

Puzzle 0: one or more than one *the*?

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Consider the following sentences or mini-discourses:

- (1) **The student who came to Fred's office hours** asked some questions about the assignment.
- (2) **The student who came to Fred's office hours** asked some questions about the assignment.  
#In fact, **the student** was one of many students to come to Fred's office hours today with questions about the assignment. I guess his assignment instructions were unclear.
- (3) A student came to Fred's office hours. **The student** asked some questions about the assignment.
- (4) Two students came to my office hours today. #**The student** asked some questions about the assignment
- (5) A student came to Fred's office hours. **The student** asked some questions about the assignment. In fact, **the student** was one of many students to come to Fred's office hours today with questions about the assignment. I guess his assignment instructions were unclear

The symbol '#' (see examples (2) and (4)) indicates that the following sentence/discourse cannot follow the previous sentence/discourse, even though the sentences are well-formed syntactically.

Given the highlighted expressions in these examples, is there one or more than one *the* in English? How would you be able to tell? Describe the uses of *the* illustrated here as clearly as possible. Do you agree with the judgements?

This puzzle is not assessed, but our first topic this term is definites and it will help you to start thinking about examples like these. Don't worry about getting stuck or not knowing how to proceed. Try to pay attention to how you are reasoning about the examples and make that reasoning explicit. Discuss the problem with other students in the class if you know any. Bring your ideas to class on 30 January.

Please bear in mind that Puzzle 1 will ask you to look back at these data.