

On multilingual websites, all language versions of a page use the same URL by default. This URL is based on the given page's alias path. For example, the home page always has the following URL: `/Home`

If you want to see the same page in French, you need to change the culture by entering the URL with an **appropriate query string parameter**: `/Home?lang=fr-fr`

Once the language is selected, the system stores the preferred culture code in the visitor's browser using a cookie. This means that the given visitor automatically sees the French version when returning to `/Home` or another translated page, even without any parameters in the URL.

✓ Providing language selectors for website visitors

Having to type a URL with a query string manually would be inconvenient for visitors. You can provide a more friendly way for users to switch between cultures [using the Language data source web part](#).

Enforcing separate domains for languages

Having a different [domain name](#) for each culture is a good way to let visitors know that the particular version of the site is intended for a certain language audience. It is also the best option for multilingual websites with regard to [Search engine optimization](#).

For example, if the English version of your site is available under `domain.com`, the French version could use `domain.fr` and so on. This scenario uses a different countrycode toplevel domain, but you can set any other domain name format, such as unique subdomains for each culture.

To implement domain separation based on languages:

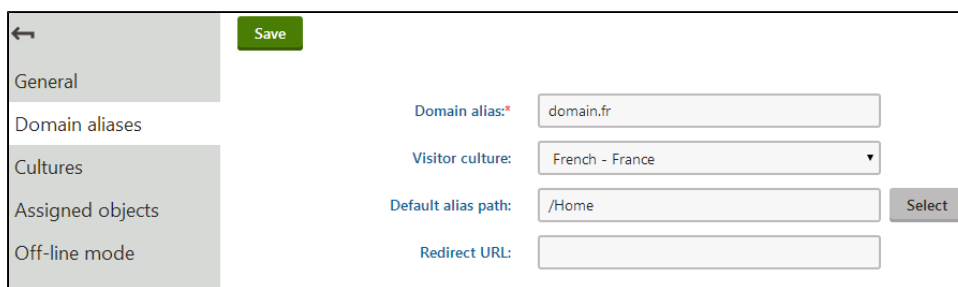
1. Open the **Sites** application.
2. Edit (✎) your site.
3. On the **General** tab, select your website's primary language in the **Visitor culture** field.
 - This assigns the given language to the site's main domain name.
4. Set up additional domain names for other languages as domain aliases on the **Domain aliases** tab.
 - Just like with the main domain, you can assign a language to each alias by selecting the matching culture in the **Visitor culture** field.



Configuration requirements

When setting up the **Visitor culture** of the site and its aliases, only assign each language to a single domain and do not use the *(Automatic)* value. Otherwise the system cannot determine with certainty which content culture to display.

Also make sure that your domain aliases do *not* use a **Redirect URL** leading to another domain name.



5. Open the **Settings** application.
6. Select the **URLs and SEO** category and enable the **Force domain culture** setting.
7. Click **Save**.



Note: You cannot use forced culture domains in combination with the language URL prefixes described in the next section.

The system now ensures the following:

- The default content culture is selected based on the domain name through which the website is opened.
- All page URLs (e.g. in navigation elements) are generated using the domain name to which the current content culture is assigned.
- When a user selects a different language through one of the language selection web parts, the system redirects the URL to the corresponding domain name.



Authentication with multiple domains

The user context is not carried over when switching between domains on the live site. If you are using standard Forms authentication, registered users who change the content culture while browsing need to log in separately on each language version of the website.

If this is a problem, you can work around it by implementing a single sign-on mechanism for all domains.

Using language prefixes for URLs

If you do not own a different domain name for each language version of the website, but still want to ensure unique URLs for each culture without adding query string parameters, you can use language prefixes. Language prefixes insert a subdirectory into the URL in format **<domain>/<language prefix>/<URL path>**, for example: `<domain>/fr-FR/Home`

To enable language prefixes, go to **Settings -> URLs and SEO**, and enable the **Use language prefix for URLs** setting.



Note: You cannot use language prefixes if the **Force domain culture** setting is enabled.

Unless you check the **Allow URLs without language prefixes** setting, the system automatically redirects all URLs without a language prefix to a corresponding URL that includes a language prefix (according to the current content culture).

If language prefixes are enabled, the language selection web parts used on your site generate links containing the appropriate URL prefix by default. If you wish to configure a specific web part to use links with the standard query string parameter, disable the web part's **Use culture specific URLs** property. Please keep in mind that all other settings still apply, so the resulting URLs may be redirected.

Changing the language prefix text

By default, the language prefix matches the culture code of the requested language. If a *culture alias* is set for the language, it takes precedence and the system uses the alias instead of the culture code. If you want to change the language prefix for a certain language, the best way is to set a culture alias.

For example, to change the language prefix for the French language to *France*:

1. Open the **Localization** application.
2. Select the **Cultures** tab.
3. Type *fr-fr* into the **Culture code** filter and click **Search**.
4. Edit (✎) the *French - France* culture.
5. Set the **Culture alias** property to *France*.
6. Click **Save**.

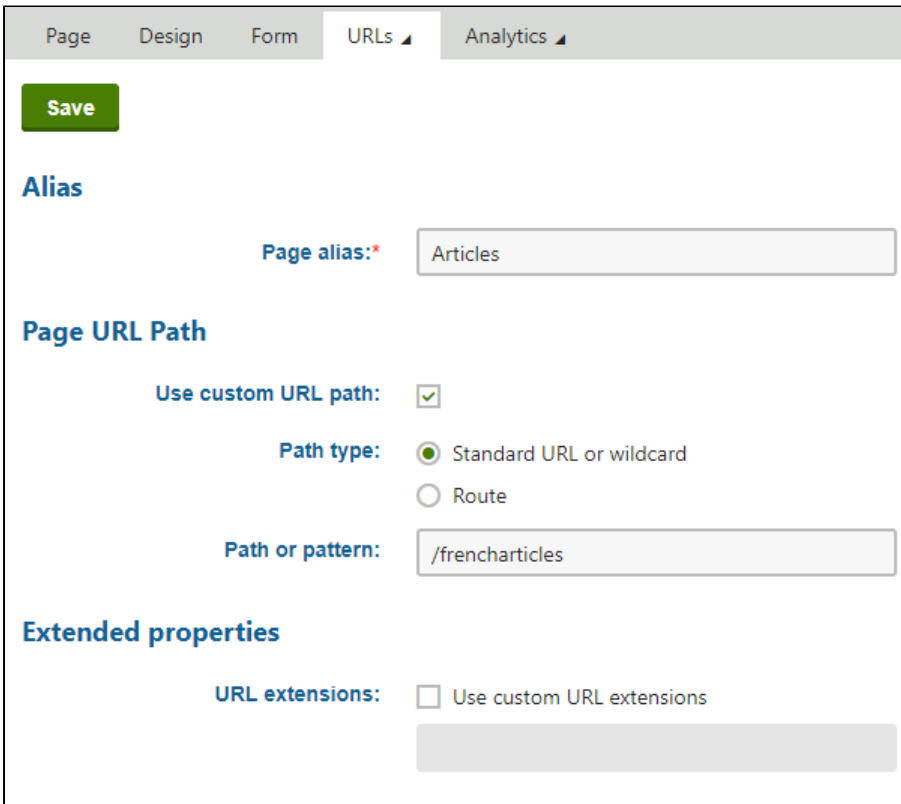
The system now displays the language prefix in URLs of French page as for example: `<domain>/France/Home`

Setting page URL path for different culture versions

Forcing culture domains or using language prefixes for URLs ensures that you have a different URL for every page culture version. You can use the following approach if the features described above are disabled or if you want different culture versions of pages to have different names in the URL path.

For example, if you want the French Articles page to have a different URL than the English version:

1. Open the **Pages** application, and select the Articles page in the content tree.
2. Select the *French* language in the selector below the content tree.
3. Open the **Properties** -> **URLs** tab.
4. In the **Page URL Path** section, check **Use custom URL path**.
5. Leave the **Standard URL or wildcard** option selected as the **Path type**.
6. Set the **Path or pattern** value to: */frencharticles*
7. Click **Save**.



The screenshot shows the 'URLs' tab in the Kentico Pages application. At the top, there are tabs for 'Page', 'Design', 'Form', 'URLs', and 'Analytics'. A green 'Save' button is in the top left. The 'Alias' section has a 'Page alias:' label and a text box containing 'Articles'. The 'Page URL Path' section has a 'Use custom URL path:' checkbox which is checked. Below it, the 'Path type:' section has two radio buttons: 'Standard URL or wildcard' (which is selected) and 'Route'. The 'Path or pattern:' text box contains '/frencharticles'. The 'Extended properties' section has a 'URL extensions:' checkbox which is unchecked, and an empty text box below it.

To try out how the custom URL works, sign out and view the English version of the website. If you open the URL *<domain>/frencharticles*, the website automatically switches the culture to French and displays the French version of the Articles page.

The Language data source web part reflects the custom URL paths for culture versions of pages when generating links to the corresponding culture version.

You can also set [Page aliases](#) for pages dedicated to specific cultures. When the page is accessed through this type of alias, the system always opens it in the corresponding culture.



Note: You may encounter problems when using wildcards in URLs on multilingual sites. You can find more details and a possible solution on the [Wildcard URLs](#) page.

Generating URL path based on page name path

If you want to use automatically generated culture-specific URLs for different culture versions of pages, you must disable the *Use custom URL path* setting on the *Properties* -> *URLs* tab to let the system generate URLs based on the page name path.

For example, an English culture version of the *Store* page can be located at the *<domain>/Store* URL while its French culture version can be named *Boutique* and located at the *<domain>/Boutique* URL.

To enable using page name paths for URL paths:

1. Open the **Settings** application.
2. Select the **URLs and SEO** category and enable the **Use name path for URL path** setting.
3. Click **Save**.

Note: The *Use name path for URL path* system setting indicates whether the *Use custom URL path* page setting is enabled for newly created pages. URL properties of pages created prior to enabling the system setting are not changed.

If you need to disable the *Use custom URL path* page setting for existing pages, you can do so manually via the Kentico API.



To prevent possible URL collisions, you can combine this approach with using [different domain names for each culture](#).