

# Neuf vs Nouveau



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The French adjectives **neuf** and **nouveau** both mean “new,” but they don’t describe the same kind of “new.”

One is used for something that’s never been used before, and the other for something that’s simply *new or different* in a given context.

## 1. Neuf - Brand new, unused

Use **neuf** (or **neuve** for feminine nouns) to describe something that’s *brand new, just made, or never used before*.

Think of **neuf** as meaning *fresh out of the box*.

### Examples:

- J’ai acheté une voiture **neuve**.
- I bought a **brand new** car.
  
- Tes chaussures ont l’air **neuves**!
- Your shoes look **brand new**!

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- Ce téléphone est **neuf**.
- This phone is **brand new**.
- La peinture est encore **neuve**.
- The paint is still **fresh/new**.

You'll often hear **neuf** used for *objects* rather than people or ideas.

## 2. Nouveau - New, different, recent

Use **nouveau** (or **nouvelle, nouveaux, nouvelles**) when something is *new to you* or *recently arrived*, even if it's not brand new.

It's about *change* or *replacement*, not condition.

### Examples:

- J'ai une **nouvelle** voiture.
- I have a **new (different)** car.
- Il a un **nouveau** travail.
- He has a **new** job.
- Voici mon **nouveau** voisin.
- Here's my **new** neighbor.

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- Elle a un **nouveau** look.
- She has a **new (different)** look.

**Nouveau** is used for people, ideas, jobs, feelings, homes. Use it for anything that's *new in your life or recently changed*.

### 3. Comparisons

Sometimes both words can technically work, but they don't mean the same thing.

#### Examples:

- J'ai une **nouvelle voiture**.
- I have a different car than before.
  
- J'ai une voiture **neuve**.
- My car is brand new, never before driven.
  
- Il a un **nouvel** ordinateur.
- He has a new (different) computer.
  
- Il a un ordinateur **neuf**.
- His computer is brand new, just out of the box.

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If you buy a *used* car that's new to you, you'd say: *une **nouvelle** voiture*

If you buy a *brand-new* car from the dealership, you'd say: *une voiture **neuve***

#### 4. Grammar note - Position of “nouveau”

**Nouveau** is a BAGS adjective (like *beau, vieux, bon*), and it goes **before** the noun, while **neuf** goes **after**.

#### Examples:

- un **nouveau** manteau
- a new (different) coat
  
- un manteau **neuf**
- a brand-new coat

Adjective	Meaning	Example	Translation
<b>Neuf / Neuve</b>	brand new, unused	un téléphone neuf	a brand-new phone

<b>Nouveau / Nouvelle</b>	new to you, different, recent	un nouveau téléphone	a new (different) phone
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**Easy way to remember:**

*Neuf* - New in condition

*Nouveau* - New in situation

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