

Unit 35 - Using indefinites (1) - French indefinites

1 Definitions

An indefinite word is one which indicates identity or quantity in a general or non-specific way. These can be **indefinite pronouns** (as with *quelqu'un*), **indefinite adverbs** (as with *n'importe où*) or **indefinite adjectives** (as with *n'importe quel*).

2 *Autre* - other

2.1 When used as an adjective, *autre* is always preceded by a determinant (*un, l', mon* etc.). Note that *un / une autre* becomes *d'autres* in the plural :

Viens un autre jour	L'autre livre était plus cher
<i>Come another day</i>	<i>The other book was more expensive</i>
Avez-vous d'autres pullovers dans ce style ?	
<i>Do you have any other jumpers in this style ?</i>	

2.2 *D'autres* (and not **des autres*) is also used in the pronoun form :

Aucun de ces pullovers est à ma taille. Est-ce que vous en avez **d'autres** dans ce style ?
None of these jumpers fit me. Do you have any others in this style ?

3 *Tel* - such

3.1 *Tel* is usually preceded by the indefinite article *un / une*, or *de* in the plural :

Une telle perspicacité est rare chez les enfants
Such perceptiveness is rare in children
De telles erreurs sont compréhensibles chez les débutants
Mistakes like that are understandable in beginners

4 *Plusieurs* - several

Note that *plusieurs*, which is always plural, has no special feminine form :

Il y a **plusieurs** voitures dans leur allée - ils ont sûrement invité des amis
There are several cars in their drive - they must have invited friends over

5 *Différent* - different / various

5.1 When used before a noun *différent* has the sense of *various* :

Le comité a examiné différentes possibilités avant d'arriver à une décision
The committee considered various options before arriving at a decision

5.2 When used after a noun *différent* has the sense of *different* :

En ce qui concerne la politique, ils ont souvent des points de vue différents
When it comes to politics, they often have different points of view

6 *Chaque, chacun(e)* - each / every, each / every one

6.1 *Chaque* is a singular adjective and has only one form, whilst *chacun(e)* is a singular pronoun :

Chaque passage de la chanson à la radio lui rapporte des droits d'auteurs
Each time the song is played on the radio he earns royalties

UNIT 35 - USING INDEFINITES (1) - FRENCH INDEFINITES

Chacune de ses chansons lui rapporte des droits d'auteurs
Each of his songs earns him royalties

- 6.2** When expressing frequency, *tous / toutes les* is generally preferred :
Le conseil des ministres se tient **tous les** mercredis matin
The Cabinet meets every Wednesday morning

7 **Tout**

- 7.1** When used as an adjective, *tout* must always agree with the noun to which it is referring. When used with a determinant such as *le* or *mon* it means *all* :

Tous les articles pris lors du cambriolage ont été retrouvés
All the items taken during the burglary were retrieved

When used without a determinant it has the more hypothetical sense of *any* :

Tout Français qui se respecte le saurait
Any self-respecting Frenchman would know that

The adjective *tout* is often used with demonstrative pronouns (*ce, celle*) :

Il va faire une liste de **tous ceux / toutes celles** qui veulent venir
He's going to make a list of all those who want to come

Watch the spelling when *tout* is used with *ce qui* or *ce que* :

Tout ce qui (and not ***tous qui**) compte c'est qu'il est revenu sain et sauf
All that matters is that he has returned safely

- 7.2** When used as a pronoun, *tout* agrees with the noun which it is replacing. Note that the final -s of *tous* is pronounced :

Il y a beaucoup de restaurants en ville mais **tous** sont fermés le lundi
There are a lot of restaurants in town, but they're all closed on Mondays

- 7.3** Where *tout* is used without referring to a specific noun it has the meaning of "everything" :
Grâce à lui, **tout** a été réglé - *Thanks to him, everything has been sorted out*

Where *tous / toutes* are used without referring to a specific noun they have the meaning *everyone* :

C'est un homme qui était aimé de **tous** - *He was man who was loved by everyone*

- 7.4** When used as an adverb, *tout* means *all* in the sense of *completely, very*. Note that it is invariable in front of masculine adjectives but not feminine adjectives beginning with a consonant :

Tes cheveux sont **tout** mouillés - *Your hair is all wet*
Ta robe est **toute** froissée - *Your dress is all creased*

Agreement is optional in front of feminine adjectives beginning with a vowel or aspirate *h* :

Elle était **tout(e)** excitée / heureuse d'avoir réussi ses examens
She was very excited / happy at having passed her exams

- 7.5** *Tous / toutes les deux* can be used to express the English *both* :
Ses deux fils / filles l'ont **tous / toutes les deux** suivi dans la profession
His two sons / daughters both followed him into the profession