



# **GENDER AND NUMBER OF NOUNS**

**First lesson – Première leçon**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- A noun is a label for places, things, and concepts.
- **Nouns may be categorised :**
  - **common** or **proper**
  - **counting** or **mass**
  - **singular** (sg.) or **plural** (pl.),
  - **masculine** (m.) or **feminine** (f.).



- It is important to recognise **the gender and the number of a noun.**
- These properties **affect the form of the determiner, pronouns, and adjectival/participial agreement.**



- Thus, most of time **French nouns are preceded by a determiner**. Observe:

○ *C'est la vie!*      *That's life!*

- The construction:

**\*C'est vie**

is not possible in French



The most common determiners are articles, appearing before the noun, (e.g. **la** vie) and indicate definiteness. **La** introduces a feminine and singular noun.

French articles change form to agree in gender and number with the noun. There is also a contracted form used before words starting with **a vowel** and most words beginning with **“H”**.



	Singular	plural
<b>Masculine</b>	Le	Les
<b>Feminine</b>	La	Les
<b>Before vowel or h</b>	L'	Les

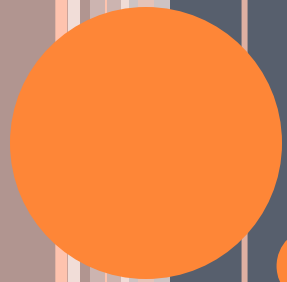


- Some examples of noun with their corresponding definite article

- *Le garçon / les garçons* *the boy(s)*
- *la fille / les filles* *the girl(s)*
- *L'appartement / les appartements* *the flat(s)*
- *L'université / les universités* *the universitie(s)*







**MASCULINE GENDER**

## 2. IDENTIFYING A MASCULINE GENDER

- There are few general patterns and rules that help to identify the gender and number of French nouns.



## 2. MASCULINE GENDER

### 2.1-Common endings:

- A) Nouns ending in **-é, -er, -ier**

*Le café (the coffee), l'atelier (the studio),  
le dîner (the lunch)...*

- B) Nouns ending in **-ent**

*Le document (the document), le moment (the moment),  
L'appartement (the apartment)*

- C) Nouns ending in **-isme**

*Le socialisme (the socialism), le capitalisme (the  
capitalism), le nihilisme (the nihilism)...*



## 2. MASCULINE GENDER

- D) Nouns ending in **-eau, -o, -eu**

*Le cerveau (the brain), le vélo (the bicycle), le jeu (the game) ...*

- E) Most compound nouns

*Le tire-bouchon (the corkscrew), le pique-nique (the picnic), le passe-temps (the pastime) ...*



## 2. MASCULINE GENDER

All weekdays are masculine

- Le lundi                      Monday
- Le mardi                     Tuesday
- Le mercredi                Wednesday
- Le jeudi                     Thursday
- Le vendredi                Friday
- Le samedi                  Saturday
- Le dimanche               Sunday

All seasons are masculine

- Le printemps              Spring
- L'été                         Summer
- L'automne                 Autumn
- L'hiver                      Winter



# ALL LANGUAGES ARE MASCULINE

- Le français                      French
- Le zoulou                         Zulu
- Le suédois                        Swedish
- Le turc                             Turkish
- Le grec                             Greek
- L'anglais                          English
- Le portugais                      Portuguese
- ...





## 3.2. Particularities

- When a noun ends in **-s**, **-x** or **-z**, there is no difference between the singular and plural forms:
  - *Le bras / Les bras* *the arm(s)*
  - *Le gaz / Les gaz* *the gaz / gases*
  - *Le prix / Les prix* *the price(s)*



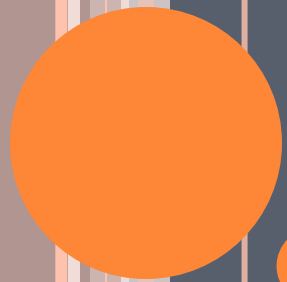


### 3.3 Irregular patterns

Observe:

Ending	Singular	Plural	Translation
-ail	Le travail	Les travaux	<i>Work, job(s)</i>
-al	Le journal	Les journaux	<i>Newspaper(s)</i>
-eau	Le cadeau	Les cadeaux	<i>Present(s)</i>
-eu	Le jeu	Les jeux	<i>game(s)</i>
-ou	Le bijou	Les bijoux	<i>Jewel(s)</i>





# FEMININE GENDER

## 4. IDENTIFYING FEMININE GENDER

### 4.1 Common endings:

- A) Nouns ending in **-ure** or **-ue**

*La culture* (the culture), *la voiture* (the car),  
*la rue* (the street), *l'aventure* (the adventure)...

- B) Nouns ending in **-tion** or **-(s)sion**

*La passion* (the passion), *la dissertation* (the essay),  
*l'émotion* (the emotion), *la nation* (the nation)...



## 4. FEMININE GENDER

- C) Nouns ending in **-ée**

*La matinée* (morning), *la journée* (day),  
*la soirée* (evening), *l'idée* (idea)...

- D) Most common nouns ending in **-té**

*La clarté* (clarity), *la médiocrité* (mediocrity),  
*la santé* (health), *la pauvreté* (poverty) ...



## 4. FEMININE GENDER

- E) Most nouns ending in **-ie**

*La pluie* (rain), *la pâtisserie* (pastry shop),  
*la pharmacie* (pharmacy), *l'académie* (academy) ...

- F) Nouns ending in **-ance**

*La méfiance* (distrust), *l'arrogance* (arrogance),  
*la chance* (chance), *la vengeance* (revenge)...



## 4. FEMININE GENDER

- G) Most nouns ending in **-ence**

*La préférence* (preference), *l'absence* (absence), *la patience* (patience), *la conférence* (conference)...

- H) Most nouns ending in **-eur**

*La peur* (fear), *la couleur* (colour),  
*la grandeur* (size), *l'erreur* (mistake) etc...



## 4. FEMININE GENDER

- I) Most nouns ending in a **double consonnant followed by -e**

*La ville* (the city), *la couronne* (the crown),  
*la famille* (the family), *l'adresse* (address)...



# SCIENCES ARE FEMININE

- L'anthropologie
  - La biologie
  - La chimie
  - La géographie
  - La linguistique
  - La médecine
  - La physique
  - La politique
  - ...
- 
- **EXCEPT**
  - Le droit
- Anthropology
  - Biology
  - Chemistry
  - Geography
  - Linguistics
  - Medecine
  - Physics
  - Politics
- Law





## 4. FEMININE GENDER

### 4.2 Particularities

- When referring to a person, most masculine nouns add **-e** to their ending for their feminine form:

*L'étudiant* → *L'étudiante*

*the student*

*Le français* → *La française*

*the French person*



## 4. FEMNINE GENDER

- If the masculine noun ends in **-é**, a **silent -e** (known as a **mute e**) is added. The pronunciation remains the same

*Le fiancé* → *La fiancée*      *the fiancé*

*Le marié* → *La mariée*      *the married man / woman*



## 4. FEMININE GENDER

### 4.3 Irregular patterns

Masculine ending	Feminine ending	Example		Translation
-an	-anne	Le pays <u>an</u>	La pays <u>anne</u>	Farmer
-ien	-ienne	Le gardi <u>en</u>	La gardi <u>enne</u>	Guard
-on	-onne	Le patron <u>on</u>	La patron <u>ne</u>	Boss
-er	-ère	Le boulang <u>er</u>	La boulang <u>ère</u>	baker
-eur	-euse	Le danse <u>ur</u>	La danse <u>use</u>	dancer
-teur	-trice	Le direct <u>eur</u>	La direct <u>rice</u>	director

## 4. FEMININE GENDER

- The rules above apply to both nouns and adjectives

*L'étudiant → L'étudiante (noun)*

*Student / student*

*Paul est étudiant (adjective)*

*Paul is a student.*

*Marie est étudiante (adjective)*

*Mary is a student.*



## 5. FEMININE NUMBER

- In all these cases, the plural is formed by adding **-s** to the noun.

L'étudiante → les étudiantes

La directrice → les directrices

La danseuse → les danseuses





# GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

## 5. GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

**5.1** Some nouns ending in **-e** that refer to people have the same form for both masculine and feminine. In these cases, the article clarifies the meaning:

*Le/la révolutionnaire*      *the revolutionary man/woman*

*Le/la touriste*                      *the tourist man/woman*



## 6. GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

- Some nouns only exist in the feminine form:

*La victime (man/woman)*

*the victim*

*La personne (man/woman)*

*the person*





## 5. GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

**5.2** Some nouns denoting professions exist only in the masculine form

*Le médecin*

*the doctor*

*Le juge*

*the judge*



## 6. GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

- Note : In these cases, feminine nouns are sometimes formed by placing **femme** (*woman*) in front of the word, preceded by an article as determiner:

*Une femme médecin*

*a female doctor*



## 5. GENDER'S PARTICULARITIES

**5.3** Some other nouns denoting professions only exist only in the feminine form

*Une sage-femme*

*a midwife*



C'est tout pour aujourd'hui!

Au revoir!

Merci!

