

# Les articles définis

## INTRO

The articles are determiners used to qualify a noun. French nouns always have a gender and the determiner indicates this gender.

## DETAILS

"The" is the definite article in English.

Le + masculine singular: le chat, le courage... (the cat, the bravery...)

La + feminine singular: la maison. la sœur... (the house, the sister...)

L' + masculine / feminine singular starting by a vowel or h

= l'hôpital (m), l'école (f)

Les + masc. / fem. plural: les livres (m), les voitures (fem)

## MORE

The #1 difficulties for learners is certainly knowing the genders of inanimate items. There are some "shortcuts" to guess the gender of a noun depending on its ending with more or less accuracy, but the only foolproof system is to learn them by heart. When you learn a new word, learn it with its correct determiner.

All the items that are masculine / feminine by definition usually stay the same: the father (male) = le père, the bull = le taureau...

Wild animals often have only one gendered article:

Le crapaud (toad) = male and female

La girafe = male and female

# Les articles indéfinis

## INTRO

The indefinite articles are slightly easier to get use to than the definite ones, since they leave aside the neutral l' (exists for pronunciation only)

## DETAILS

"A / an" + some

Un + masculine singular (= one): un chien, un stylo... (a dog, a pen...)

Une + feminine singular: une pomme, une mère... (an apple, a mother...)

Des + masculine / feminine / mixed plural

= des bouteilles (f), des élèves (mixed), des murs (bottles, pupils, walls)

## MORE

Though English doesn't have a lot of indefinite plural determiners, French has a bunch. Which means that you might see "some" translated by something else. The meaning won't change though, simply the nature of the determiner, so don't be too concerned with the grammar!

## DIFFERENCES LE / UN

The difference between definite and indefinite articles is the same in English and French. "The" is used to talk about a specific individual, mainly known by both the speaker and its interlocutor and "a" is used for an undeterminate individual.

Ex: Je vois un chien. => we don't know it, it's not specific

Je vois le chien. => we both know which dog, previously mentioned, or know in any way by speaker / interlocutor.