Le/ la/ l’ or un/ une?
Not sure when to use these words for ‘the’, ‘a’ and ‘some’ in French?
When you look up a French noun, you can tell whether it is masculine (le or un) or feminine (la or une) by the article. The article is the determiner that tells you which person or thing the sentence is about.

So the snake = le serpent and a snake = un serpent.
So the goat = la chèvre and a goat = une chèvre.

★ The word for the will be l’ if it starts with a vowel sound (a,e,i,o,u) e.g. l’animal = the animal. If it’s a plural noun then French word for the = les. It’s the same if it’s masculine or feminine. The French word for some = des. It’s the same if it’s masculine or feminine.

Allez practice
You are writing an email about a school trip to the zoo to a French student. However, you are stuck with how to say some of the animals in French. Use the Oxford Learner's French Dictionary to look up the words. Check the gender and decide whether you need to use le or la or un or une.

Salut, Ça va? La semaine dernière nous avons visité ___ ____. C’était chouette! Mon animal préféré, c’était ___ _____________ mais j’ai aimé aussi ___ _____________ . J’ai vu ___ _________ mais il dormait. ___ _____________ était très haute et elle avait ___ ____________ . J’ai touché ___ ____________ . Ça faisait peur!
A bientôt!
Lucy

Hi, How are you? Last week we visited the zoo. It was great! My favourite animal was the elephant, but I also liked the monkeys. I saw a lion but it was asleep. The giraffe was very tall and it had a baby.
I touched a spider. It was scary!
Bye for now!
Lucy
Students show that they understand the main points and some of the detail in short written texts from familiar contexts. When reading on their own they can use a bilingual dictionary they begin to use context to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

What about words I don’t understand?

Read the text *Une grand fête en Belgique: le carnaval de Binche* on pg 126 of Allez 1. Are there some words you do not understand? Can you work out the meaning from words that you know already, e.g. *deuxième* - if *deux* means *two*, can you work out the meaning? If not, look it up. What word class is it?

When you look up an English verb in your dictionary, you will find it in the infinitive form (e.g. *to fly, to run, to jump*) and the French word usually ends in *-er, -ir* or *-re*. But verb endings change when you use them so be careful when you look up verbs: the ending in the dictionary could be different from the ending in your text.

Read the text again and try to work out its meaning before you turn to your dictionary. Now look up the words in the grid below and write their word class (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, or adverb) in the next column. To help you, if it is a verb the infinitive form is in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>word class</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jour</td>
<td>noun (masc)</td>
<td>day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>portent (porter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bataille</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le feu d’artifice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouver (trouver)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you summarise *Une grand fête en Belgique: le carnaval de Binche* now in English?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

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Students understand and use present tense forms of high frequency verbs; they identify patterns of pronunciation, word formation, word order and grammatical structure in the target language.

The Oxford Learner’s French Dictionary gives verbs in their infinitive form, e.g. to laugh, to sleep, to wash. Look up some verbs on both sides of your dictionary.

**Est**

1. (birds, bees, planes) voler [1]
2. (in a plane) prendre [64] l’avion

We flew from Gatwick. Nous sommes allés à Edimbourg en avion.

**Gagner**

1. to win
Il a gagné! He’s won!
Elles ont gagné le match. They won the match.

However, the verb you want to translate is often not the infinitive which means it will not appear the same way in the dictionary! Verb forms change when you use them. *Elle gagne plusieurs matches.* She wins lots of matches.

In a sentence about something happening now, the verb is in the **present tense**. The verb also changes depending on who or what is the subject (the be-er or do-er) in the sentence, e.g. you, they, a girl, the dogs, etc. In French, it changes by removing the -er/-ir/-re ending and adding the correct ending.

*She wins = gagner > Elle gagne."

Some verbs do not follow a regular pattern, including verbs used a lot, such as **aller** (to go). You will find all the verb forms in the centre pages of your Oxford Learner’s French Dictionary (see P369 for **aller**).

If you look up **va** in the dictionary, you will find:

*va** verb ➔ **aller**

It directs you to **aller**, which is the infinitive form of the verb, and helps you to understand that **va** is a form of the verb **aller**, meaning to go.

**Note**

Some verbs have **se/s’** at the beginning of the infinitive form; they are reflexive. When you look them up, ignore the **se/s’** and look up the next letter, e.g. s’arranger ➔ arranger.

Léa Romain

Read the article about Léa, the tennis player, on page 144 of Allez 1. Look up the verbs below in your dictionary and write out the infinitive form. This will help you to work out their meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb in the text</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>English meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>est</td>
<td>être</td>
<td>to be (am, are, is; as, were; been, being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>améliorer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>passer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding the right word

English words can have different word classes and different meanings. For example, the word fly can be a verb or a noun:

fly noun see fly verb
la mouche fém . fly spray la bombe insecticide

I will fly to Paris.

Waiter, waiter there’s a fly in my soup!

When you look in your dictionary, you need to take care to choose the right word. The insect, a fly, is une mouche in French. The verb, to fly, is voler.

In each entry, the Æ warns you to check for another dictionary entry!

Allez practice

Which drink?

Read the two sentences below and then circle the right French word for drink in each case.

May I have a drink please?

I’d like to drink some lemonade.

Get the right word

Now read the sentences below and look at the underlined words. Write v for the verbs and n for the nouns. Then find the right French word in your Oxford Learner’s French Dictionary and complete the sentences in French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in English</th>
<th>v/n</th>
<th>en français</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I want to book three tickets for the</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>Je voudrais réserver trois billets por le cinéma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I like this book!</td>
<td></td>
<td>J’aime ce __________ !</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I’m going to play football.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Je vais __________ au football.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Our school is putting on a play.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Notre école monte une __________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I like your new watch!</td>
<td></td>
<td>J’aime ta nouvelle __________ !</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. I love to watch Youtube videos.</td>
<td></td>
<td>J’adore __________ les vidéos de Youtube.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>