

A French reference grammar for students

Pas à pas

**NOUVELLE
ÉDITION**

ADRIENNE HORRIGAN

Cover Art: « Les neiges éternelles le sont-elles vraiment ? » = *Are the eternal snows really everlasting?*

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ÉDITION**

ADRIENNE HARRIGAN

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Printed by Valiant Press, 8 Elliot Place, Ringwood Vic 3134.

Designed and edited by Kerry and Darren O'Connor

Set in 9pt Proxima Nova Condensed

Produced by Adrienne Horrigan

Printed in Australia

National Library of Australia

Cataloging-in-publication data

Horrigan, A. (Adrienne)

Pas à pas - Nouvelle édition

ISBN: 978-0-6451830-3-0 (book)

ISBN: 978-0-6451830-1-6 (eBook)

1. French language - Grammar

2. French language - Textbook for students of French

Dewey 448.2/421

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Acknowledgements

For permission to reproduce the following photographs I would like to thank the following: Frederick Bethry, Nadine Watson, Liz Shehan Cora Hopkins, Elizabeth Moir and Madeleine Horrigan. All other photographs are copyright to the author.

Illustrations by: Isabella Horrigan

Cover photography by: Commander Frederick Bethry

First published Melbourne 1979

Edition 2 Melbourne 1984

Published by Pearson Education Australia, 1986

Edition 3 Melbourne 2021

Edition 4 Melbourne 2022

Pas à pas - Nouvelle édition

The collaborative work between Margaret Rogers, (Vice Principal of Lauriston Girls School, Malvern) and Adrienne Horrigan, (Genazzano College, Kew) led to the publication of the Exercises in French Workbooks, (Years 7/8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11). These books offered accessible grammar notes with related exercises. Over time, our students told us that they really wanted a compact volume of notes to cover French grammar up to early tertiary level. ***Pas à Pas*** followed in 1979.

After the success of ***Pas à Pas***, a second edition appeared in 1984, published by Sorrett Longman, then Longman Cheshire, before Pearson Education, Australia republished the text in 1986. Reprints followed in 1987, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006. By 2008 people were still requesting copies but there were none left. I felt disappointed that students would no longer continue to benefit from the co-authored work of Horrigan and Rogers. Margaret had been such a dynamic and remarkable person, who shared her work unstintingly and had been awarded the Diplôme des Palmes Académiques in 2000, in recognition of her services to the French Language. Sadly Margaret, my friend and co-author, passed away unexpectedly and the rights reverted to me.

In February 2020, just prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I was in Melbourne. I visited the Language International Bookshop / Intext where I saw my long esteemed friend, Jillian Symons, B.A. DipEd. and Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, awarded for her services to French then, and these now total 45 years. During our conversation, I mentioned that people still asked about Pas à Pas. Now in my eighties, I was really hesitant about republishing - retyping, revising and updating the text - but Jillian persuaded me to reconsider. How grateful I am to have been so busy during COVID! Jillian introduced me to Gwenaëlle Page to undertake the typing and even suggested the new title - ***Pas à pas - Nouvelle édition***. Et voilà!

Features of Pas à pas - Nouvelle édition

- No similar reference grammar text exists currently in Australia.
- Complete revision and new design.
- Comprehensive verb tables with margin tags.
- French verbs, moods and tenses explained through the Axe spacio-temporel diagram, courtesy of Frederick Bethry.
- Step by step explanations and summaries of grammar, syntax and idioms, with student prompts in blue boxes.
- Core sections but advanced material highlighted by a red border.
- Key reference tools - Book and eBook.

The presentation with its new art and illustrations aims to promote an understanding of France, her language and historical impact on world cultures, by preparing students for the time when they can travel overseas and visit some of the many French-speaking parts of the world communicating in excellent French.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues, friends and family, for their encouragement and support without which this text would not have materialized.

Editor	Darren O'Connor, a genius who is neither a French speaker nor a teacher but senses student needs.
Design	Kerry and Darren O'Connor for their painstaking attention to detail with the Adobe InDesign format.
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Chanson occitane: Ai vist lo lop, lo rainare, la lèbre

L'Occitan s'entend toujours dans le Midi de la France. Les troubadours chantaient le sort du peuple car dans la société médiévale, c'étaient le roi (lo lop = le loup), l'église (lo rainare = le renard), les nobles (la lèbre - le lièvre) qui réglaient les impôts, mais le peuple devait payer les impôts... 1789!

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Introduction

Definition of Terms Used

Parts of Speech

Verb	A “doing” word, describing an action; for example, she <u>cooks</u> ; or a “being” word, describing a state; for example, she <u>was</u> hungry.
Noun	A word to name persons / places / things; e.g. <u>mother</u> , <u>town</u> , <u>table</u> , <u>toy</u> .
Pronoun	A word used in the place of a noun; for example: the father → <u>he</u> , <u>him</u> the mother → <u>she</u> , <u>her</u> the table → <u>it</u> the cats → <u>they</u> , <u>them</u> .
Adjective	It describes or qualifies a noun/a thing; e.g. the <u>young</u> mother.
Article	<u>the</u> , <u>a (an)</u> and <u>some</u> .
Adverb	It describes or modifies a verb or an adjective / another adverb - e.g. the mother cooks <u>expertly</u> .
Preposition	It generally shows place or position - e.g. the mother cooks <u>in</u> the kitchen / <u>on</u> the stove.
Conjunction	It joins two clauses / phrases / nouns, e.g. Mary cooks <u>and</u> the family eats.

Forms Associated with Verbs

Regular	A verb which shows a systematic or normal pattern of inflection (endings).
Irregular	A verb which shows markedly abnormal patterns of inflection.
Semi-Irregular	Some ER verbs show abnormal patterns of inflection due to pronunciation.
Tense	A form of the verb denoting <u>the time</u> when an action takes place.
Simple tense	A verb whose ending shows the tense. A verb in a simple tense consists of one word only.
Compound tense	A verb made up of an <u>auxiliary</u> verb and a <u>past participle</u> , (auxiliary = helping verb) I have given = j'ai donné
Stem	The root of a verb to which the simple tense endings are added.
Infinitive	A verb in its “primary” state - in English it is preceded by “to”; for example, <u>to cook</u> .
Finite verb	An inflected or conjugated verb which has a subject, <u>we</u> cooked.
Past Participle and Present Participle	The non-finite part of the verb, which cannot be used with a subject - e.g. jumped = past participle jumping = present participle.
Auxiliary	Auxiliary verb + past participle forms a compound tense. In French avoir or être (English to have).
Indicative	The indicative mood states something as a fact, not as a wish or a vague doubt.
Subjunctive	A mood to convey doubt, hypotheses or the subjective opinions of the speaker, which may not be factual.
Imperative	A command.
Conjugate	To inflect = to conjugate a verb in voice, mood, tense, number and person. Voice = active or passive e.g. active - I saw, but passive - I was seen by the officer.
Person	1 st person singular and plural refer to the person(s) speaking 2 nd person singular and plural refer to the person(s) spoken to 3 rd person singular and plural refer to the person(s) spoken about I we you he, she, one, they

Other Terms

Accents	See below.
Number	Singular / plural.
Gender	Masculine / feminine.
Subject	The person / thing performing the action of the verb. To find it, ask “who” or “what” before the verb. John sees a dog. Who sees? John sees - so <u>John</u> is the subject of the verb to see .
Predicate	Every part of a sentence except the subject.
Direct object	The person/ thing which answers “whom” or “what” after the verb. John sees a dog - sees what? = a dog - the word <u>dog</u> is the direct object of the verb to see .
Indirect object	The person who answers the question “to whom” after the verb. John gives a bone to the dog - who gives? = John gives = subject John gives a bone to the dog - gives what? = a bone = direct object John gives a bone to the dog - to whom? = to the dog = indirect object
Indefinite article	A (an), some (<u>a</u> book as opposed to <u>the</u> book).
Definite article	<u>The</u> book as opposed to <u>a</u> book.
Partitive article	Some of a whole, a part of, any, any of it, some, some of it, some of them.
Ordinal number	A number that defines the position in a series; e.g. first, fourth, tenth.
Cardinal number	Ordinary numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., as opposed to 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , etc.
Mute “e”	A silent or unpronounced “e”, as in <u>le</u> or the “uh” grunt we make in English.
Mute “h”	“H” is not pronounced and the vowel of the article is dropped. For example, l' <u>homme</u> is pronounced like “lomme”.
Aspirate “h”	“H” is not pronounced but is treated as a consonant - the article retains the vowel; e.g. <u>la h</u> âche.

Accents

An accent is a sign which is placed over or under a letter to change the pronunciation of that letter or indicate that a letter, once present in Old French, has been omitted. There are four accents in French (three over and one under.)

The acute accent ´ (l'accent aigu)

The acute accent is only placed *over* an “e”, e.g. on a final “e”; e.g. café, or when the next syllable is to be pronounced; e.g. préférer.

It may indicate the presence of an “s” in the Latin word from which the French word is derived; e.g. Latin *scuola* French école.

★ **Note:** English “strange” = Fr. étrange, to study = Fr étudier

The sound is vaguely similar to the English sound “ay” as in “day”, but the lips must be drawn back tightly and there is scarcely any space between the teeth. The muscles must be tight.

The grave accent ` (l'accent grave)

This accent can be found *over* three of the five vowels: “a”, “e”, and “u”; e.g. à, père, où, but it is much more commonly found over an “e”, and the latter case indicates that the following syllable is not pronounced. The sound is somewhat similar to the English sound “ai” as in “air”, but the mouth is more open.

The circumflex accent ^ (l'accent circonflexe)

This is found over the five vowels: a, e, i, o, and u.

e.g.	tâche	forêt	île	côte	coût
	task	forest	isle	coast	cost

The circumflex indicates the disappearance of an “s” from the Latin root word. A look at the English translation above shows this. The circumflex changes the pronunciation of “a”, “e” and “o” by slightly lengthening the vowel, but does not affect “i” or “u”.

The cedilla ç (la cédille)

This squiggly sign only appears **under** a “c” so that the “c” is to be pronounced like an “s” and not like a hard “k” sound. It is only used when the next letter is an “a”, “o” or “u”, but never before an “e” or an “i”.

★ **Note:** Compare the hard **K** sound in **casque**, **cordon**, **cure** with the soft **C** which sounds like an **S** in **ça**, **garçon**, **reçu**.

English has the same “rules” -

C + a	card	C + e	face
C + o	cost	C + i	facial
C + u	cut		

Apostrophe indicates elision

To elide means to omit, contract or merge two discordant vowel sounds. French is a melodious language, so when two vowels jar each other, an apostrophe shows where the omission occurred and the sounds elided, as below.

je + aime → j'aime, le + homme → l'homme or la + amie → l'amie

The vowel from **le la** and the “e” from **je, te, se, me** or **que** are removed before another word beginning with a vowel, e.g. **si** loses “i” before **il/ils** but not before **elle/elles**, therefore **s'il** but **si elle**.

Diaeresis / Le tréma

Le tréma (also called diaeresis) is the name given to the two dots over the vowels: e, o, i and u when two vowels are pronounced separately as in **noël**, **naïf**, **maïs** (maize).

Inverted commas / Les guillemets

The French angle quotation marks or inverted commas « ... » (guillemets) are used for quotations. These are different to both the English or German ones.

« En français on ouvre les guillemets au début d'une phrase et on les ferme à la fin de la phrase. »

Coordinating conjunctions / Conjonctions de coordination

These conjunctions **mais, ou, et, donc, or, ni, car** link the sets of words, so there is no comma before them.

For example:

Jean n'est pas ici car il est allé en ville. John is not here because he went to town.



Paris sous la neige.

Verbs

1. Forms of Verbs

Regular verbs follow a set pattern and serve as a model for others. Irregular verbs however, have developed personal characteristics. Long ago as languages evolved and coalesced, some parts became dominant, other parts faded away. Common verbs are often irregular! Consider the English verb **to be**, **I am / you are / they were!** This is a common linguistic feature.

Regular verbs follow a set pattern - there are three types ending **er**, **ir** or **re**, e.g. donner, finir, vendre.
Irregular verbs have special characteristics that must be learned.
Semi-irregular verbs are all in **er** group and are mostly regular but have spelling variations.

Simple or Compound?

Simple verbs add an ending to create a tense: e.g. je donnais - I was giving, je finirai - I shall finish.
Compound verbs use auxiliary verb avoir / être with a past participle: (Latin auxilio = to help).
 e.g. j'ai vu (I have seen) je suis allé (I have gone).

2. Verb Tables

Table 1. Verb stems and endings (for regular verbs)

Tense	Stem Rule	Endings				Meaning
Present	To find the stem of a verb take the infinitive and cut off the ending er , ir or re and add the appropriate endings for the verb		ER	IR	RE	
		je	e	is	s	I give / finish / sell
		tu	es	is	s	I do give / ... finish / ... sell
		il	e	it	-	I am giving / ... finishing / ... selling
		elle	e	it	-	
		nous	ons	issons	ons	
		vous	ez	issez	ez	
Imperfect	To find the stem for the Imperfect take 1 st person plural present tense less " ons " and add endings	ils	ent	issent	ent	
		elle	ent	issent	ent	
		ais	ions			I was giving / ... finishing / ... selling
Future	Take whole infinitive (the re verbs drop final e) and add the endings	ais	iez			I used to give / ... finish / ... sell
		ait	aient			
		ai	ons			I <i>shall</i> give
Conditional	Take whole infinitive (re verbs drop final e) then add (imperfect endings)	as	ez			we <i>shall</i> give
		a	ont			you will give
		he will give	they will give			
Past Historic	Take infinitive less er , ir , or re and add endings (check your verb tables)	ais	ions			I would give / ... finish / ... sell
		ais	iez			
		ait	aient			
Past Historic	Take infinitive less er , ir , or re and add endings (check your verb tables)		ER		IR / RE	
		ai	âmes	is	îmes	I gave / finished / sold
		as	âtes	is	îtes	Very rare in 2nd person sing. / plural
	a	èrent	it	irent		

Table 2. Regular Verbs and their endings

Infinitive	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Present Subjunctive
1 st Conjugation donner to give	donné donnant	je donne tu donnes il / elle donne vous donnez ils/elles donnent	donnais donnais donnait donniez donnaient	donnerai donneras donnera donnerons donnerez donneront	donnerais donnerais donnerait donnerions donneriez donneraient	donnai donnas donna donnâmes donnâtes donnèrent	que je donne que tu donnes qu'il donne que nous donnions que vous donniez qu'ils donnent
2 nd Conjugation finir to finish	fini finissant	je finis tu finis il / elle finit nous finissons vous finissez ils/elles finissent	finissais finissais finissait finissions finissiez finissaient	finirai finiras finira finirons finirez finiront	finirais finirais finirait finirions finiriez finiraient	finis finis finit finîmes finîtes finirent	que je finisse que tu finisses qu'il finisse que nous finissions que vous finissiez qu'ils finissent
3 rd Conjugation vendre to sell	vendu vendant	je vends tu vends il/elle vend- nous vendons vous vendez ils/elles vendent	vendais vendais vendait vendions vendiez vendaient	vendrai vendras vendra vendrons vendrez vendront	vendrais vendrais vendrait vendrions vendriez vendraient	vendis vendis vendit vendîmes vendîtes vendirent	que je vende que tu vendes qu'il vende que nous vendions que vous vendiez qu'ils vendent

The regular endings are highlighted for comparison.

Table 3. Auxiliary verbs avoir and être

Infinitive	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
avoir to have	eu ayant	j'ai tu as il a nous avons vous avez ils/elles ont	avais avais avait avions aviez avaient	aurai auras aura aurons aurez auront	aurais aurais aurait aurions auriez auraient	eus eus eut eûmes eûtes eurent	Imperative: aie! ayons! ayez!	que j'aie que tu aies qu'il ait que nous ayons que vous ayez qu'ils aient
être to be	été étant	je suis tu es il / elle est nous sommes vous êtes ils/ elles sont	étais étais était étions étiez étaient	serai seras sera serons serez seront	serais serais serait serions seriez seraient	fus fus fut fûmes fûtes furent	Imperative: sois! soyons! soyez!	que je sois que tu sois qu'il soit que nous soyons que vous soyez qu'ils soient

The verbs avoir and être are *irregular* but some endings follow the norm.

Table 4. Irregular verbs

Infinitive	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
aller to go	allé allant	vais vas va allons allez vont	allais allais allait allions alliez allaient	irai iras ira irons irez iront	irais irais irait irions iriez iraient	allai allas alla allâmes allâtes allèrent	Imperative va! allons! allez!	que j'aïlle que tu aïlles qu'il aïlle que nous allions que vous alliez qu'ils aillent
s'asseoir to sit down	assis asseyant	assieds assieds assied asseyons asseyez asseyent	asseyais asseyais asseyait asseyions asseyiez asseyaient	assiérai assiéras assiéra assiérons assiérez assiéront	assiérais assiérais assiérait assiériers assiériez assiéraient	assis assis assit assimes assîtes assirent	Imperative assieds-toi! asseyons-nous! asseyez-vous!	que je m'asseye que tu t'asseyes qu'il s'asseye que nous nous asseyions que vous vous asseyiez qu'ils s'asseyent
boire to drink	bu buvant	bois bois boit buvons buvez boivent	buvais buvais buvait buvions buviez buvaient	boirai boiras boira boirons boirez boiront	boirais boirais boirait boirions boiriez boiraient	bus bus but bûmes bûtes burent		que je boive que tu boives qu'il boive que nous buvions que vous buviez qu'ils boivent
conduire to drive	conduit conduisant	conduis conduis conduit conduisons conduisez conduisent	conduisais conduisais conduisait conduisions conduisiez conduisaient	conduirai conduiras conduira conduirons conduirez conduiront	conduirais conduirais conduirait conduirions conduirez conduiraient	conduisis conduisis conduisit conduisimes conduisîtes conduisirent	cuire to cook produire to produce traduire to translate	que je conduise que tu conduises qu'il conduise que nous condui- sions que vous condui- siez qu'ils conduisent
connaître to know	connu connaissant	connais connais connait connaissons connaissez connaissent	connaissais connaissais connaissait connaissions connaissiez connaissaient	connaîtrai connaîtrás connaîtra connaîtrons connaîtrez connaîtront	connaîtrais connaîtrais connaîtrait connaîtrions connaîtriez connaîtraient	connus connus connut connûmes connûtes connurent	paraître to appear	que je connaisse que tu connaisses qu'il connaisse que nous connais- sions que vous connais- siez qu'ils connaissent
coudre to sew	cousu cousant	couds couds coud cousons cousez cousent	cousais cousais cousait cousions cousiez cousaient	coudrai coudras coudra coudrons coudrez coudront	coudrais coudrais coudrait coudrions coudriez coudraient	cousis cousis cousit cousimes cousîtes cousirent		que je couse que tu couses qu'il couse que nous cousions que vous cousiez qu'ils cousent
courir to run	couru courant	cours cours court courons courez courent	courais courais courait courions couriez couraient	courrai courras courra courrons courrez courront	courrais courrais courrait courrions courriez courraient	courus courus courut courûmes courûtes coururent		que je coure que tu courres qu'il coure que nous courions que vous couriez qu'ils courent

Infinitive (Cont.)	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
craindre to fear All verbs ending in -indre	craint craignant	crains crains craint craignons craignez craignent	craignais craignais craignait craignions craigniez craignaient	craindrai craindras craindra craindrons craindrez craindront	craindrais craindrais craindrait craindrions craindriez craindraient	craignis craignis craignit craignîmes craignîtes craignirent	atteindre reach; éteindre switch off light joindre to join; peindre paint; plaindre to complain.	que je craigne que tu craignes qu'il craigne que nous craignons que vous craigniez qu'ils craignent
croire to believe	cru croyant	crois crois croit croyons croyez croient	croyais croyais croyait croyions croyiez croyaient	croirai croiras croira croirons croirez croiront	croirais croirais croirait croirions croiriez croiraient	crus crus crut crûmes crûtes crurent		que je croie que tu croies qu'il croie que vous croyions que vous croyiez qu'ils croient
cueillir to pluck, pick (flowers etc)	cueilli cueillant	cueille cueilles cueille cueillons cueillez cueillent	cueillais cueillais cueillait cueillions cueilliez cueillaient	cueillerai cueilleras cueillera cueillerons cueillerez cueilleront	cueillerais cueillerais cueillera cueillerions cueilliez cueilleraient	cueillis cueillis cueillit cueillîmes cueillîtes cueillirent	accueillir to greet/ welcome This IR verb has ER verb endings in the present and future tenses	que je cueille que tu cueilles qu'il cueille que nous cueillions que vous cueilliez qu'ils cueillent
devoir to have	dû (f. due) devant	dois dois doit devons devez doivent	devais devais devait devions deviez devaient	devrai devras devra devrons devrez devront	devrais devrais devrait devrions devriez devraient	dus dus dut dûmes dûtes durent		que je doive que tu doives qu'il doive que nous devions que vous deviez qu'ils doivent
dire to say	dit disant	dis dis dit disons dites disent	disais disais disait disions disiez disaient	dirai diras dira dirons direz diront	dirais dirais dirait dirions diriez diraient	dis dis dit dîmes dîtes dirent		que je dise que tu dises qu'il dise que nous disions que vous disiez qu'ils disent
écrire to write	écrit écrivant	écris écris écrit écrivons écrivez écrivent	écrivais écrivais écrivait écrivions écriviez écrivaient	écrirai écriras écrira écrivons écriverez écriront	écrirais écrirais écrirait écrivions écriviez écriraient	écrivis écrivis écrivit écrivîmes écrivîtes écrivirent		que j'écrive que tu écrives qu'il écrive que nous écrivions que vous écriviez qu'ils écrivent
envoyer to send	envoyé envoyant	envoie envoies envoie envoyons envoyez envoient	envoyais envoyais envoyait envoyions envoyiez envoyaient	enverrai enverras enverra enverrons enverrez enverront	enverrais enverrais enverrait enverrions enverriez enverraient	envoyai envoyas envoya envoyâmes envoyâtes envoyèrent		que j'envoie que tu envoies qu'ils envoient que nous envoyions que vous envoyiez qu'ils envoient
faire to make, to do	fait faisant	fais fais fait faisons faites font	faisais faisais faisait faisions faisiez faisaient	ferai feras fera ferons ferrez feront	ferais ferais ferait ferions feriez feraient	fis fis fit fîmes fîtes firent		que je fasse que tu fasses qu'il fasse que nous fassions que vous fassiez qu'ils fassent

Infinitive (Cont.)	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
falloir to be necessary	----- fallu	faut	fallait	faudra	faudrait	fallut	In 3rd singular il faut + infinitive il faut que + subjunctive	qu'il faille
fuir to flee	fui fuyant	fuis fuis fuit fuyons fuyez fuient	fuyais fuyais fuyait fuyions fuyiez fuyaient	fuirai fuiras fuira fuirons fuierez fuiront	fuirais fuirais fuirait fuirions fuiriez fuiraient	fuis fuis fuit fûmes fûtes fuirent		que je fuie que tu fuies qu'il fuie que nous fuyions que vous fuyiez qu'ils fuient
lire to read	lu lisant	lis lis lit lisons lisez lisent	lisais lisais lisait lisions lisiez lisaient	lirai liras lira lirons lirez liront	lirais lirais lirait lirions liriez liraient	lus lus lut lûmes lûtes lurent		que je lise que tu lises qu'il lise que nous lisions que vous lisiez qu'ils lisent
mettre to put	mis mettant	mets mets met mettons mettez mettent	mettais mettais mettait mettions mettiez mettaient	mettrai mettras mettra mettrons mettrez mettront	mettrais mettrais mettrait mettrions mettriez mettraient	mis mis mit mîmes mîtes mirent	omettre to omit permettre to permit promettre to promise remettre to replace	que je mette que tu mettes qu'il mette que nous mettions que vous mettiez qu'ils mettent
mourir to die	mort mourant	meurs meurs meurt mourons mouriez meurent	mourais mourais mourait mourions mouriez mouraient	mourrai mourras mourra mourrons mourrez mourront	mourrais mourrais mourrait mourrions mourriez mourraient	mourus mourus mourut mourûmes mourûtes moururent		que je meure que tu meures qu'il meure que nous mourions que vous mouriez qu'ils meurent
naître to be born	né naissant	nais nais naît naissons naissez naissent	naissais naissais naissait naissions naissiez naissaient	naîtrai naîtras naîtra naîtrons naîtrez naîtront	naîtrais naîtrais naîtrait naîtrions naîtriez naîtraient	naquis naquis naquit naquîmes naquîtes naquirent		que je naisse que tu naisses qu'il naisse que nous naissions que vous naissiez qu'ils naissent
ouvrir to open Present tense has -er form.	ouvert ouvrant	ouvre ouvres ouvre ouvrons ouvrez ouvrent	ouvrais ouvrais ouvrirait ouvriions ouvriez ouvraient	ouvrirai ouvriras ouvrira ouvriions ouvrierez ouvriront	ouvrirais ouvrirais ouvrirait ouvriions ouvririez ouvriraient	ouvris ouvris ouvrit ouvriîmes ouvriîtes ouvrirent	couvrir to cover, découvrir to discover souffrir to suffer	que j'ouvre que tu ouvres qu'il ouvre que nous ouvriions que vous ouvriiez qu'ils ouvrent
plaire to please	plu plaisant	plais plais plaît plaisons plaisez plaisent	plaisais plaisais plaisait plaisions plaisiez plaisaient	plairai plairas plaira plairons plairez plairont	plairais plairais plairait plairions plairiez plairaient	plus plus plut plûmes plûtes plurent	se taire to be silent to keep quiet	que je plaise que tu plaises qu'il plaise que nous plaisions que vous plaisiez qu'ils plaisent

Infinitive (Cont.)	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
pleuvoir to rain	plu pleuvant	il pleut	pleuvait	pleuvra	pleuvrait	plut	In 3rd person singular only	qu'il pleuve
pouvoir to be able	pu pouvant	peux peux peut pouvons pouvez peuvent	pouvais pouvais pouvait pouvions pouviez pouvaient	pourrai pourras pourra pourrons pourrez pourront	pourrais pourrais pourrait pourrions pourriez pourraient	pus pus put pûmes pûtes purent	NB je peux but puis-je	que je puisse que tu puisses qu'il puisse que nous puissions que vous puissiez qu'il puissent
prendre to take	pris prenant	prends prends prend prenons prenez prenent	prenais prenais prenait prenions preniez prenaient	prendrai prendras prendra prendrons prendrez prendront	prendrais prendrais prendrait prendrions prendriez prendraient	pris pris prit prîmes prîmes prirent	apprendre learn comprendre to understand surprendre to surprise	que je prenne que tu prennes qu'il prenne que nous prenions que vous preniez qu'ils prennent
recevoir to receive	reçu recevant	reçois reçois reçoit recevons recevez reçoivent	recevais recevais recevait recevions receviez recevaient	recevrai recevras recevra recevrons recevrez recevront	recevrais recevrais recevrait recevrions recevriez recevraient	reçus reçus reçut reçûmes reçûtes reçurent	apercevoir to notice décevoir to deceive	que je reçoive que tu reçoives qu'il reçoive que nous recevions que vous receviez qu'ils reçoivent
rire to laugh	ri riant	ris ris rit riions riez rient	riaais riaais riaait riaions riaiez riaient	rirai riras rira rirons rirez riront	rirais rirais rirait ririons ririez riraient	ris ris rit rîmes rîtes rirent	sourire to smile	que je rie que tu ries qu'il rie que nous riions que vous riiez qu'ils rient
rompre to break and verbs ending -rompre	rompu rompant	romps romps rompt rompons rompez rompent	rompais rompais rompait rompions rompiez rompaient	romprai rompras rompra romprons romprez rompront	romprais romprais romprait romprions rompiez rompraient	rompis rompis rompit rompîmes rompîtes rompirent	corrompre to corrupt interrompre to interrupt	que je rompe que tu rompes qu'il rompe que nous rompions que vous rompiez qu'ils rompent
savoir to know facts or how to do	su sachant	sais sais sait savons savez savent	savais savais savait savions saviez savaient	saurai sauras saura saurons sauriez sauront	saurais saurais saurait saurions sauriez sauraient	sus sus sut sûmes sûtes surent	Imperative: sache! sachons! sachez!	que je sache que tu saches qu'il sache que nous sachions que vous sachiez qu'ils sachent
sortir to go out	sorti sortant	sors sors sort sortons sortez sortent	sortais sortais sortait sortions sortiez sortaient	sortirai sortiras sortira sortirons sortirez sortiront	sortirais sortirais sortirait sortirions sortiriez sortiraient	sortis sortis sortit sortîmes sortîtes sortirent	dormir to sleep mentir to lie partir to leave sentir to feel servir to serve	que je sorte que tu sortes qu'il sorte que nous sortions que vous sortiez qu'ils sortent

Infinitive (Cont.)	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
suivre to follow	suivi suivant	suis suis suit suivons suivez suivent	suivais suivais suivait suivions suiviez suivaient	suivrai suivras suivra suivrons suivrez suivront	suivrais suivrais suivrait suivriions suivriez suivraient	suivis suivis suivit suivîmes suivîtes suivirent		que je suive que tu suives qu'il suive que nous suivions que vous suiviez qu'ils suivent
tenir to hold	tenu tenant	tiens tiens tient tenons tenez tiennent	tenais tenais tenait tenions teniez tenaient	tiendrai tiendras tiendra tiendrons tiendrez tiendront	tiendrais tiendrais tiendrait tiendrions tiendriez tiendraient	tins tins tint tîmes tîntes tinrent	compare with venir	que je tienne que tu tiennes qu'il tienne que nous tenions que vous teniez qu'ils tiennent
vaincre to conquer	vaincu vainquant	vaincs vaincs vainc vainquons vainquez vainquent	vainquais vainquais vainc vainquait vainquions vainquiez vainquaient	vaincrai vaincras vaincra vaincrons vaincrez vaincrons	vaincrais vaincrais vaincrait vaincraions vaincriez vaincraient	vainquis vainquis vainquit vainquîmes vainquîtes vainquirent	convaincre to convince	que je vainque que tu vainques qu'il vainque que nous vainquions que vous vainquiez qu'ils vainquent
valoir to be worth	valu valant	vaut vaut vaut valons valez valent	valais valais valait valions valiez valaient	vaudrai vaudras vaudra vaudrons vaudrez vaudront	vaudrais vaudrais vaudrait vaudrions vaudriez vaudraient	valus valus valut valûmes valûtes valurent	“mieux vaut tard que jamais” English “value”.	que je vaille que tu vailles qu'il vaille que nous valions que vous valiez qu'ils valient
venir to come	venu venant	viens viens vient venons venez viennent	venais venais venait venions veniez venaient	viendrai viendras viendra viendrons viendrez viendront	viendrais viendrais viendrait viendrions viendriez viendraient	vins vins vint vîmes vîntes vinrent	compare with tenir	que je vienne que tu viennes qu'il vienne que nous venions que vous veniez qu'ils viennent
vivre to live	vécu vivant	vis vis vit vivons vivez vivent	vivais vivais vivait vivions viviez vivaient	vivrai vivras vivra vivrons vivrez vivront	vivrais vivrais vivrait vivriions vivriez vivraient	vécus vécus vécut vécûmes vécûtes vécurent		que je vive que tu vives qu'il vive que nous vivions que vous viviez qu'ils vivent
voir to see	vu voyant	vois vois voit voyons voyez voient	voyais voyais voyait voyions voyiez voyaient	verrai verras verra verrons verrez verront	verrais verrais verrait verrions verriez verraient	vis vis vit vîmes vîtes virent		que je voie que tu voies qu'il voie que nous voyions que vous voyiez qu'ils voient
vouloir to want, to wish	voulu voulant	veux veux veut voulons voulez veulent	voulais voulais voulait voulions vouliez voulaient	voudrai voudras voudra voudrons voudrez voudront	voudrais voudrais voudrait voudrions voudriez voudraient	voulus voulus volut voulûmes voulûtes voulurent		que je veuille que tu veuilles qu'il veuille que nous voulions que vous vouliez qu'ils veuillent

Table 5. Semi-irregular verbs

Infinitive	Past & Present Participles	Present	Imperfect	Future	Conditional	Past Historic	Remarks	Present Subjunctive
lever	levé levant	lève lèves lève levons levez lèvent	levais levais levait levions leviez levaient	lèverai lèveras lèvera lèverons lèverez lèveront	lèverais lèverais lèverait lèverions lèveriez lèveraient	levai levas leva levâmes levâtes levèrent	acheter buy mener lead	que je lève que tu lèves qu'il lève que nous levions que vous leviez qu'ils lèvent
espérer to hope	espéré espérant	espère espères espère espérons espérez espèrent	espérais espérais espérait espérions espérez espéraient	espérerai espéreras espérera espérerons espérez espéreront	espérerais espérerais espérerait espérerions espéreriez espéreraient	espérai espéras espéra espérâmes espérâtes espérèrent	posséder to possess répéter to repeat	que j'espère que tu espères qu'il espère que nous espérions que vous espérez qu'ils espèrent
lancer to throw	lancé lançant	lance lances lance lançons lancez lancent	lançais lançais lançait lancions lanciez lançaient	lancerai lanceras lancera lancerons lancerez lanceront	lancerais lancerais lancerait lancerions lanceriez lanceraient	lançai lanças lança lançâmes lançâtes lançèrent	All verbs ending -cer	que tu lances qu'il lance que nous lancions que vous lanciez qu'ils lancent
manger to eat	mangé mangeant	mange manges mange mangeons mangez mangent	mangeais mangeais mangeait mangions mangiez mangeaient	mangerai mangeras mangera mangerons mangerez mangeront	mangerais mangerais mangerait mangerions mangeriez mangeraient	mangeai mangeas mangea mangeâmes mangeâtes mangèrent	All verbs ending -ger	que je mange que tu manges qu'il mange que nous mangions que vous mangiez qu'ils mangent
appeler to call	appelé appelant	appelle appelles appelle appelons appelez appellent	appelais appelais appelait appelions appeliez appelaient	appellerai appelleras appellera appellerons appellerez appelleront	appellerais appellerais appellerait appellerions appelleriez appelleraient	appelai appelas appela appelâmes appelâtes appelèrent	s'appeler to be called	que j'appelle que tu appelles qu'il appelle que nous appelions que vous appeliez qu'ils appellent
jeter to throw	jeté jetant	jette jettes jette jetons jetez jettent	jetais jetais jetait jetions jetiez jetaient	jetterai jetteras jettera jetterons jetterez jetteront	jetterais jetterais jetterait jetterions jetteriez jetteraient	jetai jetas jeta jetâmes jetâtes jetèrent		que je jette que tu jettes qu'il jette que nous jetions que vous jetiez qu'ils jettent
nettoyer to clean	nettoyé nettoyant	nettoie nettoies nettoie nettoyons nettoyez nettoient	nettoyais nettoyais nettoyait nettoyions nettoyez nettoyaient	nettoierai nettoieras nettoiera nettoierons nettoierez nettoieront	nettoierais nettoierais nettoierait nettoierions nettoieriez nettoieraient	nettoyai nettoyas nettoya nettoyâmes nettoyâtes nettoyèrent	essayer essuyer payer	que je nettoie que tu nettoies qu'il nettoie que nous nettoyions que vous nettoyez qu'ils nettoient

3. Moods and Tenses

In the first millennium B.C.E. Greece gradually extended a powerful influence over the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea and became the cornerstone for Roman thought and culture. After the Romans conquered Gaul, later called France, the Gauls benefited from the Roman way of life - in law, engineering, entertainment and foods, fruit, (citrus, peaches, apricots) and grapes meant wine! The Celtic tribes must have been amazed at the engineering skills of these people who built roads, bridges, baths, amphitheatres (Arles, Nîmes ...) which are still there and often in use today. Advancement in that society necessitated adopting the ways of the Romans, including their language. With the passing centuries the language gradually developed and due to diverse influences, further evolved into French. As with the Latin verbs, French verbs provide the option of using unique strategies to express facts, wishes, and emotions with remarkable factual precision.

French grammar is enhanced with four personal moods and three impersonal moods. ***Pas à pas - Nouvelle édition*** concentrates on the four personal moods – the indicative / subjunctive / imperative / conditional. Each mood allows for declensions in different tenses.

What is a mood? *It states how the action, meaning the verb, is used or should be used.*

What is a tense? *It states how and when an action takes place.*

Moods and tenses “collaborate” to refine meaning.

French uses seven verb moods

Four personal moods: conjugated in the Indicative, Conditional, Subjunctive and Imperative.

Three impersonal moods: not conjugated - Infinitive, Participle and the Gerund. (a verb form that functions as a noun).

Indicative Mood (indicatif) expresses an action that is real, factual or certain.
There are 4 simple tenses Present / Imperfect / Future / Past Historic.
There are 4 compound tenses Perfect / Pluperfect / Future Perfect / Past Anterior.

Subjunctive Mood (subjunctif) expresses **possibility, wishing, uncertainty or doubt** and often used after a verb of wishing or feeling (e.g. vouloir, désirer, craindre etc) - the subordinate clause is introduced by **que...**

The French subjunctive has four tenses: present / perfect / imperfect / pluperfect.

but the Imperfect and Pluperfect Subjunctive are no longer used.

The English subjunctive died out except in expressions involving a wish “Praise be to God!” “God save the Queen!” or “Long may he live!”

Conditional Mood (conditionnel) expresses an action that depends on another circumstance and occurs in the present or past.

Imperative Mood (impératif) expresses a command, an order, admonition or advice.

Infinitive Mood (infinitif) expresses an action or a state without reference to any subject.

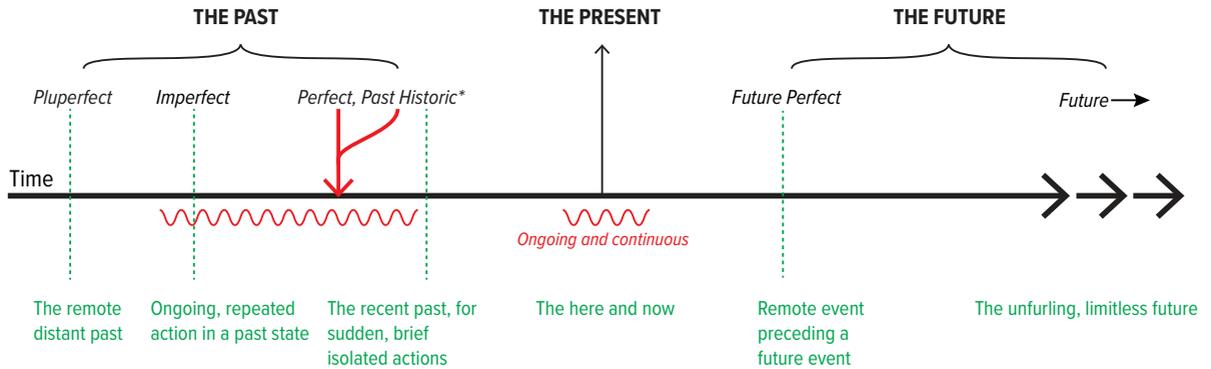
Participle Mood (participe) functions as a verb or an adjective.

Gerund Mood (gérondif) functions as a verb form that allows the one subject to perform two actions simultaneously - after en + present participle - e.g. Il parle en mangeant. See “19. Present Participle - participe présent” on page 40.



Une route romaine sur le chemin de pèlerinage qui mène à Conques. Les pèlerins allaient souvent jusqu'à Santiago en Espagne et même aujourd'hui beaucoup de jeunes participent au Camino.

4. Axe spacio-temporel



The **axe spacio-temporel** offers a visual presentation of the French verb tense system. **Time** is shown as an endless **black** horizontal line, on which the **Present** marks the central reference point. To the left lies the **Past** - to the right lies the unfurling **Future**.

The downward **red** arrow points from the Perfect or Past Historic, which describes a single action which interrupts an ongoing, repeated or continual state in the past, the Imperfect. The undulating pink line represents the ongoing and continuous nature of time, e.g. *La Belle dormait quand le prince l'a soudainement réveillée.* *Beauty was sleeping when the prince suddenly awakened her.*

Beauty's sleep is ongoing before the prince suddenly awakens her. The Imperfect tense shows that she was sleeping for an indefinite period of time and contrasts starkly with the Prince's one action in the Perfect / Past Historic. See the examples on the next page.

M. Bethry décrit l'Axe de la façon suivante:

L'étudiant a véritablement deux questions à se poser. Tout d'abord:

Où se trouve l'action que je décris sur cet axe?

Quel est le message que je veux faire passer à mon interlocuteur? Qu'est-ce que je veux qu'il comprenne?

Imaginez que vous voulez le manipuler et lui faire comprendre exactement ce à quoi vous pensez. Une fois que l'on a intégré ces deux concepts faciles l'axe du temps prend tout son sens.

Je lisais mon journal quand quelqu'un a frappé / frappa à la porte.

→ Action continue dans le passé (ligne sinusoïdale) interrompue par une ligne verticale qui montre l'interruption de la première action, ligne encore plus courte pour le PS qui décrit une action brève dans le passé.

C'est à moi de choisir quel temps je vais utiliser pour que les actions aient un impact particulier sur mon interlocuteur.

Je regarde la télévision depuis 20 minutes...

→ L'action a commencé dans le passé mais a une conséquence dans le présent puisque c'est « le moment où je parle... » Il s'agit donc d'un présent en français...

Je regarderai la télévision quand j'aurai fini mon travail.

→ Où se trouvent les actions les unes par rapport aux autres? Laquelle aura lieu en dernier? Ce sera mon futur simple. l'autre aura lieu avant, donc un futur antérieur... une sorte de passé dans le futur.

J'avais fini mon repas quand il a commencé à pleuvoir.

→ Quelle est l'action la plus ancienne dans le passé? Le PC indique une action qui en interrompt une autre commencée bien avant et qui perdurait dans le passé (PQP).

How does the Axe system work?

“What sort of information does the speaker want to send or intend the audience to understand?” The French language views time very precisely whereas modern English allows for different interpretations, e.g. 1, 4a and 4b, 5.

When looking at these examples, please check and compare the tenses against the Axe.

- 1 **Papa m’a grondé parce que j’étais rentré tard.**
« a grondé » (Perfect PC) ... « j’étais rentré » (Pluperfect PQP)
Dad scolded me because I had come home late.
The son came home late, which happens prior to the scolding. The perfect tense tells the listener that the scolding is a single event after the son’s late return.
(Nowadays, English speakers may say “Dad scolded me because I came home late”, but which action happened first? The son had come late which then caused the Father’s anger.)
- 2 **Elle lisait son livre et son mari préparait le dîner quand on a frappé à la porte.**
« lisait / préparait » (Imperfect) ... « on a frappé » (Perfect PC) ...
She was reading her book, while her husband was preparing the dinner, when there was a knock at the door.
Both imperfect tense verbs was reading / was preparing show ongoing actions whereas the knock was a single sudden action.
- 2a **Il jouait du piano quand un policier frappa à la porte.**
« jouait » (Imperfect) ... « frappa » (Past Historic PS)
He was playing the piano when a policeman knocked at the door.
He was playing all along until there was the one knock at the door – Past Historic makes this event more abrupt, e.g. as in a story.
- 3 **Le Titanic coula parce qu’il était entré en collision avec un iceberg.**
« coula » (Past Historic PS) ... « était entré » (Pluperfect PQP)
The Titanic sank because it had hit an iceberg.
The ship sank as a result of hitting an iceberg - therefore which action happened first? The pluperfect “had hit” clarifies the first event followed by the sinking of the ship.
- 4a **Je regarde la télévision depuis une heure.**
« Je regarde... » (Present tense in French) because I am still watching the TV...
I have been watching the TV for an hour. (Past tense in English)
- 4b **Vladimir Putin est président de la Russie depuis le 7 mai 2000.**
« VP est » (Present tense in French) because VP has been President of Russia since 7 May 2000... and he still is the President.
The action started in the past but the result is now as I am speaking. French uses the present tense whereas English sees this action from the perspective of time past.
- 4c **Je regardais le spectacle depuis une heure quand l’alarme a retenti. (Perfect PC)**
« Je regardais... » (Imperfect tense in French) because I was watching the show continuously
« a retenti » (Perfect PC) ... « retentit » (Past Historic PS) the alarm suddenly goes off but → Pluperfect in English.
I had been watching the show for an hour, when the alarm went off. English sees this action from the perspective of time past.
- 5 **Quand j’aurai fini mes devoirs j’irai au cinéma.**
« j’aurai fini » (Future Perfect FA) ... « j’irai » (Future FS)
When I have finished my homework, I shall go to the movies.
How do the two actions interact? French uses the Future Perfect to show that the homework preceded the outing.
Translated literally “When I shall have finished my homework I shall go ...”
- 6 **Nous prendrons le train pour Chamonix aussitôt que Louise sera arrivée.**
« Nous prendrons » (Future FS) ... « sera arrivée » (Future Perfect FA) ...
We shall catch the train to Chamonix, as soon as Louise has arrived.
How do the two actions interact? French uses the Future to show that catching the train happened after Louise’s arrival. Translated literally “We shall catch the train, as soon as Louise has arrived” (literally “will have arrived”).

5. Use of Tenses - Simple and Compound

Present Tense - présent

Use

The present tense in French is used just as in English to express which specific event is happening *now*, or which events happen regularly *now*. But in English there are three ways of expressing an event that is happening now: I work, I do work, I am working. In French there is only one way: **je travaille**.

★ **Note:** The English construction “I have been working for two hours”, which sounds like a past event, is expressed by the present tense in French, as it is obvious that the action is still taking place; I am still working.

Je travaille depuis deux heures. The action may have started in the past but is ongoing “now”.

(see Verbs on page 5; and Depuis on page 41).

Formation

Consult “Table 2. Regular Verbs and their endings” on page 6 for the endings required for regular verbs -er -ir -re, but note that -re verbs such as boire, mettre etc do not belong to this category. However, although prendre ends -dre it is irregular.

Imperfect Tense - imparfait

Use

Consult the verb tables on page 5 for the endings required for regular verbs **-er**, **-ir** and **-re**, but note that **-re** verbs really end in **-dre**, therefore verbs such as boire, mettre, etc. do not belong to this category. However, although **prendre** ends in **-dre**, it is irregular.

This tense denotes an action or state in the past whose beginning or end cannot be visualised. As with the present tense, English has many ways of expressing the imperfect. French, however, can only express these ideas in *one* way: - the imperfect tense.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| (a) Je travaillais dans mon bureau. | I was working in my study. |
| (b) Je travaillais le dimanche. | I used to work on Sundays. |
| (c) Je travaillais dur quand j'étais jeune. | I would work hard, when I was young. |
| (d) Je travaillais pour M. Oliveau. | I worked for M. Oliveau. |

Compare (a) I was working in my study with (b) I used to work on Sundays.

In (a) there is no indication given about the beginning or end of the action. Therefore, the imperfect is required. If the action is shown to have ended after two hours, the perfect tense (passé composé) or past historic (passé historique) is required. Likewise, the imperfect is used when a past state is interrupted by another action:

Je travaillais quand le téléphone a sonné. I was working when the telephone rang.

There is no indication here that the action of working has finished, it has only been interrupted. Therefore, the imperfect is required. In general, if the past continuous in English can be substituted —The rain fell = The rain was falling — the imperfect is required.

★ **Note:** *The Imperfect is used for continuous, ongoing, habitual or incomplete actions in the past.*

Formation

Take the 1st person plural present tense, remove **-ons** to produce the **stem**, then add **-ais -ais -ait -ions -iez -aient**

1st Plural Present Tense	Stem	Examples	
nous donnons (ER Verb) →	donn →	je donn ais	(tu regardais, nous allions, ils montraient)
nous finissons (IR Verb) →	finiss →	tu finiss ais	(je choisissais, vous finissiez) (IR verbs hiss !)
nous vendons (RE Verb) →	vend →	il vend ait	(j'attendais, vous perdiez, ils desce ndaient)

Verb être is the only exception - the stem of être is **-ét**

e.g. **j'étais, tu étais, il était, elle était, nous étions, vous étiez, ils étaient, elles étaient.**

Future Tense - futur simple (FS)

Formation

The future is an easy tense to form, since the infinitive provides the stem and the same set of endings is used for all verbs (see Verb Tables, starting on page 5). Remember, however, to remove the final “e” of -RE verbs, for example:

vendre — je vendrai.

Certain irregular verbs do not use the infinitive as the stem, for example:

aller — ir → j’irai = I shall go.
avoir — aur → j’aurai = I shall have.
être — ser → je serai = I shall be.

There are many more irregular future stems which must be learned separately.

This tense is often used to denote an action which will take place in a future time. Advanced - see Implied Future page 42.

Conditional Mood - conditionnel

Use

As in English this mood is used to express the result of a condition expressed in another clause. For example:

Condition → **S’ils avaient assez d’argent,**
 Result → **ils iraient en France.**

If they had enough money, they would go to France.

Condition → **Si je connaissais son adresse,**
 Result → **je lui écrirais.**

If I knew her address, I would write to her.

1. English often uses “would” to express a habitual action in the past, and this, of course, requires the Imperfect:

Quand j’étais jeune, je travaillais dur. When I was young, I would work hard = I used to work hard.

2. “Would not” often expresses unwillingness, and is then not conditional:

Je ne voulais pas le faire. I didn’t want to do it - I wouldn’t do it.
Je n’ai pas voulu le faire. I refused to do it.

Formation

The formation of the conditional is straightforward, once the future and the imperfect tenses have been mastered.

The conditional uses the same stem as the future, and the endings are the same as those for the imperfect tense. (see Verb Tables on page 5 and page 6.)

The future stem gives this conditional tense a rolling R sound which is quite different to the imperfect.

The conditional mood is also used to express an action which has not yet taken place but which will occur sometime in the future, e.g.

Il a dit qu’il partirait. He said that he would leave.

This is called the “future in the past” because, at the moment that he said that he was going to leave, but he had not left at that time.

Past Historic Tense - passé simple (PS)

This tense is also called the past definite, past historic or simple past - "simple" because unlike the Perfect tense it has no auxiliary verb.

Use

This tense is used to express one single and completed action in the past. In this way it resembles the perfect. However, whereas the perfect is used in conversation, letters and informal narratives, the past historic is a literary and historical tense. It is reserved for novels, short stories, autobiographies and any form of sustained narrative; for example, newspaper reports. It is *not* used in conversation today, with the result that it is rare to see the 2nd person singular and plural forms.

The perfect can be translated in *two* ways:

Il a travaillé. He has worked *or* He worked.

The passé simple can be translated in *one* way only:

Il travailla. He worked.

Formation

See Verb Tables, page 5 for the formation of this tense, but note that the -us, -us, -ut etc. endings are not used with any regular verbs, and only with some irregular verbs. The ending of the past participle is often a good guide to which set of endings is required for the irregular verbs. For example:

dire —	dit —	je dis
s'asseoir —	assis —	je m'assis
mettre —	mis —	je mis
prendre —	pris —	je pris

and

avoir —	eu —	j'eus
boire —	bu —	je bus
pouvoir —	pu —	je pus
recevoir —	reçu —	je reçus

However, there are exceptions and these should be learned separately.

Nevertheless, *all* verbs use *one* of the three different sets of endings, but the verbs **venir** and **tenir** and their compounds are the only exceptions. See Verb tables page 5.



Vue aérienne de l'Arc de triomphe sous lequel se trouve la tombe du Soldat inconnu qui symbolise tous les soldats morts pour la France.

Perfect Tense - passé composé (PC)

This tense is used to express one single and completed action in the past, for example:

She *finished* the letter and *sealed* it in an envelope.

PC is used in conversation, letters and any form of sustained but informal narrative. Because it is a compound tense, it can be expressed in *three* ways in English.

Elle **a fini la lettre.**

She has finished the letter.

or She finished the letter.

or She did finish the letter.

Formation

This is a *compound* tense, made up of an **auxiliary verb** (avoir / être) and a **past participle**.

The past participle of regular verbs is easy to form:

-er verbs: donner → **donné** (that is, add **é** to stem).

-ir verbs: finir → **fini** (that is, add **i** to stem).

-re verbs: vendre → **vendu** (that is, add **u** to stem).

The past participles of irregular verbs have to be learned separately (see Verb Tables, page 7).

WHICH AUXILIARY VERB - avoir or être?

Method 1: Learn this mnemonic device: **PAR MEND V** (five) **TRAMS** or another mnemonic **MRS VAN DER TRAMP**

Partir

Monter

Venir

Tomber

Arriver

Entre(r) (+ rentrer)

+ revenir, devenir, survenir

Retourner

Rester

Naître

Aller

Descendre

Mourir

Sortir

These verbs and their compounds (e.g. remonter) take être.

Expressed differently, verbs of being and movement take être except marcher, courir, voler.

Method 2: Ask the question *what* or *whom* after the verb, and if you can supply a noun or a pronoun (that is, a direct object) the verb will require avoir. For example:

She bought (Q) what? Answer: the dress Elle a acheté la robe

We saw (Q) whom? Answer: him. Nous l'avons vu.

This is a surer method because four of these verbs — monter, descendre, sortir and rentrer— will be conjugated with avoir when they are followed by a direct object, and the meaning is different:

Je suis monté. I went up (stairs).

but

J'ai monté la valise. I took the case upstairs.

For this reason "to leave" is expressed by **partir** when no object follows and by **quitter** when there is an object:

Il est parti. He has left.

Elle a quitté la région. She has left the district.

All these verbs require a preposition if a noun follows them, - the noun is then the direct object of the preposition, not of the verb.

★ **Note:** English does not always require the preposition, e.g. **il est entré dans le cinéma**. He entered the cinema.

Je suis resté à la maison. I stayed (at) home.

All reflexive verbs also take être:

Il s'est assis. He sat down.

Nous nous sommes amusés. We amused ourselves.

Elles se sont levées. They have got up.

Agreement of the Past Participle - accord du participe passé

Type A: The sixteen verbs conjugated with être — PAR MEND V TRAMS

The past participle of verbs conjugated with **être** behaves like an *adjective* and agrees with the **subject**. For example:

Elle est partie.	She has left.
Nous sommes arrivés.	We have arrived.
Pierre est sorti.	Peter has gone out.
Ils sont revenus.	They have come back.
Les dames sont revenues.	The ladies have come back.

Type B: Verbs conjugated with avoir

1. When the direct object comes *after* the verb there is *no agreement*. For example:

Elle a acheté la robe.	She has bought the dress.
Nous avons vu les enfants.	We have seen the children.

2. When the direct object comes *before* the verb the past participle *agrees* with that direct object. E.g.

Elle a acheté la robe	→ Elle a achetée.
Nous avons vu les enfants	→ Nous les avons vus.
Quelles lettres as-tu reçues?	

The past participle **never** agrees with **y** and **en** or with an **indirect object** (*lui, leur, etc.*).

Type C: Reflexive verbs (conjugated with être).

In most cases the reflexive pronoun is the *direct object*, therefore reflexive verbs behave like Type B¹; that is, the past participle agrees with the reflexive pronoun because the reflexive pronoun comes *before* the verb, for example:

We bathed (Q) Whom? Answer: ourselves.
Nous nous sommes baignés.
She washed (Q) whom? Answer: herself.
Elle s'est lavée.



¹ This is the correct grammatical explanation for the agreement of the past participle in reflexive verbs but younger students might find it easier to treat reflexive verbs as belonging to Type A.

Pluperfect Tense - plus-que-parfait (PQP)

Use

The pluperfect is used, as in English, to show a past action where another action took place *before* the first. For example:

1. My mother punished me because I had come home late.
My late arrival had to happen *before* my mother could punish me.
Ma mère m'a puni parce que j'étais rentré tard.
2. She got off the bus because she had forgotten her purse.
The purse was forgotten at home *before* she got off the bus.
Elle est descendue de l'autobus parce qu'elle avait oublié son porte-monnaie.

Students do not always recognise the need to use the pluperfect in French because English speakers today tend to use, incorrectly, a simple past tense to express the previous action, e.g.

She got off the bus because she forgot her purse.

As both verbs are in the simple past, this would indicate that the forgetting of the purse happened *after* the getting off the bus, which is nonsense.

The pluperfect is used for the action that is furthest back in time; for example:

Le Titanic coula parce qu'il était entré en collision avec un iceberg.

The Titanic sank because it had struck an iceberg. (The ship would not sink before hitting the iceberg!)

Formation

The "ingredients" are the same as for the perfect; that is, auxiliary verb (avoir or être) plus a past participle. However, in the pluperfect, the auxiliary verb is in the *imperfect*, not the *present*, and there is only *one* possible translation:

J'<u>avais</u> acheté.	I <u>had</u> bought.
Elle <u>était</u> partie.	She <u>had</u> left.
Ils s'<u>étaient</u> levés.	They <u>had</u> got up.

★ **Note:** The same rules of agreement of the past participle apply in the pluperfect tense.

The pluperfect tense may be used in conjunction with the perfect, the imperfect or the simple past, but never with the present.



Vue aérienne sur le Champ de Mars, (lieu des jeux romains) la Tour Eiffel, les jardins du Trocadéro et le Palais de Chaillot.

Future Perfect Tense - futur antérieur (FA)

Use

1. This tense is used in French, just as it is in English, to denote a future, completed action, e.g.
Si tu arrives après dix heures, nous serons partis. If you arrive after ten o'clock, we shall have left.
2. It may also be used to indicate that an action may have taken place, or to express a probability:
Elle aura manqué le train. She may have missed the train.
3. See Implied Future on page 42 for a further use of the future perfect.

Formation

The **future of the auxiliary verb and the past participle** form the future perfect. For example:

J'aurai fini.	I shall have finished.
Nous serons partis	We shall have left.
Ils se seront couchés	They will have gone to bed.

The same rules for agreement of the past participle apply.

Conditional Perfect Mood - conditionnel passé

Use

As with the conditional, the conditional perfect is used to:

1. In a clause to express the result of a condition stated in another clause, but this time in the past. For example:

Condition	→ S'ils avaient gagné le gros lot,
Result	→ ils seraient allés en France.

If they had won the lottery, they would have gone to France.

Condition	→ Si j'avais connu son adresse,
Result	→ je lui aurais écrit.

If I had known his address, I would have written to him.

2. It is also used to express future time relative to a past action:

Je croyais qu'il aurait fini avant quatre heures. I thought that he would have finished before four o'clock.

3. See Future in the Past, page 43 for a further use of the conditional perfect.

Formation

The **conditional of the auxiliary verb and the past participle form the conditional perfect:**

J'aurais fini.	I would have finished.
Nous serions partis.	We would have left.
Ils se seraient couchés.	They would have gone to bed.

★ **Note:** The same rules for the agreement of the past participle apply.

Passé antérieur (PA)

Use

This tense does not exist in English. It is a literary tense found in conjunction with the past historic, therefore it is not used in conversation, letters or informal narratives. These three conditions must exist for the passé antérieur to be used.

Firstly, it is only found in a time clause introduced by one of the following conjunctions:

quand, lorsque, (when)	dès que, aussitôt que, (as soon as)	après que, (after)	à peine ... que (scarcely)
----------------------------------	---	------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Secondly the verb in the main clause must be in the past historic;

Thirdly the verb in the time clause must be translated by the English pluperfect. For example:

Dès qu'il se fut couché, elle descendit à la cuisine. As soon as he had gone to bed, she went down to the kitchen.

Formation

The past historic of the auxiliary verb and the past participle:

Lorsqu'elle fut partie la fête reprit.

When she had left the party resumed.

A peine eut-il fermé la porte que l'orage commença.

Hardly had he shut the door than the storm broke.

★ **Note:** The same rules for the agreement of the past participle apply.

A peine eus-je fini de parler qu'elle quitta le bureau.

Scarcely had I finished speaking when she left the office.

★ **Note:** The subject and verb are inverted after **à peine** and **que** introduces the next clause.

Passé surcomposé (PS)

Use

This tense does not exist in English. Its use is scattered but it is still used in certain parts of France. Like the passé antérieur, it is translated by the English pluperfect and is only ever used in time clauses introduced by the following conjunctions:

quand, lorsque, dès que, aussitôt que, après que, à peine ... que

When the verb in the main clause is in the perfect and when the verb in the time clause translates the English pluperfect, French requires the passé surcomposé. It should not be used with reflexive verbs and is best avoided.

Formation

The passé composé of the auxiliary + the past participle:

Lorsqu'il a eu été parti la fête a repris.

When he had (finally) left the party resumed.

Dès que le Directeur a eu fini son discours, les manifestations ont reprises.

As soon as the Director had finished speaking the demonstrations resumed.

★ **Note:** The same rules apply for the agreement of the past participle.

6. Semi-irregular Verbs - verbes semi-irréguliers

Quick Reference List

These ER verbs belong to the first conjugation, and fall into different categories.

Type	Verb	Problem if	Change	Examples
1	mener	E single consonant + er	e → è Before mute ending	je mène but nous menons
2	appeler	E single consonant + er	l → ll Before mute ending	j'appelle but nous appelons
2	jeter	E single consonant + er	t → tt Before silent ending	je jette but nous jetons
3	espérer	E single consonant + er	é → è Before mute ending	j'espère but nous espérons
4	payer	E single consonant + er	y → i Before mute ending	je paie but nous payons
5	manger	G + o / a / u	soften g → e	nous mangeons je mangeais
6	commencer	C + o / a / u	soften c → ç	nous commençons je commençais

Type 1 – mener, lever, acheter

Most verbs with e + single consonant + er take grave accent è to lengthen the sound.

Present tense endings -ons and -ez are sounded but e, es, e and ent are silent. These silent endings amplify the syllable by adding a grave accent before i / e.

Present Tense – je mène tu mènes il mène nous menons vous menez ils mènent.
 Similarly – je lève, tu lèves, il lève, nous levons, vous levez ils lèvent.
 Similarly – j'achète, tu achètes, il achète, nous achetons, vous achetez, ils achètent.

Imperfect – j'achetais, tu achetais etc.
 Future Tense – je mènerai tu mèneras etc.

Type 2 – appeler, jeter

Verbs ending in e + single consonant + er double the consonant before a silent ending

j'appelle, tu appelles, il appelle, but nous appelons, vous appelez, ils appellent
 je jette, tu jettes, il jette, nous jetons, vous jetez, ils jettent

Future Tense - j'appellerai, tu appelleras... je jetterai, tu jetteras...

Type 3 – espérer, répéter, posséder

Verbs ending é + single consonant + er, e.g. répéter, espérer, posséder, take è before a mute ending,

j'espère, tu espères, il espère, nous espérons, vous espérez, ils espèrent

Future Tense – j'espérerai, tu espèreras, il espérera, nous espérerons, vous espèrerez, ils espéreront

Type 4 – payer, essayer, nettoyer- Change y → i Before a Mute Ending

je paie, tu paies, il paie, nous payons vous payez, ils paient

Future tense – je payerai, tu payeras...

The change is optional for essayer, employer but it is recommended that you follow the rule above!

Type 5 – Manger and Verbs Whose Infinitives End in -ger

The letter G in French, as in English, will sound hard or soft subject to the next vowel:
In French G followed by a / o / u sounds is like the hard G in goat.

Hard: G + a / o / u e.g. gare, gomme, guide.
Soft: G + e / i e.g. geler, girafe.

If a verb ends in -ons, e is needed to produce a soft G, nous mangeons (this e is not pronounced).

NB:

The imperfect tense endings - ais, -ais, -ait, -aient e.g. je mangeais, but nous mangions.
Past Historic → il mangea, but 3rd plural, → ils mangèrent.

Type 6 – Commencer and Verbs with Infinitives Ending in -cer

The letter C in French, as in English, will be hard or soft depending on the next vowel.
In French C sounds like a K if followed by a / o / u sounds, like the hard K sound as in cow.

Hard: C sounds like a K if followed by a / o / u e.g. car, côté, cuisine

Soft: C sounds like an S if followed by e / i e.g. France, ciel.

To produce a soft C use a cedilla if followed by o / a / u - français,

If commencer ends in -ons, ç is required in “nous commençons”

NB:

Imperfect tense endings - ais, -ais, -ait, -aient e.g. je commençais, but nous commençons.
Past Historic → il commença, but 3rd plural, e.g. ils commencèrent.



La grande Arche de la Défense à l'ouest de la capitale - Axe historique des trois arches qui sont en ligne droite.
l'Arche du Carrousel, (construite sous Napoléon), L'Etoile et la Défense.

7. Reflexive Verbs - verbes réfléchis

1. Reflexive verbs are so called because they reflect the action back on to the subject. In English we use the possessive adjective plus self or selves; for example:

I wash myself. We wash ourselves.

In French “myself”, etc. is expressed by a reflexive pronoun which is placed immediately *before* the verb (except in the affirmative imperative, where it comes *after* the verb).

Je me lave. **Negative: Je ne me lave pas.**

Je me lave. Nous **nous** lavons.
Tu te laves. Vous **vous** lavez.
Il se lave. Ils **se** lavent.

Interrogative: **Te laves-tu?** Negative: **Ne te laves-tu pas?**

★ **Note:** In English, “myself”, etc. can be omitted, but *never* in French. There are more reflexive verbs in French than in English, e.g. **je m’arrête = I stop**.

2. In sentences such as “I wash my hands”, English uses the possessive article “my” to show whose hands are involved. In French, the reflexive pronoun shows the possessor of the hands, so only the definite article is required. For example:

Je me lave les mains. I wash my hands. (literally - I to myself wash the hands)
Tu te casses la jambe. You break your leg. (literally - you to yourself break the leg)
Elle se brosse les dents. She brushes her teeth. (literally - she to herself brushes the teeth)

(See “Direct Object Pronouns” on page 67 and “Table - Order of Object Pronouns” on page 69).

3. In the perfect tense, the reflexive pronoun is placed before the auxiliary, and the past participle agrees with it, if it is the direct object; that is, if it answers the question whom? For example:

Je me suis lavé(é). Nous nous sommes lavé(e)s.
 Tu t’es lavé(e). Vous vous êtes lavé(e)(s).
 Il s’est lavé. Ils se sont lavés.
 Elle s’est lavée. Elles se sont lavées.

Elle s’est lavée. Negative: **Elle ne s’est pas lavée.**
S’est-elle lavée? Negative: **Ne s’est-elle pas lavée?**

4. When the reflexive verb depends on another verb, and is therefore an infinitive, the reflexive pronoun still stands before it, and must still relate to the subject. For example:

Je vais me laver. I am going to wash (myself).
Nous allons nous laver. We are going to wash (ourselves).
Tu décides de te laver. You decide to wash (yourself).

5. In the imperative, the reflexive pronoun only changes its position when the command is *affirmative*. It then comes after (with a hyphen); for example:

Tu te laves. — you wash but **Lave-toi!** — Wash (yourself)!
Nous nous lavons. → **Lavons-nous!** — Let’s wash (ourselves)!
Vous vous lavez. → **Lavez-vous!** — Wash (yourself, yourselves)!

★ **Note:** that the “te” becomes “toi” because the sound “te” is too minimal and “toi” makes an impact.

However, in the negative, the pronoun follows the normal rule and stands before the verb, for example:

Ne te lave pas! Don’t wash (yourself)!
Ne nous lavons pas! Let’s not wash (ourselves)!
Ne vous lavez pas! Don’t wash (yourself, yourselves)!

8. Negation

ne ... pas	not	ne ... personne	nobody
ne ... plus	no longer, no more	ne ... jamais	never
ne ... rien	nothing		

Rules

- ▶ 1. “*Sandwich*” the simple verb or the auxiliary verb with the two parts of the negative. For example:

Je ne bois pas.	I do not drink.
Il n'a jamais fumé.	He has never smoked.

but

Elle n'a vu personne.	She saw nobody. (Personne goes after the past participle in compound tenses.)
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- ▶ 2. Use **DE** instead of the full partitive article (du / de la / de l' / des) after a negative. For example:

Je n'ai plus d'argent.	I have <u>no more</u> money.	(I haven't any money.)
Il n'a pas pris de viande.	He took <u>no</u> meat.	(He didn't take <u>any</u> meat.)
Elle n'a jamais vu de neige.	She has <u>never</u> seen snow.	(She has never seen <u>any</u> snow.)

Advanced Negation

ne ... point	no (at all) (emphatic)	ne ... plus rien	nothing else	ne ... ni ... ni	neither ... nor
ne ... guère	scarcely	ne ... plus personne	nobody else	ne ... plus	no ... longer
ne ... que	only	ne ... aucun(e)	not one (very emphatic)		

Additional rules

- ▶ 1. *Aucun*, *personne* and *rien* can be used as subjects, but *ne* must precede the verb as usual. *Ne... ni... ni...* can be used similarly.

Aucune femme n'a répondu.	Not a single woman replied.
Personne n'est ici.	Nobody is here.
Rien ne peut t'arriver.	Nothing can happen to you.
Ni son frère, ni sa sœur ne sont chez nous.	Neither his brother nor his sister is at our house.

- ▶ 2. If an *infinitive* is negative, both parts of the negative stand before the infinitive, except with *personne*, which follows:

Il a décidé de ne rien dire.	He decided to say nothing.
Je lui demanderai de ne plus boire.	I will ask him not to drink any more.
Elle espère ne voir personne.	She hopes to see nobody.

- ▶ 3. *Ne... que* is a term of limitation, not really a negative. Thus *que* stands before the item limited and not necessarily after the verb. For the same reason, *ne... que* takes the full partitive article; for example:

Elle n'a rencontré en juin que des touristes japonais.	In June she only met Japanese tourists.
Il ne mange que du poisson.	He only eats fish.

- ▶ 4. Note these examples:

Elle n'a point d'argent.	She has no money at all.
Tu n'auras aucune difficulté.	You will have no difficulty at all.
	(Aucun and aucune are negative adjectives attached to a noun — therefore they agree).
Je ne l'ai trouvé nulle part.	I didn't find him anywhere.
	(Ne ... nul [nulle] is similar to ne ... aucun[e] but is used less frequently.)

- ▶ 5. Omission of *ne* usually occurs when there is no verb; for example:

pas de chance	no luck	pas encore	not yet	pas ce matin	not this morning
pas du tout	not at all	pas maintenant	not now	pas si bête	not so silly

“COPS” (cesser, oser, pouvoir, savoir)

These verbs often omit *pas* in the negative:

Je ne cesse de prier pour vous.	I never cease praying for you.
Je n’ose le dire.	I dare not say it.
Il ne peut s’en souvenir.	He can’t remember it.
Elle ne saura vous aider.	She won’t know how to help you.

However, for *special emphasis*, *pas* may be used.

Je ne peux pas l’embrasser.	I definitely cannot kiss him / her. (emphatic)
Il ne peut pas le faire.	He (really) can’t do it.

Ne is only used before a verb. Small expressions or clauses may just use *pas* or *non* (or another negative).

Pas possible	not possible
Pas de pain	no bread
C’est Stéphanie, pas Michel	it’s Stephanie, not Michael
Plus d’école	no more school
Ni moi non plus	neither (will) I
Sans manteau ni chapeau	without coat nor hat
Je crois que non	I think not / I don’t think so

★ **Note:** “Si” must be used instead of “oui” in reply to a negative question:

Q. Elle ne va pas au théâtre?	Isn’t she going to the theatre?
A. Si, elle vient de partir.	Yes, she has just left.

9. Interrogative Form

Affirmative

There are two patterns:

1. Est-ce que + statement:

Est-ce que tu joues?	Are you playing?
Est-ce qu’il le voit?	Does he see it?

2. Inversion

a) Verb + pronoun; for example:

Ai-je?	have I?
A-t-elle?	has she?
Faites-vous?	do you do / make?

b) Subject + verb hyphen subject



In English where there is a noun as a subject of a question, French introduces the equivalent pronoun:

Le docteur est-il ici?	Is the doctor here?
La femme a-t-elle vu le vol?	Did the lady see the robbery?
Les paquets sont-ils arrivés?	Have the parcels arrived?

This form is so dissimilar to English that students must take care!

c) If the question word does not include *est-ce que*, inversion must occur after the noun subject:

Quand Luc va-t-il partir?	When is Luke leaving?
Combien les fraises coûtent-elles?	How much do the strawberries cost?
Pourquoi Jeanne s’est-elle évanouie?	Why did Jeanne faint?

Note the order: Question word + noun subject + verb + subject pronoun.

After direct speech, French requires inversion of “he said”, “she asked”, etc.:

« J’y vais », leur a-t-il crié.	“I’ll go,” he shouted to them.
« Les voilà », a dit le boulanger.	“There they are,” said the baker.
« Tu viens? » lui demanda-t-il.	“Are you coming?” he asked her.
« Mon dieu! » s’écria—t-il.	“Good Lord!” he exclaimed.

Negative

The rules for the negative (see page 27) still hold, but when the subject pronoun is hyphenated to the verb the second part of the negative follows the subject pronoun:

Est-ce que tu <u>ne</u> <u>joues pas</u>?	Aren’t you playing?
Est-ce qu’il <u>ne</u> <u>le voit pas</u>?	Doesn’t he see it?
N’ai-je <u>pas</u>...?	Haven’t I ... ?
N’a-t-elle <u>pas</u>?	Hasn’t she?
<u>Ne</u> <u>jouez-vous pas</u>?	Don’t you play? / Aren’t you playing?
Le pharmacien <u>n’est-il pas</u> ici?	Isn’t the chemist here?
La femme <u>n’a-t-elle pas</u> vu l’accident?	Didn’t the woman see the accident?
Les paquets <u>ne sont-ils pas</u> arrivés?	Haven’t the parcels arrived?

Inversion After Certain Constructions

After certain constructions the verb and subject are inverted (as though asking a question), usually for euphony (sound).

1. After direct speech:

« Tu es fou », a-t-elle dit.	“You are mad”, she said.
« Il vient d’entrer », a répondu Louise.	“He has just come in”, replied Louise.

2. After

peut-être = perhaps	} when introducing a clause.
sans doute = doubtless	
aussi = and so, thus	
à peine = scarcely, no sooner	
au moins = at least	
en vain = in vain	

Peut-être finiront-ils bientôt.	Perhaps they will finish soon.
Sans doute s’est-il échappé.	Doubtless he has escaped.

3. In subordinate clauses (especially after *ce* and *ce que*):

Voilà la souris qu’a tuée le chat.	There is the mouse which the cat killed.
Voici ce qu’ont fait ses camarades.	Here is what his friends did.

4. After *qui* and *que* as invariable interrogative pronouns (direct object of the verb):

Qui a-t-il choisi?	Whom did he choose?
Que vois-tu?	What do you see?

10. Imperative

Commands are made using the present tense *without* a subject pronoun in the second person sing. first and second persons plural.

Donne! — Give!	Finis! — Finish!	Vends! — Sell!
Donnons! — Let us give!	Finissons! — Let us finish!	Vendons! — Let us sell!
Donnez! — Give!	Finissez! — Finish!	Vendez! — Sell!

★ **Note:** In -er verbs the “s” is dropped in the 2nd person singular.

Only **avoir**, **être** and **savoir** are different. See Verb Tables, page 6 for avoir / être and page 10 for savoir.

Aller is treated as an -er verb (the “s” of the 2nd person singular is dropped), and so are verbs of the ouvrir type, because they have -er endings in the present tense.

Reflexive

(See notes on the Reflexive on page 26)

Lave-toi!	Wash yourself!
Lavons-nous!	Let us wash ourselves!
Lavez-vous!	Wash yourself/yourselves!

Negative Reflexive

(See the position of the object pronouns in the “Table - Order of Object Pronouns” on page 69.)

Ne te lave pas!
Ne nous lavons pas!
Ne vous lavez pas!

★ **Note:** For euphony (= sound) the 2nd person singular “s” is retained before y and en in the imperative.

Ouvres-en!	Open some of them!	Vas-y!	Go on!
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but

N'en ouvre pas!	Don't open any!	N'y va pas!	Don't go there! Don't go!
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11. Le futur proche (aller + infinitive)

1. The present tense of aller + infinitive express the immediate future; for example:

Je vais acheter ces chaussures.	I am going to buy those shoes.
Ils vont faire du ski.	They are going skiing.

2. The imperfect tense of aller + the infinitive express what was going to happen in the past; for example:

J'allais acheter un billet, mais je n'avais pas assez d'argent.	I was going to buy a ticket but I did not have enough money.
Ils allaient faire du ski, mais leur fille est tombée malade.	They were going skiing, but their daughter fell ill.

This imperfect construction is generally used in conjunction with another past action.

12. Le passé récent (venir de + infinitive)

1. The present tense of venir de + infinitive expresses what *has just* happened:

Pierre vient de partir.	Peter has just left.
Ils viennent de commencer.	They have just begun.

2. The imperfect tense of venir de + infinitive expresses what *had just* happened:

Papa venait de partir quand nous sommes arrivés.	Dad had just left when we arrived.
Ils venaient de nager quand la sirène a retenti.	They had just been swimming when the siren sounded.

This imperfect construction is generally used in conjunction with another past action.

★ **Note:** Venir de can only be used in the Present and Imperfect Tenses.

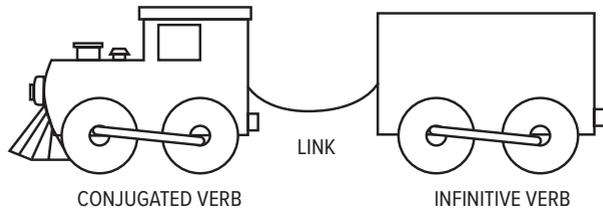
13. Modal Verbs – devoir, pouvoir, savoir, vouloir and falloir

“I can play”, “I must play” and “I want to play” tell us a different mode / way of playing. Modal verbs are highly irregular in French and English. Learn them by heart, because they are in constant use. An infinitive always follows a modal verb.

Verbs	Simple Tenses	French	English	Compound Tenses	French	English
devoir (to have to compulsion, moral obligation)	<i>Present</i>	je dois jouer	I must play	<i>Perfect</i>	j'ai dû jouer	I have had to play
	<i>Imperfect</i>	je devais jouer	I had to play I was to play	<i>Pluperfect</i>	j'avais dû jouer	I had had to play
	<i>Future</i>	je devrai jouer	I shall have to play	<i>Future Perfect</i>	j'aurai dû jouer	I shall have had to play
	<i>Conditional</i>	je devrais jouer	I ought to play	<i>Cond. Perfect</i>	j'aurais dû jouer	I ought to have played
	<i>P. Historic</i>	je dus jouer	I had to play	<i>Passé antérieur</i>	j'eus dû jouer	I had had to play
pouvoir (to be able to) ability	<i>Present</i>	je peux } puis-je } jouer	I can play I am able to play	<i>Perfect</i>	j'ai pu jouer	I was able to play
	<i>Imperfect</i>	je pouvais jouer	I was able to play	<i>Pluperfect</i>	j'avais pu jouer	I had been able to play
	<i>Future</i>	je pourrai jouer	I shall be able to play	<i>Future Perfect</i>	j'aurai pu jouer	I shall have been able to play
	<i>Conditional</i>	je pourrais jouer	I might play	<i>Cond. Perfect</i>	j'aurais pu jouer	I might have been able to play
	<i>P. Historic</i>	je pus jouer	I was able to play	<i>Passé antérieur</i>	j'eus pu jouer	I had been able to play
savoir (to know) to know how to do	<i>Present</i>	je sais jouer	I know how to play I can play	<i>Perfect</i>	j'ai su jouer	I learned how to play
	<i>Imperfect</i>	je savais jouer	I knew how to play	<i>Pluperfect</i>	j'avais su jouer	I had known how to play
	<i>Future</i>	je saurai jouer	I shall know how to play	<i>Future Perfect</i>	j'aurai su jouer	I shall have known how to play
	<i>Conditional</i>	je saurais jouer	I would know how to play	<i>Cond. Perfect</i>	j'aurais su jouer	I would have known how to play
	<i>P. Historic</i>	je sus jouer	I knew how to play	<i>Passé antérieur</i>	j'eus su jouer	I had known how to play
vouloir (to want) wishing	<i>Present</i>	je veux jouer	I want to play	<i>Perfect</i>	j'ai voulu jouer	I wanted to play
	<i>Imperfect</i>	je voulais jouer	I wanted to play	<i>Pluperfect</i>	j'avais voulu jouer	I had wanted to play
	<i>Future</i>	je voudrai jouer	I shall want to play	<i>Future Perfect</i>	j'aurai voulu jouer	I shall have wanted to play
	<i>Conditional</i>	je voudrais jouer	I would want to play	<i>Cond. Perfect</i>	j'aurais voulu jouer	I would have wanted to play
	<i>P. Historic</i>	je voulus jouer	I wanted to play	<i>Passé antérieur</i>	j'eus voulu jouer	I had wanted to play
falloir (to be necessary) necessity	<i>Present</i>	il faut jouer	it is necessary to play	<i>Perfect</i>	il a fallu jouer	it was (has been) necessary to play
	<i>Imperfect</i>	il fallait jouer	it was necessary to play	<i>Pluperfect</i>	il avait fallu jouer	it had been necessary to play
	<i>Future</i>	il faudra jouer	it will be necessary to play	<i>Future Perfect</i>	il aura fallu jouer	it will have been necessary to play
	<i>Conditional</i>	il faudrait jouer	it would be necessary to play	<i>Cond. Perfect</i>	il aurait fallu jouer	it would have been necessary to play
	<i>P. Historic</i>	il fallut jouer	it was necessary to play	<i>Passé antérieur</i>	il eut fallu jouer	if had been necessary to play

14. Infinitives

A conjugated verb is often followed by an infinitive. As a locomotive pulls a carriage, imagine a conjugated or finite verb towing along an infinitive. Some conjugated verbs have an “invisible” or “automatic” link and can be followed directly by the infinitive, but others need **à** or **de** to link the infinitive to the verb.



Conjugated verb	Automatic link	Infinitive	
Je peux	---	finir le travail.	I can finish the work.
Tu sais	---	conduire?	You know how to drive?
Elle doit	---	aller en ville.	She must go to town.
Il commence	à	jouer du piano.	He begins to play the piano.
Refusez-vous	de	regarder le match?	Do you refuse to watch the match?
Ils viennent	de	tomber.	They have just fallen.

★ **Note** the difference between:

Il vient acheter ce camion rouge.

He is coming to buy this red truck.

Il vient d'acheter ce camion vert.

He has **just** bought this green truck.

15. Infinitive Links

Infinitives with an Automatic Link, à or de

Infinitives are linked to the finite verb “invisibly” (hence require nothing), or with **à** or with **de**. There seems to be no simple way of explaining why one verb requires **à** while another requires **de** and another nothing. Learn to use the reference table on the next page until you can visualise the column in which the infinitive appears - *left / centre / right* then later by heart. Some more examples:

Ils aiment jouer au tennis.	They like to play tennis.
Elle espère voir son ami.	She hopes to see her friend.
Nous préférons laisser la valise.	We prefer to leave the case.
J'apprends à parler japonais.	I am learning to speak Japanese.
Il invite Marie à sortir.	He invites Mary to go out.
Tu perds trop de temps à regarder la télé.	You waste too much time watching ² TV.
Il essaie de jouer au golf.	He is trying to play golf.
Elle a décidé d'acheter ce pull.	She has decided to buy this sweater.

Infinitives may sound like a present participle in English, but French uses an infinitive, e.g.

Maman avait peur de trop manger.	Mum was afraid of <i>eating</i> too much.
Elle aime nager.	She likes <i>swimming</i> or <i>She likes to swim</i> .
Je me souviens de voir ce village.	I remember <i>seeing</i> that village

² English often uses a present participle here but French never does. A finite verb is only followed by an infinitive.

Infinitives

Automatic Link		à		de	
aimer	to like, love	aider	to help	achever	to complete
aimer mieux	to like better / prefer	s'amuser	to amuse oneself	s'agir	it is a matter of
aller	to go	apprendre	to learn	il s'agit de s'arrêter	it's a matter of stopping
avoir beau	to do ... in vain	arriver	to succeed in	avoir besoin / envie / peur	to need / fancy / fear
compter	to count on	s'attendre	to expect	blâmer	to blame for
courir	to run	autoriser	to authorise	cesser	to cease
croire	to believe	avoir	to have to	commander	to order
désirer	to desire	chercher	to seek to / to try	conseiller	to advise
détester	to detest	commencer	to begin / to start	convenir	to be fitting
devoir	to have to	continuer	to continue	craindre	to fear
écouter	to listen to	se décider	to make up one's mind	décider	to decide
entendre	to hear	demander	to ask to do something	défendre	to forbid
envoyer	to send	encourager	to encourage	demander	to ask
espérer	to hope	enseigner	to teach	se dépêcher	to hurry
faillir	to nearly do	s'habituer	to get used	dire	to tell
faire	to make / to do	hésiter	to hesitate	écrire	to write
falloir	to be necessary	inviter	to invite	empêcher	to prevent
s'imaginer	to imagine	se mettre	to begin	s'efforcer	to force oneself
laisser	to allow	obliger	to force	s'empresser	to hurry
mener (+all compounds)	to lead	passer } son temps	to spend } one's time	essayer	to try
nier	to deny	perdre }	to waste }	éviter	to avoid
oser	to dare	persister	to persist in	s'excuser	to excuse oneself
paraître	to appear	se plaire	to take pleasure in	faire semblant	to pretend
penser	to expect to do something	passer	to pass	féliciter	to congratulate
prétendre	to claim	rester	to remain (with time)	finir	to end, finish
regarder	to watch, look at	réussir	to succeed	se hâter	to hurry, hasten
savoir	to know how	songer	to think of	mériter	to deserve
sembler	to seem	servir	to serve	négliger	to neglect
sentir	to feel, smell	tarder	to be late	obliger	to be obliged
songer	to dream (of doing something)	tenir	to be anxious to	offrir	to offer
souhaiter	to wish			ordonner	to order
valoir mieux	to be better			oublier	to forget
venir	to come			pardonner	to forgive
voir	to see			parler	to speak
vouloir	to want			permettre	to permit
				persuader	to persuade
				prendre garde	to beware of
				prévenir	to warn
				prier	to beg
				promettre	to promise
				proposer	to propose, intend
				rappeler	to remind
				recommander	to recommend
				refuser	to refuse
				regretter	to regret
				remercier	to thank
				se repentir	to repent
				se souvenir	to remember
				suggérer	to suggest
				tâcher	to try to
				téléphoner	to telephone
				tenter	to attempt
				valoir la peine	to be worth the trouble
				venir	to have just

All modal verbs, verbs of liking or disliking, all verbs of motion, all verbs of sense perception **link automatically**.

Adjectives + à *		Adjectives + de *	
(être) accoutumé	to be used to	(être) capable	to be capable of
(être) le dernier	to be the last to (<i>m</i>)	(être) content	to be happy to
(être) la dernière	to be the last to (<i>f</i>)	(être) curieux	to be curious about
(être) lent(e)	to be slow at	(être) heureux	to be happy to
(être) long(ue)	to be long in	(être) impatient	to be impatient to
(être) occupé(e)	to be busy	(être) libre	to be free to
(être) le premier	to be the first to (<i>m</i>)	(être) obligé	to be forced to
(être) la première	to be the first to (<i>f</i>)	(être) préférable	to be preferable to
(être) prêt(e)	to be ready to	(être) soucieux	to be worried about
(être) prompt(e)	to be prompt in		

* The English preposition is given since the usual “to” sometimes varies, and English may use a present participle.

Adverbs and Expressions + à + Infinitive

The infinitive must be linked to the following adverbial expressions by à adverb + infinitive

J'ai assez à faire.	I have enough to do.
A-t-elle beaucoup à coudre?	Has she much to sew?
Pas mal à étudier	A lot to study
Personne à visiter	Nobody to visit
Quelqu'un à inviter	Someone to invite
Quelque chose à voir	Something to see
Rien à faire	Nothing to do
Tant à préparer	So much to prepare
Trop à manger	Too much to eat
J'ai énormément à repasser.	I have an enormous amount of ironing.
Nous avons peu à apprendre.	We have little to learn.

Pour + Infinitive

être trop }
 assez } adjective + pour + infinitive:

Elle est trop vieille pour travailler.	She is too old to work.
Il est assez petit pour passer par ce trou.	He is small enough to get through this hole.

16. Verbs of Sense Perception and Laisser

apercevoir	to perceive
écouter	to listen to
entendre	to hear
laisser ¹	to allow
regarder	to watch, look at
remarquer	to notice
sentir	to feel
voir	to see

Use

1. Normally the infinitive follows the finite verb immediately, unless there is a phrase or clause following, e.g.

Elle voit venir l'instituteur.	She sees the teacher coming.
Elle le voit venir.	<i>She sees him coming.</i>
Ils voient l'instituteur sortir du café.	They see the teacher leaving the café.
Ils le voient en sortir	<i>They see him leaving the cafe.</i>

2. Object pronouns stand before the verb of sense perception:

Ils regardent la forêt brûler	They watch the forest burning.
Ils la regardent brûler.	<i>They watch it burning.</i>
J'écoute chanter la diva sur le parvis.	I hear the diva singing in the forecourt.
Je l'y écoute chanter.	<i>I hear her singing there.</i>

3. With two object pronouns check position.

2 pronouns	{	Je vois Jean couper la poire en deux.	I see John cutting the pear in half.
		Je le vois la couper en deux.	I hear him cutting it in half.
		Il entend les cambrioleurs forcer la fenêtre.	He hears the burglars forcing the window.
		Il les entend la forcer.	He hears them force it open.

4. The infinitives are frequently passive in meaning - note the use of the present participle in English, e.g.

Passive	As-tu vu construire ce bâtiment?	Did you see this building <u>being built</u> ?
Active	Vous avez entendu crier les mouettes.	You heard the gulls <u>screeching</u> .
Passive	J'ai écouté lire l'annonce.	I heard the statement <u>being read</u> .

5. Past participles of verbs of sense perception **agree** as demonstrated in **Sentence A but not in Sentence B.**

Sentence A	Les chatons que j'ai vus jouer étaient adorables.	The kittens I saw playing were delightful. Direct object <u>chatons</u> precedes the verb "j'ai vu". Direct object is doing the action of the infinitive = playing so agreement takes place.
Sentence B	Les airs qu'il a entendu jouer étaient grecs.	The tunes he heard being played were Greek. The direct object <u>tunes</u> precedes the verb "il a entendu". The direct object <u>tunes</u> are not doing the action of the infinitive but are being played so NO agreement .

Combien de gâteaux ont-ils fait préparer?	How many cakes did they <u>have</u> made?	(literally allow to be made)
Combien de roses a-t-elle laissé couper?	How many roses did she <u>have</u> cut?	(literally allow to be cut)

¹ Laisser is included because it behaves like a verb of sense perception.

17. Past Participle - participe passé

The past participle is the non-finite part of the verb, that is it cannot be used alone with a subject (je tu vous etc.) However, it is a very useful part of the verb because when combined with an auxiliary verb (avoir / être) it forms many different tenses. It can also be used as an adjective.

Formation

Regular verbs

-er verbs	e.g., donner.	Remove the -er ending and add é .	donn er → donn é
-ir verbs	e.g., finir.	Remove the -ir ending and add i .	fin ir → fin i
-re verbs	e.g., vendre.	Remove the -re ending and add u .	vend re → vend u

Irregular verbs

Unfortunately these have to be learned separately, but some verbs which are irregular in the present seem to form their past participles regularly; for example, sortir/sorti, partir/parti. Students will also note that certain patterns do emerge, such as avoir/eu, devoir/dû, savoir/su, vouloir/voulu and pouvoir/pu.

Agreement

1. As indicated above, past participles can be used as adjectives, after such verbs as être and sembler. In such cases the past participle has to take on the gender (masculine or feminine) and the number (singular or plural) of the noun or pronoun it is describing. In other words, it must *agree*. Examples:

Il semble affairé.	(masculine singular to describe he)
La mère est fatiguée.	(feminine singular to describe mother)
Les professeurs sont fâchés.	(masculine plural to describe teachers)
Les infirmières sont occupées.	(feminine plural to describe nurses)

2. For this reason, in the perfect and other compound tenses, when the verb is conjugated with être (see the list, PAR MEND V TRAMS on page 19) the past participle must agree with the subject (the person or thing doing the action). Examples:

Elle est partie.	She has left (partie = feminine singular — she).
Ils sont tombés.	They have fallen (tombés = masculine plural — they).
Nous sommes venues.	We have come (we is obviously feminine plural).
Vous êtes resté.	You have stayed (you is obviously masculine singular).
Vous êtes restés.	You have stayed (you is obviously masculine plural).

This system of agreement is very useful as it indicates exactly who is being so described and avoids ambiguity.

3. Since avoir = to have cannot be followed by an adjective, in the perfect tense the past participle does **not** agree. Examples:

Elle a acheté le journal.	She has bought the newspaper.
Vous avez fini la vaisselle.	You have finished the washing up.
Ils ont perdu les documents.	They have lost the documents.
Elles ont lu les lettres.	They have read the letters.

4.a. In the previous examples the noun which *follows* the verb is the *direct object* — le journal, la vaisselle, les documents, les lettres. If we wished to replace each one of these nouns by the appropriate pronoun (le, la, les, les), we would have to alter its position in the sentence. That is, it would go *before* the verb (see position of pronouns on page 69).

Now, as every part of avoir begins with a vowel — **ai, as, a, avons, avez** and **ont** — both le and la would become “l”, and in a sentence where both a masculine and a feminine noun has been previously mentioned, there could be confusion as to which noun or pronoun this refers. Therefore, to avoid this confusion, the past participle agrees with a direct object whenever the direct object appears **before** the verb. The sentences below are given as examples:

Elle a acheté le journal.	→ Elle l’a acheté.	(masculine singular)
Vous avez fini la vaisselle.	→ Vous l’avez finie.	(feminine singular)
Ils ont perdu les livres.	→ Ils les ont perdus.	(masculine plural)
Elles ont lu les lettres.	→ Elles les ont lues.	(feminine plural)

★ **Note:** If a past participle already ends in “s” (for example, prendre / pris, mettre / mis) it cannot take another “s” to agree with masculine plural direct objects. It stays the same.

b. This rule is not just confined to object pronouns. In a question such as “Which films have you seen?” the direct object *noun* (= films) comes before the verb. Therefore the sentence must be written:

“Quels films as-tu vus?”

* Likewise the pronoun “les” is used for both masculine plural and feminine plural nouns and one needs this PDO rule for clarity.

c. When the relative pronoun “que” (which, that) is used, it will always be the direct object of the verb and it will always come before the verb, therefore the past participle must agree with que, see “33. Relative Pronouns” on page 71 for preceding direct object agreement. Examples:

Où sont les cerises que tu as achetées ce matin? Where are the cherries that you bought this morning?
Elle n’aime pas la robe que j’ai faite pour elle. She does not like the dress that I made for her.
Ils cherchent les disques que vous avez apportés. They are looking for the records that you brought.

d. However, note that the past participle **never** agrees with an indirect object:

Il a parlé à Marie. Il lui a parlé.
Nous avons écrit à nos parents. Nous leur avons écrit.

Nor does it agree with the pronoun “en”, which is not a direct object but means “de cela” (of that):

Ils ont mangé des cerises. Ils en ont mangé.

Nor does it agree with the relative pronoun “dont”, as this is not a direct object.

5. *Reflexive verbs* are conjugated with être, but the past participle agreement is the same as for verbs conjugated with avoir; that is:

a. If the reflexive pronoun is the *direct* object, the past participle agrees with it (see “7. Reflexive Verbs - verbes réfléchis” on page 26.) for the position of reflexive pronouns). Examples:

Elle s’est lavée. She washed herself. “herself” is the direct object.
Ils se sont arrêtés. They stopped (themselves). “themselves” is the direct object.

If the reflexive pronoun is the *indirect* object, the past participle does *not* agree with it. Remember that no verb can have more than one direct object.

Il s’est lavé les mains. He washed his hands. (Lit. He to himself washed the hands.)
 “Hands” are the direct object, so the reflexive pronoun is indirect.
Ils se sont brossés les cheveux. They brushed their hair. (Lit. they to themselves brushed the hair.) “Hair” is the direct object.

But if the direct object goes before the verb, the past participle agrees with it, as with verbs conjugated with avoir:

La main qu’elle s’est cassée The hand that she broke.
Quelle main s’est-elle cassée? Which hand did she break?

c. In a sentence such as “They spoke to each other” the reflexive pronoun (really a reciprocal pronoun) is still an indirect object, therefore there is *no agreement*:

Ils se sont parlé. They spoke to each other.
Elles se sont écrit pendant des années. They wrote to each other for years.

d. The past participle of certain reflexive verbs, notably *se rappeler*, *se rendre compte*, *s’imaginer* and *se plaire*, never agrees, since the reflexive pronoun is the indirect object; for example:

Elles se sont rendu compte de leur erreur. They realised their mistake. (“compte” is the direct object.)

e. In the following sentence:

Elle s’est coupée au doigt.
 The past participle agrees as the *finger* is not the direct object but shows *where (place)* she cut herself.

f. There is a small group of verbs whose past participle does not agree with the reflexive pronoun but with the *subject* instead, because the pronoun is not reflexive. This means that the past participle of these verbs will always agree. Examples:

Elle s’en est allée. She has gone away. **Ils se sont plaints.** They complained.

List of verbs of this kind:

s’en aller	to go away	s’enfuir	to flee	se moquer de	to make fun of
s’apercevoir (de)	to realise	s’envoler	to fly away	se plaindre de	to complain
se douter de	to suspect	s’évanouir	to faint	se repentir de	to repent
s’écrier	to cry out	se fier à	to trust	se souvenir de	to remember
s’emparer de	to take	se méfier de	to distrust	se taire	to be silent

Absolute Use of the Past Participle

When used absolutely (that is, without an auxiliary verb or as an adjective), the past participle neatly expresses what would normally require a fuller phrase or a clause. Examples:

- Les cerises cueillies, Mariette les emporta à la cuisine.** = **Les cerises ayant été cueillies, Mariette les emporta à la cuisine.**
 or **Quand elle eut cueilli les cerises...**
- Arrivés à Lyon, ils cherchèrent l'hôtel de leur oncle.** = **Quand ils furent arrivés à Lyon,...**
 The time of the grape harvest having arrived ...
- Le temps de la vendange arrivé,...**
 The crisis over, ...
- La crise passée,...**
 Once they had left, they ...
- Une fois parties, elles...**

Translating the English Present Participle

The past participle is also used in French to express an action of the body, where we use the present participle in English. Example :

- Assis sur le banc, les vieillards lisaient leurs journaux.** Sitting (seated) on the bench, the old men were reading their newspapers.

Similarly:

- agenouillé** — kneeling (with the knees — **les genoux**)
adossé — leaning (with the back — **le dos**)
accoudé — leaning (with the elbows — **les coudes**)
appuyé — leaning (supported)
couché — lying

★ **Note:** Past participles used like this are adjectives and must agree with their subjects; for example:
Accoudée sur le parapet, elle regardait la Seine. Leaning on the parapet, she was looking at the River Seine.



Le Pont Neuf – Le bon roi Henri IV – La Samaritaine finalement réouverte en juin 2021!

18. Perfect Infinitive

As its name suggests, the perfect infinitive is made up of the **infinitive of the auxiliary verb (avoir or être)** and a **past participle**. This construction is most often found after the preposition *après* to translate “after” (doing) or “after” (having done). It reduces a clause to a phrase, thus making a more elegant sentence.

Examples:

Nous faisons nos devoirs puis nous nous couchons. → **Après avoir fait nos devoirs, nous nous couchons.**
Elle a pris le déjeuner puis elle est sortie. → **Après avoir pris le déjeuner, elle est sortie.**
J'irai à la banque puis je rentrerai. → **Après être allé à la banque, je rentrerai.**
Ils s'habillèrent puis ils quittèrent la maison. → **Après s'être habillés, ils quittèrent la maison.**

★ **Note:** The same person must be doing the two actions in the sentence, so when a reflexive verb is used the reflexive pronoun must agree with the subject:

Je me lève puis je descends à la cuisine. → **Après m'être levé je descends à la cuisine.**

The past participle must also agree:

Elles se reposent, puis elles rentrent. → **Après s'être reposées, elles rentrent.**

★ **Note:** also that any tense can be used in the main clause:

Après s'être reposées elles rentreront. (future)
Après s'être reposées elles rentraient. (imperfect)
Après s'être reposées elles sont rentrées. (perfect) etc.

This construction is also used to denote that an action took place *before* the first stated action, as in the following examples:

On l'a accusé d'avoir volé les bijoux. He has been accused of having stolen the jewels.

★ **Note:** English is much less precise than French in this sentence, as it could be expressed as “He has been accused of stealing the jewels”. Examples:

On les a punis pour être rentrés si tard. They have been punished for coming home/having come home so late.
Excusez-moi de vous avoir dérangé. Forgive me for disturbing/ having disturbed you.

Je suis parti sans avoir fermé la maison à clef. I left without locking up/ having locked up the house.

List of Verbs which take the Perfect Infinitive

accuser d'avoir (pris)	to accuse of having (taken, or any past participle)
avoir l'air d'avoir	to appear to have
s'excuser d'avoir	to apologise for having
pardonner d'avoir	to forgive for having
punir pour avoir	to punish for having
se rappeler d'avoir	to remember having
regretter d'avoir	to regret having
remercier d'avoir	to thank for having
reprocher d'avoir	to reproach for having
se souvenir d'avoir	to remember having

19. Present Participle - participe présent

Formation

For all verbs except être, avoir and savoir, the present participle has the same stem as the first person plural (nous) form* of the present indicative + the ending 'ant'. Examples:

nous donnons → donnant	— giving
nous finissons → finissant	— finishing
nous vendons → vendant	— selling
nous buvons → buvant	— drinking

but

nous sommes → étant	— being
nous avons → ayant	— having
nous savons → sachant	— knowing

*The 1st person plural is in fact formed from the present participle, not the other way round, but since it is customary to learn the 1st person plural present form of a verb before learning the present participle, it is usually explained as above.

Use as a Verb, a Gerund or an Adjective

1 As a verb

A participle is *not* a finite verb. Therefore, a subject pronoun cannot be placed before it. A present participle is used to condense a clause into a phrase, *but* the clause must have the same subject as the main clause.

For example:

Elle lisait son journal et elle buvait son café. → Lisant son journal, elle buvait son café.

The two actions — drinking and reading — are being done by the same person.

J'étais fatiguée donc je ne suis pas sortie. → Etant fatiguée, je ne suis pas sortie.

A present participle phrase is often introduced by "en" to emphasise that the two actions are happening at the same time, for example:

En descendant les marches, elle a glissé et elle est tombée. While going down the steps, she slipped and fell.

Further emphasis is added by placing "tout en" before the present participle; for example:

Tout en parlant elle regardait ses enfants. (While) All the time she was speaking, she was watching her children.

En is also used before a present participle to show the means of doing something (by); for example:

En suivant ce chemin vous arriverez à leur ferme. By following this road, you will reach their farm.

En is the *only* preposition which can be followed by a present participle. All other prepositions are followed by the infinitive.

Notes: The present participle used in the above examples is invariable.

Nous les avons vus <u>en sortant</u> de la gare.	We saw them as (<u>we</u> were) coming out of the station.
Nous les avons vus <u>sortir</u> de la gare.	We saw them as (<u>they</u> were) coming out of the station.

(See Verbs of Sense Perception, page 35)

2 As a gerund

The verbal form "ing" in English is usually translated by an infinitive in French.

Voir c'est croire.	Seeing is believing.
avant de partir	before leaving

3 As an adjective

The present participle can also be used as an adjective (always *after* the noun) and is then **variable** (agrees with its noun):

Une histoire amusante	an amusing story
Des animaux mourants	dying animals
Des pas hésitants	tentative steps
Une fin surprenante	a surprising ending
Des cris persistants	persistent cries
Un parent accusateur	an accusing parent
Une femme séduisante	a seductive woman
Une petite fille ravissante	a delightful little girl

20. Depuis, pendant, pour

1. If *depuis*, meaning *for* or *since*, in a negative sentence, and also if *pendant* means *during*, use the same tense as in English:

Je ne l'ai pas vu depuis son accident. I haven't seen him since his accident.
Nous dormions pendant la journée. We used to sleep during the day.

2. When *depuis* means *for* or *since* in an affirmative sentence:

a. Use the *present* tense if the *action is still going on* in the present (now); for example:

Nous attendons depuis une demi-heure. We have been waiting for half an hour (and are still waiting).

b. Use the *imperfect* if the *action was still going on* in the past (then). For example:

Nous parlions depuis dix minutes quand le directeur a ouvert la porte. We had been talking for ten minutes when the headmaster opened the door.

★ **Note:** The interrupted nature of “parlions” which is a characteristic of the imperfect.

3. When *pendant* means *for*, use any tense which denotes a *completed action*:

Il travailla pendant sept ans au Caire. He worked in Cairo for seven years.

Nous avons attendu pendant une demi-heure, puis nous sommes partis. We waited for half an hour, then we left.

★ **Note:** *Pendant* can often be omitted:

Ils ont parlé longtemps. They spoke for a long time.

4. When *pour* means *for*:

a. Use the *future* for *verbs of motion*:

Nous irons à Lyon pour trois jours. We shall go to Lyons for three days.

b. Use the *present* or *future* for *être*; for example:

Je suis (serai) à Paris pour une semaine. I am (will be) in Paris for a week.

c. Use *any tense* if the action is seen as *continuing into the future*; for example:

Charlemagne devint, pour 46 ans, roi des Francs. Charlemagne became king of the Franks for forty-six years.
Tu as assez de provisions pour toute l'année. You have enough provisions for the whole year.

Note: “She has not worked here for two years” can be translated as:

i. **Elle n'a pas travaillé ici depuis deux ans.** (It is two years since she worked here);
 ii. **Elle n'a pas travaillé ici pendant deux ans.** (She did not work here for two years, but for one, four, etc. That is, the period of time stated is incorrect.)

Depuis means for

The construction with *depuis* and the present tense can be expressed in other ways. Examples:

Nous attendons ici depuis une demi-heure.
Cela fait une demi-heure que nous attendons ici.
Il y a* une demi-heure que nous attendons ici.
Voilà une demi-heure que nous attendons ici. } We have been waiting here for half an hour.

Similarly for *depuis* and the imperfect: the sentence “Nous parlions depuis dix minutes quand le directeur a ouvert la porte” can be expressed in other ways:

Cela faisait dix minutes que nous parlions quand... We had been talking for about ten minutes when ...
Il y avait une heure que nous parlions quand... We had been talking for about an hour when ...
Voilà une demi-heure que nous parlions quand... We had been talking for half an hour when ...

* Not to be confused with *il y a = ago*, e.g.

Nous sommes arrivés ici il y a une demi-heure. We got here half an hour ago.

21. Si Clauses

The tenses in a “si clause” are “fixed” and whilst the order of the two parts can be reversed the “balance” of the tenses remains.

1	Si + Present tense Si elle vient nous jouerons au tennis. <i>If she comes</i> , we shall play tennis.	+	Future tense Nous jouerons au tennis, si elle vient. We shall play tennis <i>if she comes</i> .
2	Si + Imperfect tense Si elle venait nous jouerions au tennis. <i>If she came</i> we would play tennis.	+	Conditional tense Nous jouerions au tennis, si elle venait. We would play tennis <i>if she came</i> .
3	Si + Pluperfect tense Si elle était venue nous aurions joué au tennis. <i>If she had come</i> , we would have played tennis.	+	Conditional Perfect tense Nous aurions joué au tennis si elle était venue We would have played tennis <i>if she had come</i> .

Sentence 1 is a likely outcome.

Sentence 2 is an uncertain outcome.

Sentence 3 is an unlikely or improbable outcome.

★ **Note:** Si loses the letter i before il / ils but never before elle / elles.

It is not compulsory to use the future or conditional in the main clause - the present or the imperfect may be used, e.g.

Si elle vient, nous jouons au tennis. (If she comes we play tennis – a habitual action in the present).

Si elle venait, nous jouions au tennis. (If she came we used to play tennis- – a habitual action in the past).

When si means “whether” the Si Clause rules do not apply.

Je ne sais pas s’il viendra.

I don’t whether he will come. (future)

22. Implied Future

However, the future perfect is obligatory; if the time clause begins with *dès que*, *aussitôt que* or *après que*; and if it is possible to use a compound tense in English:

Jean finira l’article dès qu’il sera rentré à la maison. John will finish the article as soon as he gets home.

But in a construction such as *être de retour* – for example, “John will finish the article as soon as he is back” – it is not possible to substitute “has been back” for “is back”, therefore only the simple future can be used:

Jean finira l’article aussitôt qu’il sera de retour.

Example:

Nous sortirons quand il cessera de pleuvoir. We shall go out when it stops raining.

English uses the present tense “stops”, whereas French uses the future “cessera”, for it is obviously still raining now (present tense). French looks *forward* to a time when it will no longer be raining therefore the future tense is used.

- ▶ **Rule:** In a time clause introduced by *quand*, *lorsque*, *dès que*, *aussitôt que* and *après que* which depends on a main clause whose verb is in the future, the future tense must be used. Example:

Jean finira l’article lorsqu’il rentrera chez lui. John will finish the article when he returns home.

- ▶ **After** *quand* or *lorsque* the future or the future perfect may be used, according to the sense:

Jean finira l’article lorsqu’il sera rentré au bureau. John will finish the article when he has returned to the office.

23. Future in the Past

The future or future perfect is used to indicate that an action will occur in the future in relation to the present moment. For example:

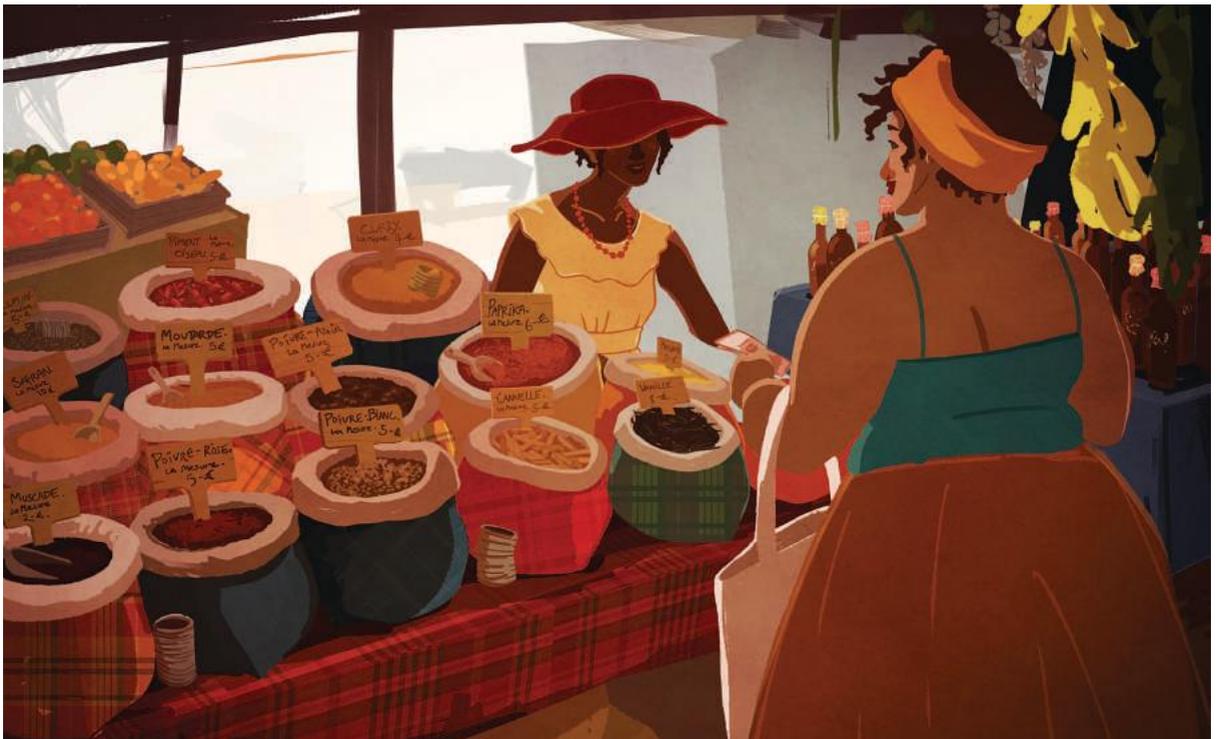
I know (now = present)	that they <u>will come</u> (future)	tomorrow.
Je sais	qu'ils <u>viendront</u>	demain.
I think (now = present)	that they <u>will have received</u> (future perfect)	the letter.
Je crois	qu'ils <u>auront reçu</u>	la lettre.

If the present is changed to the past, however, the future or future perfect must also change to the future in the past, which is expressed in English and in French by the Conditional or conditional perfect. Examples:

I knew (then = past)	that they <u>would come</u> (conditional)	the next day.
Je savais	qu'ils <u>viendraient</u>	le lendemain.
I thought (then = past)	that they <u>would have received</u> (conditional perfect)	the letter.
Je croyais	qu'ils <u>auraient reçu</u>	la lettre.

Just as the future perfect tense is required in French and the perfect in English, so the conditional perfect is required in French where English uses the pluperfect:

Je lui parlerai aussitôt qu'il sera revenu. I shall speak to him as soon as he has come back.
J'ai dit que je lui parlerais aussitôt qu'il serait revenu. I said that I would speak to him as soon as he had come back.



Le marché aux épices en Guadeloupe.

Time Clauses (Translating the English Pluperfect)

In clauses introduced by conjunctions of time such as *quand*, *lorsque*, *dès que*, *aussitôt que*, *après que*, *à peine...que*, etc. there are strict rules governing the translation of the English pluperfect — had done, had seen, etc. — depending on which tense has been used in the main clause. This is best explained in the following table. **See complete sentences below.**

Time word	Subordinate clause	Main clause
Quand Lorsque } When	1. Passé surcomposé Quand il a eu fini de jouer, When he had finished playing,	1. Perfect tout le monde a applaudi . everybody clapped. (isolated single action - Perfect)
Aussitôt que Dès que } As soon as	2. Pluperfect Dès qu'il avait fini de jouer, As soon as he had finished playing,	2. Imperfect tout le monde applaudissait . everyone used to clap. (repeated action - Imperfect)
A peine...que Après que } scarcely...than after (that)	3. Passé antérieur A peine eut-il fini de jouer que As soon as he had finished playing,	3. Past Historic / PS tout le monde applaudit . everyone clapped. (isolated single action - Past Historic)
A time word as above		

★ Notes:

1. The **auxiliary verb** in the subordinate clause **must be in the same tense as the verb in the main clause.**
2. The passé surcomposé is only used in some areas of France and should not be used with reflexive verbs. Rephrase the sentence to avoid use.
3. The same rules govern the use of the future and future perfect and the conditional and conditional perfect after time words (see Future in the Past on page 43).



Combien de langues parle-t-on en Suisse?
En Suisse on parle français, allemand, italien et romanche!

24. Subjunctive - subjunctif

This *mood* has virtually disappeared from English but it is alive and well in French. It generally reflects the speaker's point of view rather than fact.

Formation of the Present Subjunctive

1. The stem, for all but a few irregular verbs, is derived from the 3rd person plural form of the present indicative, minus the “ent”. Examples:

ils donn	<i>ent</i>	→	donn-
ils finiss	<i>ent</i>	→	finiss-
ils vend	<i>ent</i>	→	vend-
ils mett	<i>ent</i>	→	mett-
ils part	<i>ent</i>	→	part-

2. The endings, for all verbs except être and avoir:

je...	-e	nous...	-ions
tu...	-es	vous...	-iez
il...	-e	ils...	-ent

-er	-ir	-re
que je donne	que je finisse	que je vende
que tu donnes	que tu finisses	que tu vendes
qu'il donne	qu'il finisse	qu'il vende
que nous donnions	que nous finissions	que nous vendions
que vous donniez	que vous finissiez	que vous vendiez
qu'ils donnent	qu'ils finissent	qu'ils vendent

★ Notes:

- 1 For -er verbs, only the nous and vous forms are different from the present indicative.
2. For *all* regular verbs (and nearly all irregular verbs) the nous and vous forms are identical to the imperfect indicative.

Irregular Verbs

1. Three irregular verbs have a totally different stem but regular endings:

Faire	Pouvoir	Savoir
que je fasse	que je puisse	que je sache
que tu fasses	que tu puisses	que tu saches
qu'il fasse	qu'il puisse	qu'il sache
que nous fassions	que nous puissions	que nous sachions
que vous fassiez	que vous puissiez	que vous sachiez
qu'ils fassent	qu'ils puissent	qu'ils sachent

2. Two verbs have irregular stems and irregular endings:

Avoir	Etre
que j' <u>aie</u>	que je sois
que tu aies	que tu sois
qu'il ait	qu'il soit
que nous ayons	que nous soyons
que vous ayez	que vous soyez
qu'ils aient	qu'ils soient

3. The following verbs have an irregular stem for all except the nous and vous forms:

Aller	Valoir	Vouloir
que j' <u>a</u> ille	que je <u>v</u> aille	que je <u>v</u> euille
que tu ailles	que tu vailles	que tu veuilles
qu'il aille	qu'il vaille	qu'ils veuille
que nous allions	que nous valions	que nous voulions
que vous alliez	que vous valiez	que vous vouliez
qu'ils aillent	qu'ils vaillent	qu'ils veuillent

4. The following verbs exist in the 3rd person singular only: **falloir** — qu'il faille **Pleuvoir** — qu'il pleuve

5 The following verbs make their stems regularly but revert to the imperfect for the nous / vous forms:

acquérir	envoyer	recevoir	devoir	boire	mourir	voir
appeler	fuir	tenir	croire	venir	prendre	

Uses of the Subjunctive

Except for exclamations and the 3rd person imperative (see page 49) the subjunctive mood is used in a dependent (subordinate) clause introduced by **que**:

1. When the main clause expresses —

a. **Emotion or feeling:**

Je suis content qu'il fasse cela. I am pleased that he is doing/will do that.

Il regrette que tu ne viennes pas. He's sorry that you are not coming/will not come.

b. **A wish or an order:**

Je veux que vous fassiez cela. I want you to do that.

Ils demandent qu'elle vienne. They ask that she come.

c. **A prohibition:**

Je défends qu'elle fasse cela. I forbid her to do that.

d. **A doubt:**

Elle doute que tu puisses venir. She doubts that you can come.

Je ne pense pas qu'il aille. I don't think that he will go.

e. **A necessity:**

Il faut qu'il fasse cela. It is necessary that he do that/He must do that.

There is no future subjunctive. The present is used instead. Translate the present subjunctive by either the present or the future indicative according to the sense of the text.

2a. When the dependent clause follows certain conjunctions - see examples below:

à condition que	on condition that
bien que / quoique	although
avant que...(ne)	before
à moins que...(ne)	unless
pour que / afin que	in order that, so that
pourvu que	provided that
jusqu'à ce que	until
de peur que / de crainte que	for fear that / lest
en supposant que	supposing that
sans que	without

Examples:

Je ne te punirai pas pourvu que tu dises la vérité.

I shall not punish you provided you tell the truth.

Suivez ce chemin jusqu'à ce que vous voyiez une clairière à droite.

Follow this road until you see a clearing on the right.

★ **Note:** With *à moins que*, *avant que* and *de peur (crainte) que*, a pleonastic (redundant) *ne* is placed before the verb, but it is not translated as the verb is not negative. For example:
Elle vous en parlera avant que vous ne partiez. She will speak to you about it before you leave.

b. The conjunctions *de sorte que*, *de manière que* and *de façon que* are followed by:

(i) the indicative in a clause expressing result (something definitely happened). For example:

J'ai bien joué, de sorte qu'on m'a accordé le prix.

I played well, so that the prize was awarded to me.

(ii) the subjunctive in a clause expressing purpose (may or may not happen). For example:

Je jouerai bien, de sorte qu'on m'accorde le prix.

I shall play well, so that the prize might be awarded to me (but this may not happen).

c. Until — for example, to wait until — *attendre que*:

J'attendrai que le professeur parte.

I shall wait until the teacher leaves.

But **not until** cannot be expressed by *jusqu'à ce que* + negative verb; use "**ne ... que**":

Je ne partirai que lorsqu'elle l'aura fini.

I shall not leave until she has finished it.

d. If the verb in the main clause only exists with *à*, as in *s'attendre à* — to expect and *tenir à* — to be keen / anxious, the subordinate clause must be introduced by *ce que*:

Je m'attends à ce qu'elle veuille venir.

I expect that she wants to come.

Mon père tient à ce que j'aie à l'université.

My father is keen on my going to the university.

'Ainsi, toujours poussés vers de nouveaux rivages,
 Dans la nuit éternelle emportés sans retour,
 Ne pourrons-nous jamais sur l'océan des âges
 Jeter l'ancre un seul jour?'

- Alphonse de Lamartine (1817)



3. After certain impersonal expressions denoting the speaker's feeling/ judgement/ point of view:

il est bon que	it is good that	il est naturel que	it is natural that
il est bien que	it is well that	il est nécessaire que	it is necessary that
il est douteux que	it is doubtful that	il est possible que	it is possible that
il est étonnant que	it is astonishing that	il est préférable que	it is preferable that
il est étrange que	it is strange that	il est peu probable que	it is unlikely that
il est important que	it is important that	il est rare que	it is rare that
il est impossible que	it is impossible that	il est temps que	it is time that
il est juste que	it is fair that	il semble que¹	it seems that
il faut que	it is necessary that	il suffit que	it is enough that
il importe que	it is important that	il vaut mieux que	it is better that
il se peut que	it may be that		

★ **Note:** *C'est dommage que / il est dommage que* ("It is a pity that") take the subjunctive (*Le Robert and Le Bon usage*).

The following expressions, which state a fact or the certainty of a fact on the part of the speaker are followed by the indicative:

il est certain que	it is certain that
il est clair que	it is clear that
il est évident que	it is evident that
il est exact que	it is correct that
il est probable que	it is probable that
il est sûr que	it is sure that
il est vrai que	it is true that
il est vraisemblable que	it is likely that

4. In relative clause which is dependent on one of the following:

a. the superlative, when this is the *opinion* of the speaker, e.g.

C'est le meilleur gâteau que j'aie goûté. It is the best cake that I have tasted.

But, if the superlative expresses a fact, the indicative must be used, e.g.

C'est le plus long roman qu'il a écrit. It's the longest novel that he has written.

★ **Note:** *Premier, dernier and seul* are considered to be superlatives; for example:

C'est le seul homme qui puisse faire cela. He is the only man who could do that.

b. a noun whose existence or attainability is in doubt or denied; for example:

Je ne connais aucun bureau qui soit ouvert à cette heure.	I don't know of any office that is open at this hour.
Elle cherche un médecin qui sache la traiter.	She needs a doctor who would know how to treat her.
Il y a peu de gens qui veulent faire cette sorte de travail.	There are few people who want to do this sort of work.

5. After the following indefinite expressions:

Qui que vous soyez, vous ne pouvez pas entrer.	Whoever you are, you can't come in.
Quel que soit le problème, il réussira à le résoudre.	Whatever the problem, he will succeed in solving it.
Quelles que soient ses raisons, je le punirai.	Whatever his reasons, I shall punish him.
Quoi que tu fasses, tu ne le convaincras pas.	Whatever you do, you will not convince him.
Où que vous alliez, vous semez le désordre.	Wherever you go, you spread trouble.
Si aimable qu'elle paraisse, méfiez-vous d'elle!	However pleasant she appears, do not trust her!

¹ The expressions *il semble que* and *il ne me semble que* are followed by the subjunctive, but *il me semble que* and *il paraît que* are followed by the indicative.

Note:

1. Espérer in the positive takes the indicative:

J'espère qu'il arrivera à temps. I hope that he will arrive in time.

2. Verbs of thinking and believing, such as penser and croire, take the subjunctive only when used in the negative or interrogative:

Je pense qu'il vient/viendra. I think he is coming/will come.

but

Je ne pense pas qu'il vienne. I don't think he is coming.

Croyez-vous qu'elle sache cela? Do you think she knows that?

The Subjunctive in a Principal Clause

1. The subjunctive expresses the 3rd person imperative; for example:

Qu'elle entre! Let her enter!

Qu'ils fassent de leur mieux. May they do their best!

2. It is also used to express a wish or a prayer; for example:

Vive la reine! Long live the Queen!

A Dieu ne plaise! God forbid!

Plût au ciel qu'elle le sût! Would to Heaven that she knew it!

“Plût” and “sût” = imperfect subjunctive.)

Tenses of the Subjunctive

There are four tenses of the subjunctive.

1. The present tense:

Je ne crois pas qu'il fasse cela. I don't think that he does that.

2. The perfect tense. To form it, put the auxiliary verb into the subjunctive; for example:

Elle est venue → **Je ne crois pas qu'elle soit venue.**

Ils les ont faits → **Bien qu'ils les aient faits.**

Vous vous êtes amusés → **Sans que vous vous soyez amusés.**

3. The imperfect — may be found in literature, but if used today, the use is limited to 3rd person singular.

Like the past historic, there are three types of imperfect subjunctive, according to whether the past historic ends in -ai, -is or -us.

Donner	Attendre	Vouloir
que je donnasse	que j'attendisse	que je voulusse
que tu donnasses	que tu attendisses	que tu voulusses
qu'il donnât	qu'il attendît	qu'il voulût
que nous donnassions	que nous attendissions	que nous voulussions
que vous donnassiez	que vous attendissiez	que vous voulussiez
qu'ils donnassent	qu'ils attendissent	qu'ils voulussent

There are only two exceptions — tenir and venir:

que je tinsse	que je vinsse
que tu tinsses	que tu vinsses
qu'il tînt	qu'il vînt
que nous tinssions	que nous vinssions
que vous tinssiez	que vous vinssiez
qu'ils tinssent	qu'ils vinssent

Students will note that, for all verbs, the 3rd person singular ends in **ât**, **ît**, or **ût** and that for verbs which end in -is or -us in the past historic, this distinguishes the imperfect subjunctive from the past historic.

Past Historic	Imperfect Subjunctive
il vint	il vînt
il dut	il dût

4. The pluperfect subjunctive. To form it, put the auxiliary verb into the imperfect subjunctive:

Il avait fait. → **Avant qu'il eût fait...**
Elles étaient parties. → **Quoiqu'elles fussent parties...**

★ **Note:** The French rarely use the imperfect subjunctive in speech, even after a past historic tense. They prefer to use the present subjunctive. However, it is not possible to use the present or perfect subjunctive for a verb which would have been in the imperfect in the indicative. The imperfect subjunctive would be used.

Example:

Bien qu'il fronçât les sourcils, je savais qu'il n'était pas en colère. Although he was frowning, I knew that he was not angry.

The pluperfect subjunctive may be used instead of the conditional perfect:

On eût dit qu'elle dormait. One would have said she was sleeping.
= On aurait dit qu'elle dormait. = She looked as though she were sleeping.

Sequence of Tenses

The present or perfect subjunctive is used when the verb in the main clause is in —

- The present: **Je regrette qu'elle ait perdu son chien.**
- The future: **Il restera ici jusqu'à ce que vous reveniez.**
- The perfect: **Elle a menti de crainte que nous ne la punissions.**

The imperfect (or pluperfect) is used when the verb in the main clause is in —

- The imperfect: **Je regrettais qu'elle eût perdu son chien.**
- The pluperfect: **Il était resté là jusqu'à ce qu'ils revinssent.** (Obsolete)
- The conditional: **Je voudrais qu'il le fit.**
- The past historic: **Elle mentit de crainte que sa mère ne lui défendît de sortir.**

25. Passive - passif

Compare these two sentences:

1. **Ma tante fait les lits.** My aunt makes the beds.
2. **Les lits sont faits par ma tante.** The beds are made by my aunt.

Sentence 1 is **active** because the subject — the aunt — is doing the action.

Sentence 2 is **passive** because the subject — the beds — are not doing anything; they are just sitting there passively and letting themselves be made. The aunt is doing the action of making, so she is called the *agent*.

Not all passive sentences mention an agent; for example:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Les lits sont faits. | The beds are made. |
| La chaise a été réparée. | The chair has been repaired. |

To make an active sentence passive:

1. Make the **direct object** of the active sentence the subject of the passive sentence.
2. Use the corresponding tense of the verb to be (être)
3. Make the verb of the active sentence into a past participle.
4. Make the subject of the active sentence into an agent by using “par”.

Examples:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Les soldats (s.) cherchent le fugitif. | (d.o.) (present tense of chercher) |
| Le fugitif (s.) est recherché par les soldats. | (a.) (present tense of être) |
| 2. Le garçon (s.) a mangé les tartes. | (d.o.) (perfect of manger) |
| Les tartes (s.) ont été mangées par le garçon. | (a.) (perfect of être) |

★ **Note:** The past participle in the second example — mangées — is an adjective now and must agree with the subject — les tartes.

The passive is not used in French as often as it is in English, and *must not* be used with certain English constructions.

► **Rule:** Only the *direct object* of an *active* sentence can become the *subject* of a *passive* sentence. Examine this sentence:

The teacher showed some videos (d.o.) to the students (i.o.). (Active)

In English, this sentence can be made passive in two ways:

1. Some videos were shown to the students by the teacher.
2. The students were shown some videos by the teacher.

Method 2 is impossible in French because “students” is the indirect object of the active sentence.

Method 1 is too clumsy for French likes neat turns of phrase:

Des vidéos ont été montrées aux étudiants par le professeur.

However, the French would much prefer to make the sentence active:

Le professeur a montré des vidéos aux étudiants.

Students should therefore beware of verbs which require an indirect object¹ such as Group 4 à person de infinitive type, e.g. dire, demander, permettre and conseiller, and for the full list see “4. À + Person + de + Infinitive Type” on page 56 and “4. À + person + de infinitive” on page 59.

1 There are three exceptions to this rule – obéir, désobéir and pardonner

Tenses in the Passive Form

The passive is used in as many tenses as the active.

<i>Present:</i> La maison <u>est</u> construite.	The house <u>is</u> built.
<i>Imperfect:</i> La maison <u>était</u> construite.	The house <u>was</u> built. (state)
<i>Future:</i> La maison <u>sera</u> construite.	The house <u>will be</u> built.
<i>Conditional:</i> La maison <u>serait</u> construite.	The house <u>would be</u> built.
<i>Past Historic:</i> La maison <u>fut</u> construite.	The house <u>was</u> built.
<i>Perfect:</i> La maison <u>a été</u> construite.	The house <u>has been</u> built.
<i>Pluperfect:</i> La maison <u>avait été</u> construite.	The house <u>had been</u> built.
<i>Future Perfect:</i> La maison <u>aura été</u> construite.	The house <u>will have been</u> built.
<i>Conditional perfect:</i> La maison <u>aurait été</u> construite.	The house <u>would have been</u> built.
<i>Passé Antérieur:</i> La maison <u>eut été</u> construite.	The house <u>had been</u> built.

Students sometimes have difficulty with the translation of *was* built, *were* destroyed. For example:

- 1. Les ponts étaient détruits.**
- 2. Les ponts ont été détruits.** The bridges were destroyed.
- 3. Les ponts furent détruits.**

Sentence 1 means that the bridges were in a destroyed *state*; that is, it is a description of the bridges. Sentences 2 and 3 mean that someone or something actively destroyed the bridges; an action was done. If still in doubt, ask whether anybody or anything actively destroyed the bridge.

Avoiding the Passive

1. If an agent is mentioned, turn the agent into the subject of an active sentence; for example:

Les enfants ont été grondés par la mère. → La mère a grondé les enfants.

2. If there is no agent mentioned but the action has obviously been done by a person, insert “on” as the subject of an active sentence; for example:

Les enfants ont été grondés. → On a grondé les enfants.

★ **Note:** This method cannot be used when there is no possibility of a person doing the action; for example:

Le blé a été ruiné. The wheat has been ruined (by the weather).

3. Make the verb reflexive; for example:

Ce tableau se voit au Musée d'Orsay. This picture can be seen in the Musée d'Orsay.
Le pâté se vend chez le charcutier. Pâté is sold at the delicatessen / pork butcher's.
L'argot s'emploie de plus en plus fréquemment. Slang is used more and more frequently.

★ **Note:** A *passive infinitive* in English describing an action must be rendered in French by an *active infinitive* after verbs of sense perception (see page 35), *faire* and *laisser*. Examples:

Il a vu fusiller les prisonniers. He saw the prisoners shot (being shot).
Nous avons fait livrer les colis. We had the parcels delivered.

Use of “on”

In a sentence such as “Paul was told to wait”, which *cannot* be expressed in the passive in French because *dire* takes a direct object, and where there is no agent French uses “on” to express the subject:

On a dit à Paul d'attendre. Paul was told to wait.
On vous enverra votre passeport. Your passport will be sent to you.

26. Causative Faire

This construction is used to indicate that the subject of the sentence has not done an action himself or herself, but has made (caused) someone else do it for him/her. Compare “He is painting the house” with “He is having the house painted”. In the first sentence “he” is the person painting. In the second sentence, someone else is obviously painting (“he” is only paying this person to do it for him).

In French, faire expresses the idea of causing an action to be done, and the action being done is expressed as an infinitive (called the dependent infinitive); for example:

Il peint la maison but **Il fait peindre la maison.**

▶ *Rule 1:* Note that the infinitive stands immediately after faire.

▶ *Rule 2:* When “la maison” is replaced by a pronoun (la — the direct object of “peindre”), the pronoun stands before “faire”:

Il la fait peindre.

▶ *Rule 3:* When this sentence is in the perfect — Il l’a fait peindre — the past participle never agrees.

▶ *Rule 4:* If the person actually painting the house is mentioned — for example, a workman (un ouvrier), he becomes the indirect object:

Il a fait peindre la maison à l’ouvrier.

Remember that the direct object can be a whole clause instead of just a noun. In that case the object of the dependent infinitive must become the indirect object:

Il dit qu’il sera absent. He says that he will be absent.

This clause answers the question “what?” after the verb and is therefore the direct object.

Il fait savoir à ses élèves qu’il sera absent. He lets his pupils know that he will be absent.

Il leur fait savoir qu’il sera absent. He lets them know that he will be absent.

▶ *Rule 5:* If both nouns are replaced by pronouns, both stand before faire, in the normal order; for example:

Il la lui a fait peindre.

★ **Note:** The person doing the action becomes the indirect object only if there is a direct object mentioned, e.g.

Il fait chanter les garçons. He makes the boys sing.

Il les fait chanter. He makes them sing.

but

Il fait chanter la Marseillaise aux garçons. He makes the boys sing “la Marseillaise”.

Il la leur fait chanter. He makes them sing it.

▶ *Rule 6:* A sentence such as “**Il fait envoyer les articles à l’employé**” could mean “He has the articles sent to the employee” or “He has the articles sent by the employee”, so it is ambiguous. To avoid this ambiguity, use “**par**” to express “by”:

Il fait envoyer les articles par l’employé.

Par must be used if the dependent infinitive already has both a direct and an indirect object (Rule 6a), for example:

Il fait chanter “la Marseillaise” aux invités par les garçons. He makes the boys sing “la Marseillaise” to the guests

La Marseillaise = direct object and aux invités = indirect object

and if the dependent infinitive always takes an indirect object:

Il fait répondre à l’invitation par sa femme. (répondre à)

▶ *Rule 7:* If the dependent infinitive is reflexive, it is usual to omit the reflexive pronoun if it is the direct object:

L’ouvreuse a fait asseoir les spectateurs. The usherette made the spectators sit down.

Je fis arrêter le train. I made the train stop.

- **Rule 8:** If the dependent infinitive is reflexive and the reflexive pronoun is the indirect object, it stands before faire and the agent is expressed by “par”:

Je me fais couper les cheveux (par le coiffeur). I have my hair cut (by the hairdresser).

If using the perfect tense, faire is conjugated with être (Rule 8a):

Elle s’est fait faire une robe (par la couturière). (See Rule 3.) She had a dress made for herself (by the dressmaker).

- **Rule 9:** If causative faire is used in the imperative affirmative, the, direct and indirect objects follow faire, in the normal order. For example:

Fais-le-lui envoyer! Have it sent to him!
Faites-les-nous servir! Have them serve us!

27. Verbs Controlling Nouns

Verbs Controlling Nouns can be called the government of nouns by verbs - not to be confused with verbs-governing- infinitives, (see page 32). These verbs are often at “advanced” level but are not framed in red as students must gradually acquire them.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Privative removal | removing something from <i>a person</i> |
| 2. | Prendre dans removal | removal of something from <i>a place</i> |
| 3. | Preposition – less | the English preposition is contained within the French verb |
| 4. | à person de infinitive | these verbs require à + person followed by de + infinitive |
| 5. | Obéir à type | these verbs require different pronouns for people / things |
| 6. | S’approcher de type | these verbs require different pronouns for people / things |
| 7. | Inviter à | three verbs |
| 8. | Empêcher de | three verbs |

1. Privative (Removal of something from a person)

acheter	to buy	ôter	to take away
arracher	to snatch	prendre	to take
cacher	to hide	saisir	to seize
emprunter	to borrow	voler	to steal
louer	to rent		

Removal of something from somebody, legally or illegally, from is translated by à, e.g.

Il achète le chiot à l’éleveur.	He is buying the puppy <u>from</u> the breeder.
Paul louera le canot à mon oncle.	Paul will hire the boat <u>from</u> my uncle.
Elle prend le couteau à Marie.	She takes the knife <u>from</u> Marie.
J’ai saisi le fusil à cet homme.	I seized the gun <u>from</u> that man.
Je le lui ai saisi.	I seized it <u>from</u> him.

2. Prendre dans, etc. (Removal of something from a place)

boire dans	to drink	choisir dans	to choose
lire dans	to read	manger dans	to eat
prendre dans/sur	to take		

The preposition to use is determined where the thing being removed is situated. From is never translated by de, e.g.

L’enfant mange dans une assiette.	The child is eating <u>from</u> a plate.	(meaning, the food is <u>in</u> a plate).
Le garçon boit dans un verre.	The boy is drinking <u>from</u> a glass.	(... the drink is <u>in</u> a glass).
Maman prend la serviette dans le placard.	Mum gets the towel <u>from</u> the cupboard.	(... the towel is <u>in</u> the cupboard).
La dame prend la tasse sur la table.	The lady takes the cup <u>off</u> the table.	(... the cup was <u>on</u> the table).
Il prend sa canne derrière la porte.	He gets his stick <u>from behind</u> the door.	(... the stick was <u>behind</u> the door)

3. Prepositions - “less”

attendre	to wait for	habiter	to live in
chercher	to look for	payer	to pay for
demander	to ask for	regarder	to look at
écouter	to listen to		

In English these verbs have a following preposition, but in French the preposition is “*contained*” in the verb. Examples:

Elle écoutait les oiseaux.
→ **Elle les écoutait.** (direct object pronoun)

She was listening to the birds.
She was listening to them.

Ils attendent le facteur.
→ **Ils l’attendent.** (direct object pronoun)

They are waiting for the postman.
They are waiting for him.

Nous payons le fruit.
→ **Nous le payons.** (direct object pronoun)

We are paying for the fruit.
We are paying for it.

but

J’ai payé les côtelettes au boucher.

I paid the butcher for the chops. With a direct object, already involved, the person paid becomes the indirect object.

4. À + Person + de + Infinitive Type

commander	to order	faire signe	to wave, indicate
conseiller	to advise	ordonner	to order
défendre	to forbid	permettre	to permit
demander	to ask	promettre	to promise
dire	to tell	téléphoner	to telephone
écrire	to write		

These verbs require **à + person** followed by **de + infinitive**. They are therefore verbs which fall into two categories — verbs controlling nouns and verbs controlling infinitives. Examples:

Je permets à Paul de sortir.
→ **Je lui permets de sortir.** (indirect object pronoun)

I permit Paul to go out.
I permit him to go out.

Je dis à la dame de s’asseoir.
→ **Je lui dis de s’asseoir.** (indirect object pronoun)

I tell the lady to sit down.
I tell her to sit down.

Jean écrit à ses sœurs de venir.
→ **Jean leur écrit de venir.** (indirect object pronoun)

John writes to his sisters to come.
John writes to them (to tell) to come.

Après la pluie, le beau temps.
Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop.
Il faut battre le fer pendant qu’il est chaud.
On juge les gens d’après leurs actes.
Mieux vaut tard que jamais.

5. Obéir à Type

Group 1

These verbs take an indirect object pronoun for people and Y for things.

assister à	to be present at	pardonner à	to forgive
désobéir à	to disobey	plaire à	to please
échouer à	to fail	renoncer à	to give up
échapper à	to escape from	répondre à	to reply
faire mal à	to hurt	ressembler à	to resemble
faire peur à	to frighten		

People

Things

Indirect Object pronoun - me te lui nous vous leur		Object pronoun - Y	
1 à + noun		à + noun	
Jean obéit <u>à son professeur</u> .	John obeys his teacher.	Jean obéit <u>à la réglementation gouvernementale</u> .	John obeys the government regulation.
Jean lui obéit.	John obeys him.	Jean y obéit.	John obeys it.

Group 2

Applies to reflexives and 3 verbs of thinking.

Reflexives	Verbs of thinking
s'accoutumer à	penser à
se fier à	réfléchir à
s'habituer à	songer à
s'intéresser à	

People

Things

Disjunctive pronoun – moi toi lui elle nous vous eux elles		Pronoun Y	
2 à + noun		à + noun	
Example		Example	
Il s'intéresse <u>à Marie</u> .	He is interested <u>in Mary</u> .	Il s'intéresse <u>à ce livre</u> .	He is interested <u>in this book</u> .
Il s'intéresse <u>à elle</u> .	He is interested <u>in her</u> .	Il s' y intéresse.	He is interested <u>in it</u> .
Je pense <u>à mes fils</u> .	I thinking <u>of my sons</u> .		
Je pense <u>à eux</u> .	I am thinking <u>of them</u> .		



On apprend à tout âge.
Age is no barrier to learning.

Vouloir c'est pouvoir !
Where there's a will there's a way.

6. S'approcher de Type

The **s'approcher de** group also varies the pronoun for people or things, and has a subgroup that does not require an article.

People		Things	
Disjunctive pronoun - moi toi lui elle nous vous eux elles		Pronoun - en	
1 de + noun		de + noun	
Paul s'approche <u>de</u> l'agent.	Paul approaches the policeman.	Je parle <u>de</u> ta voiture.	I am speaking of your car.
Paul s'approche <u>de</u> lui .	Paul approaches him.	J'en parle.	I am speaking of it.
accuser de	to accuse	jouir de	to enjoy
s'apercevoir de	to perceive / notice	se méfier de	to be wary of
avoir peur de	to be afraid of	se moquer de	to make fun of
se changer de	to change	s'occuper de	to be occupied
dépendre de	to depend on	parler de	to speak of
douter de	to suspect	profiter de	to profit from
s'échapper de	to escape from	se rendre compte de	to realise
être fier de	to be proud of	rire de	to laugh at
s'emparer de	to grab	se souvenir de	to remember
s'étonner de	to be astonished	vivre de	to live on

People		Things	
1 de + noun		de + noun	
Jean s'approche <u>de</u> l'agent.	John approaches the policeman.	Jean parle <u>de</u> ta voiture.	John is speaking about your car.
Jean s'approche <u>de</u> lui .	John approaches him.	Jean en parle.	John is speaking of it.

		2 NO ARTICLE	
		Maman se passe de crème.	Mum is doing without cream.
		J'ai besoin de farine.	I need (some) flour.
		Elle se sert de gâteau.	She takes some cake.
		Tu en as envie.	You feel like it.
		J' en ai besoin.	I need some (of it).
		Il s' en sert.	He helps himself to it.
		<i>Note the change of meaning when the article is included.</i>	
		Maman se passe de la crème que Luc a achetée aujourd'hui.	Mum is doing without <u>the</u> cream that Luke bought today.
		J'ai besoin de la farine que tu viens d'acheter.	I need <u>the</u> flour which you have just bought.

7. Aider quelqu'un à Type

aider	to help
encourager	to encourage
inviter	to invite

Note apprendre à person **à** faire quelque chose ...

These verbs take a *direct object*, to show whom you are helping / encouraging/ inviting:

Elle aide son père à faire la vaisselle.	She helps her father to do the dishes.
J'encourage ma fille à travailler.	I encourage my daughter to work.
Nous invitons Claire à aller au théâtre.	We invite Claire to go to the theatre.

8. Empêcher quelqu'un de Type

empêcher	to prevent	persuader	to persuade
prier	to beg		

These verbs take a *direct object* to show whom you are preventing, persuading, begging, reminding and usually refer to people, although "prevent" can also refer to actions.)

Elle empêche les autres de travailler.	She prevents the others from working.
Je persuaderai mon collègue de se taire.	I will persuade my colleague to remain silent.
Nous prions André de conduire lentement.	We beg Andrew to drive slowly.

28. Verbs Controlling Nouns – Reference List

1. Privative (taking from a person)	2. Removal (taking something from a place)
acheter à arracher à cacher à emprunter à enlever à	louer à ôter à prendre à saisir à voler à
3. Preposition-less	4. À + person + de infinitive
attendre chercher demander écouter habiter payer regarder	commander conseiller défendre demander dire téléphoner écrire faire signe ordonner permettre promettre
5. Obéir à type	6. S'approcher de type
s'accoutumer à assister à désobéir à échapper à échouer à emprunter à faire mal à faire peur à se fier à s'habituer à s'intéresser à pardonner à penser à = to think of / about plaire à renoncer à répondre à ressembler à songer à réfléchir à	accuser de s'apercevoir de avoir besoin de avoir envie de avoir peur de changer de se changer de dépendre de douter de se douter de s'échapper de être fier de s'emparer de s'étonner de jouir de se méfier de se mêler de mériter de se moquer de s'occuper de parler de se passer de penser de = to hold an opinion about profiter de se rendre compte de rire de se servir de se souvenir de se tromper de vivre de
<p><i>Compare penser à and penser de</i> <i>Je pense aux vacances. I'm thinking of the holidays.</i></p> <p><i>Que penses-tu de ce prof?</i> <i>What do you think of that teacher?</i> <i>Judgemental meaning - good / bad?</i></p>	
7. Aider + direct object + à infinitive	8. Empêcher + direct object + de infinitive
aider encourager inviter	empêcher persuader prier

29. Awkward Verbs

	Infinitive	Example	
1.	jouer à + noun jouer de + noun	Il joue au tennis. (sports) Il joue de la guitare. (musical instruments) Note: faire du sport (to play sport)	
2.	manquer + noun manquer à + noun il manque (impersonal) manquer de + noun manquer de + infinitive <i>Comp. with</i> faillir <i>Comp.</i> échouer à + noun échouer dans + noun if negative réussir à	Ils ont manqué le train. Ses parents manquent à Marie. Il lui manque. Il manque vingt euros. Il lui manque dix euros. Je manque de patience. J'ai manqué de lui écrire. J'ai manqué d'être tué J'ai failli être tué. Elle a échoué à son examen. Il a échoué dans son entreprise. Il n'a pas réussi à gagner le prix. Il ne parviendra pas à... Il n'a pas gagné le prix.	They have missed the train. Marie misses her parents. He/she misses him. (he is missing to him/her) 20 euros are missing. He is 10 € short. I lack patience. I failed to write to her / to him. I just missed being killed. I was nearly killed. She failed her exam. He failed in his undertaking. He failed to win the prize. He will fail to... He won't succeed in ... He did not win the prize.
3.	échapper à + noun s'échapper de + noun	Il a échappé à la mort. Il s'est échappé de la prison. He escaped (avoided) death. He escaped from prison. (place)	
4.	penser à + noun penser de + noun	Elle pense à son fiancé. Que penses-tu de ce film? She is thinking of her fiancé. (a photo in mind). What do you think of this film? (like/dislike)	
5.	servir servir à + person servir à + infinitive servir de + noun se servir de + noun	C'est à toi de servir. Ce domestique a servi le roi fidèlement. On nous a servi des escargots. Un marteau sert à enfoncer des clous. Son manteau lui servait de couverture. Je me suis servi de sa raquette. Sers-toi de salade! It's your turn to serve. (tennis) This servant served the King faithfully. We were served snails. (to eat) A hammer is used to bang in nails. His coat served him as a blanket. I used his racket. I made use of ... Help yourself to salad!	
6.	apercevoir + noun s'apercevoir de + noun	J'ai aperçu un renard dans le poulailler. Il s'est aperçu de son erreur. Il s'est rendu compte de son erreur. (= se rendre compte de) I noticed a fox in the chicken coop. He realised his mistake.	
7.	rentrer retourner revenir	Je rentre au bureau. Je suis retournée à la gare. Elle est revenue de France. I am going back to the office. (return to a familiar place) I went back to the station. (go back to) She came back from France. (return from)\	

Infinite		Example
8. porter apporter emporter transporter rapporter remporter	Je porterai ce lourd colis. Je t'apporterai du vin. Le vent a emporté mon chapeau. On transportera les bœufs au marché. Rapporte-moi mes vidéos! Le garçon remporta le plat auquel on n'avait pas touché.	I'll carry this heavy parcel. (physically) I'll bring you some wine. (for you implied) The wind blew my hat away. (from me) The cattle will be taken away to market. Bring me back my videos! (to me) The waiter took away the dish which we had not touched.
9. mener amener emmener ramener promener	Il mena le cheval à l'écurie. La route mène à une ferme. Amène ta tante déjeuner chez moi. Elle les emmènera à la plage. Nous vous ramènerons après le film. Elle promène ses chiens tous les jours.	He led the horse to the stable. (lead physically) The road leads to a farm. Bring your aunt to lunch here. (towards you) She'll take them to the beach. (away from) We'll bring you home after the film. (too far to walk) She walks her dogs every day. (to take for a walk)
10. attendre + noun s'attendre à + infinitive or noun	J'attendrai Paul à la gare. Je m'attends à voir Jean demain. Je m'attendais à ces résultats.	I'll wait for Paul at the station. I am expecting to see John tomorrow. I was expecting these results.
11. passer se passer de	Ce bus passe le matin à 6h. J'ai passé le temps à lire. Elle passera cet examen en juin. L'évadé passa la frontière suisse. Tu te passes de petit-déjeuner?	This bus passes at 6am. (intransitive – pass by) I spent time reading. (transitive – spend time) She'll be sitting that exam in June. (sit for an exam) The escapee crossed the Swiss frontier. (to get over an obstacle) Are you not having breakfast? (deprive oneself of)
12. entendre s'entendre (avec)	J'entends entrer mon mari. Qu'entendez-vous par cela? Je m'entends bien avec mon frère. Note: L'Entente Cordiale	I hear my husband coming in. What do you mean by that? I get on well with my brother.
13. convenir à + noun convenir de + noun convenir de + infinitive il convient de + infinitive	Cette date convient à Marie. Le vin ne lui convient pas. Elles conviennent du lieu de rendez-vous. Nous avons convenu de le faire. (Impersonal) Il convient de se taire.	This date suits Mary. (to suit a person) Wine does not agree with him. (can't take wine) They agree on the meeting place. (rendezvous) We agreed to do this. It is best to say nothing.
14. en venir à + infinitive venir de + infinitive venu à + infinitive	Nous en sommes venus aux coups. Je viens de voir Pierre. Il vint à se le rappeler. (Impersonal) D'où vient-il que...?	We came to blows. I've just seen Pierre. (to have just + past participle in English) He happened to remember it. How is it that...?
15. parvenir à + noun arriver à + noun arriver à + infinitive atteindre + noun gagner + noun	Elle est parvenue à un âge avancé. Il est arrivé à Montpellier. Je n'arrive pas à le comprendre. Ils ont atteint leur but. Il a gagné le sommet de la montagne. Il a gagné le prix.	She has reached a ripe old age. He reached (arrived in) Montpellier. I can't manage to understand him. They reached their goal. The reached the mountain top. (reach a place) He won the prize.
16. tenir à + inf. + noun tenir + noun + de + noun se tenir debout	Je tiens à gagner le prix. Il tient à elle. Il tient ce talent de sa mère. Tenez-vous debout!	I'm keen on winning the prize. He is keen on her. He gets this talent from his mother. Stand up!

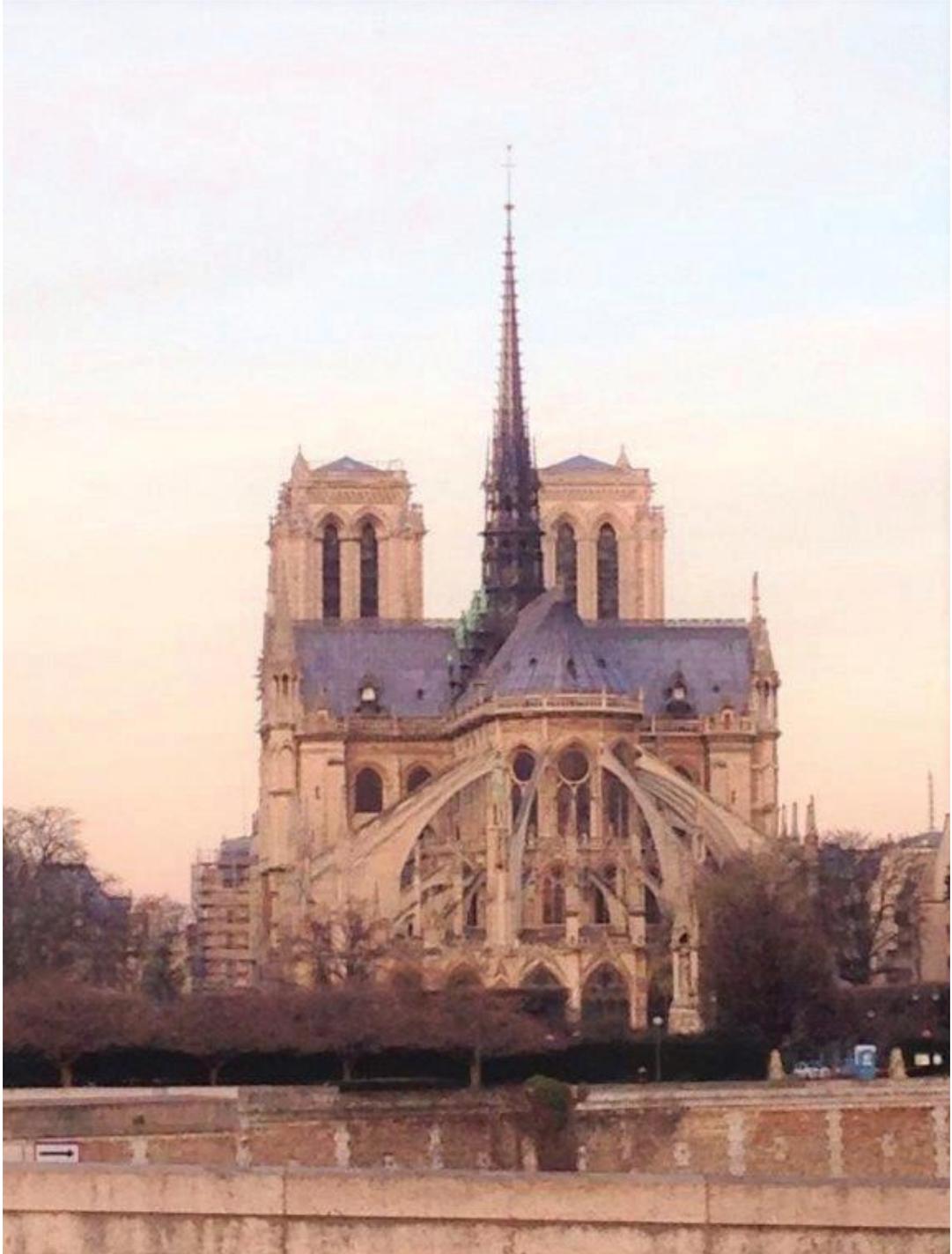


Photo de Notre Dame de Paris prise en 2015.

Nouns

30. Plural Forms

Most nouns form plural by adding **s**, e.g. le chat → les chats, la table → les tables, l'arbre → les arbres, l'assiette → les assiettes

Table 6. Table of nouns with plurals other than by adding an "s"

Words ending in	What change	Examples	Exceptions or irregular plurals
s	None	le fils → les fils (sons) le prix → les prix (prices) le nez → les nez (noses)	
x			
z			
au eau eu oeu	add x	le tuyau → les tuyaux (pipes) le seau → les seaux (buckets) le feu → les feux (fires) le vœu → les vœux (wishes)	les pneus (tyres)
al	aux	le cheval → les chevaux (horses)	les finales, les bals, les carnivals
ail	aux	le travail → les travaux (works)	les détails
ou	add s	le clou → les clous (nails)	x marks the plural of these seven nouns: le bijou → les bijoux (jewels) le caillou (pebble) le chou (cabbage) le genou (knee) le hibou (owl) le joujou (toy) le pou (louse)
Surnames	None	les Martin (the Martins)	
Others			le ciel → les cieux (skies) l'œil → les yeux (eyes) le monsieur → les messieurs madame → mesdames mademoiselle → mesdemoiselles

Compound Plurals

1. *Noun + noun*
Adjective + noun } make both words plural:

un chou-fleur → des choux-fleurs cauliflowers
une basse-cour → des basses-cours farmyards

2. *Noun + preposition + noun* — make first noun only plural:

un arc-en-ciel → des arcs-en-ciel rainbows
un chef d'œuvre → des chefs-d'oeuvre masterpieces

3. *Preposition + noun* — invariable:

un après-midi → des après-midi afternoons

4. *Verbal prefix + noun* — invariable:

un réveille-matin → des réveille-matin alarm clocks
un porte-monnaie → des porte-monnaie wallets
un gratte-ciel → des gratte-ciel skyscrapers

31. Gender

Sounds

Learn some of the **sounds** that the French ear associates with gender. Obviously, *natural gender* determines words such as father, mother, bull, cow, prince and princess. Normal endings on the left but note exceptions!

Feminine

Words ending in	Example	Exceptions - Masculine
ade	la limonade	
aison	la maison	
ale	la cathédrale	
che	la bouche	
ée	l'arrivée, la pensée	le lycée, musée, scarabée, trophée
elle	la ficelle	
erie	la pâtisserie	
ère	la fermière	
ille	la famille	
ine	la piscine	
ion	la nation	le camion, avion, lion, million <i>aide mémoire CALM</i>
nce	l'agence	le silence
nse	la danse	
son	la maison, la saison	le poison, poisson, saucisson
te	la date	
té	la santé	
tte	la baguette	le squelette
ude	la certitude	
ure	la voiture, la nature	

Masculine

Words ending in	Example	Exceptions - Feminine
acle	le spectacle	
age	le village	But <i>PPRINC = aide mémoire</i> P la page P la plage R la rage I l'image N la nage C la cage
eau	le cadeau	But une eau, la peau
ent	le compliment	But la dent
er	le boucher	But la cuiller, la mer
eur (of people)	le docteur	Abstract qualities la chaleur
ier	le fermier	
ien	le pharmacien	
Many nasal sounds	un an, le moyen, le vin, le jambon, le parfum	But la fin
Most foreign words	le jogging, le week-end, le camping	

Groups of Objects

Masculine	Examples	Feminine	Examples
metric measures	le kilo		
days	le dimanche		
months	le juin		
seasons	le printemps un été		
languages	le français		
fruits vegetables rivers countries towns	Those NOT ending in "e" le citron le chou le Rhin le Canada, le Mexique le vieux Paris	ending in "e" fruits vegetables rivers countries towns	la pomme la carotte la Seine la France la belle Cannes
name of trees	le pommier		
colours	le noir		
chemicals	le sel		
minerals	le charbon		
metal	le fer		
		arts, sciences trades	la sculpture la chimie



Une rue dans un village alsacien.

Pronouns

32. Subject, Object, Indirect, and Disjunctive Pronouns

As the name suggests, a pronoun is used in place of (= pro) a noun, and therefore is only used to replace a noun that has already been mentioned. There are many types of pronouns, both in French and in English.

Subject Pronouns

je	— I (the person speaking)	1 st person singular
tu	— you (the person spoken to)	2 nd person singular
il, elle, on	— he, she, it, one (the person spoken about)	3 rd person singular
nous	— we	1 st person plural
vous	— you	2 nd person singular or plural
ils, elles	— they	3 rd person plural

These subject pronouns come **before** the verb and the verb must agree with them, except with questions: as-tu? For example:

je regarde, tu donnes, il cherche, nous arrivons, vous entrez, ils aiment.

★ Notes:

- a. Tu = you (singular) is only used for people well-known by the speaker, e.g. family, close friends, animals, etc. It is not usual for foreigners to use “tu” and its misuse is considered ill-mannered, although people use it more and more.
b. Vous is used when talking to one person whom the speaker does not know well. It is the polite singular form of address.
c. When talking to *more* than one person, vous is then the *plural* form of address.
2. There is no neuter in French. Either “il” or “elle” are used even when talking about inanimate objects (“ils” and “elles” in the plural). For example:

La table est grande. → Elle est grande.
Les ballons sont rouges. → Ils sont rouges.

★ **Note:** The subject pronoun may not be used without a verb.

Direct Object Pronouns

me	— me	nous	— us
te	— you	vous	— you
le, la	— him, her, it	les	— them

Unlike English, these direct object pronouns are placed immediately **before** the verb, for example:

Je regarde Sophie.	Je la regarde.	I look at <u>her</u> .
Ils aiment les gâteaux.	Ils les aiment.	They like <u>them</u> .
Nous cherchons le musée.	Nous le cherchons.	We are looking for <u>it</u> .

★ **Note:** Before a verb beginning with a vowel, **le** and **la** become **l'**:

Je cherche Marie.	→ Je l'a cherche.	I am looking for Marie.	→ I am looking for <u>her</u> .
Ils aiment Paul.	→ Ils l'aiment.	They like Paul.	→ They like <u>him</u> .

The object pronoun is placed **after** the verb if it is a positive command (imperative form). The pronoun is then attached to the verb with a hyphen (which cannot be omitted).

For example:

Tu cherches <u>le ballon</u>.	Tu <u>le</u> cherches.		(statement)
	Cherche <u>le ballon</u>!	→ Cherche-<u>le</u>!	(command)
Finissez <u>les devoirs</u>!	Finissez <u>vos devoirs</u>!	→ Finissez-<u>les</u>!	(command)

★ **Note:** If the pronoun **me** meaning **me**, needs to be placed after the verb, the **me** changes to “**moi**” which is more audible, more emphatic, e.g.

Regarde-<u>moi</u>!	→ Look at <u>me</u> !	(command)
Aidez-<u>moi</u>!	→ Help <u>me</u> !	(command)

In a negative command, the pronoun returns to its normal position immediately before the verb and “**moi**” becomes “**me**” again:

Ne <u>me</u> regardez pas!	Don't look at <u>me</u> !
Ne <u>le</u> cherche pas!	Don't look for <u>him/it</u> !

Indirect Object Pronouns

me – to me	nous – to us
te – to you	vous – to you
lui – to him, to her	leur – to them

These pronouns, are placed immediately **before the verb, except in a positive imperative** (command):

Je parle à Sophie.	→ Je <u>lui</u> parle.	I speak <u>to her</u> .
Nous donnons les carottes <u>aux chevaux</u>.	→ Nous <u>leur</u> donnons les carottes.	We give the carrots <u>to them</u> .

but

Donne-<u>moi</u> les lettres!	Give the letters <u>to me</u> !
Envoyez-<u>leur</u> le paquet!	Send the parcel <u>to them</u> !

and, in the negative:

Ne <u>me</u> donne pas les lettres!	Don't give the letters <u>to me</u> !
Ne <u>leur</u> envoyez pas le paquet!	Don't send the parcel <u>to them</u> !

★ **Note:** These indirect object pronouns are generally only used for animate (living) things — people, animals, flowers, etc.

Pronoun y

This little word is a very useful adverbial pronoun and has a variety of meanings — there, to it, in it, etc.

Like the direct and indirect object pronouns, it stands immediately **before the verb** (except in a positive command).

Je vais à Paris.	→ J'<u>y</u> vais.	I am going <u>there</u> .
Nous sommes dans le salon.	→ Nous <u>y</u> sommes.	We are <u>there</u> (in the lounge / in it).

but

Allez <u>au cinéma</u>!	→ Allez-<u>y</u>!	Go <u>there</u> !
	→ N'<u>y</u> allez pas!	Don't go <u>there</u> !

Y is also used to refer to things after a verb which takes à - e.g. penser à: (See “5. Obéir à Type” on page 57, or “28. Verbs Controlling Nouns – Reference List” on page 59)

Elle pense à <u>ses vacances</u>.	→ Elle <u>y</u> pense.	She is thinking <u>about them</u> .
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Pronoun en

This adverbial pronoun is used to replace any noun that is preceded by “de” (including “du”, “de la”, etc.); a cardinal number; or an imprecise number (plusieurs, beaucoup, assez). **En** has a variety of meanings. Like the direct and indirect object pronouns, en is placed immediately before the verb. Examples:

Il veut de la soupe.	→ Il en veut.	He wants <u>some</u> (of it).
J'achète un livre.	→ J'en achète un.	I am buying <u>one</u> (of them).
Vous avez plusieurs animaux.	→ Vous en avez plusieurs.	You have several (of them).
Ils boivent beaucoup de café.	→ Ils en boivent beaucoup.	They drink a lot (of it).
Elle sort du cinéma.	→ Elle en sort.	She comes out (of it).
Mangez des cerises.	→ Mangez-en!	Eat some (of them).

En is also used after a verb which takes “de”; for example:

Ils se moquent du film.	→ Ils s'en moquent.	They make fun of it.
Elle s'approche de la voiture.	→ Elle s'en approche.	She approaches it.
Je me sers d'une fourchette.	→ Je m'en sers.	I use it (make use of it).

Table - Order of Object Pronouns

Which is the order when more than one of these object and adverbial pronouns are needed? (There can only be two with the one verb.) When the pronouns come *before* the verb, this table must be **known by heart, so that the pronouns are used in the correct order.**

1 st and 2 nd Persons Direct and Indirect Pronouns and all Reflexives	3 rd Person Direct object	3 rd Person Indirect object		
me te se nous vous se	le la les	lui leur	y	en
Order to apply →				} VERB

Il donne le gâteau aux étudiants.	→ Il le leur donne.	He gives it to them.
Je pose les assiettes sur la table.	→ Je les y pose.	I put them there (on it).
Nous envoyons des lettres au directeur.	→ Nous lui en envoyons.	We send some to him.
Elles apportent de la limonade au pique-nique.	→ Elles y en apportent.	They bring some (of it) there.

To make the negative: **ne** precedes the object pronoun/s and **pas** follows the verb as below.

SUBJECT	NE	OP	VERB	PAS
Il	ne	le leur	donne	pas
Elles	n'	y en	apportent	pas

When the pronouns come after the verb (as in a positive command) y and en will still come last, but the direct object must come before the indirect object. The order is: *direct, indirect, y, en* as shown on the Table above.

Donnez le gâteau aux étudiants!	→ Donnez-le-leur!	Give it to them!
Donnez-moi (to me) le gâteau!	→ Donnez-le-moi!	Give it to me!
Donnez-nous (to us) les lettres!	→ Donnez-les-nous!	Give them to us!
Envoyez-nous des billets!	→ Envoyez-nous-en!	Send some to us!

If the command is negative, the pronouns revert to their normal order before the verb, Ne nous les donnez pas!

★ **Note:** If either **y** or **en** come after moi, **m' / me** must be used:

Envoyez-moi des exemplaires! → **Envoyez-m'en!**

Position of Object Pronouns in the Perfect Tense

Remember that when the verb is in the perfect tense, there is still only *one* verb, even though there are two words, so the object pronouns must come before *both* parts of the verb — that is, before the auxiliary verb (avoir or être)*

Il a donné le gâteau aux étudiants.
Elle est allée à Paris.

→ **Il le leur a donné.**
→ **Elle y est allée.**

He has given it to them.
She has gone there.

* See page 20.

Position of Pronouns with Infinitives

If a noun is the object of the infinitive, then the pronoun replacing it goes *before* the infinitive; for example:

Il va donner le gâteau aux étudiants.
Nous voulons apporter de la limonade au pique-nique.
J'invite les étudiants à m'accompagner au cinéma.

→ **Il va le leur donner.**
→ **Nous voulons y en apporter.**
→ **Je les invite à m'y accompagner.**

If the infinitive is negative, both parts of the negative come before the object pronouns:

Il leur a dit de ne pas en parler. He told them not to talk about it.

Here are two easy methods of deciding where to place the pronoun(s):

He encourages me to make them.

“Me” comes after “encourage” in English so before it in French.

“Them” comes after “make” in English so before it in French; so: **Il m'encourage à les faire.**

Disjunctive Pronouns

The disjunctive pronoun is “dis – jointed” or *is separated from the verb, and never stands before the verb - it has special uses.*

NB Disjunctive pronouns have separate forms for masculine and feminine in the singular and plural.

moi – me	nous – us
toi – you	vous – you
lui – him	eux – them (<i>m</i>)
elle – her	elles – them (<i>f</i>)

Uses

1. When standing alone:

Q. Qui a fait cela? Moi. Who did that? I did.

2. To emphasise the subject:

Lui, il ne sait pas. He does not know. (emphatic he doesn't know)

3. After c'est or ce sont:

C'est elle. It is she.

★ **Note:** Ce sont is only used with eux and elles (but not with nous and vous).

4. As the object of a preposition:

Chez moi	At my house, at home
Avec nous	With us
Pour toi	For you
Après eux	After them

5. In compound subjects:

Paul et moi	(the noun comes first) Paul and I
Les enfants et lui...	The children and he

★ **Note:** In this case the verb must agree with the compound — Paul et moi = nous, so a plural verb:

Paul et moi allons au cinéma ce soir.

6. As a subject when separated from a verb:

Eux aussi le savent.	They also know it. (eux = 3rd plural)
Moi seul peux le faire.	I alone can do it. (moi = 1st sing.)

7. After que in ne ... que or comparisons:

Elle est plus grande que toi. She is taller than you.

8. To form the emphatic pronouns — moi-même, eux-mêmes, etc.:

Je le ferai moi-même. I shall do it myself.

9. When me, te, se, nous and vous are direct objects, disjunctive pronouns are used to express the indirect object. For example:

Il nous a présentés à eux. He introduced us *to them*.

10. With verbs or expressions which require à or de before their complement, when the complement refers to a person. For example:

Elle s'intéresse à toi. She is interested *in you*.

Je pense à eux. I am thinking *of them*.

Ils se souviennent de moi. They remember me. [se souvenir de]

Tu te chargeras de lui. You will be responsible *for him*.

33. Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun is used to join a clause (then called the relative clause) to another clause (called the main clause). The relative clause adds information to (that is, describes) a noun or pronoun in the main clause.

Qui

Example 1: We are looking for the man who stole our car.

This one sentence is made up of two sentences put together to become clauses:

a “We are looking for the man” + b “The man stole our car”.

The word “man” appears in both sentences or is common to both, but the second sentence gives more information about (that is, describes) the man. As the common word “man” is the subject of the verb “stole”, the relative pronoun *qui* is used to replace the common word in the second sentence:

Nous cherchons l'homme qui a volé notre voiture.

Example 2: They will catch the plane which arrives at Orly at 9 p.m.

= a “They will catch the plane” + b “The plane arrives at Orly at 9 p.m.”

The word common to both is “plane” and in **b**, “plane” is the subject of the verb “arrives”. Therefore *qui* is used to replace “plane” in the second sentence:

Ils prendront l'avion qui arrive à Orly à neuf heures du soir.

▶ **Rule 1:** The relative pronoun *qui* refers to persons or things and is used as the subject of the verb in the relative clause.

Que

Example 1: The man whom we are looking for stole our car.

= a “The man stole our car” + b “We are looking for the man”.

“Man” is common to both sentences but in **b** it is the *object* of “looking for”, since “we” is the subject.

Therefore *que* is used to replace “man” in the second clause:

L'homme que nous cherchons, a volé notre voiture.

Note: The relative clause is inserted into the main clause so that it will come immediately after the common word.

Example 2: The plane which they will catch arrives at Orly at 9 p.m.

= a “The plane arrives at 9 p.m.” + b “They will catch the plane.”

“Plane” is the common word but it is the object of the verb “will catch”, therefore *que* is used to join the two sentences (*qu'* before a vowel):

L'avion qu'ils prendront, arrive à Orly à neuf heures du soir.

▶ **Rule 2:** The relative pronoun *que* refers to persons or things and is used as the object of the verb in the relative clause. (See page 37 for the agreement of the past participle with *que*.)

Dont

Example 1: I know the man whose son stole our car.

= a **“I know the man”** + b **“The son of the man stole our car”**.

“Man” is the common word, but in **b**, of = de is used before it. In this case, *dont* is used to join the two sentences:

Je connais l’homme dont le fils a volé notre voiture. (I know the man whose son stole our car)

Note: The word order after *dont* must be subject + verb + direct object (if any). Remember **R.S.V.P.**

Relative pronoun, Subject, Verb, Predicate

Example 2: The plane, about which they are speaking, arrives at 9 p.m.

= a **“The plane arrives at 9 p.m.”** + b **“They are talking about the plane”**.

“Plane” is the common word but in **b** about = de appears before it. In this case *dont* is used to join the two sentences:

L’avion dont ils parlent arrive à neuf heures du soir. The plane, about which they are talking, arrives at 9 p.m.

★ **Note:** Students should make a list of all verbs which take *de* before the complement (object); for example, *avoir besoin de*, *se servir de*, *se souvenir de* (see “6. S’approcher de Type” on page 58).

▶ **Rule 3:** The relative pronoun *dont* refers to persons or things and is used as the object of the preposition *de*, to express “whose”, “of whom”, “of which”, “about which”, etc.

Lequel, etc.

Example 1: He lives in a house behind which there is a big sportsfield.

= a **“She lives in a house”** + b **“There is a big sports field behind the house”**.

“House” is the common word, but in **b** the preposition “behind” stands before it. In this case a form of *lequel* (*laquelle*, *lesquels*, *lesquelles*) is used to join the two sentences:

Elle habite une maison derrière laquelle il y a un grand terrain de sport.

Example 2: Here are some towels with which you can dry yourselves.

= a **“Here are some towels”** + b **“You can dry yourselves with the towels.”**

“Towels” is the common word but in **b** the preposition *with* stands before it. Again a form of *lequel* is used to join the two sentences:

Voici des serviettes avec lesquelles vous pouvez vous sécher.

▶ **Rule 4:** The relative pronoun *lequel* (and its three other forms) refers to *things* and is used as the object of a preposition in the relative clause.

Example 3: The theatre opposite which she works is going to close.

= a **“The theatre is going to close”** + b **“She works opposite the theatre.”**

“Theatre” is the common word but in **b** the preposition *opposite* (= *en face de*) stands before it. In this case the relative pronoun *lequel* must combine with the “*de*” of “*en face de*” to produce *duquel*:

Le théâtre en face duquel elle travaille, va fermer.

There are many prepositions which end in “*de*”; for example, *à côté de*, *près de*, *au milieu de*, *loin de*, etc. Students should learn them. Likewise, there are prepositions ending in “*à*”, such as *grâce à* and *jusqu’à*, and these will combine with *lequel* etc. to produce *auquel*, *auxquelles*, etc. Example:

Le sommet jusqu’auquel ils ont grimpé, offrait une vue splendide.

There are also many verbs taking *à*, which must be incorporated with *lequel*; for example:

Le concert auquel j’ai assisté ... or placed before qui; for example, l’étudiante à qui il pensait ...

Qui for Persons After a Preposition

Example: The teachers with whom she worked were very pleasant.

= a. **“The teachers were very pleasant”** + b. **“She worked with the teachers.”**

“Teachers” is the common word but refers to persons and in **b**, is preceded by the preposition *with*. In this case, *qui* is the relative pronoun required:

Les professeurs avec qui elle travaillait étaient bien aimables.

- ▶ **Rule 5:** The relative pronoun *qui* refers to *persons* and is used as the object of a preposition in the relative clause.

Example 1: The man to whose son I gave the parcel, was not pleased.

= **a** “The man was not pleased” + **b** “I gave the parcel to the son of the man.”

As the words “to the son” precede “of the man”, *dont* can not be used, as it would not immediately follow the common word. In this case *duquel* or *de qui* is used as the relative pronoun; but *duquel* is more common.

L’homme au fils duquel (de qui) j’ai donné le paquet n’était pas content.

Example 2: We could see a mountain at the foot of which was a small village.

= **a** “We could see a mountain” + **b** “A small village was at the foot of the mountain”.

Although “mountain” is the common word, it is preceded by “at the foot of” and therefore separated from it, so *dont* may not be used. A form of *duquel* is required instead:

Nous voyions une montagne au pied de laquelle se trouvait un petit village. (... at the foot of which ...)

- ▶ **Rule 6:** The relative pronoun *dont* must immediately follow the common word. If this is not possible a form of *duquel* (or *de qui*) must be used.

Ce qui, etc.

Example:

I do not like what is happening.

Je n’aime pas ce qui se passe.

a. “I do not like” + **b.** “what is happening”.

There is *no* common word, but “what” is the subject of the verb “is happening”.

- ▶ **Rule 7:** When there is *no* common word “ce” is inserted before the relative pronoun *qui*:

Example:

I do not like what we are doing.

Je n’aime pas ce que nous faisons.

a. “I do not like” + b. “we are doing” (what).

There is *no* common word but “what” is the object of the verb “are doing”, and “we” is the subject.

- ▶ **Rule 8:** When there is no common word, “ce” is inserted before the relative pronoun *que*:

Example:

I do not like what you are talking about.

Je n’aime pas ce dont vous parlez.

a. “I do not like” + b. “you are talking about” (parler de = to talk about).

There is *no* common word but “what” is the object of the preposition “de”.

- ▶ **Rule 9:** When there is no common word “ce” is inserted before the relative pronoun *dont*:

★ **Note:** These three relative pronouns are often found at the beginning of a sentence. For example:

Ce qui est arrivé ne te concerne pas.

Ce qu’elle a fait ne te concerne pas.

Ce dont ils parlent ne te concerne pas.

Ce is also inserted before *qui*, *que* or *dont* to refer back to a common *idea* expressed as a clause. For example:

They had not done their homework, which infuriated the teacher.

Here there is no common noun, but the *idea* of not *doing their homework* is common to both clauses.

Ils n’avaient pas fait leurs devoirs, ce qui a enragé le professeur.

The relative pronoun *ce à quoi* is used when the verb in the relative clause takes *à*; for example:

Ce à quoi tu penses n’est pas très clair. (penser à) What you are thinking of is not very clear.

Dont may not be used if the relative clause follows a direct or indirect question where there is no common word to refer to:

De quoi as-tu besoin?

What do you need?

Il m’a demandé ce dont j’avais besoin.

He asked me **what** I needed.

Il m’a demandé de qui je parlais.

He asked me **whom** I was talking about.

Quoi must be used if the relative clause follows a preposition and refers to an idea:

Ils ont fait leurs devoirs, après quoi ils ont regardé un film. They did their homework, after which they watched a film.

After verbs of knowing, understanding, etc., when the relative pronoun would normally be *dont* but when there is no common word, it is customary to use *de quoi*:

Je comprends de quoi tu parles. I understand what you are talking about.

Table of Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns meaning ‘who’, ‘whom’, ‘whose’, ‘which’ and ‘that’ (referring back to a specific noun)

	For People	For Things
<i>Subject</i>	who	qui which, that
<i>Object</i>	whom	que which, that
<i>Possessive</i>	whose, of whom	dont whose, of which
<i>After prepositions e.g. avec</i>	with whom	avec qui avec lequel (m.s.) avec laquelle (f.s.) avec lesquels (m.pl.) avec lesquelles (f.pl.) (also auquel, duquel, etc.)

Pronouns meaning “What” (referring back to a specific phrase)

<i>Subject</i>	ce qui	what
<i>Object</i>	ce que	what
<i>After verb taking de + noun</i>	ce dont	what
<i>After verb taking à + noun</i>	ce à quoi	what

See also “27. Verbs Controlling Nouns” on page 55

★ Notes:

1. “De quoi” must be used in indirect questions.
2. “Ce” is often omitted, particularly after “savoir” and “comprendre”.

34. Possessive Pronouns

This is a useful way to avoid repeating a noun already mentioned, for example:

He had his towel and she had her towel (clumsy). He had his towel and she had hers (possessive pronoun).

	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
mine	le mien	la mienne	les miens	les miennes
yours (tu)	le tien	la tienne	les tiens	les tiennes
his/hers	le sien	la sienne	les siens	les siennes
ours	le nôtre	la nôtre	les nôtres	les nôtres
yours (vous)	le vôtre	la vôtre	les vôtres	les vôtres
their	le leur	la leur	les leurs	les leurs

Examples:

Elle a ses chaussures; est-ce qu’il a les siennes? She has her shoes; does he have his?

Tu as acheté ton billet mais je n’ai pas acheté le mien. You have bought your ticket but I haven’t bought mine

If the verb requires *à* or *de* before the complement, these combine with the pronoun to give *au* (etc.) or *du* (etc.) For example:

Il aime ses études mais je ne m’intéresse pas aux miennes.

He likes his studies but I’m not interested in mine.

J’ai besoin de mon manuel mais vous n’avez pas besoin du vôtre.

I need my textbook but you don’t need yours.

35. Demonstrative Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	celui	ceux
Feminine	celle	celles

This pronoun replaces an already mentioned noun preceded by *ce*, *cette*, *ces*, etc. and is translated in a variety of ways. Examples:

ce gâteau-ci et celui-là	this cake and <u>that one</u>
cette robe-ci et celle-là	this dress and <u>that one</u>
ces programmes-ci et ceux-là	these programmes and <u>those</u>
ces chaussures-ci et celles-là	these shoes and <u>those</u>

It can also be used to express “the one”, “the ones” “he who” in “she who”, for example:

Celui qui a parlé est très intelligent.	The one who spoke is very intelligent.
Celles qui sortent vont faire la vaisselle.	The ones who are going out are going to do the dishes.
Celle que vous choisirez devra travailler très dur.	The one/She whom you choose will have to work very hard.
Ceux aux maillots blancs n’ont rien gagné.	Those/The ones with white singlets have won nothing.

Notes:

1. These demonstrative pronouns must be followed by either:

- ci or -là;
- some distinguishing feature, such as «aux maillots blancs»; «au chapeau noir»
- a clause introduced by *qui*, *que*, *dont*, etc.

They cannot be used by themselves. *Celui-ci*, *celle-ci*, etc. = this one *celui-là*, *celle-là* = that one; for example:

Hélène et Anne sont venues; celle-là à six heures et celle-ci à sept heures.	Helen and Anne came; the former at 6 o’clock and the latter at 7 o’clock.
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36. Interrogative Pronouns - Variable and Invariable

Variable Interrogative

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	lequel	lesquels
Feminine	laquelle	lesquelles

This pronoun is used to replace an already mentioned noun preceded by a form of *quel*. It is translated by “which (one)” or “which (ones)”:

Quel film avez-vous vu?	Which film did you see?
→ Lequel (which one) avez-vous vu?	Which one did you see?
Quelle photo as-tu prise?	Which photo did you take?
→ Laquelle as-tu prise?	Which one did you take?

Note: The past participle agrees as the direct object precedes the verb.

Quels bureaux sont fermés?	Which offices are closed?
→ Lesquels sont fermés?	Which ones are closed?
Quelles chaussures va-t-elle acheter?	Which shoes is she going to buy?
→ Lesquelles va-t-elle acheter?	Which ones is she going to buy?

★ **Note:** If the pronoun is the complement of a verb requiring *à* or *de*, these prepositions will combine with *lequel*, etc. to produce *auquel* (etc.) or *duquel* (etc.). Examples:

Desquels de ces films parlais-tu? About which of these films were you speaking?
Duquel de ces livres vous servez-vous? Which (one) of these books are you using?
A laquelle de ces revues s'intéresse-t-elle? In which (one) of these magazines is she interested?
Auxquelles de ces pièces a-t-il assisté? At which (ones) of these plays was he present?

Invariable Interrogative

	Person	Thing
<i>Subject</i>	qui est-ce qui or qui	qu'est-ce qui
<i>Object</i>	qui est-ce que or qui	qu'est-ce que or que

Qui est-ce qui a crié?
Qui a crié? } Who shouted?
Qui est-ce que tu vois?
Qui vois-tu? } Whom do you see? Note verb and subject inversion with the object form.
Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé? What has happened?
Qu'est-ce que tu fais?
Que fais-tu? } What are you doing? Note verb and subject inversion with the object form.

Invariable

These pronouns express the questions “who (whom)?” or “what?”. The answer to this question is unknown, but it will either be a person (who, whom) or a thing (what). The person or thing will either be the subject (who, what) or the object (whom, what) of the verb. Examples:

Q. Who is singing? A. A person (subject of “singing”).
Q. Whom are you bringing? A. A person (object of “are bringing”).
Q. What is on the table? A. A thing (subject of “is”).
Q. What are you doing? A. A thing (object of “are doing”).

These questions are formulated by placing either *qui* or *que* (qu’) around the phrase “est-ce”, thus there are *four* possible combinations:

The first word of the phrase determines whether a **person** or a **thing** will appear in the answer.

The **last** word of the phrase determines whether the person / thing is the *subject* or *object* of the answer.

- Qui est-ce qui?** First word = qui, therefore a person.
Last word = qui, therefore the subject.
 Q. **Qui est-ce qui chante?** Who is singing?
 A. **Marie chante.** Mary is singing. (subject and person)
- Qui est-ce que?** First word = qui, therefore a person.
Last word = que, therefore the object.
 Q. **Qui est-ce que tu cherches?** Whom are you looking for?
 A. **Je cherche Marie.** I am looking for Mary. (object and person)
- Qu'est-ce qui?** First word = que, therefore a thing.
Last word = qui, therefore the subject.
 Q. **Qu'est-ce qui fait ce bruit?** What is making that noise?
 A. **La machine à laver fait ce bruit.** The washing machine is making that noise. (subject and thing)
- Qu'est-ce que?** First word = que, therefore a thing.
Last word = que, therefore the object.
 Q. **Qu'est-ce que tu fais?** What are you doing?
 A. **Je fais mes devoirs.** I am doing my homework. (object and thing)

Only three of these forms can be shortened:

- Qui est-ce qui = qui — Qui chante?**
- Qui est-ce que = qui — Qui cherches-tu?**
- Qu'est-ce que = que — Que fais-tu?**

The inversion of subject and verb in the object forms occurs because the question formula “est-ce que” is missing.

If “whom” is the complement of a preposition, *qui* or *qui est-ce que* is used:

Pour qui fait-elle cette robe? For whom is she making that dress?
→ **Pour qui est-ce qu'elle fait cette robe?**

However, if “what” is the complement of a preposition, **quoi** must be used:
Avec quoi a-t-elle fait ce gâteau? With what did she make this cake?

37. C'est, il est, ceci, cela, Impersonal Verbs

Il(s) and elle(s)

The pronouns *il(s)* and *elle(s)* are variable personal pronouns referring back to a noun already mentioned or understood. e.g.

Regardez la vache! **Elle a l'air malade.**
Voici les bijoux! **Ils sont formidables!**
Est-ce que tu connais cet homme? **Il est avocat.**
Mes sœurs sont fatiguées car elles ont travaillé dur.

★ **Note:** These pronouns can be used as the subjects of *all* verbs. However, the pronoun “*il*” is used impersonally in certain expressions:

1. Time. **Il est six heures et demie.**
2. Weather. **Il fait mauvais — il pleut/neige/gèle.**
3. Verbs. **Il s'agit de** - it is a question of...

Il reste six éclairs. There remain six eclairs (that is, there are six eclairs left).
Il manque deux euros. Literally “There lacks two Euros” (that is, two Euros are missing).

Ce

The pronoun “*ce*” is an invariable demonstrative pronoun which corresponds to the English impersonal “*it*” (or the unemphatic “*this*” and “*that*”). It does not replace a noun that has previously been mentioned and it can only be used as the subject of *être* (or *devoir* or *pouvoir* used with *être*); e.g. **Ce doit être Marie.**

Uses

1. To explain who a person is or what a thing is (defining):

Qui est-ce? — Who is that? C'est un médecin. / C'est le médecin de mon père. / C'est une infirmière.

Qu'est-ce que c'est? — What's that? C'est un aspirateur.
Quelle est cette machine? — What's that machine? }

★ **Note:** In all answers the noun is preceded by an article — *un, le, etc.* and compare “*Il est médecin*” with “*C'est un médecin*”.

2. To sum up a previously mentioned *idea*; for example:

J'aime sortir le dimanche. Oui, c'est agréable. I like going out on Sundays. Yes, it's pleasant.
Here, “*ce*” does not refer to a noun, but to the *idea* of going out on Sundays.

3. Before a disjunctive pronoun or a name; for example:

C'est moi, c'est vous (but ce sont eux, c'étaient elles), c'est Jean, ce doit être Paul.

4. To introduce a segment of time (but not o'clock); for example:

C'est mardi. C'était le commencement du trimestre.

but

Il est deux heures, il est midi, etc.

Ceci and Cela

Ceci (this) and cela (that) are emphatic forms and, as a rule, they are not used for people. They do not refer to a previously mentioned noun, but to a whole sentence or to something which as yet has no name. They can be either the subject or object of a verb. Examples:

Lisez ceci!

Read this (whatever *it* is, is close to you)

Cela ne se dit pas.

That (whatever *it* is has already been said) is not said.

“Ça” is the colloquial form of cela.

Students have probably met it in the expression “ça va?”.

Example:

Elle a répondu comme ça.

She replied like that.

Impersonal il

The impersonal “il” must be used in a sentences like the following, such as:

Example 1:

Il est difficile de traverser la rivière.

It is difficult to cross the river.

This is because the real subject of the verb is “to cross the river” and “it” (il) is only a grammatical subject.

If students find this confusing, they should tackle the problem like this:

a. Q. Does the adjective (*difficile*) have a dependent infinitive?

Ans. Yes — “traverser”.

b. Q. Does “traverser” have an object (direct or indirect)?

Ans. Yes — “la rivière”.

Since both conditions have been met, use *Il + être + adjective + de*.

Example 2:

It is impossible to understand this rule.

a. The adjective “impossible” does have a dependent infinitive — “to understand”.

b. “To understand” does have an object — “this rule”.

Therefore:

Il est impossible de comprendre cette règle.

But if the adjective has no dependent infinitive or a dependent infinitive without an object, use *c’est + adjective + à*. Examples:

Traverser cette rivière? Oui, c’est difficile (à faire).

Comprendre cette règle? Oui, c’est impossible (à faire).

Il part demain? Ce n’est pas facile à dire.

In these three cases “ce” sums up a previously mentioned *idea*.

If, however, a previously mentioned *noun* can be the subject of the verb *être* in the answer, the appropriate personal pronoun must be used, and the infinitive must be preceded by *à*. For example:

J’ai appris cette règle.

I have learnt this rule.

Elle (= cette règle) est facile à comprendre.

It (= this rule) is easy to understand (to be understood).

Voici nos ordres.

Here are our orders;

Ils (= les ordres) sont difficiles à suivre.

They (= the orders) are difficult to follow (to be followed).

★ **Note:** The passive sense of the infinitive in these two examples. “This rule” is *not* doing the understanding but being understood and “our orders” are *not* doing the following, but being followed.

Impersonal Verbs

Se passer = unspecified event happening:

Il se passe quelque chose.

Something is happening.

Arriver = specified event happening:

Il est arrivé une chose singulière.

A strange thing happened.

Agir de = to be a question of:

Il s'agit de l'intérêt public.

It's a question of the public interest.

Il y va = it's a question/matter of:

Il y va de la vie.

It's a matter of life and death.

Rester = to remain, be left:

Il reste six oranges.

There are six oranges left.

Exister = to exist:

Il existe des yétis.

Yetis do exist.

Valoir = to be worth:

Il vaut mieux se taire.

It's better to keep quiet.

Manquer = to lack, to be missing:

Il manque sept euros.

There are seven euros missing.

Importer = to be a matter of:

Il importe de gagner le prix.

It's a matter of winning the prize.

Il y a = there is:

Il y a un garage dans cette ville.

There is a garage in this town.

Il y avait un garage dans cette ville.

There was a garage in this town.

Il y aura un garage dans cette ville.

There will be a garage in this town.

★ **Note:**

Voici = here is / here are.

Voici l'ambulance!

Here is the ambulance!

Voilà = there is / there are:

Regarde! Voilà un garage!

Look! There's a garage!

38. Miscellaneous Pronouns

We include a list of similar adjectives in this table (see also "44. Miscellaneous Adjectives, aucun, chaque, quelque ..." on page 89):

Pronouns	English	Adjectives
1. aucun(e)...ne (or ne...aucun)	none, not one, not an	aucun(e)...ne, ne...aucun(e)
2. autre	other	autre
3. chacun(e)	each one	chaque
4. n'importe lequel (laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles, qui, quoi)	anyone, anybody, anything	n'importe quel (quelle, quels, quelles)
5. nul (nulle)...ne (ne...nul, nulle)	none	ne...nul (nulle)
6. on	one	
7. pas un...ne (very emphatic)	not a single one	
8. personne...ne (ne...personne)	nobody	
9. quelqu'un(e)	somebody	quelque(s)
10. quelques un(e)s	some	
11. rien...ne (ne...rien)	nothing	
12. tout, tous	all, everybody, everything	tout, etc.

Aucun, chacun, quelqu'un, etc.

1. Aucun d'entre eux n'a répondu.	None of them replied.
2. L'autre est sorti.	The other one went out.
3. Chacun cria à tue-tête.	Each one bellowed.
4. Quel savon voulez-vous? N'importe lequel.	Which soap do you want? Any one.
Quelle marque prenez-vous? N'importe laquelle.	Which brand do you get? Any one.
Qui ira? N'importe qui.	Who will go? Anybody.
Que prendras-tu? N'importe quoi.	What will you take? Anything.
5. Nul mieux que lui	None better than he
6. On dit que...; on voit...	It is said that...; one sees ...
7. Pas un n'échappa.	Not (a single) one escaped.
8. Personne n'entra.	Nobody entered.
9. Quelqu'un parlait doucement.	Someone was speaking softly.
10. Quelques-unes des dames ont crié.	Some of the ladies shouted.
11. Rien n'arriva.	Nothing happened.
12. Ils ont tous vu le spectacle.	They all saw the show.



Un canal à Strasbourg en automne.

Adjectives

39. Agreement, Position, Comparative and Superlative

An adjective describes a noun/pronoun and **agrees** with the noun/pronoun in **gender** (masculine or feminine) **number** (singular or plural).

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	le grand jardin.	les grands jardins.
Feminine	la grande maison.	les grandes maisons.

The adjective also agrees when used predicatively — that is, *after a verb* such as être, sembler and paraître. For example:

Le jardin est grand → **Les jardins sont grands** → **Ils sont grands.**
La maison est grande → **Les maisons sont grandes** → **Elles sont grandes.**

Formation of the Feminine

1. Most adjectives form the feminine by adding “e” to the masculine, for example:

grand → grande **petit → petite** **joli → jolie** **fatigué → fatiguée.**

★ **Note:** that this “e” is not pronounced, but it causes the previous consonant **t** to be sounded as in *petite*.
 Also in long → *longue* — the “u” is added to keep the “g” hard and pronounced.

2. Masculine adjectives ending in “e” remain unchanged - **autre → autre, jeune → jeune, moderne → moderne, riche → riche.**

3. Many adjectives form the feminine *irregularly*, although these *generally* follow certain patterns: Those ending with:

-er → -ère	léger → légère, cher → chère, premier → première
-eux → -euse	heureux → heureuse, dangereux → dangereuse
-f → -ve	vif → vive, actif → active, sportif → sportive
-el → -elle	cruel → cruelle
-eil → -eille	pareil → pareille
-en → -enne	ancien → ancienne, italien → italienne
-on → -onne	bon → bonne, mignon → mignonne
-et → -ette	net → nette, but secret → secrète, inquiet → inquiète, complet → complète,
	concret → concrète, discret → discrète and replet → replète
-s → -sse	gros → grosse, épais → épaisse, bas → basse but gris → grise

4. The following adjectives have *two* forms in the masculine singular:

Masculine Singular		Feminine Singular	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
a. before a consonant	b. before a vowel	c.		
beau (beautiful)	bel	belle	beaux	belles
nouveau (new)	nouvel	nouvelle	nouveaux	nouvelles
vieux (old)	vieil	vieille	vieux	vieilles
mou (soft)	mol	molle	mous	molles
fou (mad)	fol	folle	fous	folles

Irregular Adjectives

The following adjectives share some similarities but should be learned separately:

faux → **fausse** / **roux** → **rousse**

doux → **douce**

franc → **franche**, **blanc** → **blanche**, **sec** → **sèche**, **frais** → **fraîche**, **bref** → **brève**

favori → **favorite**

grec → **grecque**, **turc** → **turque**, **public** → **publique**

jumeau → **jumelle**, **nul** → **nulle**

malin → **maligne**, **béni** → **bénigne**

Students should consult a dictionary if in doubt.

Compound adjectives are invariable; for example:

ma robe bleu-clair my light blue dress

ces manteaux vert foncé these dark green coats

Formation of the Plural

1. All feminine adjectives add “s”; for example: **les vieilles églises**, **ces serviettes sèches**.

2. All masculine adjectives ending in “e” add “s”; e.g. **ces autres chiens**.

3. Most masculine adjectives add “s”; e.g. **les marins italiens** *but* there are some exceptions e.g.

Word ending in	Any changes?	Examples
s	None	bas → bas
x	None	doux → doux
au	Add x	nouveau → nouveaux
al	aux	général → généraux, brutal → brutaux
ou	Add s	mou → mous, fou → fous
tout	tous	

4. Certain other adjectives are invariable:

a. because they are derived from foreign words — e.g.

chic — **une robe chic**;

b. because they are really nouns — e.g.

marron — **des chaussures marron**.

5. *Nouns* which are used as adjectives are normally linked to the noun they are describing by:

i.

de — **les vacances d'été** the summer holidays
un mur de briques a brick wall or also **un mur en briques**

ii.

à — **une cuiller à café** a coffee spoon
un sandwich au jambon a ham sandwich
une glace au chocolat a chocolate ice cream

Position

1. Most adjectives — especially those showing colour, form, religion and nationality — and participles are placed **after the noun**. This is the normal position in French, e.g. **une robe bleue, un vin français, une mère fatiguée**.

2.* The following common adjectives generally **precede** the noun:

ancien	— former	joli	— pretty
autre	— other	long	— long
beau	— beautiful	mauvais	— bad / evil
bon	— good	méchant	— wicked
chaque	— each	meilleur	— better
cher	— dear	même	— same / very
gentil	— kind	nouveau	— new
grand	— big / tall	petit	— little / small
gros	— fat	propre	— clean / own (see last example below)
haut	— tall	vieux	— old
jeune	— young	vilain	— nasty / ugly

une longue histoire a long story
un méchant garçon a naughty boy

All ordinal numbers precede the noun:

pour la cinquième fois for the fifth time (occasion)

* Writers sometimes alter the position of an adjective for emphasis or euphony - see below.

3. A few adjectives vary their meaning according to their position:

un <u>ancien</u> professeur	a former teacher
un château <u>ancien</u>	an old castle
un <u>brave</u> homme	a good (worthy) man
un soldat <u>brave</u>	a brave soldier
un <u>certain</u> homme	some man or other
la mort <u>certaine</u>	certain death
un <u>cher</u> ami	a dear friend
une voiture <u>chère</u>	an expensive car
un <u>grand</u> homme	a great man (e.g. Louis Pasteur)
un homme <u>grand</u>	a large man
le <u>même</u> jour	the same day
le jour <u>même</u>	the very day
une <u>pauvre</u> femme	a poor (pitiable) woman
une femme <u>pauvre</u>	a poor woman - impoverished / financially in trouble
ma <u>propre</u> chambre	my own room
un mot <u>propre</u>	an appropriate word

★ **Note:** Cardinal numbers also precede the noun.

4. If two adjectives follow the noun they are generally joined by “et”:

un homme fatigué et misérable a poor tired man

If two adjectives precede the noun, they generally do not require any joining word:

une jolie petite ferme a pretty little farm

but for ease of pronunciation “et” can / may be used:

une longue et jolie route a long and pretty road

Comparative

Comparative adjectives compare two nouns.

The comparative is formed by placing *plus* (more) or *moins* (less) before the adjective, no matter whether it precedes or follows the noun.

When after

un village agréable → un village plus agréable	a pleasant village a more pleasant village
sa chanson récente → sa chanson plus récente	her recent song her more recent song
des melons mûrs → des melons moins mûrs	ripe melons less ripe melons
vos histoires amusantes → vos histoires plus amusantes	your amusing stories your more amusing stories

When before

un joli village → un plus joli village	a pretty village a prettier village
ma belle robe → ma moins belle robe	my beautiful dress my less beautiful dress
de longs films → de plus longs films	long films longer films

Exceptions

1. The comparative of bon(s) → meilleurs or bonne(s) is meilleure(s)

→ une bonne idée	a good idea
→ une meilleure idée	a better idea

2. The comparative of mauvais(e) can be either *plus mauvais(e)* or *pire* (= worse):

un mauvais moment	a bad moment
→ un plus mauvais moment or un pire moment	a worse moment

If the adjective is used predicatively (after a verb), *plus* or *moins* still stands before it:

mes mains sont petites	My hands are small.
→ mes mains sont plus petites	My hands are smaller.

Ce livre est intéressant	This book is interesting.
→ Ce livre est moins intéressant	This book is less interesting.

Son idée est bonne	Her idea is good.
→ Son idée est moins bonne	Her idea is not so good.

Que

Que is used to express “than” or “as” in the following comparisons:

Ma maison est plus grande que sa maison.	My house is <u>bigger than</u> her house.
Son histoire est moins amusante que notre histoire.	Her story is <u>less amusing than</u> our story.
Vous êtes aussi intelligent que Jean.	You are <u>as intelligent as</u> Jean.

★ **Note:** Not so good as: **Cette méthode n’est pas si bonne que l’autre. or Cette méthode n’est pas aussi bonne que l’autre.**

Superlative

The superlative refers to the most noun + adjective: Le Mont Blanc est le plus haut sommet de l'Europe.

Adjectives which follow the noun

The superlative is formed by placing *le plus*, *la plus* or *les plus* before the comparative form and changing the indefinite article to the definite article.* Examples:

Comparative

un village plus agréable	a more pleasant village
une chanson plus récente	a more recent song
vos melons moins mûrs	your less ripe melons
des histoires moins amusantes	less amusing stories

Superlative

le village le plus agréable	the most pleasant village
la chanson la plus récente	the most recent song
les melons les moins mûrs	the least ripe melons
les histoires les moins amusantes	the least amusing stories

Adjectives Which Precede the Noun

The superlative is formed by placing *le plus*, *la plus* or *les plus* before the comparative form:

<i>Comparative:</i>	un plus joli village	a prettier village
<i>Superlative:</i>	le plus joli village	the prettiest village
<i>Comparative:</i>	de plus longs films	long films
<i>Superlative:</i>	les plus longs films	the longest films
<i>Comparative:</i>	la plus grande page	the bigger page
<i>Superlative:</i>	la plus grande page	the biggest page

* However, a possessive adjective may take the place of the definite article:

Sa chanson plus récente	Her more recent song
→ Sa chanson la plus récente	Her most recent song
Vos melons plus mûrs	Your riper melons
→ Vos melons les plus mûrs	Your ripest melons

« la plus grande page » means the bigger or the biggest page. The context will show whether the adjective is comparative or superlative.

A possessive adjective may take the place of the definite article but the context alone shows whether the adjective is comparative or superlative:

Sa plus belle robe	Her more beautiful dress <i>or</i> Her most beautiful dress
Vos moins grands abricots	Your less big (= smaller) apricots <i>or</i> Your least big (= smallest) apricots

Use of **de** = in translating in after the superlative

De must be used to express “in”, “of” etc. after the superlative:

La plus haute montagne du monde	The highest mountain in the world
L'élève le plus travailleur de l'école	The hardest-working pupil in the school

Adjectives After **de**

The masculine form of the adjective is used after these adverbial expressions + *de*: *Adverb + de + adjective*

Nous avons assez de blanc.	We have enough white.
beaucoup de bon	a lot of good
personne de gentil	nobody nice
quelqu'un de généreux	someone generous
quelque chose de délicieux	something delicious
rien d'intéressant	nothing interesting
tant de vieux	so much that is old
trop de nouveau	too much that is new
peu d'amusant	little that is amusing

42. Interrogative Adjectives

This adjective, which must be used with a noun, means “which”, although it sometimes translates the English “what”, as in

Quelle heure est-il? What is the time?

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	quel	quels
Feminine	quelle	quelles

Examples:

Quel livre veux-tu? Which book do you want?
Quelles robes va-t-elle acheter? Which dresses is she going to buy?
De quel cheval parlez-vous? About which horse are you talking?

★ **Note:** Quel may be separated from its noun by **être**, but it must still agree; for example:

Quel est son passe-temps favori? Which is his/ her favourite hobby?
Quelles sont vos raisons? What are your reasons?

Quel is also used in exclamations:

Quel beau jour! What a beautiful day! *Note: “a” is not translated.*
Quelle vue magnifique! What a fabulous view!

43. Tout

Tout as an Adjective

This adjective, which must be used with a noun, has four forms.

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	tout	tous
Feminine	toute	toutes

Tout + article = all / the whole / the entire e.g.

tout le gâteau the whole (entire) cake
toute la famille the whole (entire) family

★ **Note:** If these expressions are the subject of a verb, the verb is singular, e.g.

tous les professeurs all the teachers
toutes les chanteuses all the singers
Toute la famille sort ce soir. The whole family is going out this evening.
Tout le monde (the whole world) = “everyone”, “everybody”.

In the plural form, this adjective means “all” or “every” as in:

tous les gâteaux all (the) cakes, every cake
toutes les maisons all (the) houses, every house.

When these expressions are the subject of a verb, the verb is plural:

Toutes les maisons étaient en ruines. All the houses were in ruins.

★ **Note:** When used to mean “every” with a singular noun, the article is omitted:

Tout homme doit obéir. Every man must obey.

★ **Note:** In either case — singular or plural — a possessive or demonstrative adjective may replace the definite article; for example:

tout son temps all his time / all her time
toutes ces routes all these roads

Tout as a Pronoun

Tout corresponds to the English pronoun “all / everything” and is invariable, e.g.

Tout est fait.	Everything is done.
Tout est bien qui finit bien.	All's well that ends well.

BUT Tout meaning “*all or everything*” is variable when used as a pronoun to indicate people, e.g.

Tous (toutes) sont partis (parties) .	All (everyone, everybody) have (has) left.
--	--

or to sum up an already mentioned list of things, e.g.

Tous avaient sommeil / toutes étaient fatiguées.	All were tired / everybody was tired.
Ces filles sont toutes coupables.	These girls are all guilty.
Ces filles sont coupables, toutes les deux.	The girls are both guilty.

★ **Note:** When *tous* is used as a pronoun the *final “s”* is pronounced. *Tous* avaient sommeil

Tout as an Adverb

An adverb *tout* is invariable unless it precedes a feminine adjective beginning with a **consonant** or **h aspirate**, e.g.

L'homme était tout innocent.	The man was quite (= completely) innocent.
Les agents sont tout perplexes.	The police are quite baffled.
Les femmes sont tout émues.	The women are quite moved.

but

La fermière était toute confuse.	The farmer's wife is quite confused.
Les femmes sont toutes joyeuses.	The women are quite joyful.
Les femmes sont toutes honteuses.	The women are quite ashamed.

★ **Note:** *Tout* in the expression “*tout à fait*” (meaning **completely**) is **always invariable**. For example:
Elle est tout à fait contente.



Venez à Paris et déplacez-vous en métro!



C'est à Alésia que Vercingétorix se rend à Jules César en 52 av. J.-C. Désormais la Gaule devient une province romaine.

44. Miscellaneous Adjectives, aucun, chaque, quelque ...

The table below includes a reference list of similar or complementary pronouns (see “38. Miscellaneous Pronouns” on page 79).

Adjectives	English	Pronouns
1. aucun(s) ... ne (ne ... aucun)	no	aucun(s) ... ne (ne ... aucun)
2. autre	other (only before a noun)	un/une autre
3. chaque	each	chacun
4. n'importe lequel (quelle, quels, quelles)	any	n'importe lequel, etc.
5. nul ... ne (ne ... nul), nulle ... ne (ne ... nulle)	no	nul ... ne (ne ... nul)
6. quelque(s)	some	nulle ... ne (ne ... nulle)
7. tel + noun	such a/such	quelqu'un, quelques un(e)s
8. tout, toute, tous, toutes	all, every, whole	tout, tous

Uses

Examples:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Aucune lumière ne se fit voir. | Not a single light was to be seen. |
| 2. | D'autres enfants... | Other children ... |
| 3. | Chaque maison... | Each house ... |
| 4. | N'importe quelle route... | Any road ... |
| 5. | « Quoi, nulle trahison? » (Verlaine) | “What, no betrayal?” (Verlaine was a poet) |
| 6. | La même voiture... | The same car ... |
| | Les paroles mêmes du Pape | The very words of the Pope |
| 7. | Quelque temps | Some time |
| | Quelques affaires | Some business |
| 8. | Un tel homme... | Such a man ... |
| | De telles femmes... | Such women ... |
| 9. | Tout le gâteau | All the cake (the whole cake) |
| | Toute la ficelle | All the breadstick / the whole breadstick |
| | Tous les croissants | All the croissants (every croissant) |
| | Toutes les baguettes | All the breadsticks (every breadstick) |

★ **Note:** Tout le monde = everybody



La statue devant le Parlement Européen à Strasbourg.

The Articles

45. Articles

Table of Articles

	Indefinite article = a/an	Definite article = the	Contraction of the definite article with “de” and à	
Masculine singular	un	le	du	au
Feminine singular	une	la	de la	à la
Words beginning with a vowel or “h” mute	-	l’	de l’	à l’
Masculine or feminine plural	des	les	des	aux

Indefinite versus **Definite** Article - consider the difference between **a** jacket / **the** jacket (*any* jacket versus *the* particular one)

46. Definite Article

The one word **the** has three forms in French: **le** (masculine) **la** (feminine) **les** (plural) and **l’** before a vowel or mute h.

le + masculine noun
la + feminine noun }

or l’ before a noun starting with ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, or mute h

les + plural noun

e.g. **le père la mère l’enfant les parents** (h mute = l’homme)

Uses of the Definite Article

1. Before nouns naming a particular person or thing; for example:

Les deux jeunes filles s’appellent Hélène et Marguerite.

The two girls are called Helen and Margaret.

2. In generalisations such as:

Les souris adorent le fromage.

Mice love cheese. (Generally all mice love all cheese)

3. Expressions of the following type involving a price or rate:

**Henriette paie deux euros la bouteille (le kilo, la pièce).
Catherine roule à 150 km à l’heure.**

Henrietta pays two Euros a bottle (a kilo, each).
Catherine drives at 150 km an hour.

4. Before adjectives or titles preceding a proper noun (a name) or a title; for example:

**La belle Hélène
Le Général de Gaulle
Le petit Nicolas**

Fair Helen
General de Gaulle
Little Nicholas

5. In the kind of statement in which each person has only one head, one life, etc.; for example:

Claire et Anne mirent la tête à la fenêtre.

Claire and Stephanie stuck their heads out of the window.

6. Before the names of countries and languages:

**Le japonais est difficile.
La Suisse est un pays alpin.
La France est un beau pays.**

Japanese is hard.
Switzerland is an alpine country.
France is a beautiful country.

★ **Note:** Je parle français but je parle bien le français. There is no article unless there is a word / words between “parler” and the language.

7. In polite modes of address; for example:

Monsieur l'agent, Madame la directrice, but Madame le Juge.

The French language is adapting to the modern world. State Functionaries are always masculine (decision of the Académie Française) so a lady in such a position is addressed as Madame + the masculine functionary.

e.g. Madame le Ministre, or Madame le Consul.

Parts of the Body with the Definite Article

French *rarely* uses the possessive adjectives with parts of the body; their usage is taught at the advanced level.

Type of Expression	Use	Example	
1. Description Movement	After the verb avoir	Elle a le nez rouge. Il a les pieds plats. Il lève la main. Elle baisse les bras.	She had a red nose. He has flat feet. He raises his hand. She lowers her arms.
2. Action to self	After reflexive verbs	Je me gratte la tête. Tu te brosses les dents. Il se mouche le nez. Nous nous lavons la figure. Vous vous coiffez. Elles se peignent.	I scratch my head. You brush your teeth. He blows his nose. We wash our faces. You do your hair. They comb their hair.
3. Action to another	To show another possessor, use an indirect object pronoun me te lui nous vous leur	Nous leur prenons les mains. (literally - we to them take the hands) Je te laverai le cou. (literally - I to you will wash the neck) Elle lui a sauvé la vie. (She to him saved the life)	We take their hands. I shall wash your neck. She saved his life.

Use of the Possessive Adjectives with the Body

1. When the body is modified by an adjective (but not "droite" or "gauche"); for example:

Il lui tenait la main droite.

He held her right hand.

Il tenait sa petite main blanche entre les siennes.

He held her tiny white hand in his.

2. When a part of the body is the subject of the sentence. e.g.

Ses yeux le suivaient tout le temps.

Her eyes followed him all the time.

Sa main tremblait.

Her hand was trembling.

47. Indefinite Article

un + masculine noun

une + feminine noun

des + plural noun

} = a/an

= some

un homme, un garçon

une femme, une infirmière

des parents, des oncles

Uses of the Indefinite Article

1. The indefinite article is omitted, where it is used in English, after être (and similar verbs such as créer = to create, devenir = to become, élire = to elect, nommer = to name, rester = to remain) with an unmodified (no adjective) noun indicating profession, nationality, status or religion. Examples:

Il est soldat.	He is <u>a</u> soldier.
Elle est australienne.	She is (<u>an</u>) Australian.
Il est avocat.	He is a lawyer.
Il est président.	He is (<u>the</u>) president.
Elle est bohémienne.	She is <u>a</u> gypsy.

2. Omit after *quel, quelle* (meaning “what a”); for example:

Quel repas délicieux!	What a delicious meal!
Quelle femme incroyable!	What an incredible woman!

3. It is used with abstract qualified nouns, when English omits it; for example:

<u>un</u> grand courage	great courage
<u>des</u> amitiés étroites	close friendships

4. It is omitted after such words as *en, de* and *comme* meaning as:

Il s'est déguisé en clown.	He dressed up as a clown.
Elle travaille comme secrétaire.	She works as a secretary.

5. It is omitted after *avec, sans* or *ni* if the noun is not specific:

Tu as agi avec courage.	<i>but</i>	Tu as agi avec un courage étonnant.
Il est parti sans parapluie ni chapeau.	<i>but</i>	Il est parti sans le parapluie que je lui avais offert.

48. à + Article

Masculine singular	à + le =	au	au garçon	to the boy
Feminine singular	à + la =	à la	à la dame	to the lady
Words starting with a vowel or “h” mute	à + l’ =	à l’	à l’arbre	to the tree
Plural	à + les =	aux	aux professeurs	to the teachers
Indefinite	à + un/une =	à un(e)	à un port à une maison	to a port to a house

★ **Note:** Jusqu’à (up to, until, as far as) behaves in the same way:

jusqu’au salon	as far as the living room
jusqu’à la date	until the date

À is also used to indicate flavours or distinguishing characteristics:

une glace au chocolat	a chocolate ice-cream	une crème à la vanille	a vanilla custard
une omelette aux champignons	a mushroom omelette	l’homme au chapeau vert	the man in the green hat
la maison aux volets blancs	the house with the white shutters		

49. de + Article

Masculine singular	de + le =	du	du docteur	of the doctor
Feminine singular	de + la =	de la	de la bibliothèque	of the library
Words starting with a vowel or “h” mute	de + l’ =	de l’	de l’agent	of the policeman
Plural	de + les =	des	des bureaux	of the offices
Indefinite	de + un/une =	d’un(e)	d’un arbre d’une ferme	of a tree of a farm

These other prepositions combine with the article in the same way:

à cause de	because of	à cause de ce livre intéressant
à côté de	beside	à côté de la poste
au centre de	in the centre of	au centre de la page
au milieu de	in the middle of	au milieu des touristes
au moyen de	by means of	au moyen de l'échelle
autour de	around	autour de la ville
en face de	opposite to	en face de la cathédrale
loin de	far from	loin du village
près de	near to	près de l'eau

★ **Note:** *derrière* (= behind, at the back of) and *devant* (= in front of) have no “de” in French, e.g. *derrière la porte - devant la maison*.

50. Partitive Article

The partitive articles are *de la*, *de l'* and *des*. The word “partitive” implies a part — not a whole, just some. This is quite different from “the”, and in English the partitive article is often omitted.

Il aime la bière, mais aujourd'hui il boit du cidre.
Je prendrai de la soupe à l'oignon et puis du poulet.

He likes beer (all beer), but today he is drinking (some) cider.
I'll have the onion soup (a particular sort) and then (some) chicken.
De replaces the partitive article and **un/une** in these cases, which should be noted.

1. After a *negative*; for example:

Je voudrais du vin. I would like some wine.
Je ne voudrais pas de vin. I don't want any wine.

Elle mange des escargots. She is eating snails.
Elle ne mange jamais d'escargots. She never eats snails.

Je prends une glace à la vanille. I am having a vanilla ice cream.
Je ne prends pas de glace à la vanille. I am not having a vanilla ice cream.
(See the Negation page 27).

2. After any *quantity*, including the adverbs of quantity listed below, but also expressions indicating amounts, such as:

une boîte de chocolats	a box of chocolates
un tube de dentifrice	a tube of toothpaste
une tranche de pain	a slice of bread
un kilo d'abricots	a kilo of apricots
un sac de provisions	a bag of provisions

Adverbs of quantity

assez de	enough	pas mal de	a lot
autant de	as many as	peu de	not much, not many
beaucoup de	much, many	plus de	no more
moins de	less	tant de	so many
un peu de	a little	trop de	too many

3. *Before an adjective preceding a plural noun.* Note that most adjectives follow the noun (see those which precede on page 85), e.g.

des voitures modernes	<i>but</i>	de petites voitures
des voisins français	<i>but</i>	de nouveaux voisins
des chevaux intelligents	<i>but</i>	de vieux chevaux
des maisons rouges	<i>but</i>	d'autres maisons

When an adjective has become an integral part of the noun, *des* is used; for example:

des petits pains / some bread rolls / **des petits pois** / some peas / **des jeunes filles** / some girls
des jeunes gens / some young people

4. *Unusual expressions of quantity* which you must check until they are learned:

a. No article:

Plusieurs chaises	Several chairs
Quelques tables	A few tables

b. Full partitive article:

Bien des étudiants	Lots of students
Encore de la mousse au chocolat	More chocolate mousse
Je n'ai que du pain.	I only have bread.

★ **Note:** the verb (singular or plural) and the similarity:

La plupart des soldats sont jeunes.	Most of the soldiers are young. (Countable soldiers - plural verb)
La plus grande partie de l'armée est ici.	Most of the army is here. (A collective - the army- singular verb)

“La plupart” is used for individually countable items (soldiers) while “**la plus grande partie**” is used for nouns that cannot be counted / must be viewed as a whole (here, the army). Refer 5.b. above.

There is one exception — **la plupart du temps** is followed by a singular verb.

★ **Note:** that **un peu de** should be followed by a *singular* noun and that **quelques** should be followed by a *plural* noun.

5. *After expressions which contain de, such as:*

avoir besoin de	to need	manquer de	to lack
couvert de	covered by	au lieu de	instead of
se tromper de	to make a mistake about	priver de	to deprive (someone) of

In the examples below **de** is used because the nouns (farine, neige, etc.) which follow are not specific:

J'ai besoin <u>de</u> fromage.	I need cheese.
La terre est couverte <u>de</u> neige.	The ground is covered with snow / The ground is covered by snow.
Il manque <u>de</u> sincérité.	He lacks sincerity.
J'ai pris <u>du</u> bœuf au lieu <u>de</u> poisson.	I had beef instead of fish.

★ **Note:** difference when the noun is qualified by **que** + clause. It is now a *specific* noun — the particular cheese, snow, etc.

J'ai besoin <u>du</u> fromage <u>que</u> tu viens d'acheter.	I need the cheese which you have just bought.
La terre est couverte <u>de</u> la neige <u>qui</u> est tombée pendant la nuit.	The ground is covered with the snow which fell during the night.
Il manque <u>de</u> la sincérité <u>qu'</u>on aurait espéré trouver chez un médecin.	He lacks the sincerity which one might have expected in a doctor.
J'ai pris <u>du</u> bœuf au lieu <u>du</u> poisson <u>que</u> tu m'avais recommandé.	I took beef instead of the fish which you had recommended to me.



Le jardin de Monet et un des bassins aux nymphéas.

Adverbs

51. Formation and Position of Adverbs

Formation

Many adverbs are formed by adding **-ment** to the feminine form of the adjective (equivalent to the English **-ly**)
However **VITE** is **complete!** (= quickly)

Type	Examples	Examples	Adverb	Adverb
<i>Most adjectives</i> Use feminine form of the adjective + <i>-ment</i>	dernier → dernière doux → douce heureux → heureuse lent → lente naturel → naturelle seul → seule	last soft happy slow natural alone	dernièrement doucement heureusement lentement naturellement seulement	lastly softly happily slowly naturally only
If an adjective ends with a vowel, use the masculine form + <i>-ment</i>	absolu simple triste vrai	absolute simple sad true	absolument simplement tristement vraiment <i>but</i> gaïment <i>or</i> gaiement	absolutely simply sadly truly gaily
If an adjective ends with <i>-ant</i> or <i>-ent</i> , change it to <i>-amment</i> or <i>-emment</i>	courant méchant évident violent	fluent wicked obvious violent	couramment méchamment évidemment violemment	fluently wickedly obviously violently
With some adjectives, for easy pronunciation, change e → é	aveugle confus → confuse énorme précis → précise profond → profonde	blind confused enormous precise deep	aveuglément confusément énormément précisément profondément	blindly confusedly enormously precisely deeply
Odd ones	bref → brève gentil	brief nice, pretty	brièvement gentiment	briefly nicely, prettily

Adjectives Used as Adverbs

★ **Note:** Certain adjectives are used as adverbs and are therefore invariable:

chanter faux	to sing out of tune
chanter juste	to sing in tune
coûter cher	to cost a lot
parler bas	to speak in an undertone
s'arrêter net	to stop short
sentir bon	to smell good
tenir bon	to hold fast
travailler dur/ferme	to work hard
voir clair	to see clearly

Position

1. *Adverbs usually follow the verb or auxiliary.* (Reminder “added to the verb”.)

In compound tenses short or common adverbs follow the auxiliary and come before the past participle.

Il rentra <u>immédiatement</u>.	He went home immediately.
Ils sont <u>vite</u> rentrés.	They went home quickly.

2. *Adverbs may begin a sentence if they are emphatic:*

<u>Heureusement</u>, il a cessé de pleuvoir.	Luckily it has stopped raining.
<u>D'abord</u>, il faut attendre.	First, we must wait.

3. *Adverbs of time and place usually follow the past participle:*

Elle a vendu sa voiture <u>hier</u>.	She sold her car yesterday.
Ils ont cherché la clef <u>partout</u>.	They looked everywhere for the key.

4. *These adverbs of manner usually precede an infinitive:*

assez	enough	mal	badly
beaucoup	much	mieux	better
bien	well	tant	so much
jamais	never	trop	too much

Il veut toujours trop boire. He always wants to drink too much.

5. Do not separate the auxiliary from the past participle by an adverb ending in -ment:

Il a parlé lentement. *but* **Il a bien parlé.**

Comparative and Superlative of Adverbs

Comparative

plus	more (-er) + adverb	moins	less
plus vite	faster	plus lentement	more slowly
moins fréquemment	less frequently	moins aisément	less easily

Superlative

le plus	the most (-est)	} + adverb
le moins	the least	
le plus vite	the fastest	
le plus lentement	the slowest	
le moins fréquemment	the least frequent	
le moins aisément	the least easily	

Special Forms

bien	well	mieux	better	le mieux	best
mal	badly	pis	worse	le pis	worst
peu	little	moins	less	le moins	least

★ **Note:** Adverbs are invariable:

C'est Annette qui travaille le plus sérieusement.
Chantal et Étienne courent le plus vite.

It is Annette who works best.
 Chantal and Stephen run the fastest.

* Do not confuse **mieux** = better (adverb) with **meilleur** = better (adjective):

Il danse mieux. He dances better. (how he dances.)
Une meilleure histoire. A better story. (describes the story).





Le vieux château dans l'ancien village de Portes, dans les Cévennes.

Prepositions

52. Types of Prepositions

The difficulty with prepositions is that they vary from language to language and moreover, they are such short, “insubstantial” words to grasp. Decide which sort of preposition is needed: Type 1, Type 2 or Type 3. See examples on the next page.

1. Plain Type		2. à + Article		3. de + Article	
avant	before (eg. avant midi)	grâce à	thanks to	à côté de	beside
avec	with	jusqu'à	up to, until	au centre de	in the centre of
chez	at the home of, at			au milieu de	in the middle of
dans	in			au moyen de	by means of
derrière	behind			autour de	around
devant	in front of (eg. devant la statue)			en face de	opposite
entre	between			loin de	far from
pour (see note)	for			près de	near to
sous	under				
sur	on				
à travers	through, across			au bout de	at the end of
depuis	since, for			au lieu de	instead of
dès que	as from (time)			auprès de	beside, compared with
envers	towards			à cause de	because
parmi	among			du côté de	from the direction of
pendant	during				
pour	for				
sans	without				
vers	toward (a time or a place)				

★ **Note:** Pour - see involving time - “20. Depuis, pendant, pour” on page 41.
Pour also means **for**, e.g. **Ce billet est pour Jean.**

53. Use of Prepositions

Preposition	Uses	English
à cause de	à cause de mon succès	because of my success
au centre de	au centre de la Terre	in the centre of the Earth
au milieu de	au milieu du lac	in the middle of the lake
au moyen de	au moyen d'un tourne-vis	by means of a screwdriver
auprès de	auprès de ma belle	near/ close to my beloved
autour de	autour du château	around the castle
en face de	en face de la boulangerie	opposite the bakery
du côté de	du côté de la ville	from the direction of the town
loin de	loin de l'arbre	far from the tree
près de	près des marches	near the steps

Preposition	Uses	English
avec	<u>avec</u> mon père <u>avec</u> prudence (abstract noun = no article)	<u>with</u> my father <u>with</u> caution
chez	<u>chez</u> ma tante, <u>chez</u> Anne <u>chez</u> le fleuriste / chez le boucher / chez le dentiste <u>chez</u> Molière, <u>chez</u> les Chinois	<u>at</u> my aunt's, <u>at</u> Anne's <u>at</u> the florist's, at the butcher's, at the dentist's <u>in</u> Molière's works, in the Chinese <u>world</u>
dans	Il est assis <u>dans</u> un fauteuil. Il entre <u>dans</u> la cuisine. Elle boit du lait <u>dans</u> une tasse. Papa marche <u>dans</u> la rue. Il est { <u>dans</u> l'île, dans la ferme <u>dans</u> l'escalier	He is sitting <u>in</u> an armchair. He comes <u>into</u> the kitchen. She is drinking milk <u>out of</u> a cup. Dad is walking <u>along</u> the street. He is { <u>on</u> the island, on the farm <u>on</u> the stairs
	Je partirai <u>dans</u> un moment. (after a moment is over)	I shall leave <u>in</u> a moment.
derrière	La voiture se trouve <u>derrière</u> le garage.	The car is <u>behind</u> the garage (position).
devant	La dame est <u>devant</u> la télé.	The lady is <u>in front of</u> the TV (position cp. "avant").
entre	Je suis assis <u>entre</u> mes parents.	I am sitting <u>between</u> my parents.
sous	<u>sous</u> le toit	<u>under</u> the roof
sur	<u>sur</u> le pont d'Avignon	<u>on</u> the Bridge at Avignon
à travers	<u>à travers</u> la brume L'évadé passa <u>à travers</u> la foule.	<u>through</u> the mist The escapee passed <u>through</u> the crowd.
dès / à ...	<u>dès</u> minuit / à partir de juin	<u>as from</u> midnight / <u>as from</u> June / <u>from</u> June onwards
	<u>en</u> été, <u>en</u> automne, <u>en</u> hiver <u>but au printemps</u> <u>en</u> juillet, <u>en</u> août (all months)	<u>in</u> summer, <u>in</u> autumn, <u>in</u> winter <u>but in</u> spring <u>in</u> July, <u>in</u> August
en	<u>en</u> plein soleil / air / jour (any masculine word after "plein") <u>en</u> pleine nuit / campagne / mer (any fem. word after "pleine") une robe <u>en</u> soie, un pull <u>en</u> laine (states material of item) J'ai fait mes devoirs <u>en</u> une heure (the time it took to complete an action – homework in this case. Cp. with "dans").	<u>in</u> full sunshine / fresh air / daylight / <u>in</u> the middle of the night / <u>in</u> the heart of the country / <u>at</u> sea a silk dress, a woollen sweater I did my homework <u>in</u> an hour.
envers	Elle est gentille <u>envers</u> sa belle-mère (signifying attitude).	She is kind <u>towards</u> her mother-in-law.
parmi	Il habite <u>parmi</u> les Arabes.	He is living <u>among</u> the Arabs.
pour	<u>pour</u> ma grand-mère	<u>for</u> my grandmother
sans	<u>sans</u> argent (usually without article) <u>sans</u> manteau <u>ni</u> parapluie	<u>without</u> money <u>without</u> a coat <u>nor</u> an umbrella
vers	Ils arrivèrent <u>vers</u> minuit. <u>vers</u> le nord	They arrived <u>towards</u> midnight. <u>towards</u> the north
grâce à	grâce <u>au</u> patron	<u>thanks to</u> the boss
jusqu'à	<u>jusqu'au</u> seize janvier	<u>until</u> 16 January
à côté de	<u>à côté de</u> mon jardin	<u>beside</u> my garden

Conjunctions

54. Use of Conjunctions

Conjunctions link related things, whether nouns, phrases or clauses, usually adding style or force to an argument. For convenience they are grouped together below. Those which require a subjunctive verb have been marked with “S”.

Group type	Conjunctions	Subjunctive?	Meaning
Concession or contradiction	mais		<i>but</i>
	tandis que vu que		whereas, whilst (suggesting contrast) seeing that
Extension or emphasis	aussi et or ou bien néanmoins pourtant cependant		and so, also and now as in stories “Now there was a good king ...” or else nevertheless however meanwhile
Possibility	à condition que à moins que... ne afin que de peur que / de crainte que de sorte que en supposant que pour que / afin que pourvu que sans que	S S S S S S S S	on condition that unless so that, in order that for fear that, lest so that, in such a way that supposing that so that, in order that provided that without
Time	comme lorsque pendant que quand		as when while when
	à peine...que après que aussitôt que avant que... ne depuis que dès que jusqu'à ce que tant que	S S	scarcely, hardly after as soon as before since as soon as until as / so long as
Result	car puisque donc parce que		because since (= because) so because
	alors alors que de sorte que par conséquent		so whilst in such a way that in consequence



Une paysanne qui se promène dans un vignoble avec ses oies.

Miscellaneous

55. Measurements

Cardinal Numbers

0 zéro	10 dix	20 vingt	100 cent
1 un (une)	11 onze	30 trente	1 000 mille (no s)
2 deux	12 douze	40 quarante	1 000 000 un million
3 trois	13 treize	50 cinquante	
4 quatre	14 quatorze	60 soixante	
5 cinq	15 quinze	70 soixante-dix	
6 six	16 seize	80 quatre-vingts	
7 sept	17 dix-sept	81 quatre-vingt-un	
8 huit	18 dix-huit	82 quatre-vingt-deux	
9 neuf	19 dix-neuf	90 quatre-vingt-dix	

Notes

1. Hyphenate all numbers between 17 and 99 – for example, trente-trois, cinquante-sept – **but not**:

21 vingt et un
31 trente et un
41 quarante et un
51 cinquante et un
61 soixante et un
71 soixante et onze

2. Drop the “s” off vingt or cent if they are followed by another number:

80 quatre-vingts but 85 quatre-vingt-cinq
200 deux cents but 208 deux cent huit

Ordinal Numbers

1 st le premier / la première	8 th le / la huitième
2 nd le / la deuxième ¹	9 th le / la neuvième
3 rd le / la troisième	10 th le / la dixième
4 th le / la quatrième	11 th le / la onzième
5 th le / la cinquième	12 th le / la douzième
6 th le / la sixième	21 st le / la vingt et unième
7 th le / la septième	22 nd le / la vingt-deuxième etc.

1 For “second” use second(e) if there are only two in the series - e.g. la seconde concurrente était impressionnante.

Fractions, Decimals and Dimensions

Fractions

$\frac{1}{2}$ = la moitié	à moitié pourri à demi-mort	half rotten (physical half) half dead (half in abstract sense)
demi	un demi-kilo	half a kilo

$\frac{1}{3}$ un tiers, $\frac{1}{4}$ un quart, $\frac{1}{5}$ un cinquième, $\frac{4}{7}$ quatre septième

Notes:

- The number one is written *un*. The number seven is often hand written with a bar across it: *sept*, to separate it from a *7*.
- Cinq personnes sur six.** Five out of six people (not a fraction).

Decimals

The French use a comma instead of a decimal point; e.g. 423,50.
Prices are often written: 10,50 € (= ten Euros, fifty centimes).

Dimensions

1. Faire construction:

Cette boîte fait 60 cm de long sur 20 cm de large.	This box is 60 cm long by 20 cm wide.
Ces bâtiments font 100 m de haut.	These buildings are 100 m tall.
La piscine faisait 2,5 m de profondeur.	The swimming pool was 2.5 m deep.

2. Or use être + adjective + de: (adjective agrees)

Cette boîte est longue de 60 cm sur 20 cm de large.	This box is 60 cm long by 20 cm wide.
Ces bâtiments sont hauts de 100 m.	These buildings are 100 m high.
Cette piscine était profonde de 2,5 m.	This swimming pool was 2.5 m deep.

3. Or use avoir + noun + de Avoir une largeur. longueur / circonférence / un diamètre de...

Cette table a une circonférence de 1,50 m.	The table has a circumference of 1.5 m.
---	---

Age

Il a dix ans.	He is ten (years old). (Use “an” with a cardinal number)
Elle a cinquante ans.	She is fifty. (years old)
Elle est âgée de dix-huit ans.	She is eighteen. (years old)
Ma tante a une cinquantaine d’années.	My aunt is about fifty. (more polite and less brutal)

Other Age Expressions

Elle est entre deux âges.	She is middle-aged.
Il est âgé (jeune).	He is old (young).
Elle est assez âgée (jeune).	She is fairly elderly (young).
Il est très âgé (jeune).	He is very old (young).

Different use of un an / une année

Voilà deux années qu’il est ici. He has been here for two years. (see Axe for use of present tense in French which translates past tense in English see page 15 4a and 4b.

Cette soirée était superbe. That party was great.

Compare with jour / journée and soir / soirée. However “an”, “jour” and “soir” are normally used after cardinal numbers.

Time - l'heure

Quelle heure est-il?	Il est midi / minuit.	It is midday / midnight.
	Il est une heure dix.	It is 1:10.
	Il est deux heures et quart.	It is 2:15.
	Il est deux heures vingt-cinq.	It is 2:25.
	Il est deux heures et demie.	It is 2:30.
	Il est trois heures moins vingt.	It is 2:40.
	Il est trois heures moins le quart.	It is 2:45.
	Il est { midi et demi minuit et demi	<u>le</u> midi <u>le</u> minuit } no e on demi
	une demi-heure	<i>demi</i> is invariable when hyphenated to the noun
	une heure et demie	<i>midi / minuit are masculine so demi has no e but heure is feminine so demie needs e.</i>

1. With time “it is” is always “il est”.

2. à six heures = at six o'clock

3. à sept heures du matin = at 7 a.m.

4. à une heure de l'après-midi = at 1 p.m.

5. à huit heures du soir = at 8 p.m. or il est vingt heures

6. The 24-hour clock is much used in everyday language, particularly for timetables, e.g.

7 a.m. = 7 heures (sept)

1 p.m. = 13 heures (treize)

8 p.m. = 20 heures (vingt)

7. Towards = vers — vers onze heures = towards 11 a.m., except after “il est” or “il était” when you must use *environ* (= about) before or after the time; for example,

Il est environ trois heures. It is about 3 p.m.

Il était trois heures environ. It was about 3 p.m.

Environ can also be used after à:

à environ dix heures at about 10 a.m.

Dans, en, au bout de, après

General

Il sera ici dans une heure. (in the future, when an hour has passed)

Il fait ses devoirs en deux heures. (time taken to complete an action or task)

Elle est rentrée au bout de deux jours. (= in / after / at the end of elapsed time)

Deux jours après two days later / after two days

Never begin a phrase about passing time with “après”. English uses “After a week...”, but French uses “Une semaine après...”.

Useful Time Expressions

1. General

à l'heure	on time
à trois heures précises	at exactly 3pm
aujourd'hui en huit	in a week's time
de temps en temps	from time to time
en avance	early (ahead of schedule)
en retard	late (behind scheduled time)
huit jours / quinze jours	a week / a fortnight
la veille e.g. la veille de Noël	the eve (Christmas eve)
le jour où / le moment où	the day on which / the moment when BUT
un jour que / un moment que	one day when / one moment when
also	
un an / un mois / une semaine que	one year / month / week when - the cause of many errors!
le lendemain	the next day
le lendemain matin	the next morning
le surlendemain	the day after
tard / tous les jours	late / everyday
toutes les semaines	every week
une fois par semaine	once a week
une quinzaine	a fortnight

2. Festivals

à Noël	at Christmas
à Pâques	at Easter
la Fête des Rois	Epiphany 12 th Night (6 January)
La Fête du Travail	Labour Day (1 May)
la Fête Nationale	Bastille Day (14 July)
la Pentecôte	Pentecost / Whitsunday (depends on the date of Easter)
l'Assomption	Assumption (15 August)
l'Armistice (f.)	Armistice Day (11 November)
la Toussaint	All Saints Day (1 November)
le Jour de l'An	New Year's Day

3. Distinguish between

un jour	= a day in the general sense;
une journée	= a day viewed as a whole.

Similarly *une année, une soirée*, as opposed to *un an, un soir*:

Je n'ai rien fait de la journée.	I have done nothing all day long.
Quelle journée!	What a day!

★ **Note:**

un jour que	= one day when
le jour où	= the day on which

(Also mentioned above)

Dates

Quelle est la date? or Le combien sommes-nous aujourd'hui?

Days	Months	Seasons	
lundi	janvier	en été	(in summer)
mardi	février	en hiver	(in winter)
mercredi	mars	en automne	(in autumn)
jeudi	avril	but au printemps (in spring)	
vendredi	mai		
samedi	juin		
dimanche	juillet		
	août		
	septembre		
	octobre		
	novembre		
	décembre		

★ **Note:** En janvier or au mois de janvier.

C'est jeudi, le premier juillet.

le trois mai

le trente juin

le onze octobre

★ **Note:** Weekdays and months are spelled with *lower case letters* and the *definite article* is necessary before a number.

For years you can say either:

dix-neuf cent quatre-vingt-six — 1986 or

mille neuf cent quatre-vingt-six (more common form) — 1986.

1. For *dates* use cardinal numbers, except for the first; for example, the first of the month:

C'est le premier mai.

le trente juin

le huit juillet

le onze août

} do NOT remove the e from le

2 For *kings* and *queens* use cardinal numbers except for the first; for example:

François I — François Premier (if spoken)

Louis XIV — Louis Quatorze (if spoken)

3. Expressions referring to numbers in general:

trois mille the number 3000 BUT trois milles =3 miles

une dizaine (de) about 10

une douzaine (de) a dozen

une vingtaine (de) about 20

une centaine (de) about 100

un millier d'hommes about 1000 men

des milliers de moustiques thousands of mosquitoes

plus de trente more than 30 } (Note: **de** + number)

moins de quarante less than 40 }

Weather - le temps

Quel temps fait-il?	Use “faire” except for “pleuvoir”, “neiger” et “geler”; for example: Quel temps fait-il?
Il fait beau.	It is fine.
Il fait mauvais.	It is bad weather.
Il fait lourd.	It is sultry.
Il fait froid.	It is cold.
Il fait chaud.	It is warm.
Il fait du brouillard.	It is foggy / misty.
Il fait du soleil.	It is sunny.
Il fait nuageux.	It is cloudy.
Il fait nuit/jour.	It is dark / light.
Il pleut.	It is raining.
Il neige.	It is snowing.
Il gèle.	It is freezing.

(Never use faire except with impersonal e.g. il fait froid.)

sous la pluie	in the rain
par un temps merveilleux	in splendid weather
par une nuit d'orage	on a stormy night
par un après-midi de juin	on an afternoon in June

56. Countries and Languages

1. Capital letters are used for **nation** and **nationality** but lower case for **language** and **adjective**.

Vive la France!

2. The name of the language is preceded by “le” except when it immediately follows the verb “parler” e.g.

Le français est une langue très précise.	French is a very precise language.
Il parle grec à la vendeuse qui est grecque.	He speaks Greek with the sales lady who is Greek.
Jean habite au Maroc mais il ne parle pas arabe.	John lives in Morocco but does not speak Arabic.

Australian States and Territories

State	Gender	Capital City
Le Victoria / dans le Victoria	<i>m.</i>	à Melbourne
La Nouvelle Galles du sud	<i>f.</i>	à Sydney
Le Queensland	<i>m.</i>	à Brisbane
L'Australie du sud / L'Australie méridionale	<i>f.</i>	à Adélaïde
La Tasmanie	<i>f.</i>	à Hobart
L'Australie occidentale	<i>f.</i>	à Perth
Le Territoire du nord	<i>m.</i>	à Darwin
Le Territoire de la capitale australienne	<i>m.</i>	à Canberra

List of Countries and Nationalities

Country	Gender	Inhabitant	Language/adjective
Afrique	<i>f.</i>	un Africain	africain
Allemagne	<i>f.</i>	un Allemand	allemand
Amérique / Les Etats-Unis	<i>f. or m. pl. Les Etats-Unis</i>	un Américain	américain
Angleterre	<i>f.</i>	un Anglais	anglais
Australie	<i>f.</i>	un Australien	australien
Belgique	<i>f.</i>	un Belge	belge
Brésil	<i>m.</i>	un Brésilien	brésilien
Canada	<i>m.</i>	un Canadien	canadien
Chine	<i>f.</i>	un Chinois	chinois
Corée	<i>f.</i>	un Coréen	coréen
Danemark	<i>m.</i>	un Danois	danois
Ecosse	<i>f.</i>	un Ecossais	écossais
Egypte	<i>f.</i>	un Egyptien	égyptien
Espagne	<i>f.</i>	un Espagnol	espagnol
France	<i>f.</i>	un Français	français
Grèce	<i>f.</i>	un Grec, une Grecque	grec (grecque)
Inde	<i>f.</i>	un Indien	indien
Indonésie	<i>f.</i>	un Indonésien	indonésien
Irlande	<i>f.</i>	un Irlandais	irlandais
Italie	<i>f.</i>	un Italien	italien
Japon	<i>m.</i>	un Japonais	japonais
Luxembourg	<i>m.</i>	un Luxembourgeois	luxembourgeois
Malaisie	<i>f.</i>	un Malais	malais
Maroc	<i>m.</i>	un Marocain	marocain
Mexique	<i>m.</i>	un Mexicain	mexicain
Norvège	<i>f.</i>	un Norvégien	norvégien
Nouvelle-Zélande	<i>f.</i>	un Néo-Zélandais	néo-zélandais
Pologne	<i>f.</i>	un Polonais	polonaise
Portugal	<i>m.</i>	un Portugais	portugais
Russie	<i>f.</i>	un Russe	russe
Suède	<i>f.</i>	un Suédois	suédois
Suisse	<i>f.</i>	un Suisse	suisse
Vietnam	<i>m.</i>	un Vietnamien	vietnamien

To and From with Countries and Towns

	Masculine countries and provinces	Feminine countries and provinces	Plural countries	Islands and towns	Notes	
To	<i>All take a capital letter.</i> (à + le) = au au Japon au Canada au Danemark au Mexique dans le Berry dans le Midi de la France	en en Australie en France en Allemagne en Chine en Provence en Normandie	(à + les) = aux aux Etats-Unis aux Philippines	à à Malte à Chypre	à à Paris à Rouen à Lyon à Londres à Perth	No masculine country ends with "e", except le Mexique. Some towns retain the article: Le Caire, Le Havre Au Caire to Cairo Au Havre to Le Havre
From	(de + le) = du du Japon du Canada du Danemark du Mexique du Berry	de d'Australie de France d'Allemagne de Chine de Provence de Normandie	(de + les) = des des Etats-Unis des Philippines	de de Malte de Chypre	de de Paris de Rouen de Lyon de Londres de Melbourne de Perth	du Caire from Cairo du Havre from Le Havre
Inhabitants	<i>All take a capital letter.</i> un Japonais une Japonaise	un Français une Française	un Américain une Américaine	un Maltais une Maltaise	un Parisien une Parisienne	
Languages	<i>All are lowercase. All are masculine</i> Je parle japonais. No article is used with "parler" Je parle français.	Je parle français.		Je parle maltais.	Je parle français. <i>but</i> Je parle bien le français. J'étudie le français.	
Adjectives of Nationalities	<i>All use lower case and follow the noun.</i> une image japonaise une région provençale	une famille française	une ville américaine	une croix maltaise	une rue parisienne	



57. Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes

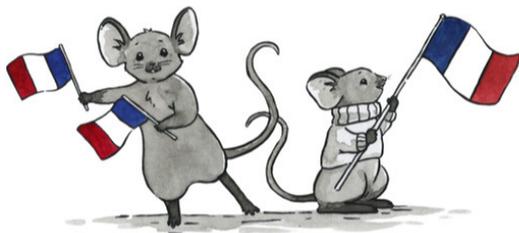
(Usually from Latin and Greek - extend the variety and number of words)

Prefix in French	Sense	French Example	Meaning	English Word Using The Same Prefix
a	towards	amener apporter	to fetch (people) to fetch (things)	approach (go towards)
anté	before (time)	antédiluvien (<i>adj.</i>)	before the flood	anteroom
anti	against	Monsieur l'Antichrist (Camus: <i>L'Etranger</i>)	against Christ	antidote
bi, bis	two, twice	bis (French house number plates 2A, etc.)	"encore" at a concert	biscuit (literally twice cooked) bivalve
cir	around	cirque (Piccadilly Circus)	circular place	circumference (to go around the edge)
dé, dis	English "un-", down from	défaire déménager	undo / to move house/ (lit. to undo a household)	derail decontaminate defuse disfigure disperse
em, en	take away from speaker	emmener emporter	to take away (people) to take away (things)	enervate (to take away the strength of)
en	in	enlever enivrer enrichir	to kidnap to intoxicate to enrich	inquire (to look into) indoctrinate inhume (bury)
ex, extra	out of	excommunication extraordinaire	out of community out of the ordinary	exhume (dig corpse out of ground) extrasensory (beyond normal sense)
im, in	-less, not	impossible inutile	impossible (not possible) useless	immortal (not mortal) impersonal (not personal)
inter	between	intervenir	to intervene (come between)	interval (period between)
per	across, through	perforer perceuse (<i>f.</i>)	to go through (e.g. paper) drill	permeate (to seep or soak through) percolator (coffee is percolated)
pré	before (time)	préface (<i>f.</i>)	introduction before chapter	preclassical (before the classical era)
re, ré	again	refaire réunir	to do again to unite again	revue (what is seen again – a show) reunite
sub	under	submersion subir	to undergo	submarine (underwater vessel)
sur	on, over	surmonter survivre	to overcome to survive (live on)	surrealist (over normal reality) surplus (over what is needed) surtax (extra tax added)
tra, trans	across	transatlantique traverser traduire	across the Atlantic to go across translate (across language)	transport (carry across) transmit (send across)
tri	three times	trilogie (<i>f.</i>)	trio / trimester / triangle	tricycle (three wheeler) trilingual (speaks three languages)
uni	one/once	unicorne (<i>m.</i>) unique	animal with one horn only one of its kind	uniform (all of one type) united (as one)

Suffixes

	Suffix	Meaning	Example
1.	-ade -age -ment -tion/-sion -ture/-ure	act of	promenade (act of walking) dépannage comportement, mouvement apparition, édition, révolution, omission couverture, garniture, coiffure
2.	-tude -té -esse	-ness, -ty	foultitude, certitude, solitude bonté, liberté, fraternité, égalité jeunesse, paresse, vieillesse
3.	-cule -eau/-ot -ette	diminutive	canicule (minuscule = <i>adj.</i>), monticule agneau, chiot, îlot, morceau, poteau, pourceau allumette, baguette, chaussette, fillette, fourchette
4.	-ée	-ful, contents of	gorgée, poignée, fournée (batch of bread from the oven = le four)
5.	-ance -ence	result of	résistance existence
6.	-aire -and/ant -er/-ier -eur	person who	bibliothécaire, libraire, propriétaire marchand, commerçant boucher, charcutier, pompier acteur, directeur, explorateur
7a.	-iste	profession	alpiniste, bouquiniste, journaliste, pompiste
7b.	-ogue	profession	géologue, vaccinologue
7c.	-ain -ais -ien -ois	native of	Mexicain, Marocain, mondain Anglais, Français, Polonais Indien, Canadien, Martien Danois, Suédois, villageois
8.	-eux	-ful, -ous, -y	curieux, heureux, peureux
9.	-able -ible -uble	able to	aimable, capable, confortable, indiscutable, véritable incorrigible, impossible soluble
10.	-al -esque -if	quality of	amical, brutal chevaleresque, pittoresque massif, oisif, pensif





Pas à pas *Nouvelle édition*

Adrienne Horrigan and Margaret Rogers wrote the four Exercises in French Workbooks for Years 7/8, 9, 10, 11, following Margaret's release of her HSC Exercises in French in 1978. Later, in response to their students' wish for a single compact, volume of notes, to cover French grammar up to early tertiary, *Pas à Pas* was published, but after two editions and nine reprints the copies ran out.

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