

PLAYING WITH FRENCH NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES...

The previous lesson, Week 4 – Leçon 1, was about French articles, feminine and masculine, singular and plural, definite and indefinite. But we should also be aware that the spelling of certain French nouns employed in the feminine or plural form can vary in many ways. And this is what this lesson is about.

Goal: By the end of this lesson, you should be able to change most French nouns/adjectives
 from: singular-----→Plural
 from: masculine-----→Feminine

A- General rules for changing French NOUNS/ADJECTIVES from singular to plural

1- As a rule of thumb, the plural of nouns is formed by adding S to their singular forms.

- Un crayon (a pencil) -----→des crayonS (pencils)
- Une personne (a person) ---→des personneS
- La leçon (the lesson) -----→les leçonS (the lessons)

French adjectives, too, will take S in the plural.

- Petit (small) -----→petitS (small [employed with plural nouns]) “*petits arbres*”/ small trees.
- Bon (good) -----→bonS (good [employed with plural nouns]) “*bons étudiants*”/good students.
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But what are the exceptions to this general rule of S?

Tip: Learning the exceptions below is much easier since there are just a few of them.

2- Words ending in al (singular) will end in aux (plural) with the EXCEPTION of festival, bal, carnaval, regal, chacal, which take S.

Un general (a general) -----→des généraux (generals)
 Un hôpital (a hospital) -----→des hôpitaux (hospitals)
 L’animal (the animal) -----→les animaux (the animals)

BUT...

Un festival (a festival) -----→ des festivals (festivals)
 Un bal (a dance/ball) -----→ des bals (dances/balls)
 Un carnaval (a carnival) -----→ des carnavs (carnivals)

3- Words ending in au (singular) will end in X (plural).

Un seau (a bucket) -----→des seaux (buckets)

Beau (beautiful/handsome) -----→beaux “ils sont beaux”/ They are handsome.
 Un anneau (a ring) -----→trois anneaux (three rings)

4- Words ending in eu (singular) will end in X (plural) with the EXCEPTION of the word bleu (blue) which takes an S.

Le jeu (the game) -----→les jeux (the games)
 Le milieu (the middle/ environment) -----→les milieux (the middles/ the environments)
 Un aveu (a confession) -----→des aveux (confessions)

5- Words ending ou (singular) will end in S (plural) with the EXCEPTION of bijou, caillou, chou, genou, hibou, joujou, pou, which take X.

Un lit mou (a soft bed) -----→ des lits mouS (soft beds)
 Un homme fou (a mad/crazy man) --→ des hommes fouS (mad/crazy men)

6- Words ending ail (singular) will end in ails (plural) with the EXCEPTION of

Bail-corail-émail-gemmail-soupirail-travail-vantail-vitrail, which change in **AUX**. For example, un travail-→ des trav**AUX**. Un bail→ des b**AUX**. Of all these words, *travail* (work) is the one I use the most. I barely employ the others 😊.

7- Words ending in S, X, and Z do NOT take additional S when in plural and stay unchanged.

Une souris (a mouse) -----→des souris (mice)
 Le latex (latex) -----→ des latex (latex)
 Le nez (the nose) -----→les nez (the noses)

B- General rules for changing French ADJECTIVES from masculine to feminine

1- As a rule of thumb, the feminine of nouns is formed by adding E to their masculine forms.

Chaud (warm/hot) -----→ chaude “une eau chaude” a warm/hot water.
 Froid (cold) -----→ froide « une eau froide » a cold water.

2- If the adjective ends in ER, its feminine will end in ère

Léger (light[weight])-----→légère “une chose légère” (a light thing)
 Amer (bitter) -----→amère « une soupe amère » (a bitter soup)

3- If the adjective ends in EUX, its feminine will end in EUSE.

Heureux (happy) -----→ Heureuse « *une femme heureuse* » (a happy woman)

Peureux (fearful) -----→ peureuse « *une chienne peureuse* » a fearful female dog.

4- If the adjective ends in ON, its feminine will end in ONNE.

Bon (good) -----→ *une bonne sauce* (a good sauce)

Poltron (fearful/coward) -----→ *la tortue poltronne* (the poltronne/coward turtle)

5- If the adjective ends in EN, its feminine will end in ENNE.

Un citoyen (a male citizen) -----→ *une citoyenne* (a female citizen)

Moyen (average) -----→ *une étudiante moyenne* (an average female student)

Doyen (male senior) -----→ *une doyenne* (female senior)

There might be some elements that I have omitted by mistake. But if you encounter some of them in your French readings, please, let me know so I can update this lesson. But basically, this is what you need to know in order to make the necessary changes of French nouns and adjectives from the masculine to the feminine gender and from the singular to the plural forms.

Now, it is time to [practice](#) a little what you have just seen. You will need to review the previous lesson on articles to correctly translate the articles.