

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE "THE"

Capitalization

Generally, the definite article "the" in geographical names is not capitalized (the Indian Ocean; the Nile River; the Philippines; the Alps). But the article "the" is capitalized if it is part of a geographical name (The Hague).

The words "north, east, south, northern, southern, western, central" and the like are capitalized if they are part of a geographical name (the North Sea; Northern Ireland; Central America) or part of the name of a region regarded as a unit (the West; Western Europe; the East; the Far East; the Eastern Hemisphere).

If such words are used for indicating direction or as descriptive terms, they are generally not capitalized: the north; the west; the southeast; the south of France; western Asia; northern Africa; the eastern United States; central Australia.

The words "ocean, river, sea, lake, island, mountains, desert, state, city, street" and the like are capitalized if they are part of a geographical name: the Volga River; the Sea of Japan; Lake Baikal; the Great Lakes; the Canary Islands; Ellis Island; the Rocky Mountains; the Sahara Desert; New York State; Mexico City; Wall Street.

If such words are not part of a geographical name, they are generally not capitalized: the island of Greenland; the state of California; the city of Boston. Such words are capitalized in titles (A Brief History of the City of New York) and may be capitalized in formal writing.

Note: Phonetic transcription of many geographical names is indicated in the materials [The Largest in the World](#) and [Countries and Cities](#) in the section Miscellany.

Continents and geographical areas

No article:

America, North America, South America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Antarctica;

North Africa, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Siberia.

Article the:

the Western Hemisphere, the Eastern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere, the Southern Hemisphere;

the Arctic, the Antarctic, the Far East, the Middle East;

the North Pole, the South Pole.

Oceans, seas, gulfs, bays, lakes

Article the:

the Atlantic Ocean / the Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean / the Pacific, the Arctic Ocean, the Indian Ocean;

the Mediterranean Sea / the Mediterranean, the Caribbean Sea / the Caribbean;

the Red Sea, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Barents Sea, the Bering Sea, the Yellow Sea;

the Sea of Okhotsk, the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Marmara;

the Gulf of Mexico, the Bay of Bengal, the Gulf of Finland, the Bay of Biscay, the Persian Gulf.

But: Hudson Bay, San Francisco Bay.

No article:

Lake Baikal / Baikal, Lake Victoria, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Crater Lake, Utah Lake, Lake Geneva, Great Pond.

But: the Great Salt Lake, the Lake of the Woods; the Great Lakes (5 lakes).

Rivers, straits, canals, currents, waterfalls

Article the:

the Amazon / the Amazon River, the Nile / the Nile River, the Mississippi / the Mississippi River, the Missouri / the Missouri River, the Rio Grande, the Yangtze / the Yangtze River;

the Thames / the Thames River / the River Thames, the Seine / the Seine River, the Danube / the Danube River;

the Amur / the Amur River, the Dnepr / the Dnepr River / the Dnieper, the Lena / the Lena River, the Ob / the Ob River, the Volga / the Volga River, the Yenisei / the Yenisei River, the Amu Darya;

the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Dover (Pas de Calais), the Strait of Magellan, the Bering Strait;

the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus (also, Bosphorus);

the English Channel (La Manche), the Mozambique Channel;

the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Erie Canal;

the Gulf Stream, the Florida Current, the Japan Current (the Kuroshio);

the Victoria Falls / Victoria Falls, Niagara Falls / the Niagara Falls, the American Falls, the Canadian Falls, the Horseshoe Falls / Horseshoe Falls.

Islands

No article:

Greenland, Java, Cyprus, Madagascar, Hokkaido, Sakhalin, Jamaica, Ellis Island.

But: the Isle of Man.

Article the:

the island of Greenland, the island of Java, the island of Cyprus, the island of Madagascar, the island of Jamaica.

Article the:

the Aleutian Islands / the Aleutians, the Kuril (or Kurile) Islands / the Kurils, the Bahamas / the Bahama Islands, the Canary Islands / the Canaries, the Philippines / the Philippine Islands;

the British Isles, the Virgin Islands, the Falkland Islands, the Florida Keys, the West Indies, the Azores.

Peninsulas, capes

Article the:

the Indochinese Peninsula, the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Alaska Peninsula, the Kola Peninsula, the Balkan Peninsula, the Iberian Peninsula, the Italian Peninsula (the Apennine Peninsula);

No article:

Indochina, Kamchatka, Iberia (peninsula);

Cape Horn, North Cape, Cape Chelyuskin, Cape Canaveral, Cape Cod.

But: the Cape of Good Hope.

Mountains, volcanoes, hills

No article:

Everest / Mount Everest, Fuji / Mount Fuji / Fujiyama, Kilimanjaro / Mount Kilimanjaro, Elbrus / Mount Elbrus, Etna / Mount Etna, Vesuvius / Mount Vesuvius;

Mount Whitney, Mount McKinley, Mont Blanc, Lassen Peak;

Capitol Hill, Telegraph Hill.

But: the Kilauea Volcano.

Article the:

the Himalayas / the Himalaya / the Himalaya Mountains, the Rocky Mountains / the Rockies, the Balkan Mountains, the Ural Mountains / the Urals, the Caucasus Mountains / the Caucasus;

the Pamirs / the Pamir, the Tien Shan / the Tian Shan;

the Cordilleras, the Andes, the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Apennines;

the Black Hills, the Berkshire Hills.

Plateaus, canyons, plains

Article the:

the Tibetan Plateau, the Central Siberian Plateau, the Mexican Plateau, the Colorado Plateau; the Grand Canyon;

the Great Plains, the East European Plain (the Russian Plain), the West Siberian Plain, the Turan Plain (the Turan Lowland).

Deserts, valleys

Article the:

the Sahara / the Sahara Desert, the Kalahari / the Kalahari Desert, the Arabian Desert, the Gobi / the Gobi Desert, the Kara Kum;

the Ruhr Valley, the Nile Valley, the Valley of the Kings.

But: Death Valley, Silicon Valley.

Countries, states

No article:

America, Australia, Great Britain, Britain, England, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand;

Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg;

Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Turkey.

But: the Congo.

Article the:

the United States (the U.S.), the United Kingdom (the UK), the Russian

Federation, the Netherlands, the Philippines;

the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Cuba, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of Spain, the Commonwealth of Australia.

States, provinces

No article:

Arkansas, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York / New York State, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington / Washington State;

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan.

Article the:

the state of California, the state of New York, the state of Texas, the state of Washington, the province of Ontario, the province of Quebec.

Cities, towns

No article:

Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Cairo, Delhi, Havana, Lisbon, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Montreal, Moscow, Munich, New York, Oslo, Paris, Philadelphia, Prague;

Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Vienna, Warsaw, Washington / Washington, D.C.

But: The Hague.

Note: D.C. ['di:'si:] – the District of Columbia.

No article:

Atlantic City, Kansas City, New York City (NYC), Oklahoma City, Quebec City, Mexico City, Panama City, Cape Town / Capetown, Fort Knox.

Article the:

the city of Athens, the city of Moscow, the city of New York, the city of Oslo, the city of Rome, the city of Tokyo, the city of Washington, the town of Bedford.

Streets, avenues, highways

No article:

Main Street, Wall Street, 42nd Street, Oak Alley, Maple Boulevard, Fifth Avenue, Sixth Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Broadway, Lexington Road,

Route 66, Highway 64.

But: the Arbat, the Mall.

Article the:

the Avenue of the Americas, the National Road, the Freedom Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Trans-Canada Highway, the Pan American Highway, the Lincoln Highway, the FDR Drive.

exercises

<http://www.englishlearner.com/intermediate/the-definite-article-place-1.shtml>