

GENDER

- ▲ Most nouns ending in **-tion, -sion, -ure, -ude, -ade, -ée, -té, -ance, and -ence** are feminine: **une addition, la quiétude, une promenade, une journée, la patience.**
- ▲ Most nouns ending in **-age, -ment, -ème, -ège, -oir, -isme** and **-ard** are masculine: **le ménage, un stratagème, un rasoir, le communisme.**
- ▲ Some nouns referring to people are always masculine or feminine, regardless of the person's gender: **un témoin, une victime, un mannequin, une personne.**
- ▲ Some French words are homonyms: they have the same spelling and pronunciation, but have different meanings due to the gender: **un livre/une livre** (a book/a pound), **un mémoire/une mémoire** (an essay/a memory), **un page/une page** (a servant/a [book] page), **un politique/une politique** (a politician/a policy).
- ▲ **Geographic names:** All continents are feminine. Most country names ending in an **-e** are feminine: **la Chine, la Russie, l'Italie.** There are a few exceptions, such as **le Mexique, le Cambodge,** or **le Mozambique.** Names of countries ending in a consonant or a vowel other than an **-e** are usually masculine: **le Canada, le Brésil, le Japon.**

SPELLING AND PLURALIZATION

- ▲ Most English nouns ending in **-or** end in **-eur** in French: **un professeur, un gladiateur.**
- ▲ Most French nouns ending in **-al** or **-ail** change to **-aux** in the plural: **un cheval/des chevaux, un travail/des travaux.**
- ▲ Most French nouns ending in **-au** or **-eau**, and **-eu** form their plural by adding an **-x**: **un tuyau/des tuyaux, un feu/des feux.**
- ▲ When a French word has an English cognate with an **-s** following a vowel, then the French word takes a circumflex accent: hospital–**hôpital**, hostel–**hôtel**, forest–**forêt**.
- ▲ Languages, adjectives of nationality, and religions are not capitalized in French: **le français, le garçon canadien, le christianisme.**

ANGLICISM AND SPECIAL VOCABULARY ISSUES

- ▲ **To talk about school:** **Le collège** = junior high school. You cannot use this for higher education. **L'université** is the correct term for college. The term **école** usually refers to elementary school, but may be used for a school of higher education, such as **école de commerce.**
- ▲ **To know: connaître vs. savoir:** **Connaître** is to know, as in to be acquainted (with a person, place, or thing). **Savoir** is to know, as in to know facts or information (about a person, place or thing). It can also mean to know how.
- ▲ **To work: travailler vs. marcher:** Use **travailler** when the subject is performing a task, as in to do homework or to earn money: **Il travaille à l'université.** Use **marcher** for to work, as in to function: **La télévision marche (elle fonctionne).**

- ▲ **To meet: rencontrer vs. retrouver: Rencontrer** is used to refer to meeting someone for the first time or running into someone while **retrouver** is used when the meeting with a friend is planned, or for a date.
- ▲ **To go home:** To say one is going home, you should use **rentrer à la maison** or **rentrer chez moi/toi/lui...**
- ▲ **Time: le temps vs. la fois vs. l'heure: Temps** is for time in general. How much time do you have? = **Combien de temps as-tu?** Use **fois** for time, as in instances: How many times do...? = **Combien de fois est-ce que...? Une fois (Deux fois, Plusieurs fois, La dernière fois...)**. Use **heure** for asking time on the clock: **À quelle heure commence le film?**
- ▲ **To visit: visiter vs. rendre visite:** Use **visiter** when you visit a place. Use **rendre visite** when you are visiting a person: **Je rends visite à ma grand-mère.**
- ▲ **To attend: assister:** If you are attending a conference, use the verb **assister: J'assiste à une conférence.** **Attendre** means to wait: **J'attends le bus.**
- ▲ **Bookstore vs. library:** You buy books at **la librairie** and borrow books from **la bibliothèque.**
- ▲ **Good vs. well / bon vs. bien: Bon** is an adjective; **bien** is an adverb: **La cuisine est bonne. Il fait bien la cuisine.**

STRUCTURE AND GRAMMAR

- ▲ Nouns ending in **-ation** are derived from regular **-er** verbs: **création (créer), interrogation (interroger).**
- ▲ **C'est vs. il/elle est:** Use **il/elle est** + adjective to describe a person: **Il est intelligent.** Use **c'est** + adjective to describe a situation: **C'est loin.** Use **il/elle est** + unmodified adverb: **Il est tard.** Use **c'est** + modified adverb: **C'est trop tard.** Use **il/elle est** + unmodified noun: **Elle est actrice.** Use **c'est** + modified noun: **C'est une actrice célèbre.**
- ▲ **Indefinite and partitive articles:** Use indefinite articles to introduce a noun that can be counted: **un livre, deux chats.** Use partitive articles to introduce a noun that can't be counted: **de l'eau, du beurre.**
- ▲ There is no equivalent in French to the **-ing** verb form. However, you can use the expression **être en train de:** he is reading = **il est en train de lire** (in the process of).
- ▲ Do not use possessives with pronominal verbs to refer to body parts like **les mains** and **les cheveux:** **Je me lave les mains** (not **mes mains**).
- ▲ **To miss = manquer.** The word order in French is as follows: **Tu me manques** (You miss to me).
- ▲ **Être** and **avoir** are used as helping verbs to form **les temps composés (passé composé, plus-que-parfait, futur antérieur...).** **Avoir** is used in most cases. **Être** is used with the verbs from the house of **être** (or *Dr. and Mrs. Vandertramp*: **Devenir, Revenir, Monter, Rester, Sortir, Venir, Aller, Naître, Descendre, Entrer, Rentrer, Tomber, Retourner, Arriver, Mourir, Partir**). **Être** is also used with reflexive verbs.