

# French Grammar

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## Alphabet and Pronunciation

a, à (accent grave)	as in <b>up</b>
â (accent circonflexe)	as in <b>father</b>
ai	as in <b>play</b>
ail, eil	as in <b>buy</b>
au	as in <b>chore</b>
b	as in <b>bed</b>
c	as in <b>cook</b> , before E, I or Y as in <b>city</b>
ç (cédille)	as in <b>sit</b>
ch	as in <b>ship</b>
d	as in <b>dandy</b>
e	(short) as in <b>men</b> , before a double consonant (long) as in <b>fur</b> (silent) at the end of a polysyllabic word
é (accent aigu)	as in <b>eh?</b>
è (accent grave)	as in <b>ghetto</b>
ê (accent circonflexe)	as in <b>ghetto</b>
eau	like <b>oh</b>
er	at the end of a polysyllabic word, like <b>eh?</b> at the end of a one-syllable word, like <b>air</b>
eu	as in <b>fur</b>
ez	at the end of a word, like <b>eh?</b>
f	as in <b>fork</b>
g	before A, O, U as in <b>get</b> ; before E or I as in <b>azure</b>
gn	as in <b>companion</b>
h	silent
i	(long) as in <b>machine</b> (short) as in <b>fit</b>
j	as in <b>azure</b>
k	(used in foreign words only) as in <b>kind</b>
l	as in <b>label</b>
m	as in <b>master</b>
n	as in <b>no</b>
o	as in <b>forever</b>
ou	as in <b>root</b>
p	as in <b>pair</b>
qu	as in <b>kick</b>
r	as in <b>carrot</b> (but pronounced in the back of the throat)
s	as in <b>sink</b> ; between vowels as in <b>zinnia</b>
t	as in <b>time</b>
u	as in <b>music</b> (use only second sound of vowel: meeusic)
v	as in <b>vase</b>
w	w sound used in foreign words only
x	as in <b>axe</b>
y	as in <b>meet</b>
z	as in <b>zinnia</b>

# Nouns

A noun refers to a person, a place, an idea, or an object, for example: **père** (father), **tour** (tower), **amour** (love). Only proper nouns are capitalized.

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## Plurals of Nouns

Plurals are regularly formed, as in English, by adding **-s**, for example: **le lac** (the lake), **les lacs** (the lakes).

Nouns ending in **-eu**, **-eau** and **-au** usually form the plural with **-x**, for example: **le bateau** (the boat), **les bateaux** (the boats).

Nouns ending in **-al** usually form the plural with **-aux**: **le cheval** (the horse), **les chevaux** (the horses).

Nouns ending in **-s**, **-x**, or **-z** do not change in the plural: **le nez** (the nose), **les nez** (the noses).

## Gender

Nouns in French are either feminine or masculine; there is no neuter gender. The names of countries and abstract and inanimate nouns may be feminine or masculine; these nouns and their articles are best learned together.

Nouns require the article **le**, **la**, **l'**, or **les**. Nouns naming males are masculine; nouns naming females are feminine.

Nouns ending in **-al**, **-ment**, and **-eau** are generally masculine (except for **eau** (water), which is feminine): **le cheval** (horse), **le paiement** (payment), **le couteau** (knife).

Nouns ending **-ance**, **-ence**, **-tion**, and **-ette** are feminine: **l'ambiance** (atmosphere), **la permanence** (permanence), **l'attention** (attention), **la serviette** (napkin).

Many nouns add **-e** to the masculine noun to form the feminine: **un ami** (male friend), **une amie** (female friend).

There are nouns that change the **-eur** masculine ending to **-euse** for the feminine, for example: **un chanteur** (male singer), **une chanteuse** (female singer).

There are nouns that change the **-eur** masculine ending to **-trice** for feminine: **le directeur** (male director), **la directrice** (female director).

## Definite and Indefinite Articles

The definite article for masculine singular nouns is **le** (plural **les**), for example: **le boucher** (the butcher). The definite article for feminine singular nouns is **la** (plural **les**), for example: **la bonne** (the maid). Both **le** and **la** elide before a noun beginning with a vowel or a mute "h", for example: **l'air** (the air), **l'homme** (the man). **Le** and **les** contract with the preposition **à** to form **au** in the singular and **aux** in the plural. They contract with the preposition **de** to form **du** in the singular and **des** in the plural.

The indefinite article is **un** for the masculine singular, **une** for the feminine singular, for example: **un boucher** (a butcher), **une bonne** (a maid). **Des** is used with the plural of both genders to mean "some": **des étudiants** (some students).

## Partitive

The partitive denotes part of a whole. In English, the partitive is expressed by using some or any in front of the noun.

The following forms are used in French:

masculine singular:	<b>du</b> or <b>de l'</b>
feminine singular:	<b>de la</b> or <b>de l'</b>
masculine or feminine plural:	<b>des</b>

**J'ai du pain** (I have some bread). **Il prend de la confiture** (He takes some jam).

# Pronouns

Pronouns are words that are used in place of nouns, for example: **il** (Michel), **vous** (Brigitte and Monique). There are ten families of pronouns in French:

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In addition there are the pronouns **y** and **en**:

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## Subject Pronouns

Subject pronouns such as **il** (he) represent the subject in a sentence. Subject pronouns are:

### Singular

<b>je</b> (j')	I
<b>tu</b>	you (familiar)
<b>vous</b>	you (formal)
<b>il, elle, on</b>	he, she, one

### Plural

<b>nous</b>	we
<b>vous</b>	you
<b>ils, elles</b>	they

## Direct Object Pronouns

Direct object pronouns take the place of the direct object nouns. While the direct object noun follows the verb, the pronoun is placed in front of it, for example: **Il viole la loi** (He breaks the law), **Il la viole** (He breaks it). Direct object pronouns are:

### Singular

<b>me (m')</b>	me
<b>te (t')</b>	you (familiar)
<b>vous</b>	you (formal)
<b>le (l'), la (l')</b>	him, her, it

### Plural

<b>nous</b>	us
<b>vous</b>	you
<b>les</b>	them

## Indirect Object Pronouns

Indirect object pronouns take the place of the indirect object nouns. Usually the prepositions **à** or **pour** are used with the indirect object noun, for example: **Il parle à Jean** (He speaks to John) becomes **Il lui parle** (He speaks to him). Indirect pronouns are:

### Singular

<b>me (m')</b>	to me
<b>te (t')</b>	to you (familiar)
<b>vous</b>	to you (formal)
<b>lui</b>	to him/her

### Plural

<b>nous</b>	to us
<b>vous</b>	to you
<b>leur</b>	to them

## Disjunctive Pronouns

Disjunctive pronouns are used after prepositions, for example: **avec moi** (with me). **Moi** and **toi** are used in place of **me** and **te** as the direct and indirect object pronouns in affirmative commands, e.g., **Aidez-moi!** (Help me!) and **Donnez-le-moi!** (Give it to me!). They are also used for emphasis, as in: **Moi, je suis belle** (I for my part am lovely). They are also used after the expression **c'est** (it is) and in response to questions: **Qui est là? - Moi.** (Who's there? I.) They are also used with **même** and **mêmes**, for example: **Est-ce qu'ils y vont eux-mêmes?** (Are they going themselves?). Disjunctive pronouns are:

### Singular

<b>moi</b>	me, I
<b>toi</b>	you (familiar)
<b>vous</b>	you (formal)
<b>soi, lui, elle</b>	oneself, him, her, she

### Plural

<b>nous</b>	us, we
<b>vous</b>	you
<b>eux, elles</b>	them, they

## Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive verbs express an action that acts upon the subject, for example: **Je me lave** (I wash myself). Reflexive pronouns are placed in front of the conjugated verb. Reflexive pronouns are:

### Singular

<b>me</b>	myself
<b>te</b>	yourself (familiar)
<b>vous</b>	yourself (formal)
<b>se</b>	himself, herself, oneself, itself

### Plural

<b>nous</b>	ourselves
<b>vous</b>	yourselves
<b>se</b>	themselves

## Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns indicate ownership. They replace a noun and agree in gender and number with the thing possessed rather than with the possessor, for example: **son stylo** (his or her pen), **le sien** (his or hers), **sa maison** (his or her house), **la sienne** (his or hers).

Possessive pronouns are:

### Singular, Masculine

**le mien, la mienne**

**le tien, la tienne**

**le vôtre, la vôtre**

**le sien, la sienne**

**le nôtre, la nôtre**

**le vôtre, la vôtre**

**le leur, la leur**

### Singular, Feminine

mine

yours (familiar)

yours (formal)

his, hers, its

ours

yours

theirs

### Plural, Masculine

**les miens**

**les tiens**

**les vôtres**

**les siens**

**les nôtres**

**les vôtres**

**les leurs**

### Plural, Feminine

**les miennes**

**les tiennes**

**les vôtres**

**les siennes**

**les nôtres**

**les vôtres**

**les leurs**

mine

yours (familiar)

yours (formal)

his, hers, its

ours

yours

theirs

## Demonstrative Pronouns

The singular demonstrative pronouns are masculine: **celui** (the one) and feminine: **celle** (the one). The plural forms are masculine: **ceux** (the ones) and feminine: **celles** (the ones), as shown in this sentence: **J'aime tes robes et celles de Monique** (I like your dresses and those of Monique).

**Ce** or **c'**, **ceci**, **cela** and its contracted form **ça** are invariable in form, for example: **C'est juste** (That's right), and **Ça t'intéresse** (That is of interest to you).

## Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns introduce a subordinate clause and refer to nouns or pronouns in the preceding clause (their antecedents). **Dont** (of which), **ce que** (that which), **lequel** and its various forms (which), **où** (where, in which), and **qui** (who) are the most common relative pronouns: **la fille qui danse** (the girl who is dancing). **Qui** is used for both persons and things when they are the subject of the relative clause, **que** when they are the object of the clause.



## Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask a question: **qui?**, **quoi?** (who, what), **lequel?** (which one?), **quel?** (which?). **Quel** and **lequel** agree in gender and number with the noun they ask a question about. **Quel** can also be used as an adjective.

## Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to persons or objects that are not identified. The most common indefinite pronouns are: **on** (one), **quelque chose** (something), **tout** (all), **aucun** (none), **certain** (certain one), **personne** (nobody), **plusieurs** (several), etc. **On** is used a great deal, and stands for an indefinite or global subject, for example: **On dit qu'elle est belle** (They say that she's pretty).

## Pronouns "y" and "en"

The pronoun **y** replaces the preposition **à** (or **sur, chez, dans**), and its noun-object, for example: **Crois-tu aux fantômes? Oui, j'y crois.** (Do you believe in ghosts. Yes, I believe in them.) The pronoun **en** replaces the preposition **de** and its noun-object, for example: **Est-ce que tu prends des huîtres? Oui, j'en prends.** (Do you want to eat some oysters? Yes, I'll have some of them.)

## Adjectives

Adjectives describe or modify nouns and pronouns. They agree in gender (masculine or feminine) and number (singular or plural) with the word(s) they modify. The feminine is regularly formed by adding an **-e** to the masculine form; the plural is regularly formed by adding an **-s** to the singular form: **le grand homme** (the tall man), **les grands hommes** (the tall men); **la jolie fille** (the pretty girl), **les jolies filles** (the pretty girls). There are exceptions, which must be memorized.

Descriptive adjectives usually follow the noun they modify, but some of them always come before. There are even some descriptive adjectives that change meaning depending on whether they are placed before or after the noun (when they follow, they have a more literal sense, e.g.: Both **une femme pauvre** and **une pauvre femme** can be translated as a poor woman, but the former means a woman with little money, whereas the latter means a woman to be pitied.)

## Adverbs

Adverbs, which modify verbs, adjectives or other adverbs, never change their form. Adverbs of manner are regularly formed by adding **-ment** to the feminine form of an adjective: masculine **doux** (soft), feminine **douce** (soft), adverbial form **doucement** (softly). But many French adverbs, such as **bien** (well) and **mal** (badly), are not directly formed from an adjective.

## Comparison

The comparative degree means "more"; the superlative means "most". For the comparative, **plus que** (more) and **moins que** (less) are used: **Monique est plus grande que sa soeur** (Monique is taller than her sister), **Jean est moins prudent que tu penses** (John is less prudent than you think).

The superlative is formed by adding the appropriate definite article in front of the comparative: **Paris est la plus grande ville de France** (Paris is the biggest city in France).

## Prepositions

Prepositions have invariable forms and are followed by their object, for example: **pour toi** (for you), **sans argent** (without money). The prepositions **à**, **pour**, and **de** can introduce an infinitive: **Rien à faire** (nothing to do). In order to express an intention, **pour** (for, in order to) is used: **On travaille pour vivre** (One works in order to live). The preposition **de** is used to express possession, origin, or quantity: **le chat de Claude** (Claude's cat); **Il vient de Marseille** (He comes from Marseille); **un kilo de pommes de terre** (a kilo of potatoes).

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that join two or more words, phrases or clauses together.

Coordinating conjunctions link two phrases or sentences of equal value: **et** (and), **ou** (or), **mais** (but), etc. When they link two independent clauses, the verbs in each clause are always in the indicative mood. Subordinating conjunctions link a subordinate clause with the main clause: **bien que** (although), **si** (if), **quand** (when), **car** (for), **comme** (as, since), etc. Subordinating conjunctions can introduce either the indicative or subjunctive mood.



## Numbers

**Cardinal numbers** are used to express precise quantities: **un, deux, trois** (one, two, three).

Cardinal numbers from 0 to 20 are:

0	<b>zéro</b>	zero
1	<b>un, une</b>	one
2	<b>deux</b>	two
3	<b>trois</b>	three
4	<b>quatre</b>	four
5	<b>cinq</b>	five
6	<b>six</b>	six
7	<b>sept</b>	seven
8	<b>huit</b>	eight
9	<b>neuf</b>	nine
10	<b>dix</b>	ten
11	<b>onze</b>	eleven
12	<b>douze</b>	twelve
13	<b>treize</b>	thirteen
14	<b>quatorze</b>	fourteen
15	<b>quinze</b>	fifteen
16	<b>seize</b>	sixteen
17	<b>dix-sept</b>	seventeen
18	<b>dix-huit</b>	eighteen
19	<b>dix-neuf</b>	nineteen
20	<b>vingt</b>	twenty

A hyphen is used in numbers from 17 to 99 (except for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60): **quatre-vingt-deux** (eighty-two). But no hyphen is placed from 100 on: **trois cent dix** (three hundred and ten).

**Ordinal numbers** refer to a position in a series: **premier, deuxième, troisième**. Ordinal numbers normally precede the nouns they modify. They agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.

1	<b>premier, première</b>	first
2	<b>deuxième</b>	second
3	<b>troisième</b>	third
4	<b>quatrième</b>	fourth
5	<b>cinquième</b>	fifth
6	<b>sixième</b>	sixth
7	<b>septième</b>	seventh
8	<b>huitième</b>	eighth
9	<b>neuvième</b>	ninth
10	<b>dixième</b>	tenth

## Negative Constructions

The most common negative construction in French is **ne + verb + pas**: **je ne sais pas** (I don't know). The negative construction with a compound verb tense is **ne + auxiliary verb + pas + past participle**: **Je n'ai pas mangé ce matin** (I haven't eaten this morning). With an infinitive, both parts of the negative expression come first: **ne pas oublier** (not to forget). Similar negative constructions are **ne...plus** (no more), **ne...rien** (nothing), **ne...jamais** (never), and **ne...personne** (no one). It is best to think of **ne** as a negative particle without a translation of its own.

## Interrogatives

Questions can be formed by inverting the subject and verb: **Avez-vous entendu le bruit?** (Did you hear the noise?). When inverted, they are connected by a hyphen. An additional **-t** is added for ease of pronunciation when the verb ends in a vowel and is followed by **il**, **elle** or **on**: **Va-t-il manger?** (Is he going to eat?). Questions can also be formed with **est-ce que** in front of the subject and verb, without inversion but with rising intonation: **Est-ce que tu viens?** (Are you coming?).

## Imperative

The imperative form is used for commands and requests with **tu** (familiar you), **vous** (polite you) or **nous** (we) as the subject. It is formed by dropping the subject noun or pronoun and using the present tense form, with an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence. The **tu** form of all regular **ER** verbs, however, loses its final **s**: **Mange!** (Eat!). Reflexive and object pronouns are attached by a hyphen to positive commands: **Dites-moi!** (Tell me!).

## Sentences

Sentences are made up of one or more clauses. A clause consists of a subject (a noun or pronoun) and a predicate (what is said about the noun or pronoun). The predicate always contains a verb. In this simple sentence: **Le roi règne** (The king rules), **roi** is the subject and **règne** is the predicate.

Adjectives or nouns used along with the verb in order to describe what is being asserted about someone or something are in the predicate position. In the sentence: **Le roi est le souverain** (The king is the sovereign), **souverain** is a predicate noun. In the sentence: **Le roi est bienveillant** (The king is benevolent), **bienveillant** is a predicate adjective. Predicate adjectives and nouns agree in number and gender with the nouns or pronouns to which they refer.

Nouns or pronouns which receive the action of the verb or a preposition are called objects. There are direct and indirect objects. The direct object of a verb is a noun or pronoun which receives the action of a verb directly. In the sentence **Le roi aime la reine** (The king loves the queen), **reine** is the direct object of the verb.

Some verbs take an indirect object. Nouns that are indirect objects are always preceded by the preposition **à**. In the sentence: **Le roi donne une perle à la reine** (The king gives a pearl to the queen), **une perle** is the direct object and **(à la) reine** is the indirect object.

## Verbs

Verbs describe an action, a process or a state of being. Verbs agree with the person (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) of the subject and with its number (singular or plural).

There are two parts to all French verbs: the stem and an ending. The stem and the endings **-ER**, **-IR**, **-RE**, or **-OIR** form the infinitive.

When conjugated, verbs indicate tense (present, past, etc.), mood (indicative, subjunctive, etc.), voice (active or passive), person, and number. The rules for the formation of the forms of a verb are different for each of these four groups.

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## Present Tense

The present tense is used to express what happens in the present time. The present tense is regularly formed by dropping the ending of the infinitive and adding a personal ending to the resulting stem: **mang-er** (to eat), **il mang-e** (he eats).

The present tense of the first conjugation (-er ending) is formed by removing the -er ending and adding a new ending to the resulting stem: **je -e, tu -es, il -e, nous -ons, vous -ez, ils -ent**.

**monter** (to go up)

singular

je	monte
tu (familiar)	montes
vous (formal)	montez
il, elle, on	monte

plural

nous	montons
vous	montez
ils, elles	montent

**The ending for the second conjugation (-ir ending) are: je -is, tu -is, il -it, nous -issons, vous -issez, ils -issent.**

**remplir** (to fill)

singular

je	remplis
tu (familiar)	remplis (familiar)
vous (formal)	remplissez
il, elle, on	remplit

plural

nous	remplissons
vous	remplissez
ils, elles	remplissent

**Certain verbs in this group follow a different conjugation pattern: je -s, tu -s, il -t, nous -ons, vous -ez, ils -ent.**

**courir** (to run)

singular

je	cours
tu (familiar)	cours
vous (formal)	courez
il, elle, on	court

plural

nous	courons
vous	courez
ils, elles	courent

**The endings for the 3rd conjugation (-re ending) are: je -s, tu -s, il -no ending, nous -ons, vous -ez, ils-ent.**

**perdre** (to lose)

singular

je	perds
tu (familiar)	perds
vous (formal)	perdez
il, elle, on	perd

plural

nous	perdons
vous	perdez
ils, elles	perdent

**The endings for the 4th conjugation (-oir ending) are: je -s, tu -s, il -t, nous -ons, vous -ez, ils -ent.**

**savoir** (to know)

singular

je	sais
tu (familiar)	sais
vous (formal)	savez
il, elle, on	sait

plural

nous	savons
vous	savez
ils, elles	savent

These verbs change their root, and must be learned as irregular verbs.



## Passé Composé

The **passé composé** describes actions or states of being that may have lasted a certain time in the past but are now over: It is the tense most used in everyday French for past actions. The **passé composé** is a compound tense and is formed using the present tense of the auxiliary verb **avoir** or **être** and the past participle of the main verb, for example: **J'ai mangé à la maison** (I ate at home).

## Imperfect Tense

The imperfect tense describes an action that was ongoing at the same time as other actions went on or occurred: **J'ATTENDAIS le bus quand j'ai vu Madeleine** (I WAS WAITING for the bus when I saw Madeleine). It is formed on the stem of the first person plural (**nous** = we) form of the present tense. All four conjugations add the same personal endings: (**je -ais, tu -ais, il -ait, nous -ions, vous -iez, ils -aient**).

**montrer** (to show)

singular

je	montra <b>is</b>
tu (familiar)	montra <b>is</b>
vous (formal)	montrie <b>z</b>
il, elle, on	montra <b>it</b>

plural

nous	montrie <b>rons</b>
vous	montrie <b>z</b>
ils, elles	montraie <b>nt</b>

## Past Participle

As part of a compound verb form, the past participle is always used with an auxiliary verb: **Il a chanté** (He sang), **Elle est venue** (She came). When used alone, it has the force of an adjective, agreeing in gender and number with the word it modifies: **une fille gâtée** (a pampered girl).

For **-ER** verbs, the past participle consists of the ending **-é** added to the stem: **manger - mangé** (eaten).

For **-IR** verbs, **-i** is added to the stem: **finir - fini** (finished).

For **-RE** verbs, **-u** is added to the stem: **entendre - entendu** (understood).

The participles of verbs in **-OIR** are irregular: **savoir - su** (known).

There are some exceptions to these rules. Irregular past participles are best memorized, e.g.:

mettre - mis (put); offrir - offert (offered); prendre - pris (taken); boire - bu (drunk), etc.

## Present Participle (Gerund)

The present participle corresponds to the English **-ing** form of the verb. It is most often used as an adjective: **un jeu amusant** (an amusing game). The present participle is formed by adding the ending **-ant** to the stem of the 1st person plural of the present tense: **nous donnons** (we give) - **donnant** (giving). The present participle is also found in a construction called the gerund, which in French consists of the preposition **en** with a present participle: **en dansant** (while dancing).

## Auxiliary (Helping) Verbs

There are two auxiliary verbs in French: **avoir** (to have) and **être** (to be). Both are irregular. Most verbs are conjugated with **avoir**. All compound tenses of reflexive verbs are formed with **être**, as are intransitive verbs describing movement or some change of condition: **aller** (to go), **entrer** (to enter), **venir** (to come), **mourir** (to die), etc. Auxiliary verbs are used in conjunction with other verbs to form compound tenses, but they can also stand alone.

## Passé Simple

The **passé simple** tense describes an action begun and then terminated once and for all in the past. It is used as a literary tense. The **passé simple** is formed by dropping the infinitive ending and adding the following endings to the stem:

### Group with -ER ending: je -ai, tu -as, il -a, nous -âmes, vous -âtes, il -èrent

**parler** (to speak)

singular

je	parlai
tu (familiar)	parlas
vous (formal)	parlâtes
il, elle, on	parla

plural

nous	parlâmes
vous	parlâtes
ils, elles	parlèrent

### Groups with -IR and -RE ending: je -is, tu -is, il -it, nous -îmes, vous -îtes, ils -irent

**choisir** (to choose)

singular

je	choisis
tu (familiar)	choisis
vous (formal)	choisîtes
il, elle, on	choisit

plural

nous	choisîmes
vous	choisîtes
ils, elles	choisirent

### Group with -OIR ending: je -us, tu -us, il -ut, nous -ûmes, vous -ûtes, ils -urent

There are many irregular forms in this group:

**recevoir** (to receive) - **je reçus**; **savoir** (to know) - **je sus**.

## Pluperfect Tense

This compound tense describes an action completed prior to another action in the past: **Quand je suis arrivé tout le monde AVAIT FINI de manger** (When I arrived everybody HAD FINISHED eating). The pluperfect tense is formed with the imperfect of the auxiliary verb **avoir** or **être** and the past participle.

## Future Tense

The future tense describes actions in the future: **J'achèterai cette robe** (I will buy this dress). It is formed by adding personal endings to the complete infinitive for **-ER** and **-IR** verbs:

**je -ai, tu -as, il -a, nous -ons, vous -ez, ils -ont:**

**manger** (to eat)

singular

je	mangerai
tu (familiar)	mangeras
vous (formal)	mangerez
il, elle, on	mangera

plural

nous	mangerons
vous	mangerez
ils, elles	mangeront

For **-OIR** and **-RE** verbs, the **-oi** and **-e** of the infinitives are omitted: **recevoir** (to receive), **je recevrai** (I will receive), **je rendrai** (I will give back). There are many irregular forms of the future tense.



## Present Conditional Tense

The present conditional tense describes an action which is possible but not a fact: **je DONNERAIS de l'argent si j'en avais** (I WOULD GIVE some money if I had any). It is formed by adding personal endings to the infinitive: **je -ais, tu -ais, il -ait, nous -ions, vous -iez, ils -aient**.

**partir** (to leave)

singular

je	partir <b>ais</b>
tu (familiar)	partir <b>ais</b>
vous (formal)	partir <b>iez</b>
il, elle, on	partir <b>ait</b>

plural

nous	partir <b>ions</b>
vous	partir <b>iez</b>
ils, elles	partir <b>aient</b>

Verbs with infinitives ending in **-RE** lose the **-e** before adding the conditional endings:

**prendre** (to take), **je prendrais** (I would take).

## Past Conditional Tense

This compound tense describes a possible action which might have taken place after another action in the past: **J'AURAIS EU de l'argent si je n'avais pas perdu ma bourse** (I WOULD HAVE HAD some money if I hadn't lost my purse). It is formed with the auxiliary verb **avoir** or **être** in the conditional tense and the past participle.

## Present Subjunctive

The subjunctive is used when a statement is doubtful, when it is perceived through a strong emotion, or when it follows an impersonal expression: **Il faut que tu viennes** (It is mandatory that you come, you have to come). The subjunctive almost always occurs in

subordinate clauses introduced by "que" (that): **Je regrette qu'elle soit malade** (I'm sorry

that she's sick). The present subjunctive is regularly formed by adding personal endings

to the stem of the first person plural ("we") verb form: **je -e, tu -es, il -e, nous -ions, vous -iez, ils -ent**, but many verbs have irregular subjunctive forms.

**penser** (to think)

singular

je	pense
tu (familiar)	penses
vous (formal)	pensiez
il, elle, on	pense

plural

nous	pensions
vous	pensiez
ils, elles	pensent

## Active and Passive Voice

In the active voice the subject is in control of the action which is expressed by the verb:

**Georges mange le poisson** (George eats the fish). In the passive voice the subject is acted upon: **Le poisson est mangé par Georges** (The fish is eaten by George). The passive voice is formed with **être** and a past participle; the participle agrees with the subject in gender and number.

## Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect (futur antérieur) is a compound tense describing an action that will be carried out in the future prior to another future action: **Il viendra dans une semaine quand tu SERAS PARTI pour la montagne** (he will come in a week after you WILL HAVE LEFT for the mountains). It is used both in conversation and in formal writing. The future perfect is formed by the future tense of the auxiliary verb **avoir** or **être** and the past participle.



## Grammar Pages

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## Number

There are two numbers in French: **singular** and **plural**.  
Most nouns in French have singular and plural forms:

**la famille, les familles** (the family, the families)

See [Plurals of Nouns](#)

Pronouns also have singular and plural forms:

**le mien**

(mine [singular,  
masculine])

**les miens**

(mine [plural, masculine])

See [Pronouns](#)

Adjectives and articles agree with nouns in number (and also in gender).

See

[Adjectives](#)

[Definite and Indefinite Articles](#)

Verbs (including participles in specific instances) agree with the subject of the sentence in number:

**Nous portons des chaussures noires.**

(We are wearing black shoes.)

**Portons** is 1st person plural present tense of the verb **porter** and agrees in number (and in gender) with the personal pronoun **nous**.

See

[Verbs](#)

[Active and Passive Voice](#)

[Past Participle](#)

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## Person

Grammatical person indicates the relationship of speaker or writer to the rest of the sentence. First person refers to the speaker or to the speaker group (**je, me, moi, le mien, nous, le nôtre**). Second person refers to whomever is being spoken to (**tu, te, toi, le tien, vous, le vôtre**). Third person refers to the entity being spoken about (**il, elle, le, la, lui, le sien, ils, elles, les, leur, eux, elles, le leur, se**).

See

[Subject Pronouns](#)

[Direct Object Pronouns](#)

[Indirect Object Pronouns](#)

[Disjunctive Pronouns](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)

[Reflexive Pronouns](#)

Verbs are inflected (receive different endings) to agree with the person of the subject:

<b>parler</b> (to talk)	singular	plural
1st person	je <b>parle</b>	nous <b>parlons</b>
2nd person	tu <b>parles</b>	vous <b>parlez</b>
3rd person	il/elle <b>parle</b>	ils/elles <b>parlent</b>

See

[Verbs](#)

[1st Conjugation](#)

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[Passive Voice](#)

# Gender

There are two genders in French: **masculine** and **feminine**.

All nouns in French are either masculine or feminine.

Although there are no rules by which the gender of all nouns can be determined, the gender of many nouns can be determined by their meaning or their ending. The gender of other nouns must be learned individually. The best way to memorize the gender of words is to memorize the article when learning a new word.

See

[Gender](#)

Knowing the gender of every noun is important not only for the noun itself, but for the spelling and pronunciation of the words it influences in a sentence: adjectives, articles, participles, and pronouns. They agree in gender and in number with the noun.

See

[Adjectives](#)

[Definite and Indefinite Articles](#)

[Past Participle](#)

[Present Participle \(Gerund\)](#)

[Pronouns](#)

[Passive Conjugation](#)

## Elision

Elision in French occurs when the final vowel of a word is dropped before another word beginning with a vowel. This term includes words beginning with mute **h**. The fact that the vowel has been elided is indicated by an apostrophe.

Elision occurs in the following circumstances:

1. The **e** of the pronouns **je, me, te, se, le, ce**, and the **a** of **la** are elided before a verb beginning with a vowel or mute **h** :

Il **m'avait** vu. (He had seen me.)

Je **t'en** donnerai. (I'll give you some.)

2. The **e** of the definite article **le** and **la** is elided before a noun or adjective beginning with a vowel or mute **h**:

**L'autre** homme (the other man)

3. The **e** of **de, ne, que** and **jusque** is elided before a vowel or mute **h**:

**N'ouvrez** pas la porte! (Don't open the door!)

4. The **e** of conjunctions **lorsque** (when) and **puisque** (since) is elided before the personal pronouns and the indefinite articles:

**Puisqu'on** ne peut pas partir... (Since we cannot leave...)

5. The **e** of **presque** (almost) and **quelque** (some) is elided only in the words **quelqu'un, quelqu'une**:

**quelqu'une** de mes publications... (a certain one of my publications...)

6. The **i** of **si** (if) is elided only before the pronouns **il, ils**:

**S'il** peut... (If he can...)

# 1st Conjugation

## Present Infinitive

chanter (to sing)

## Present Participle

chantant

## Past Infinitive

avoir chanté

## Past Participle

ayant chanté

	<b>Present</b>
je	chante
tu	chantes
il/elle	chante
nous	chantons
vous	chantez
ils/elles	chantent

	<b>Passé Composé</b>
ai	chanté
as	chanté
a	chanté
avons	chanté
avez	chanté
ont	chanté

	<b>Imperfect</b>
je	chantais
tu	chantais
il/elle	chantait
nous	chantions
vous	chantiez
ils/elles	chantaient

	<b>Pluperfect</b>
avais	chanté
avais	chanté
avait	chanté
avions	chanté
aviez	chanté
avaient	chanté

	<b>Future</b>
je	chanterai
tu	chanteras
il/elle	chantera
nous	chanterons
vous	chanterez
ils/elles	chanteront

	<b>Future Perfect (Future Anterior)</b>
aurai	chanté
auras	chanté
aura	chanté
aurons	chanté
aurez	chanté
auront	chanté

	<b>Passé Simple</b>
je	chantai
tu	chantas
il/elle	chanta
nous	chantâmes
vous	chantâtes
ils/elles	chantèrent

	<b>Past Anterior</b>
eus	chanté
eus	chanté
eut	chanté
eûmes	chanté
eûtes	chanté
eurent	chanté

	<b>Present Subjunctive</b>
je	chante
tu	chantes
il/elle	chante
nous	chantions
vous	chantiez
ils/elles	chantent

	<b>Past Subjunctive</b>
aie	chanté
aies	chanté
ait	chanté
ayons	chanté
ayez	chanté
aient	chanté

	<b>Imperfect Subjunctive</b>
je	chantasse
tu	chantasses
il/elle	chantât
nous	chantassions

	<b>Pluperfect Subjunctive</b>
eusse	chanté
eusses	chanté
eût	chanté
eussions	chanté

vous	chant <b>assiez</b>	eussiez	chanté
ils/elles	chant <b>assent</b>	eussent	chanté

	<b>Present Conditional</b>	<b>Past Conditional</b>	
je	chan <b>terais</b>	aurais	chanté
tu	chan <b>terais</b>	aurais	chanté
il/elle	chan <b>terait</b>	aurait	chanté
nous	chan <b>terions</b>	aurions	chanté
vous	chan <b>teriez</b>	auriez	chanté
ils/elles	chan <b>teraient</b>	auraient	chanté

	<b>Present Imperative</b>	<b>Past Imperative</b>	
tu	chan <b>te</b>	aie chanté	
nous	chan <b>tons</b>	ayons chanté	
vous	chan <b>tez</b>	ayez chanté	

## 2nd Conjugation

### Present Infinitive

finir (to finish)

### Present Participle

finissant

### Past Infinitive

avoir fini

### Past Participle

ayant fini

	<b>Present</b>
je	finis
tu	finis
il/elle	finit
nous	finissons
vous	finissez
ils/elles	finissent

	<b>Passé Composé</b>
ai	fini
as	fini
a	fini
avons	fini
avez	fini
ont	fini

	<b>Imperfect</b>
je	finissais
tu	finissais
il/elle	finissait
nous	finissions
vous	finissiez
ils/elles	finissaient

	<b>Pluperfect</b>
avais	fini
avais	fini
avait	fini
avions	fini
aviez	fini
avaient	fini

	<b>Future</b>
je	finirai
tu	finiras
il/elle	finira
nous	finirons
vous	finirez
ils/elles	finiront

	<b>Future Perfect (Future Anterior)</b>
aurai	fini
auras	fini
aura	fini
aurons	fini
aurez	fini
auront	fini

	<b>Passé Simple</b>
je	finis
tu	finis
il/elle	finit
nous	finîmes
vous	finîtes
ils/elles	finirent

	<b>Past Anterior</b>
eus	fini
eus	fini
eut	fini
eûmes	fini
eûtes	fini
eurent	fini

	<b>Present Subjunctive</b>
je	finisse
tu	finisses
il/elle	finisse
nous	finissions
vous	finissiez
ils/elles	finissent

	<b>Past Subjunctive</b>
aie	fini
aies	fini
ait	fini
ayons	fini
ayez	fini
aient	fini

	<b>Imperfect Subjunctive</b>
je	finisse
tu	finisses
il/elle	finît
nous	finissions

	<b>Pluperfect Subjunctive</b>
eusse	fini
eusses	fini
eût	fini
eussions	fini

vous	<b>finissiez</b>	eussiez	<b>fini</b>
ils/elles	<b>finissent</b>	eussent	<b>fini</b>

	<b>Present Conditional</b>	<b>Past Conditional</b>	
je	<b>finirais</b>	aurais	<b>fini</b>
tu	<b>finirais</b>	aurais	<b>fini</b>
il/elle	<b>finirait</b>	aurait	<b>fini</b>
nous	<b>finirions</b>	aurions	<b>fini</b>
vous	<b>finiriez</b>	auriez	<b>fini</b>
ils/elles	<b>finiraient</b>	auraient	<b>fini</b>

	<b>Present Imperative</b>	<b>Past Imperative</b>	
tu	<b>finis</b>	aie fini	
nous	<b>finissons</b>	ayons fini	
vous	<b>finissez</b>	ayez fini	

## 3rd Conjugation

### Present Infinitive

vendre (to sell)

### Present Participle

vendant

### Past Infinitive

avoir vendu

### Past Participle

ayant vendu

	<b>Present</b>
je	vends
tu	vends
il/elle	vend
nous	vendons
vous	vendez
ils/elles	vendent

	<b>Passé Composé</b>
ai	vendu
as	vendu
a	vendu
avons	vendu
avez	vendu
ont	vendu

	<b>Imperfect</b>
je	vendais
tu	vendais
il/elle	vendait
nous	vendions
vous	vendiez
ils/elles	vendaient

	<b>Pluperfect</b>
avais	vendu
avais	vendu
avait	vendu
avions	vendu
aviez	vendu
avaient	vendu

	<b>Future</b>
je	vendrai
tu	vendras
il/elle	vendra
nous	vendrons
vous	vendrez
ils/elles	vendront

	<b>Future Perfect (Future Anterior)</b>
aurai	vendu
auras	vendu
aura	vendu
aurons	vendu
aurez	vendu
auront	vendu

	<b>Passé Simple</b>
je	vendis
tu	vendis
il/elle	vendit
nous	vendîmes
vous	vendîtes
ils/elles	vendirent

	<b>Past Anterior</b>
eus	vendu
eus	vendu
eut	vendu
eûmes	vendu
eûtes	vendu
eurent	vendu

	<b>Present Subjunctive</b>
je	vende
tu	vendes
il/elle	vende
nous	vendions
vous	vendiez
ils/elles	vendent

	<b>Past Subjunctive</b>
aie	vendu
aies	vendu
ait	vendu
ayons	vendu
ayez	vendu
aient	vendu

	<b>Imperfect Subjunctive</b>
je	vendisse
tu	vendisses
il/elle	chantât
nous	vendissions

	<b>Pluperfect Subjunctive</b>
eusse	vendu
eusses	vendu
eût	vendu
eussions	vendu



vous	vend <b>issiez</b>	eussiez	vendu
ils/elles	vend <b>issent</b>	eussent	vendu

	<b>Present Conditional</b>	<b>Past Conditional</b>	
je	vendr <b>ais</b>	aurais	vendu
tu	vendr <b>ais</b>	aurais	vendu
il/elle	vendr <b>ait</b>	aurait	vendu
nous	vendr <b>ions</b>	aurions	vendu
vous	vendr <b>iez</b>	auriez	vendu
ils/elles	vendr <b>aient</b>	auraient	vendu

	<b>Present Imperative</b>	<b>Past Imperative</b>	
tu	vendr <b>s</b>	aie vendu	
nous	vendr <b>ons</b>	ayons vendu	
vous	vendr <b>ez</b>	ayez vendu	

## Passive Voice

### Present Infinitive

être aim-é -ée, -és, -ées (to be loved)

### Present Participle

étant aim-é -ée, -és, -ées

### Past Infinitive

avoir été aim-é -ée, -és, -ées

### Past Participle

ayant été aim-é -ée, -és, -ées

	Present	
je	suis	aimé
tu	es	aimé
elle	est	aimée
il	est	aimé
nous	sommes	aimés
vous	êtes	aimés
elles	sont	aimées
ils	sont	aimés

	Imperfect	
je	étais	aimé
tu	étais	aimé
elle	était	aimée
il	était	aimé
nous	étions	aimés
vous	étiez	aimés
elles	étaient	aimées
ils	étaient	aimés

	Future	
je	serai	aimé
tu	seras	aimé
elle	sera	aimée
il	sera	aimé
nous	serons	aimés
vous	serez	aimés
elles	seront	aimées
ils	seront	aimés

	Passé Simple	
je	fus	aimé
tu	fus	aimé
elle	fut	aimée
il	fut	aimé
nous	fûmes	aimés
vous	fûtes	aimés
elles	furent	aimées
ils	furent	aimés

	Present Subjunctive	
je	sois	aimé
tu	sois	aimé
elle	soit	aimée

	Passé Composé	
ai	été	aimé
as	été	aimé
a	été	aimée
a	été	aimé
avons	été	aimés
avez	été	aimés
ont	été	aimées
ont	été	aimés

	Pluperfect	
avais	été	aimé
avais	été	aimé
avait	été	aimée
avait	été	aimé
avions	été	aimés
aviez	été	aimés
avaient	été	aimées
avaient	été	aimés

	Future Perfect (Future Anterior)	
aurai	été	aimé
auras	été	aimé
aura	été	aimée
aura	été	aimé
aurons	été	aimés
aurez	été	aimés
auront	été	aimées
auront	été	aimés

	Past Anterior	
eus	été	aimé
eus	été	aimé
eut	été	aimée
eut	été	aimé
eûmes	été	aimés
eûtes	été	aimés
eurent	été	aimées
eurent	été	aimés

	Past Subjunctive	
aie	été	aimé
asies	été	aimé
ait	été	aimée

il	soit	aimé	ait	été	aimé
nous	soyons	aimés	ayons	été	aimés
vous	soyez	aimés	ayez	été	aimés
elles	soient	aimées	aient	été	aimées
ils	soient	aimés	aient	été	aimés

Imperfect Subjunctive			Pluperfect Subjunctive		
je	fusse	aimé	eusse	été	aimé
tu	fusses	aimé	eusses	été	aimé
elle	fût	aimée	eût	été	aimée
il	fût	aimé	eût	été	aimé
nous	fussions	aimés	eussions	été	aimés
vous	fussiez	aimés	eussiez	été	aimés
elles	fussent	aimées	eussent	été	aimées
ils	fussent	aimés	eussent	été	aimés

Present Conditional			Past Conditional		
je	serais	aimé	aurais	été	aimé
tu	serais	aimé	aurais	été	aimé
elle	serait	aimée	aurait	été	aimée
il	serait	aimé	aurait	été	aimé
nous	serions	aimés	aurions	été	aimés
vous	seriez	aimés	auriez	été	aimés
elles	seraient	aimées	auraient	été	aimées
ils	seraient	aimés	auraient	été	aimés

Present Imperative			Past Imperative		
tu	sois	aimé	aie	été	aimé
nous	soyons	aimés	ayons	été	aimés
vous	soyez	aimés	ayez	été	aimés

