

Unit 4: Describing Your World (Décrire le Monde)

You've learned to say hello, introduce yourself, and talk about what you have. Now, let's add some color and detail to your French! This unit will teach you how to describe people and things using adjectives, express who owns what, and master the art of counting in French. Get ready to paint a richer picture with your words!

Lesson 10: Adding Color with Adjectives (Les adjectifs)

Thoughts: Adjectives are the words that add "flavor" to your sentences – they tell you *what kind* of a noun something is. The big secret in French is that adjectives **change their form** to match the noun they're describing.

Casual Introduction: In English, we say "a *big* car" and "a *big* house." The adjective "big" stays the same. Easy, right? Well, in French, adjectives are a bit more social – they like to agree with the noun they're hanging out with! If the noun is masculine, the adjective will be masculine. If it's feminine, the adjective changes to be feminine. And if the noun is plural, the adjective goes plural too!

Good news for Czech speakers! This concept isn't entirely new to you. In Czech, you say *velký stůl* (big table, masculine) but *velká židle* (big chair, feminine). You're already used to adjectives changing their endings to match the noun! French rules are simpler than Czech ones, mostly adding an **-e** for feminine and an **-s** for plural.

Grammar Spotlight: Adjective Agreement (L'accord des adjectifs)

Most descriptive adjectives in French follow a predictable pattern:

- 1. **Masculine Singular (the basic form):** This is usually the form you find in the dictionary.
- 2. **Feminine Singular:** Add an **-e** to the masculine form. If the masculine form already ends in **-e**, it usually stays the same!
- 3. **Masculine Plural:** Add an **-s** to the masculine singular form.
- 4. **Feminine Plural:** Add an **-s** to the feminine singular form.

Regular Adjective Patterns:

Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular (-e)	Masculine Plural (-s)	Feminine Plural (-es)	English Meaning
grand (grahn)	grande (grahnd)	grands (grahn)	grandes (grahnd)	big / tall
petit (puh-TEE)	petite (puh-TEET)	petits (puh-TEE)	petites (puh-TEET)	small / little
vert (vehr)	verte (vehrt)	verts (vehr)	vertes (vehrt)	green
joli (zho-LEE)	jolie (zho-LEE)	jolis (zho-LEE)	jolies (zho-LEE)	pretty
rapide (rah-PEED)	rapide (rah-PEED)	rapides (rah-PEED)	rapides (rah-PEED)	fast / quick

* **Notice:** If the masculine already ends in -e (like **rapide**), the feminine is the same!

Pronunciation Note: When you add an -e for the feminine, the consonant before it often becomes pronounced (e.g., *grand* (silent 'd') vs. *grande* (pronounced 'd')). When adding an -s for plural, the -s is usually silent.

Irregular (but Common!) Adjectives

Some adjectives are a bit quirky, but they are very common, so it's good to meet them early.

Masc. S.	Fem. S.	Masc. Pl.	Fem. Pl.	English Meaning	Notes
beau (boh)	belle (bel)	beaux (boh)	belles (bel)	beautiful / handsome	<i>Beau</i> becomes <i>bel</i> before a vowel (e.g., <i>un bel homme</i>)
nouveau (noo-VOH)	nouvelle (noo-VEL)	nouveaux (noo-VOH)	nouvelles (noo-VEL)	new	<i>Nouveau</i> becomes <i>nouvel</i> before a vowel (e.g., <i>un nouvel ami</i>)
vieux (vyuh)	vieille (vyey)	vieux (vyuh)	vieilles (vyey)	old	<i>Vieux</i> becomes <i>vieil</i> before a vowel (e.g., <i>un vieil homme</i>)
bon (bohn)	bonne (bun)	bons (bohn)	bonnes (bun)	good	Double the consonant before the -e for feminine
jeune (zhoen)	jeune (zhoen)	jeunes (zhoen)	jeunes (zhoen)	young	Already ends in -e, so no change for feminine
intelligent (an-tay-lee-ZAHN)	intelligente (an-tay-lee-ZHANT)	intelligents	intelligentes	intelligent	

Adjective Placement

Most descriptive adjectives in French come **after the noun** they describe.

- une voiture **rouge** (a red car)
- un livre **vert** (a green book)

However, some very common adjectives, especially those related to **beauty, age, goodness, and size (BAGS)**, often come **before the noun**.

- un **grand** chien (a big dog)
- une **petite** maison (a small house)
- un **beau** garçon (a handsome boy)
- une **bonne** idée (a good idea)

Don't worry too much about placement rules right now; focus on agreement. You'll pick up the placement naturally as you learn more phrases.

Example Sentences:

- C'est **un grand** chien. (It's a big dog.)
- C'est **une grande** maison. (It's a big house.)
- J'ai **un beau** livre. (I have a beautiful book.)
- Elle est **belle**. (She is beautiful.)
- Nous sommes **petits**. (We are small - masculine/mixed plural.)
- Elles sont **petites**. (They are small - feminine plural.)
- Il est **intelligent**. (He is intelligent.)
- Elle est **intelligente**. (She is intelligent.)

Vocabulary Box:

French Adjective (Masc. S. / Fem. S.)	English Meaning
grand / grande	big / tall
petit / petite	small / little
beau / belle	beautiful / handsome
nouveau / nouvelle	new
vieux / vieille	old
jeune / jeune	young
bon / bonne	good
mauvais / mauvaise	bad
rouge / rouge	red
vert / verte	green
bleu / bleue	blue
intelligent / intelligente	intelligent
rapide / rapide	fast / quick

Exercises/Quiz:

1. Make the adjective agree with the noun:

- a) une (grand) __ maison
- b) un (petit) __ chat
- c) Elle est (intelligent) __ .
- d) Ils sont (jeune) __ .
- e) Nous avons une voiture (bleu) __ .

2. Translate into French, making sure adjectives agree:

- a) a good friend (masculine)

- b) a good friend (feminine)
- c) They (feminine) are beautiful.
- d) He is old.

3. **Choose the correct adjective form:**

- a) C'est un (bon / bonne) ami.
- b) Elle a une (nouveau / nouvelle) robe (dress - feminine).
- c) Les (vert / verts) livres.

Solutions:

1. a) grande, b) petit, c) intelligente, d) jeunes, e) bleue
2. a) un bon ami b) une bonne amie c) Elles sont belles. d) Il est vieux.
3. a) bon, b) nouvelle, c) verts

Lesson 11: My Thing, Your Thing (Les adjectifs possessifs)

Thoughts: We can say "I have a book," but what about "my book"? In French, these "my, your, his/her" words are called possessive adjectives. Just like regular adjectives, they **agree with the noun they're possessing** – not the person doing the possessing! This is a key difference from English, but similar to Czech.

Casual Introduction: In English, if I say "my book," "my" doesn't change whether the book is masculine or feminine (if English had gender). But in French, "my book" might be **mon livre** (because **livre** is masculine), and "my car" would be **ma voiture** (because **voiture** is feminine). The possessive adjective (my, your, his/her) changes to match the **gender and number of the item being possessed**.

Good news for Czech speakers! This concept is very familiar to you. You say *můj stůl* (my table, masculine) and *moje židle* (my chair, feminine). The possessive adjective (**můj/moje**) changes based on the gender of the noun (**stůl/židle**). French works the same way!

Grammar Spotlight: Possessive Adjectives

Here's the table of possessive adjectives. Pay close attention to how they change!

Possessor	Masculine Singular (e.g., livre)	Feminine Singular (e.g., voiture)	Plural (e.g., livres/voitures)	English Meaning
Je (I)	mon (mohn)	ma (mah)	mes (may)	my
Tu (You informal)	ton (tohn)	ta (tah)	tes (tay)	your
Il / Elle / On (He/She/One)	son (sohn)	sa (sah)	ses (say)	his / her / its
Nous (We)	notre (noh-truh)	notre (noh-truh)	nos (noh)	our
Vous (You formal/plural)	votre (voh-truh)	votre (voh-truh)	vos (voh)	your
Ils / Elles (They)	leur (luhr)	leur (luhr)	leurs (luhr)	their

Crucial Rule for Feminine Nouns starting with a Vowel Sound:

For feminine singular nouns that start with a vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u, or a silent 'h'), we use the **masculine singular possessive adjective** (**mon**, **ton**, **son**) instead of the feminine one (**ma**, **ta**, **sa**). This is for pronunciation reasons, to avoid two vowel sounds clashing.

- Instead of *ma amie*, we say **mon amie** (my friend - feminine).
- Instead of *ta école*, we say **ton école** (your school - feminine).
- Instead of *sa idée*, we say **son idée** (his/her idea - feminine).

Example Sentences:

- C'est **mon** livre. (It's my book - **livre** is masculine.)
- C'est **ma** voiture. (It's my car - **voiture** is feminine.)
- Ce sont **mes** amis. (They are my friends - plural.)
- Il est avec **son** chien. (He is with his dog - **chien** is masculine.)
- Elle parle à **sa** sœur. (She is talking to her sister - **sœur** is feminine.)
- Nous aimons **notre** maison. (We like our house - **maison** is feminine.)
- Vous avez **vos** clés ? (Do you have your keys? - **clés** is plural.)
- Ils cherchent **leur** chat. (They are looking for their cat - **chat** is masculine.)
- J'aime **mon** amie. (I like my friend - **amie** is feminine, but starts with 'a', so **mon** is used.)

Vocabulary Box:

French Noun (with gender)	English Meaning
un livre (m)	a book
une voiture (f)	a car
un chien (m)	a dog
une sœur (f)	a sister
une maison (f)	a house
une clé (f)	a key
un chat (m)	a cat
une idée (f)	an idea
une école (f)	a school
un appartement (m)	an apartment
des amis / amies (pl)	friends

Exercises/Quiz:

1. Fill in the blank with the correct possessive adjective (mon/ma/mes):

- a) C'est __ livre. (my book)
- b) C'est __ voiture. (my car)
- c) Ce sont __ amis. (my friends)
- d) C'est __ école. (my school - feminine, starts with vowel)

2. Fill in the blank with the correct possessive adjective (ton/ta/tes or son/sa/ses):

- a) Il a __ chien. (his dog)
- b) Elle a __ sœur. (her sister)
- c) Vous avez __ clés ? (your - informal - keys)
- d) C'est __ idée. (his idea - feminine, starts with vowel)

3. Translate into French:

- a) our house
- b) your (formal) cat
- c) their car
- d) our friends (masculine/mixed)

Solutions:

1. a) mon, b) ma, c) mes, d) mon
2. a) son, b) sa, c) tes, d) son
3. a) notre maison b) votre chat c) leur voiture d) nos amis

Lesson 12: Counting from 0 to 100 (Les nombres de 0 à 100)

Thoughts: Numbers are essential for daily life – age, prices, addresses, times! French numbers have some unique quirks, especially from 70 upwards. We'll learn them in chunks to make it easier to digest.

Casual Introduction: Ready to count like a true French person? Learning numbers is super practical. You'll be able to tell people how old you are (remember, *j'ai [number] ans!*), buy things, and understand phone numbers. The numbers 0-60 are fairly straightforward, but then French gets a bit... mathematical, especially for 70s, 80s, and 90s! Think of it as a fun puzzle.

Numbers 0-20

Number	French Word	Pronunciation
0	zéro	ZAY-roh
1	un	UHN (nasal 'un' from Unit 1)
2	deux	DUH (like 'eu' from Unit 1)
3	trois	TRWAH
4	quatre	KAH-truh
5	cinq	SANK (nasal 'an' sound, 'q' is like 'k')
6	six	SEES (final 'x' pronounced like 's')
7	sept	SET (final 'p' is silent)
8	huit	WEET (silent 'h')
9	neuf	NUHF (like 'eu' from Unit 1, final 'f' pronounced)
10	dix	DEES (final 'x' pronounced like 's')

Number	French Word	Pronunciation
11	onze	OHNZ (nasal 'on')
12	douze	DOOZ
13	treize	TREHZ
14	quatorze	KAH-torz
15	quinze	KANZ (nasal 'an')
16	seize	SEHZ
17	dix-sept	DEES-set
18	dix-huit	DEES-weet
19	dix-neuf	DEES-nuhf
20	vingt	VANG (nasal 'in', silent 't')

Numbers 21-69 (The Regular Pattern)

From 21 to 69, it's generally simple: the tens number, a hyphen, and then the single digit.

- **Important:** For numbers ending in 1 (21, 31, 41, etc.), you use "**et un**" (and one) instead of just the hyphen.
- **20** vingt (vang)
- **21** vingt-**et-un** (vang-tay-uhn)
- **22** vingt-deux (vang-duh)
- **30** trente (trahnt)
- **31** trente-**et-un** (trahnt-tay-uhn)
- **40** quarante (kah-rahnt)
- **50** cinquante (sank-ahnt)
- **60** soixante (swah-sahnt)

Numbers 70-99 (The Quirky Ones!)

This is where French uses a bit of math!

- **70s (soixante-dix = sixty-ten):** You combine "sixty" with numbers from 10 to 19.
 - **70** soixante-dix (swah-sahnt-dees)
 - **71** soixante-et-onze (swah-sahnt-ay-ohnz)
 - **72** soixante-douze (swah-sahnt-dooz)
 - ...
 - **79** soixante-dix-neuf (swah-sahnt-dees-nuhf)

- **80s (quatre-vingts = four-twenties):**
 - **80** quatre-vingts (kah-truh-vang) - *Note: the 's' in 'vingts' is pronounced here! Only for 80.*
 - **81** quatre-vingt-un (kah-truh-vang-tuhn) - *No 'et-un' for 81!*
 - **82** quatre-vingt-deux (kah-truh-vang-duh)
 - ...
 - **89** quatre-vingt-neuf (kah-truh-vang-nuhf)
- **90s (quatre-vingt-dix = four-twenties-ten):** You combine "four-twenties" with numbers from 10 to 19.
 - **90** quatre-vingt-dix (kah-truh-vang-dees)
 - **91** quatre-vingt-onze (kah-truh-vang-ohnz)
 - **92** quatre-vingt-douze (kah-truh-vang-dooz)
 - ...
 - **99** quatre-vingt-dix-neuf (kah-truh-vang-dees-nuhf)
- **100** cent (sahnt) - *Nasal 'an' sound!*

Cultural Note: These number quirks are unique to French (and some other Romance languages like Swiss and Belgian French sometimes use *septante* for 70, *octante* for 80, *nonante* for 90, which is more straightforward, but stick to the standard French for now!). They reflect historical counting methods. Practice is key!

Example Sentences:

- J'ai **vingt-cinq ans**. (I am 25 years old.)
- La table coûte **trente** euros. (The table costs 30 euros.)
- Il a **soixante-dix-huit ans**. (He is 78 years old.)
- Nous sommes **quatre-vingt** personnes. (We are 80 people.)
- C'est le numéro **quatre-vingt-treize**. (It's number 93.)

Exercises/Quiz:

1. Write the numbers in French:

- a) 8
- b) 12
- c) 21
- d) 40
- e) 63

2. Translate the following ages into French (using *avoir*):

- a) I am 70 years old.
- b) She is 85 years old.
- c) He is 99 years old.

3. Fill in the blanks with the correct number:

- a) Soixante-dix + trois = __
- b) Quatre-vingts - cinq = __
- c) Quatre-vingt-dix + deux = __

Solutions:

1. a) huit, b) douze, c) vingt-et-un, d) quarante, e) soixante-trois
 2. a) J'ai soixante-dix ans. b) Elle a quatre-vingt-cinq ans. c) Il a quatre-vingt-dix-neuf ans.
 3. a) soixante-treize (73) b) soixante-quinze (75) c) quatre-vingt-douze (92)
-

Key Takeaways for Unit 4: Describing Your World

- **Adjective Agreement:** French adjectives change their ending to agree in **gender** (masculine/feminine) and **number** (singular/plural) with the noun they describe.
 - Add **-e** for feminine singular (often makes a silent consonant pronounced).
 - Add **-s** for plural.
 - **Czech connection:** This concept is familiar from Czech adjectives like *velký/velká*.
- **Adjective Placement:** Most adjectives go *after* the noun. Some common ones (like *grand, petit, beau, bon, nouveau, vieux*) go *before*.
- **Possessive Adjectives (My, Your, His/Her, Our, Your, Their):**
 - They agree with the **possessed noun's** gender and number, *not* the possessor's gender.
 - **mon/ma/mes, ton/ta/tes, son/sa/ses, notre/nos, votre/vos, leur/leurs.**
 - **Important exception:** Use *mon/ton/son* before feminine singular nouns that start with a vowel sound (e.g., *mon amie*).
 - **Czech connection:** This also mirrors Czech possessives like *můj/moje*.
- **Numbers 0-100:**
 - Master 0-20 (especially **vingt** with silent 't').
 - Remember the **-et-un** for numbers ending in 1 (21, 31, etc.).
 - Practice the unique "mathematical" patterns for **70s (sixty-ten), 80s (four-twenties), and 90s (four-twenties-ten).**

You've learned to add rich detail to your French sentences! You can now describe things, express ownership, and count your way through many situations. Keep practicing these agreements and numbers, they are fundamental to fluent French!