5. GRAMMAR: The adjective, part 2

The position of the adjective; change in meaning depending on the position.

In part 1 of the adjective, we saw that the adjective is generally placed after the noun :

*une voiture **rapide**, une fille **intéressante**, un travail **difficile***

-However, there are some (mostly) short adjectives that are placed before the noun. These adjectives are the following:

bon /mauvais
beau/jolie
petit/grand/gros
nouveau/jeune/vieux
double/demi
autre/même

- The words *premier* (first), *dernier* (last), and *prochain* (next) are placed before the noun when they indicate a ranking (position in a sequence).

*Le **premier** candidat / Le **prochain** candidat / Le **dernier** candidat*

- However, in dates, ***prochain*** and ***dernier*** are placed after the noun.

*Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire **mardi prochain / le mois prochain** ? [next Tuesday…]*

***Mardi dernier / Le mois dernier,** j'ai vu un ovni. [last Tuesday / last month...]*

- Some other tricky points:

(1) The adjectives *beau, vieux,* and *nouveau* become *bel, vieil,* and *nouvel* respectively when they are placed before a masculine noun that starts with a vowel :

*un **vieil** homme / un **bel** arbre / un **nouvel** ordinateur …*

(2) The article ***des*** can be changed to ***de*** if the adjective that comes before the noun is in the plural :

*~~des~~ **de** belles filles / ~~des~~ **de** gros mensonges / ~~des~~ **de** bonnes élèves*

(3) Some adjectives change meaning depending on whether they are placed before or after the noun. This applies, among others, to **grand**, **curieux**, **seul**, and **ancien**.

- *un **grand** homme* ---------- *un homme **grand***
  (a big man) *(a great man)*
- *un **curieux** voisin* ---------- *un voisin **curieux***
  (a strange neighbor) *(een curious neighbor)*
- *une seule femme* ---------- *une femme **seule***
  (only one woman) *(A woman who is alone, without company.)*
- *mon **ancien** appartement* ------ *un appartement **ancien***
  *(mijn **former** apartment)* *(an old apartment**)***

(4) The adjectives **grand**, **petit**, and **vieux** sometimes also have a quantitative value (they sometimes express an amount):

- *un **grand** amateur du beau sexe (a great admirer of the fair sex)*
  *(= il aime **beaucoup** les femmes)*

- *un **petit** mangeur (a light eater)*
  *(= il mange **très peu**)*

- *un **vieux** client*
  (= client depuis très longtemps)