

The, some and Ø Part 2 (of 2) ★★

This week we look at 'general / old' and 'specific / new' plural COUNTABLE nouns.

Ø = zero article. In this case, zero has a real meaning!

1 Ø = general, we're talking about all of them.



(Ø) Kangaroos carry their young in pouches
(all kangaroos, kangaroos in general)

More examples

Computers are everywhere these days
People read books less than they used to.

2 The = specific, we know which ones we are talking about



The kangaroos are talking to each other
(just these two)

More examples

The computers in my office are all linked with wifi
"Where are the children?" "In the living room."

3 (some) = a moderate number, not specified

/sm/ unstressed



"We need koalas as well in this park!"

↑
(some) /sm

The unstressed (*some*) can always* be left out

*Oops! In language, never say **always**, never say **never**!

¹STRESSED: The vowel in the syllable has its normal sound

UNSTRESSED: The vowel in the syllable has a weak sound, or is silent.

For *a*, *an*, *the* and *some*, see also GBs 38, 39, 86, 154 and 155.

Quick check

Put Ø, *the* or (*some*) into each blank (we only accept the best one):

- 1 I think it's healthy if children are brought up with _____ pets.
- 2 We've got too much to do, we need _____ helpers.
- 3 Yes, but _____ helpers who came last time weren't much good
- 4 _____ apples and _____ pears are the favourite fruit in my family.
- 5 I've got _____ holidays coming up soon, so we can go away.