

35. Articles (3) - omission of articles

1 After negatives

Generally the articles *un, une, des, du* and *de la* take the form *de* after negatives and *sans*:

J'ai **une** voiture ⇒ Je n'ai pas **de** voiture
I have a car ⇒ I don't have a car
J'ai **du** tabac ⇒ Je n'ai pas **de** tabac
I have some tobacco ⇒ I don't have any tobacco
Tu as **de la** chance ⇒ Tu n'as pas **de** chance
You're lucky ⇒ You're unlucky
Il est actuellement **sans** emploi
He's currently unemployed

2 Before names of professions etc.

Un, une are generally absent before nouns putting someone in a general class, profession etc.:

Il est avocat depuis 1986
He's been a lawyer since 1986
On dit qu'il était résistant pendant la guerre
They say he was in the Resistance during the war
Il a été nommé Directeur Général en 1996
He was made Managing Director in 1996

This is **not** the case, however, after *c'est*:

C'est **un** socialiste / conservateur
He's a socialist / conservative

3 Before identifying nouns

When a noun is inserted after another noun to provide identification, the article is often absent before the second noun:

Mme Chevalier, **maire** de la ville depuis 1996, s'est déclarée contre le projet
Mme Chevalier, the town's mayor since 1996, declared herself to be against the plan

4 Before preceding adjective

In more formal French *des* generally takes the form *de* when the noun has a preceding adjective:

des nouvelles ⇒ **de** bonnes nouvelles - (some) good news
des fleurs ⇒ **de** jolies fleurs - (some) pretty flowers

However it remains unchanged when adjective and verb are so strongly associated as to form a set expression:

des petits pains - some bread rolls
du bon sens - common sense

5 Before describing nouns introduced by *de* or *à*

In general no article is present before a describing noun introduced by *de* or *à*:

un profil **de** carrière
a career profile
un couteau **à** découper
a carving knife

les conditions **de** travail
working conditions
une corbeille **à** linge
a laundry basket

6 After **de**

Generally the articles *du, de l', de la* and *des* are omitted in constructions involving *de*. This involves:

6.1 Expressions of quantity

These include numbers (*un million de personnes*) and more general expressions of quantity such as:

beaucoup / peu **de** bruit
A lot of / not much noise
plus / moins **d'**argent
more / less money

tant **de** jeunes
so many young people
trop / assez **de** travail
too much / enough work

un demi-kilo **de** beurre
half a kilo of butter
une bouteille **de** vin
a bottle of wine

Exceptions are: *la plupart, bien, la majeure partie, la majorité, encore*.

Nous avons eu bien **du** mal à les convaincre
We had a lot of difficulty convincing them

6.2 Other constructions involving **de**

These include: *manquer de, changer de, parler de, charger de, être vêtu de, être couvert de, être plein de, être dépourvu de, avoir besoin de, faire preuve de*.

Il ne manque pas **de** détracteurs
He's not short of critics

Elle a fait preuve **de** courage et **de** perspicacité en prenant cette décision
She showed courage and vision in taking this decision

7 In lists, headlines, titles

Articles are generally omitted in lists:

Tout est en solde: jupes, robes, vestes, pantalons, pullovers, manteaux
Everything's on sale: skirts, dresses, jackets, trousers, jumpers, coats

This is also true for newspaper headlines, book titles etc.:

Chômage en baisse
Unemployment down
Dictionnaire de la langue française
Dictionary of the French Language