

31. Adjectives (1) - agreement

1 Definitions

Adjectives are words that give information about a noun. Most often adjectives give descriptive information about a noun (as in *The book is red*), and these are called **qualificative adjectives**.

2 Agreements

2.1 In French adjectives must agree with the noun(s) they refer to. If a noun is feminine, then all adjectives referring to it must also be feminine. If a noun is plural, then all adjectives referring to it must also be plural. Generally adjectives take an *-e* in the feminine and an *-s* in the plural:

un acteur connu	une actrice connue	des acteurs connus
<i>a well-known actor</i>	<i>a well-known actress</i>	<i>well-known actors</i>

2.2 Adjectives which already end with an *-e* or *-s* remain unchanged:

un homme maigre	une femme maigre
<i>a thin man</i>	<i>a thin woman</i>
un plafond bas	des plafonds bas
<i>a low ceiling</i>	<i>low ceilings</i>

2.3 Many adjectives have irregular feminine and plural forms:

<i>ending</i>	<i>masc sing</i>	<i>masc pl</i>	<i>fem sing</i>	<i>fem pl</i>
-al	national	nationaux	nationale	nationales
-c	public	publics	publique	publiques
-el	personnel	personnels	personnelle	personnelles
-en	européen	européens	européenne	européennes
-er	léger	légers	légère	légères
-eux	heureux	heureux	heureuse	heureuses
-f	vif	vifs	vive	vives

However, some adjectives do not follow any of these patterns:

banal - banals (<i>pl</i>)	fatal - fatals (<i>pl</i>)	long - longue (<i>f</i>)
blanc - blanche (<i>f</i>)	faux - fausse (<i>f</i>)	naval - navals (<i>pl</i>)
bref - brève (<i>f</i>)	favori - favorite (<i>f</i>)	net - nette (<i>f</i>)
créateur - créatrice (<i>f</i>)	flatteur - flatteuse (<i>f</i>)	roux - rousse (<i>f</i>)
complet - complète (<i>f</i>)	fou - folle (<i>f</i>)	sec - sèche (<i>f</i>)
doux - douce (<i>f</i>)	frais - fraîche (<i>f</i>)	vieux - vieille (<i>f</i>)
épais - épaisse (<i>f</i>)	grec - grecque (<i>f</i>)	

Elle est **folle**, cette femme
That woman is mad
Sa réponse était **fausse**
His / Her answer was wrong

Elle a la peau **douce**
She's got soft skin
Ce pull a une odeur **fraîche**
This jumper smells fresh

2.4 Some adjectives have special masculine forms ending in *-l* which are used before a vowel or an *h* treated as a vowel:

un beau paysage	<i>but</i>	un bel oiseau
<i>a pretty landscape</i>		<i>a pretty bird</i>
un nouveau rapport	<i>but</i>	un nouvel hôpital
<i>a new report</i>		<i>a new hospital</i>
un vieux professeur	<i>but</i>	un vieil homme
<i>an old teacher</i>		<i>an old man</i>

2.5 A very small number of adjectives do not take an agreement. These include *chic* (stylish), *plusieurs* (several), *snob* (snobbish), *kaki* (khaki) and most **nouns** used as adjectives of colour:

Elle est très chic	Nos voisins sont très snob
<i>She's very stylish</i>	<i>Our neighbours are very snobbish</i>
Elle a des cheveux marron	Elle porte des chaussures orange
<i>She's got brown hair</i>	<i>She's wearing orange shoes</i>