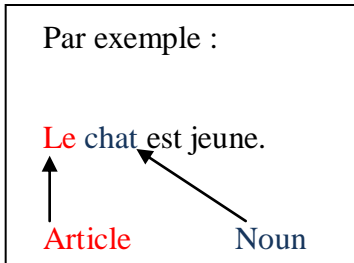_Les Articles_

In French, there are three different types of articles; definite articles, indefinite articles, and partitive articles. Each type of article comes before a noun in a sentence.

Par exemple :

Le chat est jeune.

Article   Noun

Les articles définis

The first type of article is the definite article. Definite articles describe a noun that refers to an object or a person. In English, definite articles refer to the word "the".

In French, there are four different ways to signify the word "the" as a definite article:

Le ⟶	used with masculine, singular nouns
La ⟶	used with feminine, singular nouns
Les ⟶	used with plural nouns
L' ⟶	used with nouns when the next word begins with a vowel or "h"

For Example :

Les garçons mangent tout le gâteau.

The boys eat all the cake.   ⟶ Les and le are the definite articles

Les articles indéfinis

The secondary category of articles in French are known as indefinite articles. Indefinite articles refer to a precise object or person. Any noun that can be counted is an indefinite article. In English, the word "a" or "an" are used.

In French, there are three different articles used to signifiy "a" or "an":

Un ⟶ used with singular masculine nouns

Une ⟶ used with singular feminine nouns

Des ⟶ used with plural nouns

For Example:

Un homme a couru pour une association caritative hier.

A man ran for a charity yesterday. ⟶ Un and une are the indefinite articles.

Les articles partitifs :

The last category of articles in French are partitive articles. Partitive articles refer to nouns that cannot be counted. When translated, they refer to the words "some" or "any" in English.

In French there are four partitive articles:

Du ⟶ used with singular masculine nouns

De la ⟶ used with singular feminine nouns

Des ⟶ used with plural nouns

De l' ⟶ used when the next word begins with a vowel or an "h"

For Example :

Nous avons acheté de l'ail, du pain, et de la laitue pour dîner ce soir.

We bought garlic, bread, and lettuce for dinner tonight. ⟶ De l', du, and de la are the partitive articles.

Attention ! Sometimes in English articles are omitted when speaking or writing. Usually, in English, "the" and "some" are left out; however in French, you cannot leave out any articles. All nouns must be preceded by an article.

Par exemple :

Il a acheté de la crème Chantilly hier.

He bought whipped cream yesterday. ⟶ The word "some" is omitted in English, but in French it must be present.

La négation :

When you use a negative phrase in French; ne…pas, you must use the article "de". However, you only change indefinite and partitive articles in negative phrases. Definite articles are never changed, regardless if the phrase is a negation.

Un, une, des, du, de la, de l' ⟶ de

For Example :

Elle boit une limonade. ⟶ Elle ne boit pas de limonade.

Nous mangeons de la crème caramel après diner. ⟶ Nous ne mangeons pas de crème caramel après diner.

Les mères aiment l'école nouvelle. ⟶ Les mères n'aiment pas l'école nouvelle.

Les verbes de préférence :

In French, certain words do not ever change their article. These verbs, verbs of preference, use definite articles each time, including negative sentences.

Aimer, adorer, détester, préférer use definite articles each time.

Les expressions des quantités :

When referring to quantities of a thing, the article "de" takes the place of the other articles.

Beaucoup de ⟶	a lot of
Assez de ⟶	enough
Une livre de ⟶	a pound of
Un verre de ⟶	a glass of
Un peu de ⟶	a little
Trop de ⟶	too much
Un kilo de ⟶	a kilo of
Une douzaine de ⟶	a dozen of
Une tasse de ⟶	a cup of
Un litre de ⟶	a liter of

For Example :

Tu as bu un verre de vin rouge avec dîner.

You drank a glass of red wine with dinner. ⟶ De" is used because there is a quantity, in this case a glass.

Les contractions :

Lastly, certain articles become contractions when a preposition is used before the article.

à + le ⟶ au

à + les ⟶ aux

de + le ⟶ du

de + les ⟶ des

For Example :

Les femmes vont aller au cinéma le samedi prochain.

The women are going to the movies next Saturday. ⟶ Because "cinéma" would have "à" +"le" before it, "le" is dropped, and "au" is used in its place.

My Experience :

While learning French, the articles for me are easy to make small mistakes with. It is easy to miss a preposition, or a quantity. These little words change the article in a sentence. While the rules are fairly simple and easy to understand, they are easy to miss. For me, when learning the articles and writing French, I take time to look at the sentence, and its components. This way, by taking my time, I can pick out when there are certain identifier words such as "beaucoup" or "aimer" which will change my answer. While it may take more time, the extra effort can help in the long run.

Exercice : Utiliser le article correct.

1. J'ai apporté _____ bifteck pour _____ barbecue.

2. ____ semaine dernière, elle a acheté _____ jupes pour _____ Saint-Valentin.

3. Hier, elles ont vu _____ film sur les animaux _____ désert.

4. Il n'est pas adorer _____ fille.

5. J'ai mangé trop _____ gâteau après déjeuner.