# French Language Studies – Grammar Reference Resource

## Contents

## NOUNS

### *Introduction to Nouns*

A **noun** is essentially a label for places, things, events, ideas, concepts and so on. Like English, nouns in French maybe categorized as common or proper, count or mass, singular or plural. However, unlike English, French nouns arealso categorized as either masculine or feminine.

**common vs. proper**
Common nouns in English and French are the generic term for something. Common nouns are never spelled with a capital letter unless they begin a sentence.

        un **tatou**                           an **armadillo**

Proper nouns are specific names and thus begin with capital letters.

        **Tex** et **Tammy**                    **Tex** and **Tammy**

**count vs. mass**
Another way of classifying nouns is according to whether they can be counted or not. Count nouns identifyindividual entities that can be counted, like armadillos.

        un **tatou**, deux **tatous**             one **armadillo,** two **armadillos**

In contrast, a mass noun refers to an entity as an uncountable unit. In the following example, the bread that Tex iseating is conceived of as a mass, that is, an undefined quantity.



TEX MANGE DU PAIN

        Tex mange du **pain.**                 Tex is eating **bread.**

The difference between count and mass nouns is usually clearcut. However, something that is typically countablesuch as an animal (one armadillo, two armadillos, three armadillos) can nevertheless be conceived of in terms of amass, as in the following tasteless example.

        Berk! Il y a du **tatou** écrasé partout sur les autoroutes du Texas.         Yuck! There's squashed **armadillo** all overthe Texas highways.

**singular vs. plural**
All nouns in French and English are marked for number, that is, for singular (one) or plural (more than one).French, like English, usually indicates plurality by adding an **-s** to the end of the base form, the singular noun.Count nouns have both singular and plural forms:

        le **tatou**, les **tatous**               the **armadillo** , the **armadillos**

Mass nouns typically have only a singular form. Try saying the plural forms of the following English mass nouns:

sewage, mucus, plasma.

It sounds strange doesn't it? This shows that it is difficult to pluralize a mass noun.

### masculine vs. feminine

In English, grammatical gender is based on biology and is only relevant for pronouns (he, she, it) and possessive determiners (his, her, its). Gender in French, on the other hand, affects all nouns, pronouns, adjectives and articles. A noun's gender is indicated by the article that precedes it. Masculine nouns are preceded by **le** and feminine nouns by **la**. The use of articles in French is more widespread than in English.

|  |  |
|---|---|
| le **garçon** | the boy |
| la **fille** | the girl |

Unlike English, the grammatical concept of gender in French has little to do with biological sex. Therefore, inanimate objects such as tables and desks are categorized as either masculine or feminine (there is no neuter gender in French grammar).

|  |  |
|---|---|
| la **table** (feminine) | the table |
| le **bureau** (masculine) | the desk |

Remember that gender in French, for the most part, is not about sex, but is simply an arbitrary category. The terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' really mean nothing more than 'noun class A' and 'noun class B'. Because grammatical gender is fairly arbitrary, it is essential to memorize a noun's gender along with its spelling and pronunciation.

## Gender: Masculine, Feminine

In French, a noun is always feminine or masculine. It is introduced by a determiner, which usually indicates the gender of the noun.

**people**

When a noun refers to a person, the gender is determined by the person's sex (although some exceptions do exist).

In general, the feminine form of the noun is formed by adding an **-e** to the masculine noun. Note that the addition of the **-e** changes the pronunciation in some words:

| | |
|---|---|
| Joe-Bob est **étudiant**, Tammy est aussi **étudiante**. | Joe-Bob is a student, Tammy is a student. |
| Tex est **ami** avec Joe-Bob, Tammy est aussi **amie** avec Joe-Bob. | Tex is Joe-Bob's friend, Tammy is also Joe-Bob's friend. |

There are cases when the feminine form of the noun changes more drastically.

| | |
|---|---|
| Edouard: Je suis **serveur**. Tammy: Je ne suis pas **serveuse**. | Edouard: I'm a waiter. Tammy: I'm not a waiter. |
| Trey: Je suis **musicien**. Tammy: Je ne suis pas **musicienne.** | Trey: I'm a musician. Tammy: I'm not a musician. |



JE SUIS MUSICIEN

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex: Je suis un **séducteur**. Bette: Je suis une **séductrice**. | Tex: I'm a womanizer. Bette: I'm a seductress. |
| Joe-Bob: Pour le travail, je ne suis pas **champion**. Fiona: C'est moi qui suis **championne**. | Joe-Bob: I'm not a champion at working. Fiona: I'm the one who is a champion. |
| Tex: Je suis le **copain** de Tammy. Tammy: Je suis la **copine** de Tex. | Tex: I'm Tammy's pal. Tammy: I'm Tex's pal. |

In general, when the masculine noun ends in **-e**, the feminine noun remains unchanged. Only the determiner or the context indicates if it is a feminine or masculine noun.

Tex et Rita sont frère et soeur, mais ils ont des métiers tout à fait différents.

Tex et Rita are brother and sister, but they have completely different jobs.

Tex est **poète**. Rita est **secrétaire**.

Tex is a poet. Rita is a secretary.

Tex n'est sûrement pas **secrétaire** et Rita n'est pas **poète** non plus.

Tex is certainly not a secretary and Rita is not a poet either.

**animals**

The gender of animals is often arbitrary. Some animals are always masculine (un escargot, a snail), others are feminine (la fourmi, ant). However, for some animals there are irregular masculine and feminine forms.

> le **chat** / la **chatte**, cat
>
> le **chien** / la **chienne**, dog
>
> le **coq** / la **poule**, chicken (rooster / hen)
>
> le **boeuf** , le **taureau** / la **vache**, ox / bull / cow

**objects and ideas**

The gender of nouns referring to things and abstractions is arbitrary. However, it can often be inferred from the ending of the word. Typically, words ending in **-age**, **-ment**, **-eau**, **-phone**, **-scope**, **-isme** are masculine and those ending in **-tion**, **-sion**, **-té**, **-ette**, **-ance** , **-ence** , **-ie**, **-ure**, **-ode/-ade/-ude** are feminine.



LE COUTEAU    LA FOURCHETTE

LE SENTIMENT

| **masculine endings** | **feminine endings** |
|---|---|
| le from**age** (cheese) | la sal**ade** (salad, lettuce) |
| le monu**ment** (monument) | la fourch**ette** (fork) |
| le senti**ment** (feeling) | la télévi**si on** (television) |
| le cout**eau** (knife) | la cul**ture** (culture) |
| le télé**phone** (telephone) | la situa**tion** (situation) |
| le micro**scope** (microscope) | la socié**té** (society) |
| le romant**isme** (romanticism) | la différ**ence** (difference |
| | la philosoph**ie** (philosophy) |

Tammy présente Tex pour la première fois à Bette et Fiona.

Tammy: Tex est un **ami** de Lyon. C'est un **tuteur** maintenant! Tex, la **minette** c'est mon **ami e** Bette, et la **fourmi** c'est ma **copine** Fiona. Bette et Fiona sont **étudiantes.**

Bette: Enchantée, Tex! J'adore la **culture** française.

Tex: Ah, donc tu, . . . tu aimes l'**existentialisme**?

Bette: Euh, oui, bien sûr, Tex.

Tammy introduces Tex for the first time to Bette and Fiona.

Tammy: Tex is a friend from Lyon. He is a tutor now! Tex, the kitty is my friend Bette and the ant is my pal Fiona. Bette and Fiona are students.

Bette: Nice to meet you, Tex. I adore French culture.

Tex: Ah, so you, . . . you like existentialism?

Bette: Uh, yes, of course, Tex.

# French Language Studies – Grammar Reference Resource

## *Voila vs. il y a*

**Il y a** and **voi là** are two ways of introducing nouns. They are translated into English as 'there is / there are' or 'here is / here are.'

### il y a

**Il y a + noun** usually indicates the existence of a person or a thing in the context of a particular setting. It is commonly translated as 'there is' or 'there are.' For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| A Austin, **il y a** une grande université. | In Austin, there is a big university. |
| Dans cette université, **il y a** plusieurs animaux qui parlent le français! | At this university, there are several animals who speak French! |
| Parmi ces animaux, **il y a** des tatous, un escargot, une chatte, un écureuil, et plusieurs insectes! Attention! | Among these animals, there are armadillos, a snail, a cat, a squirrel, and several insects! Careful! |

The negation of 'il y a' is **il n'y a pas**, 'there is / are not'. You will also find these forms:
**il n'y a plus**, 'there is /are not anymore', **il n'y a j amais** , 'there is/are never'.

| | |
|---|---|
| A Austin, il **n'**y a **jamais** de neige. | In Austin, there is never any snow. |
| Donc parmi ces animaux francophones, il **n'**y a **pas** de pingouin! | So, among these French-speaking animals, there is no penguin! |

The verb **avoir** in the expression **il y a** may be conjugated in any tense or mood, for example, in the past (**il y avai t**, 'there was') or in the future (**il y aura**, 'there will be.')

À AUSTIN, IL N'Y A JAMAIS DE NEIGE

### voilà/voici

**Voilà + noun** and **voi ci + noun** are commonly translated as 'here is/are'. They are used to indicate the sudden appearance of something or someone, to introduce people or ideas. Alternating between **voi ci** and **voi là** is common when referring to more than one item.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tammy montre le campus à Tex: **Voici** la bibliothèque et **voi là** la célèbre tour! | Tammy is showing the campus to Tex: Here is the library, and there is the famous Tower. |
| Tex: Oui, oui ... | Tex: Yes, yes ... |
| Tammy présente Tex: Tex, **voi ci** Joe-Bob et Corey ... et **voilà** Edouard qui arrive. | Tammy introduces Tex: Tex, here is Joe-Bob and Corey ... and there comes Edouard. |
| Joe-Bob: Bonjour, Tex. | Joe-Bob: Hello, Tex. |
| Corey: Salut, Tex. | Corey: Hi, Tex. |
| Tex: Oh, la, la, de vrais Texans ... | Tex: Oh, la, la, real Texans ... |

## Determiners

### *Introduction to Determiners*

A **determiner** is a word that determines or qualifies the meaning of a noun by expressing such concepts as quantity or definiteness. There is never more than one determiner per noun and it is always placed before the noun.
Determiners always agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.

**Articles** are the main group of determiners in French. There are three categories of articles: definite, indefinite, and partitive.

**Definite articles** (**le, la, les**) are used when the noun is specific. They are all translated as 'the' in English.

> Le serveur donne **la** carte des vins à Tex.    The waiter gives **the** wine list to Tex.

**Indefinite articles** (**un, une, des**) introduce nouns that are not specific. They are translated as 'a' or 'an' in English.

> Tex choisit **un** vin.   Tex chooses **a** wine.

**Partitive articles** (**du, de la, de l'**) are used to introduce mass nouns, that is nouns that are conceived of as a mass of indeterminate quantity. They are usually translated as 'some' in English.

> Tex boit **du** vin.       Tex drinks **some** wine.

**Demonstrative determiners** (**ce, cet, cette, ces**) point out something, typically something within sight. They may be translated in English as 'this', 'that', 'these', 'those' depending on the number (singular or plural) and proximity (near or far)

> Tex explique: **Ce** bassin est Barton Spring.
> **Cette** piscine s'appelle Deep Eddy.

> Tex explains: **This** pool is Barton Springs.
> **This** swimming pool is Deep Eddy.

**Possessive determiners** (**mon, ma, mes,** etc.) indicate ownership or possession like 'my', 'your' 'his', 'her', 'our', 'their'.

> Tex présente **sa** famille: Voici **mon** frère Trey, **ma** soeur Rita avec **ses** enfants et **leur** chien Fido. **Notre** famille est formidable.

> Tex introduces **his** family: Here is **my** brother, Trey, **my** sister, Rita with **her** children and **their** dog Fido. **Our** family is great.

## *Determiners: Definite Articles*

**forms**

In French, few nouns can stand alone. Most need to be introduced or 'determined' by an article. As in English, an article is characterized as either **definite** ('the') or **indefinite** ('a', 'an'). In addition, French articles are also **masculine** or **feminine**, **singular** or **plural** , according to the gender and number of the noun they determine. Here are the **definite articles** in French:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Masculine singular: **le** (**l'**) | Tex **le** tatou | Tex the armadillo |
| | Joe-Bob **l'**écureuil | Joe-Bob the squirrel |
| Feminine singular: **la** (**l'**) | Bette **la** chatte | Bette the cat (female) |
| | **l'**Université du Texas | The University of Texas |
| Masculine and feminine plural: **les** | **les** tatous | the armadillos |
| | **les é**cureuils | the squirrels |
| | **les** chats | the cats |
| | **les u**niversités | the universities |

**élision and liaison**

In the examples above, note that **le** and **la** both become **l'** when they precede a noun beginning with a vowel or a silent **h**: **l'**escargot, **l'**université. This is called **elision**.

Unlike **le** and **la**, **les** does not have a contracted, reduced form. When **les** is followed by a word starting with a vowel, the normally silent final **s** of **les** is pronounced, making a **/z/** sound. This additional sound linking two words is called **liaison.**

| Compulsory liaison with a vowel or silent h | No liaison with a consonant |
|---|---|
| le**s i** nsectes<br>le**s a**nimaux<br>**les h**ommes | les tatous<br>les fourmis |

Note that **elision** and **liaison** occur with most words starting with **h**: **l'**homme, **les h**ommes, **l'**hiver, **les h**ivers. Exceptions to this rule are words beginning with an aspirate 'h'.



**to identify a specific noun**

The definite article is used to identify a specific noun or to refer to a noun that has already been specified.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex adore **les** croissants. | Tex loves croissants. |
| Joe-Bob préfère **les** doughnuts. | Joe-Bob prefers doughnuts. |
| Tammy n'aime pas **le** café. | Tammy does not like coffee. |
| Edouard apprécie **la** bonne cuisine française. | Edouard appreciates good French cuisine. |

**to express general truths or concepts**

French uses the definite article to express general truths or concepts. English, in contrast, uses no article at all. Compare the following sentences:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex: **L'**argent ne rend pas **l'**homme heureux! | Tex: Money does not make man happy! |
| Tammy: Tu as raison. **L'**amour et **la** santé sont plus importants! | Tammy: You are right. Love and health are more important! |
| Tex: Bien sûr, pour **les** insectes et **les** animaux, **l'**argent n'existe pas! Mais **l'**amour est aussi important pour nous que pour les humains. Ah oui ... **l'**amour **l'**amour, toujours **l'**amour! | Tex: Of course, for insects and animals, money does not exist! But love is as important for us as it is for humans. Ah, yes, love, love, love, always love! |

**to express likes and dislikes**

The French also use the definite article with **verbs of preference**, such as **aimer, préférer, détester.** Once again, English omits the article in such general statements. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex adore **les** croissants. | Tex loves croissants. |
| Joe-Bob préfère **les** doughnuts. | Joe-Bob prefers doughnuts. |
| Tammy n'aime pas **le** café. | Tammy does not like coffee. |
| Edouard apprécie **la** bonne cuisine française. | Edouard appreciates good French cuisine. |



LE MATIN, TAMMY VA EN COURS.

**to indicate habitual recurrence**

The definite article is used in French with moments of the **day**, **days of the week**, and **seasons to indicate habitual recurrence.** For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Le** matin, Tammy va en cours. | **Every morning**, Tammy goes to class. |
| **L'**après-midi, elle va à la bibliothèque. | **Every afternoon**, she goes to the library. |
| **Le** lundi, Tex fait son jogging. | **On Mondays**, Tex goes for a jog. |
| **L'**été, il se baigne avec Tammy à Barton Springs. **L'**hiver, il skie à Purgatory. | **Every summer**, he bathes with Tammy at Barton Springs. **Every winter**, he skis in Purgatory. |

### in a series

The article is usually repeated in a **series**, in contrast to English. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tammy: Tex, aide-moi à mettre la table! Apporte **les** assiettes, **les** couteaux, **les** verres, **les** serviettes et **le** vin. | Tex, help me set the table! Bring the plates, knives, glasses, napkins, and wine. |

### no article

**Cities** usually do not require an article in French. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex habite à **Austin**. | Tex lives in Austin, |
| mais il préfère **Paris.** | but he prefers Paris. |

Continents, countries, states, regions, and oceans usually require an article (**l'**Afrique, **la** France, **le** Texas, **la** Bourgogne, **l'**Atlantique etc.), but there are a few exceptions, usually islands: Haïti, Israël, Madagascar. See prepositions with place names for more information.

**Months** never require an article: **janvier, février, mars, etc.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cependant Tex adore **mars** à Austin. | Nevertheless Tex adores March in Austin. |

**Days of the week** do not require an article in instances where they do not indicate habitual recurrence. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Lundi** , il a rendez-vous avec Tammy. | Monday he has a date with Tammy. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Tammy: J'aime beaucoup **le** français. C'est **la** langue de Molière et de Hugo, et surtout c'est **la** langue maternelle de Tex! | Tammy: I like French a lot. It is the language of Molière and of Hugo, and above all it is the mother tongue of Tex! |
| Bette: Alors comme ça Tammy, tu aimes bien **les** Français? | Bette: So Tammy, you really like French men? |
| Tammy: Oh oui! Surtout **les** Français qui portent **le** béret! | Tammy: I sure do! Especially French men who wear a beret! |

# French Language Studies – Grammar Reference Resource

## *Determiners: Indefinite Articles*

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**forms**

In French, few nouns can stand alone. Most need to be introduced or 'determined' by an article. As in English, an article is characterized as either **definite** ('the') or **indefinite** ('a', 'an'). In French, articles are also **masculine** or **feminine**, and **singular** or **plural**, according to the gender and number of the noun they determine. Here are the **indefinite articles** in French:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| masculine singular: **un** | Tex est **un** tatou. <br> Joe-Bob est **un** écureuil. | Tex is an armadillo. <br> Joe-Bob is a squirrel. |
| feminine singular: **une** | Bette est **une** chatte. | Bette is a cat.(female) |
| | UT est **une** université | UT is a university. |
| plural: **des** | **des** tatous <br> **des é**cureuils <br> **des** chats <br> **des u**niversités | (some) armadillos <br> (some) squirrels (some) cats <br> (some) universities |

**uses**

As the English 'a' 'an' or 'some', the indefinite articles **un, une**, **des** refer to nouns which are non-specific. **Un** or **une** may also indicate quantity, 'a' or 'an' in the sense of 'one.' Contrast the use of the indefinite and definite articles in the first two sentences below. The indefinite plural **des** is always expressed in French, but its English equivalent 'some' is often omitted.



JOE-BOB
A UNE CHAMBRE
DANS UNE RÉSIDENCE
UNIVERSITAIRE

| | |
|---|---|
| Joe-Bob et Corey ont **une** chambre dans **une** résidence universitaire à Austin. | Joe-Bob and Corey have **a (one)** room in **a** residence hall in Austin. |
| Ils ont **la** chambre numéro 1735 dans **la** résidence Jester. | The have **the** room #1735 in **the** Jester residence hall. |
| Joe-Bob et Corey sont **des** camarades de chambre. | Joe-Bob and Corey are roommates! |

**'de' after the negative**

In a negative sentence, the indefinite articles **un, une, des** are replaced by **de** or **d'**:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex: Joe-Bob, tu as **un** chien? | Tex: Joe-Bob, do you have **a** dog?' |
| Joe-Bob: Mais non! Je n'ai pas **de** chien. Je suis **un** écureuil. | Joe-Bob: No, I don't have **a** dog. I'm **a** squirrel. |
| Tex: Corey, tu as **des** amis? | Tex: Corey, do you have friends? |
| Corey: Mais non! Je n'ai pas **d'**amis. Je suis un cafard. | Corey: No, I don't have **any** friends. I'm a cockroach. |

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However, following the verb **être**, the indefinite articles **un, une, des** remain unchanged in the negative:

Edouard: Joe-Bob, c'est **un** écureuil. Ce n'est pas **un** tatou!

Edouard: Joe-Bob is a squirrel. He is not an armadillo.

Tex et Tammy, ce sont **des** tatous. Ce ne sont pas **des** escargots.

Tex and Tammy are armadillos. They are not snails.

**before a plural adjective**

Before a plural adjective which precedes a noun, **des** usually becomes **de**. If the adjective comes after the noun, **des** does not change to **de**.



TEX ET TAMMY SONT
DES TATOUS PARFAITS
L'UN POUR L'AUTRE

Edouard: Tex et Tammy sont **de** charmants amoureux.

Edouard: Tex and Tammy are charming lovers.

Bette: Ah bon? Ce ne sont pas seulement **de** bons amis?

Bette: Really? They are not just good friends?

Edouard: Tu ne trouves pas que Tex et Tammy sont **des** tatous parfaits l'un pour l'autre?

Edouard: Don't you think that Tex and Tammy are armadillos who are perfect for each other?

Bette: Absolument pas!

Bette: Absolutely not!

**with adjectives of profession, nationality, and religion**

Professions, nationalities and religions are considered adjectives in French and need no article after the verbs **être** and **devenir**.

Edouard: Tex devient professeur; il est américain; il n'est pas catholique.

Edouard: Tex is becoming a professor. He is American. He is not Catholic.

Bette et Tammy parlent entre femmes.

Bette and Tammy are talking woman-to-woman.

Bette: Je n'ai pas **de** véritables amis! Tout le monde pense que je suis **une** méchante chatte.

Bette: I have no real friends! Everybody thinks that I am a wicked cat.

Tammy: Mais non Bette! Toi et moi nous sommes **de** vieilles amies!

Tammy: That's not true Bette! You and I are old friends!'

Bette: Oui, mais toi tu as **un** petit ami tandis que moi je n'ai pas **de** petit ami!

Bette: Yes, but you have a boyfriend whereas I don't have any boyfriend!

Tammy: Tu sais Bette, avoir un petit ami ce n'est pas toujours une partie de plaisir, surtout quand il s'appelle Tex!

Tammy: You know Bette, having a boyfriend is not always a fun thing, especially when he's called Tex!

## *Possessive Determiners*

**forms and uses**

The possessive determiners serve to express ownership or possession (hence the name). They are also often called possessive adjectives because they agree in gender and number with the noun they introduce.

| Masculine si | Feminine si | Plural | Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **mon** | **ma** | **mes** | my |
| **ton** | **ta** | **tes** | your (familiar) |
| **son** | **sa** | **ses** | his or her or its |
| **notre** | **notre** | **nos** | our |
| **votre** | **votre** | **vos** | your (formal or plural) |
| **leur** | **leur** | **leurs** | their |

Possessive articles, like all articles, must agree with the noun they modify. Thus, if the noun is feminine, the possessive article must be feminine, too. In the following example, the feminine noun **famille** requires a feminine form – **sa.** Note that **sa** has three potential translations in English: 'his,' 'her,' or 'its.' So, how do you know which meaning is intended? Context! Since the following example sentence refers to Tex, we know that **sa** means 'his.'

Tex présente **sa** famille: Voici **mon** frère, Trey, et **ma** soeur, Rita, avec **ses e**nfants et **leur** chien Fido. **Notre** famille est formidable!

Tex introduces **his** family. Here is **my** brother, Trey, and **my** sister, Rita with **her** children and **their** dog Fido. **Our** family is great!

**liaison**

Do not forget to make the liaison between the plural forms of the possessive determiners and words that begin with a vowel sound. **Ma**, **ta**, **sa** become **mon**, **ton**, **son** in front of feminine nouns beginning with a vowel sound.

Tex continues his introductions:

Tex: Voici Tammy, mo**n a**mie, et se**s a**mies Bette et Fiona, c'est-à-dire **nos** amies.

Tex: Here is Tammy, **my** friend, and **her** friends, Bette and Fiona, that is to say, **our** friends.

Tammy parle avec Bette: Tex n'est plus **mon** ami! Il a complètement oublié **mon** cadeau et **notre** anniversaire! Il a oublié toutes **ses** promesses! Quel nul!

Tammy is talking with Bette: Tex is not **my** friend any more! He competely forgot **my** present and **our** anniversary! He forgot all **his** promises. What a loser!

# Adverbs

## *Introduction to Adverbs*

An **adverb** is a word that qualifies the action of the verb, that is, it specifies how or when the action is performed. InEnglish, many adverbs are indicated by the **-ly** ending. In French, most adverbs end in **-ment**.

| | |
|---|---|
| **lentement** | slowly |
| **attentivement** | carefully |
| **souvent** | often |

Adverbs answer questions about the action: how? how much? when? and where? While most adverbs in French andEnglish modify verbs, they can also modify other adverbs as well as adjectives.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *verb modified by adverb* | Ecoute **attentivement.** | Listen **carefully.** |
| *adverb modified by adverb* | **trop** lentement | **too** slowly |
| *adjective modified by adverb* | **extrêmement** silencieux | **extremely** quiet |

**Adverb vs. Adjective**
It is common in non-standard English for speakers to use adjectives in place of adverbs.

**Tex writes good.** (instead of 'well')

**Aggies talk too slow.** (instead of 'slowly')

While this alternation is common in English, it is not common in French whereadjectives are rarely used in place of the adverb. Remember that adverbs modify verbs (as well as other adverbs and adjectives) and adjectives modifynouns.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex écrit **bien**. | Tex writes well. |
| La poésie de Tex est **bonne**. | Tex's poetry is good. |



TEX ÉCRIT BIEN

## Adjectives

### *Introduction to Adjectives*

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. The major differences between adjectives in French and English concern agreement and placement. In French, an adjective is usually placed after the noun it modifies and must agree in gender and number with the noun. In English, an adjective usually comes before the noun it modifies and is invariable, that is, it does not agree.

Tex est un tatou **philosophique**.

Edouard est un escargot **raffiné**. Joe-Bob est un écureuil **aimable**. Bette est une chatte **capricieuse**. Corey est un cafard **ivre**.

Fiona est **travailleuse**. (f)
Mais Joe-Bob n'est pas **travailleur**. (m)

Tex is a **philosophical** armadillo.

Edouard is a **refined** snail.

Joe-Bob is a **friendly** squirrel. Bette is a **temperamental** cat. Corey is an **intoxicated** cockroach.

Fiona is **hard-working**.
But Joe-Bob isn't **hard-working**.



JOE-BOB EST UN ÉCUREUIL AIMABLE

## *Adjective vs. adverb*

It is common in nonstandard English for speakers to use adjectives in place of adverbs.

> Joe-Bob says: "Gee, Tex writes real good." (instead of: "Tex writes **well**.")
>
> Joe-Bob says "Gosh, Edouard, you walk real slow." (instead of: "Edouard, you talk **slowly**.")

French adjectives are rarely used in place of the adverbial form. Remember that adjectives modify nouns and adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs!

Tex écrit **bien**.
(adverb modifies verb)

Tex writes **well**.

La poésie de Tex est **bonne**.
(adjective modifies noun)

Tex's poetry is **good**.

## *Adjectives: Formation and Placement*

**formation**

Adjectives agree in both number and gender with the noun or pronoun they modify. For regular adjectives the masculine form is the base form to which endings are added. The feminine adjective is formed by adding an **e**. The plural adjective is formed by adding **s**.

| masculine singular | feminine singular | masculine plural | feminine plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| **petit** | **petite** | **petits** | **petites** |

Note how the singular and plural forms of the masculine adjective sound the same, and the singular and plural forms of the feminine adjective also sound the same.



TEX EST PETIT

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex est **petit.** | Tex is little. |
| Tammy est **petite**. | Tammy is little. |
| Tex et Trey sont **petits.** | Tex and Trey are little. |
| Tammy et Bette sont **petites**. | Tammy and Bette are little. |

The adjective takes the masculine plural when the nouns it modifies are of different genders: Tammy et Tex sont petit**s**. (Tammy and Tex are little.)

Irregular adjectives do not follow the rules given above.

**placement**

In French, most adjectives follow the noun, unlike in English, where the adjective precedes the noun. Here are some examples of adjectives following the noun:

Tex porte toujours un béret **rond**, même quand il fait du sport. Il aime les romans **existentialistes**. Dans son enfance, Tex a habité chez des nonnes **catholiques**.

Tex always wears a round beret, even when he exercises. He likes existentialist novels. As a child, Tex lived with catholic nuns.

Tammy a un nez **pointu**. C'est une tatou **mince** et **sympathique.** Elle apprend la langue **française** et fait des études **littéraires**.

Tammy has a pointed nose. She is a slim and nice armadillo. She's learning the French language and is studying literature.

Bette est de caractère **méfiant**. Elle est d'humeur **changeante**. C'est une chatte très maline

Bette has a mistrustful personality. She has changing moods. She's a very cunning cat.

Note that there is a small group of adjectives that normally precede the noun. Some adjectives can also be placed before or after the noun but changing the position of the adjectives can modify their meaning.



BERK! TU AIMES VRAIMENT ÇA?

Tammy, Bette et Tex sont à Gregory Gym. Les deux filles parlent, puis se disputent, pendant que Tex fait son sport **annuel** .

Tammy: Regarde, Bette, comme ses ongles **jaunes** tapent sur le tapis **roulant** quand il court! Quel tatou **adorabl e**! Et ce museau **fin** et **pointu**, ces écailles **étincelantes**, ce corps **souple**, ces gestes et ces mouvements **pleins de** grâce ...

Bette: Berk! Tu aimes vraiment ça!? Un corps **humide de** sueur et un poil **gris** comme une boule de papier **mâché**! Oh mon dieu! Et cette odeur **désagréable**! Comme un rat **noyé**! Tu n'es pas **sérieuse**!

Tammy: Bette, je ne suis pas idiote! Je connais tes intentions! Il est à moi!

Tammy, Bette and Tex are at Gregory Gym. The two girls talk, then argue, while Tex does his yearly workout.

Tammy: Bette, would you look at those yellow nails of his clicking on the tread mill when he runs! What an adorable armadillo! And that snout, so fine and pointy! Those shiny scales, that supple body, his every gesture and movement so full of grace ...

Bette: Yuck! You like that!? That clammy body, gray fur? Like a wad of paper maché! Oh, Lord! And that awful smell! Like a drowned rat! You're not serious!

Tammy: Bette, you don't fool me! I understand your intentions! He's mine!

# Verbs

## *Introduction to Verbs*

A **verb** may be defined as the 'action word of the sentence'. To determine whether a word is a verb or not, considerits role in the sentence. How is the word 'access' used in the following sentences?

<div align="center">

Never give strangers **access** to your bank account.

If you can't **access** the web pages during peak hours, try again.

</div>

In the first sentence, 'access' is a thing (a noun) that you can give to somebody. In the second sentence, 'access' issomething you do (a verb) with your computer. The point is that whether a word is considered a noun or a verbdepends on how it is used in the sentence.

### infinitives and conjugations

When you study verbs, you will need to know the difference between the infinitive form of the verb and the finiteforms, or conjugated forms. English infinitives are preceded by the word 'to'.

<div align="center">

**to eat, to drink, to sleep**

</div>

These verbs are called infinitives because, like the concept of infinity, they are not bound by time. From the infinitive, we derive the conjugated forms of the verb, also known as the finite forms of the verb. They are calledfinite because they refer to events anchored in time, that is, to events that have a particular tense: past, present,future. Note the conjugated forms of the infinitive 'to study'.

| | |
|---|---|
| I **studied** French in high school. | *past tense conjugation* |
| I **am studying** French in college this semester. | *present tense conjugation* |
| I **will study** French next year overseas. | *future tense conjugation* |

Verb conjugations are traditionally presented in textbooks according to**paradigms**, a grammatical term for pattern. A paradigm always includes the infinitive followed by the conjugations according to **person**which is divided into first, second and third, as well as number, which is the distinction between singular and plural.

Here is the paradigm for the present tense of the French verb **parler**, 'to speak'.

| parler | | |
|---|---|---|
| | singular | plural |
| 1st person | **je parle** (I speak) | **nous parlons** (we speak) |
| 2nd person | **tu parles** (you speak) | **vous parlez** (you speak) |
| 3rd person | **il/elle/on parle** (he/she/it speaks) | **ils/elles parlent** (they speak) |

Regular French verbs fall into three classes based on the last two letters of the verb. Each class has a particular pattern of conjugation. These classes of verbs are generally referred to as first conjugation, second conjugation and third conjunction.

| first conjugation (-er verbs) | |
|---|---|
| danser | to dance |
| regarder | to watch |

| second conjugati on (-ir verbs) | |
|---|---|
| finir | to finish |
| obéir | to obey |

| third conjugation (-re verbs) | |
|---|---|
| vendre | to sell |
| entendre | to listen |

**participles**

A participle is a special verb form that is derived from the infinitive but is not conjugated. In other words, while conjugations come in paradigms of six forms according to six different persons, participles have only two forms, named according to their uses: the present participle and the past participle.

A present participle in French ends in -ant and is frequently used as an adjective. French present participles are usually translated by the -ing form of the English verb. Note that the adjectival form of the present participle must agree in number and gender with the noun it modifies. In the example, the participle is made to agree with the plural noun (les animaux) by adding **-s**.

Les tatous sont des animaux **fascinants**.          Armadillos are fascinating animals.

A past participle in French is used to form compound tenses, such as the 'passé composé'. A past participle can also be used as an adjective in certain contexts. When used as an adjective, the participle agrees in number and gender with the noun it qualifies.

Tex a **perdu** une lettre d'amour de Bette.          Tex lost a love letter from Bette.

Et Tammy a trouvé la lettre **perdue**!          And Tammy found the lost letter!

In the first example, the participle 'perdu' combines with the auxiliary verb to form the past tense of **perdre** (to lose). In the second example, the participle is used as an adjective to modify the noun 'la lettre'. Note how the final
**-e** on the participle indicates agreement with the feminine noun.

**common auxiliaries and modals**

Auxiliaries, often called 'helping verbs', are verbs that combine with the main verb to form a verb phrase. There are two groups of auxiliary verbs: common auxiliaries and modals. The two common auxiliary verbs in French, **avoir** (to have) and **être** (to be) are used to form many tenses. A tense that has only a main verb and no auxiliary is called a simple tense. A verb tense that is composed of a main verb and its auxiliary is called a compound tense.

Joe-Bob **écoute** de la musique country.          Joe-Bob listens to country music.

Joe-Bob **a écouté** de la musique country          Joe-Bob has listened to country music.

In the first example, the main verb 'écouter' is in the simple present tense. In the second example, the verb is in the compound past tense, a tense which combines the auxiliary verb 'avoir' with the past participle of 'écouter'.

**Modals** are special auxiliary verbs that express the attitude of the speaker. In short, modal verbs are 'moody verbs'. For example, modal verbs indicate subtle shades of meaning concerning such things as the likelihood of an event or the moral obligation of an event. The most frequent modal verbs in English are the following: should, could, may, might, ought to, must.

Note how the following modal verbs in French and English convey an attitude of increased urgency.

Tex **peut** quitter la France.    Tex can leave France.

Tex **devrait** quitter la France!    Tex should leave France!

Tex **doit** quitter la France!!    Tex must leave France!!

**transitive vs. intransitive verbs**

Transitive verbs require a direct object while intransitive verbs do not permit an object. A direct object is usually defined as the party which directly receives the action designated by the verb. The terms 'transitive' and 'intransitive' are derived from the grammatical term transitivity which refers to the transfer of an action from the subject (S) to the direct object (DO).

*Transitive*    Tex (S) écrit un poème (DO).    Tex writes a poem.

*Intransitive*    Tex (S) sort.    Tex goes out.

**French vs. English verbs**

There is one important difference between French and English verbs that often causes trouble for beginning language learners. There is a high frequency of English verbs which combine with a particle (typically a preposition) to express idiomatic meanings. English speakers can completely change the meaning of the verb by changing the particle. Consider the extremely versatile English verb 'to get'.

| GET + particle | meaning | french equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| to get about | to move around | **se déplacer** |
| to get better | to recover | **se remettre** |
| to get out | to leave | **sortir, descendre** |
| to get up | to get out of bed | **se lever** |

In order to convey the differences in meaning of the 'get + particle' constructions, note how French makes use of completely different verbs. As a consequence, when you translate such verbs from English into French, you must never translate word-for-word (i.e. translating the verb and particle separately). Since the verb and particle 'go together' in English, they must be translated as a unit in French.

## - er verbs (regular) present tense

There are three major groups of regular verbs in French: verbs with infinitives ending in **-er**, verbs with infinitives ending in **-ir**, and verbs with infinitives ending in **-re**. Since **-er** verbs are the most numerous, they are considered the first conjugation. To conjugate these verbs, drop the **-er** from the infinitive to form the stem. Next, add the **–er** endings to the stem. Different tenses have different endings.

The endings given below (**-e**, **-es**, **-e**, **-ons**, **-ez**, **-ent**) are for forming the present tense. The endings (**-e**, **-es**, **-e**, and **-ent**) are all silent. The only endings that are pronounced are the nous (**-ons**) and the vous (**-ez**) endings. The four silent endings form a boot shape in the verb conjugation.

| parler 'to speak' ||
|---|---|
| je **parl e** | nous **parl ons** |
| tu **parl es** | vous **parl ez** |
| il/elle/on **parl e** | ils/elles **parl ent** |
| past participle: **parl é** ||

Note that the pronunciation of each of the verbs is the same even though the conjugations are spelled differently.

Tex, il **parle** français? Mais c'est un tatou.

Tex speaks French? But he's an armadillo.

Tex: Bien sûr je **parle** français etTammy, elle aussi, elle **parle** français.

Tex: Of course, I speak French and Tammy,too, she speaks French.

Eh bien dis donc, même les tatous **parlent** français au Texas?

Well, I'll be, even the armadillos speak French in Texas?

Here is a list of common **-er** verbs:

**adorer**, to adore

**aimer**, to like

**aimermieux**, toprefer

**chanter**, to sing

**chercher**,to look for

**danser** , to dance

**demander**,to ask

**détester** ,to hate, to detest

**donner**,to give

**écouter**, to listen to

**étudi er**, to study

**habiter**, to live

**jouer**, to play

**montrer**, to show

**présenter**, tointroduce

**regarder**, to watch

**rencontrer** , to meet (by chance)

**rester**, to stay,remain

**téléphoner**,to telephone

**travailler**, to work

**trouver**, to find

**Je** changes to **j'** before a verb starting with a vowel or a silent **h** (ex.**j'a**dore, **j'h**abite). This phenomenon is known as **élision**.

Tex: **J'a**dore la musique rap et **j'é**coute souvent de la musique dans les clubs.
Je chante et je danse aussi

I love rap music and I often listen to music in clubs.

I sing and I dance, too.

Note also that the **s** in plural pronouns (**nous**, **vous**, and **ils/elles**) is usually silent except when it is followed by a   verb that begins with a vowel sound. In such a case the silent **s** is pronounced as a **/z/** and links the pronoun to the verb. This phenomenon is called **liaison** ('linking') and is very characteristic of French.

Tex et Tammy, ils **écoutent** de la musique cadienne avec Paw-Paw!

Tammy: Nous **adorons** danser.

Tex: Oui, oui, c'est vrai. Nous **dansons** beaucoup.

Tex and Tammy, they listen to Cajun music with Paw- Paw!

Tammy: We love to dance.

Tex: Yes, yes, that's true. We dance a lot.



TEX & TAMMY DANSENT

## - er verbs (stem changing) present tense

Spelling changes occur in the stems of several groups of **-er** verbs in the present tense. These spelling changes reflect the pronunciation of the present tense forms.

You may have already noticed the spelling change in the verb **s'appel er** (Je **m'appelle …** , My name is ...). For verbs like **appeler** (to call), **rappeler** (to call back) and **jeter** (to throw), the consonant **-l** or **-t** in the the stem doubles in all forms of the present tense, except in the first and second person plural (nous and vous). This follows the traditional boot pattern of **-er** verb conjugations in the present tense.

| appeler  'to call' ||
|:---:|:---:|
| j'**appelle** | nous **appelons** |
| tu **appelles** | vous **appelez** |
| il/elle/on **appelle** | ils/elles **appellent** |
| past participle : **appelé** ||

This same "boot" pattern is repeated in spelling change verbs like **préférer** (to prefer). In these verbs the **é** in the last syllable of the stem changes to an **è**, except in the first and second person plural (nous and  vous).

| préféreré 'to prefer' ||
|:---:|:---:|
| je **préfère** | nous **préférons** |
| tu **préfères** | vous **préférez** |
| il/elle/on **préfère** | ils/elles **préfèrent** |
| past participle : **préféré** ||

Verbs conjugated like **préférer** include:

> **considérer**, to consider
> **espérer**, to hope
> **régler**, to regulate, pay, settle, adjust
> **répéter**, to repeat
> **sécher**, to dry, skip (a class)

In verbs which are conjugated like **acheter** (to buy), the **e** in the last syllable of the stem also changes to an **è**, again with the exception of the first and second person plural forms.

| acheter 'to buy' ||
|:---:|:---:|
| j'**achète** | nous **achetons** |
| tu **achètes** | vous **achetez** |
| il/elle/on **achète** | ils/elles **achètent** |
| past participle : **acheté** ||

Verbs conjugated like **acheter** include:

**amener**, to bring somebody (along)

**emmener**, to take somebody (along)

**lever**, to lift, raise

**mener** , to take, lead

**peser**, to weigh

Another group of stem-changing verbs include those ending in -**ayer**, including **essayer** (to try) and **payer** (to pay). In these verbs the **y** changes to **i** in all persons except the first and second person plural (nous and vous).

| essa**y**er 'to try' | |
|---|---|
| j'**essai**e | nous **essay**ons |
| tu **essai**es | vous **essay**ez |
| il/elle/on **essai**e | ils/elles **essai**ent |
| past participle : **essay**é | |

Finally, verbs ending in **-ger** like **voyager** (to travel) add an **e** after the **g** in the nous form of the present tense, so that the **g** is pronounced as a soft sound before the -**ons** ending (i.e. nous **voyageons**). Similarly, in verbs ending in -**cer**, **commencer** (to start), for example, the **c** in the nous form changes to **ç** to keep the soft c sound (**nous commençons**).

| voyager 'to travel | |
|---|---|
| je **voyage** | nous **voyageons** |
| tu **voyages** | vous **voyagez** |
| il/elle/on **voyage** | ils/elles **voyagent** |
| past participle: **voyagé** | |

Other verbs in this category include:

**corriger**, to correct

**exiger**, to demand, require

**manger**, to eat

**nager**, to swim

**partager** , to share

**ranger**, to tidy up, arrange

**rédiger**, to write, compose

**songer**, to dream, reflect

| | |
|---|---|
| Quelle activité est-ce que vous **préférez** en été? | What activitiy do you prefer in the summer? |
| Rita: J'**emmène** mes enfants à la piscine. | Rita: I take my children to the pool. |
| Ses enfants: Nous nageons et nous **mangeons** de la glace. | Her children: We swim and we eat ice crean |
| Tammy: Moi, je **préfère** faire du shopping. J'**achète** beaucoup et papa **paie** tout. | Tammy: Me, I prefer shopping. I buy lots and daddy pays for everything. |

## *- ir verbs (irregular) partir, sortir, and dormir*

The verbs **partir**, **sortir**, and **dormir** are irregular in the present tense, that is, they are not conjugated like **regular  -ir verbs.**

| partir 'to leave' | |
|---|---|
| je **par**s | nous **part**ons |
| tu **par**s | vous **part**ez |
| il/elle/on **par**t | ils/elles **part**ent |
| past participle : **part**i | |

| sortir 'to exit, go  out' | |
|---|---|
| je **sor**s | nous **sort**ons |
| tu **sor**s | vous **sort**ez |
| il/elle/on **sor**t | ils/elles **sort**ent |
| past participle : **sort**i | |

| dormir 'to sleep' | |
|---|---|
| je **dor**s | nous **dorm**ons |
| tu **dor**s | vous **dorm**ez |
| il/elle/on **dor**t | ils/elles **dorm**ent |
| past participle :**dorm**i | |



"OUI, JE PARS POUR LA LOUISIANE AVEC TEX."

Bette: Tammy, tu **pars** ce week-end?

Tammy: Oui, je **pars** pour la Louisiane  avec Tex. Nous allons rendre visite à Paw-Paw. Samedi soir nous **sortons** danser et  manger de la cuisine cadienne.

Bette: Et Paw-Paw, il **sort** avec  vous?

Tammy: Non, il préfère rester à la  maison pour dormir.

Bette: Tammy, are you leaving  this  weeken?

Tammy: Yes, I'm going to Louisianna with Tex. We're going to visit Paw-Paw.  We're going out Saturday night to dance and eat some Cajun food.

Bette: And does Paw-Paw go out with  you?

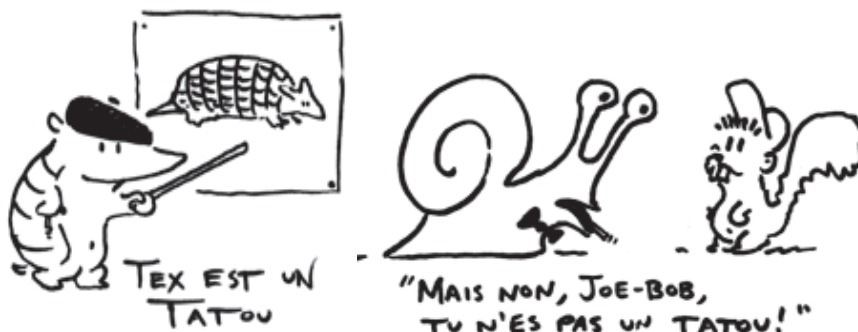Tammy: No, he prefers to stay at home and sleep.

## *etre 'to be'*

The verb **être** is an irregular verb in the present tense.

| être 'to be' | |
|---|---|
| je **sui s** 'I am' | nous **sommes** 'we are' |
| tu **es** 'you are' | vous **êtes** 'you are' |
| il/elle/on **est** 'he/she/one is' | ils/elles **sont** 'they are' |
| past participle: **été** | |



Edouard: Mais non, Joe-Bob, tu n'**es** pas un tatou!

Tex **est** un tatou. Tex et Tammy **sont** des tatous.

Toi et moi, nous ne **sommes** pas des tatous.

Toi, tu **es** un écureuil et moi, je **sui s** un escargot, un escargot français.

Edouard: But no, Joe-Bob, you are not an armadillo!

Tex is an armadillo. Tex and Tammy are armadillos.

You and I, we are not armadillos.

You are a squirrel and I am a snail, a French snail.

**C'est** (plural **Ce sont**) is a common expression used to describe and introduce people or things. See c'est vs. il/elle est for more information. **Etre** is also used as an auxiliary in compound tenses (passé composé with être, passé composé of pronominal verbs, plus-que-parfait, etc.)

## *avoir 'to have'*

The verb **avoir** is irregular in the present tense. This **liaison**, or linking, is especially important in distinguishing **ilsont** (they have) from the third person plural of être **ilssont** (they are).

| avoir 'to have' ||
|:---:|:---:|
| j'**ai** | nous**avons** |
| tu **as** | vous**avez** |
| il/elle/on **a** | ils/elles **ont** |
| past participle: **eu** ||

**Avoir** is also used as an auxiliary in compound tenses (passé composé with avoir, plus-que-parfait, futur antérieur, etc.) Besides ownership, the verb **avoi r** expresses age in French, unlike the English equivalent, which uses the verb 'to be.'

Tex, tu **as** des frères et des soeurs?

Tex: Oui, j'**ai** une soeur et un frère.

Quel âge **ont**-ils?

Tex: Ma soeur Rita **a** 30 ans et mon frère Trey **a** 16 ans.

Tex, do you have brothers and sisters?

Tex: Yes, I have a sister and a brother.

How old are they?

Tex: My sister Rita is 30 and my brother Trey is 16.



IL A UNE SOEUR
ET UN FRÈRE

## *aller* "to go"

The verb **aller** is irregular in the present tense. This **-s** is pronounced as a **/z/** to link with the vowel sound in the plural forms **allons** and **allez**.

| aller 'to go' ||
|---|---|
| je **vais** | nous **allons** |
| tu **vas** | vous **allez** |
| il/elle/on **va** | ils/elles **vont** |
| past participle : **allé** ||

**Aller** literally means 'to go', but is used figuratively in salutations to say how one is doing.



"BONJOUR MONSIEUR LE PROFESSEUR!"

Corey: Salut, Joe-Bob , où **vas** -tu?

Corey: Hey, Joe-Bob, where are you going?

Joe-Bob: Je **vais** au café.

Joe-Bob: I'm going to a coffee shop.

Corey: Mais, tu as cours maintenant.

Corey: But, you have class right now.

Joe-Bob: Oui, mais le prof est horrible, vraiment horrible!

Joe-Bob: Yes but, the prof is horrible, really horrible.

Corey: Attention! Il arrive!

Corey: Watch out! He's coming!

Joe-Bob: Ah, bonjour monsieur le professeur. Comment **allez**-vous aujourd'hui?

Joe-Bob: Oh, hello, professor. How are you today?

## faire "to do, to make"

The verb **faire** is irregular in the present tense.

| faire 'to do, to make' ||
|---|---|
| je **fais** | nous **faisons** |
| tu **fais** | vous **faites** |
| il/elle/on **fait** | ils/elles **font** |
| past participle : **fait** ||

Note the vous form **faites**. It is unusual because it does not end in **-ez**. **Faire** is one of only three verbs where this is the case (The others are **être**: vous **êtes** , and **dire**: vous **dites** ). You may notice, too, the similarity in the third person plural forms of **aller**, **être**, and **faire**:

> **ils vont** (they go),
>
> **ils sont** (they are), and
>
> **ils font** (they do/make).

Although **faire** is often used in a question, it does not automatically have to be used in the response.

Tex: Salut tout le monde. Qu'est-ce qu'on **fait**?

Tex: Hey everyone. What's everybody doing?

Corey: Pas grand-chose.

Corey: Not much.

Fiona: Nous ne **faisons** rien, absolument rien.

Fiona: We're not doing anything, absolutely nothing.



NOUS NE FAISONS RIEN, ABSOLUMENT RIEN.

**Faire** is used in many expressions, including weather, sports, and household tasks.

## *faire expressions*

The verb **faire** is used in many impersonal weather expressions.

**Quel temps fait-il?** What's the weather like?

**Il fait beau.** It's beautiful.

**Il fait chaud.** It's hot.

**Il fait du brouillard.** It's foggy.

**Il fait du soleil.** It's sunny.

**Il fait du vent**. It's windy.

**Il fait frai s.** It's cool.

**Il fait froid.** It's cold.

**Il fait mauvais.** It's bad.

Other weather expressions which do not use **faire** include:

**Il y a des nuages.** It's cloudy.

**Il y a des orages.** There are storms.

**Il y a de l'orage.** It's stormy.

**Il pleut.** It's raining.

**Il neige.** It's snowing.

**Faire** is also used to talk about sports and leisure activities. Here is a list of common expressions.

**faire de la biyclette**, to go bicycle riding

**faire du bateau**, to go boating

**faire de la lecture**, to read

**faire de la planche à voile**, to go windsurfing

**faire des randonnées**, to go hiking

**faire du ski** , to go skiing

**faire du vélo**, to go bicycle riding, cycling

**faire de la voile**, to go sailing

**faire une promenade**, to take a walk

**Faire** is also used in many expressions dealing with household chores.

**faire des achats (du shoppi ng)**, to go shopping

**faire la cuisine**, to do the cooking

**faire des courses**, to run errands

**faire la lessi ve**, to the laundry

**faire le lit**, to make the bed

**faire le marché**, to do the grocery shopping

**aire le ménage**, to do the housework

**faire la vai sselle**, to do the dishes

Quand il fait du soleil, Tex et Tammy **font** une promenade dans le parc.

When it's sunny, Tex and Tammy take a walk in the park.

Quand il **fait** mauvais, Tex **fait** le ménage et Tammy **fait** de la lecture.

When the weather's bad, Tex does the housework and Tammy reads.

QUAND IL FAIT DU SOLEIL, TEX ET TAMMY FONT UNE PROMENADE AU PARC

## Negation

### *Introduction to Negation*

**Negation** is a grammatical term for the contradiction of some or all of the meaning of an affirmative (positive) sentence. In English, a sentence is commonly negated by inserting a single negative word (not, don't, didn't, won't , etc.) into the appropriate place in the sentence. In French, a sentence is commonly negated by inserting two words.



TEX N'ÉCOUTE JAMAIS DE MUSIQUE COUNTRY

**basic negation**

**Ne … pas** is placed around the conjugated verb to negate an affirmative sentence in French. Note that the **ne** changes to **n'** before a verb beginning with a vowel.

| | |
|---|---|
| Joe-Bob, l'écureuil, court vite. | Joe-Bob, the squirrel, runs fast. |
| Edouard, l'escargot, **ne** court **pas** vite. | Edouard the snail **doesn't** run fast. |
| | |
| Trey aime le rap. | Trey likes rap. |
| Joe-Bob **n'**aime **pas** le rap. | Joe-Bob **doesn't** like rap. |

**alternate forms of negation**

There are many other French words that one can use to negate a positive statement besides the basic form **ne … pas**. Moreover, negative words can be used to contradict the verb as well as other parts of the original affirmative sentence.

| | |
|---|---|
| Joe-Bob écoute de la musique country. **n'**écoute **jamais** de musique country. | Joe-Bob listens to country. Tex Tex **never** listens to country. |
| Trey **n'**écoute **que** du rap. | Trey **only** listens to rap. |
| Fiona **n'**écoute **rien**. | Fiona listens to **nothing**. |
| | |
| Presque persone n'écoute de musique country en France. | Almost **nobody** listens to country music in France. |

## *Basic Negation: ne ... pas*

Basic negation is formed by placing **ne … pas** around the conjugated verb. **Ne** becomes **n'** in front of a verb starting with a vowel or a mute **h**.



TU NE VAS PAS EN COURS AUJOURD'HUI?

Tex: Tu **ne** vas **pas** en cours  aujourd'hui, Tammy?

Tex: You're not going to class  today Tammy?

Tammy: Non. Je **ne** vais **pas** bien. Je  **ne** peux **pas** manger et j'ai mal à la  tête.

Tammy: No. I am not well. I cannot  eat and I have a  headache.

Tex: Tu **n'**as **pas** de chance! Ce soir, il y  a une fête chez  Edouard!

Tex: That's too bad [literally 'you are  not lucky']! Tonight there is a party  at Edouard's!

Tammy: Tu **n'**es **pas** d'un grand  réconfort, tu sais!

Tammy: You are not a lot of comfort,  you know!

In compound tenses, like the passé composé, the **ne … pas** are also placed around the conjugated verb, which is  the auxiliary, **avoir** or **être**. In the periphrastic future, **ne … pas** goes around the verb **aller**.

Tex **n'**a **pas** été très  gentil.

Tex was not very  nice.

Tammy **ne** va **pas** passer la soirée  chez Edouard.

Tammy is not going to spend the  evening at Edouard's.

Note that in spoken French, the **ne**/**n'** is sometimes dropped. In familiar speech, **tu** is often pronounced as **t'** before a vowel.

Tammy: Tex, t'es (tu es) **pas** très  gentil.

Tammy: Tex, you are not very  nice.

## Introduction to Prepositions

A **preposition** is a word used to establish relationships between nouns, between nouns and verbs and between different parts of a sentence. Prepositions usually have spatial or temporal meanings (e.g. beneath, between, in front of, before, after, during, etc). Prepositions are invariable, that is, they have one form with the exception of **à** and **de** which contract with the definite articles (**le, la, les**).

Translating prepositions is notoriously tricky. Never assume that French will use the same preposition as English to express a particular meaning. In fact, there are many cases where one language requires a preposition where the other does not. This is particularly problematic with infinitives followed by prepositions. In general, it is best to treat prepositions as vocabulary items requiring memorization.

In the following sentences, these problems are demonstrated by translating the French prepositions literally. Note how awkward the English translation is as a result.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bette est fâchée contre Tammy. | Bette is angry against Tammy. |
| | Bette is angry at Tammy. |
| | |
| Tex téléphone à Joe-Bob. | Tex telephones to Joe-Bob. |
| | Tex telephones Joe-Bob. |

Literal translations are also awkward in situations where a preposition is not used in French but is required in English.

| | |
|---|---|
| Fiona attend le bus. | Fiona waits the bus. |
| | Fiona waits for the bus. |
| | |
| Joe-Bob écoute la radio. radio. | Joe-Bob listens the |
| | Joe-Bob listens to the radio. |

## *Prepositions with Places*

Prepositions are used in expressions which relate where you are, where you are going and where you are coming from. The preposition used in such expressions depends on the geographic location discussed.

| *geographic location* | *to/in* | *from* |
|---|---|---|
| | **à** | **de (d')** |
| **cites** (Paris, Londres, Austin) | à Paris | d'Austin |
| **islands** (Cuba, Tahiti) | à Cuba | de Tahiti |
| **feminine** (usually ending in -e) | **en** | **de (d')** |
| **countries** (la France) | en France | de France |
| **states** (la Californie) | en Californie | de Californie |
| **provinces** (la Bourgogne) | en Bourgogne | de Bourgogne |
| **continents** (l'Europe) | en Europe | d'Europe |



EN CALIFORNIE  AU CANADA  À CUBA

| **masculine** | **au** | **du** |
|---|---|---|
| **countries** (le Canada, le Texas :-) | au Canada | du Texas |
| **provinces/states** (le Colorado) | au Colorado | du Colorado |
| **masculine beginning with a vowel** | **en** | **de (d')** |
| **countries** (l'Iran) | en Iran | d'Iran |
| **provinces/states** (l'Ontario) | en Ontario | d'Ontario |
| | **aux** | **des** |
| **plural countries and regions** (les Etats-Unis) | aux Etats-Unis | des Etats-Unis |



EN GREVE  EN FRANCE  EN IRAN  MALL  AUX ÉTATS-UNIS

Tex est né **au** Texas, bien sûr. Mais par accident il a grandi **en** Europe. Comment expliquer cette histoire incroyable?

Eh bien, quand il était tout petit, on l'a mis dans un avion avec les bagages **à**l'aéroport Bush International **à** Houston.

Son avion est arrivé **à** Paris (**en** France) où il a rencontré des nonnes françaises qui venaient de faire un voyage**aux E**tats-Unis. Elles arrivaient **de**Houston, elles aussi. Quelle coïncidence!

Elles ont eu pitié de ce pauvre tatou égaré et elles l'ont emmené au couvent **à**Lyon. Tex a vécu heureux chez les nonnes pendant plusieurs années.

Malheureusement, un jour il a été expulsé **de** France, et il est retourné dans son pays natal, c'est-à-dire **au** Texas!

Tex was born in Texas, of course, but by accident he grew up in Europe. How de we explain this unbelievable story?

Well, when he was very little, he was put with the luggage in a plane at Bush International Airport in Houston.

His plane arrived in Paris (in France) where he met some French nuns who had just taken a trip to the United States. They, too, were arriving from Houston. What a coincidence!

They took pity on this poor lost armadillo and they took him to their convent in Lyon. Tex lived happily with the nuns for several years.

Unfortunately, one day he was deported from France and he returned to his native country, that is, to Texas!

## Pronouns

### *Introduction to Pronouns*

A **pronoun** is a word used to replace a noun. It is commonly used to avoid repeating a previously mentioned noun known as the **antecedent**. In the following example, pronouns in bold face are used to replace the underlined antecedents.

Tex a écrit un poème érotique,　Tex wrote an erotic poem and
　　　　et puis **il l**'a envoyé à Tammy. **Elle**　then **he** sent **it** to Tammy. **She**
　　　　a été choquée quand **elle l**'a lu.　　was shocked when **she** read **it**.

The different kinds of pronouns are named according to their grammatical function.

**subject pronouns**
　　　　**je, tu, il, elle, on,**　　I, you, he, she, one,
　　　　**nous, vous, ils, elles**　we, you, they (m), they (f)

**direct object pronouns**
　　　　**me, te, le, la**　　me, you, him / it, her / it us,
　　　　**nous, vous, les**　you, them (m) / (f)

**indirect object pronouns**
　　　　**me, te, lui**　　to me, to you, to him / her
　　　　**nous, vous, leur**　to us, to you, to them (m) / (f)

**the pronouns y and en**
　　　　**y**　　there (replaces preposition + location) some, any,
　　　　**en**　not any (replaces 'de' + noun)

**disjunctive pronouns**
　　　　**moi, toi, lui, elle, soi**　me, you, he, she, one
　　　　**nous, vous, eux, elles**　we, you, them (m), them (f)

**reflexive pronouns**
　　　　**me, te, se**　　myself, yourself, himself, herself ourselves,
　　　　**nous, vous, se**　yourselves, themselves

**interrogative pronouns**
　　　　**qui**　　who what
　　　　**que**

**demonstrative pronouns**
　　　　**celui, celle**　this one / that one (m,f) these,
　　　　**ceux**　those

**relative pronouns**
　　　　**qui, que**　who, whom, which which
　　　　**lequel, laquelle**

**indefinite pronouns**
　　　　**quelqu'un**　someone something
　　　　**quel que chose**

## *Subject Pronouns*

A pronoun replaces a noun in order to avoid repetition. Subject pronouns are subjects of verbs. In French, a subject pronoun is immediately or almost immediately followed by its verb. The use of subject pronouns is mandatory in French; always use a subject pronoun to construct sentences in the absence of a noun subject. Here are the French subject pronouns:

| person | singular | plural |
|---|---|---|
| *1st person* | **je**, I | **nous**, we |
| *2nd person* | **tu**, you | **vous**, you/y'all |
| *3rd person* | **il** , he/it <br> **elle**, she/it <br> **on**, one/we (colloquial) | **ils**, they (masc.) <br> **elles**, they (fem.) |

Subject pronouns are labelled by the term 'person', referring to the subject's role in the conversation. 1st person refers to the person(s) speaking (I, we); 2nd person to the person(s) spoken to (you); and 3rd person to the person(s) or thing(s) spoken about (he, she, it, they).

**je**
Unlike the English pronoun 'I', **je** is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence.

**tu**
The pronoun **tu** is singular and, importantly, informal. Use **tu** to address people your own age and those you know well.

**on**
The pronoun **on** means 'one', or 'they' in a nonspecific sense: 'comme on dit' (as they say). **On** often replaces 'nous' in spoken French: 'On y va?' (Shall we go?).

**vous**
The pronoun **vous** is conjugated with a plural verb so it obviously refers to more than one person. However, it is also the customary form of address when you are talking to only one person you do not know well, such as an elder, a boss, a shopkeeper, etc. Inappropriate use of the **tu** form is considered a sign of disrespect.

Tammy: Bonjour, Paw-Paw. **Vous** allez bien?

Paw-Paw: Ah, oui! Et vous, mes enfants, Tex, Tammy, **vous** allez bien?

Tammy: Hello Paw-Paw. Are you doing well?

Paw-Paw: Ah, yes! And you, kids, Tex, Tammy, are you doing OK?

**il/elle**
**Il** and **elle** besides meaning 'he' and 'she' can both express the meaning 'it' depending on the gender of the noun being replaced. For example:

Bette: **La musi que** est bonne, n'est-ce pas?

Tex: Non, **elle** est terrible! Je déteste la musique country.

Bette: Oh, qu'est-ce que tu as fait, Tex? **Le juke-box** est cassé?

Tex: Oui, il est casse!

Bette: The music is good, isn't it?

Tex: No, it's terrible. I hate country music.

Bette: Oh, what did you do, Tex? The juke-box is broken

Tex: Yes, it is broken!



QUOI! PAS DE LES RITAS MITSOUKO?!

LE JUKE-BOX EST CASSÉ ? OUI, IL EST CASSÉ.

## ils/elles

**ils** and **ell**es are similar to **il** and **elle** since they agree with the gender of the noun   they
replace. **ils** and **elles** may refer to people or things. **Elles** is used to mean 'they' if it replaces people who are all  women or objects
that are all feminine in gender. On the other hand, **ils**  is used to mean 'they' for objects that are masuline in gender or a group of
all men or any group where there is at least one male person or masculine object in the group.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bette et Tex sont de bons  amis. | Bette and Tex are good  friends. |
| Normalement **ils** s'entendent bien,  mais pas aujourd'hui! | Normally, they get along well, but  not today! |



BONJOUR TEX,
TU VAS BIEN ?

| | |
|---|---|
| Fiona: Bonjour Tex, **tu** vas  bien? | Fiona: Hi Tex, are you doing  well? |
| Tex: Pas du tout, **je** vais très mal. **Je**  veux écouter de la musique française. Et  puis Bette et moi, **on** s'est  disputé. | Tex: Not at all. I'm doing poorly. I want  to listen to some French music. And then Bette and I had a  fight. |
| Fiona: Ah bon? **Elle** est toujours là? | Fiona: Oh really? Is she still  here? |
| Tex: Non. **Elle** est partie avec Tammy. **Elles** sont allées au Broken  Spoke. | Tex: Non, she left with Tammy. They  went to the Broken Spoke. |
| Fiona: Tiens, **nous**  y allons, toi et  moi? | Fiona: Hey, why don't you and I go  there? |
| Tex: **Tu** ne m'as pas entendu? **Je** n'aime pas la musique country!!! Beurk!  Qu'est-ce qu'**on** aime la musique country au  Texas! | Tex: Didn't you hear me? I don't  like country music!!! Argh! People really  like country music in Texas! |

# French Language Studies – Grammar Reference Resource

## *c'est vs il/elle est*

To describe and introduce things or people in French, two common phrases are used: **c'est** and **il**/**elle est**. The plural forms are **ce sont** and **ils**/**elles sont**.

The choice between **c'est** and **il**/**elle est** is not always easy, but there are basic principles which can guide you in the choice. A rule of thumb is that **c'est** or **ce sont** are followed by a determined noun ('le tatou', 'une Américaine', 'mes livres'). Remember that nouns in French are preceded by a determiner. **il**/**elle est** and **ils**/**elles sont** are followed by an adjective ('content', 'sympathique').

### c'est/ce sont

**C'est** and **ce sont** are followed by the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| + *noun, including modified nouns* | Tex? **C'est** un tatou. **C'est** un Américain. **C'est** un petit tatou bilingue. | Tex? He's an armadillo. He is an American. He is a small bilingual armadillo. |
| | Tammy et Tex? Non, **ce ne sont pas** des chats! **Ce sont** des tatous. | Tammy and Tex? No they are not cats! They are armadillos. |
| + *proper noun* | **C'est** Tex. | It's Tex. |
| + *disjunctive pronoun* | Tammy: Allô Tex? **C'est** moi. | Tammy: Hello Tex? It's me. |
| | Tex: Qui est-ce? Ah, **c'est** toi Tammy! | Tex: Who is this? Oh, it's you Tammy! |
| + *dates* | Tex: Mon anniversaire? **C'est** le quatorze juillet. **C'est** jeudi prochain! | Tex: My birthday? It's July 14th. It's next Thursday! |
| + *an infinitive as subject* | Tex: Vivre, **c'est** parler français. | Tex: To live is to speak French! |
| + *adjective for non-specific referents* | Tex: Ah **c'est** chouette! **C'est** incroyable! | Tex: Oh, that's neat! That's unbelievable. |

### il/elle est/ils/elles sont

Use **il/elle est** or **il s/ elles sont** to introduce the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| + *adjective alone* | Tex? **Il est** arrogant! **Il n'est pas** français. **Il est** américain. | Tex? He is arrogant! He isn't French. He is American. |
| | Tammy? **Elle est** gentille. | Tammy? She is nice. |
| + *nationality, occupation, religion* (used as adjectives in French) | Tex? **Il est** poète. | Tex? He is a poet. Trey? He is |
| | Trey? **Il est** musicien. | a musician. |
| | Tammy? **Elle est** étudiante. | Tammy? She is a student. |

Remember that **il (s)** and **elle(s)** refer to a specific person or thing. **Ce** does not refer to a specific person or thing; it is usually translated as **that**.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Il est** stupide. (**He**'s stupid.) | **C'est** stupide. (**That**'s stupid.) |

# Tense, Aspect, Mood, Voice
## *Intro to Tense, Aspect, Mood, Voice*

**Tense**

Tense is the grammatical term that refers to the time when the action of the verb occurs: past, present, future. The time frame of an action is usually established by referring to the present moment; for example, the **passé composé** and the **future** are respectively past and future in relation to the present.

However, some tenses establish their time frame by referring to other actions in the past or in the future. For example, the **plus-que-parfait** tense indicates a past action that occurred prior to the completion of another past action. The **futur antérieur** tense indicates a future action that will have occured before another future action. Actions that occur before another action are described as being **anterior**.

Tenses are also described by their number of parts. For example, a tense with only one verb form is called a **simple tense** (ie, le passé simple). In contrast, a tense comprising two forms, the auxiliary verb and the participle, is referred to as a **compound tense** (ie, le passé composé).

**Aspect**

Aspect, unlike tense, is not concerned with placing events on a time line. Rather, aspect is concerned with making distinctions about the kinds of actions that are described by verbs: progressive actions, punctual actions, habitual actions, etc.

The most important aspectual distinction in French concerns the difference between the two most common past tenses: the **imparfait** and the **passé composé**. While both tenses refer to actions in the past, they are used for very different types of actions. The imparfait indicates an action that is ongoing or habitual. Actions in the imparfait may be simultaneous or overlapping. The passé composé on the other hand, indicates an action that is in a strict sequence in relation to another action. In other words, an event in the passé composé must be completed before another may be used in narration.

These aspectual differences are best understood in a **narrative** context where the **imparfait** is typically used to set the scene of a story by giving **background** information.

| | |
|---|---|
| Installé à la terrasse du Cactus Cafe, Tex **regardait** les filles qui **passaient.** Il **savourait** une tasse de café, mais quelque chose **manquait** . . . une cigarette! | Seated on the terrace of the Cactus Cafe, Tex **was watching** the girls who **walked by.** He **was enjoying** a cup of coffee, but something **was missing** . . . a cigarette! |

The **passé composé** is used for the **foreground**, that is, the plot line events. Note that plot line events are sequential, that is, an event must be completed before another event begins.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex **a sorti** une cigarette de son paquet. Il l'**a allumée** et il **a tiré** une grande bouffée. Mmm ... extase! | Tex **took out** a cigarette from his pack. He **lit** it and **took** a long drag. Mmm ... ecstasy! |

**Mood**

Mood is a grammatical category distinguishing verb tenses. There are four moods in French: **indicative**, **subjunctive**, **conditional**, and **imperative**. All of these moods, except the imperative, may be conjugated in different tenses. Each of these moods has a different function.

The **indicative mood** is the most common and is used to relate facts and objective statements.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tammy **se réveille** tôt le matin. **(present tense of the indicative mood)** | Tammy **gets up** early in the morning. |

The **subjunctive mood** is used more commonly in French than in English. It is used to express opinions and feelings (subjective thoughts).

Il est dommage que les parents de Tex **soient** morts. **(present tense of the subjunctive mood)**

It is too bad that Tex's parents **are** dead.

The **conditional mood** is used to express hypothetical or contrary-to-fact statements.

Si Corey était beau, il aurai t une copine. (present tense of the conditional mood)

If Corey were handsome, he **would have** a girlfriend.

The **imperative mood** is used to give direct orders or commands.

Tex, **réveille-toi** !

Tex, **get up**!

**Voice**

Voice is a grammatical category describing the relationship between a verb and its subject. Voice is either **active** or
**passive**. Active voice refers to the situation where the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb.

Les autorités **ont expulsé** Tex de France.

The authorities **expelled** Tex from France.

On the other hand, passive voice refers to the situation where the subject receives the action of the verb.

Tex **a été expulsé** de France (par les autorités)

Tex was expelled from France (by the authorities)

## *futur proche*

**formation**

There are two future tenses in French, the simple future and the near future (**le futur proche**). The futur proche is usually translated into English as **going** + infinitive (e.g., going to eat, going to drink, going to talk). The futur proche is characteristic of spoken French but may be used in informal writing. It is formed with the verb aller (to go) conjugated in the present tense followed by an infinitive

| nager 'to swim' ||
|---|---|
| je **vais nager**, I am going to swim | nous **allons nager**, we are going to swim |
| tu **vas nager**, you are going to swim | vous **allez nager**, you are going to swim |
| il, elle / on **va nager**, he, she (it) / one is going to swim | ils / elles **vont nager**, they are going to swim |

To negate the futur proche, place **ne ... pas** around the conjugated form of **aller**: Je **ne** vais **pas** nager. (I am not going to swim).

| | |
|---|---|
| Corey: Je **vais aller** à Barton Springs. J'adore l'eau. Je **vais nager**. Tu viens avec moi, Bette? | Corey: I am going to go to Barton Springs. I love water. I am going to swim. Are you coming with me, Bette? |
| Bette: Tu es fou! Il fait trop froid! Je **ne**vais **pas** nager! | Bette: Are you crazy? It is too cold! I am not going to swim! |

**Uses**

The futur proche is used to refer to most future events in informal conversation. For details on usage see future: usage.

| | |
|---|---|
| Corey: Tex! Tammy! Nous **allons aller** à Barton Springs. | Corey: Tex! Tammy! We are going to go to Barton Springs. |
| Bette: Mais il y a de gros nuages gris, il**va pleuvoir**. | Bette: But there are big gray clouds. It's going to rain. |
| Corey: Chouette! Je **vais nager** sous la pluie. | Corey: Great! I am going to swim in the rain. |

**aller in the imperfect + infinitive**

The construction **aller** + infinitive is also found with the verb **aller** in the imperfect (l'imparfait) to indicate what someone **was going to do**. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| Les copains **allaient partir** pour Barton Springs, quand ils ont vu un éclair. | The friends **were going to leave** for Barton Springs, when they saw lightening. |
| Bette: Corey, tu **vas te faire électrocuter**! Moi, je **vais faire** du shopping. Qui **va venir**avec moi? | Bette: Corey, you are going to get yourself electrocuted! I'm going to do some shopping. Who's going to come with me? |

.

## Interrogatives
## Introduction to Interrogatives

An **interrogative construction** is a grammatical form used to ask a question. There are two kinds of questions: yes/no questions and information questions. So-called yes/no questions may be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

> Are you a student at the University of Texas?
>
> Have you ever been to Sixth Street or Barton Springs?
>
> Do you know how many Aggies it takes to screw in a lightbulb?

Information questions contain a specific interrogative word (who, what, when, why, how) and cannot be answered with a yes or no. Their purpose is to elicit a specific piece of information.

> Who is Tex?
>
> When did he come to Texas?
>
> How did he learn French?

Besides using 'est-ce que', questions in French can be formed by **inversion** of the subject and verb.

> **Parlez-vous** français?          Do you speak French?

**formulating questions**

The word 'do' is used in English question formation. In similar fashion, French yes / no questions can be formed with the phrase **est-ce que**.

There are several other ways to ask a question in French. For instance, a **tag question** is a question word or phrase 'tagged' on to the end of a statement which requires a confirmation with a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

> Vous parlez français, **n'est-ce pas**?                    You speak French, **don't you**?

Finally, the most common way to ask a question in French conversation is to use **rising intonation**. In this kind of interrogative construction, the word order is the same as a declarative sentence, but the speaker's voice rises at the end to signal the question.

## *Yes/No Questions: est-ce que, n'est-ce pas*

**questions with intonation**

One of the easiest ways to ask a question that may be answered by yes/no is to raise the pitch of your voice at the end of a statement. In a declarative statement, the pitch normally   falls.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tex: Trey, tu aimes la  philosophie? | Tex: Trey, do you like  philosophy? |
| Trey: Non. Je n'aime pas la  philosophie. | Trey: No. I do not like  philosophy. |
| Tex: Tu connais Sartre? | Tex: Do you know  Sartre? |
| Trey: Non. Qui est-ce? | Trey: No. Who is that? |
| Tex: Gloups! C'est l'auteur du chef | Tex: Gulp! He's the author of the |
| d'oeuvre existentialiste, La Nausée. | existentialist masterpiece, Nausea. |



TEX, EST-CE QUE TU AIMES LES FILMS?

**questions using 'est-ce que ...  ?'**

 Another way to ask a yes/no question is to place **est-ce que** before a statement. Note that **que** becomes **qu'** before a vowel.

| | |
|---|---|
| Trey: Et toi, Tex, **est-ce que** tu aimes  les films? | Trey: And you, Tex, do you like   films? |
| Tex: Bien sûr, j'adore les  films. | Tex: Of course, I adore  films. |
| Trey: **Est-ce que**  tu connais  Yoda? | Trey: Do you know  Yoda? |
| Tex: Non. Qui  est-ce? | Tex: No. Who is  that? |
| Trey: Duh  ... | Trey: Duh |

**questions using 'n'est-ce pas ?'**

**N'est-ce pas?** is added  to the end of a yes/no question when the speaker expects an affirmative response

| | |
|---|---|
| Trey: Tu connais 'La guerre des étoiles,'**n'est-ce pas**? Yoda, c'est le petit sage. | Trey: You know 'Star Wars,' don't you? Yoda is the little wise man. |
| Trey: Yoda est mon héros. Tu ne connaispas Yoda? | Trey: Yoda is my hero. You don't know Yoda? |
| Tex: Ah, si, si, si*, je connais le petit philosophe. Est-ce que tu es fou? Yodan'est pas Sartre. | Tex: Ah, yes, yes, yes, I do know the  little philosopher. Are you crazy? Yoda is not Sartre. |
| Trey: Oh, mais la philosophie de Yoda est plus intéressante que la philosophie existentialiste de La Nausée! Tu esd'accord, n'est-ce pas? | Trey: Oh, but Yoda's philosophy is more interesting than the existentialist philosophy of La Nausée! You agree,  don't you? |
| Tex: Quel crétin! Retourne à tes jeux électroniques! | Tex: What an idiot! Go back to your video games! |

    *Si is used to answer 'yes' to a negative   question.

## *Interrogative and Exclamative: quel*

**Quel** is an adjective. Like any other adjective, it agrees in number and gender with the noun it modifies. Remember to make the liaison between **quels** / **quelles** and a following word beginning with a vowel (**quels** animaux).

| mascul ine singular | mascul ine plural | feminine  singular | feminine  plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| **quel** | **quels** | **quelle** | **quelles** |

**interrogative  quel**

**Quel**  is generally translated into English by 'what' or 'which'. It is always followed by a noun or by the verb 'être' + noun.

Un petit tatou: Maman, maman, **quel** est le nom de ce tatou?

A little armadillo: What's the name of this armadillo?

Rita: Oh, c'est Tex, ton oncle.

Rita: Oh, it's Tex, your uncle.

Un petit tatou: **Quel** âge aTex?.

A little armadillo: How old isTex?

Rita: On ne sait pas.

Rita: We don't know.

Un petit tatou: **Quelles** sont les qualités de Tex?

A little armadillo: What are Tex's good points?

Rita: Oh, il est intelligent,débrouillard, mais aussi cynique et pessimiste.

Rita: Oh, he's intelligent,resourceful, but also cynical and pessimistic.



QUEL EST LE NOM DE CE TATOU?

**exclamative quel**

**Quel** may also be used for emphasis. In this instance, **quel** is followed either by an adjective or a noun, and it means 'what' or 'what a'. Note that there is an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence.

Tammy: **Quel** beau tatou!

Tammy: What a handsome armadillo!

Joe-Bob: Non, **quel** tatou snob! **Quelle** belleminette!

Joe-Bob: No, what a snobby armadillo! What a beautiful kitty!

Tammy: **Quelle** chatte méchante!

Tammy: What a mean cat!

Ah, **quels** animaux absurdes!

Ah, what absurd animals!



BETTER THAN YOU COFFEE HOUSE

QUEL TATOU SNOB!