

APOSTROPHES & CONTRACTIONS

HOW TO USE DE

Have a look at the examples below:

l'adresse de l'hôtel
the hotel's address
(the address of the hotel)

la voiture de la fille
the girl's car
(the car of the girl)

l'addition de la femme
the lady's bill
(the bill of the lady)

The three examples above are quite simple to understand. Even though you might not have known all the vocabulary, the construction is clear, just say **"the something of the something"** with **"de"** being used for **"of"**. However, if the noun that follows **"of"** is masculine or plural, the word for **"the"** will be **"le"** or **"les"**. The word **"de"** joins forces with **"le"** and **"les"** (not with **"la"** for some reason) and they merge into one. This is called a **"contraction"**.

DE + LE = DU
DE + LES = DES

So, look at the sentences below:

l'adresse du restaurant
the restaurant's address
(the address of the restaurant)

la voiture de l'homme
the man's car
(the car of the man)

"DE" can also mean **"from"** as well as **"of"**

c'est de Paris
it's from Paris

c'est du restaurant
it's from the restaurant

THE SAXON GENITIVE

The Saxon Genitive is the proper name for the **"apostrophe s"** in English, which we use to show to whom something belongs. In French, however, the apostrophe s doesn't exist so you have to use another way of showing belonging. In French, you use the word **"de"**, which means **"of"**.

So, instead of saying **"Marie's address"**, you have to say **"the address of Marie"** - **"L'adresse de Marie"**. There are a couple more examples on the next page:



THE SAXON GENITIVE EXAMPLES

Pierre's house
la maison de Pierre
(the house of Pierre)

Marie's car
la voiture de Marie
(the car of Marie)

Marie's address
l'adresse de Marie
(the address of Marie)

The contractions don't happen with feminine nouns or the shortened word for "the" = L'. It only with masculine and plural nouns.

to the beach
à la plage

at the beach
à la plage

to the hotel
à l'hôtel

at the hotel
à l'hôtel

MORE CONTRACTIONS IN FRENCH

Similar to the "de" contractions, there are also two contractions that takes place with the French word "à" meaning "to" or "at". If you want to say "to the" or "at the" with a masculine or plural noun, the following contractions take place in French:

À + LE = AU
À + LES = AUX

to the restaurant
au restaurant

at the restaurant
au restaurant

to the restaurants
aux restaurants

at the restaurants
aux restaurants

This is the same with the "de" contractions; they only happen with masculine and plural nouns, not with feminine nouns or with nouns that start with a vowel or h (which cause the L').

CONTRACTION KEY

de + le = du (of the / from the)

de + les = des (of the / from the)

à + le = au (to the / at the)

à + les = aux (to the / at the)

SOME & ANY

If you put “de” in front of any word for “the” in French, you get the word for “some” or “any” (it’s the same word in French). And don’t forget about the “de” contractions.:

DE + LE = DU

DE + LES = DES

du pain

some bread / any bread

des voitures

some cars / any cars

de la dinde

some turkey / any turkey

du sucre

some sugar / any sugar

des tables

some tables / any tables

de la viande

some meat / any meat