**Les noms**

French divides its nouns into masculine and feminine groups and you will have to separate the two types. Originally, the word may have been called after male and female people/animals (e.g. man/woman, lion/lioness) but now the words are often divided by the sound of the last few letters.

There are big families which are easy to remember. Understand the main concept and don’t worry about exceptions yet. Train your ear by saying aloud and learning the word with the article (le/la or un/une).

**Masculine**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Foreign words | le robot, le tennis, le sandwich, le tee-shirt |
| Languages | le français, l’anglais, l’allemand |
| Days, months, seasons | le lundi, (le) décembre, le printemps |
| Fruit, vegetables not ending in –e | le citron, l’ananas, le melon, le chou-fleur |
| Rivers, countries, towns not ending in –e | le Rhin, le Yarra, Paris, Berlin, le Canada, le Maroc, le Japon |
| Endings:  -age  -é  Eau or O sounding  -eur of people  -er or –ier | le garage, le voyage, le chômage  le supermarché, le café, l’employé  le stylo, le lavabo, le judo, le bureau, le cadeau  le professeur, le chauffeur, le coiffeur  le boucher, le boulanger, un infirmier |
| Many nasal sounds | un an, le pain, le copain, un enfant, un appartement, le chien, le mécanicien, le dessin, le jardin, le garçon, le crayon, le bâton |

**Feminine**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fruit, vegetables which end in -e | la banane, la pomme, la carotte, la tomate, ***(but le concombre)*** |
| Rivers, countries, towns which end in -e | la Seine, la Franche, Londres, Rome,  ***(but le Rhône, le Mexique)*** |
| Endings  -ade  -agne  -erie  -ière  -ine  Lle  Ion, -tion  -ance, -ence, -anse, -ense  -ette  -euse  -son  -sse  -ure | la limonade, la sérénade  la montagne, la campagne  la boucherie, la boulangerie  une infirmière  la piscine, la copine, la cantine, une usine  la famille, la grenouille, la ville, elle  la télévision, la natation, (***but un avion, le lion)***  la différence, la chance, la danse, la défense  la calculette, la serviette ***(but le squelette)***  la vendeuse, la coiffeuse  la maison, la saison ***(but le poisson)***  la trousse, la brosse, la Suisse  la voiture, la confiture, la nature |

**Le pluriel**

French does not *always* add an S as English does, e.g. *the* cup: the cups. Check this guide.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Noun** | **Singular** | **Plural** |
| Most nouns add S | le téléphone | les téléphones |
|  | la tortue | les tortues |
| Nouns ending in S, X, Z remain unchanged | le fils | les fils |
|  | le prix | Ies prix |
|  | le gaz | les gaz |
| Nouns ending in EAU add X | le bureau | les bureaux |
|  | le cadeau | Ies cadeaux |
| Nouns ending in AL change: *AL AUX* | Le cheval | les chevaux |
|  | I'h*ô*pital | les h*ô*pitaux |

**Les articles**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | the | a or an | **to the** or **at the** | **of the** or **some** |
| Masculine singular | le | un | au | du |
| Feminine singular | la | une | a la | de la |
| Before a vowel or | l’ | un / une | a l' | de l' |
| before an h mute |  | (No shortening |  |  |
|  |  | because of 'n' sound) |  |  |
| Masculine plural | les | des (= some) | aux | des |
| Feminine plural | les | des | aux | des |

NB A rule which is easily overlooked -after a negative verb simply use **de** instead of du / de la / de l' / des. e.g. Pierre a des soeurs. Marie n'a **pas de** freres.

**Les adjectifs**

**Gender and number**

French has masculine and feminine nouns and the same is true for adjectives. Adjectives must agree in gender and number with the noun they describe. This is called 'agreement'

The form given in the dictionary is always in the masculine singular.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Singular** |  | **Plural** |  |
| Masculine | **As in dictionary** | le chat *noir* | **Add S** | les chats *noir****s*** |
| Feminine | **Add E** | la serviette *vert****e*** | **Add ES** | les serviettes vert**es** |