# Learn French

Welcome to the web course on French. This course is meant to be an on-line reference to French grammar and common vocabulary. The scope of this tutorial is not very deep. One may use these pages for a one-semester course at the beginners' level.

No attempt has been made to provide pronunciation guidelines for the French alphabet. If you know English well and want to speak French in the English way, you will probably be the last person to be understood even by a French. French pronunciation is dramatically different from English.

These pages should better be used with the help of an instructor. Self-study might be possible. But that is expected to be a little difficult.

## 1. Introduction

In this section, you need not bother too much about exact grammatical constructions followed in French. We list in the following pages a set of common words and idiomatic expressions that one should learn by heart. We discuss about French grammar in the next section.

- French alphabet
- Introduce yourself in French
- Some common expressions
- Numbers
- Expressions involving time

## 2. Grammar

### 2.1 Parts of speech

- Articles
- Nouns
    1. Genders
    2. Number
- Pronouns
- Adjectives
    1. Regular adjectives
    2. Irregular adjectives
    3. Antonyms
    4. Demonstrative adjectives
    5. Adjectives denoting quantity
- Verb conjugation - Present tense
    1. General conjugation patterns
    2. Conjugation patterns for some common verbs
    3. Some other verbs
    4. Reflexive verbs
- Prepositions
    1. Use of prepositions
    2. Appropriate prepositions after verbs
- Adverbs
    1. Some common adverbs
    2. Construction of adverbs from adjectives
    3. Position of an adverb in a sentence

### 2.2 Sentence construction

- Negative sentences
- Interrogative sentences
    1. Three forms of interrogative sentences
    2. WH questions
- Imperative sentences

## 3. Vocabulary

- Places
- Family
- Vehicles
- Common professions
- Some countries
- Body parts
- House
- Food and drink
- Colors
- Instruments and objects

### References

[1] Class notes of a course offered by the ‘Foreign Languages Section’, Indian Institute of Science.

[2] P. Dominique, J. Girardet, M. Verdelhan and V. Verdelhan, *Le nouveau sans frontières* **1** (Méthode de français), CLE International, 1988. (This is a nice introduction to French. Audio cassettes available with the book make it a valuable resource to learn French pronunciations. The book contains many good exercises that clarify the grammatical rules. It also helps build a rich vocabulary on a variety of items. The problem with the book is that it is written in French and hence it is not ideal for self-study for the beginners.)

[3] J. Bady, I. Greaves, A. Petetin, *Grammaire*, Hachette Livre, 1996. (This is basically an execrcise-book that deals with a (possibly more) in-depth study of French grammar. The examples provided are fairly illustrative and the coverage is extensive. This book is also written in French and is better to be studied with the help of an instructor.)

[4] The ARTFL project, Divisions of the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Chicago. (This is an on-line version of many utilities on French. In particular, look at the on-line French-English dictionary and the on-line verb conjugator. The data-base is reasonably large.)

[5] Jacques Léon, French Language Course. (A nice on-line introduction to French in html. Ideal for beginners and for self-study.)

### Note

I am a student of a French course offered by the Foreign Languages Section, Indian Institute of Science. Please do not expect much from these pages. I organized these pages from the class-notes for myself and the fellow-students. It’s my pleasure if you enjoy them too. I cannot rule out the possibility of errors (though I hope otherwise). If you find errors, write to me. Your suggestions and comments are most welcome.

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# 1. Introduction

## French alphabet

In addition to the 26 alphabetic letters **a** through **z**, French uses certain accented letters. We list these accents below. The first four are applicable to vowels and the fifth one to ‘c’ only. The last one is really not an accent. This symbol is, however, quite frequently used in French.

| Accent | Examples |
|---|---|
| L’accent aigu (acute or sharp accent) | année (year), étudiant (student), école (school) |
| L’accent grave (grave accent) | à (to, towards), père (father), où (where) |
| L’accent circonflexe (circumflex) | âge (age), tête (head), connaître (to know), hôtel (hotel), août (August) |
| Le Tréma (diaeresis) | Noël (Christmas), naïf (naive) |
| La Cédille (cedilla) | français (French), garçon (boy) |
| Trait d’union (hyphen) | Excusez-moi (Excuse me) |

## Introduce yourself in French

**Q:** Comment vous vous appelez? [What’s your name? (Lit. How do you call yourself?)]
**A:** Je m’appelle Barda. [My name is Barda. (Lit. I call myself Barda.)]

**Q:** Quel est votre nom? [What’s your name?]
**A:** Barda.

**Q:** Quel est votre prénom? [What’s your forename (first name)?]
**A:** Barda.

**Q:** Épelez votre nom. [Spell your name.]
**A:** B-a-r-d-a.

**Q:** Quel âge avez-vous? [What’s your age? (Lit. What age do you have?)]
**A:** J’ai 29 (vingt-neuf) ans. [I am 29 years old. (Lit. I have 29 years.)]

**Q:** Quelle est votre profession? [What is your profession?]
**A:** Je suis étudiant(e). [I am a student.]

**Q:** Quelle est votre adresse? [What’s your address?]
**A:** N 97, IISc, Bangalore 560 012

**Q:** Quelle est votre nationalité? [What’s your nationality?]
**A:** Je suis indien(-ne). [I am an Indian.]

**Q:** Où habitez-vous? [Where do you live?]
**A:** J’habite à Bangalore. [I live in Bangalore.]

**Q:** Où habitent vos parents? [Where do your parents live?]
**A:** Mes parents habitent à Calcutta. [My parents live in Calcutta.]

**Q:** Quelle est votre langue maternelle? [What is your mother tongue?]
**A:** Bangla.

# Some common expressions

| French | English |
|---|---|
| Allô | Hallo |
| bonjour | Good day |
| bonne journée | Have a good day |
| bon après-midi | Have a good afternoon |
| bonsoir | Good evening |
| bonne soirée | Have a good evening |
| bonne nuit | Good night |
| bonne année | Happy new year |
| tout le monde | everybody (Lit. all the world) |
| Bonsoir tout le monde. | Good evening everybody. |
| Comment allez-vous? | How are you? (Lit. How are you going?) |
| Comment vas tu? | How are you? (Informal) |
| - ça va / très bien / comme ci, comme ça / très mal | - good / very good / okay / bad |
| Et vous? / Et toi? | And you? |
| Vous allez bien? | Are you doing (lit. going) fine? |
| - Oui, ça va / Non, ça va pas | - Yes / No |
| Merci. | Thank you. |
| Merci beaucoup. | Thanks a lot. |
| - Service. / Je vous en prie. / Je t'en prie. | - I am at your service. |
| Pardon! | Sorry! |
| Je suis désolé (-e). | I am sorry. |
| Excusez-moi! | Excuse me! |
| Excuse-moi! | Excuse me! (Informal) |
| S'il vous plaît / S'il te plaît | Please |
| Répondez s'il vous plaît. | Please reply. |
| Au revoir | See you again. |
| Qu'est-ce que c'est? | What is this? |
| - C'est un livre / une chaise / une table. | - This is a book / chair / table. |
| Qui est-ce? | Who is this? |
| - C'est M./Mme./Mlle. Dupont / un homme / une femme. | - This is Mr./Mrs./Miss. Dupont / a man / a woman. |
| Comment fait-il aujourd'hui? | How is it (the weather) today? |
| - Il fait chaud / bien / doux / frais / froid / nuageux. | - It is hot / nice / gentle / fresh (or cool) / cold / cloudy. |
| - Il neige / pleut / gèle. | - It is snowing / raining / freezing. |
| - Il y a du soleil / vent / brouillard. | - It's a sunny / windy / foggy day. |
| Quelle heure est-il? | What is the time? |
| Quelle heure avez-vous? | What is the time? (Lit. What time do you have?) |
| - Il est sept heures. | - It is seven o'clock. |
| [avoir + mal + à]<br>J'ai mal à la tête.<br>Elle a mal au dos.<br>Nous avons mal aux jambes. | [to have pain at]<br>I have a headache.<br>She has a back pain.<br>We have pain in the legs. |
| Mon dieu! | My God! |
| Bonne chance! | Good luck! |
| Bon appétit! | Enjoy your meal! (Lit. Good appetite!) |
| À vos (nos) santés | To your (our) health |
| À bientôt! | See you soon! |
| Bon voyage! | Have a nice trip! (Lit. Good journey!) |
| Bonnes vacances! | Happy vacation! |

# Numbers

| Number | Ordinal (abbreviation) |
|---|---|
| 0 - zéro | |
| 1 - un | premier ($1^{er}$) |
| 2 - deux | deuxième or second ($2^{e}$) |
| 3 - trois | troisième ($3^{e}$) |
| 4 - quatre | quatrième ($4^{e}$) |
| 5 - cinq | cinquième ($5^{e}$) |
| 6 - six | sixième ($6^{e}$) |
| 7 - sept | septième ($7^{e}$) |
| 8 - huit | huitième ($8^{e}$) |
| 9 - neuf | neuvième ($9^{e}$) |
| 10 - dix | dixième ($10^{e}$) |
| 11 - onze | onzième ($11^{e}$) |
| 12 - douze | douzième ($12^{e}$) |
| 13 - treize | treizième ($13^{e}$) |
| 14 - quatorze | quatorzième ($14^{e}$) |
| 15 - quinze | quinzième ($15^{e}$) |
| 16 - seize | seizième ($16^{e}$) |
| 17 - dix-sept | dix-septième ($17^{e}$) |
| 18 - dix-huit | dix-huitième ($18^{e}$) |
| 19 - dix-neuf | dix-neuvième ($19^{e}$) |
| 20 - vingt | vingtième ($20^{e}$) |
| 21 - vingt et un | vingt-et-unième ($21^{e}$) |
| 22 - vingt-deux | vingt-deuxième ($22^{e}$) |
| 23 - vingt-trois | vingt-troisième ($23^{e}$) |
| 29 - vingt-neuf | vingt-neuvième ($29^{e}$) |
| 30 - trente | trentième ($30^{e}$) |
| 31 - trente et un | trente-et-unième ($31^{e}$) |
| 32 - trente-deux | trente-deuxième ($32^{e}$) |
| 33 - trente-trois | trente-troisième ($33^{e}$) |
| 39 - trente-neuf | trente-neuvième ($39^{e}$) |
| 40 - quarante | quarantième ($40^{e}$) |
| 41 - quarante et un | quarante-et-unième ($41^{e}$) |
| 42 - quarante-deux | quarante-deuxième ($42^{e}$) |
| 43 - quarante-trois | quarante-troisième ($43^{e}$) |
| 49 - quarante-neuf | quarante-neuvième ($49^{e}$) |
| 50 - cinquante | cinquantième ($50^{e}$) |
| 51 - cinquante et un | cinquante-et-unième ($51^{e}$) |
| 52 - cinquante-deux | cinquante-deuxième ($52^{e}$) |
| 53 - cinquante-trois | cinquante-troisième ($53^{e}$) |
| 59 - cinquante-neuf | cinquante-neuvième ($59^{e}$) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 60 - soixante | soixantième (60$^{e}$) |
| 61 - soixante et un | soixante-et-unième (61$^{e}$) |
| 62 - soixante-deux | soixante-deuxième (62$^{e}$) |
| 63 - soixante-trois | soixante-troisième (63$^{e}$) |
| 69 - soixante-neuf | soixante-neuvième (69$^{e}$) |
| 70 - soixante-dix | soixante-dixième (70$^{e}$) |
| 71 - soixante et onze | soixante-et-onzième (71$^{e}$) |
| 72 - soixante-douze | soixante-douzième (72$^{e}$) |
| 73 - soixante-treize | soixante-treizième (73$^{e}$) |
| 79 - soixante-dix-neuf | soixante-dix-neuvième (79$^{e}$) |
| 80 - quatre-vingts | quatre-vingtième (80$^{e}$) |
| 81 - quatre-vingt-un | quatre-vingt-unième (81$^{e}$) |
| 82 - quatre-vingt-deux | quatre-vingt-deuxième (82$^{e}$) |
| 83 - quatre-vingt-trois | quatre-vingt-troisième (83$^{e}$) |
| 89 - quatre-vingt-neuf | quatre-vingt-neuvième (89$^{e}$) |
| 90 - quatre-vingt-dix | quatre-vingt-dixième (90$^{e}$) |
| 91 - quatre-vingt-onze | quatre-vingt-onzième (91$^{e}$) |
| 92 - quatre-vingt-douze | quatre-vingt-douzième (92$^{e}$) |
| 93 - quatre-vingt-treize | quatre-vingt-treizième (93$^{e}$) |
| 99 - quatre-vingt-dix-neuf | quatre-vingt-dix-neuvième (99$^{e}$) |
| 100 - cent | centième (100$^{e}$) |
| 101 - cent un | cent-unième (101$^{e}$) |
| 199 - cent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf | cent-quatre-vingt-dix-neuvième (199$^{e}$) |
| 200 - deux cents | deux-centième (200$^{e}$) |
| 1.000 - mille | millième (1.000$^{e}$) |
| 10.000 - dix milles | dix-millième (10.000$^{e}$) |
| 100.000 - cent milles | cent-millième (100.000$^{e}$) |
| 1.000.000 - million | millionième (1.000.000$^{e}$) |

# Expressions involving time

## Time in the day

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| matin, *m* | morning |
| midi, *m* | noon |
| après-midi, *m* | afternoon |
| soir, *m* | evening |
| nuit, *f* | night |
| minuit, *f* | mid-night |

## Days in the week

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| lundi | Monday |
| mardi | Tuesday |
| mercredi | Wednesday |
| jeudi | Thusrday |
| vendredi | Friday |
| samedi | Saturday |
| dimanche | Sunday |

## Months in the year

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| janvier | January |
| février | February |
| mars | March |
| avril | April |
| mai | May |
| juin | June |
| juillet | July |
| août | August |
| septembre | September |
| octobre | October |
| novembre | November |
| décembre | December |

## Units

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| seconde, *f* | second |
| minute, *f* | minute |
| heure, *f* | hour |
| jour, *m* | day |
| semaine, *f* | week |
| mois, *m* | month |
| an, *m* | year |
| année, *f* | year |
| décennie, *f* | decade |
| siècle, *m* | century |

## Seasons

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| été, *f* | summer |
| automne, *f* | autumn |
| hiver, *m* | winter |
| printemps, *m* | spring |

## Today etc.

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| maintenant | now |
| aujourd'hui | today |
| demain | tomorrow |
| après demain | day after tomorrow |
| hier | yesterday |
| avant hier | day before yesterday |

## Clock time

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| Quelle heure est-il? | What's the time? (Lit. What hour is it?) |
| Quelle heure avez-vous? | What's the time (by your watch)? (Lit. What time do you have?) |
| Il est une heure. | It is one o'clock. |
| Il est cinq heures. | It is five o'clock. |
| Il est cinq heures quinze. | It is 5:15. |
| Il est cinq heures et quart. | It is quarter past five. |
| Il est cinq heures vingt-trois. | It is 5:23. |
| Il est cinq heures et demie. | It is half past five. |
| Il est six heures moins le quart. | It is quarter to six. |
| Il est six heures moins dix. | It is ten to six. |
| Il est dix-huit heures. | It is eighteen hours. |
| Il est midi. | It is 12:00 noon. |
| Il est midi et quart. | It is 12:15 pm. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Il est minuit. | It is 12:00 midnight. |
| à six heures | at six o'clock |
| à six heures et demie | at half past six |
| de six heures à neuf heurs | from six o'clock to nine o'clock |
| Je commence mon travail à huit heures et demie. | I start my work at half past eight. |
| Je finis mon travail à dix-sept heures. | I finish my work at seventeen hours. |
| Je travaille de 8h30 à 17h. | I work from 8:30 to 17:00. |
| neuf heures du matin | nine o'clock in the morning |
| cinq heures de l'après-midi | five o'clock in the afternoon |
| huit heures du soir | eight o'clock in the evening |

## Other expressions

| **French** | **English** |
|---|---|
| être / arriver en avance | to be / arrive before time |
| être / arriver à l'heure | to be / arrive on time |
| être / arriver en retard | to be / arrive late |
| | |
| horaire, *m* | time-table (for train, plane etc.) |
| emploi du temps, *m* | diary for appointment |
| agenda, *m* | appointment book |
| horloge, *m* | clock |
| montre, *f* | wrist watch |
| réveil, *m* | alarm clock |
| pendule, *f* | pendulum |

# 2. Grammer

## 2.1 Parts of Speech

# Articles

### Definite article

**le** masculine, singular
**Example:** le garçon (the boy), le livre (the book)

**la** feminine, singular
**Example:** la fille (the girl), la chaise (the chair)

**l'** special form (masculine or feminine, singular) when followed by a vowel or vowel sound
**Example:** l'école (the school), l'hôpital (the hospital)

**les** plural (masculine and feminine)
**Example:** les garçons (the boys), les filles (the girls)

### Indefinite article

**un** masculine, singular
**Example:** un homme (a man), un livre (a book)

**une** feminine, singular
**Example:** une femme (a woman), une chaise (a chair)

**des** plural (masculine and feminine)
**Example:** des hommes (men), des femmes (women)

**Note:** The concept of a plural form of the indefinite article might look alien (and surprising) to you. But this is quite often used in French. There is no equivalent of 'des' in English (and in German, too). The difference between 'les livres' and 'des livres' is that 'les livres' refer to a specific set of books, whereas 'des livres' refer to 'some books' or books in general. Well, this rule is rather over-simplified. But don't mind. We will see enough examples of both 'les' and 'des' throughout this tutorial.

### Partitive article

The definite article before an abstract or uncountable noun often takes a special form called 'l'article partitif'. These forms are given below:

**du** masculine, singular
**Example:** du café (the coffee), du travail (the work)

**de la** feminine, singular
**Example:** de la beauté (the beauty), de la bière (the beer)

**de l'** special form (masculine or feminine, singular) when followed by a vowel or vowel sound
**Example:** de l'eau (the water)

**des** plural (masculine and feminine)
**Example:** des fruits (the fruits)

These articles are used in sentences as illustrated in the following examples:

Nous avons du temps. - We have the time.

Voudriez-vous manger du boeuf? - Would you like to eat beef?
J’ai de la chance. - I have the chance (or luck).
Nous buvons de l’eau. - We drink water.

# Nouns

## Gender

Every French noun has a gender, which is either ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. (There is NO ‘neuter’ gender in French.)

**Some masculine nouns:** livre (book), hôpital (hospital), bras (arm), vélo (bicycle), magasin (shop), aéroport (airport), piano (piano), mot (word), matin (morning), chemin (street), village (village), soleil (sun), Pakistan (Pakistan).

**Some feminine nouns:** chaise (chair), pharmacie (drug store), jambe (leg), moto (motor-cycle), boutique (shop), gare (railway station), musique (music), phrase (sentence), nuit (night), rue (road), ville (city), lune (moon), Inde (India).

It is apparent from the above examples that no good rule decides the gender of a noun. One must remember it. In some specific cases, however, we can frame certain rules:

### Human beings

| masculine | feminine |
|---|---|
| homme (man) | femme (woman) |
| garçon (boy) | fille (girl) |
| père (father) | mère (mother) |
| frère (brother) | soeur (sister) |
| fiancé (boy friend) | fiancée (girl friend) |
| roi (king) | reine (queen) |
| prince (prince) | princesse (princess) |

### Professions

| masculine | feminine |
|---|---|
| acteur (actor) | actrice (actress) |
| chanteur (male singer) | chanteuse (female singer) |
| étudiant (male student) | étudiante (female student) |
| médecin (male doctor) | médecin (lady doctor) |

Note that there is again no rule that tells how to generate the feminine form from the masculine form (and vice versa).

### Regular suffixes

For certain nouns, the termination patterns (i.e. the suffixes) determine the genders of the nouns. For example, a noun that ends with ‘age’ is usually masculine [Example: ‘village’ (village) is masculine. Exception: ‘plage’ (beach) is feminine]. We list here a set of regular suffixes and the corresponding genders. For some of these, there are exceptions. The rules are, nevertheless, useful in practice and should be remembered.

| Suffix | Gender | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| **age** | masculine | le visage (the face), le garage (the garage), l’étage (the floor, storey), le pourcentage (the percentage), le reportage (the report) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ée** | feminine | la journée (the day), la soirée (the evening), l'année (the year), la chaussée (road), la poupée (the doll, puppet) |
| **ement** | masculine | l'appartement (the apartment), le gouvernement (the government), le vêtement (the cloth), l'amusement (the entertainment), l'avancement (the acceleration), le placement (the housing or accommodation) |
| **esse** | feminine | l'addresse (the address), la vitesse (the speed), la jeunesse (the youth), la princesse (the princess), la tigresse (the tigress), la confesse (the confession) |
| **ie** | feminine | la vie (the life), l'académie (the academy), la batterie (the battery), l'économie (economy), la librairie (the book shop), la boulangerie (the bakery), la roupie (the rupee) |
| **ier** | masculine | le cahier (the exercise-book or notebook), le calendrier (the calendar), l'escalier (the staircase), le cendrier (the ash-tray), l'entier (the integer), le papier (the paper) |
| **isme** | masculine | l'hypnotisme (the hypnotism), le magnétisme (the magnetism), le mécanisme (the mechanism), l'optimisme (the optimism), le pessimisme (the pessimism), le tourisme (the tourism) |
| **oir** | masculine | le couloir (the corridor, passage), le miroir (the mirror), le mouchoir (the handkerchief), le rasoir (the safety razor), le soir (the evening) |
| **té** | feminine | la capacité (the capacity), l'égalité (the equality), l'électricité (the electricity), la nationalité (the nationality), la possibilité (the possibility) |
| **tion** | feminine | l'éducation (the education), la négation (the negation), la ponction (the puncture), la souscription (the subscription) |
| **ure** | feminine | l'aventure (the adventure), la confiture (the jam), l'heure (the hour), la mercure (the mercury), la température (the temperature), la voiture (the car) |

### Special nouns

- The name of a country is feminine if it either starts with a vowel or ends with 'e'. An exception to this rule is: 'Mexique' (Mexico) is masculine.
- All languages are masculine.

## Number

In general the plural form of a French noun is obtained by appending an 's' to the singular form. Some examples are given below:

| Singular | Plural |
|---|---|
| la table (the table) | les tables (the tables) |
| une main (a hand) | deux mains (two hands) |
| mon livre (my book) | mes livres (my books) |
| une bouteille de vin (a bottle of wine) | des bouteilles de vin (bottles of wine) |

There are many exceptions to this simple rule. For some specific suffixes of the singular form of the noun, the plural form can be derived following some specific rules. In the other cases, the plural form is completely irregular. Let's take examples.

**Suffix 'al' and 'ail' change to the suffix 'aux' in the plural form.**

un cheval (a horse) - des chevaux (horses)
un animal (an animal) - des animaux (animals)
un journal (a magazine or newspaper) - des journaux (magazines or newspapers)
un travail (a work) - des travaux (works)

**Nouns ending with 'eu', 'ou' or 'eau' append an 'x' in the plural form.**

le cheveu (the hair, singular) - les cheveux (the hair, plural)
le jeu (the game) - les jeux (the games)

le bijou (the jewel) - les bijoux (the jewels)
l'oiseau (the bird) - les oiseaux (the birds)

**Nouns ending with 's' and 'x' do not change in the plural form.**

un bras (an arm) - deux bras (two arms)
un mois (a month) - douze mois (twelve months)
un fils (a son) - trois fils (three sons)
un prix (a prize) - cent prix (hundred prizes)

**Irregular plurals**

un oeil (an eye) - deux yeux (two eyes)
monsieur (Mr.) - messieurs (Mr. - plural)
madame (Mrs.) - mesdames (Mrs. - plural)
mademoiselle (Miss.) - mesdemoiselles (Miss. - plural)

# Pronouns

| Singular | | Plural | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **French** | **English** | **French** | **English** |
| Je | I | Nous | We |
| Tu | You (Informal) | | |
| Vous | You (Formal) | Vous | You |
| Il/Elle | He/She | Ils/Elles | They |

### Possessive adjectives

| English | French | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **masculine singular** | **feminine singular** | **plural** |
| my | mon | ma | mes |
| your | ton | ta | tes |
| his/her | son | sa | ses |
| our | notre | notre | nos |
| your | votre | votre | vos |
| their | leur | leur | leurs |

## Examples

J'habite à Bangalore. - I live at Bangalore.
Mon frère habite à Bombay. - My brother lives at Bombay.
Ma soeur habite à Madras. - My sister lives at Madras.
Mes parents habitent à Calcutta. - My parents live at Calcutta.
Où habitent vos grand-parents? - Where do your grand-parents live?

### Alternative form of the pronouns

| **Pronoun** | Je | Tu | Il | Elle | Nous | Vous | Ils | Elles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alternative form** | Moi | Toi | Lui | Elle | Nous | Vous | Eux | Elles |

These pronouns are called *'les pronoms personnels toniques'*. These are used in certain specific circumstances.

**After certain prepositions (like avec, sans, pour, devant, chez etc.)**

Je mange avec toi. - I eat with you.
Elle vient chez moi. - She comes to my house.

**As an emphasis at the beginning of a sentence**

Moi, je suis étudiant. - I am a student.
Person 1 (to Person 2): J'ai faim. (I am hungry)
Person 2 (to Person 1): Moi aussi et (about Person 3) lui aussi. (I too and he too)

# Adjectives

The problem with a French adjective is that it takes a form that depends heavily on the gender and number of the noun that the adjective qualifies. In general, there are four forms of an adjective - masculine/feminine singular/plural. Luckily enough these four forms normally follow specific termination patterns in most of the cases. Unfortunately there are many exceptions to this simple rule.

## Regular adjectives

To start with we state the regular termination patterns for an adjective. In the following table '-' denotes the stem of an adjective. (In most of the cases, these stems are listed as head-words in dictionaries.)

| | **masculine** | **feminine** |
|---|---|---|
| **singular** | - | -e |
| **plural** | -s | -es |

We need examples to illustrate. Consider the four forms of 'grand' (which means great):

### Example 1

1. **Masculine, singular:** un grand homme (a great man)
2. **Feminine, singular:** une grande femme (a great woman)
3. **Masculine, plural:** de grands hommes (great men)
4. **Feminine, plural:** de grandes femmes (great women)

Note that the indefinite article becomes 'de' before a plural adjective.

The second example illustrates the fact that the adjective follows the same termination patterns when used in sentences like 'He is pretty' or 'She is pretty'.

### Example 2

1. **Masculine, singular:** Il est joli. (He is pretty.)
2. **Feminine, singular:** Elle est jolie. (She is pretty.)
3. **Masculine, plural:** Ils sont jolis. (They are pretty.)
4. **Feminine, plural:** Elles sont jolies. (They are pretty.)

Note that the same termination patterns hold even in sentences 'I am tired' or 'We are tired'. In this case, the exact form of the adjective depends on the gender of the speaker(s).

### Example 3

1. **Masculine, singular:** Je suis fatigué. (I am tired.)
2. **Feminine, singular:** Je suis fatiguée. (I am tired.)
3. **Masculine, plural:** Nous sommes fatigués. (We are tired.)
4. **Feminine, plural:** Nous sommes fatiguées. (We are tired.)

It is customary in French to put the adjective *after* the noun it qualifies, as in the following examples:

C'est un homme blond. (This is a blond man.)

C’est une femme blonde. (This is a blond woman.)
On ne mange pas de poisson cru. (One does not eat raw fish.)

In some cases, the adjective comes *before* the noun. In those cases, the meaning of the adjective changes. For example, we have seen that

Il est un grand homme.

means ‘He is a great man’. On the contrary, the usual construction

Il est un homme grand.

means that ‘He is a tall man’!!

## Irregular adjectives

### Adjectives ending with ‘e’

Adjectives that end with ‘e’ do not change in the feminine form. An example is given below:

1. **Masculine, singular:** Le livre est rouge. (The book is red.)
2. **Feminine, singular:** La fleur est rouge. (The flower is red.)
3. **Masculine, plural:** Les livres sont rouges. (The books are red.)
4. **Feminine, plural:** Les fleurs sont rouges. (The flowers are red.)

### Adjectives ending with ‘n’

*Some* adjectives ending with ‘n’ adds ‘ne’ (instead of a ‘e’) to give its feminine form. Most of these adjectives denote the nationality of a country. Some examples are given below:

1. **Masculine, singular:** Je suis indien. (I am an Indian.)
2. **Feminine, singular:** Je suis indienne. (I am an Indian.)
3. **Masculine, plural:** Nous sommes indiens. (We are Indian.)
4. **Feminine, plural:** Nous sommes indiennes. (We are Indian.)

Other examples include ‘européen’ (European), italien (Italian) etc. A different type of example is ‘bon’ (good) or ancien (ancient, old). Recall the greetings:

Bon après-midi! (Good afternoon!)
Bonne nuit! (Good night!)

Some adjectives that end with ‘n’ but are regular, include ‘plein’ (full), ‘brun’ (brown) etc.

### Adjectives ending with ‘s’

*Some* adjectives ending with ‘s’ adds ’se’ to give the feminine form.

Le doigt est gros. (The finger is big.)
La tête est grosse. (The head is big.)

Regular adjectives ending with ‘s’ include ‘mauvais’ (bad), français (French) etc.

### Adjectives ending with ‘el’, ‘ul’ and ‘eil’

These adjectives usually append ‘le’ to form the feminine forms.

C’est le principe essentiel. (That is the essential principle.)
C’est l’idée essentielle. (That is the essential idea.)

### Adjectives ending with ‘al’

The adjectives ending with ‘al’ *are* regular in the feminine form. For example,

le sujet spécial (the special subject)
l'année spéciale (the special year)

However these adjectives are irregular in the masculine, plural form.

les sujets spécaux (the special subjects)
les années spéciales (the special years)

### Adjectives ending with 'f'

For such an adjective the feminine form is obtained by changing the 'f' to 'v' and then adding an 'e'.

un étudiant attentif (an attentive male student)
une étudiante attentive (an attentive female student)

### Adjectives ending with 'er' or 'et'

In these cases, the 'er' changes to 'ère' and the 'et' changes to 'ète' in the feminine form.

le dernier appartement (the last apartment)
la dernière maison (the last house)

un livre secret (a secret book)
une lettre secrète (a secret letter)

### Adjectives ending with 'eux' or 'oux'

The forms of these adjectives are as follows:

1. **Masculine, singular:** dangereux (dangerous)
2. **Feminine, singular:** dangereuse
3. **Masculine, plural:** dangereux
4. **Feminine, plural:** dangereuses

### Totally irregular adjectives

Some adjectives do not comply with any rule described so far. A good example is provided by 'nouveau' (which means 'new'). The forms are given below:

1. **Masculine, singular:** le nouveau danseur (the new dancer), le nouvel acteur (the new actor)
2. **Feminine, singular:** la nouvelle danseuse (the new (female) dancer)
3. **Masculine, plural:** les nouveux danseurs (the new dancers)
4. **Feminine, plural:** les nouvelles danseuses (the new (female) dancers)

Look at the two forms in the masculine singular. If the adjective is followed by a vowel (or vowel sound), one should use the second form. Another adjective which follows similar termination patterns as 'nouveau' is 'beau' (beautiful).

Some other irregular adjectives are listed below:

| masculine, singular | feminine, singular | meaning |
|---|---|---|
| blanc | blanche | white |
| bref | brève | brief, short |
| doux | douce | gentle |
| faux | fausse | false |
| favori | favorite | favorite |
| fou (or 'fol' before vowel) | folle | mad |
| frais | fraîche | fresh |
| gentil | gentille | nice |
| grec | grecque | Greek |
| long | longue | long |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| public | publique | public |
| roux | rousse | the rust color |
| sec | sèche | dry |
| vieux | vieille | old |

## Antonyms

In this section, we list some adjectives and their antonyms.

| Adjective | Meaning | Antonym | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|
| agréable | pleasant | désagréable | unpleasant |
| ancien | ancient, old | moderne *ou* nouveau | modern *or* new |
| assis | sitting | debout | standing |
| beau | beautiful | laid *ou* moche | ugly |
| bon | good | mauvais | bad |
| calme | calm | bruyant | noisy |
| chaud | hot | froid | cold |
| cher, coûteux | expensive | bon marché, pas cher | cheap |
| clair | clear, light (colored) | sombre | dark, gloomy |
| content *ou* heureux | pleased, happy, glad | malcontent *ou* triste | unhappy, sad |
| direct | direct | indirect | indirect |
| égal | equal | inégal | unequal |
| étroit | narrow | large | wide, broad |
| facile | easy | difficile | difficult |
| futur | future | actuel *ou* passé | present *or* past |
| gentil | nice, pleasant, kind | méchant | malicious, wicked, evil |
| grand | big | petit | small |
| haut | high | bas (*f.* basse) | low |
| honnête | honest | malhonnête | dishonest |
| inférieur | inferior | supérieur | superior |
| intelligent | intelligent | bête | stupid |
| intéressant | interesting | ennuyeux | boring |
| intérieur | inner, interior | extérieur | outer, exterior |
| jeune | young | vieux | old, aged |
| léger | light | lourd, pesant | heavy |
| long | long | court | short |
| marié | married | célibataire | unmarried |
| national | national | régional *ou* provincial | regional *or* provincial |
| normal | normal | anormal | abnormal |
| plein | full | vide | empty |
| possible | possible | impossible | impossible |
| premier | first | dernier | last |
| prudent | cautious, careful | imprudent | careless, rash |
| public | public | privé | private |
| riche | rich | pauvre | poor |
| sale | dirty | propre | clean |
| souriant | smiling | triste | sad |
| sympathique | nice, pleasant | antipathique | disagreeable |
| timide | timid | courageux | courageous |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| vrai | true | faux | false |

## Demonstrative adjectives (This / That)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **masculine, singular** | **ce** | ce garçon (this/that boy) |
| **masculine, singular (before a vowel sound)** | **cet** | cet homme (this/that man), cet animal (this/that animal) |
| **feminine, singular** | **cette** | cette femme (this/that woman) |
| **masculine or singular, plural** | **ces** | ces arbres (these/those trees), ces lampes (these/those lamps) |

## Adjectives denoting quantity

| Adjective | Meaning |
|---|---|
| beaucoup | a lot |
| assez | enough |
| trop | excessive, too many |
| peu | little |
| un peu | a little |
| un morceau / une tranche | a piece / a slice |
| deux morceaux / deux tranches | two pieces / two slices |
| une bouteille / un pot | a bottle / a jar |
| dix bouteilles / dix pots | ten bottles / ten jars |
| un kilo / un litre | a kilo / a liter |
| trois kilos / trois litres | three kilos / three liters |

These adjectives are used in the following way:

**adjective + de (*or* d') + noun (singular or plural)**

Note that one should not insert an article (definite, indefinite or partitive) between 'de' and the noun.

**Examples:**

1. Elle a gagné beaucoup de prix. - She has won many prizes.
2. J'ai trop de travail. - I have too much work.
3. Il y a assez de livres. - There are enough books.
4. Nous avons un litre / cinq litres d'huile. - We have one liter / five liters of oil.
5. Voici huit bouteilles de bière et deux tranches de pain. - Here are eight bottles of beer and two slices of bread.

# Verb conjugation - Present tense

## General conjugation patterns

French verbs fall in three groups depending on whether the infinitive form of the verb ends with -er, -ir or -re. Verbs ending with -er are said to constitute 'the first group' of verbs, whereas those ending with -ir and -re constitute the second and the third groups respectively.

**-er** Most of the verbs in the first group follow a specific conjugation pattern. This is:

| | |
|---|---|
| Je + stem + -e | Nous + stem + -ons |
| Tu + stem + -es | Vous + stem + -ez |
| Il/Elle + stem + -e | Ils/Elles + stem + -ent |

## Examples

**Regular conjugation pattern:** parler (to talk), habiter (to live), s'appeler (to call oneself), chanter (to sing), écouter (to listen), manger (to eat), commencer (to begin), rester (to stay).

**Irregular conjugation pattern:** aller (to go), acheter (to go).

**-ir** Verbs in the second group are less regular in terms of a fixed conjugation pattern. However, in many cases the pattern shown below is followed.

| | |
|---|---|
| Je + stem + -s | Nous + stem + -ons |
| Tu + stem + -s | Vous + stem + -ez |
| Il/Elle + stem + -t | Ils/Elles + stem + -ent |

In some other cases, the following pattern is used.

| | |
|---|---|
| Je + stem + -s | Nous + stem + -ssons |
| Tu + stem + -s | Vous + stem + -ssez |
| Il/Elle + stem + -t | Ils/Elles + stem + -ssent |

## Examples

**Regular conjugation pattern of the first type:** partir (to leave), sortir (to go out).

**Regular conjugation pattern of the second type:** finir (to finish), choisir (to choose), rougir (to turn red, to blush).

**Irregular conjugation pattern:** avoir (to have), vouloir (to want), vouloir (would like), pouvoir (to be able), savoir (to know), venir (to come).

**-re** There is practically no good general rule to describe the conjugation pattern of the verbs in the third group. Most of these verbs are irregular.

## Examples

être (to be), faire (to do), connaître (to know), comprendre (to understand), lire (to read), écrire (to write), boire (to drink), prendre (to take (food etc.)), vendre (to sell).

## être (to be)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je suis | Nous sommes |
| Tu es | Vous êtes |
| Il/Elle est | Ils/Elles sont |

**Examples:**

1. Paris est une ville française. - Paris is a French city.
2. Nous sommes dans un magasin de musique. - We are in a music shop.
3. Ils sont à l'école. - They are in the school.
4. Je suis étudiant. - I am a student.
5. Vous êtes prêts? - Are you ready?

## avoir (to have)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'ai | Nous avons |
| Tu as | Vous avez |
| Il/Elle a | Ils/Elles ont |

**Examples:**

1. Nous avons faim/soif. - We are hungry/thirsty. (Lit. We have hunger/thirst.)
2. Le garçon a 12 (douze) ans. - The boy is 12 years old. (Lit. The boy has 12 years.)
3. Tu as un dîplome. - You have a diploma.
4. J'ai deux mains. - I have two hands.
5. Vous avez raison / tort. - You are right / wrong. (In French, you cannot *be* right or wrong. You must *have* reason or otherwise!)

## faire (to do, to make)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je fais | Nous faisons |
| Tu fais | Vous faites |
| Il/Elle fait | Ils/Elles font |

**Examples:**

1. Qu'est-ce qu'ils font? - What are they doing?
2. Faites un projet de week-end. - Make a plan for the weekend.
3. Je fais du tennis / du ski. - I play tennis / ski.

## habiter (to live)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'habite | Nous habitons |
| Tu habites | Vous habitez |
| Il/Elle habite | Ils/Elles habitent |

**Examples:**

1. J'habite à Bangalore. - I live in Bangalore.
2. Où habitent vos parents? - Where do your parents live?
3. Vous habitez au Japon / en Espagne / aux États-Unis. - You live in Japan / Spain / the USA.
4. Nous habitons boulevard St. Michel / Rue Pascal / avenue de la gare. - We live on St. Michel boulevard / Pascal street / station road.

**Note:** habiter + Preposition

1. habiter + au / en / aux + pays (country), depending on whether the name of the country is masculine / faminine / plural respectively.
2. habiter + à + ville (city)
3. habiter + rue / chemin / boulevard / avenue ( road / street etc) [No preposition is needed].

## parler (to speak)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je parle | Nous parlons |
| Tu parles | Vous parlez |
| Il/Elle parle | Ils/Elles parlent |

**Examples:**

1. Nous parlons l'anglais et le français. - We speak English and French.
2. Elle ne parle pas l'allemand. - She does not speak German.

**Note:** All languages are masculine. However, the word 'langue', which means language, is feminine.

## dire (to say, to tell)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je dis | Nous disons |
| Tu dis | Vous dites |
| Il/Elle dit | Ils/Elles disent |

**Examples:**

1. Nous ne disons pas de vérité. - We do not tell the truth.
2. Elle dit trop de mots. - She says too many words.

## s'appeler (to call oneself)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je m'appelle | Nous nous appelons |
| Tu t'appelles | Vous vous appelez |
| Il/Elle s'appelle | Ils/Elles s'appellent |

**Examples:**

1. Comment tu t'appelles? - What's your name? (Lit. How do you call yourself?)
2. Je m'appelle Barda. - My name is Barda. (Lit. I call myself Barda.)

## vouloir (to want)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je veux | Nous voulons |
| Tu veux | Vous voulez |
| Il/Elle veut | Ils/Elles veulent |

**Examples:**

1. [vouloir + infinitive] Je veux aller à Paris. - I want to go to Paris.
2. [vouloir + article] Je veux un café. - I want (a) coffee.

## vouloir (would like)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je voudrais | Nous voudrions |
| Tu voudrais | Vous voudriez |
| Il/Elle voudrait | Ils/Elles voudraient |

**Examples:**

1. [vouloir + nom (noun)]
   Je voudrais un café. - I would like (a) coffee.
2. [vouloir + infinitif (infinitive)]
   Nous voudrions aller à Mysore. - We would like to go to Mysore.
   Ils voudraient rencontrer M. Das. - They would like to meet Mr. Das.

## connaître (to know)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je connais | Nous connaissons |
| Tu connais | Vous connaissez |
| Il/Elle connaît | Ils/Elles connaissent |

**Examples:**

1. Je connais Monsieur et Madame Brun. - I know Mr. and Mrs. Brun.
2. Il connaît boulevard St. Michel. - He knows St. Michel boulevard.

## savoir (to know)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je sais | Nous savons |
| Tu sais | Vous savez |
| Il/Elle sait | Ils/Elles savent |

**Examples:**

1. [savoir + infinitif]
   Nous savons parler français. - We know how to speak French.
   Il sait bien nager. - He knows swimming well.
   Mon ami sait conduire une voiture. - My friend knows how to drive a car.
2. [savoir + comment / quel / ...]
   Je sais comment elle s'appelle. - I know her name. (Lit. I know how she calls herself.)
   Je sais quel est son nom. - I know what his/her name is.
   Je ne sais pas quel âge il a. - I don't know his age. (Lit. I don't know what age he has.)

**Note:** The difference between 'connaître' and 'savoir' is that the former is used to denote the familiarity of a person (or some persons) with another person (or persons) or with a place etc. 'savoir', on the other hand, is employed to denote the knowledge of a person (or persons) to do some thing or the knowledge of some information. Grammatically, 'connaître' is always followed by a noun indicating a person or place etc, whereas 'savoir' is followed either by the infinitive form of a verb or by a WH question (what, how etc.).

In English both these verbs are translated as 'to know'. If you know German, it is easier for you to understand the distinction between these verbs. The German equivalent of 'connaître' is 'kennen', whereas that of 'savoir' is 'wissen'.

## comprendre (to understand)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je comprends | Nous comprenons |
| Tu comprends | Vous comprenez |
| Il/Elle comprend | Ils/Elles comprennent |

**Examples:**

1. Je ne comprends pas. - I do not understand.

## aller (to go)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je vais | Nous allons |
| Tu vas | Vous allez |
| Il/Elle va | Ils/Elles vont |

**Examples:**

1. Je vais au cours de français. - I go to the French class.
2. Il va au foyer d'étudiants. - He goes to the students' hostel.
3. Vous allez à la ville / montagne / mer. - You go to the city / mountain / sea.
4. Nous allons à l'hôpital / l'ecole. - We go to the hospital / school.
5. Tu vas aux États-Unis. - You go to the USA.

**Note:** aller + preposition + definite article (to go to)

1. aller + à + le = aller au
2. aller + à + la = aller à la
3. aller + à + l' = aller à l'
4. aller + à + les = aller aux

## venir (to come)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je viens | Nous venons |
| Tu viens | Vous venez |
| Il/Elle vient | Ils/Elles viennent |

**Examples:**

1. Je viens d'Inde. - I come from India.
2. D'où viens-tu? - Where do you come from?
3. Elle vient de la ville. - She comes from the city.
4. Nous venons du théâtre. - We come from the theater.
5. Vous venez des États-Unis. - You come from the USA.
6. Tu viens de l'Autriche. - You come from Austria.

**Note:** venir + preposition + definite article (to come from)

1. venir + de + le = venir du
2. venir + de + la = venir de la
3. venir + de + l' = venir de l'
4. venir + de + les = venir des

## arriver (to arrive)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'arrive | Nous arrivons |
| Tu arrives | Vous arrivez |
| Il/Elle arrive | Ils/Elles arrivent |

**Examples:**

1. Le train arrive de Madras à Bangalore. - The train comes (lit. arrives) from Madras to Bangalore.
2. J'arrive au / du cinéma. - I come to / from the cinema.
3. Ils arrivent à / de l'hôpital. - They come to / from the hospital.

## entrer (to enter)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'entre | Nous entrons |
| Tu entres | Vous entrez |
| Il/Elle entre | Ils/Elles entrent |

**Examples:**

1. Nous entrons dans la Salle. - We enter into the classroom.
2. Amit entre dans le théâtre. - Amit enters into the theater.

## rentrer (to return)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je rentre | Nous rentrons |
| Tu rentres | Vous rentrez |
| Il/Elle rentre | Ils/Elles rentrent |

**Examples:**

1. Il rentre chez lui. - He returns to his house.

## partir (to leave)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je pars | Nous partons |
| Tu pars | Vous partez |
| Il/Elle part | Ils/Elles partent |

**Examples:**

1. Nous partons de chez moi. - We leave from my house.
2. Je pars du bureau de poste. - I leave from the post office.
3. Soumen et Abhi partent à / pour Paris. - Soumen and Abhi leave for Paris.

## sortir (to go out)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je sors | Nous sortons |
| Tu sors | Vous sortez |
| Il/Elle sort | Ils/Elles sortent |

**Examples:**

1. Sanjukta sort de la maison. - Sanjukta goes out of the house.

## lire (to read)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je lis | Nous lisons |
| Tu lis | Vous lisez |
| Il/Elle lit | Ils/Elles lisent |

**Examples:**

1. Il lit le journal. - He reads the newspaper.
2. Nous lisons des livres. - We read books.

## écrire (to write)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'écris | Nous écrivons |
| Tu écris | Vous écrivez |
| Il/Elle écrit | Ils/Elles écrivent |

**Examples:**

1. [écrire + à - to write to (somebody)] Vous écrivez à l'enfant / aux enfants. - You write to the child / the children.

## commencer (to start)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je commence | Nous commençons |
| Tu commences | Vous commencez |
| Il/Elle commence | Ils/Elles commencent |

**Examples:**

1. La pièce commence à cinq heures moins le quart. - The play (theater) starts at quarter to five.
2. Nous commençons notre travail à neuf heures du matin. - We start our work at 9 O'clock in the morning.
3. Nous commençons à travailler à 9 heures du matin. - We start working at 9 O'clock in the morning.

## finir (to finish, to end)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je finis | Nous finissons |
| Tu finis | Vous finissez |
| Il/Elle finit | Ils/Elles finissent |

**Examples:**

1. Le cours de français finit à six heures et demie du soir. - The French class finishes at half past six in the evening.
2. Je finis mon travail à dix-huit heures. - I finish my work at 18 hours.

3. Je finis de travailler à dix-huit heures. - I finish working at 18 hours.

## pouvoir (can, to be able)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je peux | Nous pouvons |
| Tu peux | Vous pouvez |
| Il/Elle peut | Ils/Elles peuvent |

**Examples:** [pouvoir + infinitive]

1. Je peux chanter. - I can sing.
2. Tu ne peux pas bien nager. - You can not swim well.

## manger (to eat)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je mange | Nous mangeons |
| Tu manges | Vous mangez |
| Il/Elle mange | Ils/Elles mangent |

**Examples:**

1. Abhi ne mange pas de viande, mais il mange du poisson. - Abhi does not eat meat, but he eats fish.

## boire (to drink)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je bois | Nous buvons |
| Tu bois | Vous buvez |
| Il/Elle boit | Ils/Elles boivent |

**Examples:**

1. Je bois de la bière / du vin. - I drink beer / wine.
2. Buvez-vous du café / du thé / de l'eau? - Do you drink coffee / tea / water?

## prendre (to take (food))

| | |
|---|---|
| Je prends | Nous prenons |
| Tu prends | Vous prenez |
| Il/Elle prend | Ils/Elles prennent |

**Examples:**

1. Je prends le déjeuner. - I take the lunch.
2. Tu prends une tasse de café. - You take a cup of coffee.
3. Prenez-vous du café? - Do you take coffee?

## choisir (to choose, select)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je choisis | Nous choisissons |
| Tu choisis | Vous choisissez |
| Il/Elle choisit | Ils/Elles choisissent |

**Examples:**

1. Nous choisissons un dessert. - We choose a dessert.
2. Pratip choisit une salade. - Pratip chooses a salad.

## acheter (to buy)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'achète | Nous achetons |
| Tu achètes | Vous achetez |
| Il/Elle achète | Ils/Elles achètent |

**Examples:**

1. J'achète l'appartement à M. Sengupta. - I buy the flat from Mr. Sengupta.
2. Elle achète le pain dans la boulangerie. - She buys the bread from the bakery.

## vendre (to sell)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je vends | Nous vendons |
| Tu vends | Vous vendez |
| Il/Elle vend | Ils/Elles vendent |

**Examples:**

1. Je vends un appartement à M. Sengupta. - I sell a flat to Mr. Sengupta.
2. Elle vend le pain dans la boulangerie. - She sells bread in the bakery.

## louer (to hire, to rent)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je loue | Nous louons |
| Tu loues | Vous louez |
| Il/Elle loue | Ils/Elles louent |

**Examples:**

1. Il loue l'appartement 4000 roupies par mois. - He rents the apartment for 4000 rupees per month.
2. L'apppartement loue 4000 roupies par mois. - The apartment is on rent for 4000 rupees per month.

## écouter (to listen)

| | |
|---|---|
| J'écoute | Nous écoutons |
| Tu écoutes | Vous écoutez |
| Il/Elle écoute | Ils/Elles écoutent |

**Examples:**

1. J'écoute de la musique. - I am listening (to) the music.

## regarder (to watch, to look at)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je regarde | Nous regardons |
| Tu regardes | Vous regardez |
| Il/Elle regarde | Ils/Elles regardent |

**Examples:**

1. Ne regarde pas le programme mauvais. - Don't watch the bad program.

## voir (to see)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je vois | Nous voyons |
| Tu vois | Vous voyez |

| | |
|---|---|
| Il/Elle voit | Ils/Elles voient |

**Examples:**

1. Sudipto voit le film «Titanic» au cinéma «Galaxy». - Sudipto sees the film 'Titanic' in the cinema (hall) 'Galaxy'.

### donner (to give)

| | |
|---|---|
| Je donne | Nous donnons |
| Tu donnes | Vous donnez |
| Il/Elle donne | Ils/Elles donnent |

**Examples:**

1. **[donner + à (to give to (somebody))]**
   Je donne le livre à mon ami. - I give the book to my friend.

### falloir (should, have to)

Il faut

**Examples:**

1. Il faut y aller. - One/I/We/You should go there.

**Note:** The verb 'falloir' is used only with 'il'.

## Some other verbs

Here we list some other common verbs. Most of these verbs are regular. It should be easy to write the conjugation patterns for these verbs. (We have seen enough examples so far.) Look at the section on general conjugation patterns. If you still have doubts, you may consult the on-line verb conjugator. For the non-regular verbs we mention the conjugation pattern in brief.

| Verb | Meaning | Note on conjugation |
|---|---|---|
| adorer | to love (a thing or to do something) | regular |
| aimer | to like (a thing or to do something) | regular |
| préférer | to prefer (a thing or to do something) | regular, but the second é changes to è in all cases except with 'nous' and 'vous' |
| détester | to hate, detest (a thing or to do something) | regular |
| conduire | to drive | similar to lire |
| jouer | to play (a game or a musical instrument) | regular |
| étudier | to study | regular |
| enseigner | to teach | regular |
| envoyer | to send | J'envoie / Tu envoies / Il/Elle envoie / Nous envoyons / Vous envoyez / Ils/Elles envoient |
| porter | to wear, to put on (cloth etc.) | regular |
| attendre | to wait | J'attends / Tu attends / Il/Elle attend / Nous attendons / Vous attendez / Ils/Elles attendent |
| voyager | to travel | Similar to manger |
| chanter | to sing | regular |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| danser | to dance | regular |
| rester | to stay | regular |
| se promener | to take a walk | reflexive: Je me promène / Tu te promènes / Il/Elle se promène / Nous nous promenons / Vous vous promenez / Ils/Elles se promènent |
| se reposer | to take rest, to relax | regular, reflexive |
| rencontrer | to meet (somebody) | regular |
| gagner | to win, to earn | regular |
| travailler | to work | regular |
| inviter | to invite | regular |
| dormir | to sleep | Je dors / Tu dors / Il/Elle dort / Nous dormons / Vous dormez / Ils/Elles dorment |
| demander | to ask for | regular |
| poser | to ask (a question) | regular |
| répondre | to answer, reply | Je réponds / Tu réponds / Il/Elle répond / Nous répondons / Vous répondez / Ils/Elles répondent |
| décrire | to describe | similar to écrire |
| déjeuner | to take lunch | regular |
| dîner | to take dinner, to dine | regular |

### Examples

**jouer + à + definite article + game (to play a game)**
jouer au tennis / aux cartes (to play tennis / cards)

**jouer + de + definite article + musical instrument (to play a musical instrument)**
jouer du piano / du violon / de la guitare (to play piano / violin / guitar)

**adorer / aimer / préférer / detester + definite article + noun**
J'aime la montagne / le ski (I like mountain / ski)

**adorer / aimer / préférer / detester + infinitive**
J'aime aller à la montagne / faire du ski (I like to go to the mountain / to do skiing)

## Reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs (more generally, *pronominal verbs*) are not used in English. A reflexive verb takes an object which is a pronoun and which stands for the subject of the sentence. We have seen several examples of reflexive verbs in French. The first one is s'appeler (to call oneself). In a sentence like 'Je m'appelle Barda', the pronominal object is 'me' which means 'myself'. [Note that m'appelle = me + appelle] The literal translation of this sentence in English is: 'I call myself Barda'. One cannot use the pronominal object to stand for a person different from the subject, that is, one cannot use this verb in sentences like 'You call me Barda'. The only allowed usages are 'You call yourself Chhorda', 'He calls himself Mejda' etc.

Some other reflexive verbs that we have seen so far include 'se promener' (to take a walk), 'se reposer' (to relax). That is, 'Je me promène' literally means 'I take a walk myself'. Clearly the 'myself' is completely redundant in the English translation. But the French sentence must have the pronominal object 'me'.

Another language that makes frequent use of reflexive verbs is German. If you already know German, the concept of reflexive verbs would not be alien to you. We note in passing that the German equivalents of s'appeler (heißen) and se promener (spazierengehen) are not reflexive, whereas that of se reposer (sich entspannen) is reflexive. Two other verbs that are reflexive in both French and German are:

> **French:** se souvenir (de + . . . )
> **German:** sich (an + . . . ) erinnern
> **English:** to remember, to recall (Lit. to remind oneself)

**French:** se raser
**German:** sich rasieren
**English:** to (have a) shave

Pronominal verbs are used in other contexts too, where the use of the object alters the meaning of the sentence. A full description of all these is beyond the scope of this introductory tutorial.

# Prepositions

## Use of prepositions

### à (to, at, in)

This is one of the most common prepositions used in French. Before we look at the usage of this preposition, we list the forms of ‘à’ when (immediately) followed by the definite article.

à + le = au
à + la = à la
à + l’ = à l’
à + les = aux

‘à’ is used in many cases:

**Movement to a place**

Je vais au restaurant. - I am going to the restaurant.
Tu pars aux États-Unis. - You leave for the USA.

**Position**

à is used to denote position of an object or action at a city and some other places.

Mon frère habite à Mumbai. - My brother lives at Mumbai.
Il reste à la maison. - He stays at the house.
Les enfants sont à l’école. - The children are in the school.
au rez-de-chaussée / premier étage / dernier étage - at the ground / first / top floor

**Time**

Je commence mon travail à 8h. - I start my work at 8 o’clock.
À mercredi! - See you on Wednesday!

**To (somebody)**

Soumen écrit à ses parents. - Soumen writes to his parents.
Je donne le crayon à Debu. - I give the pencil to Debu.

**Before an infinitive**

Je commence à travailler. - I start working.
Il y a l’appartement à vendre / louer. - There is the apartment for sale / rent.

**With some modes of transportation**

à bicyclette / vélo - by bicycle
à pied - on foot
à cheval - on horseback

### en (in)

The preposition ‘en’ is used in the following cases:

**With countries**

Its form is ‘au’, ‘en’ or ‘aux’ depending on whether the name of the country is masculine, feminine or plural.

Il habite au Maroc. - He lives in Morocco.
Je suis en Inde. - I am in India.
Elle va aux États-unis. - She goes to the USA.

**With seasons and months**

En été il fait chaud. - In summer it is hot.
En janvier il neige. - In January it snows.

**With vehicles**

Nous allons en bus. - We go by bus.
en avion / train / métro / bateau - by airplane / train / metro / boat

**With languages**

Il chante des chansons en beaucoup de langues. - He sings songs in many languages.
J’écris une lettre en anglais. - I am writing a letter in English.

## de (from, of)

The conjugation of ‘de’ with the articles is as follows:

de + le = du
de + la = de la
de + l’ = de l’
de + les = des
de + un = d’un
de + une = d’une

Examples of the usage of ‘de’ are given below:

**From a place or time**

Ils sortent de la maison. - They come out of the house.
Je pars de la bibliothèque. - I leave (from) the library.
Le train de Madras arrive à 21h15. - The train from Madras arrives at 21:15 hours.

The preposition ‘de’ is often used in conjunction with ‘à’ to denote ‘from . . . to . . .’.

J’arrive de Paris à Bangalore. - I arrive (go) from Paris to Bangalore.
Nous travaillons de 8h à 18h. - We work from 8 hours to 18 hours.

**of (to denote possession)**

C’est la rue du cinéma. - This is the road of the cinema.
C’est un cahier d’un étudiant. - This is a notebook of a student.
C’est le livre de mon ami. - This is the book of my friend.
Il est dans un magasin de musique. - He is in a music shop (lit. shop of music).

**As a complement**

Je parle de mon ami. - I am talking about my friend.
Cette chaise est pleine de poussière. - This chair is full of dust.

**Before an infinitive**

Nous finissons de travailler. - We finish working.

### dans (on, in, at)

'dans' is used to denote the location of an action. (Note that 'à' is often used to denote movement towards a place (or time), whereas 'de' is used to denote movement from a place (or time).)

Je rencontre mon amie dans la rue. - I meet my friend on the road.
Le garçon achète le pain dans la boulangerie. - The boy buys bread from (or at) the bakery.
L'étudiante entre dans la Salle. - The (female) student enters into the classroom.

### chez (in/at the house of)

This is used to denote the location of some action at somebody's house.

Nous déjeunons chez moi. - We take lunch at my house.
Il va chez le médecin. - He is going to the doctor's house.
Vous partez de chez lui. - You leave from his house.

### avec (with), sans (without), pour (for), par (by, per)

Ils vont avec / sans moi. - They are going with / without me.
Nous partons pour Mysore. - We leave for Mysore.
C'est un portrait d'un grand musicien par le journaliste. - This is a report about a great musician by the journalist.
Je loue l'appatement 4000 roupies par mois. - I rent the apartment for 4000 rupees per month.

### Prepositions denoting positions of an object or action with respect to another

Some of these prepositions are:

**avant de (before), devant (before, in front of), derrière (behind, after), à côté de (beside, at the side of), au bord de (at the bank of), entre (between), à gauche de (to the left of), à droite de (to the right of), au-dessous de (below, under), au-dessus de (above), sur (on, atop, over), sous (below, beneath, under)**

Les garçons jouent devant (/ derrière / à côté de) la maison. - The boys are playing in front of (/ behind / beside) the house.
avant de commencer le repas - before starting the meal

## Appropriate prepositions after verbs

| | |
|---|---|
| être + à | to be at some place |
| habiter + au / en / aux | to live in a country (resp. masculine, feminine or plural) |
| habiter + à | to live in a city |
| habiter + *no preposition* | to live on a street / road etc. |
| rester + à | to stay at (some place) |
| aller + à | to go to (a place) |
| venir + de | to come from (a place) |
| arriver + à | to arrive at (a place) |
| arriver + de | to arrive from (a place) |
| entrer + dans | to enter into (a place) |
| partir + de | to leave from (a place) |
| partir + à / pour | to leave for (a place) |
| sortir + de | to come out of (a place) |
| écrire + à | to write to (a person) |
| commencer + à | to start at (a time) |
| commencer + à + infinitif | to start a work |

| | |
|---|---|
| finir + à | to finish at (a time) |
| finir + de + infinitif | to finish a work |
| travailler + de + temps + à + temps | to work from a time to a time |
| travailler + jusqu'à | to work till (a time) |
| acheter + à | to buy from (somebody) |
| vendre + à | to sell to (somebody) |
| donner + à | to give to (somebody) |
| faire + de + *definite article* | to play (a game) |
| jouer + à + *definite article* | to play (a game) |
| jouer + de + *definite article* | to play (a musical instrument) |

# Adverbs and adverbial phrases

## Some common adverbs

- bien - well
- mal - badly
- bientôt - soon
- beaucoup - a lot
- très - very
- bien sûr - of course

- déjà - already
- encore - yet, again
- toujours - always
- jamais - never
- souvent - often
- parfois - sometime
- quelquefois - sometimes
- rarement - rarely, seldom
- prochaine fois - next time
- pas du tout - not at all

- près (de) - near to, close to
- loin (de) - far from
- ici - here
- là - there
- là-bas - over there
- ici et là - here and there

- en avance - before time
- à l'heure - in time
- en retard - late

- maintenant - now
- aujourd'hui - today
- demain - tomorrow
- après demain - day after tomorrow
- hier - yesterday
- avant hier - day before yesterday

- ensemble - together
- seul - alone
- enfin - at last, finally

- oui - yes
- non - no
- si - yes (affirmative answer to a negative question)

**Examples**

**Q:** Vous aimez aller au cinéma? (Do you like to go to the cinema?)
**A:** Oui. (Yes.)

**Q:** Vous adorez le tennis? (Do you love tennis?)
**A:** Non. (No.)

**Q:** Vous n'aimez pas aller au cinéma? (Don't you like to go to the cinema?)
**A:** Si. (Yes. That is, I like to go to the cinema.)

**Q:** Vous n'adorez pas le tennis? (Don't you love tennis?)
**A:** Non. (No. That is, I don't love tennis.)

# Construction of adverbs from adjectives

## The general rule

In general, an adverb corresponding to an adjective can be obtained by appending 'ment' to the feminine, singular form of the adjective. For example, 'malheureux' means unfortunate. The feminine singular form of it is 'malheureuse'. Therefore 'unfortunately' is 'malheureusement' in French. Some other examples are given below:

| adjective | feminine, singular | Adverb |
|---|---|---|
| certain (certain) | certaine | certainement (certainly) |
| normal (normal) | normale | normalement (normally) |
| actuel (present) | actuelle | actuellement (presently) |
| dernier (last, latest) | dernière | dernièrement (recently) |
| collectif (collective) | collective | collectivement (collectively) |
| agréable (nice, pleasant) | agréable | agréablement (nicely, pleasantly) |

## Exceptions

**Adjectives that end with a vowel usually append 'ment' to the masculine (not feminine), singular form**

vrai (true, real) - vraiment (truely, really)
absolu (absolute) - absolument (absolutely)

**Exceptions:** assidu (diligent) - assidûment (diligently)

**Adjectives that end with 'ant' or 'ent' change the 'nt' to 'mment'**

brillant (brilliant) - brillamment (brilliantly)
constant (constant) - constamment (constantly)
évident (obvious) - évidemment (obviously)

**Some adverbs are the same as the corresponding adjectives (masculine, singular form)**

haut (loud) - haut (aloud, loudly)
dur (hard) - dur (hard)

# Position of an adverb in a sentence

In a sentence an adverb usually comes immediately after the (main) verb. For example,

Je vais rapidement à l'école. - I am going to the school fast.
Il sait bien nager. - He knows swimming well.
À Calcutta les chemins sont malheureusement très étroits. - In Calcutta, the streets are unfortunately very narrow.

# 2.2 Sentence construction

## Negative sentences

In French, a negative sentence can be formed from an affirmative one by adding **ne** before the (main) verb and adding **pas** after the (main) verb. This can be illustrated through examples:

| Affirmative | Negative |
|---|---|
| Elle va chez le médecin. (She goes to the doctor.) | Elle ne va pas chez le médecin. (She doesn't go to the doctor.) |
| J'aime la musique classique. (I like classical music.) | Je n'aime pas la musique classique. (I don't like classical music.) |
| Ils peuvent travailler jusqu'à minuit. (They want to work till midnight.) | Ils ne peuvent pas travailler jusqu'à minuit. (They don't want to work till midnight.) |
| A Bangalore il y a bons restaurants. (In Bangalore, there are good restaurants.) | A bangalore il n'y a pas bons restaurants. (In Bangalore, there are not good restaurants.) |
| C'est mon ami. (This is my friend.) | Ce n'est pas mon ami. (This is not my friend.) |

Under certain special circumstances, one has to make more or other changes than just adding 'ne' and 'pas' as discussed earlier. Some examples are given below. First we consider the case where the indefinite article (un, une, des) changes to 'de'.

| Affirmative | Negative |
|---|---|
| Il veut un dictionnaire. (He wants a dictionary.) | Il ne veut pas de dictionnaire. (He does not want a dictionary.) |
| J'ai une soeur. (I have a sister.) | Je n'ai pas de soeur. (I don't have a sister.) |
| Il y a des restaurants dans la rue. (There are restaurants on the road.) | Il n'y a pas de restaurants dans la rue. (There are not restaurants on the road.) |

Note that the definite article (le, la, les) does not change under such circumstances. For example,

| Affirmative | Negative |
|---|---|
| Il veut le dictionnaire. (He wants the dictionary.) | Il ne veut pas le dictionnaire. (He does not want the dictionary.) |
| J'aime beaucoup la chanson. (I like the song very much.) | Je n'aime pas beaucoup la chanson. (I don't like the song very much.) |

Finally, the partitive articles change like the indefinite articles, that is, 'du', 'de la' 'des' etc. change to 'de' in the negative sentence:

| Affirmative | Negative |
|---|---|
| Je mange du chocolat. (I eat chocolate.) | Je ne mange pas de chocolat. (I do not eat chocolate.) |
| Tu as de la chance. (You have chance.) | Tu n'as pas de chance. (You do not have chance.) |

Next we consider examples where some other changes are necessary.

| Affirmative | Negative |
|---|---|
| J'ai déjà le livre. (I already have the book.) | Je n'ai pas encore le livre. (I do not have the book yet.) |
| Elle préfère toujours aller à la montagne. (She always prefers to go to the mountain.) | Elle ne préfère pas toujours aller à la montagne. (she does not prefer to go to the mountain always.) *or* Elle ne préfère jamais aller à la montagne. (She never prefers to go to the mountain.) |
| Nous mangeons souvent du poisson. (We often eat fish.) | Nous ne mangeons pas souvent de poisson. (We do not eat fish often.) *or* Nous ne mangons jamais de poisson. (We never eat fish.) |
| Ils mangent parfois du poisson. (They sometimes eat fish.) | Ils ne mangent jamais de poisson. (They never eat fish.) |
| Vous avez beaucoup de travail. (You have a lot of work.) | Vous n'avez pas beaucoup de travail. (You do not have a lot of work.) *or* Vous n'avez pas du tout de travail. (You do not have any work at all.) |
| Tu détestes le thé et le café. (You dislike tea and coffee.) | Tu ne détestes ni le thé ni le café. (You dislike neither tea nor coffee.) |
| J'aime aller à la mer. (I like to go to the sea.) | Je n'aime pas aller à la mer. (I do not like to go to the sea.) *or* J'aime ne pas aller à la mer. (I like not to go to the sea.) |

# Interrogative sentences

## Three forms

There are three ways in which one can frame interrogative sentences in French. Sentences in each of these three forms are translated the same way in English. These three forms are called the following in French.

1. **La langue familière**
2. **La langue courante** *or* **la langue standarde**
3. **La langue soignée**

Let us illustrate the difference between these forms by means of examples.

### Example 1

**Declarative form:** Vous aimez la mer. - You like the sea.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Vous aimez la mer?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce que vous aimez la mer?
3. **La langue soignée:** Aimez-vous la mer?

Each of these three sentences means: 'Do you like the sea?'

Note that in the third type of construction, the subject comes after the verb. In such cases, one must use the hyphen (trait d'union).

### Example 2

**Declarative form:** Nous allons au cours de français. - We go to the French class.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Nous allons au cours de français?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce que nous allons au cours de français?
3. **La langue soignée:** Allons-nous au cours de français?

Each of these three sentences means: ‘Do we go to the French class?’

### Example 3

**Declarative form:** Il habite à Paris. - He lives in Paris.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Il habite à Paris?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce qu’il habite à Paris?
3. **La langue soignée:** Habite-t-il à Paris?

Each of these three sentences means: ‘Does he live at Paris?’ Note how ‘que + il’ becomes ‘qu’il’. Also note the introduction of a ‘t’ between ‘Habite’ and ‘il’ in the third sentence. This happens because two vowels ‘e’ and ‘i’ would otherwise come next to each other. The next example illustrates the same with ‘elle’ (she).

### Example 4

**Declarative form:** Elle parle français. - She speaks French.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Elle parle français?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce qu’elle parle français?
3. **La langue soignée:** Parle-t-elle français?

Each of these three sentences means: ‘Does she speak French?’

### Example 5

**Declarative form:** Soumen va avec toi. - Soumen goes with you.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Soumen va avec toi?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce que Soumen va avec toi?
3. **La langue soignée:** Soumen va-t-il avec toi?

Each of these three sentences means: Does Soumen go with you?

### Example 6

**Declarative form:** Ananya dîne chez Anirban. - Ananya dines at Anirban’s house.

**Interrogative forms:**

1. **La langue familière:** Ananya dîne chez Anirban?
2. **La langue courante / standarde:** Est-ce qu’Ananya dîne chez Anirban?
3. **La langue soignée:** Ananya dîne-t-elle chez Anirban?

Each of these three sentences means: Does Ananya dine at Anirban’s house?

## WH questions (What, Who, How etc.)

| French | English |
|---|---|
| combien (+ de) | how many, how much |
| combien de temps | how long |
| comment | how |
| où | where |

| | |
|---|---|
| pourquoi | why, what for |
| quand | when |
| quel (quelle, quels, quelles) | what, which |
| qui | who |

## Examples

**Combien (How many, how much)**

- Combien de livres avez-vous? *or* Combien de livres vous avez? - How many books do you have?
- Combien de persons partage la chambre avec toi? - How many persons share the room with you?
- Combien coûte cette bouteille de vin? - How much does this bottle of wine cost?

**Comment (How)**

- Comment allez-vous? - How are you? (Lit. How are you going?)
- Comment tu t'appelles? *or* Comment t'appelles-tu? - What's your name? (Lit. How do you call yourself?)
- Comment le nouvel artiste chante? *or* Le nouvel artiste, comment chante-t-il? - How does the new artist sing?

**Où (Where)**

- Où est-ce que vous travaillez? *or* Où travaillez-vous? - Where do you work?
- Où est-ce que votre ami travaille? *or* Votre ami, où travaille-t-il? - Where does your friend work?
- D'où est-ce qu'elle sort? *or* D'où sort-t-elle? - From where does she go out?
- Où est l'école? *or* L'école, où est-ce? *or* L'école, où est-ce que c'est? - Where is the school?

**Pourquoi (Why)**

- Pourquoi vous êtes fatigué? *or* Pourquoi êtes-vous fatigué? - Why are you tired?
- Pourquoi elle écrit la lettre? *or* Pourquoi écrit-t-elle la lettre? - Why does she write the letter?

**Quand (When)**

- Quand est-ce que tu prends le petit déjeuner? *or* Quand prends-tu le petit déjeuner? - When do you take the breakfast?
- Quand est-ce que le train arrive à Bangalore? *or* Le train, quand arrive-t-il à Bangalore? - When does the train arrive at Bangalore?

**Quel, quelle, quels, quelles (What, which)**

- Quel est votre numéro de téléphone? - What is your telephone number?
- Quelle est votre profession? - What is your profession?
- De quelle heure à quelle heure travaillez-vous? - From what hour to what hour do you work?
- Quelles couleurs tu préfères? *or* Quelles couleurs préfères-tu? - Which colors do you prefer?

  **Note:** Look at the different forms of 'quel':
    - quel (masculine, singular)
    - quelle (feminine, singular)
    - quels (masculine, plural)
    - quelles (feminine, plural)

**Qui (Who)**

- Qui écrit la lettre? *or* Qui est-ce qui écrit la lettre?- Who writes the letter?
- Qui rencontrez-vous dans la rue? *or* Qui est-ce que vous rencontrez dans la rue? - Whom do you meet on the road?
- À qui est-ce qu'elle écrit la lettre? *or* À qui écrit-t-elle la lettre? - To whom does she write the letter?

# Imperative sentences

## Verbs in the first group

Let us recall the conjugation pattern of the verb ‘parler’ (to speak) in the present tense.

Nous parlons. (We speak.)
Vous parlez. (You speak.)
Tu parles. (You speak.)

The imperative forms corresponding to these sentences are as follows:

Parlons! (Let us speak!)
Parlez! (Speak!)
Parle! (Speak!)

Note that the ‘s’ in ‘parles’ does not appear in the imperative form. In general, it is true of most of the verbs in the first group (that is, the verbs whose infinitive forms end with ‘er’). Let us take another example: ‘aller’ (to go). The conjugation patterns in the present tense are:

Nous allons. (We go.)
Vous allez. (You go.)
Tu vas. (You go.)

The corresponding imperative forms are

Allons! (Let us go!)
Allez! (Go!)
Va! (Go!)

## Verbs in other groups

Now let us consider verbs in the second group (i.e. verbs ending with ‘ir’). The conjugation patterns for ‘venir’ (to come) are as follows:

Nous venons. (We come.)
Vous venez. (You come.)
Tu viens. (You come.)

And the imperative forms are:

Venons! (Let us come!)
Venez! (Come!)
Viens! (Come!)

This is simpler than the previous examples. Here the verb remains exactly the same in all the three cases of imperative sentences as compared with the forms in the present tense. This is generally true for all verbs in the second and third groups (i.e. those ending with ‘ir’ and ’re’).

## Negative forms

The negative form of the imperative sentences can be obtained by adding **ne** before the verb and **pas** after the verb. For example, consider the imperative forms for ‘parler’. The negative of these sentences are:

Ne parlons pas! (Let’s not speak!)
Ne parlez pas! (Don’t speak!)
Ne parle pas! (Don’t speak!)

For ‘aller’ the negative forms are:

N’allons pas! (Let’s not go!)
N’allez pas! (Don’t go!)

Ne va pas! (Don't go!)

## Other examples

| Declarative | Imperative |
|---|---|
| Nous buvons du vin. (We drink wine.) | Buvons du vin! (Let us drink wine!) |
| Vous faites un projet de week-end. (You make a plan for the week-end.) | Faites un projet de week-end! (Make a plan for the week-end!) |
| Tu ne sors pas de la salle. (You do not go out of the classroom.) | Ne sors pas de la salle! (Do not go out of the classroom!) |
| Vous ne criez pas. (You do not shout.) | Ne criez pas! (Don't shout!) |
| - | Répondez s'il vous plaît. (Please reply.) |
| - | Allons-y! (Let's go there!)<br>Allez-y! (Go there!)<br>Vas-y! (Go there!) |

**Note:** In the last example, the imperative form corresponding to 'tu' is *Vas-y!* and NOT *Va-y!*. 'y', in this example, means 'there'.

# 3. Vocabulary

## Common places

- aéroport, *m* - airport
- ambassade, *f* - embassy
- autoroute, *f* - highway, motorway
- avenue, *f* - avenue
- banque, *f* - bank
- bar, *m* - bar, buffet
- bord, *m* - bank (of a river)
- boulevard, *m* - boulevard
- boutique, *f* - shop, store
- bureau de poste, *m* - post office
- café, *m* - cafeteria
- campagne, *f* - countryside
- cathédrale, *f* - cathedral
- chemin, *m* - street
- cinéma, *m* - cinema
- consulat, *m* - consulate
- discothèque, *f* - discotheque
- école, *f* - school
- église, *f* - church
- endroit, *m* - place
- foyer d'étudiants, *m* - students' hostel
- gare, *f* - (railway) station
- hôpital, *m* - hospital
- hôtel, *m* - hotel
- île, *f* - island
- jardin, *m* - garden
- lac, *m* - lake
- lieu, *m* - place, scene (of an accident etc.)
- magasin, *m* - shop, store
- mairie, *f* - town hall
- maison, *f* - house
- marché, *m* - market
- mer, *f* - sea
- montagne, *f* - mountain
- office de tourisme, *m* - tourism office
- pays, *m* - country
- pharmacie, *f* - drug store
- plage, *f* - beach
- port, *m* - port, harbor
- restaurant, *m* - restaurant
- rivière, *f* - river
- rue, *f* - road
- salle, *f* - room (class room, lecture hall)
- salle de spectacle, *f* - theater
- stade, *m* - stadium, stage
- supermarché, *m* - supermarket
- théâtre, *m* - theater
- village, *m* - village
- ville, *f* - city

- est, *m* - east
- nord, *m* - north
- ouest, *m* - west
- sud, *m* - south

## Family

- ami, *m* - friend
- amie, *f* - girl friend
- beau-fils, *m* - son-in-law
- beau-frère, *m* - brother-in-law
- beau-père, *m* - father-in-law
- bébé, *m* - baby
- belle-fille, *f* - daughter-in-law
- belle-mère, *f* - mother-in-law
- belle-soeur, *f* - sister-in-law
- cousin, *m* - cousine
- cousine, *f* - cousine
- dame, *f* - lady
- enfant, *m* - child
- femme, *f* - woman, wife
- fiancé, *m* - lover
- fiancée, *f* - lover
- fille, *f* - daughter, girl
- fils, *m* - son
- frère, *m* - brother
- garçon, *m* - boy
- grand-mère, *f* - grand mother
- grands-parents, *m,pl* - grand parents
- grand-père, *m* - grand father
- homme, *m* - man
- madame, *f* (abbr. Mme.) - Mrs.
- mademoiselle, *f* (abbr. Mlle.) - Miss.
- mari, *m* - husband
- mère, *f* - mother
- monsieur, *m* (abbr. M.) - Mr.
- neveu, *m* - nephew
- nièce, *f* - niece
- oncle, *m* - uncle
- parents, *m,pl* - parents
- père, *m* - father
- petit-enfant, *m* - grand child
- petite-fille, *f* - grand daughter
- petit-fils, *m* - grand son
- soeur, *f* - sister
- tante, *f* - aunt

# Vehicles

- autobus, *m* - bus
- avion, *m* - airplane
- bateau, *m* - boat
- bicyclette, *m* - bicycle
- bus, *m* - bus
- camion, *m* - truck
- charette, *f* - cart
- fusée, *f* - rocket
- moto, *f* - motorcycle
- navire, *m* - ship
- taxi, *m* - taxi
- train, *m* - train
- vélo, *m* - bicycle
- vélomoteur, *m* - moped
- voiture, *f* - car

# Professions

- acteur (actrice) - actor
- architecte (-) - architect
- avocat (-) - advocate
- chanteur (chanteuse) - singer
- commerçant (-e) - shopkeeper
- conducteur (conductrice) - driver
- contrôleur (contrôleuse) - bus conductor, ticket inspector (in train)
- danseur (danseuse) - dancer
- directeur (directrice) - director
- dramaturge (-) - dramatist
- écrivain (-) - writer
- enseignant (-e) - teacher
- érudit (-e) - scholar
- étudiant (-e) - student
- homme (femme) d'affaires - businessman (businesswoman)
- infirmière, *f* - nurse
- ingénieur, *m* - engineer
- instituteur (institutrice) - teacher
- journaliste (-) - journalist
- mécanicien (-) - mechanic
- médecin (-) - doctor
- musicien (-ne) - musician
- photographer (-) - photographer
- professor (-) - professor
- propriétaire (-) - landlord
- réalisateur (réalisatrice) - film director
- scientifique (-) - scientist
- secrétaire (-) - secretary

# Countries and nationality

- l'Allemagne - allemand [Germany, German]
- l'Angleterre - anglais [England, English]
- l'Autriche - autrichien [Austria, Austrian]
- la Canada - canadien (-ne) [Canada, Canadian]
- la Chine - chinois (-e) [China, Chinese]
- la Corée - coréen (-e) [Korea, Korean]
- l'Espagne - espagnol (-e) [Spain, Spanish]
- les États-Unis (d'Amérique) - américain (-e) [USA, American]
- la Finlande - finlandais (-e) *or* finnois (-e) [Finland, Finnish]
- la France - français (-e) [France, French]

- la Grèce - grec (grecque) [Greece, Greek]
- l'Inde - indien (-ne) [india, Indian]
- l'Iran - iranien (-ne) [Iran, Iranian]
- l'Irlande - irlandais (-e) [Ireland, Irish]
- l'Italie - italien (-ne) [Italy, Italian]
- le Japon - japonais (-e) [Japan, Japanese]
- le Maroc - marocain (-e) [Morocco, Moroccan]
- le Pakistan - pakistanais (-e) [Pakistan, Pakistani]
- les Pays-Bas (*m,pl*) - néerlandais (-e) *or* hollandais (-e) [(the) Netherlands, Dutch]
- le Portugal - portugais (-e) [Portugal, Portugese]
- la Russie - russe (-) [Russia, Russian]
- la Suède - suédois (-e) [Sweden, Swedish]
- la Suisse - suisse (-) [Switzerland, Swiss]

**Note:** The name of a country is feminine, if either it starts with a vowel or it ends with e. In all other cases, the name is masculine.

# Parts of body

- barbe, *f* - beard
- bouche, *f* - mouth
- bras, *m* (also *pl*) - arm (also arms)
- cheveux, *m,pl* - hair
- corps, *m* - body
- dent, *f* - tooth
- doigt, *m* - finger
- dos, *m* - back
- droit, *adj* - right
- estomac, *m* - stomach
- gauche, *adj* - left
- jambe, *f* - leg
- joue, *f* - cheek
- lunettes, *f,pl* - spectacles
- main, *f* - hand
- moustache, *f* - moustache
- nez, *m* - nose
- oeil, *m* (*pl* yeux) - eye
- oreille, *f* - ear
- pied, *m* - foot
- santé, *f* - health
- tête, *f* - head
- ventre, *m* - stomach
- visage, *m* - face

# Colors

- blanc - white
- bleu - blue
- blond - blond
- brun - brown
- gris - gray
- jaune - yellow
- marron - chestnut brown
- noir - black
- orange - orange
- rose - pink
- rosé - pinkish
- rouge - red
- roux - foxy red, of the rust color
- vert - green
- violet - magenta
- violette - violet

# House

## Types of house

- appartement, *m* - apartment, flat
- bâtiment, *m* - building
- immeuble, *m* - building, an apartment building
- logement, *m* - accommodation, housing
- maison, *f* - house
- studio, *m* - studio
- villa, *f* - villa

## Floors

- étage, *m* - floor
- rez-de-chaussée, *m* - ground floor
- premier étage, *m* - first floor
- deuxième étage, *m* - second floor
- dernier étage, *m* - top floor
- toit, *m* - roof
- sous-sol, *m* - basement

## Parts of house

- ascenseur, *m* - lift, elevator

## Furnitures

- armoire, *f* - cabinet, closet, cupboard

- chambre, *f* - room
- chambre à coucher, *f* - bedroom
- couloir, *m* - corridor, passage
- cuisine, *f* - kitchen
- entrée, *f* - entrance
- escalier, *m* - staircase, stairs
- fenêtre, *f* - window
- garage, *m* - garage
- moquette, *f* - fitted carpet
- mur, *m* - wall
- parquet, *m* - (wooden) floor
- pièce, *f* - room
- plafond, *m* - ceiling
- plancher, *m* - floor
- porte, *f* - door, gate
- salle à manger, *f* - dining room
- salle de bains, *f* - bathroom
- salle de séjour, *f* - living room
- salon, *m* - lounge, hall, sitting room
- toilette, *f* - toilet
- toit, *m* - roof
- tuile, *f* - tile

- baignoire, *f* - buth tub
- banc, *m* - bench
- canapé, *m* - sofa
- chaise, *f* - chair
- douche, *f* - shower
- fauteuil, *m* - arm-chair
- fauteuil roulant, *m* - wheel-chair
- glace, *f* - mirror
- lampe, *f* - lamp
- lit, *m* - bed
- meubles, *m,pl* - furniture
- miroir, *m* - mirror
- table, *f* - table
- tapis, *m* - carpet

## Food

- agneau, *m* - lamb
- baguette, *f* - long French bread
- banane, *f* - banana
- beurre, *m* - butter
- boeuf, *m* - beef
- brioche, *f* - a kind of light sweet bun
- canard, *m* - duck
- carotte, *f* - carrot
- champignon, *m* - mushroom
- chocolat, *m* - chocolate
- chou, *m* (*pl* choux) - cabbage
- chou-fleur, *m* (*pl* choux-fleurs) - cauliflower
- confiture, *f* - jam
- crème, *f* - cream
- croissant, *m* - a kind of crescent-shaped bread
- dessert, *m* - dessert
- farine, *f* - flour
- fromage, *m* - cheese
- fruit, *m* - fruit
- gâteau, *m* - cake
- glace, *f* - ice-cream
- haricot, *m* - bean
- huile, *f* - oil
- lait, *m* - milk
- lapin, *m* - rabbit
- légume, *m* - vegetable
- marmelade, *f* - marmalade, jam
- moutarde, *f* - mustard
- oeuf, *m* - egg
- omelette, *f* - omelette
- orange, *f* - orange
- pain, *m* - bread
- pois, *m* - pea
- poisson, *m* - fish
- poivre, *m* - pepper
- pomme de terre, *f* - potato

## Drinks

- alcool, *m* - alcohol
- bière, *f* - beer
- café, *m* - coffee
- champagne, *m* - champagne
- cognac, *m* - cognac, brandy
- eau, *f* - water
- jus de fruit, *m* - fruit juice
- rhum, *m* - rum
- thé, *m* - tea
- vin, *m* - wine
- vin blanc, *m* - white wine
- vin rouge, *m* - red wine
- whisky, *m* - whiskey

## Cutlery items

- assiette, *f* - plate
- bol, *m* - bowl
- bouteille, *f* - bottle
- carafe, *f* - jug
- couteau, *f* - knife
- cuillère, *f* - spoon
- fourchette, *f* - fork
- serviette, *f* - napkin
- tasse, *f* - cup
- verre, *m* - glass

## At restaurant

- garçon, *m* - waiter
- serveuse, *f* - waitress
- menu, *m* - menu
- carte, *f* - card
- plat, *m* - dish (of food)

## Meals

- potage, *m* - soup
- poulet, *m* - chicken
- riz, *m* - rice
- salade, *f* - salad
- sel, *m* - salt
- soupe, *f* - soup
- sucre, *m* - sugar
- tomate, *f* - tomato
- veau, *m* - veal
- viande, *f* - meat
- vinaigre, *m* - vinegar

- petit déjeuner, *m* - breakfast
- prendre le petit déjeuner, *verb* - to take breakfast
- déjeuner, *m* - lunch
- déjeuner, *verb* - to take lunch
- dîner, *m* - diner
- dîner, *verb* - to dine

### Medicines

- drogue, *f* - drug
- médicament, *m* - medicine

# Some instruments and objects

## Books etc.

- livre, *m* - book
- cahier, *m* - notebook, exercise book
- journal, *m* - newspaper
- stylo, *m* - pen
- crayon, *m* - pencil

## Musical instruments

- guitare, *f* - guitar
- piano, *m* - piano
- violon, *m* - violin
- clavier, *m* - keyboard
- harmonica, *m* - harmonica

## Postal items

- lettre, *f* - letter
- enveloppe, *f* - envelope
- timbre, *m* - postal stamp
- carte postale, *f* - picture postcard
- poste, *f* - post office
- bureau de poste, *m* - post office
- code postal, *m* - post code, zip code
- boîte postale, *f* - P.O. box
- poster - to post
- lieu d'envoie, *m* - the place from where a letter is sent
- destinateur - the person who sends a letter
- destinataire, *m,f* - the person to whom a letter is sent, addressee