Determiners

A picture guide for Year 5. Each page builds on the last - start here, then look at the six kinds of determiner.

A determiner is a little word that comes before a noun.

It tells you **which one**, **how many** or **whose**.

Determiner + noun

The determiner points at the noun. If there are describing words (adjectives), they go **in between**.

the	dog
DETERMINER	NOUN

my	new	bike
DETERMINER	ADJECTIVE	NOUN

three	shiny	red	apples
DETERMINER	ADJECTIVE	ADJECTIVE	NOUN

every	child
DETERMINER	NOUN

Three questions a determiner answers

WHICH ONE?

the · a · an · this · that

Pass me **that** book.

HOW MANY?

three · some · many · every · no

I ate **two** biscuits.

WHOSE?

my · your · her · our · their

This is **our** classroom.

The quick test

✓ Determiner

Can a noun go straight after it?

my ___ → **my bike**

✗ Not a determiner

If it can stand on its own, it isn't one.

mine ___ → ~~mine bike~~

For parents: "determiner" is a newer word for something you already know. Your child may also hear "article" (a, an, the) - articles are one kind of determiner.

Determiners: the six kinds

Every determiner belongs to one of these families. You don't need to learn the family names to use them - but Year 5 tests sometimes ask.

📄 Articles

a, an = any one. the = a particular one.

a **an** **the**

e.g. **A** cat sat on **the** wall.

👉 Demonstratives

Point at something: near or far, one or many.

this **that** **these** **those**

e.g. **These** shoes are new.

🔑 Possessives

Say who something belongs to.

my **your** **his** **her** **its** **our** **their**

e.g. **Their** house is blue.

🥣 Quantifiers

Say how much or how many.

some **any** **many** **much** **few** **every** **each** **all** **no** **several** **both**

e.g. **Several** birds flew past.

🔢 Numbers

Say exactly how many.

one **two** **three** **twenty**

e.g. **Two** buses were late.

❓ Question words

Ask about a noun.

which **what** **whose**

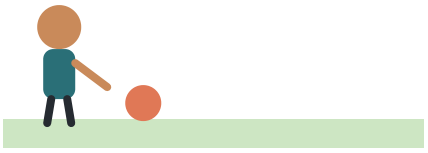
e.g. **Which** coat is yours?

Remember: it is the **job** that matters, not the word. "That" can be a determiner (*that dog*) or a pronoun (*I like that*) - see page 3.

Determiners: tricky bits

The three things that catch most children out - and most parents too.

This, that, these, those

	One thing	Lots of things
Near me	**this** ball 	**these** balls 
Far away	**that** ball 	**those** balls 

Common slip: "~~them~~ books" → "**those** books". "Them" is never a determiner.

a or an? Listen to the first sound

an + vowel sound

an apple · an egg · an umbrella
an **h**our (the h is silent)
an honest answer

a + consonant sound

a banana · a horse
a **u**nicorn (sounds like "you")
a uniform · a one-way street

Determiner or pronoun?

Determiner

This **book** is mine.

A noun comes **straight after** it.

Pronoun

This is mine.

It **stands on its own**, instead of the noun.

Determiner (noun follows)	Pronoun (stands alone)
That cake is tasty.	I want **that**.
Some pens are here.	**Some** were lost.
Her coat is red.	I gave it to **her**.
Which ball is it?	**Which** is yours?

Determiners: spot them

Spot them

The determiners are coloured. Notice how each one sits in front of a noun.

The cat chased **a** mouse.
DETERMINER DETERMINER

My brother has **two** hamsters.
DETERMINER DETERMINER

Those clouds look like rain.
DETERMINER

Every pupil needs **their** reading book.
DETERMINER DETERMINER

Which team scored **more** goals?
DETERMINER DETERMINER

Your turn: circle the determiners

1. A fox crept into our garden.
2. I need some glue and three pencils.
3. That film was scarier than the book.
4. Each player kicked the ball twice.
5. Whose jumper is on the floor?

For parents: in the Year 6 SATs grammar test children are asked to "circle the determiner" or to choose a/an. Reading together and pausing to ask "which word tells us *which* one?" is the quickest way to practise.

Answers: 1. A, our 2. some, three 3. That, the 4. Each, the 5. Whose, the