

G Gender

Every French noun has a gender, either **masculine** (m) or **feminine** (f). All people, places or things are either masculine or feminine and it is easier to learn the French noun with its gender. You will need to know a noun's gender because every time you use an adjective with a noun, you might need to change its spelling if the noun is feminine or plural.

There are some clues which will help you remember the gender of a noun:

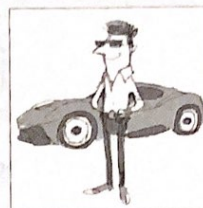
Masculine nouns

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------------|
| • male people: | le père | father | |
| • days of the week: | le lundi | on Mondays | |
| • seasons: | le printemps | spring | |
| • most nouns which end in -age : | le village | village | |
| • most nouns which end in -er : | le boucher | butcher | |
| • most nouns which end in -eau : | le bureau | office | except l'eau (f) water |

★ If you don't know the gender of a word, you can look it up in a dictionary or online.

Feminine nouns

- | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| • female people: | la mère | mother |
| • countries which end in -e : | la France | France |
| • most nouns which end in -e : | la voiture | car |
| • most nouns which end in -ée : | la journée | day |
| • all nouns ending in -sion or -tion : | la destination | destination |
| • all nouns ending in -té : | l'identité | identity |



Some nouns are always feminine, whether they are referring to a male or female person: *la vedette* (star), *la personne* (person), *la victime* (victim).

Some nouns are always masculine such as *le bébé* (baby).

Many masculine nouns have a feminine equivalent which is formed by adding **-e**: e.g. *ami* → *amie* (friend).

Others simply change gender depending on the person to whom the noun refers: e.g. *collègue* can be masculine or feminine.

Jobs often change their ending to make the feminine form:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <i>le mécanicien</i> (m) → <i>la mécanicienne</i> (f) | mechanic |
| <i>le coiffeur</i> (m) → <i>la coiffeuse</i> (f) | hairdresser |
| <i>le boulanger</i> (m) → <i>la boulangère</i> (f) | baker |

Some nouns change meaning depending on their gender:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----|--------------------|-------|
| <i>le tour</i> (m) | tour / trick | but | <i>la tour</i> (f) | tower |
|--------------------|--------------|-----|--------------------|-------|

★ Don't assume you know the gender of a word in French just because you know what it means. For example, it's **la police** (f)!

Plural nouns

To make a French noun plural, you normally add **-s**: *chat* → *chats* (but the **-s** is not pronounced!).

Some nouns end in **-x** in the plural:

- nouns ending in **-al**: *animal* → *animaux* (animal → animals)
- nouns ending in **-eau**: *bureau* → *bureaux* (office → offices)
- nouns ending in **-eu**: *jeu* → *jeux* (game → games)
- some nouns ending in **-ail**: *travail* → *travaux* (work → works)
- some nouns ending in **-ou**: *genou* → *genoux* (knee → knees).

H Nouns which already end in **-x**, **-z** or **-s** don't change: e.g. *os* (bone or bones), *nez* (nose or noses).

Abstract nouns, which are used to talk about qualities, are always singular:

- la générosité* (generosity), *la modestie* (modesty), *la fidélité* (faithfulness)

1 Work out the gender of these words. Write m (masculine) or f (feminine).

- 1 fille _____ 2 garage _____ 3 plage _____ 4 hiver _____ 5 quantité _____
6 oncle _____ 7 décision _____ 8 bébé _____ 9 araignée _____ 10 père _____

2 Make the following nouns plural.

- 1 chou _____ 2 hôtel _____ 3 riz _____ 4 chien _____ 5 travail _____

3 Fill in the gaps in the table.

	singular	plural
1		chats
2	animal	
3		châteaux
4	fils	
5		nez

4 Write the French job titles.



- 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____



- 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____

5 Now fill in the gaps with the correct word.

masculine	feminine	English meaning
caissier		cashier
électricien		
	fermière	
fonctionnaire		civil servant
	journaliste	
vendeur		sales assistant
vétérinaire		

★ You may need to use a dictionary to help you here!

G Definite articles

As you know, every French noun is either masculine or feminine. The French for 'the' is different for masculine and feminine nouns. **Le** is used before masculine nouns and **la** before feminine: e.g. **le livre** (the book), **la table** (the table). **Les** is used for all plural nouns whatever their gender: e.g. **les livres** (the books), **les tables** (the tables).

However, **le** and **la** both change to **l'** if the noun is singular and starts with a vowel or silent **h**. In these cases, you cannot tell by looking whether the noun is masculine or feminine, so it is very important to learn the genders of nouns: e.g. **l'église** (f) the church **but** **l'hôpital** (m) the hospital.

	masculine	feminine	before a vowel or silent <i>h</i>	plural
The definite article: 'the'	le	la	l'	les

Indefinite articles

The French for 'a' is either **un** (for masculine words) or **une** (for feminine words): e.g. **un livre** (a book), **une table** (a table). The plural of the indefinite article is **des** (some): e.g. **des livres** (some books), **des tables** (some tables).

	masculine	feminine	plural
The indefinite article: 'a' or 'some' (pl)	un	une	des

1 Write the correct word for 'the' (*le, la, l' or les*) in front of these places in a town.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 _____ pharmacie (f) | 5 _____ bowling (m) | 9 _____ rues (pl) |
| 2 _____ hôtel (m) | 6 _____ cinéma (m) | 10 _____ piscine (f) |
| 3 _____ gare (f) | 7 _____ hôpital (m) | |
| 4 _____ magasins (pl) | 8 _____ appartements (pl) | |

2 Write the correct word for 'a' (*un or une*) in front of the following parts of the house.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 _____ jardin | 4 _____ cuisine | 7 _____ garage |
| 2 _____ salle de bains | 5 _____ chambre | 8 _____ salle de séjour |
| 3 _____ salon | 6 _____ salle à manger | |

3 Fill in the gaps in this table.

singular	plural
	les livres
un magasin	
l'hôtel	
	des maisons
l'arbre	
un parking	
	des plages
une piscine	

★ Look carefully at the articles (*un, une, des, le, la, l', les*).

4 Translate the following into French.

- 1 the streets _____
- 2 some trees _____
- 3 a swimming pool _____
- 4 a church _____
- 5 some cinemas _____
- 6 the hospital _____

★ If there is a feminine word starting with a vowel or silent *h*, the French is still *une*:
une église a church.

- 7 a car park _____
- 8 some markets _____
- 9 the park _____
- 10 the shops _____

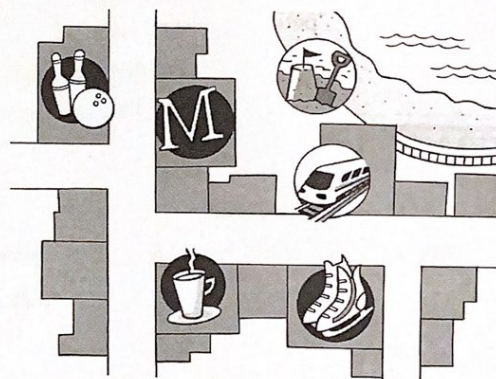
5 Translate these sentences into French.

- 1 I like the cinema.

- 2 I don't like books.

- 3 I prefer the theatre.

Remember that there must be a word for 'the' in French here.



H 6 Translate this passage into French.

Remember: 'a' is an indefinite article.

'Some' is also an indefinite article.

'The' is a definite article.

In my town there is a shopping centre with some fantastic shops. I like the bowling alley but I don't like the museum. There are also some cafés, some restaurants and an ice rink. The railway station is opposite the swimming pool and the beach is behind the railway station.

Articles The partitive article

» Foundation pp. 50-51
» Higher pp. 52-53

- G** It is important to know when and how to use the partitive article, as it translates the English word 'some'. The word you use will depend on whether the noun is masculine, feminine or plural, and whether it begins with a vowel or silent 'h'.

masculine	feminine	begins with vowel or silent 'h'	plural
du	de la	de l'	des

du café some coffee *de l'eau* some water
de la confiture some jam *des chips* some crisps

We don't always need to say 'some' in English, but it must be used in French.

Tu veux du sucre? Do you want (some) sugar?

However, after a negative, you must use *de* (or *d'* before a vowel or a silent 'h'). In such cases, we would say 'any' rather than 'some' in English.

Nous n'avons pas de lait. We don't have any milk.

You must use the word for 'some' in questions, although we would use 'any' in English.

Vous avez du pain? Have you got any bread?

Similarly, expressions of quantity are followed by *de* or *d'* too.

une bouteille d'eau a bottle of water or *un paquet de chips* a packet of crisps

1 Write the correct word for 'some' in front of these nouns.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 _____ bonbons (pl) | 5 _____ pain (m) |
| 2 _____ jambon (m) | 6 _____ frites (pl) |
| 3 _____ petits pois (pl) | 7 _____ huile (f) |
| 4 _____ viande (f) | 8 _____ confiture (f) |

2 Complete the sentences with *du/de la/de l' or des*.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Tu as _____ légumes? | 3 J'ai _____ eau minérale. | 5 Nous avons _____ carottes. |
| 2 Tu voudrais _____ café? | 4 Tu voudrais _____ pizza? | |

3 You need to go shopping. Write answers to these questions, saying whether you have the following things.

Example: Tu as des pêches? Non, je n'ai pas de pêches.

- 1 Tu as du pain? **X**

- 2 Vous avez des pommes? **✓**

- 3 Tu as de l'eau minérale? **✓**

- 4 Tu as de la viande? **X**

- 5 Vous avez du fromage? **✓**

★ Remember that you always use *de* (or *d'*) after a negative.

4 Translate these sentences into English.

1 Nous n'avons pas de garage.

2 Elle n'a pas de frères.

3 Tu as des livres.

4 Ont-ils de l'argent?

5 Je n'ai pas de chips.

5 Translate these sentences into French.

1 I don't have any brothers.

Remember that after a negative you must use *de* (or *d'*).

2 I would like some coffee.

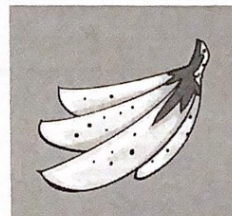
This word will depend on the gender of the noun.

3 I want some eggs, some ham, some jam and some mineral water.

4 Do you want some coffee?

5 Would you like some bananas?

6 Do you have you any money?

**H 6 Translate this passage into French.**

Think about the tense here!

I want some milk, some butter and some flour because I am going to make a cake. I bought some peaches and some pears yesterday. I have lots of fruit but I would also like some apples and some cream. I haven't got any sugar but I have got some yoghurt. Do you have any eggs?

After a negative, 'any' is often *de*.

3 Put the infinitive into the correct form of the perfect tense.

- Samedi dernier 1 _____ (*je - prendre*) le car en ville où 2 _____ (*je - retrouver*) ma meilleure amie. 3 _____ (*Nous - faire*) les magasins et 4 _____ (*elle - acheter*) des baskets. 5 _____ (*Nous - prendre*) un burger dans un restaurant et moi, 6 _____ (*je - choisir*) un milkshake. 7 _____ (*Elle - boire*) un café. 8 _____ (*Nous - décider*) de rentrer chez moi à pied. 9 _____ (*Nous - écouter*) de la musique et 10 _____ (*mes parents - préparer*) le dîner.



You will need two words to form the present tense each time: a part of *avoir* and the past participle of the verb. There are some irregular past participles here!



4 Translate the sentences into English.

- 1 Elle a envoyé un e-mail. _____
 2 Nous avons compris les questions. _____
 3 Je n'ai pas vu le bus. _____
 4 Tu as fait de la natation hier? _____
 5 La semaine dernière, ils ont voulu aller au cinéma. _____
 6 Vous avez joué au golf samedi dernier? _____



It's good practice to translate from French into English before you start to translate into French in the perfect tense. Remember that in the perfect tense there will always be a part of *avoir* and a past participle.

5 Translate these sentences into French.

- 1 She finished her homework. _____
 2 We played football. _____
 3 I saw the film at the cinema. _____

Homework is plural in French.

6 Now translate this passage into French.

You could use *on* or *nous*, but remember that they use different persons of the verb.

Use *en* with this form of transport.

Last year I spent my holidays at the seaside with my friends. We travelled by bus. Lionel and Joachim played tennis on the beach but Angèle read a magazine and I ate two ice creams. Later we bought some bread and some cheese and we had a picnic.

Masculine words use *du* for 'some'.

Verbs The perfect tense with être

» Foundation pp. 40–41
» Higher pp. 16–17

- G** As you have seen, most verbs form the perfect tense using *avoir* as the auxiliary verb, but some verbs use *être* instead. They are mostly verbs to do with movement. Some are opposites.

Forming the perfect tense

These verbs use part of the present tense of *être* + the past participle:

être	
je suis	nous sommes
tu es	vous êtes
il/elle/on est	ils/elles sont

★ DR+MRS VAN DER TRAMP spells out the first letters of the 16 verbs in the table and may help you remember them!

English meaning	French verb	past participle
to go / to come	aller / venir	allé / venu
to arrive / to leave	arriver / partir	arrivé / parti
to go in / to go out	entrer / sortir	entré / sorti
to go up / to go down	monter / descendre	monté / descendu
to stay / to fall	rester / tomber	resté / tombé
to be born / to die	naître / mourir	né / mort
to come back	revenir	revenu
to return	retourner	retourné
to become	devenir	devenu
to go back	rentrer	rentré

With these verbs, the past participle may need to change spelling as it must agree with the subject of the verb. So, for a feminine subject of a verb you would add *-e* to the end of the past participle: *elle est tombée* (she fell). Likewise, for a masculine plural subject, add *-s*: *ils sont partis* (they left). Add *-es* for a feminine plural subject: *elles sont parties* (they left).

je suis allé(e)	I went	nous sommes allé(e)s	we went
tu es allé(e)	you went	vous êtes allé(e)s	you went
il est allé	he went	ils sont allés	they (m) went
elle est allée	she went	elles sont allées	they (f) went

1 Complete these sentences with the correct part of être.

- Nous _____ arrivés très tard.
- Elle _____ allée en ville.
- Je _____ rentré chez moi.
- Ils _____ montés.
- Tu _____ tombé dans la rue.
- Vous _____ partis à onze heures.

2 Rewrite the sentences using the correct past participle of the verb in brackets.

- Elle est (*arriver*) vers dix heures.

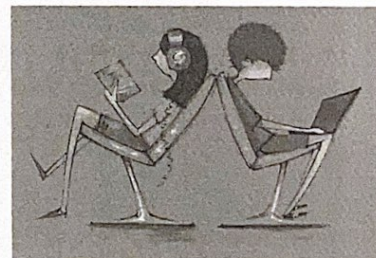
- Ils sont (*rester*) à la maison.

- Il est (*sortir*) avec ses copains.

- Elle est (*partir*) tôt.

- Nous (m) sommes (*entrer*) dans le salon.

- Je (f) suis (*aller*) au cinéma.



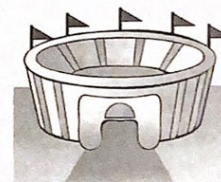
★ Remember that the past participle must agree with the subject of the verb.

3 Replace the verb in brackets with the correct form of the perfect tense. Take care as there will always be a part of *être* and a past participle.

- 1 Les garçons (*arriver*) hier. _____
- 2 Je (m) (*naître*) en France. _____
- 3 Elle (*mourir*) il y a 20 ans. _____
- 4 Tu (f) (*aller*) au collège. _____
- 5 Elles (*retourner*) en Angleterre. _____
- 6 Il (*partir*) avec son ami. _____

4 Translate these sentences into English. It will help you to remember that there are two parts to every perfect tense in French.

- 1 Le soir, je suis allé au stade. _____
- 2 Nous sommes arrivés avant midi. _____
- 3 Mon amie est tombée. _____
- 4 Mon père n'est pas venu. _____
- 5 Je suis sorti avec Louise. _____
- 6 Ils sont restés à la plage. _____



5 Translate these sentences into French.

Remember that 'went' will be two words in French: a part of *être* and a past participle.

- 1 Yesterday she went to school. _____

- 2 He arrived at the station at 6 o'clock. _____
- 3 We went into the house. _____

6 Now translate this passage into French.

Last week I went to the museum with my brother. We left the house at 2 o'clock and we arrived in town at 2.30. Afterwards, we went to a restaurant where we stayed on the terrace. I returned home but my brother stayed in town.

The verb *partir* needs to be followed by *de* here.

Use *rester*.

Use *rentrer* in the perfect tense here.

Verbs The near future tense

» Foundation pp. 14–15
» Higher pp. 14–15

G Using different tenses is a good way of showing variety and complexity in your written and spoken French. Using the near future can help with this. When you are talking about what you are going to do or what is going to happen in the future, you use the **near future tense** (*le futur proche* in French).

To form this, you need the correct part of the verb *aller* (to go) in the present tense and an infinitive. This makes it easy to translate because we also use the verb 'to go' in English.

Je vais manger.

I'm going to eat.

Nous allons partir.

We are going to leave.

Remember all the parts of *aller*:

<i>je vais</i>	I'm going	<i>nous allons</i>	we are going
<i>tu vas</i>	you are going	<i>vous allez</i>	you are going
<i>il/elle/on va</i>	he/she/one is going	<i>ils/elles vont</i>	they are going

Remember that the infinitive is the part of the verb you find in the dictionary and always ends in **-er, -ir or -re**:
e.g. *jouer, venir, prendre*.

1 Choose the correct form of *aller* to complete the near future sentences.

- Nous *vais / allons* regarder un film.
- Je *vas / vais* télécharger de la musique.
- Mon ami *vont / va* arriver en retard.
- Tu *vas / va* partir en vacances.
- Elles *allons / vont* voir un concert.
- Vous *allez / allons* sortir ce soir.

★ The first word in the sentence has a capital letter!

2 Rewrite these near future sentences in the correct order.

- visiter allons un Nous château .
- vont leurs Elles devoirs faire .
- tennis allez au jouer Vous ?
- vais avec mes Je amis parler .
- Les vont radio la écouter garçons .
- vas finir devoirs tes Tu .
- aller Elle à pêche la va .
- manger Ils un dans restaurant vont .

3 Complete these near future sentences with the correct form of *aller*.

- Vous _____ manger dans un petit restaurant en ville.
- Je _____ jouer au squash avec mon ami.
- Nous _____ faire du vélo.
- Ils _____ vendre leurs ordinateurs.
- Tu _____ acheter des provisions.
- Elle _____ sortir bientôt.



Fill in the gap with an appropriate verb in the infinitive.

- 1 Je vais _____ du vélo.
- 2 Elle va _____ un sandwich.
- 3 Nous allons _____ la France.
- 4 Ils vont _____ au cinéma.

5 Translate these sentences into English.

- 1 Je vais faire les magasins cet après-midi.

- 2 Elles vont regarder un film ce soir.

- 3 Nous allons passer le week-end prochain à Paris.

- 4 Ma famille va jouer aux cartes.



6 Translate these sentences into French.

- 1 He is going to play football this morning.

- 2 We are going to visit the castle tomorrow.

- 3 I'm going to watch TV in my bedroom.

Remember that there won't be a word for 'is', 'are' or 'am' before 'going'.

7 Translate this passage into French.

I'm going to spend the weekend at my friend's house. We are going to listen to music and chat with our friends on Skype. My brother is going to go windsurfing with my Dad and in the evening they are going to go to the ice rink. What are you going to do?

This needs *chez* followed by 'my friend'.

Use *faire* not *aller* here.

Don't forget you don't need a word for 'in' here.
