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Notes for

# Duolingo

French

Notes compiled by Derek Sollberger

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# 1 Chapter 1

## 1.1 Basics 1

### 1.1.1 Genders

French has two grammatical genders: masculine and feminine. All nouns have a gender that you must memorize. Sometimes, the gender can be obvious: une femme ("a woman") is feminine. Other times, it's not obvious: une pomme ("an apple") is also feminine.

### 1.1.2 Personal Subject Pronouns

In every complete sentence, the subject is the person or thing that performs an action or is being described. This is often a noun, but a personal subject pronoun (e.g. "I", "you", or "he") can replace that noun. In both English and French, pronouns have different forms based on what they replace.

English	French	Example
I	je	Je mange. ~ I eat.
You(singular)	tu/vous	Tu manges. ~ You eat.
He/It	il	Il mange. ~ He eats.
She/It	elle	Elle mange. ~ She eats.

### 1.1.3 Subject-Verb Agreement

Notice above that the verb manger (as well as its English equivalent, "to eat") changes form to agree grammatically with the subject. These forms are called conjugations of that verb. Whenever you want to learn a verb's conjugation, hover your mouse over that word and press the "Conjugate" button.

Subject	Manger (To Eat)	Être (To Be)	Avoir (To Have)
je	je mange ~ I eat	je suis ~ I am	j'ai ~ I have
tu	tu manges ~ you eat	tu es ~ you are	tu as ~ you have
il/elle/on	il mange ~ he eats	il est ~ he is	il a ~ he has

### 1.1.4 Articles

Articles (e.g. "the" or "a") provide context for a noun. In English, articles may be omitted, but French nouns almost always have an article. French has three types of articles:

- Definite articles ("the") are used with specific nouns that are known to the speakers, as in English, but also to indicate the general sense of a noun, unlike in English.
- Indefinite articles ("a"/"an"/"one") are used for countable nouns that are unspecified or unknown to the speakers.
- Partitive articles ("some"/"any") indicate a quantity of something uncountable.

Articles have multiple forms, as provided in this table:

Article	Masculine	Feminine	Plural	Example
<b>Definite</b>	le/l'	la/l'	les	le chat → the cat
<b>Indefinite</b>	un	une	des	une femme → a woman
<b>Partitive</b>	du/de l'	de la/de l'		de l'eau → (some) water

It is critical to understand that articles must agree with their nouns in both gender and number. For instance, *le femme* is incorrect. It must be *la femme* because *la* is feminine and singular, just like *femme*.

### 1.1.5 Elisions

*Le* and *la* become just *l'* if they're followed by a vowel sound. This is an example of *elision*, which is the removal of a vowel sound in order to prevent consecutive vowel sounds and make pronunciation easier. Elisions are mandatory—for instance, "*je aime*" is incorrect. It must be "*j'aime*".

These other one-syllable words can also elide: *je*, *me*, *te*, *se*, *de*, *ce*, *ne*, and *que*. *Tu* can also be elided in casual speech, but not in writing (including on Duolingo).

### 1.1.6 Contractions

In a contraction, two words combine to form one shortened word. For instance, the partitive article *du* is a contraction of the preposition *de* with *le*.

- *du pain* → (some) bread

However, since *du* can create vowel conflicts, when it would appear in front of a vowel sound, it takes the elided *de l'* form instead. This is also the case for *de la*.

- *de l'ananas* [masc.] → (some) pineapple
- *de l'eau* [fem.] → (some) water

### 1.1.7 Words Beginning with H

The letter *H* is always mute (silent) in French, but when *H* starts a word, it can act as a consonant (aspirate) or vowel (non-aspirate). For example, the *H* in *homme* acts as a vowel. This means that "the man" must be written as *l'homme*. Conversely, an aspirate *H* doesn't participate in elisions or liaisons (which you'll learn about soon). It's usually found at the beginning of loanwords from German or other languages. For instance, "the hero" is *le héros*. Pay attention to this when learning new vocabulary.

**1.1.8 First Vocabulary**

French	English	French	English
la femme	woman	il	he
la fille	girl	le chat	cat
le garçon	boy	noir	black
l'homme	man	la robe	dress
la pomme	apple	et	and
l'orange	orange	calme	calm
l'enfant	child	riche	rich
elle	she		

- Je suis rouge!  
I am red!



## 1.2 Basics 2

### 1.2.1 Plurals

Many French words have plural forms. Plural nouns and adjectives often end in -s, though the S is usually silent.

- homme ("man")  $\Rightarrow$  hommes ("men")
- femme ("woman")  $\Rightarrow$  femmes ("women")
- chat noir ("black cat")  $\Rightarrow$  chats noirs ("black cats")

There are also plural forms for pronouns and verb conjugations. Consider parler ("to speak"):

Person	French	Example
I	je	Je parle. $\Rightarrow$ I speak.
You (singular)	tu	Tu parles. $\Rightarrow$ You speak.
You (formal)	vous	Vous parlez. $\Rightarrow$ You speak.
He	il	Il parle. $\Rightarrow$ He speaks.
She	elle	Elle parle. $\Rightarrow$ She speaks.
We	nous	Nous parlons. $\Rightarrow$ We speak.
You (plural)	vous	Vous parlez. $\Rightarrow$ You speak.
They (any group including a male)	ils	Ils parlent. $\Rightarrow$ They speak.
They (all women)	elles	Elles parlent. $\Rightarrow$ They speak.

### 1.2.2 Tu or Vous?

French has two words for the subject pronoun "you": tu and vous. For a singular "you", tu should only be used for friends, peers, relatives, children, or anyone else who's very familiar to you. In all other cases and also for plurals, the more polite vous should be used to show respect. When in doubt, use vous.

### 1.2.3 Agreement

Pronouns, adjectives, and articles must agree with their nouns in both gender and number. Consider the examples below and note how the article and adjective change to agree with each noun.

- Masculine singular: Le chat noir  $\Rightarrow$  The black cat
- Masculine plural: Les chats noirs  $\Rightarrow$  The black cats
- Feminine singular: La robe noire  $\Rightarrow$  The black dress
- Feminine plural: Les robes noires  $\Rightarrow$  The black dresses

Not all adjectives change forms. For instance, riche is the same for both masculine and feminine singular nouns.

### 1.2.4 Continuous Tenses

English has two present tenses: simple ("I write") and continuous ("I am writing"), but French has no specialized continuous verb tenses. This means that "I write", "I am writing", and "I do write" can translate to *j'Écris* (not *je suis Écris*) and vice versa. However, the idiomatic phrase *Être en train de Être* is often used to indicate that someone is in the process of doing something.

- Je suis en train de manger. → I am [in the process of] eating.

When translating, remember that English stative verbs have no continuous forms. For instance, *j'aime un garçon* cannot be translated as "I am loving a boy".

### 1.2.5 L'Amour

Love is tricky in France. For people and pets, *aimer* means "to love", but if you add an adverb, like in *aimer bien*, it means "to like". For everything else, *aimer* only means "to like". *Adorer* can always mean "to love", though it tends to be more coy than *aimer*.

### 1.2.6 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
la lettre	letter	le journal	newspaper
la robe	dress	le menu	menu

## 1.3 Phrases

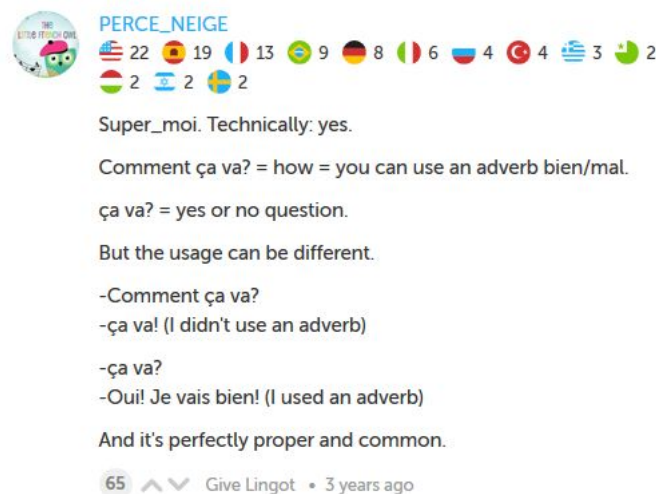
### 1.3.1 Bonjour!

Bonjour is a universal greeting that can be spoken to anyone at any time. In France, greeting people is very important, and some will even say *bonjour* aloud when entering a public room or bus. *Bon aprÃs-midi* is often used as a farewell in the afternoon, while *bonsoir* is an evening greeting.

- Greetings: *bonjour*, *bonsoir* (plus *bon matin* in QuÃbec only)
- Farewells: *bonne journÃe*, *bon aprÃs-midi*, *bonne soirÃe*, *bonne nuit*

### 1.3.2 Idioms

Many words or phrases cannot be translated literally between English and French because their usages are idiomatic. For instance, consider "Ãa va ?", which means "How are you?" The literal translation of the French is "That goes?", but this is nonsensical in English. It is very important to identify idioms in both languages and learn how to translate them properly.



### 1.3.3 Liaisons

In a liaison, an otherwise silent ending consonant is pushed to the next word, where it's pronounced as part of the first syllable. Like elisions, this prevents consecutive vowel sounds. Liaisons are possible whenever a silent ending consonant is followed by a word beginning in a vowel sound, but some liaisons are mandatory and others are forbidden. Here are some mandatory liaisons, along with approximate pronunciations:

- Articles and adjectives with nouns. For example, *un homme* ("uh-nohm") *mon orange* ("mohn-norahnge"), or *deux hommes* ("duh-zohm").
- Pronouns and verbs. For example, *nous allons* ("noo-zalohn") or *est-il* ("ay-teel").
- Single-syllable adverbs and prepositions. For instance, *trÃs utile* ("tray-zuteel") or *chez elle* ("shay-zell").

Liaisons that are forbidden:

- Before and after *et* ("and").
- After singular nouns (including proper nouns and names).

- After inversions (which you'll learn in "Questions").
- Before an aspirated H (e.g. hÃfros - "hero").
- After a nasal sound, except that un, on, and en do liaison.

Note that some consonants take on a different sound in liaisons, and it's important to pronounce these correctly when speaking.<sup>1</sup>

Original Consonant	Resulting Liaison Sound	Example
-s, -x, -z	Z	des hommes ("day-zohm")
-d	T	un grand arbre ("uhn-grahn-tarbre")
-f	V	neuf ans ("nuh-vahn")

### 1.3.4 Enchaînement

In enchaînements, ending consonant sounds are pushed onto the next word if it begins in a vowel. This is essentially the same as a liaison, except that the consonant sound wasn't silent beforehand. For instance:

- elle est is pronounced like "eh-lay".
- mange une pomme is pronounced like "mahn-jun-pom".

### 1.3.5 The Impersonal Expression Il Y A

Impersonal expressions are phrases where there isn't a real subject. For instance, in the phrase "It is snowing" (Il neige), "it" doesn't refer to anything. It's a dummy subject that exists just to maintain the sentence structure. One of the most common impersonal expressions is il y a, which is an idiom for "there is" or "there are".

- Il y a une fille ici.  
There is a girl here.
- Il y a un serpent dans ma botte !  
There's a snake in my boot!

<sup>1</sup>Liaison rules vary among speakers, particularly across dialects, and fewer liaisons tend to appear in casual and slow speech. Note that the slow mode in Duo listening exercises does not include liaisons.

**1.3.6 Vocabulary**

<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
oui	yes	ça va	how are you?
non	no	comment ça va	how are you?
s'il vous plaît	please	Ça va bien	I am well.
merci	thank you	pardon	pardon me
merci beaucoup	thank you very much	désolé	sorry
bonjour	hello	Bienvenue!	Welcome!
bonsoir	good evening	À bientôt!	See you soon!
salut	bye	À plus tard!	See you later!
au revoir	goodbye	À demain!	See you tomorrow!
bonne nuit	good night	D'accord	Okay

- Oui, je suis désolé.  
Yes, I am sorry.

## 1.4 Food

### 1.4.1 The Partitive Article

The partitive article is used for unspecified amounts of uncountable nouns. In English, it can translate to "some", but it's often just omitted. Remember that *du* is a contraction of *de + le* and that partitives can elide.

Gender	Partitive Article	Example
Masculine	<i>du</i>	<i>Je mange du poisson.</i> → I am eating fish.
Feminine	<i>de la</i>	<i>Je mange de la viande.</i> → I am eating meat.
Elided Masc.	<i>de l'</i>	<i>Je mange de l'ananas.</i> → I am eating pineapple.
Elided Fem.	<i>de l'</i>	<i>Je bois de l'eau.</i> → I am drinking water.

Nouns almost never appear without articles in French, so articles must be repeated in serial lists. For example,

- *Il cuisine du poisson et de la viande.*  
He cooks fish and meat.

### 1.4.2 Count Noun, Mass Noun, or Both?

**Count nouns** are discrete and can be counted, like *un livre* ("a book"). They can be modified by definite and indefinite articles, but not partitive articles.

- *Je lis un livre.*  
I am reading a book.
- *Nous avons les livres.*  
We have the books.

**Mass nouns** like *lait* ("milk") are uncountable, and they can be modified by definite and partitive articles, but not indefinite articles.

- *Je bois du lait.*  
I am drinking [some] milk.
- *Je bois le lait.*  
I am drinking the milk.

However, many nouns can behave as both count nouns and mass nouns. This is true for most edible things. For instance, consider *poisson* ("fish") or *vin* ("wine"):

- Count noun: *Le poisson est rouge.*  
The fish is red.
- Mass noun: *Je mange du poisson.*  
I eat [some] fish.
- Count noun: *Le vin est blanc.*  
The wine is white.
- Mass noun: *Je bois du vin rouge ou blanc.*  
I drink red or white wine.

Note that some mass nouns can be pluralized in English when they refer to multiple types of the noun, but this usage isn't found in French. For instance, "the fishes" refers to multiple species of fish, while *les poissons* just refers to multiple fish.

### 1.4.3 Omitted Articles

When an article is missing in an English sentence, it must be added to the French translation. The definite article can be used to fill this void in three situations:

- Almost anywhere one would use "the" in English (i.e. when referring to specific things).
- Before the subject of a sentence to state general truths about it.
- Before the direct object of a verb of appreciation (like *aimer*) to express like/dislike.

If any of the above is true, then use the definite article. Otherwise, use the indefinite or partitive, depending on whether or not the noun is countable.

- I like wine, but I am drinking milk.  
J'aime le vin, mais je bois du lait.

Both articles are missing in the English version of this example. *Aimer* expresses fondness for wine, so *le vin* should be used there. However, *boire* is not a verb of appreciation, so the partitive *du* should be used on the uncountable *lait*.

- Cats are animals.  
Les chats sont des animaux.

This is a general truth about cats, but (2) above can only apply to subjects, so only *chats* takes a definite article here. *Animaux* are countable, so use the plural indefinite *des*.

- He likes to eat meat.  
Il aime manger de la viande.

This is a tricky example because the meat is the direct object of *manger*, not *aimer*. Thus, (3) does not apply and *viande* cannot take a definite article. Also, the French definite article can be ambiguous when translating from French to English. It can often refer to both a specific noun and the general sense of a noun.

- Les chats sont des animaux.  
Cats are animals. / The cats are animals.

### 1.4.4 De + Definite Article

*De plus* a definite article can also have other meanings. *De* means "of" or "from", so this can also indicate possession or association with a definite noun.

- La copie du livre.  
The copy of the book.
- Les copies des livres.  
The copies of the books.
- L'enfant de la femme.  
The woman's child.

## 1.4.5 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
boivent	to drink	le repas	meal
mangent	to eat	la boisson	beverage
cuisine	to cook	le thé	tea
le sandwich	sandwich	la crêpe	crepe
la tomate	tomato	le beurre	butter
la soupe	soup	le fromage	cheese
la fraise	strawberry	le poisson	fish
la viande	beef	le bonbon	candy
la baguette	baguette	la banane	banana
le oignon	onion	le sel	salt
l'eau	water	le poivre	pepper
l'œuf	egg	le sucre	sugar
l'alcool	alcohol	le poulet	chicken
la salade	salad	le porc	pork
le riz	rice	le gâteau	cake
la bière	beer	le citron	lemon
le lait	milk	le chocolat	chocolate
le pain	bread	le bœuf	beef
le vin	wine	le raisin	grape
le café	coffee	le jus	juice
avec	with		

- Je bois de la bière.  
I drink beer.
- Les hommes mangent du fromage.  
The men drink beer.
- Nous avons du sucre.  
We have sugar.



## 1.5 Animals

### 1.5.1 Noun Genders

One of the most difficult aspects of learning French is memorizing noun genders. However, by spending some time now memorizing the following patterns, you may be able to guess most nouns' genders and save yourself a lot of trouble in the future. Some nouns, like *l'élève* ("the student"), have the same spelling and meaning in both forms. Other nouns have the same spelling, but have different meanings. *Un tour* is a tour, while *une tour* is a tower. There are also nouns that only have one possible gender. Even a baby girl is *une bébé*, for instance. Many masculine nouns can be changed to a feminine form simply by adding an -e to the end. Your male friend is *un ami* and your female friend is *une amie*. Some genders depend on a noun's classification. For instance, languages, days of the week, months, seasons, metals, colors, and measurements are mostly masculine. Otherwise, memorizing word endings is the best way to guess genders. We'll learn these ending patterns in four steps:

1. Nouns ending in -e tend to be feminine. All others, especially nouns ending in consonants, tend to be masculine. This is true for over 70% of all nouns.
2. Nouns that have the endings -ion and -son tend to be feminine, even though they end in consonants.
3. Nouns with these endings are usually masculine, although they end in -e:
  - -tre, -ble, -cle (think "treble clef")
  - -one, -îme, -îge (think "OMG")
  - -age, -isme
4. Watch out for these complications:
  - -îl is masculine, but -tîl is feminine.  
le *résumé* (masc) → the *summary*  
la *liberté* (fem) → the *liberty*
  - -de is masculine, but -ade, -nde, and -ude are feminine.  
le *guide* → the *guide*  
la *parade* → the *parade*
  - -ste and -me tend to be masculine, but there are dozens of exceptions. Words for people ending in -ste are often gender-neutral, e.g. *le/la cycliste*.
  - -eur is masculine for most professions or technical terms, but it's feminine for some emotions and abstract things.  
le *chauffeur* → the *driver*  
la *peur* → the *fear*

That's it! Memorize these, and you'll be able to guess most noun genders.

### 1.5.2 Feminine Animals

In French, female animal nouns are generally formed as follows by taking the last consonant, doubling it, and adding a mute -e to the end.

- un chat ⇒ une chatte
- un chien ⇒ une chienne

Of course, there are many exceptions. For example:

- un ours ⇒ une ourse (not une oursse)
- un cheval ⇒ une jument (not une chevalle)

## 1.5.3 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
cheval	horse	le singe	monkey
chien	dog	requin	shark
l'animal	animal	l'abeille	bee
l'oiseau	bird	serpent	snake
canard	duck	l'araignée	spider
chat	cat	la souris	mouse
l'éléphant	elephant	le papillon	butterfly
ours	bear	l'insecte	insect
la tortue	turtle	la fourmi	ant
lion	lion	la baleine	whale
la vache	cow	le dauphin	dolphin
cochon	pig	le loup, la louve	wolf
la mouche	[house]fly	lapin	rabbit
le tigre	tiger	la poule	hen

## 1.6 Adjectives

Unlike English adjectives, French adjectives must agree in number and gender with the nouns that they modify. A black dog is *un chien noir*, but a black dress is *une robe noire*. Also, remember that some adjectives have the same masculine and feminine form, especially those ending in a silent -e (e.g. *riche*). When used with pronouns, adjectives agree with the noun that has been replaced. This is particularly tricky with the formal *vous*: to a singular man, you would say *vous Êtes beau*, but to plural women, you would say *vous Êtes belles*.

### 1.6.1 Adjective Placement

In French, most adjectives appear after the nouns they modify. For instance, *le chat noir*. However, some adjectives precede the noun. You can remember these types of nouns using the mnemonic **BANGS**.

- **B** is for beauty. *Une belle femme*  $\Rightarrow$  A beautiful woman
- **A** is for age. *Une jeune fille*  $\Rightarrow$  A young girl
- **N** is for number.<sup>2</sup> *Deux hommes*  $\Rightarrow$  Two men
- **G** is for good or bad. *Un bon garçon*  $\Rightarrow$  A good boy
- **S** is for size. *Un gros chat*  $\Rightarrow$  A fat cat

All determiner adjectives (e.g. possessives, interrogatives, and demonstratives) appear before the noun, e.g. *mon livre* ("my book") and *ce cochon* ("that pig"). You will learn these later.

### 1.6.2 Figurative Adjectives

A few adjectives can come both before and after the noun depending on their meaning. The most common example is *grand*, which is a BANGS adjective for everything but people. For people, it comes before a noun when it means "important" and after the noun when it means "tall". For instance, Napoleon was *un grand homme* ("a great man"), but not *un homme grand* ("a tall man"). Usually, figurative meanings will precede the noun, while literal meanings will follow the noun.

- *un pauvre homme*  $\Rightarrow$  a pitiful man
- *un homme pauvre*  $\Rightarrow$  a poor man
- *un certain nombre*  $\Rightarrow$  a certain (particular) number
- *une victoire certaine*  $\Rightarrow$  a certain (guaranteed) victory
- *ma propre voiture*  $\Rightarrow$  my own car
- *ma voiture propre*  $\Rightarrow$  my clean car
- *un cher ami*  $\Rightarrow$  a dear friend
- *une montre chère*  $\Rightarrow$  an expensive watch

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<sup>2</sup>This can also be for rank: *Le premier mot*  $\Rightarrow$  The first word

### 1.6.3 Euphony

As you have already learned, elisions, contractions, liaisons, and enchaînements are all designed to prevent consecutive vowel sounds (which is called hiatus). This quest for harmonious sounds is called euphony and is an essential feature of French. It has, however, created some unexpected rules. For instance, the masculine beau ("beautiful") changes to bel if its noun begins with a vowel sound. A beautiful man is un bel homme. The other two common changes are vieux to vieil ("old") and nouveau to nouvel ("new"). Note that this doesn't occur to feminine adjectives because they usually end in silent vowels.

### 1.6.4 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
froid	cold	grand	large
chaud	hot	jeune	young
nouveau	new	joli	pretty
petit	small		

## 1.7 Plurals

Most plural forms of nouns and adjectives can be formed by appending an -s to the singular, but remember that this -s is usually silent.

- Le chat noir ⇒ The black cat ⇒ Les chats noirs ⇒ The black cats
- Un chat noir ⇒ A black cat ⇒ Des chats noirs ⇒ (Some) black cats

Note: If the noun is preceded by an adjective, des becomes de.

- Un petit chat ⇒ A little cat ⇒ De petits chats

Articles must agree with the nouns they modify, so plural nouns require either les or des. This is a great way to tell if a noun is plural. If you hear les or des (which sound similar to "lay" and "day"), then the noun is plural. If not, it's probably singular. Remember that verbs change conjugation to agree with their subjects in both grammatical person and number.

Subject	Être ("to be")	Parler ("to speak")
<b>je</b>	suis	parle
<b>tu</b>	es	parles
<b>il/elle/on</b>	est	parle
<b>nous</b>	sommes	parlons
<b>vous</b>	êtes	parlez
<b>ils/elles</b>	sont	parlent

### 1.7.1 Punctuation

There are no quotation marks in French. Instead, the French use guillemets («»). Exclamation marks (!), question marks (?), colons (:), semicolons (;) and guillemets need to have a space on either side.

- Incorrect: "Ça va?"
- Correct: « Ça va ? »

When writing numbers in French, commas are decimal points, while spaces mark thousands places.

- Incorrect: 1,235.8
- Correct: 1 235,8

## 2 Chapter 2

### 2.1 To Be and To Have

Être and avoir are the most common verbs in French. Like many common verbs, they have irregular conjugations.

Subject	Être ("to be")	Avoir ("to have")
<b>je</b>	(je)suis	(j')ai
<b>tu</b>	es	as
<b>il/elle/on</b>	est	a
<b>nous</b>	sommes	avons
<b>vous</b>	êtes	avez
<b>ils/elles</b>	sont	ont

There should be a liaison between ils or elles and ont ("il-zon" or "elle-zon"). The "z" sound is essential here to differentiate between "they are" and "they have", so be sure to emphasize it. These two verbs are very important because they can act as auxiliary verbs in French, but they differ from their English equivalents. In "Basics 2", you learned that "I write" and "I am writing" both translate to j'écris, not je suis écris. This is because être cannot be used as an auxiliary in a simple tense. It can only be used in compound tenses, which you will learn in the "Passé Composé" unit. Another important distinction is that avoir means "to have" in the sense of "to possess", but not "to consume" or "to experience". Other verbs must be used for these meanings.

#### 2.1.1 C'est or Il Est?

When describing people and things with être in French, you usually can't use a personal subject pronoun like elle. Instead, you must use the impersonal pronoun ce, which can also mean "this" or "that". Note that ce is invariable, so it can never be ces sont.

	Impersonal Subject Pronoun	Personal Subject Pronoun
<b>Singular</b>	c'est	il/elle est
<b>Plural</b>	ce sont	ils/elles sont

These pronouns aren't interchangeable. The basic rule is that you must use ce when être is followed by any determiner—for instance, an article or a possessive adjective. Note that c'est should be used for singulars and ce sont should be used for plurals.

- C'est un homme.—He's a man. / This is a man. / That is a man.
- Ce sont des chats.—They're cats. / These are cats. / Those are cats.
- C'est mon chien.—It's my dog. / This is my dog. / That's my dog.

If an adjective, adverb, or both appear after être, then use the personal pronoun.

- Elle est belle.—She is beautiful. (Or "It is beautiful.")
- Il est très fort.—He is very strong. (Or "It is very strong.")

As you know, nouns generally need determiners, but one important exception is that professions, nationalities, and religions can act as adjectives after être.

This is optional; you can also choose to treat them as nouns.

- He is a doctor.—Il est médecin. / C'est un médecin.

However, c'est should be used when using an adjective to make a general comment about (but not describe) a thing or situation. In this case, use the masculine singular form of the adjective.

- C'est normal ?—Is this normal?
- Non, c'est étrange.—No, this is strange.

### 2.1.2 Idioms with Avoir

One of the most common idioms in French is the use of the verb avoir in certain places where English would use the verb "to be". This is especially common for states or conditions that a person may experience.

- Elle a chaud.—She is hot. (Or "She feels hot.")
- Il a froid.—He is cold.
- Elle a deux ans.—She is two years old.
- J'ai peur !—I am afraid!

French tends to use the verb faire ("to do") idiomatically for general conditions like weather.<sup>3</sup>

- Il fait chaud.—It is hot (outside).
- Il fait froid.—It is cold.
- Il fait nuit.—It is nighttime.
- C'est de la soupe.  
This is soup
- C'est la soupe.  
This is the soup
- C'est du vin.  
That is wine.

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<sup>3</sup>Note that il fait is an impersonal expression with no real subject, just like il y a from "Common Phrases".

## 2.2 Clothing

### 2.2.1 Idiomatic Plurals

English has a number of idiomatic plural-only nouns that have to be translated carefully. These are not just nouns that are invariable with number (like "deer"), but rather nouns that cannot refer to a singular thing at all. For instance, "the pants" can only be plural in English, but the corresponding *le pantalon* is singular in French. A single pair of pants is not *les pantalons*, which refers to multiple pairs of pants. Similarly, when translating *le pantalon* back to English, you can say "the pants" or "a pair of pants", but "a pant" is not correct. This also applies to *un jean* ("a pair of jeans"). *Un vêtement* refers to a single article of clothing, and it's incorrect to translate it as "clothes", which is plural and refers to a collection of clothing. This would have to be *des vêtements*.

### 2.2.2 Diacritics

The **acute accent** (é) only appears on E and produces a pure [e] that isn't found in English. To make this sound, say the word "cliché", but hold your tongue perfectly still on the last vowel to avoid making a diphthong sound.

The **grave accent** (è) can appear on A/E/U, though it only changes the sound for E (to [ÉŽ], which is the E in "lemon"). Otherwise, it distinguishes homophones like *a* (a conjugated form of *avoir*) and *à* (a preposition).

The **cedilla** (ç) softens a normally hard C sound to the soft C in "cent". Otherwise, a C followed by an A, O, or U has a hard sound like the C in "car".

The **circumflex** (ê) usually means that an S used to follow the vowel in Old French or Latin. (The same is true of the acute accent.) For instance, *île* was once "isle".

The **trema** (ë) indicates that two adjacent vowels must be pronounced separately, like in *Noël* ("Christmas") and *maïs* ("corn").

### 2.2.3 Nasal Vowels

There are four nasal vowels in French. Try to learn these sounds by listening to native speakers.

IPA	Letter Sequence	Examples
/ÂŞİČ/	un/um	un/parfum
/ÉŽİČ/	in/im/yn/ym	vin/pain/syndicat/sympa
/ÉŚİČ/	an/am/en/em	dans/chambre/en/emploi
/ÉŤİČ/	on/om	mon/ombre

These aren't always nasalized. If there's a double M or N, or if they are followed by any vowel, then the vowel should have an oral sound instead. For instance, *un* is nasal, but *une* is not. Also, *vin* is nasal, but *vinaigre* is not.



**2.2.4 Vocabulary**

<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
le sac	bag	le manteau	coat
la poche	pocket	la vest	jacket
la ceinture	belt	le chapeau	hat
le vêtement, les vêtements	clothes	la chaussette	sock
le pantalon, les pantalons	pair of pants, pants	le jean, les jeans	pair of jeans, jeans
la chaussure	shoe	le parapluie	umbrella
la chemise	shirt	le gant	glove
la jupe	skirt	la casquette	cap
le botte	boot	l'écharpe	scarf
le costume	suit	la cravate	necktie
le portefeuille	wallet		

## 2.3 Colors

Colors can be both nouns and adjectives. As nouns, colors are usually masculine (e.g. « Le rose » = “The pink”).

As adjectives, they agree with the nouns they modify except in two cases. First, colors derived from nouns (e.g. fruits, flowers, or gems) tend to be invariable with gender and number. Orange ("orange") and marron ("brown") are the most common examples.

- La jupe orange  
The orange skirt
- Les jupes orange  
The orange skirts
- Les chiens marron  
The brown dogs

Second, in compound adjectives (les adjectifs composés) made up of two adjectives, both adjectives remain in their masculine singular forms.

- Sa couleur est vert pomme.  
Its color is apple-green.
- J'aime les robes rose clair.  
I like light-pink dresses.

Most colors that end in -e in their masculine forms are invariable with gender.

- Un chien rouge  
A red dog
- Une jupe rouge  
A red skirt

French	English	French	English
le couleur	color	rouge	red
blanc	white	orange	orange
noir	black	jaune	yellow
gris	gray	verte	green
rose	pink	bleu	blue
marron	brown	violet	purple

- La fille a une jolie robe rose.  
The girl has a pretty pink dress.

## 2.4 Possessives

In English, possessive adjectives (e.g. “his”) match the owner. However, in French, they match the thing being owned. Consider the example of “her lion”. The French translation is « son lion », because lion is masculine and both the lion and the woman are singular. Note that if we hear just « son lion », we can’t tell if the lion is owned by a man or woman. It’s ambiguous without more context. If two people own a lion, then it is « leur lion ».

Possessives have different forms that agree with four things: the number of owners, the number of things owned, the gender of the thing owned, and the grammatical person of the owner (e.g. "his" versus "my"). For one owner, the possessive adjectives are:

Person	English	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Plural
<b>1st</b>	my	mon	ma	mes
<b>2nd</b>	your (singular)	ton	ta	tes
<b>3rd</b>	his/her/its	son	sa	ses

For multiple owners, genders don’t matter:

Person	English	Singular Owned	Plural Owned
<b>1st</b>	our	notre	nos
<b>2nd</b>	your (plural)	votre	vos
<b>3rd</b>	their	leur	leurs

The plural second-person possessive adjectives, votre and vos, should be used when addressing someone formally with vous.

Owner	Singular Owned	Plural
<b>My</b>	Mon ami—My friend	Mes tigres—My tigers
<b>Your</b>	Ton abeille—Your bee	Tes lions—Your lions
<b>His/Her</b>	Son oiseau—His/her bird	Ses chiens—His/her dogs
<b>Our</b>	Notre bière—Our beer	Nos pommes—Our apples
<b>Your</b>	Votre sel—Your salt	Vos citrons—Your lemons
<b>Their</b>	Leur fromage—Their cheese	Leurs fromages—Their cheeses

### 2.4.1 Euphony in Possessives

For the sake of euphony, all singular feminine possessives switch to their masculine forms when followed by a vowel sound.

Person	Masculine	Feminine	Feminine + Vowel Sound
1st	mon chat	ma robe	mon eau
2nd	ton chat	ta robe	ton eau
3rd	son chat	sa robe	son eau

### 2.4.2 Femme and Fille

Femme can mean "woman" or "wife" and fille can mean "girl" or "daughter" depending on the context. For example, when femme and fille are preceded by a possessive adjective, then they translate to "wife" and "daughter", respectively.

- Une fille et une femme sont dans le restaurant  
A girl and a woman are in the restaurant. (Not: "A daughter and a wife are in the restaurant.")
- Ma fille  
My daughter. (Not: "My girl".)
- Ta femme  
Your wife. (Not: "Your woman".)

## 2.5 Present Tense 1

As you learned in “Basics 1”, verbs like *parler* conjugate to agree with their subjects. *Parler* itself is an infinitive, which is a verb’s base form. It consists of a root (*parl-*) and an ending (*-er*). The ending can dictate how the verb should be conjugated. In this case, almost all verbs ending in *-er* are regular verbs in the 1st Group that share the same conjugation pattern. To conjugate another 1st Group verb, affix the ending to that verb’s root.

- Aimer (“to love”): *j’aime, tu aimes, nous aimons*, etc.
- Marcher (“to walk”): *je marche, tu marches, nous marchons*, etc.

Every verb belongs to one of three groups:

- The **1st Group** includes regular *-er* verbs and includes 80% of all verbs.<sup>4</sup>
- The **2nd Group** includes regular *-ir* verbs like *finir* (“to finish”).
- The **3rd Group** includes all irregular verbs. This includes many common verbs like *être* and *avoir* as well as a handful of less common conjugation patterns.

Subject	G1: parler	G2: finir	G3: dormir
je	parle	finis	dors
tu	parles	finis	dors
il/elle/on	parle	finit	dort
nous	parlons	finissons	dormons
vous	parlez	finissez	dormez
ils/elles	parlent	finissent	dorment

**Spelling-changing** verbs end in *-ger* (e.g. *manger*) or *-cer* (e.g. *lancer*, “to throw”) and change slightly in the *nous* form, as well as any other form whose ending begins with an A or O. These verbs take a form like *nous mangeons* or *nous lançons*.

**Stem-changing** verbs have different roots in their *nous* and *vous* forms. For instance, most forms of *appeler* (“to call”) have two L’s (e.g. *j’appelle*), but the N/V forms are *nous appelons* and *vous appelez*.

### 2.5.1 Semi-Auxiliary Verbs

The only true auxiliary verbs in French are *être* and *avoir*, but there are a number of semi-auxiliary verbs in French that can be used with other verbs to express ability, necessity, desire, and so on. They are used in **double-verb** constructions where the first verb (the semi-auxiliary) is conjugated and the second is not.

- Je veux lire.  
I want to read.
- Il aime manger.  
He likes to eat.

Modal verbs are the English equivalents of semi-auxiliaries. For instance, “can”, translates to either *savoir* or *pouvoir*. When “can” indicates knowledge, use *savoir*. When “can” indicates permission or ability (apart from knowledge), use *pouvoir*.

<sup>4</sup>Aller (“to go”) is the only fully irregular verb in Group 1, but a handful of others are slightly irregular.

- Je sais lire et écrire.  
I know how to read and write.
- Il sait parler allemand.  
He knows how to speak German.
- Il peut manger.  
He can (or "may") eat.
- Il peut parler allemand.  
He is allowed to speak German.

One of the most important semi-auxiliary verbs is *aller*, which is used to express the near future (*futur proche*), just like the English verb "going to".

- Je vais manger.  
I am going to eat.
- Vous allez lire le livre.  
You are going to read the book.

Note that in verb constructions beginning with non-auxiliary verbs, the verbs must be separated by a preposition.

- Nous vivons pour manger.  
We live to eat.

### 2.5.2 Impersonal Expressions

A few defective impersonal verbs can only be used in impersonal statements and must be conjugated as third-person singular with *il*. Remember that *il* is a dummy subject and does not refer to a person. *Falloir* means "to be necessary", and it often takes the form *il faut* + infinitive. *Il faut* can also be used transitively with a noun to indicate that it is needed.

- Il faut manger.  
It is necessary to eat. / One must eat.
- Il faut choisir.  
It is necessary to choose. / One must choose.
- Il faut du pain.  
(Some) bread is needed.

### 2.5.3 Confusing Verbs

Used transitively, *savoir* and *connaître* both mean "to know", but in different ways. *Savoir* implies understanding of subjects, things, or skills, while *connaître* indicates familiarity with people, animals, places, things, or situations.

- Je sais les mots.  
I know the words.
- Je connais le garçon.  
I know the boy.

*Attendre* means "to await", which is why it does not need a preposition.

- Il attend son ami.  
He is awaiting (or "waiting for") his friend

### 2.5.4 One Each

The indefinite article doesn't always refer to just one thing. Sometimes, it can mean one thing each. Consider these examples:

- Ils ont un manteau  
They have one coat / They each have one coat
- Ils ont des manteaux  
They have some coats / They each have some coats

### 2.5.5 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
lire	to read	faire	to make
écrivent	to write	vais	going to
parler	to talk	acheter	to buy
aimer	to like	aider	to help
vouloir	to want	appeller	to call
boivent	to drink	apporter	to bring
comprendre	to understand	apprendre	to learn
pouvoir	to be able to	attendre	to wait for
doivent	must	chercher	to look for
adorer	to love	savent	to know
faut	need to	connaître	to know (people)
commander	to be in charge		

### 2.5.6 Demonstratives 1

Demonstrative adjectives (this, that, these, and those) modify nouns so they refer to something or someone specific. They can be used in place of articles. Like other adjectives, they must agree with the nouns they modify.

Gender	Singular	Plural
Masculine	ce/cet	ces
Feminine	cette	ces

The singular masculine *ce* becomes *cet* in front of a vowel sound for euphony.

- Ce livre est rouge.  
That book is red.
- Cet arbre est grand.  
That tree is big.
- Cette pomme est rouge.  
That apple is red.
- Ces livres et ces pommes sont rouges.  
Those books and those apples are red.

*Ce* can mean either “this” or “that”. It’s ambiguous between the two. To specify, use the suffix *-ci* (“here”) or *-là* (“there”) on the modified noun.

- Ce livre-ci est rouge.  
This book is red.
- Ces chats-là sont noirs.  
Those cats are black.

French learners often confuse the demonstrative adjective *ce* with the pronoun *ce* (from “Être-Avoir”). Discerning between them is easy, however: an adjective must modify a noun, while a pronoun can stand alone as a subject or object. Compare:

- Adjective: Ces hommes sont mes amis.  
These men are my friends.
- Pronoun: Ce sont mes amis.  
They are my friends.

In the first example, *ces* is an adjective that modifies *hommes*, but in the second, *ce* is a subject pronoun.

### 2.5.7 Ça

The indefinite demonstrative pronoun *ça* refers to an unnamed concept or thing. When it’s used as an object, it usually translates to “this” or “that”.

- Tu manges ça.  
You are eating this.
- Je veux ça.  
I want that.



Ça can also be used as a subject, in which case it can also mean “it”.

- Ça sent bon.  
It smells good.
- Ça semble simple.  
This seems simple.

### 2.5.8 Ça or Ce?

A simple rule of thumb to follow is that ce should be used with être, including in the double-verb constructions pouvoir être and devoir être.

- C'est un très bon vin !  
This is a really good wine!
- Ce sont des garçons.  
They are boys.
- Ce peut être triste en hiver.  
It can be sad in winter.
- Ce doit être ton fils.  
It must be your son.

Ça should be used with all other verbs.

- Ça va bien.  
It's going well.
- Ça dure un jour.  
That lasts a day.
- Ça m'intéresse beaucoup.  
That interests me a lot.

However, when an object pronoun comes before être, then you must use ça, not ce. This is relatively rare.

- Ça m'est égal.  
It's all the same to me.

Also, note that ça is informal and is usually replaced by cela (“that”) or ceci (“this”) in writing.

## 2.6 Conjunctions 1

Conjunctions function by hooking up words, phrases, and clauses. This unit focuses on coordinating conjunctions, which link two or more similar elements in a sentence. For instance, «et » may be used to link two nouns together.

- Je mange une pomme et une orange.  
I am eating an apple and an orange.
- Elle a un chien et un chat.  
She has a dog and a cat.

It may also link two adjectives or even two clauses.

- La robe est grande et jolie.  
The dress is big and pretty.
- Le chat est noir et le chien est blanc.  
The cat is black and the dog is white.

For the most part, French coordinating conjunctions behave very similarly to their English counterparts.

Conjunction	English	Exemple	Example
et	and	Elle a un chien et un chat.	She has a dog and a cat.
mais	but	Mais pas maintenant.	But not now.
ou	or	Oui ou non ?	Yes or no?
comme	as/like	Je suis comme Åŕa.	I am like that.
donc	so/thus	Il est jeune, donc il est petit.	He is young, so he is small.
car	because	Jelis, car j'aime ce livre.	I read because I like this book.

The conjunction «car » means “because”, and it’s usually reserved for writing. The subordinating conjunction «parce que » is preferred in speech; you’ll learn this in *Conjunctions 2*.

- Comme vous savez.  
As you know.
- Elle mange du pain quand elle veut.  
She eats bread when she wants.
- Je lis, car j'aime le livre.  
I read because I like the book.

## 2.7 Questions

### 2.7.1 Inversions

The most formal way of asking a question is to use an **inversion**, where the verb appears before its pronoun and the two are connected by a hyphen.

- Boit-il ?  
Does he drink? / Is he drinking? / He drinks?
- Boivent-ils du lait ?  
Do they drink milk? / Are they drinking milk? / They drink milk?

However, if the subject of the sentence is a noun, then the noun should appear before the verb, although a pronoun still needs to appear afterwards.

- Le lait est-il froid ?  
Is the milk cold?
- Les chats sont-ils noirs ?  
Are the cats black?

If the verb ends in a vowel, the letter T must be inserted after the verb for euphony. This T is chained onto the pronoun and is meaningless.

- A-t-il un chien ?  
Does he have a dog?
- Parle-t-elle anglais ?  
Does she speak English?

Inverted forms still obey other grammar rules, like those for « il est » versus « c'est ». However, the pronoun in an inversion cannot elide.

- Est-ce un problème ?  
Is it a problem?
- Est-elle médecin ?  
Is she a doctor?
- Puis-je aider les enfants ?  
Can I help the children?

### 2.7.2 Est-ce Que

**Est-ce que** (pronounced like “essk”) can be added in front of a statement to turn it into a question. Remember that « que » elides in front of vowel sounds.

- **Est-ce qu’il** boit ?  
Does he drink? / Is he drinking?
- **Est-ce que** c’est un problème ?  
Is it a problem?
- **Est-ce qu’il** a un chien ?  
Does he have a dog?

### 2.7.3 Intonation

In informal speech, one of the most common ways to ask a question is simply to raise your intonation at the end of a statement, like you'd do in English.

- Il boit ?  
Is he drinking?
- Il pleut ?  
Is it raining?

## 2.8 Interrogatives

An **interrogative** word introduces a question. French has interrogative adjectives, pronouns, and adverbs.

### 2.8.1 Interrogative Adjectives

French has one interrogative adjective with four forms. It translates to “which” or “what” depending on the context.

Gender	Singular	Plural
<b>Masculine</b>	quel	quels
<b>Feminine</b>	quelle	quelles

An interrogative adjective cannot stand alone. It must modify (and agree with) a noun, and that noun must either be adjacent to it or separated by a form of être.

- Quelle fille ?  
Which girl?
- Quel est le problème ?  
What is the problem?

Quel is also an exclamatory adjective in statements.

- Quelle chance !  
What luck!
- Quel grand garçon il est !  
What a tall boy he is!

### 2.8.2 Interrogative Pronouns

Unlike an adjective, an interrogative pronoun can stand alone. For instance, the interrogative pronoun *lequel* can replace *quel* + noun. Note that it agrees with the noun it replaces.

Quel Form	Lequel Form
Quel cheval ?—Which horse?	Lequel?—Which one?
Quels hommes mangent ?—Which men eat?	Lesquels mangent ?—Which ones eat?
Quelle robe est rose ?—Which dress is pink?	Laquelle est rose ?—Which one is pink?
Quelles lettres ?—Which letters?	Lesquelles ?—Which ones?

The most common interrogative pronouns are «qui » (for people) and «que » (for everything else). However, the construction changes based on a number of factors. *Qui* is the only pronoun that can start a question by itself, but both *qui* and *que* can be used with inversion.

- Qui parle ?  
Who is speaking?
- Qui es-tu ?  
Who are you?

- Que fait-il ?  
What is he making?

Both can also use *est-ce*, but *est-ce que* (which you learned above) can only be used in a question with *être* or when the pronoun is the object (“what” or “whom”). When it is the subject, *est-ce qui* must be used.

- Qui est-ce qui parle ?  
Who’s speaking? (subj.)
- Qu’est-ce qui se passe ?  
What is going on? (subj.)
- Qui est-ce que tu appelles ?  
Whom are you calling? (obj.)
- Qu’est-ce que c’est ?  
What is it? (question with *être*)

After prepositions and at the end of questions, «*que* » becomes «*quoi* ».

- Le problème est quoi ?  
What’s the problem?
- À quoi pensez-vous ?  
What are you thinking about?

*Qui* and *que* can be very confusing because they can also be relative pronouns. *Que* can also be a subordinating conjunction. You will learn these uses later.

### 2.8.3 Interrogative Adverbs

A number of interrogative adverbs can be used to request information

- Pourquoi (“why”): Pourquoi manges-tu du pain ?—Why are you eating bread?
- Comment (“how”): Comment allez-vous ?—How are you?
- Quand (“when”): Quand est-ce que tu vas manger ?—When are you going to eat?
- Combien (“how many/much”): Combien d’eau ?—How much water?
- Où (“where”): Où suis-je ?—Where am I?

Note that when these adverbs are used with intonation-based questions, they can appear at the beginning or the end of the sentence (except *pourquoi*).

- Tu vas comment ?  
How are you?
- Vous êtes d’où ?  
Where are you from?

## 2.9 Present Tense 2

As you learned in “Verbs Present 1”, Group 3 verbs are considered irregular, but some sparse patterns do exist among the -ir and -er verbs in this group.

Subject	G1 parler	G2 finir	G3 dormir	G3 ouvrir	G3 vendre
je	parle	finis	dors	ouvre	vends
tu	parles	finis	dors	ouvres	vends
il/elle/on	parle	finit	dort	ouvre	vend
nous	parlons	finissons	dormons	ouvrons	vendons
vous	parlez	finissez	dormez	ouvrez	vendez
ils/elles	parlent	finissent	dorment	ouvrent	vendent

Among the G3 -ir verbs, some conjugate like dormir, while verbs like ouvrir conjugate as though they’re -er verbs. Note that singular conjugations of dormir drop the last letter of the root. Also, while some -re verbs (such as attendre, entendre, and perdre) conjugate like vendre, dozens of other conjugation patterns exist, so it’s best to memorize each verb’s conjugation individually.

### 2.9.1 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Sentences can have grammatical objects, which are nouns that are affected by a verb. There are two types of objects: **direct objects**, which are nouns acted upon, and **indirect objects**, which are nouns that are indirectly affected by the action. In the example “Ben threw the ball at him”, “Ben” is the subject, “the ball” is the direct object, and “him” is the indirect object. You can usually recognize indirect objects in English by looking for a preposition after a verb. Identifying objects is important, especially in French. Verbs can be **transitive**, **intransitive**, or both. Transitive verbs can have direct objects, while intransitive verbs cannot. However, both types of verbs can have indirect objects.

- Transitive: Je lance une chaussure.  
I throw a shoe.
- Intransitive: Je parle à Jacques.  
I am speaking to Jacques.

*Parler* is an interesting example because it’s intransitive for everything but language names.

- Transitive: Je parle anglais.  
I speak English.

French verbs can be tricky for Anglophones because some transitive verbs in French have intransitive English translations and vice versa. Pay attention to this.

- Transitive: Le chat regarde le chien.  
Intransitive: The cat is looking at the dog.
- Intransitive: Il téléphone à son ami.  
Transitive: He is calling his friend.

### 2.9.2 Stative Verbs in English

Unlike dynamic verbs, which describe actions and processes, stative verbs describe states of being, physical and mental states, possession, sensations, and so on. The most common stative verb is “to be”. Here are some other common examples:

- Possessing: belong, get, have, own, possess
- Feeling: hate, like, love, need, want
- Sensing: feel, hear, see, smell, taste
- Thinking: believe, know, recognize, think, understand

The most important detail about stative verbs is that they can’t be used in continuous tenses in English.

- C’est mon fils.  
He is my son. (Not “is being”.)
- Je veux une pomme.  
I want an apple. (Not “am wanting”.)
- Elle aime son chien.  
She loves her dog. (Not “is loving”.)
- On a deux amis.  
We have two friends. (Only cannibals “are having” their friends.)

You may have noticed that some verbs can be both stative and dynamic based on context. For instance:

- “To have” can be dynamic when it means “to consume”.
- “To feel” is stative, but “to feel sick” or “to feel better” are dynamic.
- “To be” can be dynamic when it means “to act”.

Pay attention to this nuance when translating into English. This problem rarely occurs when translating to French because it lacks continuous tenses.

### 2.9.3 Impersonal Expressions

A number of other impersonal verbs have to do with weather.

- Pleuvoir (“to rain”): Il pleut.  
It is raining.
- Neiger (“to snow”): Il neige.  
It is snowing.
- Faire chaud (“to be warm”): Il fait chaud aujourd’hui.  
It is warm today.

Chaud can be replaced with a number of other adjectives, like froid (“cold”) or humide (“humid”).



### 2.9.4 Confusing Verbs

Like their English counterparts, voir (“to see”) and regarder (“to watch”) differ based on the subject’s intention. If the subject is actively watching or looking for something, use regarder. Otherwise, use voir.

- Le chat regarde le poisson.  
The cat is watching the fish.
- Elle peut voir la ville.  
She can see the city.

### 2.9.5 Vocabulary

French	English	French	English
respecter	to respect	porter	to carry
contenir	to contain	poser	to set down
couper	to cut	posséder	to own
courir	to run	prendre	to take
cuire	to cook	proposer	to suggest
dire	to say	saisir	to grab
donner	to give	souhaiter	to wish
entrer	to enter	suivre	to follow
finir	to finish	terminer	to finish
gagner	to win	tenir	to hold
intéresser	to interest	trouver	to find
lancer	to throw	vendre	to sell
laver	to wash	voir	to see
marcher	to walk	vivre	to live
mériter	to deserve	ajouter	to add
mettre	to put	améliorer	to improve
montrer	to show	concerner	to concern
cacher	to hide	casser	to break
motiver	to motivate	devenir	to become
neiger	to snow	dormir	to sleep
pleuvoir	to rain	entendre	to hear
ouvrir	to open	regarder	to watch
perdre	to lose		

- Où vivez-vous?  
Where do you live?
- Le livre concerne une femme.  
The book has to do with a woman.

## 2.10 Adjectives 2

When multiple adjectives modify a noun, they should come before or after the noun based on the same rules as if they were the only adjective. This means that adjectives may straddle the noun if one is a BANGS adjective.

- La grande robe rouge  
The big red dress
- Une jeune fille française  
A young French girl

When arranging multiple adjectives on the same side, concrete adjectives should usually be placed closer to the noun than abstract ones.

- J'ai un joli petit chat gris.  
I have a lovely little grey cat.
- J'ai un chat blanc courageux.  
I have a brave white cat.

You can add conjunctions and adverbs to break up multiple adjectives.

- J'ai un chapeau blanc et bleu.  
I have a white and blue hat.
- L'homme fort et sérieux  
The strong and serious man.
- Voici mon premier petit chat blanc et courageux.  
Here is my first small white and brave cat.
- J'adore mon propre tout petit chat blanc très doux.  
I love my own tiny white and very soft cat.

When there are multiple nouns being described by one adjective, that adjective takes the masculine plural by default.

- Un garçon et une fille italiens  
An Italian boy and girl
- J'ai une chemise et un manteau simples.  
I have a simple shirt and coat.

However, if the nouns are all feminine, then they can take the feminine plural.

- La robe et la jupe vertes  
The green dress and skirt

### 2.10.1 Grand or Gros?

Grand and gros can both mean "big", but they're only partly interchangeable. Grand tends to be used for:

- General size: La grande robe—The big dress
- Height: L'enfant est grand.—The child is tall/big.
- Area: La ville est grande.—The city is big.
- Figurative size: La grande richesse—The great wealth
- Importance: Un grand homme—A great man

Gros tends to be used for:

- Thickness or volume: Une grosse boîte de petits-pois—A big can of peas
- Fatness: Un gros chat—A fat cat
- Things that are round: Une grosse pomme—A big apple
- Seriousness: Un gros problème—A big (serious) problem

### 2.10.2 Faux Amis

Many English and French words look alike and share meanings. This is because English is heavily influenced by French and Latin. However, there are faux amis ("false friends") that look similar but do not have the same meaning. For instance, gros looks like "gross", but their meanings are not the same. Be careful before assuming a French word's meaning based on its English lookalike.

**2.10.3 Vocabulary**

<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
bon	good (BANGS)	gros	fat
même	same	bête	stupid
première	first	énorme	enormous
long	long	drôle	funny
bien	good	méchant	vicious
dernier	shirt	laid	ugly
beau	beautiful	japonais	Japanese
génial	brilliant	sombre	dark (colored)
belle	beautiful (BANGS)	anglaise	English
simple	simple	européens	European
française	french	italien	Italian
second	second	chinois	Chinese
mauvais	bad (BANGS)	espagnol	Spanish
difficile	difficult	africaine	African
nombreux	numerous	sympa	friendly
impossible	impossible	américain	American
deuxième	second (BANGS)	sérieux	serious
troisième	third (BANGS)	prêt	ready
différent	different	sec	dry
important	important	allemand	German
clair	light (colored)	gentil	gentle
fort	strong	seul	only (BANGS)
large	big	propre	clean
pauvre	poor	sale	dirty
dur	hard	léger	light[weight]
grosse	large	joli	pretty

## 2.11 Pronouns

### 2.11.1 On

«On » is a versatile and ubiquitous French indefinite subject pronoun. Francophones usually say on to refer to “us”, “them”, or one or more unidentified persons. «On » is always masculine and third-person singular, which is why conjugation charts often list il/elle/on together.

- On mange.  
We are eating.
- On est seul.  
We are alone.

«On » can also be used more formally in the passive voice or for general statements, much like the English “one”.

- On doit dormir assez.  
One must sleep adequately.

### 2.11.2 Direct Objects

English	Direct Object
me	me
you (sing.)	te
him	le
her	la
us	nous
you(plur. or formal sing.)	vous
them	les

Direct object pronouns usually come before their verbs.

- L'enfant me voit.  
The child sees me.
- Le lion le mange.  
The lion eats it (or "him").
- Vous nous aimez.  
You love us.
- Je t'aime.  
I love you.

Me/te/le/la elide, so make sure you notice them when they hide in the first syllable of a verb.

- Elle m'attend.  
She is waiting for me.
- L'enfant l'appelle.  
The child calls to him/her.

Le and les only contract when they're articles, not when they're object pronouns.

- Je suis en train de le faire. (Not du faire)  
I am in the process of doing it.

### 2.11.3 En Replaces De + Noun

The adverbial pronoun «en» can be used to replace objects introduced by de. For instance, it can replace a partitive article + noun.

- Avez-vous de l'argent ?  
Do you have some money?
- Oui, j'en ai.  
Yes, I have some.

«En» may replace nouns or pronouns in verb constructions that use de, like parler de ("to talk about").

- Marc parle de son frère ?  
Is Marc talking about his brother?
- Oui, il en parle.  
Yep, he's talking about him.

Nouns in adverbs of quantity can also be replaced with «en».

- Achetez-vous beaucoup de livres ?  
Are you buying a lot of books?
- Oui, j'en achète beaucoup.  
Yes, I am buying a lot [of them].

### 2.11.4 Y Can Refer to a Place

The adverbial pronoun «y» can refer to a previously mentioned or implied place, in which case it's usually translated as "there". In English, "there" may be omitted, but the same is not true of «y» in French. «Je vais» is not a complete sentence without «y».

- Allez-vous au restaurant ?  
Are you going to the restaurant?
- Oui, j'y vais.  
Yes, I'm going there.

### 2.11.5 The Relative Pronouns Que and Qui

**Relative pronouns** introduce relative clauses, which are subordinate clauses that elaborate upon a previously mentioned noun (the antecedent). Use «que» when the relative pronoun is the direct object ("whom" in English) and use «qui» when it is the subject ("who" in English).

- C'est l'homme que je connais.  
He's the man whom (or "that") I know.
- La fille qui lit un menu.  
The girl who (or "that") reads a menu.

If you have trouble figuring out whether to use «qui » or «que », try rephrasing the sentence without the relative pronoun. Use «qui » if the antecedent is the subject; otherwise, use «que ».

- Subject: La fille qui lit un menu. ⇒ La fille lit un menu.
- Object: C'est l'homme que je connais. ⇒ Je connais l'homme.

### 2.11.6 The Reflexive Pronoun Se

A **reflexive pronoun** like «se » can be used to indicate that a verb acts upon the subject. «Se » is used with all third-person subjects, regardless of gender and number.

- Il s'aime.  
He loves himself.
- Il s'appelle comment ?  
What's his name? (Lit, "He calls himself what?")
- Elle se demande pourquoi.  
She wonders why. (Lit, "She asks herself why.")

When «se » refers to a plural subject, it can also be reciprocal or mutual ("each other").

- Ils s'aiment.  
They love each other.
- Les filles se parlent.  
The girls speak to each other.
- On se parle quand ?  
When do we speak to each other?
- On se voit bientôt.  
We will see each other soon.

Certain pronouns can be added to the end of the sentence to differentiate between reflexive and reciprocal uses if necessary.

- Ils s'aiment eux-mêmes.  
They love themselves.
- Elles s'aiment elles-mêmes.  
They love themselves.
- Ils s'aiment l'un l'autre.  
They love each other.
- Elles s'aiment les unes les autres.  
They love one another.
- Ça se peut.  
It can be done.
- Qu'est-ce que tu as ?  
What have you got?
- Je sais où c'est.  
I know where it is.
- Je veux boire quelque chose.  
I want to drink something.

## 3 Chapter 3

### 3.1 Prepositions 1

French prepositions can be difficult because their meanings and uses don't always line up to what you would expect in English.

#### 3.1.1 De and À

The most common French prepositions are «de » (“of”/“from”) and «à » (“to”/“at”). These prepositions can be used in many ways. For instance, they may indicate movement or location.

- Nous allons à Paris.  
We are going to Paris.
- Il vient de Bordeaux.  
He is coming from Bordeaux.
- Je suis au restaurant.  
I am at the restaurant.

Notice «au » above. De and à must contract with definite articles whenever they are adjacent.

Definite Article	De	À
le	du	au
la	de la	à la
les	des	aux

If the contraction is followed by a vowel sound, du and de la both become «de l' » and au and à la both become «à l' ». This change occurs for euphony only; the nouns do not change genders because of it.

- Tu parles à l'enfant. (Not au)  
You are speaking to the child.
- La Maison de l'Ours  
The House of the Bear
- Les copies des livres.  
The copies of the books.
- Le repas du chien.  
The dog's meal. (The meal of the dog.)

De may be found in numerous fixed expressions, especially in adverbs of quantity like «beaucoup de » (“a lot of”).

- Nous avons beaucoup de pommes.  
We have a lot of apples.
- Rémy a beaucoup d'amis.  
Remy has a lot of friends.

Adding de or à to the end of certain verbs can change their meanings.



- Penser (“to think”): Je pense que c’est un homme.  
I think that he is a man.
- Penser à (“to think about”): Elle pense à son chien.  
She’s thinking about her dog.
- Penser de (“to have an opinion about”): Que pensez-vous de ce repas ?  
What do you think of this meal?

### 3.1.2 Using articles after de

Most articles can be used immediately after expressions and verbs ending in *de*, but they must follow contraction and elision rules.

- Elle parle beaucoup des (*de + les*) pâtes.  
She speaks a lot about the pasta.
- Que pensez-vous de la voiture ?  
What do you think of the car?
- Il a besoin d’un chien.  
He needs a dog.

However, no article that already contains *de* may follow an expression, negative term, or verb ending in *de*. This includes the partitives *du* and *de la* and the indefinite *des*. In this situation, the article is removed so that only the naked *de* remains.

- Elle mange beaucoup de frites. (Not *de des*)  
She eats a lot of fries.
- Je n’ai pas de pain. (Not *de du*)  
I do not have (any) bread.
- Il a besoin d’argent (Not *de de l’*)  
He needs (some) money.

### 3.1.3 Des before adjectives

When *des* appears immediately before an adjective, it changes to *de*. This only occurs with BANGS adjectives, which come before the noun.

- Vous êtes de jeunes garçons.  
You are young boys.
- Elle a de petits chiens.  
She has small dogs.
- Merci pour le repas.  
Thank you for the meal.
- Je bois du jus de pomme.  
I am drinking apple juice.

## 3.2 Numbers 1

Between zéro and 20, most French numbers are constructed similarly to English numbers. The main difference is that French starts using hyphenated compound numbers, at dix-sept (17), while English continues with single-word numbers until 21.

Number	Nombre	Number	Nombre
1	un	11	onze
2	deux	12	douze
3	trois	13	treize
4	quatre	14	quatorze
5	cinq	15	quinze
6	six	16	seize
7	sept	17	dix-sept
8	huit	18	dix-huit
9	neuf	19	dix-neuf
10	dix	20	vingt

### 3.2.1 Uses of Un

The word un (or une in feminine) can be used in a number of ways. As an indefinite article ("a" or "an"), it is used to modify countable nouns that are unspecified or unknown to the speakers.

- un livre  
a book
- un éléphant  
an elephant

As a numeral ("one"), it is a kind of adjective.

- J'ai une seule question.  
I have only one question.

As a pronoun ("one"). Like in English, French numbers can be used as pronouns. In general, when you see a preposition like de after a number, that number acts as a pronoun.

- C'est un de mes enfants.  
He is one of my children.
- Je connais un de ces hommes.  
I know one of those men.

Also, keep in mind that liaisons are forbidden before and after et.

### 3.3 Family

Adults should use « père » and « mère » when referring to parents. The juvenile forms, « papa » and « maman », are generally used only by children, much like “papa” and “mama” or “daddy” and “mommy” in English.

You learned in « Être-Avoir » that you must often use the impersonal pronoun « ce » when describing people and things with être. In general, use ce whenever être is followed by any determiner—for instance, an article or a possessive adjective. Remember that ce is invariable, so use c’est for singulars and ce sont for plurals. This rule applies everywhere, including in questions, inversions, and subordinate clauses.

- C’est un animal ?  
That’s an animal?
- Est-ce votre petit-fils ?  
Is he your grandson?
- Vous l’aimez parce que c’est votre fils.  
You love him because he is your son.

The personal pronoun il should only be used with être when they’re followed by an adjective and/or adverb.

- Il est fort.  
He is strong.
- Est-elle forte ?  
Is she strong?
- Est-ce qu’il est content ?  
Is he happy?

In the last example, note that est-ce still appears because est-ce que is a fixed impersonal phrase.

Français	English	Français	English
le père	father	le bébé	baby
le mère	mother	le oncle	uncle
le famille	family	le tante	aunt
le fils	son	le grand-mère	grandmother
le prénom	[first] name	le grand-père	grandmother
le sœur	sister	cousin	cousin
le frère	brother	le neveu	nephew
le papa	daddy	le petit-fils	grandson
le maman	mama	le parents	parents
le mari	husband	le mariage	marriage
le couple	couple		

Note that “daughter” is « ma fille » and “wife” is « ma femme ».

### 3.4 Possessives 2

**Possessive pronouns** replace a possessive adjective + a noun. Like most other pronouns, they agree in gender and number with the noun they replace.

- Est-ce ton chapeau ?  
Is that your hat?
- Oui, c'est le mien.  
Yes, it's mine.

For one owner, the forms of possessive pronouns follow a simple pattern:

Person	English	Masc. Sing.	Fem. Sing.
1st	mine	le mien	la mienne
2nd	yours	le tien	la tienne
3rd	his/hers	le sien	la sienne

- J'ai mon livre. As-tu le tien ?  
I have my book. Do you have yours?
- Ma ceinture est rouge. La sienne est blanche.  
My belt is red. His (or "hers") is white.

For multiple owners, the articles vary with gender, but the pronouns do not:

Person	English	Sing. Masc.	Sing. Fem.
1st	ours	le nôtre	la nôtre
2nd	yours	le vôtre	la vôtre
3rd	theirs	le leur	la leur

- Vous mangez votre repas et nous mangeons le nôtre.  
You eat your meal and we eat ours.
- Vous aimez votre voiture et nous aimons la vôtre.  
You like your car and we like yours.

The 2nd-person articles for multiple owners can be used for a single owner when speaking formally. Notice that you must use *c'est* with possessive pronouns, not *il est*, *elle est*, etc.

- Informal, one owner: C'est le tien.
- Formal, one owner: C'est le vôtre.
- Multiple owners: C'est le vôtre.

The definite article at the beginning of a possessive pronoun can contract with *À* or *de*.

- Tu téléphones à ton père et je téléphone au mien.  
You are calling your dad and I am calling mine.
- J'aime mon repas. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez du vôtre ?  
I like my meal. What do you think of yours?

### 3.5 Demonstratives 2

Ceci (“this”) and cela (“that”) are the formal versions of the indefinite demonstrative pronoun ça (“this” or “that”). These are used when pointing something out, referring to something indefinite (like an idea), or referring back to something already mentioned.

- Je connais cela.  
I know about that.
- Je veux ceci.  
I want this.

Ceci is usually only used when making a distinction between “this” and “that”. Otherwise, cela is preferred in writing and ça is preferred in speech. Remember that ce can only be used with être, including devoir être and pouvoir être.

- C’est un très bon vin !  
This is a really good wine!
- Ce doit être ton fils.  
It must be your son.

However, cela and ceci can also be used with être for emphasis.

- C’est le mien.  
It’s mine.
- Non, ceci est le mien. Cela est le tien.  
No, *this* is mine. *That* is yours.

Cela/ceci/ça should be used with all other verbs.

- Cela arrive souvent.  
It happens often. / That happens often.
- Ceci contient un bonbon.  
This contains a candy.

#### 3.5.1 Demonstrative Pronouns

**Demonstrative pronouns** (e.g. “this one”, “that one”, “these”, “those”) replace a demonstrative adjective + noun for the sake of avoiding repetition. Like most other pronouns, they agree in gender and number with the noun they replace.

Type	Adjective + Noun $\Rightarrow$ Pronoun	English
masculine singular	ce + noun $\Rightarrow$ celui	the one / this / that
masculine plural	ces + noun $\Rightarrow$ ceux	the ones / these / those
feminine singular	cette + noun $\Rightarrow$ celle	the one / this / that
feminine plural	ces + noun $\Rightarrow$ celles	the ones / these / those

Demonstrative pronouns refer to a very specific thing and cannot stand alone. They must be used in one of three constructions.

1. **Demonstrative pronoun + relative pronoun** A relative pronoun and dependent clause can follow the demonstrative pronoun. For instance, you can use *que* when the relative pronoun is the direct object and use *qui* when it's the subject.

- Celui qui est dans ma poche.  
The one that is in my pocket.
- Ceux que je connais.  
The ones that I know. / The ones whom I know.

2. **Demonstrative pronoun + preposition** The preposition *de* can appear after the demonstrative pronoun to indicate possession.

- À qui est cette balle ?  
Whose ball is this?
- C'est celle du chien.  
It's the dog's. (Literally: "It is the one of the dog.")

3. **Demonstrative pronoun + suffix** [This construction will appear in "Demonstratives 3".]

### 3.5.2 Examples

Demonstrative pronouns are often used in comparisons or choices between alternatives.

- Ce tableau est moins beau que celui de Rembrandt.  
This painting is less beautiful than that by Rembrandt.
- Quelle robe préfères-tu ? Celle de Paris ou celle de Tokyo ?  
Which dress do you prefer? The one from Paris or the one from Tokyo?

They can also be used within prepositional phrases.

- Je pense à celles qui sont en vacances.  
I am thinking about the ones who are on vacation.
- Ce repas est pour ceux qui aiment les oignons.  
This meal is for those who like onions.

### 3.6 Dates and Time

In French, the present tense can often be used to describe something that will happen soon.

- Je vous appelle demain.  
I [will] call you tomorrow.
- On se voit demain.  
We [will] see each other tomorrow.

This also occurs in English, albeit less frequently.

- Ça commence demain.  
That begins tomorrow.

#### 3.6.1 Describing Dates

The most formal way to express a date in French is with *c'est*. (Never use *il est*.)

- C'est dimanche.  
It's Sunday.

However, the most common way is to use *nous sommes* or *on est*. This construction is idiomatic and does not directly translate to English.

- Nous sommes vendredi.  
It is Friday.
- Aujourd'hui, on est mardi.  
Today is Tuesday.

Note that while “today” is a noun and adverb in English, *aujourd'hui* cannot be used as a noun to give a date, so you cannot say *Aujourd'hui est mardi*. However, *hier*, *aujourd'hui*, and *demain* can be used as nouns when qualified by an adjective or another noun.

- Demain est un autre jour.  
Tomorrow is another day.
- Hier était férié.  
Yesterday was a holiday.

This construction can be used to express the month, though you must add *en*. Months aren't capitalized in French.

- Nous sommes en juillet.  
It's July.

When denoting specific dates, put *le* and the date before the month. Also, French date abbreviations take the form DD/MM/YY.

- 27/11/14: C'est le 27 novembre 2014.  
It's November 27, 2014.
- 02/10: Nous sommes le 2 octobre.  
It's October 2nd.

However, for the first day of the month, you must use the word *premier*.

- 01/04: C'est le premier avril.  
It's April 1st.

To express a relative time in the past, you can use *il y a*.

- *il y a huit jours*  
eight days ago
- *il y a deux ans*  
two years ago

### 3.6.2 Jour or Journée?

A few words for dates and times have both masculine and feminine forms that are used in different contexts.

English	Masculine	Feminine
day	jour	journée
morning	matin	matinée
evening	soir	soirée
year	an	année

Consider the meaning of the whole sentence when deciding between the two. Some pairs are more flexible than others. *Jour* and *journée* can often be interchangeable, but *matin* and *matinée* are very strictly separate. The masculine forms are used for countable units of time and specific dates or moments. For instance:

- With numerals (except *un* in some cases).
  - *deux ans*—two years
  - *trois jours*—three days
- With temporal adverbs (e.g. *demain* and *hier*).
  - *demain matin*—tomorrow morning
  - *hier soir*—yesterday evening / last night

The feminine forms are used to express or emphasize a duration or the passing of time. They're also used with most adjectives. For instance:

- When emphasizing a duration.
  - *Je vais lire toute la matinée.*—I am going to read all morning.
  - *la journée de 8 heures*—the 8-hour day
- With adjectives (except *tous/chaque/ce*).
  - *une belle soirée*—a beautiful evening
  - *Cette année est mémorable.*—This year is memorable.

Deciding between forms with *un* depends on whether *un* acts as a numeral or article. If you can translate *un* as “one” in English, then go with the masculine. Notice that *chaque matin* doesn't require an article but *tous les matins* does. This is because *chaque*, *ce*, and articles are all examples of determiners, which are words that give context to nouns. You will learn more about determiners in “Adjectives 3”.



- Les jours de la semaine sont lundi, mardi, mercredi, jeudi, vendredi, samedi, et dimanche.  
The days of the week are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
- Les douze mois de l'année sont janvier, février, mars, avril, mai, juin, juillet, août, septembre, octobre, novembre, et décembre.  
The 12 months of the year are January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December.
- Les saisons de l'année sont printemps, été, automne, et hiver.  
The season of the year are spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

Français	English	Français	English
le temps	time	le anniversaire	birthday
aujourd'hui	today	la date	date
le mois	month	la date	date
le petit déjeuner	breakfast	la naissance	birth
le déjeuner	lunch	la jeunesse	youth
le midi	noon	le après-midi	afternoon
le siècle	century	la nuit	night
la semaine	week	le minuit	midnight
la durée	duration	le dîner	dinner
le début	beginning	la montre	watch
la période	period	le calendrier	calendar
la minute	minute	le demi	half (in measurements)
le hier	yesterday	le quart	quarter
les vacances	vacation	moins	minus
la fête	celebration	la heure	hour
le second	second	le moment	moment

- Mon petit frère a douze ans.  
My little brother is 12 years old.
- Dans un jour.  
In one day.
- Bonne année !  
Happy New Year!
- Au début c'est difficile.
- Dans la minute qui suit.  
In the next minute.
- De mars à mai.  
From March to May.
- Rendez-vous en octobre.  
Let's meet in October.

- Il est huit heures et quart.  
It is a quarter past eight.
- Il est midi moins le quart.  
It is a quarter before noon.
- Avez-vous l'heure ?  
Do you have the time?

### 3.7 Infinitives

Verb conjugations are classified in two ways: tense and mood. Tenses reflect a time frame (e.g. present tense), while moods reflect a speaker's attitude. So far, you've mainly used the **indicative mood** (for facts and certainties), but it is only one of seven moods.

#### 3.7.1 The Infinitive Mood

The **infinitive mood** is an impersonal mood that isn't conjugated nor associated with any subject pronoun. It can be used in a variety of constructions, either with or without prepositions.

- Without prepositions: Infinitives are often the objects of conjugated semi-auxiliary verbs such as *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, and *aimer*. You learned this in "Verbs: Present 1".
  - Ça va venir.  
It is going to come.
  - Je veux danser.  
I want to dance.
  - J'aime avoir un chat.  
I like having a cat.

Infinitives can also act like nouns and can be used as subjects.

- Faire du café est facile.  
Making coffee is easy.
- Cuisiner et nettoyer sont ses responsabilités.  
Cooking and cleaning are his responsibilities.

Here, note that French infinitives can often be translated as English gerunds (with an -ing ending), especially when they're subjects.

- After verbs + prepositions: As you learned previously, some verbs must be followed by a preposition to complete their meaning (e.g. *penser à*). An infinitive can be used as an object when it follows such prepositions.
  - Elle parle de cuisiner le poulet.  
She is talking about cooking the chicken.
  - Je pense à changer de job.  
I am thinking about changing jobs.
  - Je vous remercie de laver les verres.  
I thank you for washing the glasses.

Since infinitives can act like nouns, they can follow *être* + *de* to describe or define a subject (as a subject complement).

- Mon travail est de cuisiner.  
My job is to cook.
- L'objectif est d'apprendre le français.  
The goal is to learn French.

The preposition *pour* ("for" or "in order to") can come before an infinitive to express the purpose of an action.

- Je lis pour apprendre.  
I read [in order] to learn.

- Je viens pour parler.  
I am coming [in order] to talk.

Keep in mind that conjugated verbs should never come after prepositions.

- After nouns: An infinitive can also modify a noun when used with *de* or *à*. It may take practice to decide which preposition should be used, but in general, use *de* whenever the infinitive has an object.

- Merci de laver les verres.  
Thanks for washing the glasses.
- Il prend le temps de manger une pomme.  
He takes the time to eat an apple.

Use *à* when the verb in the sentence is *avoir* (with the translation “to have”).

- J’ai une décision à prendre.  
I have a decision to make.
- Il a un examen à préparer  
He has an exam to prepare.

*À* can also be used to indicate the purpose of a noun.

- une maison à vendre  
a house for sale
- l’eau à boire  
drinking water

- After adjectives: Infinitives can be used with the construction *il est* + adjective + *de* to create impersonal expressions. Remember from “Common Phrases” that an impersonal statement is one with a dummy subject instead of a real one.

- Il est possible de manger maintenant.  
It is possible to eat now.
- Il est nécessaire de boire de l’eau.  
It is necessary to drink water.

However, if the subject *il* is a real thing instead of just a dummy subject, then you must use *à* instead of *de*.

- Cette tâche est facile à faire.  
This task is easy to do.
- C’est bon à savoir.  
That’s good to know.

To further illustrate the difference, consider these two different translations of “It is fun to read.” The first is a general statement, while the second is a statement about a real subject.

- Il est amusant de lire. (Impersonal)  
It is fun to read. / Reading is fun.
- Il est amusant à lire. (Real)  
It (e.g. a book) is fun to read.

### 3.7.2 Causative Faire

Faire often appears before a verb to indicate that the subject causes something to happen instead of performing it. It's often used in relation to foods.

- Il fait bouillir le thé.  
He boils the tea.
- J'aime faire griller du poulet.  
I like grilling chicken.

It can also be used to indicate that the subject has directed someone else to perform an action.

- Je le fais réparer.  
I am having it fixed.
- Je fais partir mon ami.  
I am making my friend leave.

### 3.8 Adverbs 1

Adverbs are invariable words that can modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and more. If an adverb modifies a verb, it usually follows right after it.

- Il parle vite.  
He speaks quickly.
- Elle mange souvent de la soupe.  
She often eats soup.
- J'aime bien l'hiver.  
I like the winter.

An adverb comes before an adjective or other adverb that it modifies.

- Je suis très heureux.  
I am very happy.
- Ma cuillère est trop grande !  
My spoon is too big!

A long adverb that modifies a phrase can usually be relegated to the beginning or end of a sentence.

- Ton fils est un homme maintenant.  
Your son is a man now.
- Généralement, je sais quoi faire.  
Generally, I know what to do.

#### 3.8.1 Adverbs of Quantity

Imprecise quantities are expressed using adverbs of quantity, which are usually followed by the preposition *de*.

- Il a beaucoup de chiens.  
He has a lot of dogs.
- Il boit trop de bière.  
He is drinking too much beer.

Recall that *du*, *de la*, and *des* cannot be used after expressions ending in *de*, such as adverbs of quantity. Thus, *des* does not appear before *chiens* and *de la* does not appear before *bière*. However, other articles can follow adverbs of quantity when the noun is specific.

- Beaucoup des (de + les) amis de mon frère sont là.  
Many of my brother's friends are here.
- Je veux plus du (de + le) même.  
I want more of the same.

### 3.8.2 Comparatives and Superlatives

The adverbs plus (“more”) and moins (“less”) can be used with the conjunction que in comparisons.

- Ta sœur est plus jolie qu’elle.  
Your sister is prettier than her.
- Ils mangent moins que nous.  
They are eating less than us.

To express equivalence, use aussi...que (“as...as”).

- Je suis aussi timide que mon père.  
I am as shy as my father.

Adding a definite article before plus or moins creates a superlative. The definite article agrees with the noun being modified.

- C’est la plus jolie robe.  
That’s the prettiest dress.
- Le plus grand arbre du monde est là.  
The biggest tree in the world is there.

If the adjective should follow the noun, then the definite article must be repeated.

- Je veux acheter le pain le moins cher.  
I want to buy the least expensive bread.
- C’est le livre le plus difficile à comprendre.  
That’s the most difficult book to understand.

### 3.8.3 Bon, Bien, Mauvais, et Mal

In French, we have to deal with the good (bon and bien), the bad (mauvais and mal), and the ugly (trying to decide which to use). Luckily, in most cases, bon and mauvais are adjectives while bien and mal are adverbs.<sup>5</sup>

- C’est un bon chanteur.  
He is a good singer.
- Il chante bien.  
He sings well.
- Elle est bonne étudiante.  
She’s a good student.
- Elle étudie bien.  
She studies well.
- C’est un mauvais homme.  
He’s a bad man.
- Mon frère lit très mal.  
My brother reads very badly.

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<sup>5</sup>L’anglais, ce n’est jamais que du français mal prononcé.  
—Georges Clemenceau, “English is nothing but mispronounced French.”

- Tu bois le mauvais vin !  
You're drinking the wrong wine!

There are also a number of fixed expressions or special usages for bien. You are familiar with some of these from “Common Phrases”.

- Bien !  
Good!
- C'est très bien !  
That's very good!
- Bien sûr.  
Of course.

Also, remember that aimer normally means “to love” when directed at people and animals, but adding bien reduces its meaning to “to like”.

- Elle l'aime.  
She loves him.
- J'aime bien mon ami.  
I like my friend.

Français	English	Français	English
plus	more	assez	enough
moins	less	beaucoup	a lot
bien	well	maintenant	now
là	here	vite	quickly
aussi	also	souvent	often
mal	bad	tard	late
très	very	tôt	early
trop	too	voici	Here
ici	here	voilà	there



### 3.9 Occupations

Remember that occupations (along with nationalities and religions) can act as adjectives when used with être or devenir, so unlike in English, the French often drop the indefinite article (un, une, etc.) before an occupation.

- Je suis juge.  
I am a judge.
- Elle va devenir avocate.  
She is going to become a lawyer.

However, if any specification follows the occupation, then the indefinite article must be added.

- Tu es un juge respecté par tous.  
You are a judge respected by all.
- Il veut devenir un professeur pour adultes.  
He wants to become a teacher for adults.

Omitting the indefinite article is optional. However, if it's included in the third-person, then you must use c'est or ce sont.

- C'est un juge.  
He's a judge.
- C'est une dentiste bien connue.  
She is a well-known dentist.
- Ce sont des journalistes.  
They are journalists.

#### 3.9.1 Genders in Occupations

Some occupations have the same form in both masculine and feminine.

Français	English	Français	English
un/une auteur	an author	un/une professeur	a teacher
un/une docteur	a doctor	un/une dentiste	a dentist
un/une juge	a judge	un/une secrétaire	a secretary
un/une journaliste	a journalist	un/une ingénieur	an engineer
un/une pédiatre	a pediatrician		

Other occupations have a feminine form that's derived from the masculine:

Masculine	Feminine	English
un policier	une policière	a police officer
un agriculteur	une agricultrice	a farmer
un avocat	une avocate	a lawyer
un enseignant	une enseignante	a teacher
un serveur	une serveuse	a server
un cuisinier	une cuisinière	a cook
un coiffeur	une coiffeuse	a hairdresser
un boulanger	une boulangère	a baker
un serveur	une serveuse	a server
un chauffeur	une chauffeuse	a driver

Français	English	Français	English
le roi	king	le prince	prince
la reine	queen	la princesse	princess
le emploi	job	le soldat	soldier
le métier	profession	la carrière	career
la police	police	le chef	boss
le travail	work	le personnel	staff

- Mon père est à la retraite.  
My father is retired.

### 3.10 Negation

A negation changes the meaning of a statement to its negative. Most French negations are constructed out of two words that surround a conjugated verb.

- Je ne comprends pas.  
I don't understand.
- Il ne parle pas anglais.  
He doesn't speak English.

Note that the particle *ne* elides before vowel sounds.

- Vous n'avez pas de chien.  
You don't have a dog.
- Ils n'aiment pas le menu.  
They don't like the menu.

Along with *ne...pas*, there are a number of other negations you can use.

- Ne...plus: not any more/no more/not any longer/no longer
  - Elle n'a plus de lait.  
She no longer has milk.
  - Il ne peut plus marcher.  
He can't walk any longer.
- Ne... jamais: not ever/never
  - Je ne sais jamais.  
I never know.
  - Je ne gagne jamais.  
I don't ever win.
- Ne... rien: not anything/nothing
  - Je n'ai rien.  
I have nothing.
  - Elles ne voient rien.  
They don't see anything.
- Ne... personne: not anybody/nobody/not anyone/no one
  - Je ne vois personne.  
I don't see anybody.
  - Il ne veut voir personne.  
He doesn't want to see anyone.

Note that in negations, direct objects preceded by indefinite and partitive articles change to *de*.

- Elle n'a pas de lait.  
She doesn't have milk. (Not du lait.)
- Je n'entends plus de bruit.  
I don't hear a sound anymore. (Not un bruit.)

- Je n'entends plus d'oiseaux.  
I don't hear birds anymore. (Not des oiseaux.)

Since être does not have direct objects, all articles may be used.

- Ce liquide n'est pas du lait.  
This liquid isn't milk.
- Ce n'est pas un couteau.  
That's not a knife.

### 3.10.1 Negative Pronouns and Conjunctions

In addition to the negative adverbs above, you also have the option of starting a sentence with a negative word, which acts like a masculine subject. Both personne and rien can also be negative subject pronouns if you put ne after them.

- Personne ne means "nobody".
  - Personne ne sait.  
Nobody knows.
  - Personne n'aime cela.  
Nobody likes that.
- Rien ne ("nothing") is the pronoun version of ne...rien.
  - Rien n'est parfait.  
Nothing is perfect.
  - Rien n'est si dangereux qu'un ignorant ami. (Jean de La Fontaine)  
Nothing is so dangerous as an ignorant friend.

The negative conjunction ni can be used to add something to a negation and is similar to the English "nor". Think of it as a negative form of et ("and"). Ni can be used instead of negative adverbs or in addition to them.

- Elle ne connaît ni toi ni moi.  
She knows neither you nor me. (Or "She doesn't know you or me.")
- Je ne veux ni ce repas ni cette boisson.  
I want neither this meal nor this drink.
- Il ne fait pas chaud ni froid.  
It is neither hot nor cold.

When ni coordinates multiple conjugated verbs, each verb must be preceded by ne.

- Je ne lis pas, ni n'écris.  
I don't read or write.
- Il ne veut ni ne peut manger de la colle.  
He neither wants nor is able to eat glue.

### 3.10.2 Word Order

When the negated verb has a pronoun object, it belongs right after *ne*.

- Je ne l'aime pas.  
I don't like it.
- Je n'en ai pas.  
I don't have any. (Lit. "I do not have some of it.")

When a negation is used with an inversion (to ask a question), the whole inversion must remain inside the negation.

- Ne comprenez-vous pas ?  
Don't you understand?
- Pourquoi ne l'as-tu pas ?  
Why don't you have it?

Unconjugated verbs like infinitives must come after the negation.

- Ne pas toucher.  
Do not touch.
- Elle choisit de ne pas manger.  
She chooses not to eat.

Extra adverbs that modify the verb usually come after the negation. Otherwise, they follow the rules from "Adverbs 1".

- On ne marche pas vite.  
We aren't walking quickly.
- Elle ne vient jamais ici.  
She never comes here.

### 3.10.3 Miscellaneous

In English, two negatives may make a positive, but in French, they usually don't. For instance, consider *ne... jamais rien*, which is "never... anything", not "never... nothing"

- Ils ne vont jamais rien perdre.  
They will never lose anything.
- Elle ne mange jamais rien.  
She never eats anything.

The particle *ne* is often skipped or slurred in casual speech. It's also omitted for short phrases that lack a verb.

- Pas si vite !  
Not so fast!
- Pas de problème.  
No problem.

Remember that verbs of appreciation (e.g. *aimer*) require the definite article in French. Negations are no different.

- Je n'aime pas le poisson.  
I don't like fish. (Not *Je n'aime pas de poisson*.)

### 3.11 Subordinating Conjunctions

In “Conjunctions 1”, you learned about coordinating conjunctions, which link similar elements that have equal importance in a sentence. However, in complex sentences, one clause may be dependent on another.

- Il mange parce qu’il a faim.  
He eats because he is hungry.

In this example, *parce qu’il a faim* (“because he is hungry”) is a dependent clause because it gives more information about the independent clause *il mange* (“he eats”). The dependent clause is introduced by *parce que*, which is a subordinating conjunction. Many subordinating conjunctions end in *que*. Unlike coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions can begin sentences.

- Lorsque le garçon mange, la fille mange.  
When the boy eats, the girl eats.
- Pendant que je lis, il écrit.  
While I read, he is writing.

#### 3.11.1 Temporal Conjunctions

*Quand* and *lorsque* both mean “when”, but they aren’t always interchangeable. Both can be used for temporal correlations, but *lorsque* refers to one particular instance, while *quand* can refer to one or multiple instances. *Quand* is also an adverb, so it can be used in questions. When in doubt, use *quand*.

- Je sortais quand/lorsque tu arrivais.  
I was leaving when you were arriving.
- Je mange quand j’ai faim.  
I eat when (whenever) I am hungry.
- Quand mangez-vous ?  
When do you eat?

*Alors que*, *pendant que*, and *tandis que* can indicate simultaneity

- Je mange alors que tu manges.  
I eat while you eat.
- Pendant que tu bois, je bois.  
While you drink, I drink.

*Alors que* and *tandis que* can also indicate a contrast or contradiction, though this is rare for *tandis que*.

- Elle est grande, alors que je suis petit.  
She is tall, whereas I am short.
- Je mange alors que je n’ai pas faim.  
I am eating even though I am not hungry.

### 3.11.2 Causal Conjunctions

Parce que, car, and puisque all mean “because” and describe some kind of cause-and-effect relationship, but they aren’t completely interchangeable. Parce que is a subordinating conjunction that provides an explanation, motive, or justification.

- Elle lit parce qu’elle a un livre.  
She is reading because she has a book.
- Parce qu’elle est jeune, elle est jolie.  
She is pretty because she is young.

Car is similar to parce que, but it’s a coordinating conjunction and thus cannot begin a sentence or clause.

- Je mange du poulet, car j’aime la viande.  
I am eating chicken because I like meat.

Puisque is a subordinating conjunction that means “because” or “since” and gives an already-known or obvious reason or justification.

- Puisque il pleut, j’ai un parapluie.  
Since it’s raining, I have an umbrella.

### 3.11.3 Elisions with Si and Que

Usually, only one-syllable words ending in -e can be elided, but the main exceptions are elle, si, and words ending in que. However, si only elides before il and ils, so you must write s’il, but cannot write s’elle.

- Un citron, sinon une orange.  
A lemon, otherwise an orange.
- S’il boit, je mange.  
If he drinks, I eat.
- Dès qu’elle parle, j’écris.  
As soon as she speaks, I write.
- Vous mangez autant que vous voulez.  
You eat as much as you want.
- Je parle pendant que je mange.  
I speak while I eat.

### 3.12 Adverbs 2

In English, many adverbs are constructed from adjectives by adding “-ly” to the end. For instance, “quick” becomes “quickly”. In French, add -ment to feminine adjectives to create adverbs.

- facile (easy) → facilement (easily)
- forte (strong) → fortement (strongly)
- grande (great) → grandement (greatly)

However, if the masculine form of an adjective ends in -nt, do not use the feminine form to construct the adverb, but replace the masculine ending with -mment.

- constant (constant) → constamment (constantly)
- prudent (prudent) → prudemment (prudently)

#### 3.12.1 Adverbs with Negations

In negative clauses, adverbs that would otherwise follow the verb usually appear after the negation.

- Nous ne vivons pas ensemble.  
We don't live together.
- Ce n'est pas si mauvais.  
That isn't so bad.

Français	English	Français	English
généralement	generally	devant	in front
sûrement	surely	à peu près	about [in number]
lentement	slowly	peut-être	perhaps
normalment	normally	seulement	only
rarement	rarely	presque	almost
suffisamment	sufficiently	toujours	still
ensemble	together	encore	again
au moins	at least	parfois	sometimes
en fait	in fact	pourtant	yet
tout 'a fait	absolutely	après	after
bref	in short	déjà	already

- Il est si grand !  
It is so big!



### 3.13 Household

Français	English	Français	English
la maison	house	le meuble(s)	furniture
la table	table	la piscine	swimming pool
le lit	bed	la douche	shower
la chaise	chair	le escalier	stair
la cuillère	spoon	le réfrigérateur	refrigerator
le couteau (les couteaux)	knife (knives)	le oreiller	pillow
le assiette	plate	descend	to descend
le fourchette	fork	la télévision	television
la verre	glass (container)	la prise	[electrical] outlet
la bouteille	bottle	la serviette	napkin
le téléphone	telephone	la horloge	clock
le bol	bowl	la couverture	blanket
la tasse	cup	les rideaux	curtains
le couvert	cutlery	le outil	tool
le berceau	crib	la baignoire	bathtub
la cuisine	kitchen	le chauffage	heater
la fenêtre	window	le savon	pink
le miroir	mirror	le plafond	ceiling
la éponge	sponge	ferme	to close
le canapé	sofa	le recette	recipe
la lampe	lamp	le shampooing	shampoo
le bureau	desk/office	la poubelle	bin
la porte	door	nettoyer	to clean
le mur	wall	le drap	bedsheet
le four	oven	le balcon	balcony
le toit	roof	le jouet	toy
le tapis	carpet		

## 3.14 Objects

### 3.14.1 Cognates

As you may have noticed, a lot of English vocabulary (vocabulaire) comes from French. This has created many etymological patterns that you can use to your advantage when learning new words. Consider the following suffix patterns:

- -aire → -ary
  - ordinaire—ordinary
  - dictionnaire—dictionary
- -eur → -er
  - chargeur—charger
  - serveur—server (waiter)
- -tion / -sion → -tion
  - invitation—invitation
  - condition—condition
- -ment (noun) → -ment
  - le document—the document
  - le gouvernement—the government
- -ment (adverb) → -ly
  - probablement—probably
  - sûrement—surely
- -ique → -ical
  - logique—logical
  - électrique—electrical
- -able → -able / -ible
  - responsable—responsible
  - indispensable—indispensable

### 3.14.2 Noun Adjuncts

Unlike English, French does not have noun adjuncts, which are nouns that modify other nouns. Instead, you must use *de* or another preposition to make one noun modify another.

- l'album de photos  
photo album
- la soupe de poulet  
chicken soup
- le hockey sur gazon  
field hockey

Français	English	Français	English
la chose	thing	le drapeau	flag
le objet	object	la feuille	leaf
le arme	weapon	le cadeau	gift
la boîte	box	la valise	suitcase
la croix	cross	le ordinateur	computer
la pièce	room	le clavier	keyboard
le fil	thread	le adaptateur	adapter
la page	page	le album	album
la carte	map	le plateau	tray
la radio	radio	le écran	screen
la caisse	case (crate)	le dictionnaire	dictionary
le document	document	le magazine	magazine
la brosse	brush	le robot	robot
le cadre	frame	le stylo	pen
las lunettes	eyeglasses	la voiture	car
le parfum	perfume	le roue	wheel
la photo	photo	la enveloppe	envelope
le dossier	case (investigation)	allumer	to light
le linge	laundry	la allumette	match (of fire)
le disque	record	brancher	to connect
la paire	pair	charger	to charge
la clé	key	le chargeur	charger
le billet	ticket	le bougie	candle
la poudre	powder	éteins	to blow out

### 3.15 Adjectives 3

You learned in “Basics 1” that almost all nouns must be preceded by an article. This isn’t entirely accurate. Rather, almost all nouns must be preceded by a determiner, which is a word that puts a noun in context. As of this unit, you will have encountered every type of determiner.

- Articles, as in le pantalon (“the pants”).
- Possessive adjectives, as in ton cochon (“your pig”).
- Cardinal numbers, as in deux chevaux (“two horses”).
- Interrogative adjectives, as in quel chat ? (“which cat?”).
- Exclamation adjectives, as in quelle chance ! (“what luck!”).
- Negative adjectives, as in aucune chance (“no chance!”).
- Indefinite adjectives, as in plusieurs jouets (“several toys”).

There are very few exceptions to the rule that nouns must have a determiner. A few are verb-based. For instance: names of professions, religions and a few nouns expressing a status with être; names of languages with parler; and most nouns with devenir.

- Je suis médecin.  
I am a doctor.
- Il est bon élève.  
He is a good student.
- Elle est victime de son succès.  
She is a victim of her own success.
- Paul était témoin à mon mariage.  
Paul was a witness at my wedding.
- Je parle anglais.  
I speak English.
- Il devient roi du Nord.  
He becomes King of the North.

Determiners are also omitted after some prepositions.

- Je ne peux pas vivre sans eau.  
I cannot live without water.
- Nous le transportons par avion.  
We transport it by aircraft.
- C’est une feuille de papier.  
This is a sheet of paper.

Recall that French does not have noun adjuncts, which are nouns that qualify other nouns. Instead, use de between two nouns to qualify the first one.

- C’est un album de photos.  
That’s a photo album. (Literally, “album of photos”)

- Je vais à l'agence de voyage.  
I am going to the travel agency.
- Il a un couteau de cuisine.  
He has a kitchen knife.

### 3.15.1 Indefinite Articles

Indefinite adjectives like *plusieurs*, *certains*, *quelques*, and *chaque* reference nouns in a non-specific sense, akin to the way indefinite articles reference nouns.

- L'enfant a plusieurs jouets.  
The child has several toys.
- Certains hommes sont mauvais.  
Some (or "certain") men are bad.
- J'ai quelques livres.  
I have a few (or "some") books.
- L'automne est un deuxième printemps où chaque feuille est une fleur.  
Autumn is a second spring where every leaf is a flower. (Albert Camus)

### 3.15.2 Comparatives and Superlatives

In “Adverbs 1”, you learned that you can use *plus* as a comparative and *le/la/les plus* as a superlative.

- C'est une plus jolie robe.  
That's a prettier dress.
- C'est la plus jolie robe.  
That's the prettiest dress.

*Bon* (“good”), *bien* (“well”), and *mauvais* (“bad”) also have comparative and superlative forms, but they're irregular, just like their English counterparts. To say “better” when referring to a noun, you can't just say *plus bon*. Instead, use *meilleur*, which is a BANGS adjective with four inflections.

Gender	Singular	Plural
Masculine	<i>meilleur</i>	<i>meilleurs</i>
Feminine	<i>meilleure</i>	<i>meilleures</i>

- Elle cherche un meilleur emploi.  
She is looking for a better job.
- Je veux de meilleures robes.  
I want better dresses. <sup>6</sup>

For the superlative, just add a definite article before the adjective that agrees with it.

- Paul est le meilleur.  
Paul is the best.
- Ses filles sont les meilleures.  
Her daughters are the best.

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<sup>6</sup>Remember that *des* becomes *de* when immediately followed by an adjective.

When “better” modifies an action or state of being, you must use mieux.

- Il parle mieux japonais.  
He speaks better Japanese.
- Ça va mieux.  
It is going better.

Add a definite article to create a superlative.

- C’est Paul qui cuisine le mieux.  
It’s Paul who cooks the best.
- Il les connaît le mieux.  
He knows them the best.

Unlike bon and bien, comparative and superlative forms of mauvais can either be regular (with plus) or irregular (with pire).

- C’est une plus mauvaise situation.  
That’s a worse situation.
- Ça peut être pire.  
That might be worse.
- Ce sont les pires choix.  
Those are the worst choices.

Français	English	Français	English	Français	English
pareil	same	fin	thin	possible	possible
réel	real	efficace	efficient	prudent	careful
logique	logical	sauvage	savage	ancienne	old (thing)
électrique	electric	idéal	ideal	vieil	old (BANGS)
plat	flat	précieux	precious	célibataire	single (not married)
ordinaire	ordinary	puissant	strong	bruyant	noisy
fixe	fixed	dangereux	dangerous	parfait	perfect
libre	free	fausse	fake	lourd	heavy
profond	deep	haut	upstairs	blonde	blonde
précis	precise	âgée	old (person)	brun	brunette
intuile	useless	tout	every	roux	red-headed
indispensable	indispensable	spécial	special	quatrième	fourth
populaire	popular	gras	fat	cinquième	fifth
privé	private	sage	wise	rond	round
complet	complete	mariée	married	facile	easy
solide	solid	tel	such	plusieur	several
pratique	practical	cru	raw	certain	certain
célèbre	famous	terrible	terrible	quelque	few
vivante	alive	personnel	personal	chaque	every
intéressant	interesting	incroyable	incredible	liquide	liquid
secret	secret	indépendant	independent	franc(he)	frank
fermé	closed	normal	normal	entière	entire
responsable	responsible	magnifique	magnificent		

- Le gâteau est très fin.  
The cake is top quality.
- J'écris tous les jours.  
I write everyday.
- Elle est brune.  
She is a brunette.
- Chaque jour je t'aime plus.  
Every day I love you more.
- Aucun animal ne boit.  
No animal drinks.

## 3.16 Prepositions 2

### 3.16.1 Temporal Prepositions

Choosing a preposition for time depends on the situation, but multiple choices may be appropriate.

- **Durations**

- Pendant and durant are interchangeable and mean “during” or “for”. These are versatile and can be used for most expressions of duration.
  - \* Pendant l’été, il fait chaud.  
During the summer, it is hot.
  - \* Je veux dormir pendant une semaine !  
I want to sleep for a week!
  - \* Elles peuvent rester durant un jour.  
They can stay for a day.
  - \* Chaque matin, je cours pendant une heure.  
Every morning, I run for an hour.
- Depuis (“since” or “for”) can be used for things that are still happening, and it’s usually followed by a start date or a duration. It’s tricky because a French present tense verb with depuis often translates to an English present perfect tense verb.
  - \* Il pleut depuis hier.  
It has been raining since yesterday.
  - \* Je te connais depuis deux ans.  
I have known you for two years.
- En (“in”) indicates the length of time an action requires for completion and can be used with any tense.
  - \* Je peux le finir en deux heures.  
I can finish it in two hours.
  - \* Elle va lire le livre en une heure.  
She is going to read the book in an hour.
- Pour (“for”) is the most limited choice and is only used with aller or partir for future events.
  - \* Il est en vacances pour une semaine.  
He is on vacation for a week.
  - \* Je vais chez moi pour la nuit.  
I am going home for the night.

- **References**

- Use à to pinpoint exactly what time of day an event begins or to give the endpoint of a time range in conjunction with de.
  - \* Le repas commence à midi.  
The meal begins at noon.
  - \* La boutique est ouverte de 8.00 à 17.00.  
The boutique is open from 8 to 5.
- En can also indicate that an action took place in a particular month, season, or year. The exception is spring, which requires au.
  - \* Je vais à Paris en avril.  
I am going to Paris in April.



- \* Je commence à bronzer en douceur en été.  
I begin to gently sunbathe in summer.
- \* Il va toujours chez lui au printemps.  
He always goes home in spring.
- Dans also means “in”, but it gives the amount of time before an action will take place.
  - \* Elle va revenir dans 15 minutes.  
She is going to return in 15 minutes.
  - \* Je vais t’appeler dans une demi-heure.  
I’m going to call you in half an hour.
- However, to give the amount of time needed to perform an action, en will be used.
  - \* Je peux faire ceci en une heure.  
I can do this in/within one hour.
  - \* Elle pouvait résoudre ce problème en 10 minutes  
She was able to solve this problem in 10 minutes.

### 3.16.2 Puzzling Prepositions

- Chez can be combined with a pronoun or noun to refer to someone’s home or workplace.
  - Je vais chez le dentiste.  
I am going to the dentist’s.
  - Elle est chez Kristy.  
She’s at Kristy’s house.
- Entre means “between”, both literally and figuratively.
  - Il est entre deux fougères.  
He is between two ferns.
  - Je te le dis, mais c’est entre nous.  
I can tell you, but it’s between us.
- Parmi means “among” and indicates that something is part of a larger group of assorted people, animals, or things.
  - Des lions sont parmi les animaux du zoo.  
Lions are among the zoo animals.
  - Le chat dort parmi les chiens.  
The cat sleeps among the dogs.
- However, if the larger group is uniform in some specific way, entre can also mean “among”.
  - Ici, nous sommes entre femmes.  
Here, we are among women.
  - Nous pouvons parler librement entre collègues.  
We can speak freely among colleagues.
- There are some situations where both entre and parmi are acceptable.
  - Il choisit entre/parmi les options.  
He chooses between the options.
- Devant and avant both mean “before”, but devant is spatial while avant is temporal.

- Je suis devant vous.  
I stand before you.
- Il mange avant nous.  
He eats before us.

### 3.16.3 Peu

Using the word *peu* (“few”/“little”) can be surprisingly complicated. By itself, *peu* is usually an adverb that diminishes what it modifies and is generally translated using “not very/much/well”.

- Elle parle peu.  
She doesn’t talk much.
- Il est peu probable.  
It is not very likely.
- Je vous connais peu.  
I don’t know you well.
- Ce phénomène est peu fréquent.  
This phenomenon is infrequent.
- peu après  
not long after

Appending *de* creates an adverb of quantity that modifies nouns.

- Peu de femmes disent ça.  
Few women say that.
- Peu d’eau sur la Terre est potable.  
Little of the water on Earth is drinkable.

However, *peu* can also be a noun, especially when preceded by an article.

- Elle parle un peu de français.  
She speaks a bit of French.
- Tu veux manger un peu de fraises ?  
Do you want to eat a few strawberries?
- Oui, j’en veux un peu.  
Yes, I want a few. (Or “a little”.)

Français	English	Français	English	Français	English
sur	on	contre	against	selon	according
sans	without	chez	at [some] place	parmi	among
entre	among	depuis	since	sauf	except
sous	under	pendant	for (duration)	durant	during
vers	toward	derrière	behind	malgré	despite

### 3.17 Places

Expressing locations in French can be tricky because many English prepositions don't have one-to-one French translations. This is especially true for "in", which can be *dans*, *en*, or *à* depending on how specific the location is.

- *Dans* means "in" for specific, known locations. It is especially appropriate when the location name has an article or possessive.
  - Il mange dans le restaurant.  
He's eating in the restaurant.
  - Un chat est dans ma chambre.  
A cat is in my room.
- Use *à* and its contractions for unspecific or vague locations.
  - On vit à la campagne.  
We live in the country.
  - C'est dangereux à la frontière.  
It's dangerous at the frontier.
- When describing a location that doesn't require a determiner (usually a type of place), use *en*.
  - Nous sommes en classe.  
We are in class.
  - Elle est en prison.  
She is in prison.

#### 3.17.1 Special Rules

For all cities (and islands), use *à* for "to" or "in" and *de* for "from".

- Le roi vit à Versailles.  
The king lives in Versailles.
- Nous allons à Paris.  
We are going to Paris.
- Napoléon vient de Corse.  
Napoleon comes from Corsica.
- Je l'envoie d'Orléans.  
I am sending it from Orleans.

Countries, province, states and continents have gender-based rules. For feminine ones, *en* means "to" or "in" and *de* means "from". Luckily, all continents are feminine, as are most countries ending in -e.

- Bordeaux est en France.  
Bordeaux is in France.
- Il reste en Europe.  
He is staying in Europe.
- On vient de Californie.  
We come from California.

- Elle part d'Asie.  
She is departing from Asia.

For masculine countries, provinces and states that start with a consonant sound, use *au* and *du*.

- Je veux aller au Québec.  
I want to go to Quebec.
- Elles partent du Japon.  
They are departing from Japan.

If they start with a vowel sound, switch back to *en* and *de* for euphony.

- Il y a une guerre en Irak.  
There is a war in Iraq.
- J'arrive d'Ontario.  
I am coming from Ontario.

For countries with pluralized names (the USA, the Netherlands, the Philippines, etc.), use *aux* and *des*.

- On travaille aux États-Unis.  
We work in the United States.

### 3.17.2 Using the Present for the Future

In both French and English, the present tense can often be used to express the near future (*le futur proche*). In French, this usage is basically equivalent to *aller* + infinitive.

- Je vais à Paris demain.  
I am going to Paris tomorrow.
- Demain, c'est samedi.  
It's Saturday tomorrow.
- La fête commence demain.  
The party begins tomorrow.

Français	English	Français	English	Français	English
la place	place	le salon	living room	le bâtiment	building
la pays	country	le territoire	territory	la Bordeaux	Bordeaux
la terre	soil	le trou	hole	le restaurant	restaurant
la rue	street	le château	castle	le pont	bridge
le lieu	location	le étage	floor	la banque	bank
la chambre	bedroom	le appartement	apartment	la États-Unis	United States
la ville	town	la adresse	address	le désert	desert
le tour	tour	la plage	beach	la Paris	Paris
le milieu	middle	la prison	prison	l'Angleterre	England
la route	road	le bar	bar (for drinks)	l'Asie	Asia
à bord	on board	le magasin	store	la boulangerie	bakery
le coin	corner	le parc	park	l'Espagne	Spain
le jardin	garden	la cave	cellar	l'Afrique	Africa
le garage	garage	le bain	bath	l'Italie	Italy
l'hôtel	hotel	la boutique	shop	le zoo	zoo
la région	region	la frontière	frontier	la campagne	countryside
la entreprise	company	les toilettes	bathroom	la Brésil	Brazil
la côte	coast	la salle	room	la Chine	China
la ile	island	le tribunal	court	le immeuble	block
le port	port	la Amérique	America	la discothèque	night club
le village	village	le banlieue	suburb	le supermarché	supermarket
le quartier	district	la Europe	Europe	le couloir	corridor
la propriété	property	le France	France	visiter	to visit
la zone	area	le Allemange	Germany		

### 3.18 Irregular Plurals

Most French nouns and adjectives can be pluralized by adding an ending -s, like in English. Those that can't be pluralized like this normally will have plural forms that end in -x. For instance, most nouns ending in -al or -ail change to -aux.

- un animal → des animaux (“animals”)
- le travail → les travaux (“work”)

Similarly, masculine singular adjectives ending in -al take on -aux endings in the plural. However, feminine singular adjectives ending in -ale simply add an ending -s.

- général → généraux (“general”)
- générale → générales (“general”)
- idéal → idéaux (“ideal”)
- idéale → idéales (“ideal”)

Add -x to the end of most nouns that end in -au, -eau, and -eu to pluralize them.

- un tuyau → des tuyaux (“pipes”)
- mon chapeau → mes chapeaux (“my hats”)
- le feu → les feux (“fires”)

The plural forms of -au, -eau, and -eu words are homophones of their singular forms. In general, the best way to tell if a noun is plural is to listen carefully to its article or determiner. If you hear les or des, or the possessives mes, tes, ses, nos, vos, leurs, or the demonstrative ces, it's plural. Otherwise, it's probably singular.

- Ce sont vos animaux.  
Those are your animals.
- Ce sont des chevaux.  
Those are horses.
- Ses yeux sont bleus.  
Her eyes are blue.
- Les hommes aiment les jeux.  
The men like the games.
- Nous aimons lire les journaux.  
We like reading the newspapers.
- Ce bébé a les cheveux noirs.  
This baby has black hair.
- Les animaux doivent boire.  
Animals have to drink.
- Les oiseaux mangent du riz.  
The mice eat rice.

- Leurs gâteaux sont bons.  
Their cakes are nice.
- Je suis à genoux.  
I am on my knees.
- Elle a quinze bijoux.  
She has 15 jewels.
- Je mange des morceaux de gâteau.  
I eat pieces of cake.
- Ils sont très vieux.  
They are very old.

### 3.19 People

French nouns for persons of a certain nationality are capitalized, but in French, national adjectives and language names are not capitalized.

- C'est une Anglaise.  
She's an Englishwoman.
- C'est une voiture anglaise.  
It's an English car.
- Ce sont des Françaises.  
They are Frenchwomen.
- Elles parlent français.  
They speak French.

Remember that nouns for nationalities (and also professions and religions) can appear after être without a determiner. In this usage, they are adjectives and are not capitalized.

- Je suis chinois.  
I am Chinese.
- Mon oncle est italien.  
My uncle is Italian.
- J'ai un groupe d'amis.  
I have a group of friends.
- Tu es mon peuple.  
You are my people.
- Oui, nous avons des amis.  
Yes, we have friends.
- Ce sont des gens.  
They are people.
- C'est ma culture.  
It is my culture.
- J'ai quelques amis.  
I have a few friends.
- Je suis dans la foule.  
I am in the crowd.
- Le lion est parmi la foule.  
The lion is among the crowd.
- C'est une personne sale.  
It is a dirty person.
- La dame est parfaite.  
The lady is perfect.
- Mes voisins sont espagnols.  
My neighbors are Spanish.



- Ce sont des héros.  
They are heroes.
- Elle n'a pas d'ennemis.  
She does not have enemies.
- Les habitants sont riches.  
The inhabitants are rich.
- Je suis un homme et un citoyen.  
I am a man and a citizen.
- Nous avons une **association**.  
We have an association.
- C'est mon collègue.  
It is my colleague.
- Son copain est chauffeur.  
His buddy is a driver.
- Ma **génération** ne mange pas de poisson.  
My generation does not eat fish.
- Mon père est un adulte.  
My father is an adult.
- Il est populaire parmi ses collègues.  
He is popular among his colleagues.
- Un adolescent mange beaucoup.  
A teenager eats a lot.
- Ce sont vos prisonniers.  
They are your prisoners.
- J'aime ma copine.  
I love my girlfriend.
- Tu es mon invité.  
You are my guest.
- J'aime tout le monde ici.  
I like everybody here.
- Les vieux sont intéressants.  
The elderly are interesting.
- J'attends un client aujourd'hui.  
I am waiting for a client today.
- Elle a un petit ami.  
She has a boyfriend.
- Ce magasin a beaucoup de clients.  
That store has a lot of customers.
- Il parle le russe.  
He speaks Russian.

- Le mari est aussi un Russe.  
The husband is also Russian.
- C'est un Allemand.  
He is a German man.

## 4 Chapter 4

### 4.1 Present 3

A **pronominal verb** requires a reflexive pronoun, which is a special kind of pronoun that agrees with and refers back to the subject. They're identical to direct object pronouns except for the third-person *se*.

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	me	nous
2nd	te	vous
3rd	se	se

One type of pronominal verb, the reflexive verb, describes an action being done by the subject to the subject.

- Je me dis que ce n'est pas possible.  
I tell myself that it isn't possible.
- Vous vous levez.  
You are getting up. (Lit. You raise yourself.)
- La femme se promène.  
The woman goes for a walk. (Lit. walks herself.)

Reflexive verbs include *se* in their infinitive forms (e.g. *se promener*). It isn't necessary to include the reflexive pronoun in the English translation. Also, the reflexive verb should come after *ne* in negations.

- Ils se rasent.  
They are shaving.
- Elle ne se rase pas.  
She doesn't shave.

The other kinds of pronominal verbs are reciprocal, passive, and subjective. You will learn these later.

#### 4.1.1 Pronoun Order

When two object pronouns modify the same verb, they always appear in a predefined order:  
*me/te/nous/vous/se* → *le/la/les* → *lui/leur* → *y* → *en*.

- Je vous la laisse.  
I am leaving it for you.
- Nous nous la réservons.  
We reserve it for ourselves.
- Ils nous le donnent.  
They are giving it to us.
- Ils le lui donnent.  
They are giving it to him.

### 4.1.2 Verbs with À and De

As you learned previously, à or de can appear after a verb to introduce an infinitive or object. You should consider such a preposition to be an integral part of the verb that completes or changes its meaning.

- Je commence à manger.  
I am starting to eat.
- Ma nièce essaie de dormir.  
My niece is trying to sleep.
- Je pense à des éléphants roses.  
I am thinking about pink elephants.
- Que pensez-vous de ce film ?  
What do you think of that film?

However, recall from “Verbs: Present 1” that semi-auxiliary verbs can introduce other verbs without needing a preposition.

- Je veux lire.  
I want to read.
- Il aime manger.  
He likes to eat.

For verbs appended with à (like penser à), the adverbial pronoun y can replace à + a thing.

- Tu penses à l'examen ? Oui, j'y pense encore.  
Are you thinking about the test? Yes, I'm thinking about it again.
- Il croit aux fantômes ? Oui, il y croit.  
Does he believe in ghosts? Yes, he believes in them.

To replace à + a person or animal, use an indirect object pronoun instead.

- Je lui parle.  
I am talking to him/her.
- Elle me téléphone maintenant.  
She is calling me right now.

### 4.1.3 Confusing Verbs

Demander à means “to ask to” when followed by an infinitive.

- Elle demande à payer avec des dollars.  
She asks to pay with dollars.

However, when used with nouns, demander is particularly confusing because its direct and indirect object are the opposite of its English counterpart, “to ask”.

- Je demande une baguette.  
I ask for a baguette. (Not “I ask a baguette.”)
- Je demande une baguette à la boulangère.  
I ask the baker for a baguette.

- Je lui demande de me donner une baguette.  
I ask him/her to give me a baguette.

Écouter means “to listen” in the literal sense of intentionally listening or paying attention to something.

- J’écoute de la musique.  
I am listening to music.
- Elle écoute la voix de la sagesse.  
She listens to the voice of reason.

Entendre can mean hear, listen, or (rarely) understand.

- J’entends du bruit.  
I hear noise.
- Elle ne veut rien entendre.  
She won’t listen.

Manquer means “to miss”, but the pronouns are flipped from its English counterpart. If it helps, you can think of manquer as “to be missed by”.

- Vous me manquez.  
I miss you.
- Je vous manque.  
You miss me.

Plaire à is commonly translated as “to like”, but for grammatical purposes, think of it as “to please” or “to be pleasing to”.

- La jupe plaît aux filles.  
The girls like the skirt. / The skirt is pleasing to the girls.
- Ça me plaît.  
I like it. / That is pleasing to me.

Se lever (“to get up”) means to physically get up from a non-standing position, not to wake up, which is se réveiller.

Français	English	Français	English	Français	English
affirmer	to claim	jouer à	to play (with)	remarquer	to notice
appartenir	to belong	laisser	to leave	retour	to return (there)
arriver	to arrive	commencer	to start	répondre	to respond
se bronzer	to [get] tan	se lever	to rise (get up)	reposer	to rest
continuer	to continue	manquer	to miss (out)	représenter	to represent
venir	to come	mentir	to lie	réserver	to reserve
demander	to ask for	partir	to leave	rester	to stay (vacation)
douter de	to doubt (something)	passer	to spend (time)	revenir	to come back
croire	to believe	penser	to think	sembler	to seem
dépendre de	to depend (on)	ressembler	to look like	utiliser	to use
échange	to exchange	plait	is liked	se sentir	to feel
écouter	to listen	planter	to plant	signifie	meaning
travailler	to work	se préférer	to prefer	sortir	to go out
servir	to serve	présenter	to present	supposer	to suppose
essayer	to try	se promener	to go for a walk	tomber	to fall
exister	to exist	recevoir	to receive	(se) enfuir	to flee
expliquer	to explain	offrir	to offer/buy	se raser	to shave
habiter	to live (in)	refuser	to refuse		

- Ce costume m'appartient.  
This suit belongs to me.
- Je viens d'Amérique.  
I come from America.
- Ça dépend.  
It depends.
- J'habite en banlieue.  
I live in the suburbs.
- Je préfère le riz au pain.  
I prefer rice over bread.
- Ça représente quoi ?  
What does it represent?
- Ils semblent mauvais.  
They seem bad.
- Les garçons ressemblent des garçons.  
Boys will be boys.
- Ce thé sent bon.  
The tea smells good.

- Qu'est-ce que ça signifie ?  
What is the meaning of this?

## 4.2 Past Imperfect

French has a few past tenses, one of which is the imperfect (imparfait). You can construct it by taking the present indicative nous form of any verb and replacing the -ons with the imperfect ending. Notice that all the conjugated forms except the nous and vous forms have the same sound.

Subject	Ending	Être	Parler	Manger	Aller
je (j')	-ais	étais	parlais	mangeais	allais
tu	-ais	étais	parlais	mangeais	allais
il/elle/on	-ait	était	parlait	mangeait	allait
nous	-ions	étions	parlions	mangions	allions
vous	-iez	étiez	parliez	mangiez	alliez
ils/elles	-aient	étaient	parlaient	mangeaient	allaient

The only irregular imperfect verb is être, which takes on an être root. However, for spelling-changing verbs that end in -ger or -cer (e.g. manger), add an “e” to the root so the consonant remains soft.

- Kilroy était ici.  
Kilroy was here.
- Elle mangeait avec ses amis.  
She was eating with her friends.

### 4.2.1 Translating the Imperfect

Translating the past tense between English and French can be difficult because there is no simple mapping between the English past tenses and the two main French past tenses, the imparfait and the passé composé (taught in the next unit). When choosing a tense, pay close attention to what you’re trying to express.

The imperfect describes situations, states of mind, and habits in the past. In a story, it sets the scene or background; thus, it often translates to and from the English past continuous tense.

- Il rentrait chez lui.  
He was going home.
- Dis donc ! Je mangeais ça !  
Hey! I was eating that!

For repeated actions or habits, you can also use constructions with “used to” or “would”.

- Nous visitons un monument chaque semaine.  
We used to visit one monument every week.
- À l’époque, elle chantait souvent.  
Back then, she would often sing.

A lot of confusion stems from the versatile English preterit (simple past), which overlaps both French tenses. For instance, the preterit can also be used for habits.

- Nous visitons un monument chaque semaine.  
We visited one monument every week.
- À l’époque, elle chantait souvent.  
Back then, she often sang.



As you learned in *Verbs: Present 2*, stative verbs (e.g. “to be”, “to think”) usually can’t be used in English continuous tenses. When used in past tenses, they should translate to the preterit.

- Il croyait son père.  
He believed his father. (Not “was believing”.)
- Nous avions trois cousins.  
We had three cousins. (Using “were having” would make you a confessed cannibal.)

#### 4.2.2 Using the Imperfect

- **States or situations** Use the preterit here to describe mental or physical conditions, scenes, dates or times, weather, etc. Remember that you should never use English continuous tenses for stative verbs. In the examples below, looked, smelled, and understood are stative verbs.

- Il était malade.  
He was sick.
- Elle avait froid.  
She was cold.
- Nous avions vingt ans.  
We were twenty.
- Tu semblais heureux.  
You looked happy. (Not “were looking”.)
- Il était trois heures.  
It was 3:00.
- Vos fleurs sentaient si bon !  
Your flowers smelled so nice! (Not “were smelling”.)
- Elle comprenait mes sentiments.  
She understood my feelings. (Not “was understanding”.)
- Il y avait des bateaux.  
There were boats.

Also, when using *il y a* in other tenses, conjugate *avoir* to match. For the Imperfect, it becomes *avait*.

- **Actions or processes** The continuous past can be used here to set up a scene by describing an action or process.
- Je marchais lentement.  
I was walking slowly.
- Vous regardiez la mer.  
You were watching the sea.
- Elles pensaient à leurs enfants.  
They were thinking of their children. (“Thinking” is a process here.)
- Nous sentions la soupe  
We were smelling the soup. (Process of perceiving an odor.)
- Il pleuvait fort.  
It was raining hard.

Note that “was” and “were” are the preterit forms of “to be”, but they are also auxiliary verbs for the continuous past when used before another verb in gerund.

- **A habit or repeated action**

- Nous nous entraînions chaque semaine.  
We used to train every week.
- Il récitait des poèmes.  
He would (or) used to recite poems.
- Je ressentais souvent de la douleur.  
I frequently felt pain.

Note that you shouldn't use the past continuous here, but as mentioned before, you may use the preterit, "used to", or "would".

### 4.3 Compound Past

Compound verbs contain at least two words: a conjugated auxiliary verb and a participle. In this unit, we will cover the *passé composé* (PC), which can translate to the English present perfect.

- Elle a vu ce chien.  
She has seen that dog.
- Ils ont dit la vérité.  
They have told the truth.

In both languages, the compound verb begins with a conjugated auxiliary verb (*avoir* and “to have” here) that agrees with the subject. A past participle (e.g. *vu* or “seen”) follows the auxiliary.

#### 4.3.1 Auxiliaries

In English, the active present perfect has only one auxiliary verb (“to have”), but the PC has two: *avoir* and *être*. Most verbs use *avoir*.

- J’ai été malade.  
I have been sick.
- Il a appelé un docteur.  
He has called a doctor.

A handful of verbs use *être*. The mnemonic “ADVENT” may help you remember these.

Initial Verb	Opposite Verb	Related Verbs
Arriver (arrive)	partir (leave)	
Descendre (descend)	monter (ascend)	
Venir (come)	aller (go)	devenir (become), revenir (return)
Entrer (enter)	sortir (leave)	rentrer (re-enter)
Naître (be born)	mourir (die)	
Tomber (fall)		

The remaining verbs are *passer* (pass), *rester* (stay), *retourner* (return), and *accourir* (run up). Notice that *être* verbs involve movement or transformation.

- Il est venu.  
He has come.
- Septembre est passé.  
September has passed.
- Je suis devenu roi.  
I have become king.

Also, all pronominal verbs use *être*.

- Il s’est souvenu de ses amis.  
He has remembered his friends.

- Il s'est rasé.  
He has shaved.

Object pronouns, negations, and inversions appear around the auxiliary.

- Je l'ai entendu.  
I have heard him.
- Il ne m'a pas trouvé.  
He has not found me.
- Avez-vous vu les robes ?  
Have you seen the dresses?
- Pourquoi l'avez-vous fait ?  
Why have you done it?

### 4.3.2 Past Participles

A participle is a special non-conjugated form of a verb. Most participles are formed by adding an ending to a verb's root.

Group	Ending	Example
-er verbs	-é	manger → mangé
-ir verbs	-i	choisir → choisi
-re verbs	-u	vendre → vendu

Unfortunately, most irregular verbs have irregular participles. For instance, the past participle of venir is venu.

- Il est venu.  
He has come.
- Les filles sont venues.  
The girls have come.

Note that participles vary with gender and number just like adjectives.

Gender	Singular	Plural
Masculine	venu	venus
Feminine	venue	venues

Adverbs appear right before the participle.

- Je l'ai souvent entendu.  
I often heard him/her/it.
- Je vous en ai déjà parlé.  
I already talked to you about it.

A participle that follows avoir is usually invariable.

- L'homme a mangé.  
The man has eaten.
- Les femmes ont mangé.  
The women have eaten.

However, if a Direct Object appears before avoir, its participle agrees with the DO. Below, vues agrees with the plural feminine robes because les precedes the verb.

- Tu as vu les robes ?  
Have you seen the dresses?
- Oui, je les ai vues.  
Yes, I have seen them.

A participle that follows être agrees with the subject.

- L'homme est venu.  
The man has come.
- Les hommes sont venus.  
The men have come.
- La femme est venue.  
The woman has come.
- Les femmes sont venues.  
The women have come.

However, if a pronominal verb has no DO, then the participle is invariable. For instance, compare s'appeler (transitive) to se téléphoner (no DO).

- Nous nous sommes appelés.  
We called each other. (For a masculine nous.)
- Nous nous sommes téléphoné.  
We called each other. (For both genders of nous.)

Translating the past tense can be difficult because the English simple past (preterit) overlaps the French passé composé and imparfait (taught in the previous unit). The PC can translate to the preterit when it narrates events or states that began and ended in the past. In this usage, the PC often appears with expressions of time or frequency like il y a, which means “ago” when followed by a duration.

- La fille a mangé il y a cinq minutes.  
The girl ate five minutes ago. (A single specific event.)
- Les enfants ont eu froid hier.  
The children were cold yesterday. (A state on a specific date.)
- Je suis tombé(e) plusieurs fois.  
I fell several times. (Multiple specific actions.)
- Je suis déjà tombé(e).  
I already fell. (An event in an undetermined time frame.)

The PC can also translate to the present perfect for actions and states that started in the past and are still true.

- Il n'a jamais mangé de pâtes.  
He has never eaten pasta.
- Tu as perdu tes clés.  
You have lost your keys.
- Cette page ? Oui, je l'ai lue.  
That page? Yes, I have read it.
- Elle a été terrible.  
She has been terrible.
- Tu as déjà mangé.  
You have already eaten.
- Elles ont été très méchantes.  
They have been very mean girls.
- Elles ont bu du lait avec leurs amis.  
They drank milk with their friends.
- Où as-tu mangé hier ?  
Where did you eat yesterday?
- Il est allé au magasin.  
He went to the store.
- Elle n'est pas née en Angleterre.  
She was not born in England.
- Elle est venue seule.  
She came alone.
- Elle est allée pas à pas. She went step by step.
- Il est venu avec nous.  
He has come with us.
- Deux personnes sont mortes.  
Two people have died.
- L'oiseau est tombé.  
The bird has fallen.
- Elle a essayé.  
She has tried.
- Il m'a donné une montre.  
He has given me a watch.
- Elle a conduit sa voiture.  
She has driven her car.
- Son père a disparu.  
His father has disappeared.
- Ils n'ont jamais cuisiné.  
They have never cooked.

- Ils ont porté leurs chapeaux.  
They have worn their hats.
- C'est la robe qu'elle a portée hier.  
That is the dress that she had on yesterday.
- Les sandwiches, nous les avons rendus.  
We have returned the sandwiches.
- Nous avons réussi !  
We have succeeded !
- Elle a pris une pomme verte.  
She has taken a green apple.
- J'en ai entendu assez.  
I have heard enough.
- Je l'ai vu récemment.  
I have seen it recently.
- Personne ne m'a cru au début.  
Nobody believed me at first.

## 4.4 Directions

- Je tourne à droite.  
I turn right.
- Je vois l'entrée.  
I see the entrance.
- Elle est au centre du village.  
It is in the center of the village.
- Quelle est ta position ?  
What is your position?
- Sur ta gauche !  
On your left!
- Elle fait un pas dans le jardin.  
She steps into the garden.
- Il y a un panneau rouge avec une croix blanche.  
There is a red sign with a white cross.
- La sortie est ici.  
The exit is here.
- Nous allons vers l'est.  
We are going eastward.
- Mon magazine est au fond de mon sac.  
My magazine is on the bottom of my bag.
- Je dois prendre la direction inverse.  
I have to take the opposite direction.
- Plan du château  
castle map
- Le départ est à Marseille.  
The departure is in Marseille.



## 5 Compound Past 2

The imparfait and passé composé can work together in the same sentence. A verb in the imparfait may be used as a background for an action given by a verb in the passé composé.

- Elle chantait quand elle est arrivée.  
She was singing when she arrived.
- Vous m'avez téléphoné pendant que je dînais.  
You called me while I was having dinner.
- Il dormait quand il a entendu un bruit.  
He was sleeping when he heard a noise.
- Je marchais quand je suis tombé.  
I was walking when I fell.

Remember that while you shouldn't use English continuous tenses for stative verbs (such as "to be"), any French verb can take the imparfait. Thus, you may often need to translate the imparfait into the English preterit when dealing with verbs that describe background feelings or states.

- Je le savais mais je l'ai oublié.  
I knew it but I forgot it. (Not "was knowing".)
- Je connaissais l'histoire qu'elle a racontée hier.  
I knew the story she told yesterday.
- Je le comprenais, alors je l'ai accepté.  
I understood it, so I accepted it.

### 5.0.1 Être and Direct Objects

Six être verbs can be used transitively with a direct object: monter, descendre, sortir, rentrer, retourner, and passer. When used transitively, they switch from être to take avoir as an auxiliary.

- Je suis monté(e).  
I went up.
- J'ai monté les valises.  
I brought up the suitcases.
- Il est sorti.  
He left.
- Il a sorti son portefeuille.  
He took out his wallet.
- Sur ta gauche !  
On your left!
- Septembre est passé.  
September has passed.
- J'ai passé trois heures ici.  
I spent three hours here.

Notice that the transitive versions of these verbs have a different meaning than the intransitive versions.

### 5.0.2 Past Participles as Adjectives

Just like in English, past participles can be used as adjectives in French.

- La baguette grillée.  
The toasted baguette
- Des biens vendus.  
Sold goods
- Elle est mariée.  
She is married.
- C'est du temps perdu.  
It is lost time.

### 5.0.3 Advanced Participle Agreement

You learned in the first compound verb lesson that participles that follow an avoir auxiliary are invariable unless a direct object (often a pronoun) precedes the verb.

- Voici nos livres. Je les ai achetés hier.  
Here are our books. I bought them yesterday.
- Où est leur voiture ? Ils l'ont vendue ?  
Where is their car? Did they sell it?
- C'est la fille que j'ai vue.  
She is the girl that I saw.

An avoir participle also agrees with any form of quel + a noun as long as the noun is the object of the compound verb.

- Quelle femme avez-vous vue ?  
Which woman did you see?
- Quels bonbons a-t-il achetés ?  
Which candies did he buy?

This is also true for lequel (plus its other forms) and combien.

- Laquelle des filles as-tu vue ?  
Which of the girls did you see?
- Lesquelles de ces chemises a-t-il aimées ?  
Which of those shirts did he like?
- Combien de robes ta fille a-t-elle achetées ?  
How many dresses did your daughter buy?

Participles do not agree with indirect objects, y, nor en.

- Je leur ai parlé.  
I talked to them.
- J'y ai pensé.  
I thought about it.
- Nous en avons vendu.  
We have sold some.

### 5.0.4 C'est in the Compound Past

In the present indicative tense, *c'est* can be used to identify or describe nouns. In the *passé composé*, *être* takes *avoir* as an auxiliary. One consequence of this is that *ce* actually becomes *Ç'* because it must elide before the vowel beginnings of all forms of *avoir* while still retaining its original soft consonant sound.

- Ç'a été un succès !  
This has been a success!
- Ç'a été un désastre !  
This has been a disaster!

Since this form is somewhat awkward, many Francophones prefer to use the *imparfait* instead.

- C'était très agréable.  
That was very pleasant.
- C'était très bon pour l'économie.  
This was very good for the economy.

In informal writing, you may also see the ungrammatical form *Ç'a a été*. When spoken, both "A" sounds fuse into one long vowel. Erudite Francophones may also use *ce fut* as a substitute. This alternative uses the *passé simple* tense, one of French's literary tenses.

- Ce fut bref mais intense !  
That was short but intense!
- Ce fut une année très intéressante.  
This has been a very interesting year.
- Tu as beaucoup changé.  
You have changed a lot.
- Il a eu un chien.  
He has had a dog.
- Nous avons vécu au Canada.  
We have lived in Canada.
- J'ai compris.  
I did understand.
- Je suis rentrée très tard.  
I have returned very late.
- Elle est rentrée.  
She has returned.
- Si, j'ai voulu cette voiture.  
Yes, I have wanted that car. ("Si" can be 'yes' in a response to a question.)
- Quelle page as-tu apprise ?  
Which page have you learned?
- Désolé, ce n'est pas la boisson que j'ai commandée.  
Sorry, this is not the drink that I ordered.

## 5.1 Numbers 2

UGH. There are so many notes!  $74 =$  [sixty fourteen]? WTF?

- le chiffre  
the figure
- Quelle est la somme ?  
What is the sum?
- Trois et cinq sont des nombres.  
3 and 5 are numbers.
- Une dizaine de canards  
a dozen ducks
- Il est cinq heures trente.  
It is 5:30.
- C'est un nombre à deux chiffres.  
It is a two-digit number.
- Quarante-sept ans  
47 years
- Cinquante personnes travaillent ici.  
50 people work here.
- J'ai soixante-dix amis.  
I have 70 friends.
- Notre oncle a soixante-et-onze ans.  
Our uncle is 71 years old.
- J'ai quatre-vingts chemises.  
I have 80 shirts.
- Votre grand-père a quatre-vingt-un ans.  
Your grandfather is 81 years old.
- Notre grand-mère a quatre-vingt-neuf ans.  
Our grandmother is 89 years old.
- Elles parlent pendant quatre-vingt-dix minutes.  
They speak for 90 minutes.
- Nous avons cent ours !  
We have 100 bears!
- Je connais des centaines de personnes.  
I know hundreds of people.
- Nous avons un mille pièces.  
We have 1000 pieces.
- un milliard  
one billion

## 5.2 Feelings

- Tu as des **pensées** bizarres.  
You have weird thoughts
- avec **plaisir**  
with pleasure
- Le garçon a **peur** des chiens.  
The boy is afraid of dogs.
- un grand moment de **bonheur**  
a big moment of happiness
- Oui, avec joie.  
Yes, with joy.
- **Le désir** et **la peur**  
the desire and the fear
- Je connais ce **sentiment**.  
I know that feeling.
- J'ai rêvé d'elle.  
I dreamed of her.
- Il est temps pour **la paix**.  
It is time for peace.
- Tu es notre seul **espoir**.  
You are our only hope.
- J'aime **le goût** du chocolat.  
I like the taste of chocolate.
- Elle joue avec mon sentiments.  
She plays with my emotions.
- Je suis une personne très triste.  
I am a very sad person.
- Nous avons honte.  
We are ashamed.
- C'est seulement son **imagination**.  
It is only his imagination.
- **La douleur** est légère.  
The pain is light.
- Je ne suis pas en colère.  
I am not angry.
- Je suis très heureux de vous voir.  
I am very happy to see you.
- Je crois en l'amitié.  
I believe in friendship.

- Cette nouvelle coupe de cheveux est une **horreur** !  
That new haircut is horrible!
- Cet enfant a un joli **sourire**.  
That child has a pretty smile.
- Elle me rend heureuse.  
She makes me happy.
- Je suis si heureux.  
I am so happy.
- Je hais les légumes.  
I hate vegetables.
- Il a envie de pleurer.  
He feels like crying.
- Elle a beaucoup de souvenirs.  
She has a lot of memories.
- Et pourquoi souffrir ?  
And why suffer?
- Je suis de bonne humeur.  
I am in a good mood.
- Le vin est doux.  
The wine is sweet.
- Si ma mémoire est bonne.  
If my memory is good.
- Elle a une bonne **odeur**.  
She has a good scent.
- Ton chapeau est-il doux ?  
Is your hat soft?
- Dans tes rêves !  
In your dreams!
- Les parents sont gênés.  
The parents are embarrassed.
- Je ne suis pas inquiet.  
I am not worried.
- Il a sommeil.  
He is sleepy.
- **La confiance** est importante.  
Confidence is important.
- Elle n'est pas fatiguée.  
She is not tired.
- C'est une personne de confiance.  
She is trustworthy.

- Je suis sûr.  
I am sure
- Elle doit te haïr.  
She must hate you.
- Le lion a soif.  
The lion is thirsty.
- Avez-vous faim ?  
Are you hungry?
- Elle est amoureuse de sa voiture.  
She is in love with her car.
- Ce cheval est nul !  
That horse is useless!
- Ça devient ennuyeux.  
That is becoming boring.
- C'est tout à fait juste.  
It is absolutely fair.
- Il est amoureux d'une femme qui ne l'aime pas.  
He is in love with a woman who does not love him.

### 5.3 Possessives 3

Possessive pronouns replace a possessive adjective + a noun. Like most other pronouns, they agree in gender and number with the noun they replace.

- Est-ce ton chapeau ?  
Is that your hat?
- Oui, c'est le mien.  
Yes, it's mine.

Possessive pronouns take different forms depending on how many things are possessed. First, let's take another look at the forms used when a single thing is possessed.

Owners	Person	English	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular
singular	1st	mine	le mien	la mienne
singular	2nd	yours	le tien	la tienne
singular	3rd	his/hers	la sien	la sienne
plural	1st	ours	le nôtre	la nôtre
plural	2nd	yours	le vôtre	la vôtre
plural	3rd	theirs	le leur	la leur

To change these to the forms used when multiple things are possessed, simply add an -s to the end of the pronoun and change the definite article to les.

Owners	Person	English	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular
singular	1st	mine	les miens	les miennes
singular	2nd	yours	les tiens	les tiennes
singular	3rd	his/hers	les siens	les siennes
plural	1st	ours	les nôtres	les nôtres
plural	2nd	yours	les vôtres	les vôtres
plural	3rd	theirs	les leurs	les leurs

Note that the plural forms here are invariable with gender.

- Ces enfants sont les miens.  
These (or “those”) children are mine.
- Ce sont les tiens.  
They are yours.
- Ces photos sont les siennes.  
These photos are his (or “hers”).
- Ces jupes sont les leurs.  
Those skirts are theirs.

Possessive pronouns act like modified nouns, so you must use *ce/c'* when referring to them with *être*.



- Est-ce ton fils ?  
Is he your son?
- Oui, c'est le mien. (Not il est)  
Yes, he is mine.
- Est-ce que ce sont tes filles ?  
Are they your daughters?
- Oui, ce sont les miennes. (Not elles sont)  
Yes, they are mine.
- J'ai fermé ta chambre mais pas les leurs.  
I have closed your room but not theirs.
- Ceci est un cadeau pour vous et les vôtres.  
Here is a gift for you and yours.
- Peut-il apporter ses photos et les leurs ?  
Can he bring his photos and theirs?
- Il vient avec ses enfants et nous avec les nôtres.  
He comes with his children and we with ours.
- Voici tes clés et voilà les nôtres.  
Here are your keys and there are ours.

## 5.4 Demonstratives 3

Demonstrative pronouns (e.g. “this one” or “those”) replace and agree with a demonstrative adjective + noun. You learned four such pronouns in “Demonstratives 2”.

Type	Adjective + Noun $\Rightarrow$ Pronoun	English
masculine singular	ce + noun $\Rightarrow$ celui	the one / this / that
masculine plural	ces + noun $\Rightarrow$ ceux	the ones / these / those
feminine singular	cette + noun $\Rightarrow$ celle	the one / this / that
feminine plural	ces + noun $\Rightarrow$ celles	the ones / these / those

Demonstratives like *ce* and *celui* are ambiguous and can mean either “this” or “that”. To remove this ambiguity, you can add a suffix to the end of each pronoun. Add *-ci* for “this/these” and *-là* for “that/those”.

- Tu veux celui-ci.  
You want this one.
- Je préfère celle-là.  
I prefer that one.
- Celles-ci sont noires.  
These are black.
- Elle n’aime pas celles-là.  
She doesn’t like those.

These suffixes can also be used with demonstrative adjectives in many situations.

- Je suis très occupé ces jours-ci.  
I am very busy these days.
- Ils vous ont vus ce jour-là.  
They saw you that day.
- Le magasin est-il sur ce côté-ci de la rue ?  
Is the store on this side of the street?
- Elle connaît ce type-là.  
She knows that guy.

In conversations, be aware that using demonstrative pronouns like *celui-là* to refer to people who aren’t present can be considered condescending.

## 5.5 Adjectives 4

The French past participle, which you learned in “Verbs: Compound Past”, can often be used as an adjective. Conveniently, this also occurs in English, though we may sometimes use the present participle instead of the past.

- L’homme fatigué veut dormir.  
The tired man wants to sleep.
- L’examen est terminé.  
The test is finished.
- Je ne suis pas occupé.  
I am not busy.
- On va parler avec les parties intéressées.  
We will speak with the interested parties.

### 5.5.1 Neuf

The adjective neuf (“new”) describes something that has just been created or manufactured. Don’t confuse it with nouveau, which describes something that has just been acquired by a new owner but may already be quite old. Remember that nouveau becomes nouvel in front of vowel sounds.

- J’achète seulement des sous-vêtements neufs.  
I only buy new underwear.
- Cette voiture est flambant neuve.  
This car is brand-new.
- Voici ma nouvelle montre ancienne.  
Here’s my new antique watch.
- J’aime ton nouvel appartement.  
I like your new apartment.

While neuf (new) and neuf (9) are homonyms, you can often distinguish them based on context. For instance, neuf (9) comes before its noun, isn’t accompanied by any articles, and is invariable.

- J’ai neuf livres.  
I have nine books.
- J’ai des livres neufs.  
I have new books.

Français	English	Français	English	Français	English
futur	future	super	great	certain	certain
récent	recent/new	actuels	actual	délicieuse	delicious
prochain	next	aléatoire	random	fragile	fragile
agréable	pleasant	général	general	original	original
inconnu	unknown	nouvelle	new	étroit	tight/narrow
magique	magical	présent	present/here	exact	number
magnifique	magnificent/gorgeous	technique	technical	curieux	curious
universel	universal	national	national	rare	rare
autre	another/other	double	double	suivante	following
brillant	shiny/brilliant	occupé	busy	utile	useful
culturel	cultural	physique	physical	pur	pure
demi-	half (of a)	nécessaire	necessary	faible	weak
excellente	excellent	frais	fresh	extraordinaire	extraordinary
mince	thin	moderne	modern	étrangè	strange
gratuit	free	immense	immense	confortable	comfortable
international	international	supérieur	superior	lente	slow
mondial	global	publique	public	intéressé	interested
neuf	new	extrême	extreme	sympathique	nice/sympathetic
positif	positive	ouvert	open	court	short
négatif	negative	capable	capable	grave	serious
professionnel	professional	classique	classic	vrai	true/genuine

- Je veux une autre chose.  
I want something else.
- En général c'est vert.  
Generally it is green.
- Je ne suis pas occupé maintenant.  
I am not currently busy.
- Je suis certain de cela.  
I am certain of that.
- Il termine sa carrière l'année suivante.  
He finishes his career next year.

## 5.6 Pronouns 2

French has three sets of personal object pronouns: direct object pronouns (from “Pronouns 1”), indirect object pronouns, and disjunctive pronouns.

English	Direct Object	Indirect Object	Disjunctive
me	me	me	moi
you (singular)	te	te	toi
him	le	<b>lui</b>	<b>lui</b>
her	la	<b>lui</b>	<b>elle</b>
us	nous	nous	nous
you (plural)	vous	vous	vous
them (masculine)	les	<b>leur</b>	<b>eux</b>
them (feminine)	les	<b>leur</b>	<b>elles</b>

Notice that only the third-person pronouns differ between direct and indirect objects.

### 5.6.1 Indirect Objects

As you learned in “Verbs: Present 2”, indirect objects are nouns that are indirectly affected by a verb; they are usually introduced by a preposition.

- Il écrit une lettre à Mireille.  
He is writing a letter to Mireille.
- Vous pouvez parler aux juges.  
You can talk to the judges.
- Elle parle de son amie.  
She is talking about her friend.

A personal indirect object pronoun can replace à + indirect object. For instance, the first two examples above could be changed to the following:

- Il lui écrit une lettre.  
He is writing a letter to her.
- Vous pouvez leur parler.  
You can talk to them.

Also, il faut can take an indirect object pronoun to specify where the burden falls.

- Il lui faut manger.  
He has to eat. / She has to eat.
- Il nous faut le croire.  
We have to believe it/him. / It is necessary for us to believe it/him.

### 5.6.2 Disjunctive Pronouns

Disjunctive pronouns (a.k.a. stressed or tonic pronouns) must be used in certain situations. For instance, only disjunctive pronouns can follow prepositions.

- Il parle avec toi.  
He speaks with you.
- Elle pèse moins que moi.  
She weighs less than me.
- Ils sont rentrés chez eux.  
They returned home.
- C'est pour lui.  
This is for him.

Note that *lui* can be masculine or feminine when it's an indirect object, but it can only be masculine when it's disjunctive.

- Je lui parle. (indirect object)  
I am talking to him/her.
- Je parle de lui. (disjunctive)  
I am talking about him.
- Je parle d'elle. (disjunctive)  
I am talking about her.

The construction *être + à + disjunctive pronoun* indicates possession.

- Le livre est à moi.  
The book is mine.
- Celui-là est à toi.  
That one is yours.
- Ceux-là sont à eux.  
Those are theirs.

However, using *à + pronoun* is incorrect when a verb can accept a preceding pronoun.

- Incorrect: Je parle à lui.
- Correct: Je lui parle.

Disjunctive pronouns are also used for emphasis, for multiple subjects, or in sentence fragments without a verb.

- Moi ? Je l'aime.  
Me? I love him.
- Lui et elle mangent.  
He and she are eating.
- Vous aussi.  
You, too.

### 5.6.3 Indirect Objects and Y

For most verbs, personal indirect object pronouns like *lui* can only refer to people or animals, but you can use the adverbial pronoun *y* for inanimate things.

- Elle ressemble à sa mère. ⇒ Elle lui ressemble.  
She resembles her.
- Ça ressemble à un robot. ⇒ Ça y ressemble.  
It resembles it.

Some verbs allow personal pronouns like *lui* to be used with anything you can personify. These verbs are *dire à*, *demander à*, *donner à*, *parler à*, *téléphoner à*, and *ressembler à*.

- L'enfant parle à son jouet. ⇒ L'enfant lui parle.
- Je demande un renseignement à la banque. ⇒ Je lui demande un renseignement.

Some French expressions don't allow any preceding indirect objects, notably *être à*, *faire attention à*, *s'habituer à*, *penser à*, *revenir à*, and *tenir à*.

- Tu fais attention à elle. (Not Tu lui fais...)  
You are paying attention to her.
- Il pense à elle. (Not Il lui pense...)  
He thinks of her.

Remember that *y* can also refer to locations.

- J'y vais.  
I'm going there.
- Il y était.  
He was there.

### 5.6.4 Quelque

The indefinite adjective *quelque* ("some") can be combined with pronouns or nouns to create indefinite pronouns. For instance, *chose* means "thing", so *quelque chose* means "something".

- Nous écrivons quelque chose.  
We are writing something.
- Je veux manger quelque chose.  
I want to eat something.

*Quelque* can combine and elide with *un* ("one") to give *quelqu'un* ("someone"), which is singular.

- Quelqu'un est ici.  
Someone is here.
- Je connais quelqu'un au restaurant.  
I know someone at the restaurant.

For multiple people or things, use the plural forms *quelques-uns* (masc) and *quelques-unes* (fem), which are normally translated as "a few", or perhaps "some". While *quelqu'un* only refers to people, *quelques-un(e)s* can refer to anything.

- Ce sont quelques-uns de nos meilleurs amis.  
These are a few of our best friends.
- Quelques-unes de ces questions sont difficiles.  
Some of these questions are difficult.
- Je suis d'accord avec eux.  
I agree with them.
- Pourquoi eux ?  
Why them?
- Merci pour tout.  
Thanks for everything.
- Il aide souvent les autres.  
He often helps others.
- Nous sommes sept, dont moi.  
We are seven, including me.
- Aucune !  
None!
- Je peux manger n'importe quoi.  
I can eat no matter quoi.
- J'ai le même.  
I have the same.
- Quelqu'un me disait ça.  
Someone said that to me.
- Elle n'a pas la même que nous.  
She does not have the same as us.



## 5.7 Infinitives 2

As you learned in Verbs: Infinitive 1, verbs in the infinitive mood are not conjugated and are not paired with a subject pronoun. The infinitive is more versatile in French than in English. For instance, an infinitive can act as a noun (where gerunds might be used in English).

- Faire du café est facile.  
Making coffee is easy.
- Cuisiner et nettoyer sont ses responsabilités.  
Cooking and cleaning are his responsibilities.

In French, the infinitive is also used for generalized instructions like those in product manuals, public notices, recipes, and proverbs.

- Lire le mode d'emploi avant utilisation.  
Read the instructions before using.
- Garder hors de la portée des enfants.  
Keep out of reach of children.
- Battre les œufs.  
Beat the eggs.
- Vaut mieux prévenir que guérir.  
It is worth more to prevent than to cure.

Conjugated verbs are the only verbs that can appear inside a negation, so when a negation is used with an infinitive, both parts of the negation come before the infinitive.

- Ne pas entrer.  
Do not enter.
- Ne rien administrer par la bouche.  
Do not administer by mouth.

An infinitive can also be used to pose a question. These sentences may not translate literally to English.

- Comment obtenir  $\tilde{A}$ ga ?  
How does one obtain that?
- Qui croire ?  
Whom should I believe?
- Quoi faire ?  
What can we do?
- Comment ne pas tomber amoureux d'elle ?  
How can I not fall in love with her?

### 5.7.1 Impersonal Expressions

Recall that the subject in the impersonal construction *il est* + adjective + *de* must be a dummy subject. If it's a real subject, you must use *à* instead of *de*.

- Il est impossible de vivre sur cette île.  
It is impossible to live on that island.

- Il est facile de comprendre le livre.  
It is easy to understand the book.
- Il est amusant de cuisiner.  
It is fun to cook. / Cooking is fun.
- Je n'aime pas ce livre. Il est difficile à comprendre.  
I don't like this book. It's difficult to understand.
- Ce plat est bon parce qu'il est facile à cuisiner.  
This dish is good because it is easy to cook.
- Il est difficile à faire.  
It is difficult to do.

### 5.7.2 Register

Communication in French can occur at several different levels of formality, which are called registers. Different registers may vary in word choice, sentence structure, and even pronunciation. For instance, the use of liaisons is relatively formal. By comparison, English verbal formality is arguably less intricate. The most obvious indication of register is pronoun choice. As you know by now, addressing someone with the pronoun *vous* is considered more formal. This is described by the French verb *vouvoyer*.

- Il doit vouvoyer son professeur.  
He must speak formally with his professor.
- Je ne veux pas vouvoyer mes amis.  
I don't want to address my friends formally.

The more familiar *tu* form should be used with friends, peers, relatives, or children. If you're not sure who's a *vous* and who's a *tu*, consider matching the register of your interlocutor. Alternatively, you can directly ask if you can speak informally by using the verb *tutoyer*.

- On peut se tutoyer ?  
Can we be on familiar terms?
- Je peux tutoyer mes amis.  
I can be on familiar terms with my friends.

Question structure is another key ingredient of register. Inversions are considered formal.

- Pouvons-nous nous tutoyer ?  
Can we be on familiar terms? (said very formally.)
- Comment allez-vous ?  
How are you?

Use the conditional forms of *aimer* and *vouloir* for polite requests. More on this in the “Verbs: Conditional” unit.

- J'aimerais une tasse de café, s'il vous plaît.  
I would like a cup of coffee, please.
- Je voudrais vous remercier.  
I would like to thank you.

### 5.7.3 Faire vs Rendre

In Verbs: Present 1, you learned about the causative faire, which can indicate that the subject has directed someone to perform an action. Notice that faire is followed by an infinitive here.

- Je le fais réparer.  
I am having it fixed.
- Elle lui a fait perdre 5 kilos.  
She made him/her/it lose 5 kilos.
- Je leur ai fait faire de l'exercice.  
I made them (get some) exercise.

The verb rendre ("to make") can also indicate that the subject has caused something to happen, but it's used with adjectives instead of verbs.

- Elle le rend heureux.  
She makes him happy.
- Ça me rend fou !  
That drives me crazy!
- L'erreur a rendu le texte incompréhensible.  
The error rendered the text incomprehensible.
- Je ne peux pas vous entendre.  
I cannot understand you.
- J'aime passer du temps avec elle.  
I like passing time with her.
- Merci de me laisser tranquille !  
Thanks for leaving me in peace!
- Il semble nous connaître.  
He seems to know us.
- À suivre  
to be continued
- Il a peur de tomber.  
He is afraid of falling.
- Je vais rester trois nuits.  
I am going to stay three nights.
- Il n'a pas envie de mourir.  
He does not feel like dying.
- Il est ici pour rester.  
It is here to stay.
- Je n'ai pas de temps à perdre.  
I do not have time to lose.
- Êtes-vous sûr de vouloir un cheval ?  
Are you sure you want a horse?