



The gender of nouns

How the feminine is built from the masculine — the endings that cover most cases.

THE 5 PATTERNS

1

-EUR → -EUSE

The commonest pattern for job titles: danseur / danseuse (dancer), vendeur / vendeuse (shop assistant), chanteur / chanteuse (singer), serveur / serveuse (waiter).

2

-EUR → -RICE

Some -eur words take -rice instead: acteur / actrice, directeur / directrice, créateur / créatrice.

3

-TEUR → -TRICE

The same mechanism with -teur words: organisateur / organisatrice, narrateur / narratrice, traducteur / traductrice.

4

-IER → -IÈRE

A written accent appears: boulanger / boulangère (baker), infirmier / infirmière (nurse), caissier / caissière (cashier).

5

Single form for both genders

Some words never change — only the article does: un / une artiste, un / une journaliste, un / une élève, un / une colocataire (flatmate).

How to spot the pattern

Ends in -EUR → usually -EUSE, but some words take -RICE. Learn those exceptions separately.

Ends in -TEUR → almost always -TRICE.

Ends in -IER → -IÈRE, with a grave accent on the E.

When in doubt, check a dictionary: the pattern is not 100% predictable.

General rules of gender

French has only masculine and feminine — no neuter at all.

The feminine is usually formed by adding an -E: ami / amie, Français / Française, cousin / cousine.

English has no grammatical gender: learn every French noun together with its article.