

Contents

French Grammar Help

[Alphabetized Listing](#)

[Adjectives - General](#)

[Adverbs](#)

[Articles](#)

[General](#)

[Nouns](#)

[Pronouns](#)

[Quantifiers](#)

[Verbs](#)

Alphabetized Listing

Topics in alphabetical order

Adjectives
Adjectives 2
Adjectives 3
Avoir/Etre
Bien/Mieux
Bon/Meilleur
Comparative Adjectives
Conditional
Conditional Perfect
Definite Articles
Demonstrative Adjectives
Demonstrative Pronouns
Direct Objects
Double Object Pronouns
for
Future Perfect
Future Tense
Gender
her
Imperative
Imperfect
in
Indefinite Articles
Indirect Objects
it
more
Near Future
Negative Words
Negatives
Non-Inflecting
Partitive
Passé Antérieur
Passé Composé
Passé Simple
Past Perfect
Past Subjunctive
play
Pluperfect Subjunctive
Possessive Pronouns
Present Perfect Subjunctive
Present Progressive
Present Subjunctive
Present Tense
Pronoms Disjoints
Questions
Reflexive Pronouns
Reflexive Verbs
that
Verbs--Infinitive

Vous and Tu

Adjectives - General

Adjectives

Adjectives 2

Adjectives 3

Bon/Meilleur

Adjective Inflections

Comparative Adjectives

Demonstrative Adjectives

Adjectives

Adjectives in French agree with their nouns in gender and number. In other words, the form of the adjective usually changes in some way, depending on the gender and number of the noun it modifies. The usual rule is: to change a masculine adjective from singular to plural, add an **-s**; to modify a feminine noun, add an **-e** to the adjective's masculine stem; to change a feminine adjective from singular to plural, add an **-s** to the final (feminine) **-e** to form **-es**. For example:

un grand garçon	a big boy
de(s) grands garçons	big boys
une grande fille	a big girl
de(s) grandes filles	big girls

- Adjectives ending in an **-s** in the masculine singular do not change for the masculine plural:

Il est mauvais.
He is bad.

Ils sont mauvais.
They are bad.

- Adjectives ending in **-x** in the masculine singular are unchanged for the masculine plural, but drop the **-x** and add **-se** for the feminine singular and **-ses** for the feminine plural:

Il est curieux.
He is curious.

Ils sont curieux.
They are curious.

Elle est curieuse.
She is curious.

Elles sont curieuses.
They are curious.

- Adjectives ending in **-f** in the masculine singular end in **-ve** and **-ves** in the feminine:

un homme sportif	an athletic man
une femme sportive	an athletic woman
des femmes sportives	athletic women

- Adjectives ending in **-al** in the masculine singular change the ending to **-aux** in the masculine plural:

un programme original	an original program
des programmes originaux	original programs

- Adjectives ending in **-e** in the masculine singular are identical to the feminine singular:

un mur rouge	a red wall
une fleur rouge	a red flower

See also Adjectives 2 and Adjectives 3

Adjectives 2

Contrary to the usual pattern in English, the adjective in French normally follows, rather than precedes the noun it modifies. There are, however, several adjectives which do customarily precede the noun.

- Adjectives of color, nationality, or description are generally **after** the noun:

un pantalon bleu	blue pants
une étudiante américaine	an American student
une auto économique	an economical car

- Some adjectives that generally **precede** the noun:

bon/bonne	good
mauvais/mauvaise	bad
beau/belle	beautiful
joli/jolie	handsome/pretty
grand/grande	big/tall
petit/petite	small
gentil/gentille	nice
même	same
long/longue	long
vieux/vieille	old
jeune/jeune	young
nouveau/nouvelle	new
autre/autre	other
premier/première	first
dernier/dernière	last

- Adjectives which change meaning when they change position (before or after the noun) are **ancien**, **brave**, **cher**, **grand**, **même**, **pauvre** and **propre**:

Il est mon ancien patron.	He is my former boss.
C'est une ville ancienne.	It's an old city.
C'est un brave garçon.	He's a good boy.
C'est un soldat brave.	He's a brave soldier.
J'ai vu le même homme.	I've seen the same man.
Il est parti ce jour même.	He left this very day.
la pauvre fille	the unfortunate girl
une maison très pauvre	a very poor house
sa propre mère	his own mother
des mains propres	clean hands

See also [Adjectives](#) and [Adjectives 3](#)

Adjectives 3

There are several French adjectives which take unusual forms when they change according to gender and number:

Singular (masc./fem.)	Plural (masc./fem)	Meaning
bon/bonne	bons/bonnes	good
blanc/blanche	blancs/blanches	white
vieux (vieil before a vowel)/vieille	vieux/vieilles	old
fou (fol before a vowel)/folle	fous/folles	mad

- Adjectives ending in **-eau** in the masculine singular drop the **-eau** before a vowel and add **-el**; in the masculine plural, **-x** is added to form **-eaux**; for the feminine singular, **-eau** is replaced by **-elle**; feminine plurals are formed by adding **-s** to form **-elles**:

mon nouveau tricot	my new sweater (masculine)
mon nouvel ami	my new friend (masc.)
ma nouvelle amie	my new friend (fem.)
mes nouveaux amis	my new friends (masc. pl.)
mes nouvelles amies	my new friends (fem. pl.)

- Adjectives ending in **-el** in the masculine singular add **-s** to form the masculine plural; the feminine singular is formed by dropping the **-el** and adding **-elle**; the feminine plural adds an **-s** to form **-elles**:

un paysage naturel	a natural landscape (masc.)
des paysages naturels	natural landscapes (masc. pl.)
une vie naturelle	a natural life (fem. pl.)
des vies naturelles	natural lives (fem. pl.)

- Adjectives ending in **-er** in the masculine singular add **-s** for the masculine plural; they change the **-er** to **-ère** for the feminine singular and add **-s** to form the feminine plural, **-ères**:

Il est fier.
He is proud. (masc.)
Elle est fière.
She is proud. (fem.)
Ils sont fiers.
They are proud. (masc. pl.)
Elles sont fières.
They are proud. (fem. pl.)

- Adjectives with the masculine singular ending **-ien** add **-ne** to that ending to form **-ienne** as the feminine singular; **-s** is added to these endings to form both plurals:

Il est parisien.
He is a Parisian. (masc.)
Elle est parisienne.
She is a Parisian. (fem.)
Elles sont parisiennes.
They are Parisians. (fem. pl.)

See also Adjectives and Adjectives 2

Bon/Meilleur

The one adjective in French which has irregular comparative and superlative forms is **bon**. These forms are as follows:

- The comparative of **bon/bonne**: **meilleur/meilleure**

Le dessert est bon.
The dessert is good.

Le dessert est meilleur que la soupe.
The dessert is better than the soup.

Mon auto est bonne.
My car is good.

Mon auto est meilleure que la vôtre.
My car is better than yours.

- The superlative of **bon/bonne**: **le meilleur/la meilleure**

Ce dessert est le meilleur.
This dessert is the best.

Elle est la meilleure étudiante de la classe.
She is the best student in the class.

- The adjective **bon/meilleur** should not be confused with the adverb **bien/mieux**.

See Bien/Mieux for more information on the comparative and superlative of **bien**.

Adjective Inflections

Unlike English adjectives, French adjectives inflect to agree with the nouns they modify. Regular French adjectives follow the pattern below, adding **-e** to the masculine form to create the feminine, and adding **-s** to the singular to create the plural.

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	petit	petits
Feminine	petite	petites

Adjectives already ending in **-e** inflect only for the plural, by adding an **-s**.

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	rouge	rouges
Feminine	rouge	rouges

See also:

[Adjectives](#)

[Adjectives 2](#)

[Adjectives 3](#)

Comparative Adjectives

When an adjective is used to express a comparison of superiority or inferiority, it is preceded by **plus**, (**more**), or **moins**, (**less**). The English word **than** in such phrases is **que** in French:

- Comparing two nouns:

Jean est grand.
John is tall.

Jean est plus grand que Jacques.
John is taller than James.

Jean est moins grand que Paul.
John is less tall than Paul.

- The superlative is also a way of comparing nouns. The definite article **le**, **la** or **les** is added to the comparative phrase to form the superlative:

Jean est intelligent.
John is intelligent.

Jean est le plus intelligent de la classe.
John is the most intelligent in the class.

- The superlative can be used without an explicit noun:

Jean est le plus grand.
John is the tallest.

- The phrase **aussi . . . que** is the comparative of equality:

Il est aussi méchant que son chien.
He is as mean as his dog.

See Bon/Meilleur for more help with the comparative and superlative of **bon/bonne**.

Demonstrative Adjectives

There are four forms of the demonstrative adjective (**this**, **that**) in French:

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	ce(cet)	cette
Plural	ces	ces

- Examples:

Ce livre est excellent.
This book is excellent.

Cette jeune fille est très jolie.
This girl is very beautiful.

Cet étudiant aime lire.
This student likes to read.

Ces arbres ont bruni.
These trees have turned brown.

- The suffixes **-ci** (**here**) and **-là** (**there**) may be used to distinguish specific objects or people, as necessary: For example:

Je préfère **cette** maison-ci mais ma femme préfère **cette** maison-là.
I prefer **this** (**here**) house but my wife prefers **that** house (**there**).

Adverbs

Bien/Mieux

The French adverb **bien** corresponds to the English adverb **well**. Its usage should not be confused with that of the adjective **bon** and its forms.

- The comparative of **bien** is **mieux que**:

Jean travaille bien.

John works well.

Jean travaille mieux que Georges.

John works better than George.

- The superlative of **bien** is **le mieux**:

J'aime le mieux les vins de Californie.

I like the wines of California the best.

Articles

Article Inflections

Definite Articles

Indefinite Articles

Article Inflections

French articles exist in masculine and feminine, singular and plural, and definite and indefinite forms:

	Masculine		Feminine	
	Definite	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite
Singular	le, l'	un	la, l'	une
Plural	les	des	les	des

See also:

[Definite Articles](#)

[Indefinite Articles](#)

French Assistant may classify as articles some words, such as [any](#), [some](#), [every](#) and [few](#), which are not considered articles in traditional grammar. This classification facilitates the translation of these words between English and French.

Definite Articles

The definite article is closely associated with the noun. In English it only has one form: **the**. In French, it has four: **le**, **la**, **l'**, **les**. The explanation of this difference is that in French, unlike in English, an adjective agrees with the noun which it modifies in gender and in number.

- The masculine singular form is **le**:

le livre **the** book

- The feminine singular form is **la**:

la maison **the** house

- When the article precedes a masculine or feminine noun that begins with a vowel, the **e** of **le** or the **a** of **la** is dropped and replaced by an apostrophe:

l'étudiant **the** student
(masculine)

l'institutrice **the** teacher
(feminine)

- The plural article, **les**, is the same for both genders:

les hommes **the** men

les femmes **the** women

Indefinite Articles

In French, the indefinite article's forms are **un** (masculine), **une** (feminine), and **des** (plural). Their English equivalences are **a** and **an**; the closest English translation of **des** is **some**, but its use is often mandatory in French in phrases where **some** would not be required in English. The basic use of this adjective, in both French and English, is to indicate particular persons or things which have not been identified or introduced before.

- The masculine singular form:

un livre **a book**

- The feminine singular form:

une histoire **a story**

- The plural form (masculine or feminine):

des jeunes filles **(some) young women**

General

Demonstrative Inflections

for

her

in

Interrogative Inflections

it

more

Negative Words

Non-Inflecting

Partitive

play

Questions

that

Demonstrative Inflections

The primary French demonstrative word is **ce**, which can mean **this** or **that**. French demonstratives inflect to indicate the gender and number of the noun or noun phrase being indicated.

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	ce, cet	cette
Plural	ces	ces

French also has demonstrative pronouns, meaning **this one** or **that one**.

Je préfère celui-ci, pas celui-là.

I prefer this one, not that one.

Celle de ma soeur est plus belle.

That one of my sister's is more beautiful.

See also:

Demonstrative Adjectives

Demonstrative Pronouns

for

The word, **for**, is most often used as a preposition. It expresses a relationship between two other words:

The gift is for me.

Use the French preposition, **pour**, as the translation of the English preposition, **for**.

For may also be a conjunction:

I left in a hurry, for I was late.

Translate the above usage of **for** with the French conjunction, **car**.

her

The word, **her**, in English can be either a pronoun or an adjective. When translating **her** into French, you must choose from among several pronouns and adjectives, depending on the function of **her** in the original sentence.

Her may be used as an adjective, indicating ownership or possession:

Her book is red.

Translate this usage of **her** with the French possessive adjective, **son**.

If **her** replaces a noun that is the direct recipient of an action, it is functioning as a direct object pronoun:

I saw **her**.

(**Her** replaces a noun, such as **the woman**.) To replace a feminine direct object in French, choose the pronoun, **la**.

Her may be used as an indirect object pronoun, replacing an oblique recipient of some action:

I wrote (to) **her** a letter.

(**Her** replaces a noun, such as **my girlfriend**.) Translate the English indirect object pronoun, **her**, with the French pronoun, **lui**.

English also uses **her** to indicate the object of a preposition. Prepositions are words like **of**, **to**, and **with**:

I went with **her**.

To indicate the feminine object of a preposition, choose the French pronoun, **elle**.

Finally, English uses **her** to indicate the object of a command:

Help **her**!

The correct French translation for **her** when it is used as the object of a command is the tonic pronoun, **elle**.

in

In most cases, when the preposition **in** occurs before a noun modified by an adjective or article, choose the French preposition, **dans**:

I am in the room.

When **in** is used to specify the amount of time that will pass before something happens, use **dans**:

He will leave in three days.

Preceding a specific month or year, use **en**:

I will see you in May, in 1993.

Before the seasons Fall, Summer, or Winter choose **en**:

In Winter, the temperature drops below zero.

Preceding Spring, use **au**:

Flowers bloom in Spring.

Before a feminine country, choose **en**:

We do not live in France.

Before a masculine singular country, use **au**:

Two major languages are spoken in Canada.

With a masculine plural country, use **aux**:

There are 250 million people in the United States.

Preceding the name of a city, choose **à**:

We will arrive in New York Thursday.

Interrogative Inflections

Most French interrogative words are uninflected for gender and number.

Qu'est-ce que c'est?

What is it?

Pourquoi est-ce que tu n'aimes pas les pommes?

Why don't you like apples?

Comment puis-je trouver la ville?

How can I find the city?

Quand est-ce que Pierre arrive?

When is Pierre arriving?

Combien coûte l'essence?

How much does gas cost?

French interrogatives meaning **what** or **which** do change endings to indicate gender and number.

Quels livres voulez-vous?

What books do you want?

Laquelle des voitures va-t-il acheter?

Which car will he buy?

Auxquelles des dames a-t-elle parlé?

To which of the women did she speak?

See also:

Questions

it

When **it** is the subject of a sentence or clause, use the French pronoun **il** to replace a masculine noun or **elle** to replace a feminine noun:

It goes very fast!

With the verb **être** (to be), use **il** or **elle** as the subject when **it** is followed by an adjective only:

We know that **it** is stolen.

When **it** is a direct object, use **le** to replace a masculine noun, or **la** to replace a feminine noun:

I saw **it** yesterday.

With the verb **être** (to be), use the French pronoun **ce** as **it** when **it** precedes a name, a pronoun, or a superlative:

It's Mary!

It is she.

It's the best movie that I've ever seen.

Similarly, choose **ce** as **it** with the verb **être** (to be) when **it** is followed by a noun that has been modified by an article or adjective:

It is a heavy book.

It is an apple.

For the phrase **of it**, choose the pronoun **en**:

I have had enough **of it**.

For the phrase **in it**, choose the pronoun **y**:

The room was so dark that I couldn't find the ball **in it**.

more

When **more** is a comparative adverb, use the French adverb **plus**:

She is a **more** talented artist.

When **more** is an adjective expressing quantity, use **plus de**:

He has **more** money in the bank than his friends.

For the expression **more than**, followed by a number, use **plus de**:

More than 10,000 people were at the concert.

Negative Words

Common negative words: Besides **ne . . . pas**, the word **ne** may be followed by a verb plus any of the following words to create a negative expression:

personne	no one
plus	no more, no longer
rien	nothing
jamais	never
ni . . . ni	neither . . . nor
aucun(e)	no (as an adjective)
nulle part	nowhere

- Using **personne**:

Affirmative:

Quelqu'un est ici.
Someone is here.

Negative:

Personne n'est ici.
No one is here.

- Using **plus**:

Affirmative:

Vos parents sont encore jeunes.
Your parents are still young.

Negative:

Vos parents ne sont plus jeunes.
Your parents are no longer young.

- Using **rien**:

Affirmative:

J'ai quelque chose.
I have something

Negative:

Je n'ai rien.
I have nothing.

- Using **jamais**:

Affirmative

Il va toujours.
He always goes.

Negative:

Il ne va jamais.
He never goes.

- Using **ni . . . ni**:

Affirmative:

Avez-vous un roman ou un dictionnaire?
Have you got a novel or a dictionary?

Negative:

Je n'ai ni roman ni dictionnaire.
I don't have a novel or a dictionary.

- Using **aucun, aucune**:

Affirmative:

J'ai une idée.
I have an idea.

Negative:

Je n'ai aucune idée.
I have no idea

- Using **nulle part**:

Affirmative:

Tu vas partout.
You go everywhere.

Negative:

Tu ne vas nulle part.
You don't go anywhere.

Non-Inflecting

The following parts of speech have no inflectional models:

- Conjunction
- Intensifier
- Non-Grammatical
- Note
- Preposition
- Prefix
- Relative
- Slot Phrase
- Suffix
- Title

Partitive

The idea represented by **some** in English is expressed in French by adding the preposition **de** to the definite article.

- Use of **du** (masculine, singular):

du pain **some bread**

du lait **some milk**

- Use of **de la** (feminine, singular):

de la laitue **some lettuce**

de la bière **some beer**

- Use of **de l'** (before a noun of either gender that begins with a vowel):

de l'argent **some money**

de l'eau **some water**

- Use of **des** (plural of either gender):

des villes **some cities**

des enfants **some children**

- The partitive becomes **de** or **d'** (before a vowel): after a verb in the negative (example), after an expression of quantity (**beaucoup**, **trop**, **tant**, **peu**, **un peu**, **assez**, **autant**, **combien**) (example), and when a plural adjective precedes the noun (example).

play

The English noun, **play**, can indicate recreation or amusement: The workers disturbed the **play** of the children.

Translate this usage of **play** with the French noun, **jeu**. **Play** may also indicate a theatrical presentation:
I haven't seen a **play by Molière.**

The French word for a theatrical presentation is **pièce**.

The English verb, **to play**, indicates the action of recreating:
Six boys **are playing in the street.**

Translate this general use of **to play** with the French verb, **jouer**.

When **to play** takes an object, you must determine whether that object is a game or a musical instrument:
John loves **to play cards.**
Mary can **play the piano.**

(The object **cards** is a game. The object **piano** is an instrument.) When the object of **to play** is a game, use the French phrases, **jouer au** (for a masculine game), **jouer à la** (for a feminine game), or **jouer aux** for a game that ends in the plural (such as **cards** above).

When the object of **to play** is a musical instrument, choose the French phrase, **jouer de**.

Questions

Interrogative words are those words that you frequently use to introduce questions. There are three types: interrogative adverbs, interrogative adjectives and interrogative pronouns.

- Interrogative adverbs:

où (**where**):

Où est la classe?

Where is the class?

quand (**when**):

Quand sont-ils à la maison?

When are they home?

pourquoi (**why**):

Pourquoi est-elle triste?

Why is she sad?

comment (**how**):

Comment allez-vous?

How are you?

- Interrogative adjectives: the interrogative adjective has four forms, **quel**, **quelle**, **quels** and **quelles**. These correspond to the English **which** or **what**.

Masculine forms:

Quel livre aimez-vous?

Which book do you like?

Quels journaux préférez-vous?

Which newspapers do you prefer?

Feminine forms:

Quelle heure est-il?

What time is it?

Quelles jeunes filles vont venir?

Which girls are going to come?

- Interrogative pronouns: If the question concerns a person, use **qui** or **qui est-ce qui** (**who**):

Qui a dit ça?

Who said that?

Qui est-ce qui a dit ça?

Who said that?

If the question concerns an object, idea or event use **que** or **qu'est-ce que** (**what**):

Que faites-vous?

What are you doing?

Qu'est-ce que vous dites?

What are you saying?

After a preposition, for an object (not a person), use **quoi**:

A **quoi** pensez-vous?

What are you thinking about?

The relative pronoun, **lequel/laquelle** (**which**), can be used as an interrogative:

Lequel de vos parents est le plus généreux?

Which of your parents is the most generous?

Laquelle va-t-elle acheter?

Which one will she buy?

Lesquels de ces étudiants sont français?

Which of these students are French?

Lesquelles de vos robes porterez-vous?

Which of your dresses will you wear?

Prepositions may be combined with **lequel**: à plus **lequel** makes four forms, **auquel**, **à laquelle**: **auxquels**, **auxquelles**:

Il y a cinq étages. **Auquel** habitez-vous?

There are five floors. **Which** one do you live on?

A laquelle de ces jeunes filles avez-vous téléphoné?

To which one of these girls did you make a phone call?

Auxquels d'entre vous a-t-on donné des cartes?

To which of you were cards given?

Auxquelles de ces questions avez-vous répondu?

To which of these questions did you respond?

The preposition **de** plus **lequel** forms **duquel**, **de laquelle**, **desquels**, **desquelles**:

J'ai deux livres. **Duquel** avez-vous besoin?

I have two books. **Which** one do you need?

De laquelle d'entre vous, Mesdames, parlait-il?

About which one of you ladies was he speaking?

Desquels de ces animaux avez-vous peur?

Of **which** of these animals are you afraid?

Desquelles de mes idées faut-il me débarrasser?

Of **which** of my ideas must I rid myself?

that

English uses one word, **that**, in grammatical situations where French would require different kinds of words, according to the context. In English, **that** may be used as a conjunction:

I know **that** boys play football.

Choose the French conjunction, **que**, as the translation for the conjunction, **that**.

When **that** in English serves as a relative pronoun, it replaces the noun or noun clause that immediately precedes it:

The car **that** you saw was speeding.

Use the French relative pronoun, **que**, to translate the relative pronoun, **that**.

If **that** is used as a demonstrative adjective, it points out some object or person:

That sandwich tasted good.

Translate the demonstrative adjective, **that**, with the French word, **ce**.

The word **that** is often used to mean **that one**, as opposed to **this one**:

This computer is better than **that one**.

Choose the pronoun, **celui-là**, as the translation of **that one**. **That** may be used in English to replace an unspecified noun:

We bought **that** yesterday.

To translate this usage of **that**, choose the French pronoun **cela**.

Nouns

Gender

Noun Inflections

Gender

All French nouns have gender. A noun may be either masculine or feminine. The classification of nouns according to gender is, for the most part, a purely grammatical matter, with the exception of nouns designating human beings and certain animals. In some cases, the ending of the noun may indicate its gender:

Masculine endings:	Examples:
-er	le cahier, le papier
-et	le ballet, le cabinet
-ed	le pied
-ez	le nez
-eau*	le chapeau, le gâteau
nouns ending with two consonants	le savant, le respect

*Exception: l'eau (water) and la peau (skin) are feminine.

Feminine endings:	Examples:
-ion	la soustraction, la multiplication
-té	la beauté, la charité

Often, but not invariably, a mute **e** ending denotes a feminine gender: la vache, la porte, la table, la chaise, la fenêtre, etc. but **not** le livre, le verre, etc.

Noun Inflections

As in English, nouns in French have singular and plural forms. Most French nouns form the plural by adding **-s** to the singular noun. There are, however, many irregular noun plurals in French, depending on the final letters of the singular form.

Regular formation of the plural: **-s**

le garçon	les garçons
la femme	les femmes

When the final letters are **-al**, the plural changes to **-aux**

le journal	les journaux
------------	--------------

When the final letters are **-ail**, the plural simply adds an **-s**, except for a few words, which change the **-ail** to **-aux**

le bail	les baux
le travail	les travaux
le vitrail	les vitraux

When the final letters are **-s**, **-x** or **-z**: the plural and singular are the same

la fois	les fois
le nez	les nez
la voix	les voix

When the final letters are **-au**, **-eau**, **-eu** or **-oeu**, the plural adds **-x**

le bateau	les bateaux
le feu	les feux
la peau	les peaux

When the final letters are **-ou**, some nouns add an **-x**

le chou	les choux
le genou	les genoux

Proper nouns are invariable

Monsieur Charpentier	
les Charpentier	

There are a few completely irregular nouns, for example

l'oeil	les yeux
madame	mesdames
le ciel	les cieux

Note: There are exceptions to many of these rules, so care should be taken to check the inflections of any unfamiliar noun.

Pronouns

Demonstrative Pronouns

Direct Objects

Double Object Pronouns

Indirect Objects

Personal Pronoun Inflections

Possessive Pronouns

Pronoms Disjoints

Possessive Inflections

Pronoun Inflections

Reflexive Pronouns

Vous and Tu

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in French have different forms, depending on the gender, number and proximity of the antecedent.

- The four basic forms are **celui**, **celle**, **ceux**, **celles**:

celui, celle (singular) **this** (**one**; singular)

	Antecedent	Pronoun
Masculine	cet homme	celui
Feminine	cette femme	celle

ceux, celles (plural) **these** (**ones**; plural)

	Antecedent	Pronoun
Masculine	ces livres	ceux
Feminine	ces lunettes	celles

- Proximity to the speaker or person addressed. The suffixes **-ci** (**here**) and **-là** (**there**) may be used to distinguish between two antecedents:

Voici deux livres: celui-ci est en français, celui-là est en anglais.
Here are two books: this one is in French, that one is in English.

- Specificity of the antecedent. If the antecedent is vague, general, of ambiguous gender, the so-called neuter pronouns are used. **Ceci** indicates nearness, **cela** indicates more distance.

Ceci m'intéresse, mais cela m'intéresse beaucoup plus.
This interests me, but that interests me much more.

- While the pronoun **ce** is employed with all the forms of **être**, **cela** and its contraction **ça** are used as the subjects of all other verbs:

C'est beau.

It's beautiful.

Cela me semble beau.

It (that) seems beautiful to me.

Ça m'intéresse.

It (that) interests me.

Direct Objects

There are four direct object third person pronouns in French: **le**, **la**, **l'** and **les**. These correspond to the English objective pronouns, **he**, **her**, **it**, and **them**. **Le** is masculine, **la** is feminine, **l'** is the singular form of the direct object when it precedes a verb beginning with a vowel. The plural **les** refers to either gender. Note that they can refer to either people or things and are found before the conjugated verbs.

Jean lit **le** livre.

John reads **the** book.

Jean **le** lit.

John reads **it**.

Marie achète **la** fleur.

Mary buys **the** flower.

Marie **l'**achète.

Mary buys **it**.

Georges vend **la** voiture.

George sells **the** car.

Georges **la** vend.

George sells **it**.

Jeanne écrit **les** livres.

Jean writes **the** books.

Jeanne **les** écrit.

Jean writes **them**.

The other direct object pronouns in French are **me** (**me**), **te** (**you**), **nous** (**us**) and **vous** (**you**). They obey the same rules as the third person pronouns discussed above.

Double Object Pronouns

Both a direct and indirect object pronoun will often appear in the same sentence. When this occurs, the indirect object pronoun always precedes the direct object pronoun, except when both pronouns are in the third person.

- Normal double pronoun order in affirmative sentences:

Jean me le rend.
John returns it to me.

Le professeur nous l'a expliqué.
The professor has explained it to us.

- When both pronouns are in the third person, the direct object precedes the indirect object:

Il la lui donne.
He gives it to him.

Vous la leur rendrez.
You will return it to them.

- In negative expressions the word **ne** precedes the two objective pronouns:

Vous ne me les avez pas rendus.
You didn't return them to me.

Je ne la lui donne pas.
I am not giving it to him.

- In the imperative affirmative, the objective pronouns follow the verb:

Demandez-la-lui!
Ask it of him!

- In the negative imperative, the pronouns must precede the verb:

Ne la lui rends pas!
Don't give it back to him!

Indirect Objects

An indirect object participates in the action as the recipient or beneficiary or "interested" person or thing. In English, the indirect object is often preceded by the preposition **to**. In French, the indirect object pronoun always precedes the verb. Indirect object pronouns in French are: **me**, **te**, **lui**, **nous**, **vous** and **leur**.

- In pronoun form:

Il me la donne.
He gives it to me.

Je lui parle.
I speak to her.

- In noun form:

Il le rend à Jacques.
He returns it to James.

Personal Pronoun Inflections

Like their English counterparts, French personal pronouns exist in singular and plural forms for the first, second and third persons. Unlike English, French personal pronouns

- distinguish gender in the third person plural forms
- include formal and familiar forms of the second person pronoun
- have three object forms, as well as subject and reflexive forms

Subject forms

	Singular	Plural
First Person	je (I)	nous (we)
Second Person	tu (you)	vous (you)
Third Person	il, elle (he, it, she)	ils, elles (they)

Indirect object forms

	Singular	Plural
First person	me (me)	nous (us)
Second person	te (you)	vous (you)
Third person	lui (him, her)	leur (them)

Direct object forms

	Singular	Plural
First person	me (me)	nous (us)
Second person	te (you)	vous (you)
Third person	le, la (him, it, her)	les (them)

Object of preposition (disjunctive pronouns)

	Singular	Plural
First person	moi (me)	nous (us)
Second person	toi (you)	vous (you)
Third person	lui, elle (him, her)	eux, elles (them)

Reflexive forms

	Singular	Plural
First person	me (myself)	nous (ourselves)
Second person	te (yourself)	vous (yourselves)
Third person	se (himself, herself, itself)	se (themselves)

See also:

[Direct Objects](#)

[Double Object Pronouns](#)

[Indirect Objects](#)

[Pronoms Disjoints](#)

[Reflexive Pronouns](#)

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to replace a noun modified by a possessive adjective. The possessive pronoun must have the same number and gender as the noun it replaces and is accompanied by the appropriate definite article.

Adjective	Pronouns
mon, ma, mes	le mien, la mienne, les miens, les miennes
ton, ta, tes	le tien, la tienne, les tiens, les tiennes
son, sa, ses	le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes
notre, nos	le nôtre, la nôtre, les nôtres
votre, vos	le vôtre, la vôtre, les vôtres
leur, leurs	le leur, la leur, les leurs

- Using possessive pronouns:

J'ai mon livre. As-tu le tien?

I have my book. Do you have yours?

Cette voiture n'est pas la mienne. Est-elle la vôtre?

This car is not mine. Is it yours?

Pronoms Disjoints

The pronouns of accentuation (pronoms disjoints) are a special class of pronouns in French. They can be used by themselves, after a preposition or after a verb to emphasize the subjectivity of a situation. These pronouns are: **moi** (me), **-toi** (you, singular), **lui** (he), **elle** (she), **-soi** (one), **nous** or **nous autres** (we), **vous** or **vous autres** (you, plural and formal), **eux** (they, masculine), **elles** (they, feminine).

- After a verb:

Regarde-moi!
Look at me!

Réveille-toi!
Wake up!

- After a preposition:

Elle l'a acheté pour moi.
She bought it for me.

J'y suis allé sans toi.
I went there without you.

- In a compound subject:

Lui et moi, nous l'avons terminé.
He and I have finished it.

- After **c'est** and **ce sont**:

C'est toi.
It's you.

Ce sont eux.
It is they.

- By themselves:

Qui est là? Moi.
Who's there? I.

Qui l'a fait? Eux.
Who did it? They.

- For emphasis:

Moi, je l'ai fait.
I (myself) did it.

Nous, nous avons gagné.
We (ourselves) have won.

- As a compound with the word **même** (same):

moi-même	myself
toi-même	yourself
lui-même	himself
elle-même	herself
soi-même	oneself
nous-mêmes	ourselves
vous-même(s)	yourself, yourselves
eux-mêmes	themselves

elles-mêmes themselves

Possessive Inflections

Possessives are sometimes referred to in traditional grammar as possessive pronouns or possessive adjectives. They convey a sense of ownership or inherent quality, and occur in simple and emphatic forms that correspond to the personal pronouns. They agree in gender and number with the noun being modified.

Simple forms

	Singular "possessor"	Plural "possessor"
First person	mon, ma, mes (my)	notre, nos (our)
Second person	ton, ta, tes (your)	votre, vos (your)
Third person	son, sa, ses (his, her, its)	leur, leurs (their)

Emphatic forms

	Singular "possessor"	Plural "possessor"
First person	le mien, la mienne, les miens, les miennes	le nôtre, la nôtre, les nôtres
Second person	le tien, la tienne, les tiens, les tiennes	le vôtre, la vôtre, les vôtres
Third person	le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes	le leur, la leur, les leurs

See also:
[Possessive Pronouns](#)

Pronoun Inflections

The function of pronouns is to take the place of a noun or nouns. In French, most pronouns take gender and number endings in order to agree with their antecedents (the noun or nouns they are replacing). For example, demonstrative pronouns in French have different forms, depending on the gender, number and proximity of the antecedent.

The four basic forms are **celui, celle, ceux, celles**:

celui, celle (singular)	this (one; singular)	
	Antecedent	Pronoun
Masculine	cet homme	celui
Feminine	cette femme	celle
ceux, celles (plural)	these (ones; plural)	
	Antecedent	Pronoun
Masculine	ces livres	ceux
Feminine	ces lunettes	celles

Proximity to the speaker or person addressed. The suffixes **-ci** (**here**) and **-là** (**there**) may be used to distinguish between two antecedents:

Voici deux livres: celui-ci est en français, celui-là est en anglais

Here are two books: this one is in French, that one is in English.

See also:

Demonstrative Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns are used when the action in the sentence is both executed and received by the subject. If the infinitive of the verb is preceded by **se** then all conjugated forms of that verb must be accompanied by the appropriate reflexive pronoun, even if (as is likely) the verb is not reflexive in English.

- Using **me** (**m'** before a vowel):

Je m'appelle Henri.
I am called Henry.

- Using **te** (**t'** before a vowel):

Tu te mets en route.
You are starting out.

- Using **se** (**s'** before a vowel):

Elle se regarde.
She is looking at herself.

- Using **nous**:

Nous nous dépêchons.
We are hurrying.

- Using **vous**:

Vous vous habillez.
You are getting dressed.

- Using **se** (as plural):

Les hommes se rasent.
The men are shaving.

Vous and Tu

There are more pronouns in French for the expression of the subject **you** than in English. When one is addressing only one person, the singular pronoun **tu** is used. The pronoun **vous** is employed when two or more persons are being addressed. In French, one also must distinguish between formal and informal styles of discourse. Generally, between two friends or between members of a family, the familiar form **tu** is used. In all other situations, where the relationship is not intimate, the pronoun **vous** is used.

- Familiar Speech:

Comment vas-tu, Georges?

How are you, George?

- Formal Speech:

Comment allez-vous, Monsieur?

How are you, Sir?

Quantifiers

Quantifier Inflections

In French, as in English, there are three major types of quantifiers: cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers, and general quantifiers.

Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal numbers (**un**, **deux**, **trois**, etc.) may either stand alone, before a noun or noun phrase, or (in a few cases) after a noun.

Trois et quatre font sept.

Three and four are seven.

Il y a trois arbres devant la maison.

There are three trees in front of the house.

Lisez la page trois!

Read page three!

Louis seize

Louis the Sixteenth

They are invariable, with the following exceptions:

- Numbers ending in **un**, can change to **une** to agree with feminine nouns

vingt et une maisons

twenty-one houses

- When **vingt** and **cent** are multiplied, they take an **-s** for the plural

quatre-vingts

eighty

quatre cents

four hundred

- When **vingt** and **cent** are followed by another number, they are invariable

quatre-vingt-onze

ninety-one

quatre cent cinq

four hundred and five

Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers (**premier**, **deuxième**, **troisième**, etc.) stand before a noun or noun phrase, and agree in gender and number with that noun or noun phrase:

Il habite au troisième étage.

He lives on the third floor.

La seconde jeune fille s'appelle Marie.

The second girl is named Marie.

General Quantifiers

French Assistant may classify as general quantifiers such words as **all**, **some**, **first** and **last** which carry a counting or ordering meaning.

Verbs

Avoir/Etre

Conditional

Conditional Perfect

Future Perfect

Future Tense

Imperative

Imperfect

Near Future

Negatives

Passé Antérieur

Passé Composé

Passé Simple

Past Perfect

Past Subjunctive

Pluperfect Subjunctive

Present Perfect Subjunctive

Present Progressive

Present Tense

Present Subjunctive

Reflexive Verbs

Verbs--Infinitive

Avoir/Etre

There are two auxiliary verbs used in French. Most verbs use the auxiliary, **avoir**, but certain ones use **être**.

- Most verbs, transitive or intransitive, use **avoir**:

J'ai regardé.
I watched.

Nous avons dit.
We said.

- Some intransitive verbs, and compounds derived from them, use **être**. Many of these are verbs of movement:

naître	to be born
mourir	to die
monter	to go up
descendre	to go down
entrer	to enter
sortir	to go out
aller	to go
venir	to come
arriver	to arrive
partir	to leave
tomber	to fall
retourner	to return
rester	to remain
passer	to spend (time)

- When these verbs are used transitively, they take **avoir** as auxiliary:

J'ai monté l'escalier.
I went up the stairs.

J'ai passé l'examen.
I took the exam.

- For the use of **être** with reflexive verbs, see Reflexive Verbs

Conditional

Like the indicative, the imperative, and the subjunctive, the conditional is a mood, with its own endings for various tenses. It has four major uses:

- To express a past of the future, (i.e. to express an action or state that was future with respect to the past):

Il a dit qu'il viendrait bientôt.
He said he would come soon.

- To express the result of a hypothetical situation, the verb in the conditional follows the preposition **si** plus a verb the past indicative:

Si j'étais vous, je ne le ferais pas.
If I were you, I would not do it.

- To express indirect discourse (in the past):

On lui a demandé où il irait, et il a répondu qu'il irait à New York.
He was asked where he would go, and he replied he would go to New York.

- To express politeness, and in sentences where there is only one verb that is expressed in English by **I would . . .**

Je ferais ça avec plaisir.
I'd do that with pleasure.

Je voudrais une tasse de café.
I would like a cup of coffee.

Conditional Perfect

The conditional perfect is formed with the conditional of the auxiliary verb (**être** and **avoir**) plus the past participle of the main verb. It is used to express the result of a hypothetical condition or supposition in the past. The conditional perfect is only used when the other verb is in the past perfect (plus-que-parfait). If the verb introducing the hypothetical condition is in the imperfect tense, the conditional present is used.

- To express a result of a past hypothetical condition:

Si vous étiez venu, nous aurions été très contents.

If you had come, we would have been very happy.

See also [Conditional](#)

Future Perfect

The future perfect tense is a compound tense formed with the future of the auxiliary (**avoir** or **être**) plus the past participle of the verb you have in mind. In French and in English, this tense is used to express a future action that will happen before another future action. In English, this tense is formed by using **shall have** or **will have** plus the past participle of the verb you have in mind.

- Action in the future completed before another future action:

Quand vous aurez terminé, vous me le direz.

When you (will) have finished, you'll tell me.

- The conjunctions **quand**, **lorsque**, **dès que**, **aussitôt que**, when indicating a future action, must be followed by either the future or the future perfect.

Future Tense

Unlike the present, preterite, and imperfect tenses, which are based upon the so called present stem, the future tense uses the infinitive as stem. There are no irregularities in the endings for this tense, but the stem is sometimes changed.

- To express actions or states that, it is assumed, will take place at a time future to the present:

Le ballet aura lieu samedi prochain.

The ballet will take place next Saturday.

- To use the future on present intent or determination.

J'irai le voir demain.

I will go to see him tomorrow.

- Use of the future after **quand** (when). When the main clause is in the future, and the subordinate clause is introduced by **quand**, the subordinate clause will be in the future:

Je le verrai quand j'arriverai.

I will see him when I (will) arrive.

- The future is not used after **si** (if):

Je resterai à la maison si je ne fais pas d'économies.

I will stay home if I do not save money.

Imperative

The Imperative Mood is the form of a verb used to express a command or order. The imperative is conjugated in three persons, utilizing the present indicative forms of the verb, without the pronouns.

- Second person singular:

Viens avec nous.
Come with us.

- First person plural:

Allons au cinéma.
Let's go to the movies.

- Second person plural:

Faites vos devoirs.
Do your homework.

- Verbs with infinitives in **ER** drop the **s** of the second person singular in the imperative:

Mange!
Eat!

Pense!
Think!

- The irregular verb **aller** also drops the **s** in the second person imperative singular:

Va!
Go!

Imperfect

The imperfect indicative is a past tense. Because "imperfect" implies incomplete, the imperfect tense describes an action which was continuous in the past but whose state of completion is unknown or ambiguous. This tense expresses:

- A past state of mind, opinion or emotion:

Je savais que mes amis n'aimaient pas mes idées.
I knew my friends didn't like my ideas.

- A description of a scene in the past:

Dans le parc, il faisait beau et les oiseaux chantaient.
In the park, the weather was beautiful and the birds were singing.

- An habitual action that took place in the past.

Quand j'étais au collège, je travaillais tous les week-ends.
When I was in college, I worked every weekend.

- Mental, emotional, and physical conditions in the past as well as other past conditions such as weather, time, and age.

Il l'aimait beaucoup.
He loved her very much.

Il faisait chaud et humide.
It was very hot and humid.

Near Future

The near future tense is expressed in English as **I am going to ...** or **I am about to ...** In French, the present tense of the verb **aller**, plus another verb in the infinitive is often used in the same sense.

- Use of the near future:

Nous allons faire un voyage.

We are going to take a trip.

Je vais aller au cinéma samedi.

I am going to go to the movies Saturday.

Negatives

The negative of a verb in French is most commonly expressed by the insertion of the negative words **ne** before the verb and **pas** after it.

- Negation of the verb **être**:

C'est une photo.

It is a photograph.

Ce n'est pas une photo.

It's not a photograph.

Ce sont des fleurs.

These are flowers.

Ce ne sont pas des fleurs.

These are not flowers.

- Negation of **il y a** (there is/there are):

Il y a un stylo.

There is a pen.

Il n'y a pas de stylo.

There is no pen.

Il y a des clés.

There are keys.

Il n'y a pas de clés.

There are no keys.

Il y a les voisins.

There are the neighbors.

Il n'y a pas les voisins.

The neighbors are not there.

- Negation of the verb **avoir**:

J'ai un chapeau.

I have a hat.

Je n'ai pas de chapeau.

I don't have a hat.

Vous avez vos papiers.

You have your papers.

Vous n'avez pas vos papiers.

You don't have your papers.

- Negation of transitive verbs:

Je vois un avion.

I see an airplane.

Je ne vois pas d'avion.

I don't see an airplane.

J'écoute la radio.

I'm listening to the radio.

Je n'écoute pas la radio.

I'm not listening to the radio.

- Objective pronouns follow **ne** and precede the verb:

Je **ne** la lui **donne pas**.

I'm not giving it to him.

Passé Antérieur

The preterite perfect tense, like the preterite tense (passé simple), is limited in modern French to literary or historical contexts. It may be used in writing to indicate the relationship between two successive past actions. The preterite perfect is generally found in a subordinate clause, introduced by a conjunction of time: **aussitôt que, dès que, quand, lorsque**

It is formed by combining the auxiliary verb (**être** or **avoir**) in the perfect tense with the past participle of the main verb.

- Using the preterite perfect tense:

Lorsque le roi fut arrivé, il fit un discours.

After the king had arrived, he gave a speech.

Passé Composé

The present perfect indicative tense (passé composé), along with the imperfect tense, is the main past tense in French. It is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb (**avoir** or **être**) plus the participle of the main verb. The present perfect has two major uses:

- To express an action or a state of mind, emotion, or opinion at a precise or sudden moment in the past:

Quand il m'a vu, j'ai eu peur.

When he saw me, I was afraid.

- To express a completed action, thought, or statement:

Elle a ouvert la porte et je suis entrée.

She opened the door and I entered.

Passé Simple

The preterite tense (passé simple) expresses an action that was completed in the past. In modern French it is employed almost exclusively in a literary or historical context.

Napoléon mourut en 1821.

Napoleon died in 1821.

Past Perfect

The past perfect indicative tense is used to express an action which happened in the past before another past action. Since it is used in relation to another past action, the other past action is ordinarily expressed in the present perfect indicative (passé composé). In French, this tense is formed with the imperfect indicative of the auxiliary (**être** or **avoir**) plus the past participle of the main verb.

- Using the past perfect indicative:

Quand je suis arrivé chez moi, mon frère était déjà sorti.

When I arrived home, my brother had already gone out.

Past Subjunctive

The past subjunctive is a literary tense whose modern use is rare, even in literature. It may be used in sentences where the subjunctive is called for but the verb of the main clause is in the past tense or conditional mood. In modern French, the past subjunctive appears only in the third person; in contemporary usage it has been replaced by the present subjunctive:

- The past subjunctive:

Je voulais qu'elle arrivât très tôt.
I wanted her to arrive very early.

- The present subjunctive:

Je voulais qu'elle arrive très tôt.
I wanted her to arrive very early.

Pluperfect Subjunctive

The pluperfect subjunctive tense is a tense reserved for literary contexts. It is similar in use to the imperfect subjunctive, and consists of the imperfect subjunctive form of the auxiliary verb followed by a past participle. Modern usage exists only in the third person.

- Using the pluperfect subjunctive:

J'étais content que Marie fût arrivée.

I was happy that Mary had arrived.

- Modern usage (replacing the pluperfect subjunctive with the present perfect subjunctive):

J'étais content que Marie soit arrivée.

I was happy that Mary had arrived.

Present Perfect Subjunctive

The present perfect subjunctive tense is formed by using the present subjunctive of the auxiliary verb (**être** or **avoir**) plus the past participle of the main verb. It is used when the action in the subordinate clause has come before the action in the main clause (and all other conditions requiring the use of the subjunctive are met).

- Use the present perfect subjunctive when the subordinate action precedes the main action:

Je ne crois pas que vous ayez payé le garçon pour les fleurs.

I don't believe you have paid the boy for the flowers.

Ils sont contents que nous soyons venus les voir.

They are happy that we came to see them.

See also [Present Subjunctive](#)

Present Progressive

In English, there is a tense to express the idea of an action in progress (e.g. **I am going**, or **I am doing**). It is the present progressive form. This tense is not found in French. Although the present indicative tense of French verbs can often be translated as the present progressive, the French expression **être en train de** is used when there is emphasis on the fact of the action in progress.

Use of **être en train de**:

Nous sommes en train de regarder la télévision.

We are watching television.

Le téléphone a sonné pendant que nous étions en train de dîner.

The telephone rang while we were eating dinner.

Present Tense

The present tense is formed by adding **-e, -es, -e, -ons, -ez, -ent** to verbs of the **ER** verb stem, **-is, -is, -it, -issons, -issez -issent** to verbs of the **IR** verb stem, and **-s, -s, -d (or t), -ons, -ez, -ent** to verbs of the **RE** verb stem. It has several uses:

- To express something that is presently occurring:

Il y a une mouche dans ma soupe.
There is a fly in my soup.

- To translate the English present progressive most of the time (see also Present Progressive):

Je lis un bon livre.
I am reading a good book.

- To express something that is accurate for only a short period of time:

Il habite Paris en ce moment.
He lives in Paris at this moment.

- To express a sentiment that may extend indefinitely back into the past and forward into the future, this usage is referred to as the "universal present."

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.
The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Present Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood is rarely used in English but is quite frequently employed in French. A verb takes the subjunctive when it is preceded by certain verbs or certain expressions that indicate a subjective situation. The subjunctive is usually introduced by the conjunction **que**. The subjunctive occurs in a subordinate clause only when there is a change of the subject.

- After an expression of personal sentiment (emotion, will or desire):

Je suis heureux **que** vous soyez ici.
I am happy **that** you are here.

J'ai envie **que** vous soyez avec moi.
I would like **you to be** with me.

- After an expression of necessity, doubt or possibility:

Il faut **que** tu viennes avec moi.
You must **come** with me.

Il est possible **que** nous allions à Paris.
It is possible **that** we're going to Paris.

- After verbs of opinion (**penser, croire, espérer, trouver, il me semble**) when they are in the negative or interrogative:

Elle ne pense pas **qu'il** fasse plus froid en Alaska.
She doesn't think **it is** any colder in Alaska.

Vous semble-t-il **que** je sois malade?
Does it seem **to you that** I am sick?

- After certain conjunctive phrases that express the idea of unaccomplished goal or aim:

pour que	so that; in order that
afin que	so that; in order that
de sorte que	so that; in order that
avant que	before (that)
de peur que	out of fear that
à moins que	unless
jusqu'à ce que	until
bien que	although
quoique	although

- After **qui que** (**whoever**), **quoi que** (**whatever**), **où que** (**wherever**):

Qui que vous soyez . . .	Whoever you are . . .
Quoi que je fasse . . .	Whatever I do . . .
Où qu'on aille . . .	Wherever one goes . . .

- After a superlative adjective when there is an idea of doubt, probability, but not certainty:

Vous êtes peut-être **le meilleur ami que** j'aie.
You are maybe **the best friend that** I have.

Reflexive Verbs

A reflexive verb in French is one which indicates an action which reflects back on the subject. Reflexive verbs (verbes pronominaux) are also used to indicate reciprocal action or passive voice. The meaning of some reflexive verbs is strictly idiomatic. Reflexive verbs are always accompanied by reflexive pronouns.

- Almost any transitive verb can have a reflexive form:

Je lave la voiture.
I wash the car.

Je me lave.
I wash myself.

- Idiomatic reflexive verbs: some verbs have a meaning in the reflexive form which is quite different from the ordinary meaning.

J'appelle mon ami au téléphone.
I call my friend on the phone.

Je m'appelle Pierre.
My name is Peter.

A short list of idiomatic reflexive verbs:

s'en aller	to go away
s'entendre	to get along with
se conduire	to behave
s'appeler	to be named
se tromper	to be mistaken
se mettre a	to begin
s'apercevoir	to realize
se fâcher	to get angry
s'occuper de	to take care of
se serrer (la main)	to shake hands
se servir	to use
se moquer	to make fun of
se taire	to stop talking
se porter (bien)	to be in (good) health
s'arrêter	to stop
se rappeler	to remember
se souvenir	to remember
se trouver	to be located (at)

- Reflexive verbs as passive voice: Where English uses a form of the verb **to be** plus a past participle to express passivity (e.g. **it is said**, or **it is done**), the form in French is to use a verb with the impersonal pronoun **on** or to use the reflexive form.

On fait ça.
Ça se fait.
It is done.

On dit ça.
Ça se dit.
It is said.

- The compound past tenses of reflexive verbs use **être** as the auxiliary, not avoir. The past participle must agree in gender and number with the direct object, if the direct object (or pronoun) precedes the verb.

Elles se sont lavées.

They have washed (themselves).

- There is no agreement if only an indirect object precedes the verb.

Elles se sont parlé.

They spoke to themselves.

Verbs--Infinitive

Verbs followed by an infinitive: One of the most exasperating aspects of speaking or writing French is remembering when a particular verb, followed by an infinitive, should also be followed by a particular preposition. Most textbooks merely advise committing all these verbs to memory. The list below is a compilation of the most commonly used verbs and which preposition should be placed between those verbs and a subsequent infinitive.

- Verbs followed by an infinitive without a preposition:

Nous aimons aller au cinéma.

We like to go to the movies.

Verb	Translation	Verb	Translation
aimer	to like; love	monter	to go up
aller	to go	oser	to dare
arriver	to arrive	paraître	to seem
courir	to run	penser	to think
croire	to think	préférer	to prefer
désirer	to wish	se rappeler	to recall
devoir	to be supposed to	rentrer	to go home
envoyer	to send	retourner	to go back
espérer	to hope	savoir	to know
écouter	to listen	valoir (mieux)	to be better
entendre	to hear	venir	to come
faire	to do; make	voir	to see
falloir	to have to	vouloir	to want
laisser	to let; leave		

- Verbs followed by à plus an infinitive:

Je commence à jouer de la guitare.

I'm starting to play the guitar.

Verb	Translation	Verb	Translation
avoir	to have	enseigner	to teach
aider	to help	s'exercer	to practice
s'amuser	to have fun	hésiter	to hesitate
apprendre	to learn	inviter	to invite
chercher	to seek; try	se mettre	to begin
commencer	to begin	passer	to spend time
condamner	to condemn	penser	to think of
continuer	to continue	réussir	to succeed

- Verbs followed by de plus an infinitive:

J'ai décidé de rester.

I decided to stay.

Verb	Translation	Verb	Translation
s'arrêter	to stop	menacer	to threaten
cesser	to stop	mériter	to deserve
conseiller	to advise	obliger	to oblige
craindre	to fear	offrir	to offer

décider	to decide	ordonner	to order
demander	to ask	oublier	to forget
se dépêcher	to hurry	proposer	to propose
dire	to tell	refuser	to refuse
empêcher	to prevent	regretter	to regret
essayer	to try	risquer	to risk
finir	to finish	venir	to have just

Glossary of Terms

conjunction

conjunction

A word functioning as a connector between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. For example: [and](#), [because](#), [but](#), [however](#).

Je n'ai pas d'argent.
I don't have any money.

Il a bu trop de bière.

He drank too much beer.

Combien de livres a-t-il?

How many books does he have?

Elle a de bonnes amies.
She has good friends.

ça is used most in informal speech

