

What Are Complex Noun Phrases in French?

Worksheet

Complex noun phrases use adjectives, prepositional phrases, or clauses around a core noun to expand meaning. Pre-nominal adjectives come before (une belle maison), post-nominal after (un homme intelligent), and together they create precise descriptions.

Questions

1. Where does 'grand' typically go in a noun phrase?
A) After the noun
B) Before the noun
C) At the end of the sentence
D) Before the article
2. Identify the complex noun phrase: 'une jeune fille intelligente et ambitieuse'
A) jeune fille
B) intelligente et ambitieuse
C) une jeune fille intelligente et ambitieuse
D) fille intelligente
3. Which placement is typical for color adjectives?
A) Pre-nominal only
B) Post-nominal only
C) Either, but post-nominal is standard
D) Never before noun
4. What does a prepositional phrase do in a complex noun phrase?
A) Replaces the noun
B) Modifies the noun (usually post-nominal)
C) Changes tense
D) Introduces negation
5. Expand the noun phrase: 'un bâtiment' (a building) with pre- and post-nominal adjectives.
6. Build a complex noun phrase: 'homme' + pre-nominal 'jeune' + post-nominal 'français'
7. Create a phrase with prepositional modifier: 'table' + pre-adj 'petite' + prep-phrase 'du salon'
8. Define: What is a complex noun phrase?
9. Define: Where do 'grand' and 'petit' typically go?
10. Define: Where do 'blanc' or 'intelligent' typically go?

Answer Key

1. B) Before the noun — 'Grand' is pre-nominal — 'un grand arbre' (a big tree), not 'un arbre grand'.
2. C) une jeune fille intelligente et ambitieuse — The whole phrase — article + pre-nom adj + noun + post-nom adj — is the complex noun phrase.
3. C) Either, but post-nominal is standard — Colors usually follow: 'un arbre vert' (a green tree), though 'noir' can be pre-nominal stylistically.
4. B) Modifies the noun (usually post-nominal) — Prepositional phrases like 'de la maison' or 'du salon' add detail post-nominally.
5. Noun: un bâtiment. Pre-nominal adjective (quality): grand (big). Post-nominal adjective (description): blanc (white). Result: un grand bâtiment blanc (a big white building).
6. Noun: homme (man). Pre-nominal (age/quality): jeune (young). Post-nominal (nationality/detail): français (French). Result: un jeune homme français (a young French man).
7. Noun: table (table). Pre-nominal: petite (small). Post-nominal prepositional phrase: du salon (of the living room). Result: une petite table du salon (a small table of/in the living room).
8. A noun plus multiple modifiers (adjectives, phrases, clauses) placed before or after it.
9. Before the noun (pre-nominal) — 'un grand homme' (a great man), 'une petite maison' (a small house).
10. After the noun (post-nominal) — 'un arbre blanc' (a white tree), 'un homme intelligent' (an intelligent man).

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