

Class 11, Grammar

Determiners

What is a Determiner?

What is a determiner? Simply put, in English, a determiner is a word that introduces a noun. It always comes before a noun, not after, and it also comes before any other adjectives used to describe the noun.

Determiners are required before a singular noun but are optional when it comes to introducing plural nouns.

Here is a tentative list of the most frequently used Determiners:

(a) a, an, the (**Article Determiners**)

(b) this, that, these, those (**Demonstrative Determiners**)

(c) my, our, your, his, her, its, their, one's (**Possessive Determiners**)

(d) one, two, three, etc. (**Definite Numerical Determiners**)

(e) some, any, no; all, both; much, many; few, less, several, little (**Indefinite Numeral Determiners**)

(f) each, every, either, neither (**Distributive Numeral Determiners**)

USE OF SOME COMMON DETERMINERS:

(a) A, An, The [Article Determiners]

'A' and 'an' are used before countable singular nouns. 'A' is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound, while 'an' is used before words with a vowel sound as—

A hen laid an egg yesterday.

An elephant killed a boy.

She wants to be a painter.

I saw a boy reading a book.

It is not a crow. It is an owl.

'The' is a weakened form of 'that'. 'The' is used to particularise a person or a thing as—

Call the boy (who is) waiting outside.

The apples in that basket are quite fresh.

Bring me the purse I gave you.

I reached the school late.

The girl who stood first was given a prize.

(b) This, That, These, Those [Demonstrative Determiners]

This, that, these and those are used before nouns and point to the objects denoted by the nouns; as—

This car is very beautiful.

Aditi lives in that house.

These books are yours.

Distribute these mangoes among those children.

(i) 'This' and 'These' point to the objects which are near while 'that' and 'those' point to the 'distant' objects.

(ii) 'This', and 'that' are used before singular nouns while 'these' and 'those' are used before plural nouns.

(c) My, Our, Your, His, Her, Its, Their, One's [Possessive Determiners]

These are Possessive forms of Pronouns. They are used before Singular and Plural Nouns to indicate relationship/possession; as—

My mother is a teacher.

Our school has fifty rooms.

Your father is calling you.

His bag contains many objects.

Her books lie scattered in the room.

Their house is double-storeyed.

One must do one's duty.

(d) One, Two, Three, etc. [Definite Numeral Determiners]

These indicate a definite number of objects/persons; as—

The begger is blind of one eye.

She has two daughters

Five boys are sitting on that bench.

Note. 'Ordinal numbers' like 'first', 'second', "third", ... etc. refer to the position of something in a series; as—

The girl in the third row is my cousin.

The man in the first room is our warden.

(e) (i) Some, Any and No [Indefinite Numeral Determiners]

Some is generally used in affirmative sentences.

No and Any are used in negative and interrogative sentences; as—

There is no post office in this colony.

I have no friends in our class.

We have invited some T.V. anchors to the show.

There is still some milk in the jug.

There isn't any sugar in the pot.

Have you any books on western music?

Study the use of 'Some' and 'Any' in the following contexts: 'Some' may be used in questions indicating request or invitation; as—

Will you have some tea?

Will you spend some days with us?

Won't you spare some time for me?

Didn't I lend you some money yesterday?

'Any' is used in interrogative sentences to make an inquiry, as—

Is there any news?
Has the postman brought any letters for me?
Didn't you buy anything from the general store?

Note:

1. We use 'any' after 'hardly', 'barely' and 'scarcely' (adverbs with negative meanings); as—
He has hardly any money on him.
There is hardly any sugar in the house.
She has barely any beautiful dress.
He has scarcely any friend in this new city.
2. In case there is Some doubt, we use 'any' after 'if'; as—
If you need any help, press this button.
If you face any difficulty, don't hesitate to seek my help.
3. '**Some**' with a countable plural noun indicates an unknown or indefinite number while with an uncountable noun, some means an indefinite quantity; as—
Some boys were hurt in the bus accident **(number)**
Some persons always speak ill of others. **(number)**
I bought a note-book and some paper. **(quantity)**
He wants a pen and some ink. **(quantity)**

(e) (ii) All and Both [Indefinite Numeral Determiners]

'All' denotes the total of many units together while 'Both' shows the total of two units together; as—
She gave me all the apples.
All the boys are playing now.
Both Ajay and Vijay are fine cricketers.
Both father and mother are at home.

Note:

1. 'The' is used after 'All' and 'Both' but 'before' '**whole**'
All the girls are present in the class.
Both the friends refused to part.
The **whole** village was ruined in the fire.
2. '**All**' is used with both countable and uncountable nouns; as—
All my books have been tom.
All the milk turned sour.

(e) (iii) Much and Many [Indefinite Numeral Determiners]

'Many' shows number and is used

1. In interrogative and negative sentences:
Did you see many persons at the dinner?
She has not solved many sums.
2. as the subject or part of the subject:
Many have been respected and admired.
Many of us went to see the famous actor.
3. In the expressions—a good many, a great many, so many, too many, how many, as many, many a; as—
I have known her for a great many years.

Even if one person is hurt that is one too many.
Many a good man has been destroyed by drink.

In all other cases, replace many by 'a lot of' 'a great number', 'plenty of'; as—

Have you read many books ?

Yes, I have read a lot of books.

No, I haven't read a great number of books.

'Much' shows quantity and is used in the same way as 'many'. 'Much' can be replaced by 'a lot of' 'a great deal of' and 'plenty of'; as—

Does your cow give much milk ?

Yes, she gives a lot of milk.

No, she doesn't give a great deal of milk.

Note:

Many is followed by plural number while, many a takes singular number after it.

The verb agrees with the noun placed before it; as—

Many Problems have come up suddenly.

Many a flower is born to blush unseen.

(e) (iv) Few, Less and Several [Indefinite Numeral Determiners]

'Few' is the opposite of 'Many' and 'Less' is the opposite of 'Much'. Few denotes number, while 'Less' denotes quantity. '**Several**' means '**more than two but not many.**'

We have few holidays during this term.

A few persons attended the meeting.

She pays less attention to her children.

Several letters arrived this morning.

They said goodbye and went their several ways. (**different**)

(e) (v) Little and Few [Indefinite Numeral Determiners]

'Little' means not much, hardly any.

'Few' means not many, hardly any.

1. In other words 'Little' and 'Few' mean practically nothing. 'Little' is used with singular countable nouns while 'Few' is used with plural countable nouns; as—

There is little water in the pot. (hardly any)

There are few buses running.

He had little money.

I have few friends.

There was little hope of her recovery.

Few women can keep a secret.

2. '**A little**' and '**A few**' make a positive sense, A little means some quantity though not much, while 'A few' indicates a certain number, though not many; as—

I shall return the money in a few days. (= some)

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. (some but not much)

She has a little money left. (some, but small amount)

He has a few books of his own. (some, but not many)

3. 'The little' and 'The few' imply two statements—One negative and the other affirmative.

'The little' means	<i>'not much' but</i>	<i>all of that much</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>
The few means	<i>not many but</i>	<i>all of them.</i>
	<i>N</i>	

She wasted the little money she had.

We lost the little hope of her recovery.

I have read the few books I had.

She spent the few rupees her mother gave her.

(f) Each, Every, Either and Neither [Distributive Numerals]

'Each' is used for two or more persons (definite) while 'every' is used for more than two persons or things, (indefinite). 'Either' means 'any one of the two', 'Neither' means 'not any one of the two'; as—

Each student has a book of his own.

Each person must take his turn.

I play hockey every day.

India expects every man to do his best.

Either book will do.

I have two pens. You may have either.

Take either road whichever you prefer.

Neither statement is true.

Neither party was willing to quit.
