**1A.1** **Nouns and articles**

## Point de départ

A noun designates a person, place, or thing. As in English, nouns in French have number (singular or plural). However, French nouns also have gender (masculine or feminine).

| masculine singular | masculine plural | feminine singular | feminine plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| **le café** | **les cafés** | **la bibliothèque** | **les bibliothèques** |
| *the café* | *the cafés* | *the library* | *the libraries* |

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## 1A.1 Nouns and articles

Nouns that designate a male are usually masculine.
Nouns that designate a female are usually feminine.

| masculine | | feminine | |
|---|---|---|---|
| l'acteur | the actor | l'actrice | the actress |
| l'ami | the (male) friend | l'amie | the (female) friend |
| le chanteur | the (male) singer | la chanteuse | the (female) singer |
| l'étudiant | the (male) student | l'étudiante | the (female) student |
| le petit ami | the boyfriend | la petite amie | the girlfriend |

**1A.1** **Nouns and articles**

Some nouns can designate either a male or a female regardless of their grammatical gender.

**le professeur**
*the (male or female) professor*

**la personne**
*the (male or female) person*

   

## 1A.1 Nouns and articles

Nouns for objects that have no natural gender can be either masculine or feminine.

| masculine | | feminine | |
|---|---|---|---|
| le bureau | *the office; desk* | la chose | *the thing* |
| le lycée | *the high school* | la différence | *the difference* |
| l'examen | *the test, exam* | la faculté | *the university; faculty* |
| l'objet | *the object* | la littérature | *literature* |
| l'ordinateur | *the computer* | la sociologie | *sociology* |
| le problème | *the problem* | l'université | *the university* |

## 1A.1 Nouns and articles

You can usually form the plural of a noun by adding **-s**, regardless of gender. However, in the case of words that end in **-eau** in the singular, add **-x** to the end to form the plural. For most nouns ending in **-al**, drop the **-al** and add **-aux**.

| | singular | | plural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| typical masculine noun | **l'objet** | *the object* | **les objets** | *the objects* |
| typical feminine noun | **la télévision** | *the television* | **les télévisions** | *the televisions* |
| noun ending in -eau | **le bureau** | *the office* | **les bureaux** | *the offices* |
| noun ending in -al | **l'animal** | *the animal* | **les animaux** | *the animals* |

**1A.1**　**Nouns and articles**

Refer to a group composed of males and females with a masculine plural noun.

**les amis**
*the (male and female) friends*

**les étudiants**
*the (male and female) students*

## 1A.1   Nouns and articles

The English definite article *the* never varies for number or gender. However, the French definite article takes different forms according to the gender and number of the noun that it accompanies.

| | singular noun beginning with a consonant | singular noun beginning with a vowel sound | plural noun |
|---|---|---|---|
| masculine | **le tableau** *the picture/ blackboard* | **l'ami** *the (male) friend* | **les cafés** *the cafés* |
| feminine | **la librairie** *the bookstore* | **l'université** *the university* | **les télévisions** *the televisions* |

   

**1A.1**  **Nouns and articles**

Use **c'est** followed by a singular article and noun or **ce sont** followed by a plural article and noun to identify people and objects.

**Qu'est-ce que c'est?**
*What is that?*

**C'est une librairie.**
*It's a bookstore.*

**Ce sont des bureaux.**
*They're offices.*

## 1A.1 Nouns and articles

**Essayez!**   **Select the correct article for each noun.**

**le, la, l' ou les?**

1. __le__ café
2. _____ bibliothèque
3. _____ acteur
4. _____ amie
5. _____ problèmes
6. _____ lycée
7. _____ examens
8. _____ littérature

**un, une ou des?**

1. __un__ bureau
2. _____ différence
3. _____ objet
4. _____ amis
5. _____ amies
6. _____ université
7. _____ ordinateur
8. _____ tableaux