

Lesson Plan: Articles with proper nouns and place names

Level	Intermediate (B1–B2)
Time	60–75 minutes
Skills	Grammar, writing
Focus	When to use the, a, or no article with names of places, institutions, and proper nouns

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use the definite article correctly with rivers, mountain ranges, oceans, and plurals
- Understand when proper nouns take no article (most countries, cities, single mountains)
- Use articles correctly with institutions, media, and unique entities
- Avoid common errors in formal writing with proper noun articles

TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

The — used with

- rivers: the Nile, the Amazon
- mountain ranges: the Alps, the Rockies
- oceans/seas: the Pacific, the Mediterranean
- plural countries: the Netherlands, the Philippines, the United States
- newspapers: the Guardian, the New York Times
- unique entities: the Moon, the Sun, the Internet (traditionally)

No article — used with

- most countries: France, Japan, Brazil
- cities: Paris, Tokyo, Cairo
- single mountains: Mount Everest, Ben Nevis
- lakes: Lake Victoria, Lake Ontario
- continents: Europe, Asia, Africa

Tricky cases

- the United Kingdom / the UK (but: Britain — no the)
- the Hague (exception among cities)
- school/university (no article for function) vs. the school down the road (specific)

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up (10 min)

Task: Quiz: which place names need the? Students vote A (the) or B (no article).

- Amazon / Nile / Everest / Alps / Japan / Philippines / Pacific / Lake Titicaca

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Rules by category with visual map activity.

- Rivers, ranges, oceans, plural nations → the.
- Single mountains, most countries, cities, continents → no article.
- Exceptions to memorise: the Hague, the Congo.

3. Guided practice (10 min)

Task: Complete sentences with the or — (nothing).

- 'She swam in ___ Mediterranean.' / 'We flew over ___ Alps.' / '___ France is known for its cuisine.'

4. Writing task (20 min)

Task: Write a short travel itinerary visiting 6 different countries and geographical features.

- Check each article use carefully.
- Peer review: flag any article errors with place names.

5. Error correction (5 min)

Task: Fix 5 article errors in a geography text.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Write a short geography description using 8 proper nouns with correct article use.
2. Correct 8 article errors in a travel writing excerpt.
3. Write 6 sentences contrasting two geographical features using the correct articles.