

Chapter- 5

Dans la classe

STUDY NOTES

In this chapter we will learn

a. Adjectives/ Agreement of adjectives

b. avoir verb and its usage

a. Adjectives

An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun. All French adjectives agree in number (singular or plural) and gender (masculine or feminine) with the nouns they describe. In fact, in French, all words in a sentence must agree with each other: If, for example, the noun or pronoun is singular, its verb and any adjectives describing it must also be singular. If the noun is feminine, the adjective describing it must also be feminine.

Unlike English, most French adjectives are placed after the nouns they modify. A few adjectives, however, precede the noun. In addition, when you use more than one adjective to describe a noun, you must follow placement rules.

Imagine you meet two new friends when you visit Paris. You meet Lucas and his girlfriend, Anissa. Why don't we use some adjectives we know to describe them?

Lucas est grand. Il n'est pas petit. Il est joli. Il n'est pas laid.

Anissa n'est pas grande. Elle est petite. Elle est jolie. Elle n'est pas laide.

Do you see a difference between the way the adjectives are spelled when we describe Lucas and when we describe Anissa?

It's an extra e! We have to match up the adjective with the gender of the subject. When we are talking about Lucas, we don't add an e. This is called the masculine or base form of the adjective. When we are talking about Anissa, we add the e. This is called the feminine form.

TABLE 1 Forming Feminine Adjectives

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

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)

célèbre (famous)

comique (comical)

confortable (comfortable)

drôle (funny)

facile (easy)

faible (weak)

formidable (great)

B. Avoir

A Most Useful Verb

In every language, there are those workhorse verbs that really pull their weight to make the whole language that much better. Avoir (pronounced av-wah), or 'to have', is a great example of one of those in French. While the verb may just mean 'to have,' avoir has many uses beyond that. In fact, without avoir, entire tenses of the French language would be impossible! In this lesson, we're not only going to look at the forms of avoir in both present and perfect tenses, but we're also going to look at examples of it in action. Finally, we'll also learn more about just how useful avoir is throughout the French language.

Conjugation

First of all, let's conjugate avoir in the present tense:

Pronoun and Verb	Pronunciation
J'ai	J'ay
Tu as	tu ah
Il a	Il ah
Nous avons	Newz-ah-vohn

Vous **avez** Vewz-ah-vey

Ils **ont** Ilz-onh

Now before we go any further, do you see how each of those pronunciations took into account the pronoun? This is an important part of French and makes sure that you sound educated. A lot of the time, you'll use avoir with a pronoun. However, sometimes you won't. Therefore, here's a pronunciation chart that separates those last three versions out:

Pronoun	Verb	Pronunciation
Nous	Avons	Ah-vohn
Vous	Avez	Ah-vey
Ils	Ont	Onh

That way, you can say Marie et moi avons without having to sound harsh by saying Marie et moi, nous avons. Both mean 'Marie and I have', but the first one is much more casual, and frankly not as forceful as the second one. The first example is just normal conversation, while the second one is very much the style you'd expect a mother to use when saying to go clean a room now.

Examples

Here are some more examples of avoir at work:

J'ai un livre. I have a book.

Tu as une carte. You have a map.

Elle a les chapeaux. She has the hats.

Nous avons du lait. We have milk.

Vous avez une question. You have a question.

Ils ont le tableau. They have the painting.

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