

SECTION

# 14

## DETERMINERS AND INTERJECTIONS



# GRAMMAR USAGE

## INTRODUCTION

Today, we are going to explore two exciting aspects of language – **determiners** and **interjections**. When you go to a market near you like Makola or Kejetia, you use words like ‘this’ or ‘that’ to point out specific things. Don’t you? You exclaim ‘Akwaaba!’ when you welcome a friend or ‘Wow!’ when you watch a thrilling football match. While knowledge of determiners will help you specify which person, place or thing you are talking about, knowledge of interjections will help you express strong emotions. As a result, you will be able to communicate more effectively and add flavour to your language.

**By the end of this section, you should be able to**

- Use minor word classes in speaking and writing

### Key Ideas

- Determiners: They are words used before nouns to clarify them.
- Interjections: They are words used to express emotions.

## DETERMINERS AND INTERJECTIONS

### Activity 14.1

1. Join a friend or two to undertake this activity. Read the sentences below and circle all the nouns with a pencil:
  - a. This book is mine.
  - b. Your book is with me
  - c. All the learners are present.
  - d. That car is expensive
  - e. Both oranges are rotten.
  - f. The teacher is likeable.
  - g. Their house is too far.
2. Underline the words before the nouns you circled. What do you observe? Share your observation with your friend, compare and note them down.

## WHAT IS A DETERMINER?

A determiner is a word placed in front of nouns to clarify aspects of the noun. Thus, they help to specify the meaning of the nouns by indicating aspects like quantity, possession, specificity or definiteness. For example, in the sentence, ‘My sister won a scholarship,’ ‘my’ has been used to clarify the noun ‘sister’ to indicate the speaker’s relationship or possession. The speaker is therefore communicating something about his or her sister and no one else.

### Activity 14.2

Read the extract below and underline all the determiners. Then, put each of the determiners in the correct category of the table provided below the extract. You might find it helpful to refer to the information on the Types of Determiners below if you experience difficulties.

*The government of Ghana has announced that some of the roads in Accra will be closed for repairs. This decision affects all drivers who use those routes every day. Some residents are unhappy about the situation, but most people agree that the repairs are necessary. The Minister of Transportation said that every effort will be made to complete the work as quickly as possible. In the meantime, commuters are advised to use alternative routes to avoid those areas. Some of the affected roads include the Kwame Nkrumah Circle and the one leading to the Kotoka International Airport. All drivers are warned to be careful and patient during this period.*

Types of determiners	Examples
Articles	
Demonstratives	
Possessives	
Quantifiers	

## TYPES OF DETERMINERS

### 1. Articles

An article is a type of determiner that comes before a noun to indicate whether the noun is specific or general. There are two types – **definite** article and **indefinite** article.

#### a. The Definite Article – **the**

This type of article refers to something specific or known to both the speaker and listener. Examples:

I am reading the book you recommended.

The store has been razed down by fire.



The juice in the fridge is mine.

Note: In these sentences, **the** has been used to make reference to specific nouns.

b. The Indefinite Article – **a, an**

It refers to a non-specific (general) or an unknown noun.

**A** is used when the initial sound of the noun is a consonant. Examples:

**a** cat (initial sound is /k/)

**a** fan /f/

**a** thread /θ/

**a** phone /f/

It is noted that the initial sounds (not letters) of the nouns are consonants hence, the indefinite article **a** is used.

On the other hand, if the initial sound of the noun is a vowel, **an** is used.

Examples:

**An** apple (initial sound is /æ/)

**An** umbrella /ə/

**An** eraser /ɪ/

2. **Possessives**

They are used to show ownership. In other words, they indicate that something belongs to someone or something. Examples of possessives include '**my, your, his, her, its, our and their**':

Her idea was brilliant.

They watched the game in my house.

Our teacher has been honoured.

3. **Quantifiers**

They are words used to indicate quantity, amount or measurement. They include '**some, any, no, all, several, little, many and much**':

I left some food for you.

Do you want any fruit?

How much money did you pay for the registration?

Few people attended the meeting.

4. **Demonstratives**

They are words that point out specific nouns to show their proximity (how far or close). They are **this, these, that** and **those**.

This book is interesting.

Those cars are expensive.

Make a left at that junction.

These oranges are rotten.

### Activity 14.3

Now, compare the answers you provided in the table for Activity 14.2 with the information you have been given above to see if they tally.

### Activity 14.4

Play the ‘What do you see?’ game with a friend. Run and stand by an object. Call your friend to approach you and ask, ‘What do you see?’ Your friend must answer using any of the determiners. Take turns to play this game? Get creative and enjoy! This is how it will look like:

#### ‘What do you see?’ game

**Player One:** Runs and stands under a mango tree, calls Player Two and asks, ‘What do you see?’

**Player Two:** I see some mangoes on the tree/ some mangoes/ a tree

### Activity 14.5

1. Write down the words you will use to express your emotions should you be faced with the following:
  - a. Someone has just pinched you.
  - b. You have just won the lottery.
  - c. Your teacher told a story that left you in stitches.
  - d. The community gutter stinks.
  - e. A strange person chasing you with a stick.
2. Compare your answers to those of your friends. Share your observations with each other and with your facilitator.
3. Read the extract below and underline all the interjections.

*Wow! What a beautiful kente cloth. My grandmother used to weave these when I was a child. Oh no, I just remembered I left my wallet at home! Thank God, my friend lent me some money. Hallelujah! I can finally buy this cloth. Oh dear, the price is higher than I expected. Anyway, I’ll take it, it’s worth it! Alhamdulillah, I’m so grateful for this opportunity.*

## WHAT ARE INTERJECTIONS?

Interjections are words that are used to express sudden or strong emotions. Thus, they convey feelings of surprise, joy, anger, disgust, excitement or pain. It is important to note that even though Interjections are a part of speech, they have no grammatical relationship with other parts of the sentence. This makes them unique as they often are not inserted into sentences.

## Features of Interjections

Here are the key features of interjections - but avoid their over-use in formal written English:

1. **Expressive Nature:** Interjections primarily express strong emotions, feelings or reactions such as surprise, joy, anger, excitement, disgust, or pain. For example, 'Wow!' expresses amazement, and 'Ouch!' indicates pain.
2. **Grammatically independent:** Interjections usually stand alone or are set apart from the rest of a sentence. They don't need to be grammatically connected to other parts of the sentence. For example, 'Oh no!' can be used by itself to express concern.
3. **Punctuation:** In writing, interjections are often followed by an exclamation mark (!) to emphasise the intensity of the emotion. However, they can also be followed by commas or periods, depending on the context and the level of emotion. For instance, 'Hey, that's mine!' uses a comma because the emotion is less intense. Other examples are:
  - Yummy, this jollof rice is absolutely delicious!
  - Good heavens! That's the biggest tree I've ever seen.
4. **Non-Syntactic:** Interjections do not play a grammatical role in the sentence structure. They are independent of the syntax of the sentence, meaning they don't fit into the subject-predicate structure. For example, in 'Wow, that's amazing!', the interjection *Wow* isn't grammatically tied to the rest of the sentence.
5. **Brief and Concise:** Interjections are typically short, often consisting of just one or two words. For example, 'Oh!', 'Yikes!', or 'Hmm'.
6. **Spontaneous Use:** Interjections are often used spontaneously in conversation, reflecting the speaker's immediate reaction to something. They are less planned and more instinctive, making them a natural part of speech.
7. **Tone-dependent or versatility:** The same interjection can be used in different contexts to express various emotions depending on the tone and situation. For example, 'Oh' can express surprise, realisation, or disappointment, depending on how it is used.
8. **Cultural Variation and or Universal:** Different languages and cultures have unique interjections that may not have direct equivalents in other languages. Some interjections are culturally specific and can reflect local customs, habits, or expressions. However, some interjections can also be culturally universal.
9. Interjections usually appear at the beginning of a sentence or at the end for examples:
  - a. 'Phew, that was close'.
  - b. 'Yo, what's up?'
  - c. I am so excited to see you tonight, **yay!**
  - d. I can't believe I left my phone home, **oh no!**
10. **Informal:** Interjections are often used in informal settings, like conversations with friends or casual writing. While some interjections such as 'well' and 'indeed' are acceptable in formal conversation, it's best to avoid interjections in formal or academic writing.

## Some interjections and their meanings

Interjections	Purpose	Examples
Hurray! Yay! Woo-hoo!	express joy	a. Hurray, we won the game! b. Yay! I passed the exam.
Wow! Oh! Ah!	express surprise	a. Wow! The sunset is breath-taking. b. Oh! I didn't see you there.
Ugh! Ew! Yuck!	express disgust or disapproval	a. Ugh! I can't stand this weather. b. Yuck! This food had gone bad.
Damn! Ugh!	express anger or frustration	a. Damn! I missed the bus again. b. Ugh, this problem is so frustrating.
Ouch! Agh! Ah! Ow!	express pain	a. Ouch! I cut my toe. b. Ow, that was a sharp pain!
Er! Uh! Um!	express hesitation or doubt	a. Er, do you really want to do this? b. Um! Let me think about it.
Hi! Hello! Hey! Bye! Goodbye!	express greeting or parting	a. HI! How are you today? b. Hello! Nice to see you again. c. Hey! What's up?
Yes! Yeah! Sure! Absolutely!	express agreement or approval	a. Yes! I agree with your point. b. Absolutely! Let's do it.
No! Nah! Nope!	express disagreement or disapproval	a. No! I don't want to go there. b. Never! I won't do that.
Oh! Ah! Aha! Got it!	express realisation or understanding	a. Oh! Now I get it. b. Aha! So that's the solution. c. Got it! I understand what to do.
Hey! Yo! Look! Listen!	express exclamation or call or greeting	a. Look! There's a rainbow. b. Listen! I have something important to say. c. Hey, over there!
Shh! Hush!	Express silence or call for attention	a. Shh! The baby is sleeping. b. Hush! We need to be quiet now.

## Extended Reading

- Wiredu. F.J., (1992). Organised English Grammar with Answers, A Self-Study and Practice Book for Students of Senior High Schools, Training Colleges, the Polytechnics and the Universities (2nd ed.): Academic Publications Accra. (Pg. 90 – 92)

## References

- Wiredu. F.J., (1992). Organised English Grammar with Answers, A Self-Study and Practice Book for Students of Senior High Schools, Training Colleges, the Polytechnics and the Universities (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.): Academic Publications Accra. (Pg. 81 – 90)
- Sackeyfio, N. A., et al, Ghana Senior Secondary School English Book 1. Oxford University Press. (Pg. 119 – 121)



# Review Questions

Underline the determiner(s) in the following sentences.

1. Every student needs a pen for the exam.
2. This is the best movie I've ever seen.
3. All the children were excited for the trip.
4. Do you have any questions?
5. Both options are available to you.
6. Write your own sentences using the following determiners:
7. **Both, your, many, each** and **this**.
8. In the passage below, there are errors related to determiners. Identify and correct them:

*Yesterday, I visited a museum. I saw many interesting exhibits, but the one that caught my attention was the painting by Ablade Glover. I noticed that neither of the guides was available, so I explored the museum on my own. After spending a few hours there I left, feeling inspired by all the arts.*

Describe your favourite subject in a paragraph of not more than five sentences.

Complete the sentences with the appropriate interjections from the list: **Ouch, Yay, Huh, Ah**

9. ....! What did you say?
10. ....! That was a close call.
11. ....! You won the race.
12. ....! I've figured out the answer.
13. Match the interjection in column A with the emotion of column B.

Column A	Column B
Yuck	Pain
Ouch	Excitement
Hurray	Disgust
Wow	Surprise
Oh-no	Praise
Bravo	Fear

**14.** Read the short paragraph below and insert appropriate interjections in the blanks.

....., today was a tough day at work! First, I spilled my coffee all over my desk. ...., that was embarrassing! Then, I realised I forgot to bring my lunch. ...., I was so hungry by the afternoon. But ....., the day ended on a good note when I received praise from my boss for completing a difficult project. .... That made me feel much better.

**15.** Create a short dialogue with a friend using at least five different interjections.

**16.** Write a four-paragraph essay on 'the impacts of COVID 19 on learners' academic lives in Ghana'. (NB: Make use of a variety of determiners and interjections.)

**17.** Analyse and state the uses of the various determiners and interjections you have used in your essay in question E above.

# Acknowledgements



Ghana Education  
Service (GES)



## List of Contributors

Name	Institution
Beatrice Antwiwaa Boateng	Oti Boateng SHS, Koforidua
Jennifer Afua Kyei-Baffour	Sakafia Islamic SHS, Kumasi
Isabella Sika Keh	Achimota School
N-yalamba Jerry Njomoun	Tatale E.P. Agric SHS