

WHY GENDER IS IMPORTANT

LESSON FOCUS

OBJECTIFS DE LA LEÇON

1. to understand the importance of knowing whether a word is feminine or masculine
 2. to learn a few tips which will help you recognise masculine and feminine words
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NIVEAU

A1 - [niveau découverte](#) (beginner)

ARTICLES

Please note that most words ending in **-e** in French are feminine, most words ending with a consonant or not an **e** are masculine. However, this is far from being a strict rule, and there are many exceptions (see below).

- **le** (the) or **un** (a) is used in front of a masculine noun.
- **la** (the) or **une** (a) is used in front of a feminine noun.
- **les** (the) or **des** (some) is used in front of a plural noun regardless if it is feminine or masculine.

Examples:

- le/un stylo
- la/une fleur
- les/des stylos*
- les/des fleurs*

*Even though **les** or **des** is used for both masculine and feminine nouns, knowing the gender of the noun is important.

POURQUOI FAUT-IL SAVOIR SI UN NOM EST MASCULIN OU

FÉMININ ?

A noun may come with the following grammatical influencers, such as adjectives, possessive or demonstrative adjectives, etc. See below.

ADJECTIFS

All adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun they qualify.

Examples:

- Le stylo **vert** est **petit** - The green pen is small
- La fleur **verte** est **petite** - The green flower is small
- Les* stylos **verts** sont **petits** - The green pens are small
- Les* fleurs **vertes** sont **petites** - The green flowers are small

*Though we use **les** for both nouns, the corresponding adjectives still have to reflect the gender, as well as the number, of the nouns. So **verts** is masculine plural because **stylos** is masculine plural.

ADJECTIFS ET PRONOMS POSSESSIFS

All possessive adjectives and pronouns agree in number and gender with the noun used.

Examples:

- **Mon** stylo est vert (my pen is green) - **Le mien** est vert (mine is green)
 - **Ma** fleur est verte (my flower is green) - **La mienne** est verte (mine is green)
 - **Mes** stylos sont verts (my pens are green) - **Les miens** sont verts (mine are green)
 - **Mes** fleurs sont vertes (my flowers are green) - **Les miennes** sont vertes (mine are green)
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ADJECTIFS ET PRONOMS DÉMONSTRATIFS

All demonstrative pronouns and adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun used.

Exemples:

- **Ce** stylo est vert (this pen is green) - **Celui-ci** est vert (this one is green)
- **Cette** fleur est verte (this flower is green) - **Celle-ci** est verte (this one is green)
- **Ces** stylos sont verts (these pens are green) - **Ceux-ci** sont verts (these ones are green)

- **Ces** fleurs sont vertes (these flowers are green) - **Celles-ci** sont vertes (these ones are green)
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ADJECTIFS ET PRONOMS INTERROGATIFS

All interrogatives pronouns and adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun used.

Examples:

- **Quel** stylo est sur la table ? - What pen is on the table?
 - **Quels** stylos sont sur la table ? - What pens are on the table?
 - **Quelle** fleur est sur la table ? - What flower is on the table?
 - **Quelles** fleurs sont sur la table ? - What flowers are on the table?
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PRONOMS SUJETS

The subject pronoun has to agree with the number and gender of the noun it replaces.

Replacing the noun by a subject pronoun

le stylo vert - the green pen

il est vert - it* (he) is green

la fleur verte - the green flower

elle est verte - It (she) is green

les stylos verts - the green pens

ils sont verts - they are green

les fleurs vertes - the green flowers

elles sont vertes - they are green

*There is no such a thing as "it" in French, so everything has to be HE or SHE no matter if it is a door or a girl we are referring to.

PARTICIPE PASSÉ

When using the auxiliary verb **être** (to be) in a **passé composé** (past tense), the past participle of the conjugated verb must agree in gender and number with the subject.

je suis allé(e)*

tu es allé(e)*

il est allé
elle est allée
nous sommes allé(e)s
vous êtes allé(e)(s)
ils sont allés
elles sont allées

*The (e) will only be needed if **je, tu, nous, vous** are referring to feminine subjects.

FÉMININ OU MASCULIN ?

NOMS FÉMININS

The following endings usually indicate a feminine noun. However, there are some important exceptions, some of which are provided for information.

Endings	Some examples	Some exceptions
-e	la table (the table), la chaise (the chair), une école (a school), la France (France), la Belgique (Belgium)	l'arbre (the tree), le cartable (the satchel), le téléphone (the phone), le livre (the book)
-aille, -eille	la médaille (a medal), la taille (the size), une abeille (a bee), une bataille (a battle)	
-esse	une forteresse (a fortress), la gentillesse (kindness), la princesse (the princess)	
-ière	une infirmière (a nurse), la couturière (the seamstress), la cafetière (the coffee machine)	le cimetière (cemetery), l'arrière (the back)
-té, -tié	l'amitié (friendship), la santé (health), la liberté (freedom), la volonté (will)	l'été (the summer), un invité (a guest), un traité (a treaty)
-tion, -sion, -ssion	la natation (swimming), la décision (the decision), la conclusion (the conclusion), la télévision (the TV), la pression (the pressure), la progression (the progression)	
-tte	une recette (a recipe), une dette (a debt), une maisonnette (a small house)	
-tude	l'inquiétude (worry), l'aptitude (the ability), l'habitude (the habit)	

NOMS MASCULINS

The following endings usually indicate a masculine noun, however, there are also many exceptions...

Endings Some examples

-acle, -age, -asme, -ège, -ème, -isme	le miracle (the miracle), le village (the village), l'enthousiasme (enthusiasm), le collège (the secondary school), le système (the system), le thème (the theme), le modernisme (modernism)
-ail, -eil, -euil	le travail (work), un éventail (a fan), le soleil (the sun), le réveil (the alarm clock), le fauteuil (the armchair)
-eur	le docteur (the doctor), le bonheur (happiness), l'ascenseur (the lift), le professeur (the teacher)
-eau, -ot, -al,	le bateau (the boat), le château (the castle), le paquebot (the liner), l'abricot (the apricot), le canal (the canal), le cheval (the horse), un hôpital (a hospital), un bureau (a desk or an office)
-ment	un bâtiment (a building), un instrument (an instrument), un équipement (an equipment)
-oir	un manoir (a manor), un miroir (a mirror), un trottoir (a pavement), un arrosoir (a watering can)
-ou	un kangourou (a kangaroo), un clou (a nail), un hibou (an owl)

Some exceptions

la page (the page), la plage (a beach), une image (an image), la Norvège (Norway), la crème (the cream)
la blancheur (whiteness), la chaleur (heat), la pâleur (pallor), la lenteur (slowness)
la peau (the skin), l'eau (water)
une jument (a mare)