

## 1B.2 Adjective agreement

**Point de départ** Adjectives are words that describe people, places, and things. In French, adjectives are often used with the verb **être** to point out the qualities of nouns or pronouns.

Le cours est difficile.



Je suis optimiste.



- Many adjectives in French are cognates; that is, they have the same or similar spellings and meanings in French and English.

### Cognate descriptive adjectives

agréable	pleasant	intelligent(e)	intelligent
amusant(e)	fun	intéressant(e)	interesting
brillant(e)	bright	occupé(e)	busy
charmant(e)	charming	optimiste	optimistic
désagréable	unpleasant	patient(e)	patient
différent(e)	different	pessimiste	pessimistic
difficile	difficult	poli(e)	polite
égoïste	selfish	réservé(e)	reserved
élégant(e)	elegant	sincère	sincere
impatient(e)	impatient	sociable	sociable
important(e)	important	sympathique (sympa)	nice
indépendant(e)	independent	timide	shy

- In French, most adjectives agree in number and gender with the nouns they describe. Most adjectives form the feminine by adding a silent **-e** (no accent) to the end of the masculine form, unless one is already there. Adding a silent **-s** to the end of masculine and feminine forms gives you the plural forms of both.

MASCULINE  
SINGULAR

MASCULINE  
SINGULAR

**Henri est élégant.**

*Henri is elegant.*

MASCULINE  
PLURAL

MASCULINE  
PLURAL

**Henri et Jérôme sont élégants.**

*Henri and Jérôme are elegant.*

FEMININE  
SINGULAR

FEMININE  
SINGULAR

**Patricia est élégante.**

*Patricia is elegant.*

FEMININE  
PLURAL

FEMININE  
PLURAL

**Patricia et Marie sont élégantes.**

*Patricia and Marie are elegant.*

- French adjectives are usually placed after the noun they modify when they don't directly follow a form of **être**.

Ce sont des **élèves brillantes**.

*They're brilliant students.*

Bernard est un homme **agréable et poli**.

*Bernard is a pleasant and polite man.*

- Here are some adjectives of nationality. Note that the **-n** of adjectives that end in **-ien** doubles before the final **-e** of the feminine form: **algérienne, canadienne, italienne, vietnamienne**.

### Adjectives of nationality

<b>algérien(ne)</b>	<i>Algerian</i>	<b>japonais(e)</b>	<i>Japanese</i>
<b>allemand(e)</b>	<i>German</i>	<b>marocain(e)</b>	<i>Moroccan</i>
<b>anglais(e)</b>	<i>English</i>	<b>martiniquais(e)</b>	<i>from Martinique</i>
<b>américain(e)</b>	<i>American</i>	<b>mexicain(e)</b>	<i>Mexican</i>
<b>canadien(ne)</b>	<i>Canadian</i>	<b>québécois(e)</b>	<i>from Quebec</i>
<b>espagnol(e)</b>	<i>Spanish</i>	<b>sénégalais(e)</b>	<i>Senegalese</i>
<b>français(e)</b>	<i>French</i>	<b>suisse</b>	<i>Swiss</i>
<b>italien(ne)</b>	<i>Italian</i>	<b>vietnamien(ne)</b>	<i>Vietnamese</i>

- The first letter of adjectives of nationality is not capitalized.



**Il est américain.**



**Elle est française.**

- An adjective whose masculine singular form already ends in **-s** keeps the identical form in the masculine plural.

Pierre est **un ami sénégalais**.

*Pierre is a Senegalese friend.*

Pierre et Yves sont **des amis sénégalais**.

*Pierre and Yves are Senegalese friends.*

- To ask someone's nationality or heritage, use **Quelle est ta/votre nationalité?** or **Tu es/Vous êtes de quelle origine?**

**Quelle est votre nationalité?**

*What is your nationality?*

**Je suis de nationalité canadienne.**

*I'm of Canadian nationality.*

**Tu es de quelle origine?**

*What is your heritage?*

**Je suis d'origine italienne.**

*I'm of Italian heritage.*

## 3A.1 Descriptive adjectives

**Point de départ** As you learned in **Leçon 1B**, adjectives describe people, places, and things. In French, most adjectives agree in gender and number with the nouns or pronouns they modify.

SINGULAR  
MASCULINE  
NOUN ↔ SINGULAR  
MASCULINE  
ADJECTIVE

Le **père** est **américain**.  
*The father is American.*

PLURAL  
MASCULINE  
NOUN ↔ PLURAL  
MASCULINE  
ADJECTIVE

As-tu des **cours faciles**?  
*Do you have easy classes?*

- You've already learned several adjectives of nationality and some adjectives to describe your classes. Here are some adjectives used to describe physical characteristics.

### Adjectives of physical description

<b>bleu(e)</b>	<i>blue</i>	<b>joli(e)</b>	<i>pretty</i>
<b>blond(e)</b>	<i>blond</i>	<b>laid(e)</b>	<i>ugly</i>
<b>brun(e)</b>	<i>dark (hair)</i>	<b>marron</b>	<i>brown (not for hair)</i>
<b>châtain</b>	<i>brown (hair)</i>	<b>noir(e)</b>	<i>black</i>
<b>court(e)</b>	<i>short</i>	<b>petit(e)</b>	<i>small, short (stature)</i>
<b>grand(e)</b>	<i>tall, big</i>	<b>raide</b>	<i>straight</i>
<b>jeune</b>	<i>young</i>	<b>vert(e)</b>	<i>green</i>

- Notice that, in the examples below, the adjectives agree in gender and number with the subjects.

Elles sont **blondes** et **petites**.  
*They are blond and short.*

L'**examen** est **long**.  
*The exam is long.*

- Use the expression **de taille moyenne** to describe someone or something of medium size.

Victor est un homme  
**de taille moyenne**.  
*Victor is a man  
of medium height.*

C'est une université  
**de taille moyenne**.  
*It's a medium-sized  
university.*

- The adjective **marron** is invariable; that is, it does not agree in gender and number with the noun it modifies. The adjective **châtain** is almost exclusively used to describe hair color.

Mon neveu a les **yeux marron**.  
*My nephew has brown eyes.*

Ma nièce a les **cheveux châtain**.  
*My niece has brown hair.*

## Some irregular adjectives

masculine singular	feminine singular	masculine plural	feminine plural	
<b>beau</b>	<b>belle</b>	<b>beaux</b>	<b>belles</b>	<i>beautiful; handsome</i>
<b>bon</b>	<b>bonne</b>	<b>bons</b>	<b>bonnes</b>	<i>good; kind</i>
<b>fier</b>	<b>fière</b>	<b>fiers</b>	<b>fières</b>	<i>proud</i>
<b>gros</b>	<b>grosse</b>	<b>gros</b>	<b>grosses</b>	<i>fat</i>
<b>heureux</b>	<b>heureuse</b>	<b>heureux</b>	<b>heureuses</b>	<i>happy</i>
<b>intellectuel</b>	<b>intellectuelle</b>	<b>intellectuels</b>	<b>intellectuelles</b>	<i>intellectual</i>
<b>long</b>	<b>longue</b>	<b>longs</b>	<b>longues</b>	<i>long</i>
<b>naïf</b>	<b>naïve</b>	<b>naïfs</b>	<b>naïves</b>	<i>naïve</i>
<b>roux</b>	<b>rousse</b>	<b>roux</b>	<b>rousses</b>	<i>red-haired</i>
<b>vieux</b>	<b>vieille</b>	<b>vieux</b>	<b>vieilles</b>	<i>old</i>

- The forms of the adjective **nouveau** (*new*) follow the same pattern as those of **beau**.
- Other adjectives that follow the pattern of **heureux** are **curieux** (*curious*), **malheureux** (*unhappy*), **nerveux** (*nervous*), and **sérieux** (*serious*).

### Position of adjectives

- These adjectives are usually placed before the noun they modify: **beau**, **bon**, **grand**, **gros**, **jeune**, **joli**, **long**, **nouveau**, **petit**, and **vieux**.

J'aime bien les **grandes familles**.  
*I like large families.*

Joël est un **vieux copain**.  
*Joël is an old friend.*

- These forms are used before masculine singular nouns that begin with a vowel sound.

**beau**  
**nouveau**  
**vieux**



**bel**  
**nouvel**  
**vieil**



un **bel** appartement  
un **nouvel** ami  
un **vieil** homme

- These adjectives are also generally placed before a noun: **mauvais(e)** (*bad*), **pauvre** (*poor, unfortunate*), **vrai(e)** (*true, real*).
- The plural indefinite article **des** changes to **de** before an adjective followed by a noun.

J'habite avec **des amis sympathiques**.  
*I live with nice friends.*

J'habite avec **de bons amis**.  
*I live with good friends.*

**Julie**



**Annick**



**Michelle**



**Patrick**



**Laurent**



**Stéphane**



**Robert**

**Émilie**