

Indefinite Adjectives

Indefinite adjectives change nouns in a way that isn't as specific as normal adjectives. A few examples of these in English would be 'certain', 'each', 'several' etc. This article will explore their usage, placement in sentences and examples.

I. Usage

The indefinite adjectives shown in the table below are used in a very similar way to English usage. The two main differences are where they are placed in the sentence, which we will cover in the next point, and that some of them change according to the gender and number of the noun they are modifying.

Quelque(s)	Some/a few
Certain(e)(s)	Certain/some
Différent(e)(s)	Various/several – it means 'different' as a regular adjective
Plusieurs	Several
Autre(s)	Other
Le/la/(les) même(s)	The same
Tous/tout(e)(s)	All/every
Chaque	Each/every
Divers(e)(s)	Various
Aucun(e)	Any/no

II. Placement in Sentences

Quelque(s) - Some/A Few

'Quelque(s)' is placed **before** the noun it relates to. It is one of the indefinite adjectives that can be plural, but its formation doesn't change according to gender.

E.g.

Singular: 'La mer se trouve à quelque distance d'ici.'

'The sea is (situated) **some** distance from here.'

Plural: 'L'été ne dure que **quelques** semaines en Angleterre'

'Summer only lasts for **a few** weeks in England'

1. Certain(e)(s) - Certain/some

'Certain' is placed **before** the noun it relates to. It does change with both gender and number. 'Certaine' is the feminine form, with 'certains' being the masculine plural form and 'certaines' being the feminine plural form.

E.g.

Masculine singular: 'Un certain nombre de pays sont en voie de développement.'

'A certain number of countries are developing.'

Masculine plural: 'Dans certains endroits, il est trop tard de protéger l'environnement.'

'In certain places, it is too late to protect the environment.'

Feminine singular: 'Il y a une certaine personne qui me rend content.'

'There is a certain person who makes me happy.'

Feminine plural: 'Certaines personnes pensent que les vacances scolaires sont une perte de temps.'

'Some people think that school holidays are a waste of time.'

2. Différent(e)(s) and Divers(e)(s) - Various

'Different' and 'Divers' also change with gender and number.

- 'Différente' would be the feminine singular form, which 'différents' is the masculine plural form and 'différentes' is the feminine plural form.
- For 'divers' the feminine form would be 'diverse', the masculine plural is 'divers' and the feminine plural form is 'diverses'.

When 'différent' or 'divers' are placed **before** the noun as an indefinite adjective, they tend to carry the meaning of 'various'.

NOTE: When 'différent' is placed **after** the noun as a regular adjective, the meaning expressed changes to 'different'. When 'divers' is placed after the noun as a regular adjective, its meaning changes to 'diverse'.

The examples below are of the indefinite adjectives. 'Différent' and 'divers' are always plural as indefinite adjectives.

E.g.

Masculine plural 'divers': 'Aujourd'hui il y aura plein de débats sur divers sujets.'

'Today there will be plenty of debates on various subjects.'

Feminine plural 'différentes': 'Il est toujours absent pour différentes raisons.'

'He is always absent for various reasons.'

3. Plusieurs - Several

'Plusieurs' comes before the noun. It is only ever found in the plural form. It also doesn't change according to gender.

E.g.

'Les étudiants voudraient apprendre plusieurs langues.'

'The students would like to learn several languages.'

4. *Autre(s) - Other*

'Autre' is also placed before the noun it refers to. It can be either plural or singular but it doesn't change according to gender.

E.g.

Singular: 'Est-ce qu'il y a une autre raison?'

'Is there another reason?'

Plural : 'J'aime rencontrer des autres gens.'

'I love to meet other people.'

5. *Le/La/ (Les) Même(s) - The same*

'Le même' changes with both gender and number. For the feminine singular form, we use 'la même', and for plural (masculine and feminine) it becomes 'les mêmes'. It is also placed **before** the noun it refers to.

E.g.

Masculine singular: 'On parle du même sujet.'

'We are talking about the same topic.'

Feminine singular: 'C'est la même chose.'

'It's the same thing.'

Plural: 'Je vois toujours les mêmes personnes.'

'I always see the same people.'

Tout(e)(s)/Tous... All/Every

'Tout' is placed **before** the noun it refers to and it changes with gender and number. It becomes 'toute' in the feminine form, 'toutes' in the feminine plural form and 'tous' in the masculine plural form.

E.g.

Masculine singular: 'Tout le monde a des opinions différentes.'

'Everyone has different opinions.'

Masculine plural: 'Je mangerai tous les bonbons.'

'I will eat all the sweets.'

Feminine singular: 'Je vais fêter mon anniversaire avec toute ma famille.'

'I'm going to celebrate my birthday with all my family.'

Feminine plural: 'Toutes nos idées sont utiles.'

'All our ideas are useful.'

6. Chaque - Every

'Chaque' is only ever used in the singular form – 'chaques' does not exist. It is placed **before** the noun it refers to.

E.g. 'Il faut faire les devoirs chaque jour.'

'You have to do homework every day.'

Aucun(e) – Any/no

'Aucun' changes with gender ('aucune' for the feminine) but not number. It is always singular and placed **before** the noun.

E.g.

Masculine singular: 'Tu ne fais aucun effort.'

'You don't make any effort'.

Feminine singular: 'Il n'y a aucune raison pour ton absence.'

'There is no reason for your absence.'

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What are indefinite adjectives?

- a) An indefinite list of adjectives
- b) They are adjectives that change nouns in a way that is less specific than regular adjectives
- c) They are adjectives that don't change nouns
- d) They are adjectives such as big, small, fat, thin etc.

2. Which of the below is an example of an indefinite adjective in English?

- a) Tall
- b) Short
- c) Every
- d) Fast

3. Which of these French adjectives are indefinite adjectives?

- a) Quelque
- b) Tout
- c) Plusieurs
- d) All of the above

4. What is the feminine plural form of 'chaque'?

- a) Chaquees
- b) Chaques
- c) Chaquee
- d) Chaque has no feminine plural form

5. What does 'aucun' mean?

- a) It has no meaning

- b) It means every
- c) It means any/no
- d) It means all

6. What is the meaning of 'different' when placed before the noun?

- a) Different
- b) Various
- c) The same
- d) All

7. Which of the following is NOT a form of 'tout'?

- a) Touts
- b) Tous
- c) Toutes
- d) Toute

8. Which of the following is correct?

- a) La même
- b) Les mêmes
- c) Le meme
- d) All of the above

9. How can 'several' be translated into French?

- a) Chaque
- b) Plusieurs
- c) Tout
- d) Aucun

10. What does 'autre' mean?

- a) Other
- b) Every
- c) All
- d) Some

Answers:

- 1. B
- 2. C
- 3. D
- 4. D
- 5. C
- 6. B
- 7. A
- 8. D
- 9. B
- 10. A