

42. Possessive adjectives

1 Definitions

Possessive adjectives are adjectives which are used to indicate possession:

Ma voiture est italienne tandis que **sa** voiture est allemande

My car is Italian whilst his / her car is German

2 Use

- 2.1** In French, possessive adjectives agree with the noun they precede (i.e. *Elle a oublié **son** livre*). This is unlike English where possessive adjectives agree with the possessor (i.e. *She has forgotten **her** book*).

	Singular		Plural
	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>masc and fem</i>
<i>my</i>	mon	ma	mes
<i>your</i>	ton	ta	tes
<i>his / her</i>	son	sa	ses
<i>our</i>	notre		nos
<i>your</i>	votre		vos
<i>their</i>	leur		leurs

Veux-tu lire **mon** magazine / **mes** notes?

*Do you want to read **my** magazine / **my** notes?*

Il s'entend bien avec **son** beau-père / **sa** belle-mère

*He gets on well with **his** stepfather / **his** stepmother*

Elle a perdu **sa** montre / **ses** lunettes

*She's lost **her** watch / **her** glasses*

- 2.2** The masculine forms *mon*, *ton* and *son* are used before a feminine singular noun or adjective beginning with a vowel or unaspirated *h* (i.e. an *h* treated as a vowel):

mon idée	ton autre sœur	son habitude
<i>my idea</i>	<i>your other sister</i>	<i>his / her habit</i>

- 2.3** Unlike in English, possessive adjectives are usually repeated before each noun they apply to:

Il a apporté **son** chapeau, **son** pardessus et **son** parapluie

He brought his hat, overcoat and umbrella

- 2.4** The definite article is often used where English would use a possessive (*his*, *her*):

Elle ferma **les** yeux pour mieux se concentrer

*She closed **her** eyes to concentrate better*

Elle marchait **les** yeux fermés

*She was walking with **her** eyes shut*

2.5 Note that the impersonal pronoun *on* and other impersonal expressions take the possessive adjective *son / sa / ses*:

On a le droit de faire **son** service militaire à l'étranger

You have the right to do your military service abroad

Avant d'aller à l'université **il faut** d'abord avoir **son** bac

Before going to university you must first have your baccalaureate