

# 6 Uses of *the* and *a/an*

Excuse me, where's the cinema?

It's in Oxford Street. Go along here and turn right.

## 1 Words with *the*

We usually use *the* with

times of the day	<i>in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening (but at night)</i>
musical instruments	<i>I play the piano. Does she play the guitar?</i>
names of newspapers	<i>The Times, The Sun, The New York Times</i>
the media	<i>the radio, I saw it on the Internet.</i>
shops/places in a town	<i>the bank, the cinema, the post office, the supermarket, the chemist's, the station</i>
names of museums, cinemas, theatres, hotels	<i>the Guggenheim Museum, the Odeon Cinema, the Drury Lane Theatre, the Savoy Hotel</i>
locations	<i>on the left/right, in the middle, on the coast/border, in the east/north/south/west</i>
countries with plural names and with Republic, Kingdom	<i>the Netherlands, the United States, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom</i>
names of oceans, seas, rivers, mountain ranges	<i>the Pacific Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Thames, the Amazon, the Himalayas, the Andes</i>



We don't usually use *the* with *watch TV*:

✓ *I'm watching TV.* ✗ *I'm watching the TV.*

## 2 Words without *the*, *a* or *an*

We don't use *the*, *a* or *an* with

times, days and months	<i>at midday, on Monday, in January</i>
meals	<i>What time is breakfast?</i>
sports	<i>basketball, tennis, football</i>
transport and communication	<i>by train, by bus, by email, by phone</i>
languages, school subjects	<i>English, Spanish, Turkish, art, history</i>
most magazines	<i>Newsweek, Hello Magazine</i>
roads, streets, squares and parks	<i>Park Lane, Oxford Street, Times Square, Central Park</i>
airports and stations	<i>Manchester Airport, Victoria Bus Station, Penn Station</i>
most countries and continents	<i>Spain, Japan, Turkey, Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa</i>
cities, towns and states	<i>Paris, Sydney, Johannesburg, California</i>
mountains, hills and lakes	<i>Mount Everest, Lake Ontario</i>
names and titles	<i>John, Susan, Mr Smith, Professor Sinclair, Uncle Jack</i>



We don't use *the*, *a* or *an* for: *at home, at work, in bed*

Compare:

*He plays the guitar.* but *He plays football.*

*She works at the bank.* but *She works at Manchester Airport.*