

Gros vs Grand



French Adjectives Gros / Grand

The French adjectives *gros* and *grand* may appear similar, but they have distinct meanings and usage.

Gros usually translates to *big* or *fat*, and *grand* to *tall* or *large*.

Sometimes they are (and sometimes they are not) interchangeable.

Let's look at the example of a *big bear*. *Un gros ours* vs *un grand ours*.

Gros emphasizes the bear's weight or bulkiness, while *grand* emphasizes its height or overall size.

We tend to use *gros* with animals unless specifically referring to height - *une grande girafe*, bien sûr.

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Size: "Gros" = physical bulk or overall size, width or volume.

- C'est un **gros** chat.
- That's a **big** cat.

Size: "Grand" = vertical height

- Il est très **grand** pour son âge.
- He is very **tall** for his age.

- Un **grand** arbre
- A **tall** tree

People: When describing people, "gros" refers to someone being overweight, and "grand" describes someone as being tall.

- Elle est **grosse**.
- She is **fat**.

- Il est **grand** et mince.
- He is **tall** and slim.

Abstract Concepts: "Gros" can also be used metaphorically to express intensity or significance, and "grand" can convey importance, influence, or scale.

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- Un **gros** problème
- A **big** problem.

- Un **gros** mensonge
- A **big** lie.

- Une **grande** décision
- A **major** decision.

- Un **grand** écrivain
- A **great** writer.

Interchangeable: There are instances where "gros" and "grand" can be used interchangeably, and they mean the same thing.

- Une **grosse/grande** ville
- A **big** city.

- Une **grosse/grande** maison
- A **big** house.

Gros and grand can't always be substituted for one another. For instance, you wouldn't use "gros" when talking about a tall person or "grand" when describing an overweight person.

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