# Synthèse de grammaire

## 1. Expressing number and gender: *les articles indéfinis*

In French, the indefinite article (similar to *a/an* or *some* in English) has three basic forms, **un**, **une**, and **des**, depending on the gender (masculine or feminine) and number (singular or plural) of the noun.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **un** crayon (masc. sing.) | a pencil | **des** crayons (masc. pl.) | (some) pencils |
| **une** calculatrice (fem. sing.) | a calculator | **des** calculatrices (fem. pl.) | (some) calculators |

After a negative expression, the indefinite article will become **de/d'**.

Il y a **un** ordinateur dans mon sac à dos.
Il n'y a pas **d'**ordinateurs dans mon sac à dos.

J'ai **des** crayons dans ma trousse.
Je n'ai pas **de** crayons dans ma trousse.

## *Les articles définis et la possession avec de*

The definite article (similar to *the* in English) has three basic forms, **le**, **la**, and **les**, depending on the gender and number of the noun.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **le** crayon | the pencil | **les** crayons | the pencils |
| **la** calculatrice | the calculator | **les** calculatrices | the calculators |

The definite article sometimes is not translated into English when it refers to something in general.

J'aime **la** biologie. | *I like biology.*
Nous aimons **les** chansons françaises. | *We like French songs.*

Definite articles can be used with the preposition **de** to show possession. The formula for showing possession is to use a *definite article* + *noun* + **de/d'** + *name*.

**La calculatrice de Paul** est moderne. | *Paul's calculator is modern.*

## 2. Telling Time: *l'heure*

In French, one can ask about the time in several ways:

**Quelle heure est-il?** or **Il est quelle heure?**    *What time is it?*
**Tu as l'heure?** or **Est-ce que tu as l'heure?**    *Do you have the time?*

The *il* is an impersonal "it," as in <u>It</u> is 10:00.

**Il est 10h11. (Il est dix heures onze.)**    *It is ten eleven AM.*

**Il est 13h21. (Il est treize heures vingt et une.)**    *It is one twenty-one PM.*

**Il est 23h58. (Il est vingt-trois heures cinquante-huit.)**    *It is eleven fifty-eight PM.*

## 3. Expressing daily school activities: *les verbes en -er*

The basic form of the verb (action word) in French is the infinitive, which can end in *-er, -ir,* and *-re* (e.g., *parler, finir, répondre*).

To talk about customary actions and general facts, we use a form of the verb called the present tense. For infinitives that end in *-er*, look at the endings for each of our subject pronouns for the of the verb *chanter*:

| | |
|---|---|
| je chante | nous chantons |
| tu chantes | vous chantez |
| il/elle/on chante | ils/elles chantent |

Je **parle** anglais avec ma famille.    *I speak English with my family.*

Nous n'**étudions** pas le latin.    *We do not study Latin.*

Note that in these two sentences, there is not a separate French word that corresponds to the English *do* or *is*.

*On* is a more generic pronoun used to refer to people in general, such as in the sentence, "One speaks French in France"/*On parle français en France.*