEFINITE ARTICLE THE

J) Media:
- *I went to the cinema/the theatre.*
- *What’s on the radio?*

BUT:
- *What’s on television?*
INDEED!


If the rules for the use of articles seem too complicated, remember these three golden rules:

1. Do not use *the* (with plural and uncountable nouns) to talk about things in general:
   *Life is hard.*

2. Do not use singular countable nouns without articles:
   *The car*  *a car*

3. Use *a/an* to say what people’s professions or jobs are:
   *She’s a bank manager*