**Grammar: Present Tense**

**Overview**

The present tense in French, known as "le présent," is used to describe actions that are currently happening, habitual actions, and general truths. It is one of the most fundamental aspects of French grammar and forms the basis for constructing sentences in everyday conversation.

**Regular Verbs**

French verbs are categorized into three groups based on their infinitive endings: -er, -ir, and -re. Each group follows a regular pattern when conjugated in the present tense.

**1. -ER Verbs (e.g., parler - to talk)**  
To conjugate these verbs:

* Remove the "-er" ending from the infinitive.
* Add the following endings to the stem:

| **Pronoun** | **Ending** | **Example (parler)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| je | -e | je parle |
| tu | -es | tu parles |
| il/elle/on | -e | il parle |
| nous | -ons | nous parlons |
| vous | -ez | vous parlez |
| ils/elles | -ent | ils parlent |

**2. -IR Verbs (e.g., finir – to finish)**  
To conjugate these verbs:

* Remove the "-ir" ending from the infinitive.
* Add these endings:

| **Pronoun** | **Ending** | **Example (finir)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| je | -is | je finis |
| tu | -is | tu finis |
| il/elle/on | -it | *il finit* |

* nous \* |-issons \* *nous finissons* \*
* vous \* |-issez \* *vous finissez* \*
* ils/elles \* |-issent \* *ils finissent* \*

**3.-RE Verbs (e.g., vendre – to sell)**  
To conjugate these verbs:

* Remove the "-re" ending from the infinitive.
* Add these endings:

Pronoun Ending Example (vendre) je -s je vends tu -s tu vends il/elle/on -\_ il vend nous -ons nous vendons vous -ez vous vendez ils/elles -ent il vendent

Irregular Verbs

Some common irregular verbs do not follow regular patterns and must be memorized individually. Here are a few examples:

Être(to be)

Avoir(to have)

Aller(to go)

Faire(to do/make)

Conjugation table for être:

Pronoun Conjugation Example Sentence

Je suis Je suis étudiant.(I am a student.)

Tu es Tu es intelligent.(You are smart.)

Il/Elle /On est Il est médecin.(He is a doctor.)

Nous sommes Nous sommes amis.(We are friends.)

Vous êtes Vous êtes professeur.(You are a teacher.)

Ils/Elles sont Ils sont heureux.(They are happy.) Conjugation table for avoir:

Pronoun Conjugation Example Sentence

Je ai J'ai un livre.(I have a book.)

Tu as Tu as une voiture?(Do you have a car?)

Il /Elle On a Il elle on un chat .(He/she has cat )

Nous avons Nous avons des questions .(We have questions )

Vous avez Vous avez raison .(You right )

Ils elles ont Ils elles ont beaucoup d'amis . They many friends ) Common Uses of Present Tense Describing current actions : Je mange une pomme(I eating apple ) Habitual Actions : Elle lit tous les soirs(She reads every night ) General truths Les oiseaux chantent au printemps(Birds sing spring )

Practice Exercises

Fill blank correct form verb given brackets :

Nina \_\_\_\_ à la bibliothèque chaque jour(lire ).

Nous \_\_\_\_ souvent nos devoirs ensemble(faire ).

Vous \_\_\_ en vacances cet été ? aller .

With practice , mastering French present tense become second nature!