**LES ARTICLES**

The French article is the word used for identifying, presenting and indicating the gender (masculine or feminine) and the number (singular or plural) of words belonging to the following grammatical units: Nouns, possessive pronouns and some indefinite pronouns. It is compulsorily placed before each noun with which it is used. We have three different forms of French Articles, they are; the definite article, the indefinite article and the partitive article.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Les articles(en Anglais) | Singulier | Singulier | Pluriel | Pluriel |
|  | Masculin | Feminin | Masculin | Feminin |
| L’article defini (the) | Le, l’ | La, l’ | Les | Les |
| L’article indefini (a, an, some, one) | Un | Une | Des | Des |
| L’article partitif (some, any) | Du, de l’ | De la, de l’ | Des= (de+ les) | Des (de + les) |

**Definite Articles**

They are: le, la, l’, and les**. Le** is the French masculine singular definite article. It is used before every masculine singular accompanying any noun that starts with a consonant or an aspirated **h**. Here are some words beginning with an aspirated h: le haut (top), le Havre (Hanover), le héros (hero), le hall (hall), le handball (handball), le hibou (owl), le hockey (hockey), le handicap (handicap), le hardware (hardware). **Le** is reduced to **L’** whenever is in contact with another word beginning with a vowel or with a silent **h**. Examples of masculine nouns beginning with a mute **h** are; l’habit (dress), l’homme (man), l’héroïsme (heroism), l’hôpital (hospital), l’hôtel (hotel). **La** is the French feminine singular definite article. It is used before any feminine singular noun beginning with a consonant or an aspirated **h**. Among the most commonly used nouns beginning with an aspirated **h** are; la haine (hatred), la Havane (Havana), la Haye (hague), la Hanche (hip), la honte (shame/disgrace), la Hollande (Holland).

**L’** is used instead of la, before any feminine noun whose first letter is any of the five vowel letters and also the mute **h**. Examples; l’heroine (heroine), l’horloge (clock), l’harmonie (harmony/unity), l’histoire (history/story), l’habitude (custom/habit), l’hotesse (hostess), l’huile (oil), l’hyene (hyena), etc.

**Les** is the plural of le, la, and l’. It is used before a plural noun, a plural possessive or indefinite pronoun, whether it is masculine or feminine. It’s accompanying noun or possessive pronoun is always plural.

**Use of Definite Article**

1. With General or Abstract nouns

It is used with all abstract nouns or nouns used in a general sense. Example: L’homme est mortel. (man is mortal) L’amour est divin. (Love is divine)

1. With Titles.

When talking about someone, the definite article must be used with titles. The article is omitted, however in direct address. Examples: Le docteur Martin est dentist.

1. With Languages and Academic subjects

The definite article is used with languages unless the name of the language immediately follows the verb **parler** or the preposition **de** or **en**.

Examples: Le français est une belle langue. French is a beautiful language.

J’étudie le français et l’anglais. I study French and English.

Je parle français. I speak French

**For Subjects**

La biologie, la linguistique, la chimie, les mathématiques, le tourisme, les sciences politiques, les relations internationales et la diplomatie.

1. With days of the week, seasons, dates, and time expressions.

It is used with days of the week to indicate habitual occurrence. The definite article has the meaning of **every** or **on**. The definite article accompanying the days of the week is masculine. Examples: J’ai ma classe de francais le mercredi. I have my French class on Wednesday (every Wednesday)

The definite article is omitted when talking about a particular day.

Example: Je suis allé au cinéma lundi.

I went to the movies (on) Monday.

Definite article has the meaning of **in the** when used with parts of the day.

Example: Le matin, je vais à l’église.

In the morning, I go to church.

The definite article is used with seasons when discussing the season in a general sense.

Example: L’été est une saison agréable.

Summer is a nice season.

The definite article is used with dates.

Example: Le 15 Septembre, les classes recommencent.

On the 15th of september, classes resume.

1. With Names of Continents, Countries, Provinces, Regions, Islands, Mountains and Rivers.

The definite article is used with names of continents, countries, Provinces, regions, mountains and rivers.

Example: La France n’est pas un grand pays.

France is not a large country.

1. With Weights and Measures.

It is used with the expression of quantity when used in conjunction with a price to indicate **Per**.

Example: Les tomates coutent deux francs le kilo.

Tomatoes cost two francs (per) kilogram.

1. With Parts of the Body or Clothing.

The definite article is used instead of the possessive adjective with parts of the body or clothing, in order to avoid ambiguity.

Example: Il se lave les mains.- He washes his hands.

**Contraction of the Definite Article**

The definite article contracts with a (at, to) and de (from, about, of) in the following way:

à + le = au

à + la = a la

à + les = aux

à + l’ = a l’

Examples: Je vais au musée- I am going to the museum.

Je parle aux garcons- I’m speaking to the boys.

Je vais à la pharmacie- I am going to the pharmacy.

J’arrive à l’hopital- I’m arriving at the hospital.

De + le =du

De + la = de la

De + les = des

De + l’ =de l’

Examples: Je parle du garçon- I’m speaking about the boy

Je parle de la fille- I am talking about the girl.

Je parle de l’élève- I am talking about the pupil.

Je parle des étudiants- I am talking about the students.

**Indefinite Articles**

The French indefinite article is generally used, as the English indefinite article, whenever a common noun preceded by the article is unknown to the reader or listener or whenever such a noun is being presented in an indefinite, non-specific or imprecise manner. It is also used when no previous reference has been made to the noun and when neither the speaker nor the audience knows what the specific item is. **Un** and **une** mean **a, an,** or **one** while **des** the plural form is translated in English as **some.** At times, it is not even translated.

Examples:

Un livre-textbook, Un garçon- a boy, un ami- a friend, un professeur- a teacher, un rêve- a dream.

Une règle- a ruler, une chaise- a chair, une fille- a girl, une couleur- a colour, une table- a table.

Des livres- some books, des couleurs- some colours, des idées- some ideas.

**Omission of Indefinite Articles.**

1. It is omitted after the verb ‘etre’ (to be) when the verb is followed by an unmodified noun indicating nationality, religion, or profession.

Examples: Elle est médecin- She is a doctor.

Elle est catholique- She is a catholic.

But when **c’est** is used instead of **il est**, the indefinite article is used.

E.g. C’est un francais- He is a Frenchman.

C’est un avocat- He is a lawyer.

1. It is omitted whenever any form of **quel** (what) precedes the noun to produce an exclamatory statement about a noun, although its meaning is implied (in French) and, in fact made explicit (in English).

Example: Quel beau garcon! – What a handsome boy!

1. The indefinite article is replaced by de/d’ whenever the noun being imprecisely referred to is used in a negative context, as seen in each answer below in which the verb is used in the negative.

Examples: Tu as un crayon?- Do you have a pencil ? Non, je n’ai pas de crayon- No, I do not have a pencil/ I have no pencil.

**Exercises: Page 153 “Practical French for Anglophone students” by Prof S. Ade Ojo.**

**Partitive Articles**

The French partitive article (which, when used in an affirmative statement, translates in English into Some, part of, and from) is used with a common noun to refer to an undefined, indefinite or imprecise quantity of a noun, in order to indicate the quantity of the noun (for example, some liquid, or food) that is uncountable or to state the indefinite number of something that is countable. It is also used to refer to a small portion of a thing or to an aspect of an idea expressed by the noun.

Examples: De la glace- some ice/cream, de la confiture- some jam, de l’huile- some oil, de l’eau- some water, du sel- some salt, du vin- some wine, de l’argent- some money, des épinards- some spinach, des petits pois- some garden peas.

**The Full Partitive Articles in Affirmative Sentences**

The partitive article translates into **some** in English when it is used in an affirmative statement. However, **some**, as a partitive article is not always translated but rather implied in English.

Examples: Donnez-moi de la glace- Give me (some) ice-cream.

Il a de la chance.- He is lucky/he has luck.

J’ai besoin de l’huile.- I need (some) oil.

**The Reduced Full partitive Articles in Negative Statements.**

Whenever the sentence in which the partitive article is used with a noun is negative, the full partitive is reduced to **de/d’**. It is reduced to **de** when followed by a noun beginning with a consonant or an aspirated **h**; and to d’ when it precedes a noun beginning with a vowel or a silent **h**. When it is used after a negative verb other than ‘**etre**’, it is usually translated in English by **any** or **no**. Example:

Il n’a pas de chance.- He is not lucky/He has no luck.

**LES NATIONALITES**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Pays** | **Masc. (un)** | **Fem. (une)** | **Masc. Pluriel** | **Fem. Pluriel** |
| Nigeria | Le Nigeria | Nigérian | Nigériane | Nigérians | Nigérianes |
| Algeria | L’Algérie | Algérien | Algérienne | Algériens | Algériennes |
| Benin republic | Le Benin | Béninois | Béninoise | Béninois | Béninoises |
| Burkina Faso | Le Burkina Faso | Burkinabé | Burkinabé | Burkinabés | Burkinabés |
| Brazil | Le Brésil | Brésilien | Brésilienne | Brésiliens | Brésiliennes |
| Botswana | Le Botswana | Botswanais | Botswanaise | Botswanais | Botswanaises |
| Burundi | Le Burundi | Burundais | Burundaise | Burundais | Burundaises |
| Cameroon | Le Cameroun | Camerounais | Camerounaise | Camerounais | Camerounaises |
| Canada | Le Canada | Canadien | Canadienne | Canadiens | Canadiennes |
| Cote d’ivoire | La cote d’ivoire | Ivoirien | Ivoirienne | Ivoiriens | Ivoiriennes |
| China | La Chine | Chinois | Chinoise | Chinois | Chinoises |
| Chad | Le Tchad | Tchadien | Tchadienne | Tchadiens | Tchadiennes |
| Congo | Le Congo | Congolais | Congolaise | Congolais | Congolaises |
| Egypt | L’Egypte | Egyptien | Egyptienne | Egyptiens | Egyptiennes |
| England | L’Angleterre | Anglais | Anglaise | Anglais | Anglaises |
| France | La France | Français | Française | Français | Françaises |
| Gabon | Le Gabon | Gabonais | Gabonaise | Gabonais | Gabonaises |
| Germany | L’Allemagne | Allemand | Allemande | Allemands | Allemandes |
| Ghana | Le Ghana | Ghanéen | Ghanéenne | Ghanéens | Ghanéennes |
| Guinea | La Guinée | Guinéen | Guinéenne | Guinéens | Guinéennes |
| Great Britain | La Grande Bretagne | Britannique | Britannique | Britanniques | Britanniques |
| Greece | La Grèce | Grec | Grecque | Grecs | Grecques |
| India | L’Inde | Indien | Indienne | Indiens | Indiennes |
| Italy | L’Italie | Italien | Italienne | Italiens | Italiennes |
| Ireland | L’Irlande | Irlandais | Irlandaise | Irlandais | Irlandaises |
| Mali | Le Mali | Malien | Malienne | Maliens | Maliennes |
| Libya | La Libye | Libyen | Libyenne | Libyens | Libyennes |
| Morocco | Le Maroc | Marocain | Marocaine | Marocains | Marocaines |
| Niger | Le Niger | Nigérien | Nigérienne | Nigériens | Nigériennes |
| Netherlands | Les Pays-Bas | Néerlandais | Néerlandaise | Néerlandais | Néerlandaises |
| Rwanda | Le Rwanda | Rwandais | Rwandaise | Rwandais | Rwandaises |
| Senegal | Le Sénégal | Sénégalais | Sénégalaise | Sénégalais | Sénégalaises |
| Scotland | L’Ecosse | Ecossais | Ecossaise | Ecossais | Ecossaises |
| Spain | L’Espagne | Espagnol | Espagnole | Espagnols | Espagnoles |
| Russia | La Russie | Russe | Russe | Russes | Russes |
| Togo | Le Togo | Togolais | Togolaise | Togolais | Togolaises |
| Tunisia | La Tunisie | Tunisien | Tunisienne | Tunisiens | Tunisiennes |
| United States | Les Etats Unis | Américain | Américaine | Américains | Américaines |
| Belgium | La Belgique | Belge | Belge | Belges | Belges |
| Kenya | Le Kenya | Kenyan | Kenyane | Kenyans | kenyanes |

Vous êtes de quelle nationalité ? You are of what nationality?

D’où venez-vous? Where do you come from?

Je suis nigériane, Je viens du Nigeria.

Examples

1. Président Obama est Américain, mais il vient du Kenya.
2. Je suis Algérien. Je viens d’Algérie.
3. Tu es Egyptienne. Tu viens d’Egypte.
4. Il est canadien. Il vient du Canada
5. Elle est marocaine. Elle vient du Maroc.
6. Nous sommes nigérians. Nous venons du Nigeria.
7. Vous êtes Ecossais. Vous venez d’Ecosse
8. Vous êtes Espagnoles. Vous venez d’Espagne.
9. Ils sont Tunisiens. Ils viennent de Tunisie.
10. Elles sont Indiennes. Elles viennent d’Inde.