

Ordinal numbers usually premodify the head and both nouns take the zero article. The noun head however may be definite, in which case the ordinal number does not. As premodifiers, they are determiners proper and indicate mere temporal or spatial order. Sometimes, a semantic distinction is drawn between the premodifying and the postmodifying role of these numbers. As postmodifiers they function more like adjectives indicating superiority. 'The first man who won this prize' is normally interpreted as 'the first man who won this prize'; whereas 'the first prize' as premodifier and as postmodifier 'the first prize' takes the definite article: 'the first prize'. These examples should be compared with the following, where there does not seem to be a semantic distinction. For example, 'the first prize' and 'the first prize' are both possible. For example, 'the first prize' and 'the first prize' are both possible. 'The first prize' and 'the first prize' are both possible.