

FRENCH ADJECTIVES

Most adjectives add *e* to the masculine singular form to get the feminine singular. Be careful when you see masculine adjectives ending in *-e*, *-eux*, *-f*, and *-er*, because for those, you do not simply add *e*. (Note that adding this *e* to a previously silent consonant causes that consonant to be pronounced. No pronunciation changes, however, occur when adding *e* to a vowel.) The table below is a list of common adjectives in their masculine and feminine form.

| Common Adjectives | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| américain (American) | américaine |
| amusant (fun) | amusante |
| bleu (blue) | bleue |
| brun (brunette) | brune |
| blond (blonde) | blonde |
| charmant (charming) | charmante |
| content (happy) | contente |
| court (short) | courte |
| élégant (elegant) | élégante |
| fort (strong) | forte |
| français (French) | française |
| grand (big) | grande |
| haut (tall, big) | haute |
| intelligent (intelligent) | intelligente |
| intéressant (interesting) | intéressante |
| joli (pretty) | jolie |
| lourd (heavy) | lourde |
| ouvert (open) | ouverte |
| parfait (perfect) | parfaite |
| petit (small) | petite |
| poli (polite) | polie |
| prochain (next) | prochaine |
| vrai (true) | vraie |

Masculine adjectives that end in a silent *e*

Singular adjectives that end in a silent *e* do not change in the feminine. Masculine and feminine forms are spelled and pronounced in the same manner, as follows:

- *aimable* (kind, pleasant)
- *bizarre* (weird, strange)
- *calme* (calm)
- *célèbre* (famous)
- *comique* (comical)
- *confortable* (comfortable)
- *drôle* (funny)
- *facile* (easy)
- *faible* (weak)
- *honnête* (honest)
- *jeune* (young)
- *magnifique* (magnificent)
- *maigre* (thin)
- *malade* (sick)
- *mince* (thin)
- *moderne* (modern)
- *pauvre* (poor)
- *propre* (clean)
- *riche* (rich, wealthy)
- *sale* (dirty)
- *sincère* (sincere)
- *splendide* (splendid)
- *sympathique* (nice)
- *triste* (sad)

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Masculine adjectives that end in *é*

Form the singular feminine of singular masculine adjectives ending in *é* by adding *-e*, as shown below:

| Common Adjectives | |
|-------------------|----------|
| âgé (old, aged) | âgée |
| dévoué (devoted) | dévouée |
| fatigué (tired) | fatiguée |
| occupé (busy) | occupée |
| situé (situated) | située |

Masculine adjectives that end in *eux*

Masculine singular adjectives ending in *eux* form the feminine by changing *-x* to *-se*, as shown below:

| Common Adjectives | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| affectueux (affectionate) | affectueuse |
| ambitieux (ambitious) | ambitieuse |
| chanceux (lucky) | chanceuse |
| conscientieux (conscientious) | consciencieuse |
| courageux (courageous) | courageuse |
| curieux (curious) | curieuse |
| dangereux (dangerous) | dangereuse |
| délicieux (delicious) | délicieuse |
| furieux (furious) | furieuse |
| généreux (generous) | généreuse |
| heureux (happy) | heureuse |
| malheureux (unhappy) | malheureuse |
| paresseux (lazy) | paresseuse |
| peureux (fearful) | peureuse |
| sérieux (serious) | sérieuse |

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Masculine adjectives that end in *f*

Form the feminine singular of masculine singular adjectives ending in *f* by changing *-f* to *-ve*.

| Common Adjectives | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| actif (active) | active |
| attentif (attentive) | attentive |
| imaginatif (imaginative) | imaginative |
| impulsif (impulsive) | impulsive |
| intuitif (intuitive) | intuitive |
| naïf (naïve) | naïve |
| sportif (athletic) | sportive |

Masculine adjectives that end in *er*

Masculine singular adjectives ending in *-er* form the feminine by changing *-er* to *-ère*, as shown below:

| Common Adjectives | |
|------------------------|----------|
| cher (dear, expensive) | chère |
| dernier (last) | dernière |
| entier (entire) | entière |
| fier (proud) | fière |
| léger (light) | légère |
| premier (first) | première |

Masculine adjectives that end in consonants

Some masculine singular adjectives form the feminine by doubling the final consonant before the *-e* ending.

| Common Adjectives | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| ancien (ancient, old) | ancienne |
| bas (low) | basse |
| bon (good) | bonne |
| cruel (cruel) | cruelle |
| européen (European) | européenne |
| gentil (nice, kind) | gentille |
| gros (fat, big) | grosse |
| mauvais (bad) | mauvaise |

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Masculine irregular adjectives

The irregular adjectives shown below have no rules and must be memorized.

| Common Adjectives | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| beau (handsome, beautiful) | belle |
| blanc (white) | blanche |
| complet (complete) | complète |
| doux (sweet, gentle) | douce |
| faux (false) | fausse |
| favori (favorite) | favorite |
| frais (fresh) | fraîche |
| franc (frank) | franche |
| inquiet (worried) | inquiète |
| long (long) | longue |
| nouveau (new) | nouvelle |
| sec (dry) | sèche |
| vieux (old) | vieille |

The French use special forms of *beau* (*bel*), *nouveau* (*nouvel*), and *vieux* (*vieil*) before masculine nouns beginning with a vowel or vowel sound. If, however, the adjective comes after the noun, the regular masculine form is used:

- *un bel arbre* (a beautiful tree); *L'arbre est beau*. (The tree is beautiful.)
- *un nouvel appartement* (a new apartment); *L'appartement est nouveau*. (The apartment is new.)
- *un vieil avion* (an old airplane); *L'avion est vieux*. (The airplane is old.)

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Position

In English, adjectives tend to go before the noun they describe (my new house, my old grandmother etc).

In French, they almost all go after the noun (*les plats italiens, les chaussures noires, la langue française*).

There is a small group of adjectives, however, that normally precede the noun. These adjectives may be categorized as adjectives of **B**eauty, **A**ge, **N**umbers **G**oodness, and **S**ize (**BANGS**) (!)

| Beauty | Age | Numbers | Goodness | Size |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| joli (jolie), pretty | jeune, young | premier (première), first | mauvais (mauvaise), bad | grand (grande), tall, big |
| beau (belle), beautiful | nouveau (nouvelle), new | deuxième, second | bon (bonne), good | petit (petite), little |
| | vieux (vieille), old | troisième, third | | gros (grosse), big, fat |
| | | dernier (dernière), last | | long (longue), long |
| | | | | court (courte), short |

un petit garçon – a little boy

un vieil arbre – an old tree

un nouveau gazon – a new lawn

un beau jour d'été – a beautiful summer day