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## SUMMARY OF TENSES

The following is a summary of the French tenses and their approximate English equivalents. Each of these tenses is discussed separately in the sections that follow. Notes on usage and charts for each category of [verbs](#) (**er, ir, re**) are also included, as are [conjugations](#) of **être** and **avoir**.

<i>French</i>	<i>English</i>	
	<b>Present Tenses</b>	
<b>Présent (aimer):</b> J'aime	<b>Present:</b> I love	<b>Present Continuous:</b> I am loving
	<b>Past Tenses</b>	
<b>Imparfait:</b> J'aimais	<b>Imperfect:</b> I loved	<b>Past Continuous:</b> I was loving
<b>Passé simple:</b> J'aimai	<b>Past Historic:</b> I loved	
	<b>Perfect Tense</b>	
<b>Passé composé:</b> J'ai aimé	<b>Present Perfect</b> I have loved	<b>Simple Past:</b> I loved
	<b>Future Tenses</b>	
<b>Futur simple:</b> J'aimerai	<b>Future (will + inf.)</b> I will love	<b>Future Continuous:</b> I will be loving
<b>Futur proche (with aller):</b> Je vais aimer	<b>Future (going to + inf.):</b> I am going to love	
<b>Futur antérieur:</b> J'aurai aimé	<b>Future Perfect:</b> I will have loved	<b>Future Perfect Continuous:</b> I will have been loving
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<b>Passé antérieur:</b> J'eus aimé	<b>Literary Past Perfect:</b> I had loved	
<b>Plus-que-parfait:</b> J'avais aimé	<b>Past Perfect:</b> I had loved	<b>Past Perfect Continuous:</b> I had been loving
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<b>Conditionnel présent:</b> J'aimerais	<b>Present Conditional:</b> I would love	
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<b>Présent du subjonctif:</b> que j'aime	<b>Present Subjunctive:</b> that I love	
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<b>Passé du subjonctif:</b> que j'aie aimé	<b>Present Perfect Subjunctive:</b> that I would have loved	

**Plus-que-parfait du subjonctif:**  
que j'eusse aimé

**Past Perfect Subjunctive:**  
that I had loved

# ÊTRE & AVOIR

## Conjugations

The French **verbs** **être** (to be) and **avoir** (to have) are **irregular**. They are **conjugated** as follows:

### Être:

#### Simple Tenses

##### **Present:**

Je **suis**  
Tu **es**  
Il **est**  
Nous **sommes**  
Vous **êtes**  
Ils **sont**

##### **Imperfect:**

J'**étais**  
Tu **étais**  
Il **était**  
Nous **étions**  
Vous **étiez**  
Ils **étaient**

##### **Past Historic:**

Je **fus**  
Tu **fus**  
Il **fut**  
Nous **fûmes**  
Vous **fûtes**  
Ils **furent**

##### **Future:**

Je **serai**  
Tu **seras**  
Il **sera**  
Nous **serons**  
Vous **serez**  
Ils **seront**

#### Compound Tenses

##### **Present Perfect:**

J'**ai été**  
Tu **as été**  
Il **a été**  
Nous **avons été**  
Vous **avez été**  
Ils **ont été**

##### **Past Perfect:**

J'**avais été**  
Tu **avais été**  
Il **avait été**  
Nous **avions été**  
Vous **aviez été**  
Ils **ont été**

##### **Literary Past Perfect:**

J'**eus été**  
Tu **eus été**  
Il **eut été**  
Nous **eûmes été**  
Vous **eûtes été**  
Ils **eurent été**

##### **Future Perfect:**

J'**aurai été**  
Tu **auras été**  
Il **aura été**  
Nous **aurons été**  
Vous **aurez été**  
Ils **auront été**

#### Conditionals

##### **Present Conditional:**

Je **serais**  
Tu **serais**  
Il **serait**  
Nous **serions**

##### **Past Conditional:**

J'**aurais été**  
Tu **aurais été**  
Il **aurait été**  
Nous **aurions été**

Vous **seriez**  
Ils **seraient**

Vous **auriez été**  
Ils **auraient été**

### Subjunctives

#### **Present Subjunctive:**

Que je **sois**  
Que tu **sois**  
Qu'il **soit**  
Que nous **soyons**  
Que vous **soyez**  
Qu'ils **soient**

#### **Imperfect Subjunctive:**

Que je **fusse**  
Que tu **fusses**  
Qu'il **fût**  
Que nous **fussions**  
Que vous **fussiez**  
Qu'ils **fussent**

#### **Present Perfect Subjunctive:**

Que j'**aie été**  
Que tu **aies été**  
Qu'il **ait été**  
Que nous **ayons été**  
Que vous **ayez été**  
Qu'ils **aient été**

#### **Past Perfect Subjunctive:**

Que j'**eusse été**  
Que tu **eusses été**  
Qu'il **eût été**  
Que nous **eussions été**  
Que vous **eussiez été**  
Qu'ils **eussent été**

### Imperative Forms

**Sois**  
**Soyons**  
**Soyez**

singular / informal  
1st person plural / informal  
2nd person singular formal / plural informal

### **USAGE:**

As an auxiliary, **être** (*to be*) is used with:

1. The following sixteen verbs:

<b>aller</b>	to go
<b>arriver</b>	to arrive
<b>descendre</b>	to go / come down
<b>devenir</b>	to become
<b>entrer</b>	to go / come in
<b>monter</b>	to go / come up
<b>mourir</b>	to die
<b>naître</b>	to be born

<b>partir</b>	to leave
<b>passer</b>	to go through
<b>rentrer</b>	to go home
<b>rester</b>	to remain
<b>retourner</b>	to return
<b>sortir</b>	to go / come out
<b>tomber</b>	to fall
<b>venir</b>	to come

#### **EXAMPLES:**

Elle **est** arrivée ce matin.  
She arrived this morning.

Elle **est** née hier.  
She was born yesterday.

2. All Reflexive Verbs:

Ils se **sont** lavés.  
They *washed* themselves.

3. Verbs in Passive Voice:

Ils ont **été** reçus.  
They have *been* received.

**NOTE:** Some verbs can take either **être** or **avoir** as an auxiliary. As a general rule, the auxiliary avoir is used to emphasize an action, while **être** is used to express a state or condition.

J'**ai écrit** un livre.  
I wrote a book.

C'**est écrit** dans ce livre.  
It *is written* in this book.

**Passer** can also be conjugated with **avoir**:

Il **a passé** trois jours à Paris.  
He *spent* three days in Paris.

**Descendre, monter, rentrer, retourner,** and **sortir** are conjugated with **avoir** instead of **être** when they are followed by a direct object.

Les élèves **sont sortis** de la salle.  
The students *left* the room.

Les élèves **ont sorti** leurs cahiers.  
The students *got out* their workbooks.

**Avoir:**

Simple Tenses

**Present:**

J'**ai**  
Tu **as**  
Il **a**  
Nous **avons**  
Vous **avez**  
Ils **ont**

**Imperfect:**

J'**avais**  
Tu **avais**  
Il **avait**  
Nous **avions**  
Vous **aviez**  
Ils **avaient**

**Past Historic:**

J'**eus**  
Tu **eus**  
Il **eut**  
Nous **eûmes**  
Vous **eûtes**  
Ils **eurent**

**Future:**

J'**aurai**  
Tu **auras**  
Il **aura**  
Nous **aurons**  
Vous **aurez**  
Ils **auront**

Compound Tenses

**Present Perfect:**

**Past Perfect:**

J'ai eu  
Tu as eu  
Il a eu  
Nous avons eu  
Vous avez eu  
Ils ont eu

J'avais eu  
Tu avais eu  
Il avait eu  
Nous avions eu  
Vous aviez eu  
Ils avaient eu

***Literary Past Perfect:***

J'eus eu  
Tu eus eu  
Il eut eu  
Nous eûmes eu  
Vous eûtes eu  
Ils eurent eu

***Future Perfect:***

J'aurai eu  
Tu auras eu  
Il aura eu  
Nous aurons eu  
Vous aurez eu  
Ils auront eu

**Conditionals**

***Present Conditional:***

J'aurais  
Tu aurais  
Il aurait  
Nous aurions  
Vous auriez  
Ils auraient

***Past Conditional:***

J'aurais eu  
Tu aurais eu  
Il aurait eu  
Nous aurions eu  
Vous auriez eu  
Ils auraient eu

**Subjunctives**

***Present Subjunctive:***

Que j'aie  
Que tu aies  
Qu'il ait  
Que nous ayons  
Que vous ayez  
Qu'ils aient

***Imperfect Subjunctive:***

Que j'eusse  
Que tu eusses  
Qu'il eût  
Que nous eussions  
Que vous eussiez  
Qu'ils eussent

***Present Perfect Subjunctive:***

Que j'aie eu  
Que tu aies eu  
Qu'il ait eu  
Que nous ayons eu  
Que vous ayez eu  
Qu'ils aient eu

***Past Perfect Subjunctive:***

Que j'eusse eu  
Que tu eusses eu  
Qu'il eût eu  
Que nous eussions eu  
Que vous eussiez eu  
Qu'ils eussent eu

**Imperative Forms**

<b>Aie</b>	singular / informal
<b>Ayons</b>	1st person plural / informal
<b>Ayez</b>	2nd person singular formal / plural informal

**USAGE:**



As an [auxiliary](#), **avoir** is used:

1. With all transitive verbs:

Elle **a** appris sa leçon.  
She *has* learned her lesson.

2. With most intransitive verbs:

Elle **a** dîné.  
She *has* dined.

Elle **avait** dîné.  
She *had* dined.

3. With all impersonal verbs:

Il **a** neigé.  
It *had* snowed.

Il **avait** neigé.  
It *had* snowed.

4. In forming the Present Perfect Tense of **être** and **avoir**:

j'**ai** eu...  
I *have* had...

j'**ai** été...  
I *have* been...

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Reflexive Verbs](#)

[Passive Voice](#)

## PRESENT TENSE

The French Present Tense (Présent) is formed with the following **verb** endings:

1st group: **-er**

**-e**  
**-es**  
**-e**  
**-ons**  
**-ez**  
**-ont**

2nd group: **-ir**

**-is**  
**-is**  
**-it**  
**-issons**  
**-issez**  
**-issent**

3rd group: **-re**

**-s**  
**-s**  
**---**  
**-ons**  
**-ez**  
**-ent**

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer** - to like

J'**aime**  
Tu **aimes**  
Il **aime**  
Nous **aimons**  
Vous **aimez**  
Ils **aiment**

**finir** - finish

Je **finis**  
Tu **finis**  
Il **finit**  
Nous **finissons**  
Vous **finissez**  
Ils **finissent**

**rendre** - to make, render, or return

Je **rends**  
Tu **rends**  
Il **rend**  
Nous **rendons**  
Vous **rendez**  
Ils **rendent**

### USAGE:

The Present Tense is used to express:

1. An action or state presently occurring:

L'enfant **joue** dans le jardin.  
The child *is playing* in the garden.

2. A general fact that is permanently true:

La terre **est** ronde.  
The earth *is* round.

3. An habitual action:

Tous les matins, je me **lève** à sept heures.  
Every morning I *wake up* at seven o'clock.

4. A progressive action:

Je **lis** le journal.  
I *am reading* the newspaper.

**NOTE:** It is also used for the "universal present," a sentiment that may extend indefinitely into the past and forward into the future:

Pierre qui roule **n'amasse** pas mousse.  
A rolling stone *gathers* no moss.

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

## IMPERFECT TENSE

The French Imperfect Tense (Imparfait) is formed using the following [verb](#) endings:

*1st group: -er*

-ais  
-ais  
-ait  
-ions  
-iez  
-aient

*2nd group: -ir*

-issais  
-issais  
-issait  
-issions  
-issiez  
-issaient

*3rd group: -re*

-ais  
-ais  
-ait  
-ions  
-iez  
-aient

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer** - to like

J'**aimais**  
Tu **aimais**  
Il **aimait**  
Nous **aimions**  
Vous **aimiez**  
Ils **aimaient**

**finir** - finish

Je **finissais**  
Tu **finissais**  
Il **finissait**  
Nous **finissions**  
Vous **finissiez**  
Ils **finissaient**

**rendre** - to give back, return

Je **rendais**  
Tu **rendais**  
Il **rendait**  
Nous **rendions**  
Vous **rendiez**  
Ils **rendaient**

### USAGE:

The Imperfect Tense (Imparfait) is used to express:

1. An act that was in process in the past:

Le soleil **se couchait**.  
The sun *was setting*.

2. Two actions taking place at the same time in the past:

Pendant que vous **étiez** en France, j'**étais** en Angleterre.  
While you *were* in France, I *was* in England.

3. An action that was repeated in the past:

Chaque année, je **passais** l'été à la plage.  
Every year I *spent* the summer at the beach.

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Past Historic Tense](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Literary Past Perfect](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

## PAST HISTORIC TENSE

The French Past Historic Tense (Passé simple) is formed using the following [verb](#) endings:

1st group: **-er**

-ai  
-as  
-a  
-âmes  
-âtes  
-èrent

2nd group: **-ir**

-is  
-is  
-it  
-îmes  
-îtes  
-irent

3rd group: **-re**

-is  
-is  
-it  
-îmes  
-îtes  
-irent

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer** - *to like*

J'**aimai**  
Tu **aimas**  
Il **aima**  
Nous **aimâmes**  
Vous **aimâtes**  
Ils **aimèrent**

**finir** - *finish*

Je **finis**  
Tu **finis**  
Il **finit**  
Nous **finîmes**  
Vous **finîtes**  
Ils **finirent**

**rendre** - *to give back, return*

Je **rendis**  
Tu **rendis**  
Il **rendit**  
Nous **rendîmes**  
Vous **rendîtes**  
Ils **rendirent**

### USAGE:

The Past Historic (Passé simple) is used to express an action that happened at a precise moment in the past. It most often occurs in narration and is usually replaced in spoken French by the [Present Perfect](#) (Passé composé).

### EXAMPLE:

Soudain, quelqu'un **frappa** à la porte.  
Suddenly, someone *knocked* at the door.

### Related Topics:

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Imperfect Tense](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Literary Past Perfect](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

## PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

The French Present Perfect Tense (Passé composé) is formed with the [auxiliary verb \(être or avoir\)](#) [conjugated](#) in the Present Tense + [past participle](#):

J'ai donné	Nous avons donné
Tu as donné	Vous avez donné
Il a donné	Ils ont donné

### EXAMPLES:

Il **est allé** à Dijon.  
He *went* to Dijon.

Elle **a visité** sa soeur à Cologne.  
She *visited* her sister in Cologne.

**NOTE:** [Intransitive verbs](#) generally form their Present Perfect Tense with [être](#).

### EXAMPLES:

Je suis allé(e)	Nous sommes allé(e)s
Tu es allé(e)	Vous êtes allé(e)s
Il est allé / Elle est allée	Ils sont allés / Elles sont allées

### USAGE:

The Present Perfect Tense (Passé composé) is used to express an action that occurred at a specific moment in the past:

Hier je **suis allé** en ville.  
Yesterday I *went* to town.

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Literary Past Perfect](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Past Participles](#)

## FUTURE TENSE

The French Future Tense (Futur simple) is formed using the following [verb](#) endings:

1st group: <b>-er</b>	2nd group: <b>-ir</b>	3rd group: <b>-re</b>
-erai	-irai	-rai
-eras	-iras	-ras
-era	-ira	-ra
-erons	-irons	-rons
-erez	-irez	-rez
-eront	-iront	-ront

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer - to like**

J'aimerai  
Tu aimeras  
Il aimera  
Nous aimerons  
Vous aimerez  
Ils aimeront

**finir - finish**

Je finirai  
Tu finiras  
Il finira  
Nous finirons  
Vous finirez  
Ils finiront

**rendre - to give back, return**

Je rendrai  
Tu rendras  
Il rendra  
Nous rendrons  
Vous rendrez  
Ils rendront

### USAGE:

The Future Tense is used to express:

1. An action that will take place in the near future:  
Ils **arriveront** à trois heures.  
They *will come* at three o'clock.
2. An action that will take place at a given time in the future:  
La conférence **commencera** lundi matin.  
The conference *will begin* Monday morning.
3. A present intention that will be realized in the future:  
J'**irai** au marché samedi matin.  
I *will go* to the market on Saturday morning.

**NOTE:** Where English uses [Present Tense](#) to describe an anticipated event, French sometimes employs Future Tense.

### EXAMPLE:

Dites-moi quand il **viendra**.  
Tell me when he *comes*.

**NOTE:** French also uses a future tense formed with **aller** (to go). It parallels the English "**going to**" + **infinitive** (e.g., *He's going to go to a movie with his girlfriend.*).

**EXAMPLES:**

Je **vais visiter** mon oncle à Paris.  
I'm *going to visit* my uncle in Paris.

Nous **allons voyager** à Bordeaux par bateau.  
We're *going to travel* to Bordeaux by boat.

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Future Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditionals](#)



## FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

The French Future Perfect Tense (Futur antérieur) is formed with the [Future Tense](#) of the [auxiliary verb \(être or avoir\)](#) + [past participle](#).

Only the auxiliary is [conjugated](#).

For verbs conjugated with **avoir**, the pattern is:

J' <b>aurai aimé</b>	Nous <b>aurons aimé</b>
Tu <b>auras aimé</b>	Vous <b>aurez aimé</b>
Il <b>aura aimé</b>	Ils <b>auront aimé</b>

With intransitive verbs taking the auxiliary **être**, the pattern is:

Je <b>serai allé(e)</b>	Nous <b>serons allé(e)s</b>
Tu <b>seras allé(e)</b>	Vous <b>serez allé(e)s</b>
Il <b>sera allé</b>	Ils <b>seront allés</b>

### EXAMPLES:

Elle **aura fait** ses achats.  
She *will have made* her purchases.

J'**aurai reçu** l'abonnement avant septembre.  
I *will have received* the subscription by September.

### USAGE:

The Future Perfect Tense is used to express:

1. An action that has to take place before another one can occur:  
Dès que j'**aurai terminé** mon travail, je **viendrai** te voir.  
As soon as I've finished (*will have finished*) my work, I *will come* to see you.
2. An hypothesis or assumption:  
Il **aura** sans doute **fini** bientôt.  
He *will surely be finished* soon.  
Vous **aurez** sans doute mal **entendu**.  
You *will undoubtedly have misunderstood*.
3. An action that will end at a precise date in the future:  
Dès le mois prochain, nous **aurons terminé** ce projet.  
By next month, we *will have finished* this project.

### EXAMPLES:

Elle **aura remboursé** les clients.  
She *will have reimbursed* the clients.

J'**aurai trouvé** du travail avant septembre.

I *will have found* some work by September.

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Future Tense](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Participles](#)

## LITERARY PAST PERFECT

The Literary Past Perfect (Passé antérieur) is formed with the [auxiliary verb conjugated](#) in the [Past Historic](#) (Passé simple) + **past participle**.

For verbs conjugated with **avoir**, the pattern is:

J' <b>eus aimé</b>	Nous <b>eûmes aimé</b>
Tu <b>eus aimé</b>	Vous <b>eûtes aimé</b>
Il <b>eut aimé</b>	Ils <b>eurent aimé</b>

With [intransitive verbs](#) taking the [auxiliary être](#), the pattern is:

Je <b>fus allé(e)</b>	Nous <b>fûmes allé(e)s</b>
Tu <b>fus allé(e)</b>	Vous <b>fûtes allé(e)s</b>
Il <b>fut allé</b>	Ils <b>furent allés</b>

### EXAMPLES:

Au bruit qui eut lieu, la multitude **fut confondue**.  
At the sound which arose, the multitude *was confounded*.

Vous **eûtes écrit** des lettres.  
You *had written* letters

Ils **eurent appris** des langues étrangères.  
They *had learned* foreign languages.

### USAGE:

It is used to express:

1. A past action that is immediately preceded by another:

Dès qu'il **eut mangé**, il nous quitta.  
As soon as he *had eaten*, he left us.

2. An action that occurred rapidly:

Ils **furent vite arrivés**.  
They *came* quickly.

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

## PAST PERFECT TENSE

The French Past Perfect Tense (Plus-que-parfait) is formed with the [auxiliary verb \(être or avoir\)](#) in the [Imperfect Tense](#) + **past participle**. Only the auxiliary is [conjugated](#).

For verbs conjugated with **avoir**, the pattern is:

J' <b>avais aimé</b>	Nous <b>avons aimé</b>
Tu <b>avais aimé</b>	Vous <b>aviez aimé</b>
Il <b>avait aimé</b>	Ils <b>avaient aimé</b>

With [intransitive verbs](#) taking the [auxiliary être](#), the pattern is:

J' <b>étais allé(e)</b>	Nous <b>étions allé(e)s</b>
Tu <b>étais allé(e)</b>	Vous <b>étiez allé(e)s</b>
Il <b>était allé</b>	Ils <b>étaient allés</b>

### EXAMPLES:

Ils **avaient travaillé** pendant longtemps.  
They *had worked* for a long time.

Elles **étaient revenues**.  
They *had returned*.

### USAGE:

The Past Perfect Tense is used:

1. To express an action in the remote past or to narrate a story.

Les diplomates **avaient voyagé** en Russie.  
The diplomats *had traveled* to Russia.

2. To express an action in the past that was interrupted by the occurrence of another action.

Nous **étions** à peine **partis** quand il commença à pleuvoir.  
We *had just left* when it began to rain.

### **Related Topics:**

[Être and Avoir: Conjugations](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Past Participles](#)

## CONDITIONAL MOOD

There are two Conditionals in French and they are:

The *Present Conditional*, which is formed by adding the following verb endings:

1st group: <b>-er</b>	2nd group: <b>-ir</b>	3rd group: <b>-re</b>
-erais	-irais	-rais
-erais	-irais	-rais
-erait	-irait	-rait
-erions	-irions	-rions
-eriez	-iriez	-riez
-eraient	-iraient	-raient

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer** - to like

J'**aimerais**  
Tu **aimerais**  
Il **aimerait**  
Nous **aimerions**  
Vous **aimeriez**  
Ils **aimeraient**

**finir** - to finish

Je **finirais**  
Tu **finirais**  
Il **finirait**  
Nous **finirions**  
Vous **finiriez**  
Ils **finiraient**

**rendre** - to give back, return

Je **rendrais**  
Tu **rendrais**  
Il **rendrait**  
Nous **rendrions**  
Vous **rendriez**  
Ils **rendraient**

The *Past Conditional*, which is formed with the auxiliary (être or avoir) conjugated in the Conditional + **past participle**.

**aimer** / to like

J'**aurais aimé**  
Tu **aurais aimé**  
Il **aurait aimé**  
Nous **aurions aimé**  
Vous **auriez aimé**  
Ils **auraient aimé**

**aller** / to go

Je **serais allé**  
Tu **serais allé**  
Il **serait allé**  
Nous **serions allés**  
Vous **seriez allés**  
Ils **seraient allés**

### USAGE:

The conditional is used to introduce a hypothesis or a supposition. It can express:

1. A future action that will occur only if a certain condition is met:

S'il **était forcé** de partir, nous le **suivrions**.  
If he *were forced* to leave, we *would follow* him.

2. A present or past action the outcome of which depends on an unrealized condition:

Si j'**avais** de l'argent, j'**achèterais** une nouvelle voiture.  
If I *had* some money, I *would buy* a new car.

Si j'**avais su**, je **serais venu** plus tôt.  
*Had* I known, I *would have come* earlier.

3. In an *independent* or *main clause*, it can express:

An hypothesis about a past action:

Une fête **aurait eu** lieu au château.  
A party (supposedly) *took place* at the castle.

A desire:

**Pourriez-vous vous déplacer?**  
Could you *move*?

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Imperfect Tense](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Participles](#)

[Conditionals](#)

## SUBJUNCTIVE

The French **subjunctive** is most commonly used in a **subordinate clause**, but may also be found in a **main clause**. It occurs in several tenses. The two most frequently used are:

The *Present Subjunctive* is formed as follows:

1st group: <b>-er</b>	2nd group: <b>-ir</b>	3rd group: <b>-re</b>
-e	-isse	-e
-es	-isses	-es
-e	-isse	-e
-ions	-issions	-ions
-iez	-issiez	-iez
-ent	-issent	-ent

### EXAMPLES:

**aimer - to like**

que j'**aime**  
que tu **aimes**  
qu'il **aime**  
que nous **aimions**  
que vous **aimiez**  
qu'ils **aiment**

**finir - to finish**

que je **finisse**  
que tu **finisses**  
qu'il **finisse**  
que nous **finissions**  
que vous **finissiez**  
qu'ils **finissent**

**rendre - to return**

que je **rende**  
que tu **rendes**  
qu'il **rende**  
que nous **rendions**  
que vous **rendiez**  
qu'ils **rendent**

The *Past Subjunctive* is formed with the **auxiliary** (conjugated in Present Subjunctive) + **past participle**. Only the auxiliary is **conjugated**.

**aimer / to like**

que j'**aie aimé**  
que tu **aies aimé**  
qu'il **ait aimé**  
que nous **ayons aimé**  
que vous **ayez aimé**  
qu'ils **aient aimé**

**aller / to go**

que je **sois allé**  
que tu **sois allé**  
qu'il **soit allé**  
que nous **soyons allés**  
que vous **soyez allés**  
qu'ils **soient allés**

There are two other less frequently used forms of the subjunctive:

The *Imperfect Subjunctive* is formed by adding the following **verb** endings:

1st group: <b>-er</b>	2nd group: <b>-ir</b>	3rd group: <b>-re</b>
-asse	-isse	-isse
-asses	-isses	-isses
-ât	-ît	-ît
-assions	-issions	-issions
-assiez	-issiez	-issiez
-assent	-issent	-issent

The *Past Perfect Subjunctive* is formed with the **auxiliary** (imperfect subjunctive) + **past participle**.

**aimer - to like**

que j'**eusse aimé**  
que tu **eusses aimé**  
qu'il **eût aimé**  
que nous **eussions aimé**  
que vous **eussiez aimé**  
qu'ils **eussent aimé**

**aller - to go**

que je **fusse allé**  
que tu **fusses allé**  
qu'il **fût allé**  
que nous **fussions allés**  
que vous **fussiez allés**  
qu'ils **fussent allés**

### **USAGE:**

The Subjunctive Mood is used in French in [subordinate clauses](#) to express an eventuality, an hypothesis, a desire, doubt, or wish.

### **EXAMPLES:**

Nous y allons, qu'il le **veuille** ou non.  
We are going there, whether he *wants* us to or not.

Je veux que vous **fassiez** cela.  
I would like you *to do* this.

**NOTE:** The subjunctive may also be found in a [main](#) clause or simple statement.

### **EXAMPLE:**

Que Dieu vous **bénisse**.  
God *bless* you.

### **Related Topics:**

[Present Tense](#)

[Imperfect Tense](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)



## Participles

The Infinitive, Past Participle and Present Participle are grouped together for functional reasons. These verb forms do not inflect for person and number in the same way as all the other tenses.

## PRESENT PARTICIPLES

The Present Participles (equivalent to the English "ing" form) of all French verbs (except être, avoir, and savoir) is formed by dropping the "-ons" of the first person plural (**nous** form) of the Present Tense and adding "-ant."

### EXAMPLES:

<u>Infinitive:</u>	regarder	(to look)
<i>1st person plural</i>	regardons	(we look)
<i>Present Participle</i>	<b>regardant</b>	(looking)

<u>Infinitive:</u>	vouloir	(to want)
<i>1st person plural:</i>	voulons	(we want)
<i>Present Participle:</i>	<b>voulant</b>	(wanting)

Present Participles for être, avoir, and **savoir** must be learned:

<u>Infinitive:</u>	être	
<i>Present Participle:</i>	<b>étant</b>	(being)

<u>Infinitive:</u>	avoir	
<i>Present Participle:</i>	<b>ayant</b>	(having)

<u>Infinitive:</u>	savoir	
<i>Present Participle:</i>	<b>sachant</b>	(knowing)

### USAGE:

Present Participles have several uses in French. They may serve as:

1. Adjectives, in which case they must agree in number and gender with the noun(s) they modify.

un poème **émouvant**  
a *moving* poem

une conversation **stimulante**  
a *stimulating* conversation

des jardins **florissants**  
*flowering* gardens

des nouvelles **surprenantes**  
*surprising* news

2. Verbs describing a secondary or peripheral action in a sentence. This construction has a parallel in English and requires that the participle be invariable.

en **courant** vers le marché  
*running* to the market

en **faisant** ceci et cela

*doing* this and that

Ils le reconduisirent **en chantant**.  
They led him back *singing*.

Un homme **tenant** une lampe à la main s'avança vers moi.  
A man *holding* a lamp in his hand approached me.

**NOTE:** Present Participles may be introduced by the [preposition "en"](#) and used adverbially. These phrases parallel the English "*in doing,*" "*by doing,*" "*while/when doing.*"

Elle se sentait mal **en voyageant** par avion.  
She felt sick *traveling* by airplane.

Nous avons fait le tour de Londres **en assistant** à la conférence.  
We toured London *while attending* the conference.

**En dégustant** le vin, ils ont été surpris.  
*On tasting* the wine, they were surprised.

**NOTE:** In the participial phrase with "**en**," the action described by the participle always refers to the subject of the sentence.

**Related Topics:**

[Past Participles](#)

[Prepositions](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

## PAST PARTICIPLES

The French [Past Participles](#) are derived from [verbs](#) and are formed as follows:

1. "Er" [verbs](#) add **é** in place of their [infinitive](#) ending:

<i>Infinitive:</i>	parler	(to speak)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>parlé</b>	(spoken)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	manger	(to eat)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>mangé</b>	(eaten)

**NOTE:** The [irregular verbs être](#) and [naître](#) also have [past participles](#) ending in "é":

<i>Infinitive:</i>	être	(to be)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>été</b>	(been)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	naître	(to be born)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>né</b>	(was/were born)

2. "Ir" [verbs](#) and many [irregular verbs](#) ending in "ir" form their [past participles](#) with an "i" ending.

<i>Infinitive:</i>	choisir	(to choose)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>choisi</b>	(chosen)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	grandir	(to grow)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>grandi</b>	(grown)

3. "Re" [verbs](#) can form their [past participles](#) in several ways. Some examples are:

<i>Infinitive:</i>	rendre	(to return)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>rendu</b>	(returned)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	prendre	(to take)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>pris</b>	(taken)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	éteindre	(to extinguish)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>éteint</b>	(extinguished)

<i>Infinitive:</i>	nuire	(to harm)
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>nui</b>	(harmed)

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Future Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Present Participles](#)

## MODAL AUXILIARIES

French modal auxiliary verbs are combined with infinitives to express such concepts as possibility, necessity, or obligation. They include:

<b>pouvoir</b>	to be able to
<b>devoir</b>	to have to / must
<b>vouloir</b>	to want to
<b>falloir</b>	to have to / must
<b>savoir</b>	to know

These verbs are irregular and are conjugated in the Present Tense as follows:

### **Principal Parts**

Infinitive:

Present Participle:

Past Participle:

**pouvoir**  
**pouvant**  
**pu**

Je **peux** / **puis** (as in puis-je)  
Tu **peux**  
Il **peut**  
Nous **pouvons**  
Vous **pouvez**  
Ils **peuvent**

### **Principal Parts**

Infinitive:

Present Participle:

Past Participle:

**devoir**  
**devant**  
**dû**

Je **dois**  
Tu **dois**  
Il **doit**  
Nous **devons**  
Vous **devez**  
Ils **doivent**

### **Principal Parts**

Infinitive:

Present Participle:

Past Participle:

**vouloir**  
**voulant**  
**voulu**

Je **veux**  
Tu **veux**  
Il **veut**  
Nous **voulons**  
Vous **voulez**  
Ils **veulent**

### **Principal Parts**

Infinitive:

Present Participle:

Past Participle:

**savoir**  
**sachant**  
**su**

Je **sais**  
Tu **sais**

Il **sait**  
Nous **savons**  
Vous **savez**  
Ils **savent**

**NOTE:** Also included among the list of modal verbs is the [impersonal](#) "falloir" (*to be necessary*). It is used only in the third person.

**Principal Parts**

<i>Infinitive:</i>	<b>falloir</b>
<i>Present Participle:</i>	-----
<i>Past Participle:</i>	<b>fallu</b>
<i>Impersonal:</i>	<b>Il faut</b>

**EXAMPLES:**

<b>Il faut</b> que...	<i>It is necessary</i> that...
<b>Il lui faut</b> de l'argent...	<i>He needs</i> money...

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Present Participles](#)

[Past Participles](#)

[Use of the Subjunctive](#)

[Tense Agreement](#)

## REFLEXIVE VERBS

In a [reflexive verb](#), the action is performed by the [subject](#) upon itself; thus, the [subject pronoun](#) and object pronoun refer to the same person.

### EXAMPLES:

Je <b>m'amuse</b>	I <i>amuse myself</i>
Tu <b>t'amuses</b>	You <i>amuse yourself</i>
Il/Elle <b>s'amuse</b>	He/She <i>amuses himself/herself</i>
Nous <b>nous amusons</b>	We <i>amuse ourselves</i>
Vous <b>vous amusez</b>	You <i>amuse yourselves</i>
Ils/Elles <b>s'amusent</b>	They (m. or f.) <i>amuse themselves</i>

**NOTE:** The object pronoun is included in the [Imperative Form](#) of reflexive verbs:

<b>Amuse-toi!</b>	<i>Amuse yourself!</i>
<b>Amusez-vous!</b>	<i>Amuse yourself/-selves! (formal/informal)</i>
<b>Amusons-nous!</b>	<i>Let's amuse ourselves!</i>

**NOTE:** French reflexive verbs frequently drop their object pronouns when translated to English.

Vous <b>vous trompez.</b>	<i>You are mistaken.</i>
Comment <b>t'appelles-tu?</b>	<i>What's your name?</i>
<b>Dépêche-toi!</b>	<i>Hurry up!</i>

Some commonly used reflexive verbs include:

<b>s'amuser</b>	to enjoy oneself, have a good time
<b>s'appeler</b>	to be called
<b>s'arrêter</b>	to stop
<b>s'asseoir</b>	to sit (down)
<b>se battre</b>	to fight
<b>se blesser</b>	to hurt oneself, get hurt
<b>se brosser</b>	to brush oneself
<b>se coucher</b>	to lie down, go to bed, to set (sun)
<b>se dépêcher</b>	to hurry
<b>se déshabiller</b>	to get undressed
<b>s'en aller</b>	to go away
<b>s'endormir</b>	to fall asleep
<b>s'ennuyer</b>	to get bored
<b>se fâcher</b>	to get angry
<b>s'habiller</b>	to dress (oneself), get dressed
<b>se laver</b>	to wash (oneself), get washed
<b>se lever</b>	to get up, to rise (sun)
<b>se marier</b>	to marry, get married
<b>se passer</b>	to happen
<b>se plaindre</b>	to complain
<b>se porter</b>	to feel (of health)
<b>se promener</b>	to take a walk
<b>se rappeler</b>	to recall, remember
<b>se raser</b>	to shave (oneself)
<b>se reposer</b>	to rest

**se réveiller**  
**se sentir**  
**se souvenir de**  
**se taire**  
**se tromper**  
**se trouver**

to wake up  
to feel  
to remember  
to be silent, keep quiet  
to be mistaken, make a mistake  
to be, be situated

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Imperative Form](#)

[Reflexive Pronouns](#)



## IMPERATIVE FORM

The Imperative is used for a command, an order, or a polite request. In French, these forms are derived from the [verb](#) stem in the [Present Tense](#). Only the second person singular (**tu**), first person plural (**nous**), and second person plural (formal and informal) (**vous/vous**) forms are used.

**Viens vite!**  
*Come quickly!*

**Allons danser!**  
*Let's go dancing!*

**Prenez garde!**  
*Be careful!*

**NOTE:** French uses either the formal (**vous**) or the informal (**tu**) form of the Imperative, as the situation dictates.

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Present Tense](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

## PASSIVE VOICE

Passive Voice is used less frequently in French than in English, but the constructions are parallel. It occurs when the order of subject and object are reversed or when the subject is omitted altogether. It is formed using être + past participle. Only être is conjugated.

### Formation in Various Tenses:

#### Present Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **invitent**.                      They *invited* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **sommes invités**.                      We *are invited*.

#### Future Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **inviteront**.                      They *will invite* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **serons invités**.                      We *will be invited*.

#### Imperfect Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **invitaient**.                      They *invited* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **étions invités**.                      We *were invited*.

#### Present Perfect Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **ont invités**.                      They *invited* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **avons été invités**.                      We *have been invited*.

#### Past Perfect Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **avaient invité**.                      They *had invited* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **avions été invités**.                      We *had been invited*.

#### Future Perfect Tense:

**Active:**  
Ils nous **auront invité**.                      They *will have invited* us.

**Passive:**  
Nous **aurons été invités**.                      We *will have been invited*.

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Past Participles](#)

## NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

There are several ways to express negation in French. Each indicates a variation of type and degree. The most frequently used negative words are:

<b>ne ... pas</b>	not	<b>ne ... jamais</b>	never
<b>ne ... point</b>	not at all	<b>ne ... rien</b>	not at all
<b>ne ... plus</b>	no more or no longer	<b>ne ... guère</b>	hardly

And:

<b>ne ... personne</b>	no one	<b>ne ... ni</b>	neither ... nor
<b>ne ... que</b>	only	<b>ne ... aucun(e)</b>	not any; none
<b>ne ... nulle part</b>	nowhere		

**NOTE:** **ne** becomes **n'** before a vowel or silent **h**.

## POSITION OF NEGATIVE EXPRESSIONS

1. With the **simple tenses** and **Imperative Form**, **ne** comes before the **verb** and the second part of the negative expression (e.g., **pas**) follows it:

Je <b>ne</b> la connais <b>pas</b> .	I <i>don't</i> know her.
<b>N'</b> insistez <b>pas</b> !	<i>Don't</i> insist!
Je <b>n'</b> ai <b>plus</b> d'argent.	I <i>haven't</i> any money <i>left</i> !
Tu <b>ne</b> le sauras <b>jamais</b> !	You will <i>never</i> know.
<b>Ne</b> dis <b>rien</b> !	<i>Don't</i> say <i>anything</i> !
Il <b>n'</b> y a <b>personne</b> !	There's <i>no one</i> here!
Je <b>n'</b> avais <b>que</b> dix francs.	I had <i>only</i> ten francs.
Il <b>n'</b> est <b>nulle part</b> .	It <i>isn't</i> <i>anywhere</i> .
Tu <b>n'</b> as <b>aucun</b> sens de l'humour!	You have <i>no</i> sense of humor.
Ce <b>n'</b> est <b>ni</b> noir <b>ni</b> bleu!	It's <i>neither</i> black <i>nor</i> blue.

2. With **compound tenses**, the word order with **ne ... pas** and the other expressions listed above is: **ne + auxiliary + pas + past participle**:

Il <b>n'</b> est <b>pas</b> revenu.	He <i>didn't</i> come back.
Je <b>n'</b> ai <b>plus</b> essayé.	I <i>didn't</i> try any more.
Je <b>n'</b> ai <b>jamais</b> vu Paris.	I <i>have never</i> seen Paris.
On <b>n'</b> a <b>rien</b> fait.	We <i>haven't</i> done anything.

3. With **ne ... personne** and the other expressions in the second part of the list above (**ne ... personne**, **ne ... que**, etc.), the word order is: **ne + auxiliary + past participle + personne / que / ne**:

Il <b>ne</b> l'a dit à <b>personne</b> .	He <i>didn't</i> say it to <i>anyone</i> .
Tu <b>n'</b> en as acheté <b>qu'</b> un?	<i>Did</i> you <i>only</i> buy one?
Je <b>n'</b> en ai aimé aucun.	I <i>didn't</i> like any of them.
Il <b>n'</b> est allé <b>nulle part</b> .	He <i>hasn't</i> gone <i>anywhere</i> .

4. With the **infinitive**, **ne ... pas** and the other expressions in the first part of the list above (**ne ... pas**, **ne ... point**, etc.) are placed together before the **verb**:

Je préfère **ne pas** manger.  
Essaie de **ne rien** perdre.

I'd *rather not* eat.  
Try *not* to lose *anything*.

**BUT:** The **infinitive** is enclosed within **ne ... personne** and the other expressions given in the second part of the list:

Il a été surpris de **ne voir personne**.      He was surprised *not* to see *anybody*.  
J'ai décidé de **n'en préparer aucun**.      I decided *not* to prepare *any* of them.

5. When **personne, rien, aucun, or ni ... ni** begin a sentence, they are followed by **ne**:

**Personne ne** le sait.      *Nobody* knows.  
**Rien n'a** changé.      *Nothing* has changed.  
**Ni Lidia ni** Bertrande **ne** sont venues.      *Neither* Lidia *nor* Bertrande came.  
**Aucun** secours **n'est** arrivé.      *No* help arrived.

Some combinations of negative expressions that are frequently used include:

**ne ... plus jamais**  
**ne ... plus rien**  
**ne ... plus personne**  
**ne ... plus ni ... ni**  
**ne ... plus que**  
**ne ... jamais rien**  
**ne ... jamais personne**  
**ne ... jamais ni ... ni**  
**ne ... jamais que**

On **ne** l'a **plus jamais** revu.      *We never* saw him *again*.  
Il **n'y a plus rien**.      *There isn't anything* left.  
**Plus personne ne** dansera.      *No one* will dance *anymore*.  
Tu **ne** fais **jamais rien**.      *You never* do *anything*.  
Je **ne** bois **jamais que** de l'eau.      *I never* drink *anything* except water.  
Je **ne** vois **jamais personne**.      *I never* see *anybody*.

## NEGATIVE EXPRESSIONS WITHOUT A VERB

**Pas** (*not*) is the most common of all negatives. It is frequently used without a **verb**:

Tu l'aimes ? -- **Pas** beaucoup.      Do you like it? Not much.  
Ah non! **Pas** lui!      Oh no! Not him!  
Non merci, **pas** pour moi.      No thanks, not for me.  
Un roman **pas** très long.      Not a very long novel.  
Lui, il viendra, mais **pas** moi.      He will come, but I won't.  
J'aime ça; **pas** toi?      I like that, don't you?

**Ne** is not used when the response does not contain a **verb**:

Qui a crié? -- **Personne**.      Who shouted? Nobody.  
**Jamais** de la vie!      Not on your life!  
**Rien!** Je ne veux rien!      Nothing! I want nothing!  
**Rien du tout**.      Nothing at all.

**Non** (*no*) is always used when the response does not contain a **verb**:

Tu aimes la natation?  
**Non**, pas du tout.

Do you like swimming?  
No, not at all.

Tu viens, oui ou non?  
Je crois que **non**.

Are you coming, yes or no?  
I don't think so.

**NOTE:** **non plus** (*neither*) is often used in short answers.

Je ne le crois pas. Moi **non plus**. I don't believe him. *Neither* do I.

Je n'ai rien mangé. Nous **non plus**. I haven't eaten anything. *Neither* have we.

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Present Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Perfect Tense](#)

[Past Participles](#)

[Questions](#)

## THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

The definite article (equivalent to the English "the") precedes a noun with a predetermined meaning. In the singular, it must agree in number and gender with the noun it introduces. Plural forms of the article are identical for masculine and feminine. The French definite articles are:

### *Singular*

<b>le</b> garçon	<i>the boy</i>
<b>la</b> fille	<i>the girl</i>

### *Plural*

<b>les</b> garçons	<i>the boys</i>
<b>les</b> filles	<i>the girls</i>

**Le** and **la** become **l'** when they precede a noun that begins with a vowel or a silent **h**. The plural remains regular.

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>English</i>	
<b>l'</b> enfant	<b>les</b> enfants	<i>the child</i>	<i>the children</i>
<b>l'</b> heure	<b>les</b> heures	<i>the hour</i>	<i>the hours</i>

## CONTRACTIONS

When the definite articles **le** and **les** are combined with the prepositions **de** and **à**, the following contractions result:

à + le = <b>au</b> ( <i>to the, sing.</i> )	à + les = <b>aux</b> ( <i>to the, pl.</i> )
de + le = <b>du</b> ( <i>of the, sing.</i> )	de + les = <b>des</b> ( <i>of the, pl.</i> )

La queue **du** singe...  
The tail of the monkey...

Vous aimez aller **au** cinéma.  
You enjoy going to the movies.

Le journaliste a adressé la parole **aux** écrivains.  
The journalist addressed the writers.

## USAGE:

Usage of the French definite article varies slightly from English:

1. It precedes each noun in a series:

Nous étudions **l'**histoire, **la** géographie et **l'**économie des provinces.  
We are studying the history, geography, and economy of the provinces.

2. It is used when talking about parts of the body:

Je me lave **les** mains et **la** figure.  
I am washing my hands and face.

3. It is used when referring to languages:

Jean comprend **le** russe.  
John understands Russian.

Nous apprenons **l'**allemand.  
We are learning German.

4. It is used when referring to titles of profession or rank, but *not* when addressing a person directly:

**Le** professeur Mersenne arrive.  
Professor Mersenne is arriving.

**But:** Au revoir, **Professeur** Mersenne.

5. It is used with days of the week and dates as an equivalent of the English "on":

Nous ne travaillons pas **le** samedi.  
We don't work on Saturday.

Les écoles sont fermées **le** samedi et **le** dimanche.  
Schools are closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

**AND:**

C'est aujourd'hui **le** 5 mai 1992.  
Today is May 5, 1992.

6. It is used as the equivalent of the English "per" or "a":

Les abricots coûtent cinq francs **la** douzaine.  
The apricots cost five francs per dozen.

7. It is used with the names of the seasons:

**L'**hiver est très long en Suisse.  
Winter is very long in Switzerland.

Au Canada **le** printemps est doux.  
In Canada, spring is mild.

**Related Topics:**

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[The Partitive Article](#)

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[The Clock and the Calendar](#)



## THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE

The indefinite article is equivalent to the English **a / an / one** and precedes an unspecified [noun](#). French uses:

### *Singular*

**un** homme (masc.)

a man

**une** femme (fem.)

a woman

### *Plural*

**des** hommes et **des** femmes (masc. and fem.)

men and women

### **Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

## THE PARTITIVE ARTICLE

The partitive article is placed before an uncountable **noun** to indicate a part or portion of it. In English, it is not necessary to use an article before nouns such as *water*, *energy*, or *patience*; however, French requires this. The partitive articles are:

<b>du</b> ( <b>de + le</b> ); ( <b>de l'</b> before a vowel)	<i>masculine singular</i>
<b>de la</b> ; ( <b>de l'</b> before a vowel)	<i>feminine singular</i>
<b>des</b> ( <b>de +les</b> )	<i>masculine and feminine plural</i>

### EXAMPLES:

<b>du</b> sel	( <i>some</i> ) salt
<b>de la</b> farine	( <i>some</i> ) flour
<b>de l'</b> eau	( <i>some</i> ) water
<b>des</b> épinards	( <i>some</i> ) spinach

Monsieur Comte mange **du** pain.  
Mr. Comte is eating (*some*) bread.

Y a-t-il encore **de l'**eau?  
Is there *any* more water (or *any water left*)?

**NOTE:** The partitive article is not omitted before a plural **noun** modified by a preceding **adjective**.

Cette rue a **de** beaux arbres,  
This street has (*some*) lovely trees.

Madame Dupont porte **de** jolies chaussures.  
Mrs. Dupont is wearing (*some*) snappy shoes.

**NOTE:** The partitive article becomes "**de**" after specific expressions of quantity such as:

<b>assez</b>	enough
<b>beaucoup</b>	a lot
<b>peu</b>	a little
<b>trop</b>	too much
<b>tant</b>	too many
<b>autant</b>	as much
<b>moins</b>	less

### And:

une <b>tranche</b>	a slice
une <b>boîte</b>	a box
une <b>bouteille</b>	a bottle
un <b>verre</b>	a glass
un <b>kilo</b>	a kilogram
un <b>litre</b>	a liter
une <b>livre</b>	a pound
une <b>douzaine</b>	a dozen

**Exceptions** to this rule that take the definite article include:

bien de(s)	a lot of
------------	----------

la plupart de(s)	most of
la majorité de(s)	the majority of

**NOTE:** After "**ne que**" (only), the partitive article is used.

Il **ne** mange **que de** la salade.  
He only eats salad.

**Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

## GENDER OF NOUNS

French uses two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine. Inanimate or abstract **nouns** can be either masculine or feminine based on their etymology. Animate nouns describing male human beings or animals are generally of masculine gender while those describing female beings or animals are feminine. Feminine animate nouns are generally formed by adding an **-e** at the end of the masculine **noun**, although other rules may apply.

un ami	une amie
a (male) friend	a (female) friend

### Exceptions:

1. **Nouns** ending in **-el** and **-eau** form the feminine with **-elle**:

un colonel	une colonelle
un chameau	une chamelle

2. **Nouns** ending in **-en** or **-on** form the feminine by doubling the final consonant:

un gardien	une gardienne
un champion	une championne

3. However, **nouns** ending in **-an**, **-in**, and **-ian** do *not* double the consonant to form the feminine:

un orphelin	une orpheline
un gitan	une gitane

4. **Nouns** ending in **-t**:

**Nouns** ending in **-et** double the consonant:

un cadet	une cadette
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**Nouns** ending in **-at** or **-ot** do not double the consonant:

un idiot	une idiote
un avocat	une avocate

(Except for **chat** / **chatte**; **linot** / **linotte**; **sot** / **sotte**)

5. **Nouns** ending in **-er** form the feminine with **-ère**:

un jardinier	une jardinière
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6. **Nouns** ending in **-s** or **-x** usually form the feminine with **-se**:

un époux	une épouse
un français	une française

7. **Nouns** ending in **-f** form the feminine with **-ve**:

un veuf	une veuve
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8. **Nouns** ending in **-eur** form the feminine with **-euse**:

un joueur	une joueuse
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**Nouns** ending in **-teur** or **-deur** form the feminine with **-trice**, unless the noun has a corresponding verb that shares the same stem:

un acteur	une actrice	an actor / actress
un ambassadeur	une ambassadrice	an ambassador / ambassador's wife or ambassador

**But:**

un chanteur	une chanteuse	a singer
un vendeur	une vendeuse	a salesman / saleswoman

9. Certain **nouns** ending in **-e** form the feminine with **-esse**:

un traître	une traîtresse
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10. Other **nouns** do *not* form a feminine:

**masculine or feminine:**

un auteur / un écrivain

**Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[The Partitive Article](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

## PLURAL FORMATION OF NOUNS

In general, plural nouns are formed in French by adding an **-s**, although other rules apply:

### EXAMPLES:

une pomme	des pommes
un fruit	des fruits

### Exceptions:

1. Nouns ending in **-s**, **-x** or **-z** do not change in the plural:

une souris	des souris
une voix	des voix
un nez	des nez

2. Nouns ending in **-al** usually form the plural with **-aux**:

un cheval	des chev <b>aux</b>
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Some nouns ending in **-al** form the plural with **-s**:

un bal	des bals
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3. Nouns ending in **-au**, **-eu**, or **-eau** usually form the plural with **-x**:

un tuyau	des tuy <b>aux</b>
un feu	des fe <b>ux</b>
un cadeau	des cade <b>aux</b>

Some nouns ending in **-au**, **-eu**, or **-eau** form the plural with **-s**:

un pneu	des pne <b>s</b>
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4. Nouns ending in **-ail** form the plural with **-s**:

un chandail	des chand <b>ails</b>
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5. Nouns ending in **-ou** form the plural with an **-s**:

un fou	des fo <b>us</b>
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**Exceptions** (which form the plural with **-x**):

bijou	bijou <b>x</b>
caillou	caillou <b>x</b>
chou	chou <b>x</b>
genou	genou <b>x</b>
hibou	hibou <b>x</b>
joujou	joujou <b>x</b>
pou	pou <b>x</b>

6. Some irregular plurals are:

l'oeil	les yeux
le ciel	les cie <b>ux</b>

## PROPER NOUNS

Proper [nouns](#) are always capitalized.

les **Espagnols**  
les **Suisses**

The rules of plural formation for proper [nouns](#) are:

1. Proper [nouns](#) referring to famous royal families generally take the plural.

Les Bourbons = The Bourbon family.

2. Proper [nouns](#) referring to common families remain invariable:

Les Dupont

3. Proper [nouns](#) referring to works of art produced by a given artist take the plural form where required:

Il possède quatre Monets.  
He has four Monet paintings.

### **Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[The Partitive Article](#)

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

## COMPOUND NOUNS

French uses various forms of [compound nouns](#).

1. Two [nouns](#) can be linked:

bon + jour                      bonjour

The plural of such [nouns](#) is formed according to the general rule: add (-s).

### Exceptions:

bonhomme	bonshommes
monsieur	messieurs
madame	mesdames

2. When two [nouns](#) are linked by a hyphen, both elements take a plural ending:

un chef-lieu                      des chefs-lieux

3. Similarly, when a [noun](#) and an [adjective](#) are combined, both elements take a plural ending:

un coffre-fort                      des coffres-forts

4. When a [verb](#) + [complement](#) are combined, only the second element takes a plural ending:

un couvre-feu                      des couvre-feux

5. Expressions linked by hyphens are invariable:

le qu'en-dira-t-on

### **Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[The Partitive Article](#)

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)



## PERSONAL PRONOUNS

French uses the formal **vous** to address adults, strangers, superiors, or more than one person. **Tu** is used for a relative, friend, classmate, child, or an animal. Personal pronouns can be either subjects or objects. Their forms vary accordingly.

### PRONOUN AS SUBJECT:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person</i>	<b>je</b>	<b>nous</b>
<i>2nd person</i>	<b>tu</b>	<b>vous</b>
<i>3rd person</i>	<b>il, elle</b>	<b>ils, elles</b>

#### EXAMPLES:

Il parle.  
He speaks.

### PRONOUN AS DIRECT OBJECT:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person</i>	<b>me</b>	<b>nous</b>
<i>2nd person</i>	<b>te</b>	<b>vous</b>
<i>3rd person</i>	<b>le, la</b>	<b>les</b>

#### EXAMPLES:

Il **le** prend.  
He takes *it*.

### PRONOUN AS INDIRECT OBJECT:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person</i>	<b>me</b>	<b>nous</b>
<i>2nd person</i>	<b>te</b>	<b>vous</b>
<i>3rd person</i>	<b>lui</b>	<b>leur</b>

#### EXAMPLES:

Je **lui** ai donné le livre.  
I gave *him* the book.

### PRONOUN AS OBJECT PRECEDED BY A PREPOSITION:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person</i>	<b>moi</b>	<b>nous</b>
<i>2nd person</i>	<b>toi</b>	<b>vous</b>
<i>3rd person</i>	<b>lui, elle</b>	<b>eux, elles</b>

#### EXAMPLES:

Ce livre est à **toi**.  
This book is *yours*.

**Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Pronouns](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)

## POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns refer to a previously mentioned noun and generally agree in number and gender with that noun. French is unique in that its possessive pronouns agree with the person, being, or thing owned, and *not* with the owner.

**NOTE:** Possessive pronouns can include a definite article (**le, la, les**) contracted with the prepositions **à** and **de**:

Il me parle de son travail et je lui parle **du mien**.  
He is talking to me about his job and I am talking to him *about mine*.

When used as pronouns, **nôtre** and **vôtre** take a circumflex accent in all cases.

<i>One object</i>		<i>Several objects</i>	
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
le mien	la mienne	les miens	les miennes
le tien	la tienne	les tiens	les tiennes
le sien	la sienne	les siens	les siennes
le nôtre	la nôtre	les nôtres	
le vôtre	la vôtre	les vôtres	
le leur	la leur	les leurs	

### EXAMPLES:

Je conduis ma voiture et il conduit **la sienne**.  
I'm driving my car and he's driving *his*.

Nous prendrons nos boissons et vous prendrez **les vôtres**.  
We will take our drinks and you'll take *yours*.

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Pronouns](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)

## POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

Possessive adjectives indicate ownership. In French, they are:

### *Singular*

	<i>One object</i>		<i>Several objects</i>
	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person:</i>	<b>mon</b>	<b>ma</b>	<b>mes</b>
<i>2nd person:</i>	<b>ton</b>	<b>ta</b>	<b>tes</b>
<i>3rd person:</i>	<b>son</b>	<b>sa</b>	<b>ses</b>

### *Plural*

	<i>One object</i>	<i>Several objects</i>
	<i>(Masculine and Feminine)</i>	
<i>1st person:</i>	<b>notre</b>	<b>nos</b>
<i>2nd person:</i>	<b>votre</b>	<b>vos</b>
<i>3rd person:</i>	<b>leur</b>	<b>leurs</b>

### EXAMPLES:

C'est **sa** voiture.  
It is *his* car.

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Adjectives](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)

## DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

French uses two types of demonstrative pronouns:

1. Those that are *variable* indicate [gender](#) and number and must agree with the [noun](#) they replace.

### EXAMPLE:

J'ai aimé **tes photos** et **celles** de Marc.  
I liked *your pictures* and *Marc's*.

2. Those that are *neuter* (**ceci**, **cela**, **ça**, **ce**) and do not indicate [gender](#) and number. They always stand alone.

### EXAMPLE:

**Ceci** est vrai.  
*This* is true.

Demonstrative pronouns can be divided into two groups:

1. *Simple demonstrative pronouns* whose demonstrative power is weak. They must be accompanied by a [relative clause](#) that clarifies their meaning.

### EXAMPLE:

Donnez-moi **celui** qui est sur la table (un livre).  
Give me *the one* that is on the table (a book).

2. *Compound demonstrative pronouns* that are formed by combining the variable demonstrative pronouns with **-ce** or **là**. They are used to indicate that persons or objects are either close to or at a distance from the speaker.

	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>	
	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
Simple forms	<b>celui</b>	<b>celle</b>	<b>ce</b>	<b>ceux</b>	<b>celles</b>
Compound forms	<b>celui-ci</b> <b>celui-là</b>	<b>celle-ci</b> <b>celle-là</b>	<b>ceci</b> <b>cela</b>	<b>ceux-ci</b> <b>ceux-là</b>	<b>celles-ci</b> <b>celles-là</b>

### EXAMPLE:

Quel gâteau prenez-vous, **celui-ci** ou **celui-là**?  
Which cake are you taking, *this one* or *that one*?

### Related Topics:

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)



## DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES

[Demonstrative adjectives](#) are used to specify exactly which [noun](#) is being referred to. The French demonstrative adjectives are:

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
Singular	<b>ce, cet</b>	<b>cette</b>
Plural	<b>ces</b>	

**Cet** is used when preceding a [noun](#) beginning with a vowel.

**Cet** ami.  
*That* friend.

The demonstrative adjective can be reinforced by adding the [adverbs](#) **ci** or **là** to the noun:

**Cet** ami-là.  
This friend (*over there*).

**Cet** ami-ci.  
This friend (*over here*).

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Pronouns](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)

## RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Relative pronouns are used to link an object or person to a relative clause that gives further information about him / her / it. The simple forms of the French relative pronouns are:

<b>qui, que</b>	used for both masculine and feminine, singular or plural
<b>quoi</b>	generally neutral
<b>dont, où</b>	used for both masculine and feminine, singular or plural

The compound forms of relative pronouns are:

<b>Singular</b>		<b>Plural</b>	
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
<b>lequel</b>	<b>laquelle</b>	<b>lesquels</b>	<b>lesquelles</b>
<b>duquel</b>	<b>de laquelle</b>	<b>desquels</b>	<b>desquelles</b>
<b>auquel</b>	<b>à laquelle</b>	<b>auxquels</b>	<b>auxquelles</b>

**NOTE:** Other compound forms include:

<b>quiconque</b>	whoever
<b>quelconque</b>	whatever
<b>qui que ce soit</b>	whoever
<b>quoi que ce soit</b>	whatever

### EXAMPLE:

La personne **qui** est partie.  
The person *who* left.

### Related Topics:

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Demonstrative Pronouns](#)

[Interrogatives](#)



## INTERROGATIVES

The interrogative **adjective QUEL...?** (*Which...?, What...?*) agrees in number and **gender** with the **noun** it refers to. French uses four forms:

<b>Quel...?</b>	With a <i>masculine singular noun</i> .
<b>Quelle...?</b>	With a <i>feminine singular noun</i> .
<b>Quels...?</b>	With a <i>masculine plural noun</i> .
<b>Quelles...?</b>	With a <i>feminine plural noun</i> .

It is used in *direct* questions:

<b>Quel</b> est votre passe-temps favori?	<i>What's</i> your favorite pastime?
<b>Quelle</b> heure est-il?	<i>What</i> time is it?
<b>Quels</b> jours as-tu de libres?	<i>Which</i> days have you got free?
<b>Quelles</b> affaires comptes-tu prendre avec toi?	<i>Which / what</i> things do you intend to take with you?

And in *indirect* questions:

Je ne sais pas <b>quel</b> disque choisir.	I don't know <i>which</i> record to choose.
Il se demande <b>quelle</b> veste lui va le mieux.	He's wondering <i>which</i> jacket suits him best.

The exclamatory adjective **Quel!** has the same forms as the interrogative:

<b>Quel</b> dommage!	<i>What</i> a pity!
<b>Quels</b> imbéciles!	<i>What</i> idiots!
<b>Quelle</b> belle maison!	<i>What</i> a beautiful house!

The interrogative **pronouns** in French are:

<b>Lequel...? / laquelle...?</b>	<i>Which (one)...?</i>
<b>Lesquel(le)s...?</b>	<i>Which ones...?</i>

**Lequel** agrees in number and **gender** with the **noun** for which it stands:

<b>Lequel...?</b>	<i>Which (one)...?</i>	With a <i>masculine sing. noun</i> .
<b>Laquelle...?</b>	<i>Which (one)...?</i>	With a <i>feminine sing. noun</i> .
<b>Lesquels...?</b>	<i>Which (ones)...?</i>	With a <i>masculine plural noun</i> .
<b>Lesquelles...?</b>	<i>Which (ones)...?</i>	With a <i>feminine plural noun</i> .

**NOTE:** After the **prepositions** **à** and **de**, **lequel** **contracts** to:

à + lequel	=	<b>auquel</b>
à + lesquels	=	<b>auxquels</b>
à + lesquelles	=	<b>auxquelles</b>
de + lequel	=	<b>duquel</b>
de + lesquels?	=	<b>desquels</b>
de + lesquelles	=	<b>desquelles</b>
à / de + laquelle	--	no change

*Direct* questions are formed using **lequel** as follows:

Je cherche un hôtel; **lequel** recommandez-vous?

I am looking for a hotel. *Which one* do you recommend?

Nous avons plusieurs couleurs; vous préférez **laquelle**?  
We have several colors. *Which one* do you prefer?

**Lesquels** de ces livres sont à toi?  
*Which* of these books are yours?

Je voudrais essayer ces chaussures. **Lesquelles**?  
I would like to try these shoes on. *Which ones*?

*Indirect questions* with **lequel** are formed as follows:

Demande-lui **lequel** de ces ordinateurs est le moins cher.  
Ask him *which (one)* of these computers is the cheapest.

C'est dans une de ces rues, mais je ne sais plus **laquelle**.  
It's in one of these streets, but I can't remember *which one*.

**Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Relative Pronouns](#)

[Questions](#)

## REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

The French [reflexive pronouns](#) are:

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st person:</i>	<b>me</b>	<b>nous</b>
<i>2nd person:</i>	<b>te</b>	<b>vous</b>
<i>3rd person:</i>	<b>se</b>	<b>se</b>

**NOTE:** **Me**, **te**, and **se** are [contracted](#) to **m'**, **t'**, **s'** when followed by a [verb](#) beginning with a vowel.

### EXAMPLES:

Je **me** tais.  
I am keeping quiet.

Nous **nous** dépêchons.  
We are hurrying.

### But:

Il **s'**apaise.  
He is calming down.

### **Related Topics:**

[Reflexive Verbs](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Passive Voice](#)

## INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

Indefinite [pronouns](#) are used to indicate a person or an object in very general terms. The following are the French indefinite pronouns:

<b>aucun / une</b>	any (m., f.)
<b>autre</b>	the other
<b>autrui</b>	others
<b>certains</b>	some people
<b>chacun/une</b>	everyone / each one
<b>chaque</b>	each person
<b>divers</b>	various people
<b>l'un</b>	the one
<b>l'autre</b>	the other
<b>mainte</b>	many
<b>même</b>	the same one / person
<b>n'importe quel</b>	whatever
<b>n'importe qui</b>	whoever
<b>nul</b>	no one
<b>on</b>	equivalent to the English impersonal "one"
<b>pas un</b>	nobody
<b>peu de chose</b>	few things
<b>personne</b>	nobody
<b>plus d'un tel</b>	more than one so-and-so
<b>plusieurs</b>	many
<b>quelconque</b>	whatever / any
<b>quelqu'un</b>	someone
<b>tout</b>	all / everybody

**NOTE:** While some of these are [indefinite articles](#) or [adjectives](#), they become [pronouns](#) when they stand alone.

### EXAMPLES:

**Plusieurs étudiants** lisent Cicéron.  
*Many students* read Cicero.

#### But:

**Plusieurs** écoutent les émissions de Radio France.  
*Many* listen to the broadcasts of Radio France.

#### And:

**Nul** n'est prophète en son pays.  
*No one* is a prophet in his own country.

### **Related Topics:**

[The Indefinite Article](#)  
[Idioms](#)

## GENDER OF ADJECTIVES

French adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun they modify. Therefore, there are four inflected forms for adjectives: masculine, feminine, masculine plural, and feminine plural.

1. As a general rule, feminine adjectives are formed by adding an **-e** to the masculine adjective:

Un petit garçon.  
*A small boy.*

Une petite fille.  
*A small girl.*

2. Adjectives ending in **-e** in the masculine form do not change in the feminine form:

Un travail facile.  
*An easy job.*

Une question facile.  
*An easy question.*

3. Adjectives ending in **-el** and **-eil** double the **-l** before adding **-e** to form the feminine:

Un problème éventuel.  
*A possible problem.*

Une solution éventuelle.  
*A possible solution.*

4. Adjectives ending in **-en** or **-on** double the **-n** before adding **-e** to form the feminine:

Un ancien élève.  
*A former pupil.*

Une ancienne élève.  
*A former pupil.*

5. Adjectives ending in **-et** double the **-t** before adding **-e** to form the feminine:

Un homme muet.  
*A deaf man.*

Une femme muette.  
*A deaf woman.*

### Exceptions:

The following adjectives form the feminine by changing **-et** to **-ète**:

complet	complète
incomplet	incomplète
concret	concrète
désuet	désuète

discret	discrète
indiscret	indiscrète
inquiet	inquiète
replet	replète
secret	secrète

**EXAMPLES:**

un plan secret  
a *secret* plan

une pensée secrète  
a *secret* thought

6. Adjectives ending in **-x** usually form the feminine with **-se** (pronounced z):

Un homme généreux.  
A *generous* man.

Une personne généreuse.  
A *generous* person.

**Exceptions:**

doux	douce
faux	fausse
roux	rousse
vieux	vieille

7. Adjectives ending in **-s** usually form the feminine according to the general rule (**-e**).

**Exceptions:**

The following adjectives double the **-s** before adding **-e**:

bas	basse	low
gras	grasse	fat
las	lasse	tired
épais	épaisse	thick
gros	grosse	big
métis	métisse	half-caste

Un cheval gras.  
A *fat* horse.

Une vache grasse.  
A *fat* cow.

8. Adjectives ending in **-er** form the feminine with **-ère**:

Un premier pas.  
A *first* step.

Une première fois.  
A *first* time.

9. **Adjectives** ending in **-f** form the feminine with **-ve**:

Un garçon actif.  
An *active* boy.

Une fille active.  
An *active* girl.

10. **Adjectives** ending in **-c** form the feminine in **-que**:

Le jardin public.  
The *public* garden.

Une école publique.  
A *public* school.

**Exceptions:**

grec	grecque	Greek
blanc	blanche	white
franc	franche	frank
sec	sèche	dry

**Also:**

long	longue	long
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11. **Adjectives** ending in **-eur** form the feminine with **-euse**.

Un homme trompeur.  
A *deceitful* man.

Une action trompeuse.  
A *deceptive* action.

**Exceptions:**

The following **adjectives** ending in **-eur** form the feminine according to the general rule, by adding **-e**:

antérieur	antérieure	previous
postérieur	postérieure	subsequent
ultérieur	ultérieure	later
extérieur	extérieure	exterior
intérieur	intérieure	interior
majeur	majeure	major
mineur	mineure	minor
supérieur	supérieure	superior
inférieur	inférieure	inferior
meilleur	meilleure	better

12. **Adjectives** ending in **-teur** form the feminine with **-trice**:

Un mot modificateur.  
A *modifying* word.

Une condition modificatrice.  
A *qualifying* condition.

**Exception:**

enchanteur          enchanteresse          an enchanting man/woman

**NOTE:** The following irregular [adjectives](#) have a second masculine form that is used preceding a vowel or a silent **h**.

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Masculine (Before Vowel)</i>	<i>English</i>
beau	belle	bel	beautiful
nouveau	nouvelle	nouvel	new
vieux	vieille	vieil	old
fou	folle	fol	crazy
mou	molle	mol	soft

**Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[The Definite Article](#)

[The Indefinite Article](#)

[Comparative Forms](#)

[Superlative Forms](#)

[Adverbs of Manner](#)

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Adverbs of Place](#)

[Adverbs of Intensity and Quantity](#)

[Position of Adverbs](#)



## PLURAL ADJECTIVES

The plural of a French [adjective](#) is generally formed by adding an **-s** to the singular form:

un travail important	des travaux importants
une situation importante	des situations importantes

### Exceptions:

Masculine [adjectives](#) ending in **-s** or **-x** do not change in plural:

l'homme heureux	les hommes heureux
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Masculine [adjectives](#) ending in **-al** form the plural with **-aux**:

un conte original	des contes originaux
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The following [adjectives](#) take an **-s** in the plural:

banal  
fatal  
final  
natal  
naval

[Adjectives](#) ending in **-eau** take an **-x** in the plural:

beau	beaux
nouveau	nouveaux
jumeau	jumeaux

### Related Topics:

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Comparative Forms](#)

[Superlative Forms](#)

## COMPARATIVE FORMS

French uses the following [comparative forms](#):

1. Equality: **aussi** precedes the [adjective](#) and it is followed by **que**.

Elle est **aussi grande que** son frère.  
She is *as tall as* her brother.

2. Superiority: **plus** precedes the [adjective](#) and it is followed by **que**.

Elle est **plus grande que** son frère.  
She is *taller than* her brother.

3. Inferiority: **moins** precedes the [adjective](#) and it is followed by **que**.

Elle est **moins grande que** son frère.  
She is *shorter than* her brother.

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

[Superlative Forms](#)

## SUPERLATIVE FORMS

French uses **plus** or **moins** to indicate the [superlative](#) form of its adjectives. The superlative can be preceded by:

1. A [definite article](#):

la **plus grande** des femmes  
the tallest of women

la **moins grande** des femmes  
the least tall of women

2. A [possessive adjective](#):

votre **plus grande** soeur  
your tallest / oldest sister

3. The [preposition de](#):

Il y en a de **plus grands**.  
There are taller ones.

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Nouns](#)

[Plural Formation of Nouns](#)

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

[Comparative Forms](#)

## ADVERBS OF MANNER

Adverbs of manner are usually formed by adding "-ment" (equivalent to the English -ly) to the adjective.

1. If the adjective ends in a consonant, **-ment** is added to its feminine form:

### **Adjective**

doux, douce (soft)  
franc, franche (frank)  
final, finale (final)

### **Adverb**

doucement (softly)  
franchement (frankly)  
finalement (finally)

2. If the adjective ends in a vowel, **-ment** is added to its masculine form:

### **Adjective**

absolu (absolute)  
désespéré (desperate)  
vrai (true)  
simple (simple)

### **Adverb**

absolument (absolutely)  
désespérément (desperately)  
vraiment (truly)  
simplement (simply)

### **But:**

gai (cheerful)

gaiement (cheerfully)

nouveau (new)  
fou (mad)

nouvellement (newly)  
follement (madly)

3. Many adverbs have irregular forms:

- a) Some change the **e** of the feminine form of the adjective to **é** before adding **-ment**:

### **Adjective**

commun (common)  
précis (precise)  
profond (profound)  
énorme (enorme)  
aveugle (blind)

### **Adverb**

communément (commonly)  
précisément (precisely)  
profondément (profoundly)  
énormément (enormously)  
aveuglément (blindly)

- b) Adjectives that end in **-ent** and **-ant** change to **-emment** and **-amment**.  
(**Note:** Both endings are pronounced **-amment**.)

### **Adjective**

prudent (careful)  
évident (evident)  
brillant (brilliant)

### **Adverb**

prudemment (carefully)  
évidemment (evidently)  
brillamment (brilliantly)

### **But:**

lent (slow)

lentement (slowly)

4. Some adverbs are completely irregular, including some of the most common ones:

### **Adjective**

bon (good)  
bref (brief)  
gentil (kind)  
mauvais (bad)  
meilleur (better)

### **Adverb**

bien (well)  
brièvement (briefly)  
gentiment (kindly)  
mal (badly)  
mieux (better)

5. Some [adjectives](#) are also used as [adverbs](#) in certain set expressions:

parler bas / haut or fort	to speak softly / loudly
coûter/ payer cher	to cost / to pay a lot
s'arrêter court	to stop short
couper court	to cut short
voir clair	to see clearly
marcher droit	to walk straight
travailler dur	to work hard
chanter faux / juste	to sing off key / in tune
sentir mauvais / bon	to smell bad / good
refuser net	to refuse point blank

6. In French, after [verbs](#) of saying and looking, an adverbial phrase is often preferred to an [adverb](#):

#### **EXAMPLES:**

"Tu m'écriras?" dit-il **d'une seule voix**.  
"Are you writing to me?" he said at once.

Elle nous a regardé **d'un air dédaigneux**.  
She looked at us with an air of disdain.

7. English [adverbs](#) may be expressed in French by a [preposition](#) followed by a [noun](#):

sans soin	carelessly
avec fierté	proudly
avec amour	lovingly

#### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

[Comparative Forms](#)

[Superlative Forms](#)

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Prepositions](#)

## ADVERBS OF TIME

The [adverbs](#) of time most commonly used in French are:

<b>alors</b>	then
<b>après</b>	afterwards
<b>aujourd'hui</b>	today
<b>aussitôt</b>	at once
<b>bientôt</b>	soon
<b>d'abord</b>	first
<b>déjà</b>	already
<b>demain</b>	tomorrow
<b>encore</b>	still, again
<b>pas encore</b>	not yet
<b>enfin</b>	at last, finally
<b>hier</b>	yesterday
<b>parfois</b>	sometimes
<b>rarement</b>	rarely
<b>souvent</b>	often
<b>tard</b>	late
<b>tôt</b>	early
<b>toujours</b>	always
<b>tout de suite</b>	immediately

### EXAMPLES:

Tu as **déjà** essayé?  
Have you tried *before*?

Il mange **encore**!  
He's eating *again*!

Elle n'est pas **encore** arrivée.  
She hasn't arrived *yet*.

### **Related Topics:**

[Adverbs of Place](#)

[Adverbs of Intensity and Quantity](#)

[Position of Adverbs](#)

## ADVERBS OF PLACE

The [adverbs](#) of place most commonly used in French are:

<b>ailleurs</b>	somewhere else
<b>ici</b>	here
<b>là</b>	there
<b>loin</b>	far away
<b>dessus</b>	on top, on it
<b>au-dessus</b>	over, above
<b>dessous</b>	underneath
<b>au-dessous</b>	below
<b>dedans</b>	inside
<b>dehors</b>	outside
<b>devant</b>	in front, ahead
<b>derrière</b>	behind
<b>où</b>	where
<b>partout</b>	everywhere

### EXAMPLES:

Ne restez pas **dehors**!  
Don't stay *outside*!

Mon nom est marqué **dessus**.  
My name is written *on it*.

Qu'est-ce qu'il y a **dedans**?  
What's *inside*?

Passez **devant**!  
Go *in front*!

### **Related Topics:**

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Adverbs of Intensity and Quantity](#)

[Position of Adverbs](#)

## ADVERBS OF INTENSITY AND QUANTITY

Adverbs of intensity and quantity may be used with a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Those most commonly used are:

<b>à peine</b>	hardly
<b>assez</b>	enough, quite
<b>autant</b>	as much/ many
<b>beaucoup</b>	a lot, much/ many
<b>combien</b>	how much/ many
<b>comme</b>	how
<b>moins</b>	less
<b>plus</b>	more
<b>presque</b>	nearly
<b>peu</b>	little
<b>seulement</b>	only
<b>si</b>	so
<b>tant</b>	so much/ many
<b>tellement</b>	so much/ many
<b>très</b>	very
<b>trop</b>	too, too much/ many
<b>un peu</b>	a little

### EXAMPLES:

Vous avez **assez** bu!  
You've had *enough* to drink!

Il ne fait pas **assez** chaud!  
It's not warm *enough*!

Nous avons **beaucoup** ri.  
We laughed *a lot*.

**Comme** c'est amusant!  
*How* funny!

Je vais **un peu** mieux.  
I'm feeling *a little* better.

Elle parle **trop**.  
She talks *too much*.

Il est **très** timide.  
He's *very* shy.

**NOTE:** All of these adverbs may be followed by **de** + noun to express a quantity.

### Exceptions:

**à peine**  
**comme**  
**presque**  
**si**  
**très**



**seulement**

**Related Topics:**

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Adverbs of Intensity and Quantity](#)

[Position of Adverbs](#)

## POSITION OF ADVERBS

In French, [adverbs](#) usually follow [verbs](#):

### EXAMPLES:

Je vais **rarement** au théâtre.  
I *rarely* go to the theatre.

Comme vous conduisez **prudemment**!  
You do drive *carefully*.

1. With [compound tenses](#), [adverbs](#) come between the [auxiliary](#) and the [past participle](#):

J'ai **enfin** terminé.  
I've *finally* finished.

Nous y sommes **souvent** allés.  
We've *often* gone there.

Il me l'a **déjà** dit.  
He's *already* told me.

Elle avait **beaucoup** souffert.  
She had suffered *a lot*.

2. But adverbs of place and many adverbs of time follow the [past participle](#):

Je l'ai rencontré **hier**.  
I met him *yesterday*.

Elle avait cherché **partout**.  
She had looked *everywhere*.

Mettez-le **dehors**.  
Put it *outside*.

Tu t'es couché **tard**?  
Did you go to bed *late*?

3. [Adverbs](#) usually come before [adjectives](#) or other adverbs:

très rarement	very seldom
trop vite	very fast

Elle est **vraiment** belle.  
She is *really* beautiful.

### **Related Topics:**

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

## COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE OF ADVERBS

The comparative and superlative forms of French adverbs are formed in the same way as they are for adjectives.

<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
souvent often	<b>plus souvent</b> (que) more often (than)	<b>le plus souvent</b> (the) most often
souvent	<b>moins souvent</b> (que) less often (than)	<b>le moins souvent</b> (the) least often
souvent	<b>aussi souvent</b> (que) as often (as)	-----

**NOTE:** The superlative form of the adverb always takes the masculine singular form of the definite article **le**:

### EXAMPLES:

Je le vois **plus souvent** qu'avant.  
I see him *more often* than I used to.

Il conduit **moins prudemment** que moi.  
He drives *less carefully* than I do.

C'est lui qui conduit **le moins prudemment**.  
He's the one who drives the *least carefully*.

Je sais cuisiner **aussi bien** que toi!  
I can cook *as well as* you!

**NOTE:** *As ... as possible* is translated either by **aussi ... que possible** or **le plus ... possible**.

*as far as possible*                      **aussi loin que possible**  
   **le plus loin possible**

**NOTE:** After a negative, **aussi** is often replaced by **si**:

Pas **si** vite!                              Not so fast!

**NOTE:** In French, the idea of *not so / not as* is often expressed by **moins** (*less*):

Parle **moins fort**!                      *Don't talk so loudly!*

### IRREGULAR COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE FORMS OF ADVERBS

<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
beaucoup much, a lot	<b>plus</b> more	<b>le plus</b> (the) most
bien	<b>mieux</b>	<b>le mieux</b>

well	better	(the) best
mal badly	<b>pis</b> or <b>plus mal</b> worse	<b>le pis</b> or <b>le plus mal</b> (the) worst
peu little	<b>moins</b> less	<b>le moins</b> (the) least

**NOTE:** **Mieux / le mieux** must not be confused with **meilleur / le meilleur**, which are [adjectives](#) used to modify [nouns](#).

**NOTE:** **Pis / le pis** are only found in certain set expressions:

**EXAMPLES:**

**tant pis**  
so much the worse, too bad

**de mal en pis**  
from bad to worse

**Related Topics:**

[Gender of Adjectives](#)

[Plural Adjectives](#)

[Comparative Forms](#)

[Superlative Forms](#)

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Adverbs of Place](#)

[Adverbs of Intensity and Quantity](#)

[Position of Adverbs](#)

## PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions introduce a [complement](#). They are words or expressions used to indicate the relationship (time, space, manner, goal, cause, possession, etc.) that exists between persons and things. Simple prepositions consist of only one word, while [prepositional phrases](#) consist of two or more.

The most commonly used simple prepositions are:

<b>à</b>	to, in	<b>hors</b>	outside of
<b>après</b>	after / according to	<b>jusque</b>	as far as, until
<b>avant</b>	before	<b>malgré</b>	in spite of
<b>avec</b>	with	<b>outre</b>	except, outside of
<b>chez</b>	at / by	<b>par</b>	per, for
<b>compris</b>	including	<b>parmi</b>	among
<b>contre</b>	against / in opposition to	<b>plein</b>	full of
<b>dans</b>	within / inside of	<b>pour</b>	for
<b>de</b>	from, of	<b>près</b>	near to
<b>depuis</b>	since	<b>sans</b>	without
<b>dès</b>	since, from	<b>sauf</b>	except
<b>devant</b>	in front of, in advance of	<b>selon</b>	according to
<b>durant</b>	during	<b>sous</b>	under
<b>en</b>	in	<b>sur</b>	on, upon
<b>entre</b>	between	<b>vers</b>	against

The most commonly used [prepositional phrases](#) are:

<b>à cause de</b>	because of
<b>à défaut de</b>	lacking, in the absence of something
<b>à force de</b>	due to
<b>à l'aide de</b>	with the assistance of
<b>à l'égard de</b>	with respect to
<b>à l'exception de</b>	with the exception of
<b>à l'insu de</b>	unknown to
<b>à moins de</b>	unless
<b>afin de</b>	in order to
<b>au-dessus de</b>	under
<b>au lieu de</b>	in place of
<b>au moyen de</b>	by means of
<b>au péril de</b>	at the risk of
<b>autour de</b>	around
<b>aux dépens de</b>	at the expense of
<b>dans le but de</b>	with the purpose of
<b>de façon à</b>	so as to
<b>de manière à</b>	in such a way
<b>de peur de</b>	in fear of
<b>en dépit de</b>	in spite of
<b>en plus de</b>	more than
<b>en raison de</b>	for the reason that / the reason being that
<b>en vue de</b>	in view of the fact that
<b>étant donné</b>	in consideration of
<b>faute de</b>	for want of
<b>grâce à</b>	thanks to
<b>quant à</b>	as for

**Related Topics:**

[Conjunctions](#)

[Idioms](#)

## CONJUNCTIONS

Coordinating conjunctions are used to link words or phrases of equal grammatical status. By contrast, subordinating conjunctions are used to link main and subordinate clauses.

The *coordinating conjunctions* most commonly used in French are:

<b>à savoir</b>	namely	<b>or</b>	now, well
<b>ainsi</b>	thus	<b>ou</b>	or
<b>au contraire</b>	to the contrary	<b>ou bien</b>	or else
<b>aussi</b>	also	<b>ou ... ou (bien)</b>	either ... or (else)
<b>car</b>	for	<b>pourtant</b>	however, nevertheless
<b>cependant</b>	while	<b>puis</b>	often
<b>comme</b>	as	<b>quand</b>	when
<b>donc</b>	therefore	<b>quoique</b>	though, although
<b>ensuite</b>	whereupon, then	<b>si</b>	if
<b>et</b>	and	<b>sinon</b>	otherwise, except
<b>lorsque</b>	then	<b>soit ... ou</b>	either ... or
<b>mais</b>	but	<b>soit ... soit</b>	either ... or
<b>néanmoins</b>	never	<b>toujours</b>	nevertheless
<b>ni...ni</b>	neither...nor		

The *subordinating conjunctions* most commonly used are:

<b>à mesure que</b>	as
<b>afin que</b>	so that, in order that
<b>ainsi que</b>	thus
<b>alors que</b>	whereas, while
<b>après que</b>	after, when
<b>aussitôt que</b>	as soon as
<b>autant que</b>	as much / many as, as far as, as near as
<b>avant que</b>	before
<b>bien que</b>	although
<b>cependant que</b>	while
<b>comme si</b>	as if
<b>d'autant plus que</b>	so much the more that
<b>de façon que</b>	so that
<b>de manière que</b>	in such a way that
<b>de même que</b>	like
<b>de peur que</b>	for fear that, lest
<b>de sorte que</b>	with the result that
<b>depuis que</b>	after
<b>dès que</b>	as soon as
<b>en attendant que</b>	until / pending
<b>en même temps que</b>	at the same time as
<b>jusqu'à ce que</b>	until
<b>non moins que</b>	no less than
<b>parce que</b>	because
<b>pendant que</b>	during
<b>plus que</b>	more than
<b>plutôt que</b>	rather than
<b>pour que</b>	for, in order that
<b>quoique</b>	though
<b>sans que</b>	without
<b>sitôt que</b>	as soon as

**tandis que**  
**tant que**

whereas, while  
as long as, while, as much as

**Related Topics:**

[Subjunctive](#)

[Prepositions](#)

[Conditionals](#)

[Use of the Subjunctive](#)

[Tense Agreement](#)



## QUESTIONS

Some of the ways in which questions can be formed in French are slightly unusual. Consider the following:

*Direct questions* are formed in one of three ways:

1. In conversation, the pattern most often used is **subject + verb (+ question word)**.

### EXAMPLES:

**Tu l'as vendu où?**  
Where did you sell it?

**Je peux téléphoner d'ici?**  
Can I phone from here?

**La gare est près d'ici?**  
Is the train station near here?

**C'est comment?**  
What is it like?

2. Another commonly used pattern is **(question word) + est-ce que + subject + verb**.

### EXAMPLES:

**Est-ce qu'il est là?**  
Is he there?

**Est-ce que ton ami a vécu à Paris?**  
Did your friend live in Paris?

3. The most formal is the inversion: **(question word) + verb + subject**.

### EXAMPLES:

**Quand est-il venu?**  
When did he come?

**Où vivez-vous?**  
Where are you living?

**Avez-vous bien travaillé?**  
Did you work well?

## QUESTION WORDS

1. **Qui** (*who/whom*) is used to refer to people. It can be both **subject** and **object**, and can be used after a **preposition**.

### EXAMPLES:

**Qui t'a accompagné?**  
*Who* accompanied you?

À **qui** as-tu téléphoné?  
*Whom* did you phone?

Tu y vas avec **qui**?  
With *whom* are you going?

C'était pour **qui**?  
*Who* was it for?

Pour **qui** vous prenez-vous?  
*Who* do you think you are?

À **qui** l'as-tu donné?  
To *whom* did you give it?

**NOTE:** No elision occurs when **qui** precedes a vowel or silent h:

**Qui** est-ce qu'elle attend?  
For *whom* is she waiting?

**NOTE:** **Qui** can be replaced by **qui est-ce qui** (subject) or **qui est-ce que** (object) in direct questions:

**Qui est-ce qui** veut du thé?  
*Who* wants tea?

**Qui** can also be replaced by **qui est-ce que** in direct questions.

Avec **qui est-ce que** tu sors ce soir?  
With *whom* are you going out tonight?

**BUT:** **Qui** cannot be replaced by **qui est-ce qui** / **qui est-ce que** in indirect questions.

J'aimerais savoir **qui** vous a dit ça.  
I would like to know *who* told you that.

Elle se demandait de **qui** étaient les fleurs.  
She was wondering *who* the flowers were from.

2. **Que** (*What?*) is used to refer to things. It is only used in direct questions, is always a direct object, and cannot be used after prepositions.

**Que** désirez-vous?  
*What* do you wish?

**Qu'a-t-il** dit?  
*What* did he say?

**NOTE:** **Que** can be replaced by **qu'est-ce qui** or **qu'est-ce que** in spoken French.

3. **Qu'est-ce qui** (*what*) is used as the subject of a verb. It cannot refer to a person.

**Qu'est-ce qui** lui est arrivé?  
*What* happened to him?

**Qu'est-ce qui** la fait rire?  
*What* makes her laugh?

4. Qu'est-ce que (what) replaces **que** as the object of a verb. It becomes **qu'est-ce qu'** before a vowel or silent h.

**Qu'est-ce que** tu aimes lire?  
*What* do you like to read?

**Qu'est-ce qu'**il va faire pendant les vacances?  
*What's* he going to do during the holidays?

5. **Quoi** (what) refers to things. It is used instead of **que** or **qu'est-ce que** after a [preposition](#).

À **quoi** penses-tu?  
*What* are you thinking about?

Dans **quoi** l'as-tu mis?  
In *what* did you put it?

And, in indirect questions:

Demandez-lui de **quoi** il a besoin.  
Ask him *what* he needs.

Je ne sais pas à **quoi** ça sert.  
I don't know *what* it's for.

6. **Ce qui** and **ce que** (what) are used only in indirect questions. They replace **qu'est-ce qui** and **(qu'est-ce) que** and serve a purpose similar to that of the [relative pronouns](#) **ce qui** and **ce que**.

- a) **Ce qui** is used as the subject of the [verb](#) in an indirect question.

Nous ne saurons jamais **ce qui** s'est passé.  
We'll never know *what* happened.

- b) **Ce que** (**ce qu'** before a vowel or silent h) is used as the object of a [verb](#) in an indirect question.

Je n'ai pas remarqué **ce qu'**il faisait.  
I didn't notice *what* he was doing.

#### **RELATED TOPICS:**

[Relative Pronouns](#)

[Interrogatives](#)

[Prepositions](#)

## CONDITIONALS

A conditional sentence consists of two parts: the **conditional** or "if" clause, and the **main** or result clause. Either **clause** may be used to begin the sentence. French uses several tense patterns for its conditionals.

### PRESENT & FUTURE CONDITIONAL

1. When the **verb** in the "**if (si)**" clause is in the **Present Tense**, the **main clause** takes its **verb** in either the **Present** or **Future Tense**. This parallels the first conditional in English (e.g., "If he goes, he sees them," or "If he goes, he will see them") and can indicate either possibility or routine action. The **Imperative Form** can also be used in this conditional to advise or give a command.

#### EXAMPLES:

S'il neige, nous ne sortirons pas. (Present ..... Future)	If it snows, we will not go out.
S'il neige, nous ne sortons pas. (Present ..... Present)	If it snows, we don't go out.
S'il neige, ne sortez pas. (Present ..... Imperative)	If it snows, don't go out.

2. The Conditional Present is used to describe what someone would do / would be doing or what would happen IF certain conditions prevailed. This parallels the second conditional in English (e.g., "If he went / were to go, he would see them") and expresses *improbability*.

#### EXAMPLES:

Si j'étais riche, j'achèterais un chateau. (Imperfect .....Present Conditional)	If I were rich, I would buy a castle.
S'il neigeait, nous ne sortirions pas. (Imperfect .....Present Conditional)	If it snowed / were to snow, we would not go out.

**NOTE:** This pattern is also used in indirect questions or reported speech instead of the **Future Tense**.

#### EXAMPLES:

Il ne m'a pas dit s'il viendrait. (Past .....Present Conditional)	He didn't tell me whether he would come.
--	--

### PAST CONDITIONAL

The Past Conditional is formed with the main verb in the **conditional perfect/past conditional**, and the verb in the **clause introduced by "si"** is in the **Past Perfect Tense**. It expresses what would have happened IF certain conditions had prevailed. It parallels the third conditional in English (e.g., "If he had gone, he would have seen them") and indicates impossibility.

Si j'avais su, je n'aurais rien dit. If I had known, I wouldn't have said anything.
--

Qu'aurais-je fait sans toi?  
What would I have done without you?

**SUMMARY:** The following tense combinations are possible:

<b><i>Verb Following "si"</i></b>	<b><i>Main Verb</i></b>
<a href="#"><u>Present</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Future</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Imperfect</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Present</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Imperfect</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Conditional Present</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Past Perfect</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Conditional Past</u></a>

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Questions](#)

## USE OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE

The Subjunctive Mood expresses a fact or event that is planned, anticipated, desired, expected, or hoped for. It is most often found in subordinate clauses, but can also be employed in independent or main clauses.

### SUBJUNCTIVE WITH "QUE"

1. In spoken French, only the Present and Present Perfect Subjunctives are used. The subjunctive is often preceded by the conjunction **que**. Some expressions requiring the subjunctive include:

<b>être content que</b>	to be pleased that
<b>être déçu que</b>	to be disappointed that
<b>être désolé que</b>	to be sorry that
<b>être étonné que</b>	to be surprised that
<b>être fâché que</b>	to be angry that
<b>être heureux que</b>	to be happy that

And:

<b>avoir peur que ... (ne)</b>	to be afraid that
<b>craindre que ... (ne)</b>	to fear that
<b>regretter que</b>	to regret that

### EXAMPLES:

Ils étaient contents que j'**aille** les voir.  
They were pleased that I *went* to visit them.

Je serais très étonné qu'il **mente**.  
I would be very surprised if he *were lying*.

On regrette beaucoup que tu **n'aies pas pu vendre** ta voiture.  
We're very sorry that you *couldn't sell* your car.

And:

Je crains que l'avion ne **soit** en retard.  
I fear that the plane *will be* late.

**NOTE:** After **avoir peur que** and **craindre que**, **ne** is used *but* it *does not* convey a negative meaning.

2. The subjunctive is also used after verbs of wishing and willing, such as:

<b>aimer que</b>	to like
<b>désirer que</b>	to wish (that)
<b>préférer que</b>	to prefer (that)
<b>souhaiter que</b>	to wish (that)
<b>vouloir que</b>	to want

**NOTE:** The English construction that parallels this use of the French subjunctive is the subjunctive, "*I wish that he were here.*"

### EXAMPLES:

Je souhaite que tu **réussisses**.  
I hope you *will succeed*.

Il aimerait que je lui **téléphone** plus souvent.  
He'd like me *to phone* him more often.

Voulez-vous que je vous y **amène** en voiture?  
Would you like me *to drive* you there?

Préférez-vous que je **rappelle** demain?  
Would you rather I *called back* tomorrow?

3. Impersonal expressions with **il** and **que** also require the subjunctive.

### EXAMPLES:

Il faut qu'on **se dépêche**.  
We must *hurry*.

Il est nécessaire que tu le **saches**.  
It is necessary that you *know* this.

Il se pourrait qu'elle **change** d'avis.  
She might *change* her mind.

Il est peu probable qu'ils **viennent**.  
It is improbable that they *will come*.

Il semble qu'elle **ait** raison.  
It appears that she *is* right.

Il vaudrait mieux que tu **ne promettes** rien.  
You'd better *not promise* anything.

C'est dommage que vous vous **soyez manqués**.  
It's a pity you *missed* each other.

Verbs and impersonal expressions conveying doubt or uncertainty (mainly in questions and negative statements) also take the subjunctive.

<b>douter que</b>	to doubt (that)
<b>(ne pas) croire que</b>	(not) to believe (that)
<b>(ne pas) penser que</b>	(not) to think (that)
<b>(ne pas) être sûr que</b>	(not) to be sure that

### Also:

<b>Il n'est pas certain que</b>	It isn't certain that
<b>Il n'est pas évident que</b>	It isn't clear that
<b>Il n'est pas vrai que</b>	It isn't true that.

### EXAMPLES:

Je doute fort qu'il **veuille** t'aider.

I doubt very much whether he'll *want* to help you.

Croyez-vous qu'il **y ait** des places de libres?  
Do you think *there are* any seats available?

On n'était pas sûr que ce **soit** le bon endroit.  
We weren't sure that it *was* the right place.

Il n'était pas certain qu'elle **puisse gagner**.  
It wasn't certain that she *could win*.

4. The subjunctive is also used after **attendre que** (to wait until, to wait for someone to do something).

Attendons qu'il **revienne**.  
Let's wait until he **comes back**.

### SUBJUNCTIVE IN INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

When used in a main clause, the subjunctive can express:

1. A command or wish, using the third person

#### EXAMPLE:

Qu'elle **parte** et qu'elle **ne revienne** plus.  
If only she *would leave* and *not return*!

2. A hope or expectation (with or without **que**)

#### EXAMPLE:

Que Dieu vous **entende**!  
If only God *would hear* you!

3. A concession

#### EXAMPLE:

Qu'elle le **veuille** ou non, il viendra.  
Whether she *likes* it or not, he will come.

### SUBJUNCTIVE IN SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

French employs subjunctive mood in subordinate clauses when they are introduced by such phrases as:

avant que  
en attendant que  
jusqu'à ce que

Some subordinating conjunctions frequently used in French include:

<b>bien que</b>	although
<b>quoique</b>	although
<b>sans que</b>	without
<b>pour que</b>	in order that



<b>afin que</b>	in order that
<b>à condition que</b>	on the condition that
<b>pourvu que</b>	provided that
<b>jusqu'à ce que</b>	until
<b>en attendant que</b>	pending
<b>avant que ... (ne)</b>	before doing
<b>à moins que ... (ne)</b>	unless
<b>de peur que ... (ne)</b>	lest
<b>de crainte que ... (ne)</b>	for fear that
<b>de sorte que</b>	with the result that
<b>de façon que</b>	in such a manner that
<b>de manière que</b>	in such a manner that

**Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être & Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Conditional Mood](#)

[Negative Statements](#)

[Questions](#)

[Idioms](#)

## TENSE AGREEMENT

The following table reflects the tense combinations (concordance des temps) that French requires for sentences containing both [main](#) and [subordinate clauses](#):

**When the *Main Verb* is in a [Present](#) or [Future Tense](#):**

<b>The <i>Secondary Verb</i> can be</b> <i>Indicative</i>	<a href="#">Subjunctive</a>
<a href="#">Present</a>	Present
<a href="#">Future</a>	Present
<a href="#">Imperfect</a> <a href="#">Past Historic</a> <a href="#">Present Perfect</a> <a href="#">Past Perfect</a>	Present Perfect

**When the *Main Verb* is in a [Past Tense](#):**

<b>The <i>Secondary Verb</i> can be</b> <i>Indicative</i>	<a href="#">Subjunctive</a>
<a href="#">Imperfect</a> <a href="#">Past Historic</a>	Imperfect
<a href="#">Future Perfect</a>	Imperfect
<a href="#">Past Perfect</a> <a href="#">Literary Past Perfect</a>	Past Perfect

### **Related Topics:**

[Summary of Tenses](#)

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Subjunctive](#)

[Use of the Subjunctive](#)

[Idioms](#)

## IDIOMS

### WITH "avoir"

avoir besoin de	to need something
avoir chaud	to be warm / hot (of persons)
avoir douze ans	to be twelve years old
avoir envie de	to feel like (doing) something
avoir faim	to be hungry
avoir froid	to be cold (of persons)
avoir honte (de)	to be ashamed (of)
avoir lieu	to take place
avoir mal à (+ part of the body)	to have a pain / ache in a part of one's body; to hurt (in that part)
avoir peur (de)	to be afraid of something
avoir quelque chose	to have something wrong
avoir de quoi (+ inf.)	to have the means to do something
avoir l'air de (+inf.)	to seem to, to look as if
avoir la parole	to have the floor
avoir raison	to be right
avoir soif	to be thirsty
avoir tort	to be wrong

### WITH "faire"

faire à sa tête	to do as one pleases
faire de la peine à	to grieve, trouble over something
faire des achats / emplettes	make some purchases, go shopping
faire exprès	to do on purpose
faire la queue	to stand in line
faire savoir (à quelqu'un)	to let (someone) know
faire une partie de	to play a game of
faire venir	to send for

### IDIOMS WITH "il"

Il fait beau.	The weather is fine.
Il fait beau temps.	The weather is beautiful.
Il fait bon.	It's nice, good.
Il fait brumeux.	It's misty.
Il fait chaud.	It's warm / hot.
Il fait clair.	It's clear.
Il fait frais.	It's cool.
Il fait froid.	It's cold.
Il fait jour.	It's daylight.
Il fait mauvais.	The weather's bad.
Il fait nuit.	It's dark.
Il fait un temps calme.	The weather is calm.
Il fait un temps couvert.	The weather is cloudy.
Il fait un temps lourd.	It's muggy.
Il gèle.	It's freezing.
Il grêle.	It's hailing.
Il neige.	It's snowing.
Il pleut.	It's raining.
Il y a du soleil.	It's sunny.
Il y a du vent.	It's windy.

**And:**

Quelle est la prévision météorologique du temps?  
*What's the weather forecast?*

**WITH REFLEXIVE VERBS:**

s'agir de (used impersonally with "il")	it is a question / matter of, it concerns
se charger de	to undertake (something)
s'en aller	to go away, to leave
se fâcher contre	to get angry with
se faire mal	to hurt oneself, to get hurt
se fier à	to trust, to trust in
se marier avec	to marry
se mettre à	to set oneself to (a task), to begin (doing something)
se mettre en route	to start out / off
se moquer de	to make fun of, laugh at
s'occuper de	to take care of, look after (something)
se passer de	to do without (something)
se rendre à	to go to
se rendre compte de (or que)	to realize, understand
se servir de	to use, to help oneself to
se souvenir/rappeler de	to remember
se tirer d'affaire	to get along, manage

**OTHER VERBAL IDIOMS:**

adresser la parole à	to address, speak to
aller	to feel, be (for health) (as in <b>Je vais bien</b> , I am / feel fine)
aller à	to fit, suit
aller à la rencontre de / aller au-devant de	to go to meet
changer de	to exchange one thing for another
donner sur	to face, look out on
entendre dire que	to hear (something) said
entendre parler de	to hear of
en vouloir à	to have a grudge against, be angry with
être à	to belong to
être bien aisé de	to be very glad to
être d'accord (avec)	to agree with, to be in agreement (with)
être de retour	to be back
être en train de	to be busy (doing something), be in the act of (doing something)
être sur le point de	to be about to
finir par (+ inf.)	to end by (doing something), to finally (do something)
jouer à	to play (a game)
jouer de	to play (an instrument)
jouir de	to enjoy, take pleasure in (what one possesses)
manquer de	to fall short of (doing something), to almost (do something), to fail to (do something)
(+ noun) / faillir (+inf.)	
n'en pouvoir plus	to be exhausted
penser à	to think about / of, to plan, anticipate, or consider (doing something)
penser de	to have an opinion of, conceive of, or envisage

prendre garde de  
prendre le parti de  
remercier de  
sauter aux yeux  
tarder à

tenir à  
valoir mieux  
venir à  
venir à bout de  
venir de

vouloir bien  
vouloir dire  
y être

something.  
to be careful not to  
to decide to, make up one's mind to  
to thank for  
to be evident  
to be long (late) in (doing something), to put off  
(doing something)  
to insist upon, to be anxious to, to value (something)  
to be better  
to happen to  
to succeed in, manage to (do something)  
to have just (done something) (used in the present  
and imperfect tenses)  
to be willing to (do something) kindly  
to mean, to intend  
to understand, to see the point (of something)

### IDIOMS INTRODUCED BY "À":

à cause de  
à force de  
à partir de

à propos de  
à demi / à moitié  
à part (de)  
à peine  
à travers  
à haute voix  
à peu près  
à quoi bon (+ inf.)

à son gré  
à temps  
à tout prix  
à vrai dire  
à la bonne heure  
à l'étranger  
à la fin  
à la fois  
à l'heure  
à la main  
à la mode  
au contraire  
au bout de  
au courant de  
au-dessous de  
au-dessus de  
au fond de  
au lieu de  
au loin  
au milieu de  
au moins  
au pied de

because of, on account of  
by, by means of, by dint of  
from .... on (as in **à partir d'aujourd'hui**,  
*from today on*), beginning with  
about, concerning  
half, halfway  
aside (from)  
hardly, scarcely  
through, across  
aloud, out loud  
nearly, about, approximately  
What's the use (of doing something)? What purpose  
does it serve (to do something)?  
as one pleases, to one's liking  
in time  
at any cost  
to tell the truth  
Good! Fine! (It's about time!)  
abroad, in a foreign country  
finally  
at the same time  
on time  
in one's hand, in one's possession  
in style  
on the contrary  
at the end of (place / time), after (time)  
informed of  
below, beneath  
above, over  
in the bottom of, at the core / foundation of something  
instead of  
in the distance  
in the middle of  
at least  
at the foot of

### IDIOMS INTRODUCED BY "DE":

d'abord	first, at first
d'accord	agreed, O.K
d'ailleurs	besides, moreover
d'avance	in advance, beforehand
de bon coeur	willingly, gladly
de bonne heure	early
de l'autre côté (de)	on the other side (of)
de la part de	on behalf of
de mon côté	for my part, as for me
de nouveau / encore une fois	again
d'ordinaire	usually
de parti pris	deliberately
de plus en plus	more and more, increasingly.....
de rien / Il n'y a pas de quoi	It was nothing. / Don't mention it.
de rigueur	(socially) obligatory, required
de temps en temps / de temps à autre	from time to time, occasionally
du côté de	in the direction of, toward
du matin au soir	from morning till night
du moins	at least

#### IDIOMS INTRODUCED BY OTHER PREPOSITIONS:

autour de	around, at (approximately), circa
chez (+ person)	to (at) the home (in the country) of someone
en arrière	backward(s), behind, in reverse
en bas	downstairs, below
en effet	indeed, as a matter of fact
en face de	opposite
en famille	as a family, within the family
en haut	upstairs, above
en haut de	at the top of
en retard	late, not on time
par conséquent	therefore, as a consequence
par hasard	by chance
par ici	this way, in that direction
par jour / semaine / mois, etc.	per day, week, month, etc.
par là	that way, in that direction, over there
sans doute	undoubtedly, without doubt

#### MISCELLANEOUS IDIOMS AND EXPRESSIONS:

bien entendu	of course, indeed
bon gré mal gré	whether one wants to or not
bon marché / meilleur marché	cheap / cheaper
Cela m'est égal.	That makes no difference to me. That's all the same to me.
Cela ne fait rien.	That does not matter. That makes no difference.
c'est-à-dire	that is to say
C'est entendu.	It's agreed, all right.
et ainsi de suite	and so forth
faute de	for lack of
grâce à	thanks to
Il y a (six ans)	(six years) ago
Il y avait une fois	Once upon a time there was/were
Jamais de la vie	Never in my life! Out of the question!

le long de	along
n'importe quand	no matter when
peu à peu	little by little, gradually
quant à	as for
tant bien que mal	rather badly, somehow or other
tant mieux	so much the better
tant pis	so much the worse
tous (les) deux	both (of them)
tout à coup	suddenly
tout à fait	entirely, quite
tout à l'heure	just now, a little while ago, in a little while, presently
tout de même / quand même	just the same
tout de suite / à l'instant	immediately, at once

**Related Topics:**

[Être and Avoir; Conjugations](#)

[Reflexive Verbs](#)

[Prepositions](#)

## THE CLOCK AND THE CALENDAR

The days of the week and the months are written in lower case in French:

### DAYS OF THE WEEK

lundi	vendredi
mardi	samedi
mercredi	dimanche
jeudi	

**NOTE:** The article **le** is used in front of the days of the week only when regular occurrence is implied; e.g., **le mardi** = *every Tuesday* or *on Tuesdays*. If you want to say "*on Tuesday*" (i.e., on a *specific* Tuesday), you simply say **mardi**.

in April	<b>en Avril</b>
in 1995	<b>en 1995</b>
on June 26	<b>le 26 juin</b>
on Monday	<b>lundi</b>
on Sundays	<b>le dimanche</b>

### MONTHS OF THE YEAR

janvier	juillet
février	août
mars	septembre
avril	octobre
mai	novembre
juin	décembre

### COMMON QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND EXPRESSIONS

Quel jour sommes-nous? Aujourd'hui, nous sommes le 12. le premier/deux juillet...	What's today's date? Today's the 12th. The first/ second of July...
aux environs du 4 juillet... du 14 au 18...	About the 4th of July... From the 14th to the 18th...
dans les années quatre-vingts / quatre-vingt-dix Quand? Jusqu'à / depuis quand? Depuis combien de temps travaillez-vous ici? hier... aujourd'hui... demain... après-demain... la semaine dernière / prochaine... le mois / l'an dernier / prochain... tous les jours / tous les vendredis... un jeudi en octobre... dans 2 jours... Cela va prendre 3 jours. Je travaille ici depuis 2 ans. Je suis en Suisse pour 2 jours.	in the 1980s / 1990s... When? Until / since when? How long have you worked here? yesterday... today... tomorrow... the day after tomorrow... last / next week... last / next month / year... every day / every Friday... one Thursday in October... in 2 days... It will take 3 days. I've worked here for 2 years. I'm in Switzerland for 2 days.
Ils l'ont terminé en 2 jours / semaines / mois.	



They finished it in 2 days / weeks / months.

## SEASONS OF THE YEAR

le printemps	spring
l'été	summer
l'automne	autumn
l'hiver	winter

## TIME OF DAY

The 24-hour clock is used extensively in mainland Europe, so, if a French speaker says **sept / huit / neuf / dix / onze heures**, he or she usually means 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., etc.

## WRITING THE TIME

When writing the time, French speakers use the letter "h" (small or capital).  
e.g. **9:00 = 9h, 10:30 = 10h30.**

13h = treize heures	19h = dix-neuf heures
14h = quatorze heures	20h = vingt heures
15h = quinze heures	21h = vingt et une heures
16h = seize heures	22h = vingt-deux heures
17h = dix-sept heures	23h = vingt-trois heures
18h = dix-huit heures	

at 10 a.m. = à 10h  
at 4 p.m. = à 16h  
at 11 p.m. = à 23h

## SOME FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT TIME OF DAY

Quelle heure est-il?	What's the time?
Quelle heure avez-vous?	What time do you have?
Avez-vous l'heure exacte?	Do you have the right time?
Il est une heure.	It's 1 o'clock.
Il est deux heures.	It's 2 o'clock.
Il est quatre heures huit.	It's 8 minutes past 4.
Il est six heures moins dix.	It's 10 to 6.
Il est neuf heures et quart.	It's a quarter past 9.
Il est deux heures moins le quart.	It's a quarter to 2.
Il est huit heures et demie.	It's half past 8.
D'après ma montre il est 2h20.	I have 2:20.
Il est 3h39 à ma montre.	My watch says 3:39.
Il est trois heures passées.	It's just after 3:00.
Il est presque onze heures.	It's nearly 11:00.
Aux environs de huit heures.	About 8 o'clock.
À quelle heure est-ce que cela commence / se termine?	What time does it start / end?
À quelle heure ouvrez-vous/ fermez-vous?	When do you open/ close?
À trois heures exactement, à trois heures précises.	At exactly 3 o'clock.
À midi.	At midday.
À minuit.	At midnight.
Jusqu'à neuf heures.	Until 9 o'clock.
Fermé de une heure et demie à quatre heures et demie.	Closed from 1:30 to 4:30.

Combien de temps est-ce que cela va prendre?	How long will it take?
Combien de temps est-ce que la réunion va durer?	How long will the meeting last?
une demi-heure...	half an hour...
un quart d'heure...	a quarter of an hour...
trois quarts d'heure...	three quarters of an hour...
Quand en avez-vous besoin?	When do you need it?
J'en ai besoin pour dix heures demain matin.	I need it for 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.
mercredi à seize heures...	by Wednesday at 4 p.m....
à six heures au plus tard...	at / by 6 o'clock at the latest...

## **DATES**

French style is very simple where dates are concerned:

May 31	<b>31 mai</b>
December 25	<b>25 décembre</b>

When saying the date, remember to add the article, **le**, e.g. *the first of May* = **le premier mai**. The French usually say the year as if it were a simple number, e.g. 1995 = **mille neuf cent quatre-vingt-quinze**. But they will often refer to the year as '95 or '96, etc. (**quatre-vingt-quinze, quatre-vingt-seize**).

### **Related Topics:**

[The Definite Article](#)

[Prepositions](#)

# CARDINAL & ORDINAL NUMBERS

## CARDINAL NUMBERS

The cardinal numbers in French are:

0 = zéro  
1 = un(e)  
2 = deux  
3 = trois  
4 = quatre  
5 = cinq  
6 = six  
7 = sept  
8 = huit  
9 = neuf

10 = dix  
11 = onze  
12 = douze  
13 = treize  
14 = quatorze  
15 = quinze  
16 = seize  
17 = dix-sept  
18 = dix-huit  
19 = dix-neuf

20 = vingt  
21 = vingt et un  
22 = vingt-deux  
23 = vingt-trois

30 = trente  
31 = trente et un  
32 = trente-deux  
33 = trente-trois

40 = quarante  
41 = quarante et un  
42 = quarante-deux  
43 = quarante-trois

50 = cinquante  
51 = cinquante et un

60 = soixante  
61 = soixante et un  
62 = soixante-deux

70 = soixante-dix  
71 = soixante et onze  
72 = soixante-douze  
73 = soixante-treize

80 = quatre-vingts  
81 = quatre-vingt-un  
82 = quatre-vingt-deux

83 = quatre-vingt-trois

90 = quatre-vingt-dix

91 = quatre-vingt-onze

92 = quatre-vingt-douze

93 = quatre-vingt-treize

99 = quatre-vingt-dix-neuf

100 = cent

101 = cent un

102 = cent deux

110 = cent dix

150 = cent cinquante

182 = cent quatre-vingt-deux

200 = deux cent(s)

300 = trois cent(s)

400 = quatre cent(s)

500 = cinq cent(s)

600 = six cent(s)

700 = sept cent(s)

800 = huit cent(s)

900 = neuf cent(s)

1.000 = mille

1.001 = mille un

1.500 = mille cinq cents

2.000 = deux mille

10.000 = dix mille

100.000 = cent mille

200.000 = deux cent mille

one million = un million

two million = deux millions

one billion (1.000 million) = un milliard

one million units = un million d'unités

2 billion francs = 2 milliards de francs

**NOTE:** Belgian and Swiss speakers often use **septante** (instead of **soixante-dix**) and **nonante** (instead of **quatre-vingt-dix**). You may also hear **octante** / **huitante** (**quatre-vingts**).

**Deux cents, trois cents**, etc. drop their final "s" when followed by another number:

**EXAMPLE:** deux **cent** cinquante...

## ORDINAL NUMBERS

The ordinal numbers in French are:

1st = premier(-ière)

2nd = deuxième

3rd = troisième

4th = quatrième

5th = cinquième

6th = sixième

7th = septième

8th = huitième  
9th = neuvième  
10th = dixième  
11th = onzième  
12th = douzième  
13th = treizième  
14th = quatorzième  
15th = quinzième  
16th = seizième  
17th = dix-septième  
18th = dix-huitième  
19th = dix-neuvième  
20th = vingtième

**NOTE:** Ordinal numbers are not used in dates, with the exception of **premier**.

## DECIMALS

In French, a comma is used where English uses a period:

<i>French</i>	<i>English</i>
3,57 (trois virgule cinquante-sept)	3.57
,08 (virgule zéro huit)	.08

## FRACTIONS

1/2	=	un(e) demi(e)
1/3	=	un tiers
1/4	=	un quart
3/4	=	trois quarts
1/2 l	=	un demi-litre
1/2 lb.	=	une demi-livre
1 1/2 l	=	un litre et demi
1 1/2 lbs.	=	une livre et demie
2 1/2 kg.	=	deux kilos et demi

## PERCENTAGES

2,5% = two and a half percent...  
deux et demi pour cent...

20% of the people here are over 65...  
20% (vingt pour cent) des gens ici ont plus de soixante-cinq ans...

Production has risen / fallen by 8%.  
La production a augmenté / diminué de 8% (huit pour cent).

## NUMERICAL NOTATION

To divide large numbers clearly, either a space or a period is often used in French where English places a comma:

***French***

***English***

**1 000 or 1.000**

1,000

**2 304 770 or 2.304.770**

2,304,770

**NOTE:** This does not apply to dates.

## **Non-Grammatical Forms**

The term, Non-Grammatical, is applied to words and expressions that do not fit into any other lexical category. Non-grammaticals do not inflect for gender, number, person or tense. Common French non-grammaticals are: **oui**, **non**, and **merci**.

## **Title Forms**

Common French titles applied to persons are Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle, and their associated abbreviations. These words typically occur before proper nouns and have certain restrictions concerning co-occurrence with articles.

### **Related Topics:**

**COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS**

**ARTICLES**

**NOUNS**



## COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

a.b.s.	aux bons soins (c/o)
A.C.F.	Automobile-Club de France
adj.	adjectif
adv.	adverbe
AFNOR	Association française de normalisation
all. ou allem.	allemand
amér.	américain
angl.	anglais
antiq.	antiquité
A.P.	Assistance publique
appel.	appellation
apr. J.-C.	après Jésus-Christ (A.D.)
av. J.-C.	avant Jésus-Christ (B.C.)
arg.	argot
art.	article
A.S.	Assurances sociales
auxil.	auxiliaire
av.	avenue
bd	boulevard
B.E.P.C.	Brevet d'études du premier cycle
B.I.T.	Bureau International du Travail (I.L.O.)
B.N.	Bibliothèque Nationale
B.N.C.I.	Banque Nationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie
B.O.	Bulletin Officiel
B.P.	Boîte postale
bret.	breton (langue)
Bull.	Bulletin
B.U.S.	Bureau Universitaire de Statistique
bx-arts ou Bx.A.	beaux-arts
c.-à-d.	c'est-à-dire
C.C.	cours complémentaire
C.C.P.	compte de chèques postaux
CD-ROM	CD-ROM
C.E.E.	Communauté Économique Européenne (E.E.C.)
C.E.I.	Communauté des États Indépendants (CIS)
CFA	Communauté financière africaine
C.F.F.	Chemins de Fer Fédéraux
Cf. ou cf.	conférez, comparez
C.F.T.C.	Confédération française de travailleurs chrétiens
C.G.A.	Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture
C.G.A.F.	Confédération Générale de l'Artisanat Français
C.G.C.	Confédération Générale des Cadres
C.G.T.	1) Confédération Générale du Travail (T.U.C.), ou 2) Compagnie Générale Transatlantique
C.G.T.-F.O.	Confédération Générale du Travail - Force Ouvrière
chir.	chirurgie
ch.V.	cheval vapeur (H.P.)
Cie; C(o)	Compagnie
civ.	civil (droit civil)
C.N.P.F.	Conseil National du Patronat Français
C.N.R.	Conseil National de Résistance

C.N.R.S.	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
C.Q.F.D.	ce qu'il fallait démontrer (Q.E.D.)
C.R.S.	Compagnies républicaines de sécurité
cond. ou condit.	conditionnel
conj.	conjonction
Cte, Ctesse	Comte, Comtesse
C.U.	Charge utile
cv	curriculum vitae
D.B.	Division blindée
D.C.A.	Défense contre avions (A.A.)
dens.	densité
d.i.	date inconnue
div.	divers
dr.	droit
ead	eadem (the same, when author is feminine)
E.A.O.	Enseignement assistée par ordinateur
éd.	édition
élec.	électronique
É.M.	État-major
É.N.	École normale
É.N.S.	École Normale Supérieure
É.N.S.I.	École Nationale Supérieure d'Ingénieurs
env.	environ
É.O.R.	Élève-officier de réserve
É.-U.	États-Unis (U.S.A.)
E.V.	En ville (local)
exp.	expéditeur
f. ou fém.	féminin
F.F.I.	Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur
F.F.L.	Forces Françaises Libres
flam.	flamand
F.L.N.	Front de Libération Nationale
fr. ou franç.	français
G.V.	Grande vitesse (Rail)
h	heure
hab.	habitants
H.C.	Hors concours
H.E.C.	Hautes Études Commerciales
hist.	histoire ou historique
H.L.M.	Habitation à loyer modéré
I.A.	Intelligence artificielle
ib.	ibidem, au même endroit, dans la même oeuvre
ibid	ibidem (dans le même livre)
id	idem (the same, when author is masc.)
id.	la même chose
imp.	imparfait
imprim.	d'imprimerie
ind. ou indir.	indirect
I.N.É.D.	Institut National des Études Démographiques
inform.	d'informatique
I.P.E.S.	Institut de préparation aux enseignements du second degré
it. ou ital.	italien

J.-C.	Jésus-Christ
J.O.	Journal Officiel
J.O.C.	Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne
jurid.	juridique
Ko	kilo-octet (KB)
langued.	languedocien
lat.	latin
l.c.	loco citato, à l'endroit cité
L.en D.	Licencié en droit
L. ès Lettres	Licencié ès lettres
L. ès Sciences	Licencié ès sciences
M.	Monsieur
m. ou masc.	masculin
mar.	marine
math.	mathématique
Me	Maître (Law)
méc. ou mécan.	mécanique
méd.	médecine
mérid.	méridional
Mgr	Monseigneur
mil.	milieu
Mlle	Mademoiselle
M.M.	Messieurs
Mme	Madame
Mo	méga-octet (MB)
M.P.C.	Certificat de Mathématiques, Physique et Chimie
M.R.P.	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
ms.	manuscrit
Mtl	Montréal
n.	nom
N.-B.	Nouveau-Brunswick
N.B.	nota bene
N.D.	Notre-Dame
N.-E.	Nouvelle-Ecosse
Néerl.	néerlandais
n.f.	nom féminin
N.F.	Nouveau franc
no	Numéro
n(o) at.	numéro atomique
nom déposé	nom appartenant à une firme commerciale, mais utilisé comme nom commun
norm.	normand
nucl.	nucléaire
num.	numérique
O.A.S.	Organisation de l'Armée Secrète
O.C.D.É.	Organisation de coopération de développement économique (O.E.C.D.)
o.i.	origine inconnue ou très incertaine
O.N.M.	Office National Météorologique
O.N.U.	Organisation des Nations Unies (U.N.O.)
op. cit.	opus citatum, ouvrage cité
O.P.	Ordre des prêcheurs (Dominicains)

opt.	optique
O.T.A.N.	Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (N.A.T.O.)
P.	Paris (dans les références biogr.)
P.A.O.	Publication assistée par ordinateur (DTP)
par anal.	par analogie
par ext.	par extension
PC	ordinateur personnel
P.C.	Parti communiste; Poste du Commandement
P.C.B.	Certificat de Physique, Chimie, Biologie
p.c.c.	pour copie conforme
P.C.N.	Certificat de Physique, Chimie, Sciences Naturelles
P.C.V.	appel téléphonique aux frais du récepteur
P.D.G.	président-directeur général
p.-ê.	peut-être
péj.	péjoratif
pers.	personne
p.ex.	par exemple
P.G.	Prisonnier de guerre (P.O.W.)
P.J.	Police judiciaire (C.I.D.)
phys.	physique
P.M.U.	Pari mutuel urbain
port.	portugais
pp.	pages
p.p.	participe passé / port payé
P.P.C.	Pour prendre congé (R&R)
P.Q.	Province du Québec
pr.	propre
prov.	proverbe ou provençal (langue)
P.S.	Post-scriptum
P.T.T.	Poste, Télégraphes et Téléphones (G.P.O.)
P.V.	Petite vitesse (Rail.)
QC	Québec
qch. ou qqch.	quelque chose
Q.G.	Quartier général (H.Q.)
qqf.	quelquefois
qqn.	quelqu'un
R.A.T.P.	Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens
R.C.	Registre du Commerce
RCA	République centrafricaine
rem.	remarque
R.F.	République Française
R.G.	République gabonaise
R.I.	Régiment d'infanterie
R.N.	route nationale
rom.	romain (antiq. rom.-antiquité romaine)
R.P.F.	Rassemblement du Peuple Français
R.S.V.P.	Répondez s'il vous plaît
R.-U.	Royaume-Uni
s/	sur
s.	siècle ou saint
S.A.	Société Anonyme
S.A.R.	Son Altesse Royale (H.R.H.)
S.A.R.L.	Société Anonyme à Responsabilité limitée (Ltd.)

sc.	scientifique
scol.	scolaire
s.d.	sans date
S.D.N.	Société des Nations
S.Ém.	Son Éminence
s.-ent.	sous-entendu
S.E(xc).	Son Excellence
séc. soc.	Sécurité sociale
seult	seulement
S.F.O.	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
S.G.D.G.	Sans garantie du gouvernement
S.Gr.	Sa Grandeur
S.I.	Syndicat d'Initiative
SIDA	Syndrome Immuno-Déficitaire Acquis (AIDS)
S.M.	Sa Majesté (H.M.)
S.N.C.B.	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Belges
S.N.C.F.	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français
S.P.	1) Sapeurs-pompiers 2) Service de presse
S.P.A.	Société protectrice des animaux
S.S.	1) Sa Seigneurie 2) Sa Sainteté 3) Sécurité sociale
Sté	Société
subj.	subjonctif
suiv.	suivant
S.V.P.	S'il vous plaît
T.	terme
t.	tome
T.A.O.	Traduction assistée par ordinateur (MT)
T.C.F.	Touring Club de France
tél.	télécommunications
T.G.V.	Train à grande vitesse
T.N.P.	Théâtre National Populaire
tr. pub.	travaux publics
trad.	traduction
T.S.V.P.	Tournez s'il vous plaît (P.T.O.)
T.T.C.	Toutes taxes comprises
T.V.A.	Taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (VAT)
U.R.S.S.	Union des Républiques Socialistes Soviétiques
V.	voir
V.H.S.	VHS
v.i.	verbe intransitif
V.I.P.	VIP
v.t.	verbe transitif
w.c.	water closet

# GLOSSARY

<a href="#">Adjectives</a>	<a href="#">Coordinating Conjunctions</a>	<a href="#">Noun</a>	<a href="#">Pronoun</a>
<a href="#">Adverbs</a>	<a href="#">Demonstrative Adjectives</a>	<a href="#">Object</a>	<a href="#">Reflexive Pronoun</a>
<a href="#">Auxiliary Verb</a>	<a href="#">Direct Object</a>	<a href="#">Object of a Preposition</a>	<a href="#">Reflexive Verb</a>
<a href="#">Clause</a>	<a href="#">Elision</a>	<a href="#">Participial Adjective</a>	<a href="#">Relative Clause</a>
<a href="#">Comparative Form</a>	<a href="#">Imperative Form</a>	<a href="#">Passive Voice</a>	<a href="#">Relative Pronouns</a>
<a href="#">Complement</a>	<a href="#">Impersonal Expressions</a>	<a href="#">Past Participles</a>	<a href="#">Simple Tenses</a>
<a href="#">Compound Noun</a>	<a href="#">Indicative</a>	<a href="#">Personal Pronouns</a>	<a href="#">Subject</a>
<a href="#">Compound Tenses</a>	<a href="#">Indirect Object</a>	<a href="#">Possessive Adjectives</a>	<a href="#">Subject Pronouns</a>
<a href="#">Conditional Clause</a>	<a href="#">Indirect Speech</a>	<a href="#">Possessive Pronoun</a>	<a href="#">Subjunctive Mood</a>
<a href="#">Conditional Mood</a>	<a href="#">Infinitive</a>	<a href="#">Predicate</a>	<a href="#">Subordinate Clause</a>
<a href="#">Conjugated</a>	<a href="#">Inflected Verb</a>	<a href="#">Predicate Adjective</a>	<a href="#">Superlative</a>
<a href="#">Conjunction</a>	<a href="#">Intransitive Verb</a>	<a href="#">Predicate Noun</a>	<a href="#">Syntax</a>
<a href="#">Continuous Tenses</a>	<a href="#">Irregular Verbs</a>	<a href="#">Preposition</a>	<a href="#">Transitive Verb</a>
<a href="#">Contraction</a>	<a href="#">Main Clause</a>	<a href="#">Prepositional Phrase</a>	<a href="#">Verb</a>

**ADJECTIVES** describe or qualify nouns. They answer the question "What sort of...?". French adjectives always agree in number and gender with the nouns they modify. Unlike English, French adjectives are usually placed after the noun. Exceptions to this rule include:

<b>bon</b>	<b>bonne</b>
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<b>joli</b>	<b>jolie</b>
<b>grand</b>	<b>grande</b>
<b>petit</b>	<b>petite</b>
<b>gentil</b>	<b>gentille</b>
<b>long</b>	<b>longue</b>
<b>vieux</b>	<b>vieille</b>
<b>jeune</b>	<b>jeune</b>
<b>nouveau</b>	<b>nouvelle</b>
<b>même</b>	
<b>autre</b>	
<b>premier</b>	<b>première</b>
<b>dernier</b>	<b>dernière</b>

**ADVERBS** describe or qualify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb and answer the questions "How...?", "When...?", "Where...?", or "In what manner...?". In French, most "how" adverbs are formed by adding **-ment** to the feminine singular form of the adjective.

An **AUXILIARY VERB** helps in the conjugation of a main verb. The French auxiliary verbs **être** (to be) and **avoir** (to have) are used to form the compound tenses.

<b>EXAMPLES:</b>	J'ai parlé avec lui. I <i>have spoken</i> with him.
	Elle <b>est</b> arrivée. She <i>has</i> arrived.

A **CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that includes at least a subject and a verb and forms part of a larger sentence. French uses relative pronouns to introduce clauses.

<b>EXAMPLE:</b>	L'artiste <b>qui fait des portraits</b> vit à Toulouse. The artist <i>who does portraits</i> lives in Toulouse.
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The **COMPARATIVE FORM** expresses a difference in degree or quality (e.g., more than, less than). It can also indicate equality (e.g., as ... as). In English, the comparative is formed by adding the ending **-er** to the adjective.

A **COMPLEMENT** is a word or group of words that completes the idea conveyed by a verb, noun, etc.

A **COMPOUND NOUN** is a noun that consists of two or more independent elements.

**COMPOUND TENSES** consist of a conjugated auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the main verb. In French, they occur in the Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Future Perfect, as well as the past tenses of conditionals and subjunctives.

A **CONDITIONAL CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that states the condition under which the action described by the main clause may be realized.

**EXAMPLE:**            **S'il avait une voiture**, il pourrait se rendre en Belgique.  
*If he had a car, he could go to Belgium.*

The **CONDITIONAL MOOD** expresses the hypothetical, unreal, or speculative and states the condition under which another action or event may be realized.

A verb is **CONJUGATED** when it is listed according to person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), number (singular / plural), tense (present, past, future, etc.), and/or conditional or subjunctive mood.

A **CONJUNCTION** serves as a link between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences.

**CONTINUOUS TENSES** are used in English to indicate that an action or condition is ongoing or that an action was in progress when another one took place. They occur in the Present, Past, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, and Future Tenses, and conditionals.

A **CONTRACTION** is formed by omitting and/or combining some of the sounds of two words. In French, **à + le** is contracted to **au**; **à + les** becomes **aux**; **de + le** becomes **du**; and **de + les** becomes **des**.

**COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS** link two independent clauses in a sentence.

**DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES** point to a definite person or object. Where English uses **this, these, that, and those**. French uses the variable forms, **ce, cet, cette, and ces**.

The **DIRECT OBJECT** is the person, place, or thing that is the direct recipient of the action described by a verb.

**EXAMPLE:**            Il lisait **le poème**.            He read *the poem*.

**ELISION** occurs in French when two vowels stand next to each other (e.g., **si + il = s'il**)

The **IMPERATIVE FORM** of a verb is used to give a command or make a suggestion. These forms are short and derived from the verb stem.

**EXAMPLES:**            **Tais-toi!**            *Be quiet!*  
**Donnez-moi le cahier.**    *Give me the notebook.*

**IMPERSONAL EXPRESSIONS** take an indefinite subject and create a sense of objectivity. They are sometimes expressed using the impersonal reflexive:

**EXAMPLE:**            Il **s'agit de...**            It is a matter of

For third person singular (**it**), French combines **il** with a verb.

**EXAMPLES:**            **Il fait chaud**            *It's hot.*  
**Il vaut la peine.**            *It's worth the effort.*

The **INDICATIVE** is the mood of the verb used in objective statements or questions.

An **INDIRECT OBJECT** is the person or thing "**to whom**" or "**for whom**" an action is performed.

**EXAMPLE:** Il t'a donné un cadeau.  
He gave *you* a gift.

**INDIRECT SPEECH** is the reporting of the words of an unknown speaker. French uses the impersonal "**on**" with the third person singular verb form to express "**it is...**," "**people...**," "**they...**," and "**one...**"

**EXAMPLES:**

**Indirect Speech:** On dit qu'il a écrit un roman policier.  
*It is said that he wrote a detective story.*

**Direct Speech:** Il a écrit un roman policier.  
*He wrote a detective story.*

An **INFINITIVE** is the basic form of a verb. It reflects no person, number, or tense. There are three infinitive ending groups in French: **-er**, **-ir**, and **-re**.

An **INFLECTED VERB** is one that has been identified as singular or plural and assigned endings for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

**EXAMPLE:** Il voyage (sing., 3rd person, Present Tense)  
He *travels*

An **INTRANSITIVE VERB** does not describe an action, but merely expresses a state of affairs, change, or natural process. It therefore does not take an object.

**EXAMPLE:** Il pleut.  
*It's raining.*

**IRREGULAR VERBS** show deviations from the usual pattern of inflection (spelling) in the stem or in the endings.

A **MAIN CLAUSE** is the independent or principal clause in a sentence. It does not depend on another clause for its meaning and can stand on its own as a full sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** Quand il viendra, je l'informerai.  
*When he comes, I'll inform him.*

A **NOUN** names a person, place, or thing.

The **OBJECT** is the recipient of the action expressed by the verb.

The **OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION** is a noun that follows a preposition.

**EXAMPLES:** Long comme un jour sans pain.  
*Long as a day without bread.*

L'institut se trouve entre les deux maisons.  
*The institute is located between the two buildings.*

A **PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVE** is an adjective derived from a verb. It must agree in number and gender with the noun it modifies.

**EXAMPLE:** Cette histoire est très émouvante.  
*This story is very moving.*

**PASSIVE VOICE** conveys a sense of anonymity or objectivity. French uses the impersonal subject "**on**" as an alternative to passive voice.

**EXAMPLES:** Active: Il a terminé le contrat. He ended the contract.



**Passive:** Le contrat **est terminé**. The contract *was ended*.  
**Passive:** **On a terminé** le contrat. The contract *was ended*.

**PAST PARTICIPLES** are formed by adding the Present Perfect endings to the Present Perfect stem of the verb (-é, -i, -u for regular verbs). Irregular past participles vary and must be learned. English equivalents for regular verbs are formed by adding -ed, -t, -en, etc. (parked, kept, frozen). They are used in the compound tenses and in Passive Voice, and they can also serve as adjectives. When used as adjectives, they must agree in number and gender with the noun they modify.

**EXAMPLES:** Ils ont **écrit** des lettres.  
They *wrote* some letters.  
  
On lit trop rarement les mot **écrits**.  
It is too seldom that we read *written* words.

**PERSONAL PRONOUNS** take the place of nouns. They usually accompany a verb and can be either the subject or the object of the verb.

**POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES** modify nouns and answer the question "**Whose...?**". They must be repeated before each noun they modify.

**EXAMPLE:** **mon** père et **ma** mère...  
*my* father and mother...

A **POSSESSIVE PRONOUN** is a pronoun that answers the question "**Whose...?**".

**EXAMPLE:** Est-ce que vous préférez conduire ma voiture ou **la vôtre**?  
Do you want to drive my car or *yours*?

A **PREDICATE** modifies a subject and includes the verbs, objects, or phrases governed by the verb. It can also be a verb or linking verb (**être** = "to be") connecting elements of a sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** Elle **a pris le métro**.  
She *took* the metro.  
  
Il **vit à Lyon**.  
He *lives in Lyons*.

A **PREDICATE ADJECTIVE** describes the subject of a predicate. It must agree in number and gender with the noun it modifies.

**EXAMPLE:** Il est **généreux**. He is *generous*.

A **PREDICATE NOUN** is equivalent in meaning to the subject and is linked to it by the verb "*to be*" (**être**).

**EXAMPLE:** Elle est **chanteuse**. *She is a singer*.

A **PREPOSITION** introduces a noun, pronoun, adverb, infinitive, or present participle and can indicate spatial or temporal relationships.

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** consists of a preposition and its object and modifies the subject or verb. Prepositional phrases are often used instead of adverbs of manner.

**EXAMPLES:** Il parle souvent **avec ironie**.  
He often speaks *ironically*.  
  
Elles ont joué **avec élégance**.  
They (fem.) played *elegantly*.

A **PRONOUN** can substitute for a noun. Like French nouns, pronouns have gender and number.

A **REFLEXIVE PRONOUN** accompanies a verb and refers the action expressed by it back to the subject.

With a **REFLEXIVE VERB**, the subject is also the object of the action performed. French reflexive verbs are frequently translated into English without their accompanying pronouns.

**EXAMPLES:** Il **s'est assis**.  
He *sat* down.  
  
Je **me lave** les mains.  
I *wash* my hands.

A **RELATIVE CLAUSE** is a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun that describes or qualifies the subject or object of a sentence. It answers the question "**What sort of...?**". The relative clause can contain a subject, verb, and/or object(s).

**EXAMPLES:** L'homme **que nous connaissons** a vendu sa maison.  
The man *whom we know* has sold his house.  
  
Elle porte le chapeau **qu'elle vient tout juste d'acheter**.  
She is wearing the hat *that she just bought*.

**RELATIVE PRONOUNS** introduce relative clauses. Some of the most frequently used French relative pronouns are:

<b>qui</b>	who, which
<b>que</b>	whom, which
<b>quoi</b>	what
<b>lequel</b>	which
<b>dont</b>	which, whose

**SIMPLE TENSES** consist of a conjugated main verb only. They occur in the Present, Imperfect, Past, and Future Tenses and the conditionals and subjunctives.

The **SUBJECT** of a sentence performs the action described by the verb.

**SUBJECT PRONOUNS** refer to the person or thing that makes up the subject.

The **SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD** indicates that a situation is hypothetical, unreal, wished or hoped for, or somehow speculative in nature. French uses special verb forms to indicate the subjunctive in the Present, Present Perfect, Imperfect, and Past Perfect Tenses. The conjunction **que** and phrases containing **que** often signal the subjunctive.

A **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE** is a secondary clause. Its meaning depends on an independent or main clause.

**EXAMPLE:** Je voudrais rentrer à l'université **pour achever un cours de commerce**.  
I would like to return to the university *in order to complete a business course*.

A **SUPERLATIVE** is an adjective or adverb that expresses the third and highest level of comparison (e.g., most, least). In English it is formed by adding the ending **est** to the adjective. French uses **le plus** or **le moins + adjective**.

**EXAMPLE:** **la plus haute** maison... the *tallest* building...

**SYNTAX** is the order in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences.

A **TRANSITIVE VERB** expresses an action that directly affects someone or something. It therefore takes a direct object.

**EXAMPLE:** Nous **avons vu le film**.  
We *saw the film*.

A **VERB** is a word that expresses an action.

# Adjectives

**ADJECTIVES** describe or qualify nouns. They answer the question "**What sort of...?**". French adjectives always agree in number and gender with the nouns they modify. Unlike English, French adjectives are usually placed after the noun. Exceptions to this rule include:

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# Adverbs

**ADVERBS** describe or qualify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb and answer the questions "**How...?**", "**When...?**", "**Where...?**", or "**In what manner...?**". In French, most "**how**" adverbs are formed by adding **-ment** to the feminine singular form of the adjective.

# Auxiliary Verb

An **AUXILIARY VERB** helps in the conjugation of a main verb. The French auxiliary verbs **être** (to be) and **avoir** (to have) are used to form the compound tenses.

**EXAMPLES:**      J'**ai** parlé avec lui.  
                         I *have spoken* with him.

                         Elle **est** arrivée.  
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# Clause

A **CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that includes at least a subject and a verb and forms part of a larger sentence. French uses relative pronouns to introduce clauses.

**EXAMPLE:** L'artiste **qui fait des portraits** vit à Toulouse.  
The artist *who does portraits* lives in Toulouse.

## Comparative Form

The **COMPARATIVE FORM** expresses a difference in degree or quality (e.g., more than, less than). It can also indicate equality (e.g., as ... as). In English, the comparative is formed by adding the ending **-er** to the adjective.

# Complement

A **COMPLEMENT** is a word or group of words that completes the idea conveyed by a verb, noun, etc.



# Compound Noun

A **COMPOUND NOUN** is a noun that consists of two or more independent elements.

## Compound Tenses

**COMPOUND TENSES** consist of a conjugated auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the main verb. In French, they occur in the Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Future Perfect, as well as the past tenses of conditionals and subjunctives.

# Conditional Clause

A **CONDITIONAL CLAUSE** is a phrase or group of words that states the condition under which the action described by the main clause may be realized.

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*If he had a car*, he could go to Belgium.

## Conditional Mood

The **CONDITIONAL MOOD** expresses the hypothetical, unreal, or speculative and states the condition under which another action or event may be realized.

# Conjugated

A verb is **CONJUGATED** when it is listed according to person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), number (singular / plural), tense (present, past, future, etc.), and/or conditional or subjunctive mood.

# Conjunction

A **CONJUNCTION** serves as a link between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences.

## Continuous Tenses

**CONTINUOUS TENSES** are used in English to indicate that an action or condition is ongoing or that an action was in progress when another one took place. They occur in the Present, Past, Present Perfect, Past Perfect, and Future Tenses, and conditionals.

# Contraction

A **CONTRACTION** is formed by omitting and/or combining some of the sounds of two words. In French, **à + le** is contracted to **au**; **à + les** becomes **aux**; **de + le** becomes **du**; and **de + les** becomes **des**.



# Coordinating Conjunctions

**COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS** link two independent clauses in a sentence.

## Demonstrative Adjectives

**DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES** point to a definite person or object. Where English uses **this, these, that, and those**. French uses the variable forms, **ce, cet, cette, and ces**.

# Direct Object

The **DIRECT OBJECT** is the person, place, or thing that is the direct recipient of the action described by a verb.

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# Elision

**ELISION** occurs in French when two vowels stand next to each other (e.g., **si + il = s'il**)

# Imperative Form

The **IMPERATIVE FORM** of a verb is used to give a command or make a suggestion. These forms are short and derived from the verb stem.

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                         **Donnez-moi le cahier.**      *Give me the notebook.*

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**IMPERSONAL EXPRESSIONS** take an indefinite subject and create a sense of objectivity. They are sometimes expressed using the impersonal reflexive:

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For third person singular (**it**), French combines **il** with a verb.

**EXAMPLES:**      **Il fait chaud**                      *It's hot.*  
                         **Il vaut la peine.**                      *It's worth the effort.*

# Indicative

The **INDICATIVE** is the mood of the verb used in objective statements or questions.

# Indirect Object

An **INDIRECT OBJECT** is the person or thing "**to whom**" or "**for whom**" an action is performed.

**EXAMPLE:**        Il t'a donné un cadeau.  
                         He gave a book *to you*.



# Indirect Speech

**INDIRECT SPEECH** is the reporting of the words of an unknown speaker. French uses the impersonal "on" with the third person singular verb form to express "it is...," "people...," "they...," and "one...."

## EXAMPLES:

### *Indirect Speech:*

**On dit qu'il a écrit** un roman policier.  
*It is said that he wrote* a detective story.

### *Direct Speech:*

**Il a écrit** un roman policier.  
*He wrote* a detective story.

# Infinitive

An **INFINITIVE** is the basic form of a verb. It reflects no person, number, or tense. There are three infinitive ending groups in French: **-er**, **-ir**, and **-re**.

# Inflected Verb

An **INFLECTED VERB** is one that has been identified as singular or plural and assigned endings for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

**EXAMPLE:**      **Il voyage**      (sing., 3rd person, Present Tense)  
                         He *travels*

# Intransitive Verb

An **INTRANSITIVE VERB** does not describe an action, but merely expresses a state of affairs, change, or natural process. It therefore does not take an object.

**EXAMPLE:** Il pleut.  
It's *raining*.

# Irregular Verbs

**IRREGULAR VERBS** show deviations from the usual pattern of inflection (spelling) in the stem or in the endings.



# **Noun**

A **NOUN** names a person, place, or thing.

# Object

The **OBJECT** is the recipient of the action expressed by the verb.



# Object of a Preposition

The **OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION** is a noun that follows a preposition.

**EXAMPLES:** Long comme un jour **sans pain**.  
Long as a day *without bread*.

L'institut se trouve **entre les deux maisons**.  
The institute is located *between the two buildings*.



## Passive Voice

**PASSIVE VOICE** conveys a sense of anonymity or objectivity. French uses the impersonal subject "**on**" as an alternative to passive voice.

<b>EXAMPLES:</b>	<b>Active:</b>	<b>Il a terminé</b> le contrat.	<i>He ended</i> the contract.
	<b>Passive:</b>	Le contrat <b>est terminé</b> .	The contract <i>was ended</i> .
	<b>Passive:</b>	<b>On a terminé</b> le contrat.	The contract <i>was ended</i> .

## Past Participles

**PAST PARTICIPLES** are formed by adding the Present Perfect endings to the Present Perfect stem of the verb (-**é**, -**i**, -**u** for regular verbs). Irregular past participles vary and must be learned. English equivalents for regular verbs are formed by adding -**ed**, -**t**, -**en**, etc. (park**ed**, kept, froz**en**). They are used in the compound tenses and in Passive Voice, and they can also serve as adjectives. When used as adjectives, they must agree in number and gender with the noun they modify.

**EXAMPLES:**      Ils ont **écrit** des lettres.  
                         They *wrote* some letters.

                         On lit trop rarement les mot **écrits**.  
                         It is too seldom that we read *written* words.

# Personal Pronouns

**PERSONAL PRONOUNS** take the place of nouns. They usually accompany a verb and can be either the subject or the object of the verb.

# Possessive Adjectives

**POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES** modify nouns and answer the question "**Whose...?**". They must be repeated before each noun they modify.

**EXAMPLE:**        **mon** père et **ma** mère...  
                          *my* father and mother...

# Possessive Pronoun

A **POSSESSIVE PRONOUN** is a pronoun that answers the question "**Whose...?**".

**EXAMPLE:** Est-ce que vous préférez conduire ma voiture ou **la vôtre**?  
Do you want to drive my car or *yours*?

# Predicate

A **PREDICATE** modifies a subject and includes the verbs, objects, or phrases governed by the verb. It can also be a verb or linking verb (**être** = "to be") connecting elements of a sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** Elle **a pris le métro**.  
She *took* the metro.

Il **vit à Lyon**.  
He *lives in Lyons*.



# Predicate Adjective

A **PREDICATE ADJECTIVE** describes the subject of a predicate. It must agree in number and gender with the noun it modifies.

**EXAMPLE:**      Il est **généreux**.                      He is *generous*.

# Predicate Noun

A **PREDICATE NOUN** is equivalent in meaning to the subject and is linked to it by the verb "to be" (**être**).

**EXAMPLE:**        **Elle est chanteuse.**        *She is a singer.*

# Preposition

A **PREPOSITION** introduces a noun, pronoun, adverb, infinitive, or present participle and can indicate spatial or temporal relationships.

# Prepositional Phrase

A **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE** consists of a preposition and its object and modifies the subject or verb. Prepositional phrases are often used instead of adverbs of manner.

**EXAMPLES:** Il parle souvent **avec ironie**.  
He often speaks *ironically*.

Elles ont joué **avec élégance**.  
They (fem.) played *elegantly*.

# Pronoun

A **PRONOUN** can substitute for a noun. Like French nouns, pronouns have gender and number.

# Reflexive Pronoun

A **REFLEXIVE PRONOUN** accompanies a verb and refers the action expressed by it back to the subject.

# Reflexive Verb

With a **REFLEXIVE VERB**, the subject is also the object of the action performed. French reflexive verbs are frequently translated into English without their accompanying pronouns.

**EXAMPLES:** Il **s'est assis**.  
He *sat* down.

Je **me lave** les mains.  
I *wash* my hands.

# Relative Clause

A **RELATIVE CLAUSE** is a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun that describes or qualifies the subject or object of a sentence. It answers the question "**What sort of...?**". The relative clause can contain a subject, verb, and/or object(s).

**EXAMPLES:** L'homme **que nous connaissons** a vendu sa maison.  
The man *whom we know* has sold his house.

Elle porte le chapeau **qu'elle vient tout juste d'acheter**.  
She is wearing the hat *that she just bought*.



# Relative Pronouns

**RELATIVE PRONOUNS** introduce relative clauses. Some of the most frequently used French relative pronouns are:

qui	who, which
que	whom, which
quoi	what
lequel	which
dont	which, whose

# Simple Tenses

**SIMPLE TENSES** consist of a conjugated main verb only. They occur in the Present, Imperfect, Past, and Future Tenses and the conditionals and subjunctives.

# Subject

The **SUBJECT** of a sentence performs the action described by the verb.

# Subject Pronouns

**SUBJECT PRONOUNS** refer to the person or thing that makes up the subject.

## Subjunctive Mood

The **SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD** indicates that a situation is hypothetical, unreal, wished or hoped for, or somehow speculative in nature. French uses special verb forms to indicate the subjunctive in the Present, Present Perfect, Imperfect, and Past Perfect Tenses. The conjunction **que** and phrases containing **que** often signal the subjunctive.

# Subordinate Clause

A **SUBORDINATE CLAUSE** is a secondary clause. Its meaning depends on an independent or main clause.

**EXAMPLE:** Je voudrais rentrer à l'université **pour achever un cours de commerce.**  
I would like to return to the university *in order to complete a business course.*

# Superlative

A **SUPERLATIVE** is an adjective or adverb that expresses the third and highest level of comparison (e.g., most, least). In English it is formed by adding the ending **est** to the adjective. French uses **le plus** or **le moins + adjective**.

**EXAMPLE:**      **la plus haute** maison...      the *tallest* building...

# Syntax

**SYNTAX** is the order in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences.



# Transitive Verb

A **TRANSITIVE VERB** expresses an action that directly affects someone or something. It therefore takes a direct object.

**EXAMPLE:**        Nous **avons vu le film**.  
                         We *saw the film*.

# **Verb**

A **VERB** is a word that expresses an action.

