

LES GENS VS LES PERSONNES



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Les Gens vs Les Personnes

Both personnes and gens mean "people" in French, but they aren't interchangeable. They differ in context, formality, and grammar rules.

Use "Gens" for General Groups of People

Gens is used for unspecified, general groups of people. It's more casual and often used in spoken French when referring to people in a general sense.

French: Il y a beaucoup de gens dans le parc.

English: There are many people in the park.

French: Les gens sont parfois imprévisibles.

English: People are sometimes unpredictable.

Use "Personnes" to Specify Individuals within a Group

Personnes refers to individuals within a group and is often used when the quantity or specificity matters. It's more formal than gens and often used with numbers or quantifiers.

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French: Il y avait cinq personnes à la réunion.

English: There were five people at the meeting.

French: Les personnes présentes doivent signer le document.

English: The people present must sign the document.

Tip: If you're specifying how many people are present or addressing individuals more specifically, use "personnes".

"Personne" for Negative Expressions

In negative expressions, "personne" means "anyone" or "nobody," in which case it's singular, with no adjective agreement needed.

French: Il n'y a personne ici.

English: There is no one here.

French: Personne ne veut venir avec moi.

English: No one wants to come with me.

Idiomatic Phrases

In some idiomatic expressions, gens is the default choice, especially with expressions of behavior, collective identity, or cultural norms.

French: Les gens de la ville sont toujours pressés.

English: City people are always in a rush.

French: C'est fou ce que les gens peuvent faire pour de l'argent.

English: It's crazy what people will do for money.

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