

## 154 determiners: the, my, some, several etc

### 1 What are determiners?

Determiners are words like *the, a, my, this, some, either, every, enough, several*. Determiners come at the beginning of noun phrases, but they are not adjectives.

<i>the moon</i>	<i>this house</i>	<i>every week</i>
<i>a nice day</i>	<i>some problems</i>	<i>enough trouble</i>
<i>my fat old cat</i>	<i>either arm</i>	<i>several young students</i>

There are two main groups of determiners.

### 2 Group A determiners: *the, my, this, ...*

These help to identify things – to say whether they are known or unknown to the hearer, which one(s) the speaker is talking about, whether the speaker is thinking of particular examples or speaking in general, etc. There are three kinds:

**articles:** *a/an, the* (see 61–70)

**possessives:** *my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, one's, whose* (see 441, 626)

**demonstratives:** *this, these, that, those* (see 589)

We cannot put two Group A determiners together. We can say *a friend, my friend* or *this friend*, but not *the my friend, the this friend, this my friend* or *my this friend*. To put a possessive together with *a/an* or a demonstrative, we can use the structure *althis ... of mine/yours* etc (see 443).

*She's a friend of mine.* (NOT *She's a my friend.*)

Nouns with possessive 's (see 439–440) can be used like determiners (e.g. *Britain's weather*).

### 3 Group B determiners: *some, each, much, enough* etc

Most of these are 'quantifiers': they say how much or how many we are talking about. The most important are:

*some, any, no*

*each, every, either, neither*

*much, many, more, most; (a) little, less, least; (a) few, fewer, fewest; enough; several*

*all, both, half*

*what, whatever, which, whichever*

Some Group B determiners are used with singular nouns (e.g. *each*), some with plurals (e.g. *many*), some with uncountables (e.g. *much*), and some with more than one kind of noun (e.g. *which*).

We can put two Group B determiners together if the combination makes sense.

*We meet every few days.*      *Have you got any more coffee?*

For details of the use of Group B determiners, look up the sections on particular words.

#### 4 Group B + Group A: *some of the people*

Group B determiners can be used directly before nouns, without *of*.

*Have you got any sugar?* (NOT ... *any of sugar*.)

*Most people agree with me.* (NOT *Most of people*...) )

But if we want to put a Group B determiner before a noun which has a Group A determiner (article, possessive or demonstrative), we have to use *of*.

Compare:

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - <i>some people</i>         | - <i>enough remarks</i>        |
| <i>some of the people</i>    | <i>enough of those remarks</i> |
| - <i>which friends</i>       | - <i>neither door</i>          |
| <i>which of your friends</i> | <i>neither of these doors</i>  |
| - <i>each child</i>          | - <i>most shops</i>            |
| <i>each of my children</i>   | <i>most of the shops</i>       |

A Group B determiner + *of* can be used directly before a noun in a few cases. This happens with proper nouns such as place names, and sometimes with uncountable nouns that refer to the whole of a subject or activity.

*Most of Wales was without electricity last night.*

*Much of philosophy is concerned with questions that have no answers.*

#### 5 Group B + *of* + pronoun: *most of us*

Group B determiners are used with *of* before pronouns.

*neither of them*                      *which of us*                      *most of you*

#### 6 *no* and *none*; *every* and *every one*

*No* and *every* are not used before *of*; instead we use *none* and *every one*.

Compare:

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - <i>no friends</i>       | - <i>every blouse</i>             |
| <i>none of my friends</i> | <i>every one of these blouses</i> |

#### 7 *all (of)*, *both (of)*, *half (of)*

We can leave out *of* after *all*, *both* and *half* when they are followed by nouns (but not when they are followed by pronouns).

*all (of) his ideas*                      *half (of) her income*  
*both (of) my parents*                      *but all of us* (NOT *all-us*)

Note that when *each*, *every*, *either* and *neither* are used directly before nouns without *of*, the nouns are singular. Compare:

- |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - <i>each tree</i>       | - <i>neither partner</i>       |
| <i>each of the trees</i> | <i>neither of the partners</i> |

#### 8 Group A + Group B: *his many friends*

Certain Group B determiners can be used after Group A determiners. They are *many*, *most*, *little*, *least* and *few*.

*his many friends*    *these few poems*    *the least time*  
*the most money*    *a little time*    *a few questions*

For the difference between *little* and *a little*, and between *few* and *a few*, see 329.

#### 9 other determiners: *other*, *such*, *what*, *only*, numbers

There are a few other determiners that do not fit into Groups A and B. They are *other*, *such*, *what* (in exclamations), *only* and numbers. *Other*, *only* and

numbers come after Group A determiners (*another* is written as one word); *such* and *what* come before the article *an*.

*my other sister*                      *such a nice day*  
*the only possibility*                *the three bears*  
   *what a pity*

*Other* and *such* can also come after some Group B determiners.

*many other problems*                *most such requests*

## 10 determiners without nouns; *I haven't read any*

Nouns are often dropped after determiners if the meaning is clear.

*Do you know Orwell's books? ~ I haven't read any.*

*Have we got any tomatoes? ~ A few.*

*Which chair do you want? ~ This will do.*

Determiners are sometimes used without nouns to refer to people in general.

This is formal and generally rather old-fashioned.

*Many are called but few are chosen.* (The Bible)

*Some say one thing, some say another.*

OPEN MEETING: ALL (ARE) WELCOME.

Possessives (except *whose* and *his*) have different forms when they are used without nouns: *mine*, *yours*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs* (see 442). Compare:

*That's my coat*                              *That's mine.*

*Its* and *one's* are not used without nouns. (See 442)

For *others* meaning 'other people', see 54.4. For *all* meaning everything, see 38.2.

For expressions like *a lot of*, *a heap of*, *the majority of*, see 333.

For more information about particular determiners, consult the entries for the individual words (see Index).

## 155 different

### 1 modifiers: *any different etc*

*Different* is a little like a comparative: unlike most adjectives, it can be modified by *any* and *no*, (*a*) *little* and *not much*.

*I hadn't seen her for years, but she wasn't any different.*

*How's the patient, doctor? ~ No different.*

*His ideas are little different from those of his friends.*

*The new school isn't much different from the old one.*

*Quite different* means 'completely different' (see 489.3).

*I thought you'd be like your sister, but you're quite different.*

Unlike comparatives, *different* can also be modified by *very*.

*She's very different from her sister.*

### 2 prepositions: *different from/to*

*From* is generally used after *different*; many British people also use *to*. In American English, *than* is common.

*American football is very different from/to soccer.*

(AmE . . . *different from/than soccer*.)

Before a clause, *different than* is also possible in British English.

*The job's different than I expected.*

(OR . . . *different from/to what I expected*.)

For the difference between *different* and *other*, see 54.5.