

FRENCH CONTRACTED VS PARTITIVE ARTICLES



It is important to understand the difference between French contracted articles vs partitive articles, especially when it comes to using them with negation.

Contracted Articles

French contracted articles involve the combination of a preposition and a definite article.

Preposition + Definite Article	Contracted Form	Example
à + le	au	Je vais au marché. I am going to the market.
à + les	aux	Je parle aux étudiants. I am talking to the students.

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de + le	du	Il revient du cinéma. He is coming back from the cinema.
de + les	des	Elle vient des États-Unis. She is from the United States.

Partitive Articles

French partitive articles are a specific type of articles used to express an indefinite quantity or an unidentified portion of something. They are used when referring to a noun that is uncountable or represents an indefinite amount. The partitive articles in French are “du,” “de la,” “de l’,” and “des,” which correspond to the English word “some” or the idea of “a portion of.”

de + le	du
Example	Je mange du pain. I am eating some bread.

de + la	de la
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Example	Elle mange de la mousse au chocolat. She is eating some chocolate mousse.
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de + les	des
Example	Nous avons des amis. We have some friends.

de l'	de l'
Example	Je bois de l'eau. I am drinking some water.

Negation With Partitive Articles

It's important to note that when the noun is used in a negative sentence or in a question where a negative response is expected, the partitive article is replaced by the indefinite article "de" or "d".

Tu bois du café?	Are you drinking (some) coffee?
Tu ne bois pas de café?	You aren't drinking any coffee?

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Tu achètes des fruits?	Are you buying some fruit?
Tu n'achètes pas de fruits?	You aren't buying any fruit?

Negation With Contracted Articles

Contracted articles do not change after negation.

Il revient du cinéma.	He is coming back from the cinema.
Il ne revient pas du cinéma.	He is not coming back from the cinema.

Elle vient des États-Unis.	She is from the United States.
Elle ne vient pas des États-Unis.	She is not from the United States.

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