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Nouns

Introduction to Nouns

A noun is essentially a label for places, things, events, ideas, concepts and so on. Like English, nouns in French may be categorized as common or proper, count or mass, singular or plural. However, unlike English, French nouns are also 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 identify individual 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 is eating is conceived of as a mass, that is, an undefined quantity.

Tex mange du pain.

Tex is eating bread.

The difference between count and mass nouns is usually clear-cut. However, something that is typically countable such as an animal (one armadillo, two armadillos, three armadillos) can nevertheless be conceived of in terms of a mass, 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 over the 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. French 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.
**number: singular, plural**

In French, a noun is always either singular or plural. It is usually introduced by a **determiner**, which reflects the number of the noun.

**regular plural formation**
As in English, the plural is formed by adding an **-s** to the singular form of the noun. Note, however, that the **-s** is not pronounced. In spoken language, the determiner is often the only indication that a noun is singular or plural.

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

Tex is an armadillo. Tex and Tammy are armadillos.

**nouns ending in -s, -x, -z in the singular**
Nouns ending in **-s**, **-x**, or **-z** do not change in the plural. For example:

Tex a un long **nez**. Les tatous ont toujours de longs **nez**.

Tex has a long nose. Armadillos always have long noses.

Joe-Bob est un écureuil. Les écureuils adorent les **noix**.

Joe-Bob is a squirrel. Squirrels adore nuts.

Bette est une chatte. Les chats mangent des **souris**. Est-ce que Bette a jamais mangé une **souris**?

Bette is a cat. Cats eat mice. Has Bette ever eaten a mouse?

**nouns ending in -al, -ail, -au, -eu, -eau, -ou in the singular**
Nouns ending in **-al**, **-ail**, or **-au** in the singular end in **-aux** in the plural. For example:

Edouard est un **animal** distingué. Corey et Fiona ne sont pas des **animaux**, ce sont des insectes peu sociables!

Edouard is a distinguished animal. Corey and Fiona are not animals. They are unsociable insects!

There are a few exceptions: un bal (ball, dance), des **bals**; un carnaval (carnival), des **carnavals**; un festival (festival), des **festivals**; un récital (recital), des **récitals**.

Nouns ending in **-eu** or **-eau** in the singular add **-x** in the plural. For example:

Edouard n’a pas un seul **cheveu**. Bien sûr, c’est un escargot! Mais Tammy a les **cheveux** longs. C’est une tatou extraordinaire!

Edouard does not have one single hair. Of course, he’s a snail. But Tammy has long hair. She’s an extraordinary armadillo!

Nouns ending in **-ou** end in **-oux** in the plural:

un bijou (jewel), des **bijoux**

un caillou (stone, pebble), des **cailloux** un chou (cabbage), des **choux**

un genou (knee), des **genoux** un hibou (owl), des **hiboux** un pou (louse), des **poux**
Exceptions include: un clou (nail), des clous; un sou (money), des sous; un trou (hole), des trous.

**irregular plurals**

Some nouns have an alternate form in the plural:

- un œil (eye), des yeux
- Madame (Madam), Mesdames, Monsieur (Sir), Messieurs, Mademoiselle (Miss), Messdemoiselles

Note that some nouns follow the regular rule of plural formation but are pronounced differently in the plural. For example, the -f is pronounced in the singular, but not in the plural.

- un œuf (egg), des œufs; un bœuf (steer), des bœufs
- un os (bone), des os

Corey: Dis Bette, tu as déjà mangé une souris?

Bette: Oh oui! J’aime les souris! Et aussi les rats, les oiseaux, les lézards. Je ne mange jamais de végétaux, mais quelquefois des insectes...

Corey: Des insectes! Allez, au revoir.

Corey: Bette, have you ever eaten a mouse?

Bette: Oh yes! I love mice! And rats, birds and lizards too! I never eat plants, but sometimes insects...

Corey: Insects! Alright, bye-bye.
**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.
- **Tex est ami** avec Joe-Bob, Tammy est aussi amie avec Joe-Bob.

Joe-Bob is a student, 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.
- **Trey: Je suis musicien**, Tammy: Je ne suis pas musicienne.

Edouard: I'm a waiter. Tammy: I'm not a waiter.

Trey: I'm a musician. Tammy: I'm not a musician.

- **Tex est un séducteur**, Bette: Je suis une séductrice.
- **Joe-Bob: Pour le travail, je ne suis pas champion**, Fiona: C’est moi qui suis championne.
- **Tex: Je suis le copain de Tammy**, Tammy: Je suis la copine de Tex.

Tex: I'm a womanizer. Bette: I'm a seductress.

Joe-Bob: I'm not a champion at working.

Fiona: I'm the one who is a champion.

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

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

Tex is a poet. Rita is a secretary.

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, an ant). However, for some animals there are irregular masculine and feminine forms.

- le chat / la chatte, cat
- le chien / la chienss, 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, -été, -ance, -ie, -ure, -ode/-ade/-ude are feminine.

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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 amie 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 introduit 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.
**Voila vs. il y a**

*Il y a* and *voilà* 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 jamais*, ‘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 avait*, ‘there was’) or in the future (*il y aura*, ‘there will be.’)

**voilà/voici**

*Voilà + noun* and *voici + 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 *voici* and *voilà* is common when referring to more than one item.

- Tammy montre le campus à Tex: *Voici* la bibliothèque et *voilà* la célèbre tour! Tammy is showing the campus to Tex: Here is the library, and there is the famous Tower.
- Tex: Oui, oui ...
- Tammy présente Tex: Tex, *voici* 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.
- Corey: Salut, Tex.
- Tex: Oh, là, là, de vrais Texans ... Tex: Hi, Tex.
- Tex: Oh, là, là, real Texans ...
There are three nouns in French, *temps*, *heure*, and *fois*, which are translated as 'time' in English, but each has very specific uses and nuances.

**temps**

*Temps* can mean either 'time' or 'weather' (in which case it is almost always accompanied by the verb *faire*).

Tex téléphone à Paw-Paw.

Paw-Paw: Tex, tu es où? Tu es en retard!

Tex: Mais non, *j'ai le temps*! Je suis en train de faire ma valise. Quel *temps* fait-il à Opelousas?

Tex téléphones Paw-Paw.

Paw-Paw: Tex, where are you? You are late!

Tex: But no, I have time! I'm packing my suitcase. What's the weather like in Opelousas?

*Temps* is usually singular but may be used in the plural, especially in the following phrases:

Paw-Paw: Tex, tu es un petit-fils ingrat! Tu ne viens jamais me voir! *Les temps changent* ...

Tex: Allons Paw-Paw, tu sais bien que je viens aujourd'hui. *'Laissez les bons temps rouler',* comme on dit en Louisiane! Dis, tu sais que personne ne connaît cette expression en France?

Paw-Paw: Tex, you're an ungrateful grand-son! You never come to visit me! Times change ...

Tex: Oh, Paw-Paw, you know I'm coming today. 'Let the good times roll', as they say in Louisiana! Do you know that nobody knows this expression in France?

Here are the most commonly used phrases with *temps*:

**De temps en temps**, Tex va voir Paw-Paw à Opelousas le week-end.

Paw-Paw parle *tout le temps* de ses rhumatismes. Il *prend son temps*.

Paw-Paw parle souvent du *bon vieux temps*: *De mon temps*, les jeunes étaient polis ...

*La plupart du temps*, Tex s’ennuie. Il a l’impression de *perdre son temps*.

*Pendant ce temps*, Tammy, Edouard et Joe-Bob sont à Austin.

Ils *ont le temps* de faire la fête.

Pauvre Tex! Il rentre à Austin le lundi matin, *juste à temps pour* faire cours.

From time to time, Tex goes to see Paw-Paw in Opelousas on the week-end.

Paw-Paw talks about his rheumatism all the time. He takes his time.

Paw-Paw often talks about the good old days: In my days, young people were polite ...

Most of the time Tex gets bored. He feels like he is wasting his time.

In the meantime, Tammy, Edouard and Joe-Bob are in Austin.

They have time to party.

Poor Tex! He comes back to Austin on Monday morning, just in time to teach.
heure

Heure is feminine and can be used in the singular or in the plural. It is used to refer to clock time.

Tammy: Tex, tu as l'heure? Tex: Oui, j'ai l'heure.
Tammy: Et bien?! Quelle heure est-il? Tex: Il est 4 heures.
Tammy: Chouette! C'est l'heure d'Oprah, mon émission préférée!
Tex: Et pour moi, c'est l'heure de faire la sieste!

fois

Fois is feminine and its singular and plural forms are identical. It is used to refer to one or several instances of an event.

Tammy: Tex, réveille-toi! Paw-Paw est au téléphone, il veut te parler.
Tex: Comment? Il a appelé quatre fois aujourd'hui!
Tammy: Cette fois, il est déprimé. Sois gentil, il a trois fois ton âge.
Tex: Bon, bon, j'y vais, mais c'est la dernière fois!

Tammy: Tex, you got the time? Tex: Yes, I've got the time.
Tammy: Well?! What time is it? Tex: It is 4 o'clock.
Tammy: Great! It's time for Oprah, my favorite show!
Tex: And it's time for me to take a nap!

Tammy: Tex, Tex, wake up! Paw-Paw is on the phone, he wants to talk to you.
Tex: What? He has called four times today!
Tammy: This time, he is depressed. Be nice, he is three times your age.
Tex: Ok, ok, I'm going, but it is the last time!
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, del`) 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. Tex explains: This pool is Barton Springs.
> Cette piscine s'appelle Deep Eddy. 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. Tex introduces his family: Here is my brother, Trey, my sister, Rita with her children and their dog Fido. Our family is formidable.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular: le (l’)</th>
<th>Feminine singular: la (l’)</th>
<th>Masculine and feminine plural: les</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tex le tatou</td>
<td>Bette la chatte</td>
<td>les tatous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe-Bob l’écureuil</td>
<td>l’Université du Texas</td>
<td>les écureuils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tex the armadillo</td>
<td>Bette the cat (female)</td>
<td>the squirrels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe-Bob the squirrel</td>
<td>The University of Texas</td>
<td>the cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 **élision**.

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**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory liaison with a vowel or silent h</th>
<th>No liaison with a consonant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>les insectes les animaux les hommes</td>
<td>les tatous les fourmis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that **élision** and **liaison** occur with most words starting with h: l’homme, les hommes, l’hiver, les hivers. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tex adore les croissants.</th>
<th>Tex loves croissants.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tammy n’aime pas le café.</td>
<td>Tammy does not like coffee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edouard apprécie la bonne cuisine française.</td>
<td>Edouard appreciates good French cuisine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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!
Tammy: Tu as raison. L’amour et la santé sont plus importants!
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: Money does not make man happy!
Tammy: You are right. Love and health are more important!
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!

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.
Joe-Bob préfère les doughnuts.
Tammy n’aime pas le café.
Edouard apprécie la bonne cuisine française.

Tex loves croissants.
Joe-Bob prefers doughnuts.
Tammy does not like coffee.
Edouard appreciates good French cuisine.

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.
L’après-midi, elle va à la bibliothèque.
Le lundi, Tex fait son jogging.
L’été, il se baigne avec Tammy à Barton Springs.
L’hiver, il skie à Purgatory.

Every morning, Tammy goes to class.
Every afternoon, she goes to the library.
On Mondays, Tex goes for a jog.
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:

  
  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.

Cities, 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 béret!
definite articles with physical characteristics

The definite article (le, la, l’, les) is often used with parts of the body instead of a possessive determiner (mon, ma, mes, etc.). Sentences with this structure always use the verb avoir to indicate that the possessor is the subject of the sentence. The following French sentences are equivalent.

Tex rêve: Ah, Tammy! Tu as les yeux brûlants, labouche pulpeuse, les cheveux si doux ...

Tex is dreaming: Ah Tammy! You have fiery eyes, full lips, such soft hair ...

Tex rêve: Ah Tammy! Ton regard est brûlant, tabouche pulpeuse, tes cheveux si doux ...

Tex is dreaming: Ah Tammy! Your eyes are fiery, your lips full, your hair so soft ..

However, an indefinite article is used if an adjective comes before the part of the body:

Tex continue: Tammy, tu as un petit nez pointu et de grandes oreilles décollées ...

Tex continues: Tammy, you have a little pointed nose and big ears which stick out ...
Determiners: Indefinite Articles

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>un</td>
<td>des</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>une</td>
<td>des</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender and Number**

- **Masculine Singular:** un (Tex est un tatou. / Joe-Bob est un écureuil.)
- **Feminine Singular:** une (Bette est une chatte. / UT est une université)
- **Plural:** des (des tatous, des écureuils, des chats, des universités)

**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 et Corey ont une chambre dans une résidence universitaire à Austin.
- Ils ont la chambre numéro 1735 dans la résidence Jester.
- Joe-Bob et Corey sont des camarades de chambre.

Joe-Bob and Corey have a (one) room in a residence hall in Austin. The have the room #1735 in the Jester residence hall. 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.
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 a 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.

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!
**determiners: partitive articles**

**forms**

There are three partitive articles in French.

**Masculine:**

- **du** (some) bread
- **de l'** (some) garlic (a vowel)
- **du** (some) meat

**Feminine:**

- **de la** (some) meat
- **de l'** (some) water

**uses**

Partitive articles are used both in English and in French to express quantities that cannot be counted. While the indefinite article (**un, une, des**) is used with countable quantities (**un œuf, deux œufs ...**), the partitive article is used before mass nouns, nouns that are indivisible or uncountable. In English the article ‘some’ is often omitted.

Edouard: Comme dessert, nous avons de la mousse au chocolat, de la glace parfumée à la vanille et du sorbet à l'ananas.

Edouard: For dessert, we have (some) chocolate mousse, vanilla ice cream, and pineapple sorbet.

While the definite article designates something in its totality, or as a whole, the partitive article designates a part of the whole. Note that depending on what you want to say, the same noun may be introduced by a definite, indefinite, or a partitive article. Compare these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edouard: Vous prenez du vin, n'est-ce pas?</th>
<th>partitive article</th>
<th>Edouard: You are having (some) wine, aren't you? (a quantity that is not specified)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le vin rouge est bon pour la santé!</td>
<td>definite article</td>
<td>Red wine is healthy! ('wine' in general)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En fait, nous avons un Beaujolais nouveau ou un Chambertin, un Châteauneuf-du-Pape, ou j'ai</td>
<td>indefinite article</td>
<td>In fact, we have a Beaujolais nouveau, or a Chambertin, a Châteauneuf-du-Pape, or I have an excellent Médoc for you, or a little grey wine from Savoy. (These are items on the wine list, a countable quantity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**after the negative**

In negative sentences, *du, de la, des, de l’* change to *de*:

- Joe-Bob mange *de la* viande.  
  Joe-Bob eats meat.

- Tex boit *du* café.  
  Tex drinks coffee.

- Il y a encore *du* vin.  
  There is some wine left.

- Tammy ne mange *pas* de viande.  
  Tammy does not eat meat.

- Tammy ne boit *jamais* de café.  
  Tammy never drinks coffee.

- Il n’y a plus *de* vin.  
  There is not any wine left.

---

The partitive and indefinite articles may be used in negative sentences, however, to emphasize the contrasting positive noun.

For example:

- Entre Tex et Tammy, ce n’est pas *de l’amitié*, c’est *de l’amour*.

- Edouard sert *du* poulet, pas *des* escargots.

---

Notice the use of the partitive articles in the following dialogue.

**Tammy est au téléphone:** Allô, Edouard? Je reçois *des* amis ce soir. Je voudrais faire *des* crêpes, mais j’ai oublié la recette. Tu peux m’aider?

**Edouard:** Rien de plus facile! Tu mélanges *de la* farine et *des* œufs. Tu ajoutes ensuite *du* lait, *du* sel et *de l’*huile. Tu verses cette pâte dans une poêle. Quand la pâte est cuite, tu garnis la crêpe avec *du* fromage râpé, *du* jambon, ou *des* cèpes. Mais n’oublie pas Tammy, avec des crêpes, on ne boit pas *de* vin. Il faut boire *du* cidre et porter une coiffe bretonne!

---

**Tammy is on the phone:** Hello, Edouard? I’m having some friends over tonight. I would like to make some crêpes, but I’ve forgotten the recipe. Can you help me?

**Edouard:** No problem! Mix some flour and eggs. Add some milk, some salt and some oil. Pour this batter in a pan. When the batter is cooked, fill the crêpe with some grated cheese, some ham, or cèpes (mushrooms). But don’t forget Tammy, with crêpes, you don’t drink wine. You have to drink cider and wear a Breton hat!
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mon</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>mes</td>
<td>my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>tes</td>
<td>your (familiar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son</td>
<td>sa</td>
<td>ses</td>
<td>his or her or its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notre</td>
<td>notre</td>
<td>nos</td>
<td>our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>votre</td>
<td>votre</td>
<td>vos</td>
<td>your (formal or plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leur</td>
<td>leur</td>
<td>leurs</td>
<td>their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Posessive 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 enfants 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, mon amie, et ses amies Bette et Fiona, c'est-à-dire nos amies.

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!

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

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

**forms**

Demonstrative determiners (‘this’, ‘these’, ‘that’ or ‘those’) are used to point out things or people. They are also sometimes called **demonstrative adjectives** (in French ‘adjectifs démonstratifs’); they agree in number and gender with the noun they introduce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular: ce</th>
<th>ce tatou</th>
<th>this armadillo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masculine singular</td>
<td>cet</td>
<td>this squirrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before a vowel sound:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine singular:</td>
<td>cette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cette chatte</td>
<td>this cat (female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural (masculine or feminine): ces</td>
<td>ces tatous</td>
<td>these armadillos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ces écureuils</td>
<td>these squirrels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that liaison is compulsory between **ces** and words starting with a vowel or a silent **h**.

**uses**

In general, demonstrative determiners designate something one can see or show:

Tex explique: Ce bassin, c’est Barton Springs. Cette piscine s’appelle Deep Eddy.

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

- **-ci** and **-là**

Demonstrative determiners can designate something close or far away; in order to distinguish between two or more elements, you can add the suffixes **-ci** or **-là** to the demonstrative determiner. The suffix **-ci** indicates that the item is relatively near to the speaker; **-là** suggests that something is farther away. In English, they are generally translated by ‘this’ and ‘that’:

Tex: Tu vois Tammy, **cette** étoile **-ci** s’appelle Vénus. Mais **ces** étoiles-**là**, c’est la Voie lactée.

Tammy: Venus ... la voie lactée ... oh Tex, j’aime bien quand tu me parles d’astronomie!

Tex: See Tammy, **this** star **-ci** is called Venus. But **those** stars **-là**, are the Milky Way.

Tammy: Venus ... the Milky Way ... oh, Tex, I like it when you talk to me about astronomy!

Et ce bikini?
Tex et Tammy sont dans le rayon femmes de J. C. Penney.

Tammy: Qu'est-ce que tu penses de ce maillot-ci ?
Tex: Ah non! Je n'aime pas du tout cette couleur.

Tammy: Et ce bikini? Ce sera parfait pour cet été. Tu ne trouves pas?
Tex: Quelle horreur! Ce tissu est complètement démodé!

Tammy: Mais Tex, tu n'as aucun goût! Tu crois que ce vieux béret que tu portes est à la mode?
Tex and Tammy are in the women's section of J. C. Penney.

Tammy: What do you think of this bathing suit?
Tex: Oh no! I don't like this color at all.

Tammy: What about this bikini? It will be perfect for this summer, don't you think?
Tex: It's horrible! This fabric is completely outdated!

Tammy: Tex, you have no taste whatsoever! You think that this old beret you wear is fashionable?
**Determiners: Expressions of Quantity**

There are many ways of expressing quantity: numbers (*deux crêpes*), the indefinite article (*un tatou, an armadillo*), and the partitive article (*du lait, some milk*). Quantities may also be expressed using adverbs and adverbial expressions, such as *assez* (enough), *beaucoup* (a lot), or *trop* (too much).

When used with nouns, expressions of quantity are always followed by *de* (d’ if the noun begins with a vowel sound).

Tammy and Tex are having some friends over tonight. Tammy is in the kitchen. Tex is watching television.

Tammy: *Une douzaine de crêpes, c'est trop* pour quatre personnes?

Tex: Mais non, Tammy, ce n'est pas assez. Il faut préparer beaucoup de crêpes.

Tammy: A dozen crepes, that's too much for four people?

Tex: No, Tammy, it's not too much. You can never prepare too many crepes.

Here is a list of common adverbial expressions of quantity:

- **assez de**, enough
- **beaucoup de**, a lot
- **un peu de**, a little
- **trop de**, too many

Note that these expressions of quantity do not change in negative sentences:

Tex: On ne prépare jamais trop de crêpes.

Tex: One never prepares too many crepes!

One can express quantity by using specific nouns or adverbs of quantity, as well as measures of weight, distance, or volume, especially in reference to food. For example:

- **une boîte de**, a can (box) of
- **un bol de**, a bowl of
- **un bout de**, a piece (end) of
- **une bouteille de**, a bottle of
- **une cuillère de**, a teaspoon of
- **une douzaine de**, a dozen
- **50 grammes de**, 50 grams of
- **un kilo de**, a kilo of

The definite article (*le, la, les*) may be used with these expressions to indicate a quantity of a specific item. Remember that *de* + *le* and *de + les* form the contractions *du* and *des* respectively.

- **un morceau du gâteau qu'Édouard a préparé**, a piece of the cake that Édouard made
- **un verre du vin rouge, pas du blanc**, a glass of the red wine, not the white one
- **beaucoup des invités parlent français**, many of the guests speak French
Tammy lit la recette: Pour une douzaine de crêpes, mélanger 400 grammes de farine et deux oeufs. Ajouter ensuite un demi litre de lait, une cuil ère de sel et une cuillère d’huile.

Tammy: Dis, Tex! Arrête de faire le légume devant la télé! Viens m’aider!

Tex: Comment? J’ai fait mon travail, moi! Le bouquet de roses et la bouteille de cidre sont sur la table!

Tammy reads the recipe: For a dozen crêpes, mix 400 grams of flour and two eggs. Then add half a liter of milk, a spoonful of salt and a spoonful of oil.

Tammy: Hey, Tex! Stop vegging out in front of the TV! Come and help me!

Tex: What? I did my job! The bouquet of flowers and the bottle of cider are on the table!
**'tout' as an adjective**

*Tout* means 'all' or 'every' when it modifies a noun. It agrees in number and gender with the noun that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Masculine plural</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
<th>Feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tout</td>
<td>tous</td>
<td>toute</td>
<td>toutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These forms of *tout* are most often used with the definite articles le, les, la, l’, but they may also be used with a possessive determiner: tous mes poèmes (all my poems), toute sa vie (all his/her life) etc.:

- Malgré toutes les filles que j’ai connues, In spite of all the girls (or all of the girls) that I have known,
- je pense à toi ... I think of you ...
- tout le temps, all the time,
- toute la journée, all day long,
- tous* les soirs, every evening,
- toutes les nuits, every night.

*Tout* or *toute* may also be used without an article to mean 'every.'

**Tex:** Tout tatou est poète! Every armadillo is a poet!

*Note that the final *s* of *tous* is not pronounced when it is used as an adjective.

**'tout' as a pronoun**

*Tout* is invariable when it functions as the indefinite pronoun meaning 'everything' or 'all', as in the first sentence below.

The plural pronouns tous and toutes agree with the nouns they replace. Compare the examples below.

**Indefinite singular 'everything'**

- Tammy: Tex, tu as vu ton éditeur? Tout s’est bien passé? Tex: Publishers are fools, I hate them all!
- Tammy: Tex, did you see your publisher? Did everything go well?
- *Les maisons d’éditions ne comprennent pas mon art. Toutes refusent mes poèmes romantiques!*
- *Publishing houses don't understand my art. All refuse my romantic poems!*

*Note that the final *s* in the pronoun tous is pronounced, in contrast to the unpronounced *s* in tous as an adjective.
'tout' as an adverb

Tout may also be an adverb meaning 'all,' 'completely,' or 'quite' when it modifies another adverb, a preposition, or an adjective. Although tout is invariable before an adverb, a preposition or a masculine adjective, the feminine forms toute and toutes are used before feminine adjectives beginning with a consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before a feminine adjective</td>
<td>Tex: Et ma poésie est toute moderne</td>
<td>Tex: And my poetry is very modern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beginning with a consonant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**tout in common idiomatic phrases**

Here is a list of common idiomatic phrases with tout:

- pas du tout, not at all
- tout de suite, right away
- tout le monde, everyone
- tout le temps, all the time
- tous les jours, every day
- tous (toutes) les deux, both
- tous les deux jours, every other day
- tous les trois jours ..., every three days
- toutes les deux semaines, every other week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>en tout cas, in any case</th>
<th>mal gré tout, in spite of everything</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tout à l’heure, in a little while</td>
<td>tout à coup, all of a sudden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tout à fait, completely</td>
<td>tout droit, straight ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tout de même, just the same</td>
<td>tout en + participe présent, all the while ...,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tammy: Alors Tex, tu as bientôt fini ton recueil de poèmes?

Tex: Oh ne m’en parle pas! J’ai perdu tout mon enthousiasme! J’ai toutes sortes de problèmes avec mon éditeur. Il refuse tous mes poèmes récents.

Tammy: Ne t’inquiète pas! Tous les grands poètes sont incompris!

Tammy: So Tex, have you almost finished writing your collection of poems?

Tex: Oh don’t ask! I have lost all my enthusiasm! I have all sorts of problems with my publisher. He refuses to publish all my recent poems.

Tammy: Don’t worry! All great poets are misunderstood!
Indefinite determiners qualify nouns and express the indefinite idea of quality (certain, any) or quantity (not one, each, different, several). They agree in number and gender with the noun they modify. Some indefinite determiners may be used as indefinite pronouns to replace a noun.

Here is a list of common indefinite determiners:

- **aucun (aucune)**, not one, not a single
- **certains (certaines)**, certain
- **chaque**, each, every
- **différents (différentes)**, various, some
- **divers (diverses)**, various, some
- **plusieurs**, several
- **quelques**, some
- **tout**, all, every

Bette: Il n'y a **aucun** doute. Tu finiras mère au foyer!

Tammy: **Chaque** jour, tu trouves une méchanceté à dire. **Aucune** chatte n'est aussi désagréable que toi!

Bette: Mais ouvre les yeux Tammy! Ton futur mari a **plusieurs** défauts. Il est snob, prétentieux et veut toujours avoir raison.

Tammy: Mais il a aussi **quelques** qualités: il est beau et talentueux. **Certains** éditeurs pensent qu'il est le prochain prix Goncourt!

Bette tout bas: Tu parles!

Bette: There is no doubt. You'll end up a housewife!

Tammy: Every day, you find something nasty to say. No cat is as unpleasant as you are!

Bette: Open your eyes Tammy! Your future husband has several negative traits. He is snobbish, pretentious and always wants to be right.

Tammy: But he also has a few good points: he is handsome and talented. Some publishers think that he is the next Goncourt prize winner.

Bette under her breath: Yeah, right!
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. In English, 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 and English modify verbs, they can also modify other adverbs as well as adjectives.

- verb modified by adverb: Ecoute attentivement.
- adverb modified by adverb: trop lentement
- adjective modified by adverb: extrêmement silencieux

Listen carefully.
Too slowly
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 where adjectives are rarely used in place of the adverb. Remember that adverbs modify verbs (as well as other adverbs and adjectives) and adjectives modify nouns.

- Tex écrit bien.
- La poésie de Tex est bonne.

Tex writes well.
Tex's poetry is good.
**adverbs: formation and placement**

**uses**
In French as in English, an adverb describes the action of a verb. It answers such questions as 'where', 'when,' 'how,' 'how long,' or 'how often.' Adverbs are invariable and may be used with almost all verbs. For example:

Edouard cuisine bien. Edouard cooks well.
Joe-Bob mange beaucoup. Joe-Bob eats a lot.

An adverb may also qualify an adjective or another adverb. Consider the sentence: ‘Edouard cuisine très bien’ (Edouard cooks very well). Très qualifies bien and both describe the action of the verb ‘cuisiner’.

**common adverbs**
Following is a list of frequently used adverbs, categorized by type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>manner</th>
<th>bien, well</th>
<th>mal, badly</th>
<th>vite, quickly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>souvent, often</td>
<td>quelquefois,</td>
<td>toujours, always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tard, late</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td>dedans, inside</td>
<td>dehors, outside</td>
<td>ici, here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>là, there</td>
<td>partout, everywhere</td>
<td>quelque part, somewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantity or degree</td>
<td>beaucoup, a lot</td>
<td>très, very</td>
<td>trop, too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assez, enough</td>
<td>peu, little, not</td>
<td>peut-être, maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sequence</td>
<td>d’abord, at first</td>
<td>puis, then, next</td>
<td>alors, then, so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>donc, thus</td>
<td>enfin, finally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**formation of regular adverbs**
A large number of French adverbs are derived from adjectives.
They are usually formed by adding -ment to the feminine singular form of the adjective. Note the exception 'gentiment', which is derived from the adjective ‘gentil’ (nice).

lent(e), slow  lentement, slowly
doux (douce), soft  doucement, softly
heureux (heureuse), happy  heureusement, happily, fortunately
franc (franche), frank  franchement, frankly
However, **-ment** is added to the masculine singular form of adjectives that end with a vowel. Note the exception 'gai-ment' which is derived from the adjective 'gai' (cheerful).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poli(e)</td>
<td>poliment, politely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolu(e), absolute</td>
<td>absolument, absolutely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrai(e), true, real</td>
<td>virement, truly, really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modéré(e), moderate</td>
<td>modérément, moderately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add **-emment** to the stem of adjectives that end in -ent; add **-amment** to the stem of adjectives ending in -ant. The stem is what remains of the adjective when -ent or -ant have been removed. Note that the one-syllable adjective 'lent' does not form its adverb, 'lentement', on this model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>récent, recent</td>
<td>récemment, recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fréquent, frequent</td>
<td>fréquemment, frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffisant, sufficient</td>
<td>suffisamment, sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>méchant, wicked, malicious</td>
<td>méchamment, wickedly, nastily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the addition of an acute accent to form the following adverbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>précis(e), precise</td>
<td>précisément, precisely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profond(e), deep</td>
<td>profondément, deeply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>énorme, huge, enormous</td>
<td>énormément, enormously</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
placement

Use the following guidelines for placement of adverbs.

adverbs that modify an adjective or another adverb

Adverbs are placed directly before the adjective or adverb that they modify.

Edouard: J'habite le Texas depuis très longtemps, mais je trouve que le barbecue est vraiment dégueulasse!  
Edouard: I've lived in Texas for a very long time, but I find that barbecue is truly disgusting!

adverbs that modify a verb

Adverbs are usually placed immediately after the conjugated verb. If the verb is negative, the adverb is placed after the negation.

Edouard comprend mal les habitudes culinaires américaines.  
Edouard understands poorly American culinary habits.

Edouard ne marche pas vite, parce qu'il sait déjà ce que les clients vont commander.  
Edouard is not walking fast, because he already knows what the customers are going to order.

Edouard: Ils exigent toujours du ketchup, mais il n'y a pas de ketchup dans mon restaurant.  
Edouard: They always demand ketchup, but there is no ketchup in my restaurant.

Note that most common adverbs are placed directly after the verb before the objects.

Joe-Bob: J'aime beaucoup le ketchup!  
J'aime davantage le foie gras!  
Joe-Bob: I like ketchup a lot!  
Edouard: I like foie gras even more!

adverbs that modify a whole sentence

If an adverb is a comment on the entire sentence (malheureusement, en plus), it may be placed at the beginning or end of the sentence. Adverbs of this type include adverbs of time and place. In the following dialogue, contrast the adverbs that modify the whole sentence to those that modify just the verb.

Joe-Bob: Edouard, viens dîner avec nous ce soir!  
Joe-Bob: Edouard, come out to eat with us this evening!

Edouard refuse obstinément l'invitation de Joe-Bob: Tu m'invites souvent, maistoujours à l'américaine!  
Edouard refuse obstinately Joe-Bob's invitation: You invite me out to eat often, but always in the American style.
placement of adverbs with passé compose

The adverb in French usually follows the conjugated verb. Thus, in all compound tenses (i.e. tenses where an auxiliary is required, such as the passé composé), adverbs are placed right after the auxiliary and just before the past participle. However, some longer adverbs ending in -ment may follow the past participle. In a sentence in the periphrastic future ('futur proche'), adverbs are placed right before the infinitive. If the conjugated verb is in the negative, the adverb follows the negation.

Tex: Oh, j'ai trop mangé. Je ne vais pas bien dormir.

Edouard: Mais tu n'as pas beaucoup mangé! Juste de la soupe!

Tex: Oui, mais il y avait une mouche dans la soupe!

Edouard: Quoi? Une mouche dans mon restaurant! Pas possible!

Je vais immédiatement te préparer une infusion. Oh, tu sais, les mouches, ça se digère vite.

Tex: Oh, I ate too much. I am not going to sleep well.

Edouard: But you didn't eat much! Just some soup!

Tex: Yes, but there was a fly in the soup!

Edouard: What? A fly in my restaurant! It's not possible!

I'm going to prepare an herb tea for you right away. Oh, you know, flies are easily digested.
**comparative and superlative of adverbs**

**comparative of adverbs: indicating more, less, or equality**

Plus + adverb + que conveys the idea of 'more ... than', moins + adverb + que the idea of 'less ... than'. Aussi + adverb + que conveys the idea of 'as ... as.'

- Joe-Bob court **plus vite** qu'Edouard.
- Tex court **moins vite** Joe- Bob.
- Qui court **aussi lentement qu'** Edouard? Personne, bien sûr!

Note that **mieux** (better) is the irregular comparative form of the adverb **bien** (well). The other comparative forms of **bien** are regular (**moins bien que**, **aussi bien que**).

**superlative of adverbs: indicating the most, the least**

In French as in English, the superlative is a way to express a maximum or minimum quality or capacity: 'the fastest', 'the least fast'. To form the superlative of an adverb, the masculine singular form of the **definite article** is always used: le, followed by **plus** (more) or **moins** (less) before the adverb. Note that the superlative of an adverb has only one form. **Le mieux** (the best) and **le moins bien** (the least well) are the superlative forms of the adverb **bien** (well).

- Joe-Bob, Tex, Corey et Edouard se préparent à faire une course.
- Corey: Qui va gagner?
- Joe-Bob: Moi, bien sûr! je cours **le plus vite** et Edouard va être le dernier parce qu'il court **le moins vite**!
- Edouard (vexé): Tu dis ça parce que je suis un escargot! Mais tout le monde sait que je cours **le plus élégamment**!

Joe-Bob, Tex, Corey et Edouard are about to start a race.
Corey: Who's going to win?
Joe-Bob: Me, of course! I run the fastest and Edouard is going to be last, because he runs the least fast!
Edouard (offended): You say this because I am a snail! But everyone knows that I run the most elegantly!
-il y a, ago

When *il y a* is followed by a time expression (such as *longtemps, quel que temps, une semaine, deux jours* etc.), it generally means 'ago': *il y a une semaine* (a week ago).

Tex: La mère supérieure m'a écrit récemment. Elle veut un souvenir du Texas! *Il y a un an j'ai promis de lui envoyer quelque chose, mais en ce moment je n'ai pas d'argent. Je viens de dépenser mes derniers sous* *il y a 10 minutes*.

Joe-Bob: Pense à des souvenirs pas chers. Hmmmm . . . mon ancien berceau, peut-être. C'est parfait pour une mère!

See also *il y a* and *Il y a ... que.*

Tex: Mother Superior (Tex was raised by nuns in France) wrote me recently. She wants a souvenir from Texas! A year ago I promised to send her something, but now I don't have any money. I just spent my last money 10 minutes ago.

Joe-Bob: Think of souvenirs that don't cost much. Hmmmm ... my old crib, maybe. It's perfect for a mother!
**tôt, tard, en avance, en retard, à l’heure**

**Tôt** and **tard** are irregular adverbs. **Tôt** means early in a general, non-measurable sense: early in the day, or in one’s life, one’s career, relationship, in a film, book, etc. Likewise, **tard** means late in the sense of late in the day (or in one’s life, career, etc.).

**En avance** (early), **en retard** (late), **à l’heure** (on time) are invariable phrases, i.e. they have only one form. They always refer to a schedule: **en avance** means early in the sense of ahead of schedule and **en retard** means late, behind schedule. They are usually used with ‘être’ and verbs of movement like ‘arriver’, ‘partir’, ‘rentrer’, ‘revenir’: in other words, the verbs from the Alamo of être. They are placed at the end of the sentence.

---

Tex et Bette sont devant PCL.

Tex et Bette are outside PCL.

Bette: Qui est-ce que tu attends, Tex?

Bette: Who are you waiting for Tex?

Tex: Oh, comme d'habitude, j'attends Edouard. Il est en retard. Il n'est jamais à l'heure.

Tex: Oh, as usual, I'm waiting for Edouard. He is late. He is never on time.

Bette: Moi, je suis toujours à l'heure. Et j'arrive même en avance quand j'ai rendez-vous avec quelqu'un comme toi: dignifie, intelligent, sophistiqué, beau ...

Bette: I am always on time. And I even arrive early when I'm meeting someone like you: dignified, intelligent, sophisticated, handsome ...

Tex: Bof ... Tu crois qu'il est trop tôt pour parler mariage avec Tammy?

Tex: Bof ... Do you think it is too early to discuss marriage with Tammy?

Bette: Certainement! Il est beaucoup trop tôt. Tu dois attendre! Regarde l'heure. Il est tard. On y va

Bette: Certainly! It is much too early. You have to wait! Look at the time. It is late. Shall we go?
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.
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!

French: "Tex écrit bien." (adverb modifies verb) Tex writes well.
French: "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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine singular</th>
<th>feminine singular</th>
<th>masculine plural</th>
<th>feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>petit</td>
<td>petite</td>
<td>petits</td>
<td>petites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.

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

Bette est de caractère méfiant. Elle est d'humeur changeante.

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

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

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.

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 adorable! 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!
Adjectives that proceed the noun

The placement of most adjectives in French is after the noun: un escargot parlant, une fourmi travaillouse, des tatous intelligents, etc. There is a small group of adjectives, however, that normally precede the noun. These adjectives may be categorized as adjectives of Beauty, Age, Numbers Goodness, and Size (BANGS).

autre, other          beau (bel le), beautiful          bon (bonne), good
grand (grande), tall, big          gros (grosse), big, fat          jeune, young
joli (jolie), pretty petit          mauvais ( mauvaise), bad          nouveau ( nouvelle), new
(petite), little          vieux ( vieille), old

**ordinal numbers:**

- premier ( premi ère), first
- deuxième, second
- troisième, third, etc.

Tammy est une belle Américaine. C'est aussi une bonne amie. C'est une petite tatou.

Tammy is a beautiful American woman. She is also a good friend. Tammy is a little armadillo.

Trey est le jeune frère de Tex. C'est le troisième enfant de la famille.

Trey is Tex's young brother. He is the third child in the family.

**beau, nouveau, vieux**

Beau, nouveau, and vieux have irregular forms. Note the special forms in the masculine singular when they precede a word that begins with a vowel or a silent h.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine singular</th>
<th>masculine before vowel</th>
<th>feminine singular</th>
<th>masculine plural</th>
<th>feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beau</td>
<td>bel</td>
<td>belle</td>
<td>beaux</td>
<td>belles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouveau</td>
<td>nouvel</td>
<td>nouvelle</td>
<td>nouveaux</td>
<td>nouvelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vieux</td>
<td>vieil</td>
<td>vieille</td>
<td>vieux</td>
<td>vieilles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adjectives which precede the noun must agree in number and gender with the noun they modify (see the regular rule for adjective formation). Be aware that changing the position of some adjectives may change their meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouvel</td>
<td>family album.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammy: Qui est cette belle femme?</td>
<td>Tammy: Who is that beautiful woman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita: C'est notre mère.</td>
<td>Rita: That's our mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autres</td>
<td>ar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar vieil</td>
<td>ar And then, next to him, that's me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar petit</td>
<td>ar he ugly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar première</td>
<td>ar of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar toi.</td>
<td>ar you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tammy: Qui est cette belle femme?
Rita: C'est notre mère.

Tammy: Who is that beautiful woman?
Rita: That's our mother.

ar nouvel arde famille de Rita.
arfamily album.

Et puis, à côté, c'est moi.
ar And then, next to him, that's me.

ar petit ar est laid!
ar he ugly!

ar première arde toi.
ar of you.
Irregular adjectives

Regular adjectives are formed by adding an *e* to the masculine form in the singular (content / contentes), or by adding an *s* to the masculine and feminine forms in the plural (Tex et Edouard sont contents / Tammy et Bette sont contentes). This group of adjectives is by far the most common. There are, however, a number of adjectives which are called irregular, because they do not have the normal *-e*, *-s*, or *-es* endings. The endings of these irregular adjectives vary widely and often change the pronunciation.

**Gender**

Some adjectives are completely irregular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>doux</td>
<td>douce</td>
<td>soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faux</td>
<td>fausse</td>
<td>false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favori</td>
<td>favorite</td>
<td>favorite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frais</td>
<td>fraîche</td>
<td>fresh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>longue</td>
<td>long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>publique</td>
<td>public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other adjectives can be grouped in categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine ending</th>
<th>Feminine ending</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-el</td>
<td>-elle</td>
<td>cruel</td>
<td>cruel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-eil</td>
<td>-elle</td>
<td>pareil</td>
<td>pareille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-il</td>
<td>-ille</td>
<td>gentil</td>
<td>gentille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-on</td>
<td>-onne</td>
<td>mignon</td>
<td>mignonne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-s</td>
<td>-sse</td>
<td>gros</td>
<td>grosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-en</td>
<td>-enne</td>
<td>ancien</td>
<td>ancienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-et</td>
<td>-ète</td>
<td>secret</td>
<td>secrète</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-er</td>
<td>-ère</td>
<td>cher</td>
<td>chère</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-eux</td>
<td>-euse</td>
<td>heureux</td>
<td>heureuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-eur</td>
<td>-euse</td>
<td>trompeur</td>
<td>trompeuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-teur</td>
<td>-trice</td>
<td>créateur</td>
<td>créatrice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-f</td>
<td>-ve</td>
<td>actif</td>
<td>active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-c</td>
<td>-che</td>
<td>franc</td>
<td>franche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ou</td>
<td>-olle</td>
<td>fou</td>
<td>folle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some adjectives have identical masculine and feminine forms. This is generally the case with adjectives ending in *e* in their masculine form and with foreign adjectives like 'snob', 'cool', etc. For example: Tex est un tatou *imaginaire*; Tammy aussi est *imaginaire*. Ils sont *imaginares*. (Tex is an imaginary armadillo; Tammy too is imaginary. They are imaginary.) Here are a few of these adjectives:

- *pauvre* (poor)
- *difficile* (difficult)
- *sensible* (sensitive)
- *riche* (rich)
- *calme* (calm)
- *semblable* (similar)
- *mince* (slim)
- *minuscule* (tiny)
- *ridicule* (ridiculous)
- *propre* (clean)
- *ironique* (ironic)
- *imaginaire* (imaginary)

### number

The majority of adjectives are regular in the plural; that is, an *-s* is added to the singular masculine or feminine forms. There are two major exceptions to this rule:

Do not add an *s* to the masculine form of adjectives ending in *s* or *x*. The masculine singular and plural forms are thus identical: un animal *heureux* (a happy animal), des animaux *heureux* (happy animals). However, the feminine plural form of these adjectives is regular; it is formed by simply adding an *s* to the feminine singular form: une fille *heureuse* (a happy girl), des filles *heureuses* (happy girls).

Adjectives ending in *al* in the masculine singular form change to *aux* in the masculine plural form.

Tex est un tatou international. Edouard et Tex sont des animaux *internationaux*. Tex is an international armadillo. Edouard and Tex are international animals.

The feminine plural form of these adjectives is regular; it is formed by simply adding an *s* to the feminine singular form: Tex aime lire *la presse internationale*. Tex aime aussi les revues *internationales*. (Tex likes to read international papers. Tex also likes international magazines).

---

Tex: Mais, qu'est-ce qui ne va pas?

Tammy: C'est encore Bette! Elle n'est jamais *sincère!* Sois *franc* Tex. Tu ne la trouves pas *capricieuse* et *cruelle*?

Tex: Non! Elle est *gentille*! C'est une *bonne* amie! Qu'est-ce qu'elle a fait?

Tammy: Comme tu es *naïf*! Elle me raconte que tu me trouves *ennuyeuse*, que tu es *amoureux* d'une de tes étudiantes. C'est vrai?

Tex: Tu es *folle*! C'est une *fausse* accusation!

Tammy: Hmm ... Tu veux que je t'explique? C'est très clair. Elle est *jalouse*!

C'est le complot *classique*. Elle essaie de nous séparer, nous des amis *s* *loyaux*!

Tex: But, what's wrong?

Tammy: It's Bette again! She is never sincere! Be frank Tex. Don't you find her capricious and cruel?

Tex: No! She is nice! She is a good friend! What did she do?

Tammy: You are so naive! She tells me that you think I'm boring, that you are in love with one of your students. Is that true?

Tex: You're crazy! It's a false accusation!

Tammy: Hmm ... Do you want me to explain? It's very clear. She is jealous!

This is the classic plot. She tries to separate us, so loyal friends.
Some adjectives can be placed either before or after the noun they are describing. Their position determines their meaning. When the adjective is placed before the noun it tends to carry a figurative, or metaphorical meaning. When it follows the noun, it carries a more literal, or actual meaning. Consider the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>literal sense following the noun</th>
<th>figurative sense before the noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ancien</td>
<td>Paw-Paw adore les meubles anciens. Paw-Paw adores very old furniture.</td>
<td>Marianne est l'ancienne copine de Tex. Marianne is Tex's former girlfriend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cher</td>
<td>Tammy aime les parfums chers de Paris. Tammy likes expensive perfumes from Paris.</td>
<td>Chers amis, je suis content de vous voir! Dear friends, I am happy to see you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dernier</td>
<td>Tex a vu Marianne la semaine dernière. Tex saw Marianne last [preceding] week.</td>
<td>Tex dit à Marianne: Pour la dernière fois, je ne veux plus te voir. Tex says to Marianne: For the last [final] time, I don't want to see you anymore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grand</td>
<td>En général, les tatous ne sont pas grands. In general, armadillos are not tall.</td>
<td>Tex est un grand philosophe. Tex is a great philosopher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>même</td>
<td>Bette est l'hypocrisie même! Bette is hypocrisy itself!</td>
<td>Tammy et Bette adorent le même petit tatou. Tammy and Bette adore the same little armadillo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pauvre</td>
<td>A son arrivée à Austin, Tex était un tatou pauvre. When he came to Austin, Tex was a financially poor armadillo.</td>
<td>Le pauvre Tex était malheureux quand il a quitté la France. The unfortunate Tex was not happy when he left France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prochain</td>
<td>Mes chers étudiants, la semaine prochaine vous avez un examen. My dear students, next [in a series] week you have an exam.</td>
<td>Tex dit à Marianne: Et la prochaine fois que tu me suits, j'appelle la police! Tex says to Marianne: And the next [following] time that you follow me, I will call the police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>propre</td>
<td>Mais oui, Edouard est un escargot propre! Yes, Edouard is a clean snail.</td>
<td>Edouard veut son propre restaurant. Edouard wants his own restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seul</td>
<td>Corey est seul. C'est un cafard. Corey is alone. He's a cockroach.</td>
<td>Dans le coeur de Tex, Tammy est le seul tatou qui compte. In Tex's heart, Tammy is the only armadillo that matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>Bette n'est pas simple. Bette is not simple [uncomplicated]</td>
<td>Tex n'est pas un simple poète, c'est aussi un philosophe. Tex is not just a poet, he is also a philosopher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrai</td>
<td>Paw-Paw a raconté des histoires vraies sur sa vie pendant la guerre. Paw-Paw told true stories about his life during the war.</td>
<td>Les aventures de Tex et ses copains, c'est une vraie histoire. The adventures of Tex and his friends are a real story!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tammy attend Tex à la bibliothèque depuis une heure. Enfin il arrive.

Tammy (ironique): Ne te presse pas mon cher Tex! Tu oublies tes propres rendez-vous maintenant?!

Tex: Ah, Tammy, ma chérie! J'étais au café avec mon grand ami Édouard, quand j'ai vu une femme seule. Elle avait l'air triste. Elle était le désespoir même. Et la beauté même...

Tammy (toujours furieuse): Et alors?

Tex: Eh bien? Tu me connais! Je suis un brave tatou! Alors, je suis allé lui offrir un café pour la consoler.

Tammy: Ah oui?
Tex: Aïe!

Tammy has been waiting for Tex at the library for an hour. Finally, he arrives.

Tammy (ironic): Take your time my dear Tex! Are you forgetting your own appointments now?!

Tex: Oh, Tammy, darling, I was at the cafe with my great friend Édouard, when I saw a lonely woman. She looked sad. She was despair itself! Beauty itself also ...

Tammy (still furious): So what?

Tex: So? You know the way I am! I am a good armadillo! So I went and bought her a coffee to console her.

Tammy: Oh really?
Tex: Ouch!
Comparisons with adjectives

comparative adjectives indicating more or less
Adjectives are frequently used to compare things, people, events, ideas etc. Plus ... que conveys the idea of 'more ... than', moins ... que the idea of 'less than.'

Tex est plus intelligent que Joe-Bob. Tex is more intelligent than Joe-Bob.
Mais Joe-Bob est moins prétentieux que Tex. But Joe-Bob is less pretentious than Tex.
Bien sûr, il est plus difficile d'être poète que d'être écureuil!

comparative adjectives indicating similarity or equality
Aussi ... que conveys the idea of 'as ... as'.
Fiona est aussi belle que Tammy. Mais elles ne sont pas aussi séduisantes que Bette.

irregular adjectives
The adjectives bon and mauvais have irregular forms of comparison, meilleur and pire. However, the regular form plus mauvais que has become commonly accepted. Note that this irregularity is found in English too with 'better' (not 'gooder') and 'worse' (not *badder).
D'après Tex, Tammy est un bon parti. Mais Bette pense qu'elle serait un meilleur parti que Tammy.
Mais il est évident que le caractère de Bette est plus mauvais que celui de Tammy.

Bette: Tex, as-tu jamais vu une fille aussi jolie que moi?
Tex philosophe: Euh! La beauté physique est moins importante que la beauté de l'âme. Voyons Bette, je n'ai pas le temps de penser à des choses aussi triviales que celles-ci ...

Bette: D'accord, d'accord, mais je suis moins bête et plus sexy que Tammy, non?
Tex: Être ou ne pas être, là est la question ...

Bette: Tex, have you ever seen a girl as pretty as I am?
Tex the philosopher: Ah! Physical beauty is less important than the beauty of the soul. Look Bette, I do not have time to think about things as trivial as that ...

Bette: Ok, ok, but I am less stupid and more sexy than Tammy, don't you think?
Tex: To be or not to be, that is the question ...
Superlative of adjectives

formation and placement

In French as in English, the superlative is a form of an adjective expressing 'the best', 'the smallest', 'the most interesting'. To form the superlative, use the definite article (le, la, les) and the adverb plus or moins before the adjective. Note that the superlative of an adjective agrees with the noun it modifies in gender and in number. The placement of the superlative corresponds to the usual placement of the adjective. In other words, if the adjective follows the noun, then the superlative will follow the noun, too. And conversely, if the adjective precedes the noun, then the superlative adjective will precede the noun, too. Note that if the adjective follows the noun, the definite article is used twice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>superlative</th>
<th>le (la, les) plus (the most)</th>
<th>le (la, les) moins (the least)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjective after noun</td>
<td>Bette est la chatte la plus rusée du monde.</td>
<td>Tammy est la tatou la moins rusée du monde.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bette is the slickest cat in the world.</td>
<td>Tammy is the least slick armadillo in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective before noun</td>
<td>Tammy est la plus gentille tatou du monde.</td>
<td>Bette est la moins gentile chatte du monde.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tammy is the nicest armadillo in the world.</td>
<td>Bette is the least nice cat in the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that instead of the definite article, you may use a possessive determiner (mon, ma, mes, etc.), so Tex might say: 'Edouard est mon ami le plus distingué' (Edouard is my most distinguished friend).

irregular superlatives

The adjectives bon and mauvais have irregular patterns in the superlative. Note there are two forms for expressing 'the worst': the irregular form le (la) pire and the more commonly used le (la) plus mauvais(e).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>superlative of bon (good)</th>
<th>superlative of mauvais (bad)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the best</td>
<td>the worst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le meilleur campus</td>
<td>le pire université</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la meilleure université</td>
<td>la moins mauvaise université</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>les meilleurs profs</td>
<td>les pires profs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>les meilleures notes</td>
<td>les pires notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le moins bon campus</td>
<td>le moins mauvais campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la moins bonne université</td>
<td>le moins mauvaise université</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>les moins bon profs</td>
<td>les moins mauvais profs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>les moins bonnes notes</td>
<td>les moins mauvaises notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Le superlatif de mauvais est toujours soit le pire ou le plus mauvais. Mais alors que vous pouvez dire 'la plus mauvaise université' ou 'la pire université,' vous ne pouvez dire 'les pires ploucs,' 'les pires catastrophes,' 'les pires crimes' etc. Pourquoi? Parce que 'plouc,' 'catastrophe,' 'crime' sont déjà négatifs et il serait redundant d'ajouter 'mauvais' ou son superlatif, 'le plus mauvais,' devant eux.

Tammy: Texas A&M est la plus mauvaise université du monde. Elle a la moins bonne équipe de foot. Elle attire les pires ploucs! Les meilleurs étudiants viennent à UT parce qu'Austin est la ville la plus cool du Texas!

Joe-Bob: Tu parles! UT craint! C'est la plus grande université du Texas! En plus, les étudiants de UT sont les plus snobs! College Station est la plus belle ville du monde!

Tammy: Texas A&M is the worst university in the world! It has the worst football team. It attracts the worst rednecks! The best students come to UT because Austin is the coolest city in Texas!

Joe-Bob: Go on! UT sucks! It's the largest university in Texas! And, UT students are the most snobbish! College Station is the most beautiful city in the world!
**Bon/meilleur vs. bien mieux**

**bon/bien**

*Bon* (good) is an adjective. Although it has an **irregular** feminine form, *bonne*, the plural is formed regularly by adding an *-s* to the masculine or feminine adjective. *Bien* (well, really, very) is an adverb. The adjective *bon* modifies a noun, whereas the adverb *bien* modifies verbs, adjectives or other adverbs.

**adjective bon**

La cuisine de Tammy est **bonne**. Tammy's cooking is **good**.

Tammy est une **bonne** cuisinière. Tammy is a **good** cook.

**adverb bien**

Mmm ... Tammy fait **bien** la cuisine. Mmm ... Tammy cooks **well**.

Tammy lit la recette **bien** attentivement. Tammy reads the recipe **very** attentively.

Ooh, la soupe de Tammy est **bien** assaisonnée. Ooh, Tammy's soup is **well**-seasoned.

**meilleur/ meilleur vs. mieux**

Comparisons with *bon* and *bien* are not formed regularly using 'plus ... que' (more ... than). Instead use **meilleur(e)(s) que**, and **mieux que**:

**adjective bon/meilleur**

Tammy est une **meilleure** cuisinière que Fiona. Tammy is a **better** cook than Fiona.

Les gâteaux de Tammy sont **meilleurs** que les gâteaux de Fiona. Tammy’s cakes are **better** than Fiona’s cakes.

**adverb bien/mieux**

Mais si, Tammy cuisine **mieux** que Fiona. But yes, Tammy cooks **better** than Fiona.

Et la soupe de Tammy est **mieux** assaisonnée que la soupe de Fiona. And Tammy's soup is **better** seasoned than Fiona's soup.

The adverb *bien* is an intensifier and can be translated as 'much' in English. Note that 'much better' is sometimes translated as *bien meilleur*, sometimes as *bien mieux*.

Tammy est **bien meilleure** cuisinière que Fiona. Tammy is a **much better** cook that Fiona.

Tammy fait **bien mieux** la cuisine qu’Fiona. Tammy cooks **much better** than Fiona.
aussi bon/ aussi bien

*Aussi bon que* (comparisons with adjectives) conveys the idea of ‘as good as’. *Aussi bien que* (comparisons with adverbs) conveys the idea of ‘as well as.’

**adjective bon/aussi bon que**

Mais Bette est une aussi bonne cuisinière que Tammy.

La cuisine de Bette est aussi bonne que la cuisine de Tammy.

**adverb bien/aussi bien que**

Bette cuisine aussi bien que Tammy.

Bette cook as well as Tammy.

*le meilleur/ le mieux : superlative forms*

In French as in English, the superlative is a form expressing a maximum or minimum quality or capacity. In English, ‘good’ and ‘well’ have the same maximum superlative: ‘the best’. In French, however, the maximum superlatives are different; they are formed with the definite articles *le (la, les) meilleur(s)* (superlative adjectives) or *le mieux* (superlative adverbs). The minimum superlatives (*le moins bon, le moins bien*) are formed regularly.

**superlative adjectives**

Qui fait *la meilleure* tarte?

Qui fait *les moins bonnes* cuisses de grenouilles?

Who makes the best tart?

Who makes the worst frog legs?
**superlative adverbs**

Qui cuisine **le mieux**?

Et qui cuisine **le moins bien**?

Edouard arbitre un concours de cuisine. Tammy, Bette et Fiona présentent des tartes.

Edouard goûte d'abord la tarte de Tammy. First, Edouard tastes Tammy's tart.

Edouard: Une tarte aux pommes ... C'est très sucré, mais délicieux. Tammy est **bonne** cuisinière. Oui, oui, elle cuisine **bien**.

Edouard goûte ensuite la tarte de Fiona. Next, Edouard tastes Fiona's tart.

Edouard: Une tarte aux piments ... C'est très épicé mais certainement original. Est-ce que cette tarte est **mieux** que celle de Tammy? Non, à mon avis, Fiona cuisine **aussi bien que** Tammy.

Enfin, Edouard goûte la tarte de Bette.

Edouard: Une tarte aux fruits exotiques. Hmm ... c'est magnifique. Cette tarte me séduit terriblement. Aucun doute! C'est Bette qui va recevoir le prix. C'est elle qui cuisine **le mieux**. C'est, comme c'est délicieux! Dites-moi, Bette, il y a un je ne sais quoi dans cette tarte. Quel est votre secret?

Bette: Mais, c'est tout simple, Edouard. Quand je cuisine, j'ajoute toujours une pincée de Viagra!

Edouard: An apple tart ... It's very sweet, but delicious. Tammy is a **good** cook. Yes, yes, she cooks **well**.

Next, Edouard tastes Fiona's tart.

Edouard: A pepper tart ... It's spicy, but certainly original. Is this tart **better** than Tammy's? No, in my opinion, Fiona cooks **as well as** Tammy.

Finally, Edouard tastes Bette's tart.

Edouard: An exotic fruit tart. Hmm ... it's magnificent. This tart really seduces me. No question about it! Bette's going to receive the prize. She's the one who cooks **the best**. How delicious it is! Tell me, Bette, there's an I don't know what in this tart. What is your secret?

Bette: But it's very simple, Edouard. When I cook, I always add a pinch of Viagra!

Bette: Mais, c'est tout simple, Edouard. Quand je cuisine, j'ajoute toujours une pincée de Viagra!
**Participles as adjectives**

The present participles and past participles of verbs are often used as adjectives. So they agree in number and gender with the noun they modify, just like regular adjectives. The distinction between adjectives derived from present and past participles is similar to that between -ing and -ed adjectives in English: *fatigant* (tiring) / *fatigué* (tired).

Oh, la, la, Tex est *fatigué* après ses cours.  
Oh, la, la, Tex is tired after his classes.

Pff... quand il parle de philosophie, Tex est parfois *fatigant*.  
Pff... when he talks about philosophy, Tex is sometimes tiring.

### Present participles used as adjectives

The present participle is formed by dropping the *-ons* ending from the *nous* form in the present tense and adding *-ant*.

Tex est un tatou *intéressant* . (intéresser)  
Tex is an interesting armadillo. Tammy est une fille *charmante*. (charmer)  
Tammy is a charming girl.

Edouard et Corey sont des animaux *amusants*. (amuser)  
Edouard and Corey are amusing animals.

Bette et Fiona sont des créatures *surprenantes*. (surprendre)  
Bette and Fiona are surprising creatures.

### Past participles used as adjectives

Past participle formation depends on the verb class (*-er*, *-ir*, *-re*, or irregular).

Tex et Tammy forment un couple *uni*. (unir)  
Tex and Tammy form a united couple.

Pauvre Joe-Bob! Il est *perdu* ... comme d’habitude. (pérder)  
Poor Joe-Bob! He’s lost ... as usual.

Edouard et Tex sont des Français peu *américanisés*. (américaniser)  
Edouard and Tex are not very Americanized French people.

Bette est trop *gâtée*. (gâter)  
Bette is too spoiled.

Note that past participles used as adjectives may have a passive meaning, and thus be followed by an agent introduced by *par* (by) or *de* (with):

Bette est une chatte *entourée d’*admirateurs.  
Bette is a cat surrounded by admirers.

Bette est très *gâtée par* ses admirateurs.  
Bette is very spoiled by her admirers.

Joe-Bob: Corey, did you see? There’s an absolutely shocking article in the Daily Texan. It’s about a prof who has multiple personalities.

Corey: Ah oui, je l’ai eu le semestre passé. Bien sûr, j’ai raté mon examen, mais au moins ses conférences étaient plus *amusantes* que celles des autres profs.  
Corey: Ah, yes. I had him last semester. Of course, I failed my exam, but at least his lectures were more amusing than the other profs’.
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, consider its role in the sentence. How is the word ‘access’ used in the following sentences?

Never give strangers access to your bank account.
If you can’t access the web pages during peak hours, try again.

In the first sentence, ‘access’ is a thing (a noun) that you can give to somebody. In the second sentence, ‘access’ is something you do (a verb) with your computer. The point is that whether a word is considered a noun or a verb depends 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 finite forms, or conjugated forms. English infinitives are preceded by the word ‘to’.

to eat, to drink, to sleep

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 called finite 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.
I am studying French in college this semester.
I will study French next year overseas.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>parler</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>je parle (I speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>tu parles (you speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>il/elle/on parle (he/she/it speaks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 conjugation.
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. Inshort, modal verbs are ‘moody verbs’. For example, modal verbs indicate subtleshades of meaning concerning such things as the likelihood of an event or themoral obligation of an event. The most frequent modal verbs in English are thefollowing: should, could, may, might, ought to, must.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tex peut quitter la France.</td>
<td>Tex can leave France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tex devrait quitter la France!</td>
<td>Tex should leave France!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tex doit quitter la France!!</td>
<td>Tex must leave France!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitive</th>
<th>Intransitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tex (S) écrit un poème (DO).</td>
<td>Tex (S) sort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GET + particle</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>french equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to get about</td>
<td>to move around</td>
<td>se déplacer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get better</td>
<td>to recover</td>
<td>se remettre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get out</td>
<td>to leave</td>
<td>sortir, descendre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get up</td>
<td>to get out of bed</td>
<td>se lever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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.

| je parle | nous parlons |
| tu parles | vous parlez |
| il/elle/on parle | ils/elles parlent |

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: Bien sûr je parle français et Tammy, elle aussi, elle parle français.
Eh bien dis donc, même les tatous parlent français au Texas?

Here is a list of common -er verbs:
adorer, to adore
aimer, to like
aimer plus, to prefer
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
étudier, to study

habiter, to live
jouer, to play
montrer, to show
présenter, to introduce
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’adore, j’habite). This phenomenon is known as élision.

Tex: J’adore la musique rap et j’écoute souvent de la musique dans les clubs.
I love rap music and I often listen to music in clubs.

Je chante et je danse aussi
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.
- **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'appeler* (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 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'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>First Person Singular</th>
<th>Second Person Singular</th>
<th>Third Person Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'appelle</td>
<td>nous appelons</td>
<td>vous appelez</td>
<td>ils/elles appelent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

### préférer 'to prefer'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>First Person Singular</th>
<th>Second Person Singular</th>
<th>Third Person Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je préfère</td>
<td>nous préférons</td>
<td>vous préférez</td>
<td>ils/elles préfèrent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs conjugated like *préférer* include:

- **considérer**, to consider
- **espérer**, to hope
- **régl er**, 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'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>First Person Singular</th>
<th>Second Person Singular</th>
<th>Third Person Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'achète</td>
<td>nous achetons</td>
<td>vous achetez</td>
<td>ils/elles achètent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>essayer</em> ‘to try’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j’essaye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu essaies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on essaie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle : essayé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>voyager</em> ‘to travel’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je voyage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu voyages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on voyage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: voyagé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?*

**Rita:** J’emmène mes enfants à la piscine.

**Ses enfants:** Nous nageons et nous mangeons de la glace.

**Tammy:** Moi, j’aime faire du shopping. J’achète beaucoup et papa paie tout.

**What activity do you prefer in the summer?**

**Rita:** I take my children to the pool.

**Her children:** We swim and we eat ice cream.

**Tammy:** Me, I prefer shopping. I buy lots and daddy pays for everything.
-ir verbs (regular) present tense

Verbs with infinitives ending in -ir form a second group of regular verbs in French, often called 'second conjugation' verbs. To conjugate these verbs, drop the -ir from the infinitive and add the second conjugation present tense endings: - is, -is, -it, -issons, -issez, -issent. The singular and plural forms of the third person are clearly distinguishable (finit vs. finissent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>finir</th>
<th>to finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je finis</td>
<td>nous finissons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu finis</td>
<td>vous finissez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on finit</td>
<td>ils/elles finissent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is a list of other common -ir verbs:

- choisir, to choose
- établir, to establish
- grandir, to grow (up)
- grossir, to gain weight
- maigrir, to lose weight
- mincir, to get slimmer
- obéir (à quelqu’un), to obey (someone)
- réfléchir, to think, reflect
- réunir, to get together, assemble
- réussir (à), to succeed (at)
- réagir, to react
- vieillir, to grow old

Not all verbs ending in -ir follow this pattern, however. Irregular -ir verbs include ouvrir, partir, sortir, and dormir.

Tex et Tammy réunissent des copains ce soir. Tex and Tammy are getting friends together this evening.

Tammy: Quel vin tu choisis, Tex? Tammy: What wine do you choose, Tex?

Tex réfléchit un moment, et puis il choisit un bon vin rouge. Tex reflects a moment and then he chooses a good red wine.

Tex: Nous choisissons toujours du rouge. C'est bon pour la santé. Tex: We always choose red (wine). It's good for (one's) health.
A very limited group of verbs with infinitives ending in -ir are irregular, that is, they do not follow the pattern of regular -ir verbs like finir. Verbs like ouvrir are conjugated instead like regular -er verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ouvrir 'to open'</th>
<th>nous ouvrons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'ouvre</td>
<td>nous ouvrons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu ouvres</td>
<td>vous ouvrez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on ouvre</td>
<td>ils/elles ouvrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: ouvert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs conjugated like ouvrir include:

- couvrir, to cover
- découvrir, to discover
- offrir, to offer, to give (a gift)
- souffrir, to suffer

Note, too, that there is no s in the imperative 'tu' form of the second sentence, since it is conjugated like a regular -er verb in the imperative.

Bette offre un cadeau à Tex. C'est son anniversaire aujourd'hui!
Bette: Ouvre le paquet, Tex!

Bette is giving Tex a gift. It's his birthday today!
Bette: Open the package, Tex!
The verbs *partir*, *sortir*, and *dormir* are irregular in the present tense, that is, they are not conjugated like regular -ir verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je</th>
<th>tu</th>
<th>il/elle/on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>partir</strong> (<em>to leave</em>)</td>
<td><em>pars</em></td>
<td><em>pars</em></td>
<td><em>part</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous</td>
<td><em>partons</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>partez</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>partent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>past participle</strong>:</td>
<td><em>parti</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je</th>
<th>tu</th>
<th>il/elle/on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>sortir</strong> (<em>to exit, go out</em>)</td>
<td><em>sors</em></td>
<td><em>sors</em></td>
<td><em>sort</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous</td>
<td><em>sortons</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>sortez</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>sortent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>past participle</strong>:</td>
<td><em>sorti</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je</th>
<th>tu</th>
<th>il/elle/on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>dormir</strong> (<em>to sleep</em>)</td>
<td><em>dors</em></td>
<td><em>dors</em></td>
<td><em>dort</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous</td>
<td><em>dormons</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>dormez</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>dorment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>past participle</strong>:</td>
<td><em>dormi</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bette: Tammy, tu **pars** ce week-end? Weeken?  
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  
Tammy: Yes, I'm going to Louisiana 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.
Verbs with infinitives ending in -re form a third group of regular verbs, often called 'third conjugation' verbs. To form the present tense conjugations of these verbs, drop the -re from the infinitive and add the third conjugation endings (-s, -s, -ons, -ez, -ent) to the resulting stem.

| je descend | nous descendons |
| tu descends | vous descendez |
| il/elle/on descend | ils/elles descendent |

past participle: descendu

Here is a list of common regular -re verbs:

- **attendre**, to wait for
- **dépendre de**, to depend (on)
- **entendre**, to hear
- **prendre**, to hang
- **perdre**, to lose
- **rendre**, to hand in, give back
- **rendre visite à quelqu'un**, to visit someone
- **répondre**, to answer, respond
- **vendre**, to sell

Not all verbs ending in -re follow this pattern, however. Irregular -re verbs include prendre, mettre, suivre and vivre.
-re verbs (irregular) like prendre

Verbs like prendre are conjugated like regular -re verbs in the singular, but not in the plural. Note the difference in the stem in the plural forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je prends</th>
<th>nous prenons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu prends</td>
<td></td>
<td>vous prenez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles prennent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

past participle: pris

Verbs conjugated like prendre include:

- apprendre, to learn
- comprendre, to understand
- surprendre, to surprise

Edouard et Tammy surprennent Tex.

Tammy: Qu’est-ce que tu fais, Tex? Tu vas où? Pourquoi tu prends un taxi?

Tex: Uhh, je suis en retard. Uhh, je vais en classe. Aujourd’hui mes étudiants apprennent à chanter la Marseillaise!

Edouard and Tammy surprise Tex.

Tammy: What are you doing, Tex? Where are you going? Why are you taking a taxi?

Tex: Uhh, I'm late. Uhh, I'm going to class. Today my students are learning to sing the Marseillaise!
**-re verbs (irregular) like mettre**

The verb *mettre* is irregular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je mets</th>
<th>nous mettons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>tu</strong></td>
<td>mettes</td>
<td>vous mettez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>il/elle/on</strong></td>
<td>met</td>
<td>ils/elles mettent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle:</td>
<td>mis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mettre** literally means 'to place, to put.' It is also used in the following expressions:

- *mettre la table (le couvert)*, to set the table
- *mettre* + article of clothing, to put on
- *mettre* + electrical item (radio, light), to turn on

Other verbs like *mettre* include:

- *admettre*, to admit
- *permettre*, to permit
- *promettre*, to promise
- *remettre*, to turn in (a report), to postpone

---

Tammy: Tex, tu *mets* la table pour la soirée?

Tex: Non, je n'ai pas envie.

Tammy: Ça alors. C'est toujours moi qui *mets* la table.

Tammy: Tex, are you going to set the table for the party?

Tex: No. I don't feel like it.

Tammy: Come on, I'm always the one who sets the table.
-re verbs (irregular) like suivre and vivre

The verbs suivre (to follow), and vivre (to live) are irregular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>suivre 'to follow'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je suis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous suivons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu suis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous suivez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles suivent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suivi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sui vre is also used in the expression suivre un cours (to take a course).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vivre 'to live, to be alive'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je vis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous vivons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu vis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous vivez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles vivent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vécu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may have seen the expression Vive ... (as in Vive la France, Long live France!) and the noun la vie (life). Vivre means 'to be alive,' as well as 'to live,' in contrast to the verb habiter which refers only to where one lives, one's place of residence.

Edouard accueille des clients au restaurant.  
Edouard greets customers at the restaurant.

Edouard: Bonsoir. Sui vez-moi, s'il vous plaît.  
Edouard: Good evening. Follow me, please.

Une heure plus tard, les clients attendent toujours.  
One hour later the clients are still waiting.

Client: Excusez, moi, mais le service est vraiment très lent.  
Client: Excuse me, but the service is really very slow.

Edouard: La qualité, ça prend du temps, monsieur. Les fastfoods, quelle horreur.  
Edouard: Quality takes time, monsieur. Fast food, how dreadful!  

Vive la cuisine française!
The verb être is an irregular verb in the present tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>être ‘to be’</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je suis 'I am'</td>
<td>nous sommes 'we are'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu es ‘you are’</td>
<td>vous êtes 'you are'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on est 'he/she/one is'</td>
<td>ils/elles sont 'they are'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: été</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Edouard: Mais non, Joe-Bob, tu n'es pas un tatou! Edouard: But no, Joe-Bob, you are not an armadillo!
Tex est un tatou. Tex et Tammy sont des tatous. Tex is an armadillo. Tex and Tammy are armadillos.
Toi et moi, nous ne sommes pas des tatous. You and I, we are not armadillos.
Toi, tu es un écureuil et moi, je suis un escargot, un escargot français. 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.)
The verb *avoir* is irregular in the present tense. This *liaison*, or linking, is especially important in distinguishing *ils sont* (they have) from the third person plural of *être* *ils sont* (they are).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>avoir 'to have'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>j’ai</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nous avons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tu as</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vous avez</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>il/elle/on a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ils/elles ont</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 *avoir* 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.
Avoir expressions

Avoir is used in the impersonal expression il y a, which means either 'there is' or 'there are.' il y a is used to express the existence of a person or a thing, or to make a list or inventory of persons or things. The indefinite article (un, une, des) is usually used with il y a.

Tex: A Paris il y a une tour, la Tour Eiffel.  
En France il y a des cathédrales, des châteaux, des monuments anciens ...

Tex: In Paris there is a tower, the Eiffel Tower.  
In France there are cathedrals, castles, ancient monuments ...

The negative of il y a is il n'y a pas. The indefinite article (un une, des) becomes de or d' after this negative expression. This corresponds to the English word 'any.'

Tex: Au Texas il n'y a pas de cathédrales, il n'y a pas de châteaux, il n'y a pas de monuments anciens,  
Tammy: Mais il y a une tour à l'Université du Texas à Austin.

Tex: In Texas, there aren’t any cathedrals, there aren’t any castles, there aren’t any ancient monuments,  
Tammy: But there is a tower at the University of Texas at Austin!

Avoir is used in many idiomatic expressions. Note that the English translation often uses the verb 'to be' rather than 'to have.'

avoir besoin de  
to need

avoir envie de  
to want (to do something), to feel like (doing something)

avoir l'intention de  
to intend to (do something)

avoir faim  
to be hungry

avoir soif  
to be thirsty

avoir chaud  
to be hot

avoir froid  
to be cold

avoir honte (de)  
to be ashamed (of)

avoir mal (à la tête, à la gorge, aux yeux)  
to hurt (to have a headache, to have a sore throat, to have sore eyes)

avoir raison  
to be right

avoir tort  
to be wrong

avoir sommeil  
to be sleepy

Bette: Tex, j’ai faim.  
Tex: il y a un café à côté. Allons prendre un sandwich.


Bette: Tex, I’m hungry.  
Tex: There’s a café next door. Let’s go have a sandwich.

Tammy: But, Tex. Bette and I have a test tomorrow. I’d like to go with you, but we need to study. AND, I’m always cold in that café.

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*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aller ‘to go’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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.

Corey: Salut, Joe-Bob, où *vas* -tu?

Bob: Je *vais* au café.

Corey: Mais, tu as cours maintenant.

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

Corey: Attention! Il arrive!

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

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

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

Corey: But, you have class right now.

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

Corey: Watch out! He's coming!

Joe-Bob: Oh, hello, professor. How are you today?
The verb *faire* is irregular in the present tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>faire</em> 'to do, to make'</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>je fais</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nous faisons</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tu fais</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vous faites</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>il/elle/on fait</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ils/elles font</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 vont* (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?
- Corey: Pas grand-chose.
- Fiona: Nous ne faisons rien, absolument rien.

Tex: Hey everyone. What’s everybody doing?
Corey: Not much.
Fiona: We’re not doing anything, absolutely nothing.

*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 frais.* 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 bicyclette,* 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 shopping),* to go shopping
- *faire la cuisine,* to do the cooking
- *faire des courses,* to run errands
- *faire la lessive,* to do the laundry
- *faire le lit,* to make the bed
- *faire le marché,* to do the grocery shopping
- *faire le ménage,* to do the housework
- *faire la vaisselle,* to do the dishes
Quand il fait du soleil, Tex et Tammy font une promenade dans le parc.

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

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

When the weather's bad, Tex does the housework and Tammy reads.
Venir ‘to come’

The verb *venir* is irregular in the present tense. The vowel is nasal in the singular, but not in the plural.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>venir</strong></td>
<td>‘to come’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je viens</td>
<td>nous venons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu viens</td>
<td>vous venez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on vient</td>
<td>ils/elles viennent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>past participle: <em>venu</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs conjugated like *venir* include:

- *devenir*, to become
- *revenir*, to come back
- *tenir*, to hold, keep
- *tenir à*, to value, care about, (+ infinitive, to be anxious to)

Bette: *Tiens*, Tammy, qu'est-ce que tu deviens?  
Bette: Une fête ... Eh bien moi, je suis très sociable. Miaou ...

Bette: Hey, Tammy, what have you been up to? (literally, what have you become)  
Tammy: Oh, I'm preparing a big party for Tex's birthday. Corey and Joe-Bob, they're coming. Everyone's coming, of course, except Fiona She's not very sociable.
Bette: A party ... hmm. Well, I am very sociable. Miaow ...
**Boire, croire, and voir**

The irregular verbs *boire*, *croire*, and *voir* have similar conjugations.

### boire 'to drink'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je bois</th>
<th>nous buvons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu bois</td>
<td></td>
<td>vous buvez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on boit</td>
<td></td>
<td>ils/elles boivent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**past participle:** *bu*

### croire 'to believe'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je crois</th>
<th>nous croyons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu crois</td>
<td></td>
<td>vous croyez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on croit</td>
<td></td>
<td>ils/elles croient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**past participle:** *cru*

### voir 'to see'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je vois</th>
<th>nous voyons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu vois</td>
<td></td>
<td>vous voyez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on voit</td>
<td></td>
<td>ils/elles voient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**past participle:** *vu*

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Fiona: Corey, tu as l’air malade! Mais qu’est-ce que tu **bois**? Hé, tu m’entends? Tu me **vois**? Oh, là, là, je **crois** qu’il va crever!

Fiona: Corey, you look sick! What are you drinking? Hey, do you hear me? Do you see me? Omigod, I think he’s gonna croak!
savoir vs. connaître present tense

The irregular verbs *savoir* and *connaître* both mean 'to know.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je</th>
<th>nous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>savoir</em></td>
<td>sais</td>
<td>savons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu sais</td>
<td>vous savez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>il/elle/on sait</td>
<td>ils/elles savent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je</th>
<th>nous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>connaître</em></td>
<td>connais</td>
<td>connaissons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu connais</td>
<td>vous connaissez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>il/elle/on connaît</td>
<td>ils/elles connaissent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Savoir and connaître are used in different contexts or to describe different degrees of knowledge. Savoir is used for facts, things known by heart, or abilities. When followed by an infinitive, savoir indicates knowing how to do something. *Je sais jouer de la guitare.*

Connaître is used for people and places and represents a personal acquaintance or familiarity.

Joe-Bob: Tex, explique-moi la différence entre savoir et connaître. Je ne comprends pas.


Joe-Bob: Oh, OK, et moi, je *sais* jouer de la guitare et je *sais* où se trouve l'université du Texas.

Tex: Mais enfin, Joe-Bob, tu n'es pas aussi stupide qu'on le pense.

Joe-Bob: Tex, explain the difference between savoir and connaître to me. I don't understand.

Tex: It's very simple, Joe-Bob. One knows (with savoir) facts, but one knows (with connaître) people and places. For example, I know Tammy, France, the Eiffel Tower.

Joe-Bob: Oh, OK, and I know how to play the guitar and I know where the University of Texas is located.

Tex: Well, Joe-Bob. You aren't as stupid as they think.
dire, lire, and écrire present tense

The irregular verbs dire, lire, and écrire have similar conjugations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dire 'to say'</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je dis</td>
<td>nous disons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu dis</td>
<td>vous dites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on dit</td>
<td>ils/elles disent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: dit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may have already seen the verb dire in phrases like Comment dit-on ... ? (How do you say ... ?) and Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? (What does that mean?) Dire means 'to say' (to say something or to tell someone something) while parler means 'to speak' (to speak to someone about something, or to speak a language). Dire is often used to start a phrase or to get someone's attention (Dis, Tex, tu viens ?, Hey, Tex, are you coming?).

Note the vous form dites. It is unusual because it does not end in -ez. Dire is one of only three verbs where this is the case (The others are être: vous êtes, and faire: vous faites).

The verb conduire (to drive) is conjugated like dire (je conduis, tu conduis, etc.) except that its past participle is conduit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lire 'to read'</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je lis</td>
<td>nous lisons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu lis</td>
<td>vous lisez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on lit</td>
<td>ils/elles lisent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: lu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>écrire 'to write'</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'écris</td>
<td>nous écrivons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu écris</td>
<td>vous écrivez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on écrit</td>
<td>ils/elles écrivent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: écrit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other verbs conjugated like écrire include décrire (to describe) and s'inscrire (to register).

Tammy: Dis, Tex, qu'est-ce que tu lis ?
Tex: Je lis de la poésie. Les poètes disent toujours la vérité. J'écris aussi des poèmes. Et toi, Tammy, qu'est-ce que tu aimes lire ?
Tammy: Chéri, tu sais bien. J'aime lire des romans historique

Tammy: Say, Tex, what are you reading?
Tex: Oh, I'm reading poetry. Poets always tell the truth. I also write poems.
Tammy, what do you like to read?

Tammy: You know sweetheart. I like to read historical novels
**Pronominal verbs**

A pronominal verb is a verb that is accompanied by a reflexive pronoun. Pronominal verbs fall into three major classes based on their meaning: reflexive, idiomatic, and reciprocal. You have probably already seen the pronominal verb s'appeler (Comment t'appelles-tu? What is your name?). To conjugate pronominal verbs in the present tense, you need to pay attention to both the pronoun and the verb form. The verb is conjugated normally (here an -er verb) with addition of the reflexive pronouns me, te, se, nous, vous, se.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>se raser</th>
<th>'to shave oneself'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je me rase</td>
<td>nous nous rasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu te rases</td>
<td>vous vous rasez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on se rase</td>
<td>ils/elles se rasent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**reflexive verbs**

Pronominal verbs often express reflexive actions, that is, the subject performs the action on itself. If the subject performs the action on someone else, the verb is not reflexive. Here is a list of common reflexive verbs:

- s'asseoir, to sit (down)
- s'appeler, to be called
- s'arrêter, to stop
- se brosser, to brush
- se coucher, to go to bed
- s'habiller, to get dressed
- se laver, to wash
- se lever, to get up
- se promener, to take a walk
- se réveiller, to wake up

Compare the difference in meaning between se raser and raser in the following sentences. Note that English does not usually indicate reflexive meaning explicitly since it can be inferred from the context. However, if reflexive meaning is intended in French, then it must be explicitly stated by using a reflexive pronoun.

Est-ce que Tex se rase? Mais non, Tex, c'est un tatou. Il n'a pas de cheveux.

Qu'est-ce qu'il fait, Tex, avec le rasoir? Il rasé Joe-Bob pour l'été.

Does Tex shave? Why no, Tex is an armadillo. He has no hair.

What's Tex doing with the razor? He's shaving Joe-Bob for the summer.

To negate pronominal verbs, place the ne before the reflexive pronoun and the pas after the verb. When used with an auxiliary verb such as aimer (to like), the infinitive of a pronominal verb agrees with its subject. When pronominal verbs are used with parts of the body, they take the definite article (le, la, les) rather than the possessive article as in English: Tex se lave les mains. (Tex washes his hands.)

Joe Bob: Edouard, est-ce que tu te rases?

Edouard: Non, je ne me rase pas.

Les escargots ne se rasent pas. Pourtant, nous nous lavons le visage tous les jours.

Joe-Bob: Ah, tu as de la chance. Je déteste me raser.

Joe Bob: Edouard, do you shave?

Edouard: No, I don't shave.

Snails don't shave. However we do wash our faces every day.

Joe-Bob: Ah, you're lucky. I hate to shave.
**Modal verbs - vouloir, pouvoir and devoir**

Vouloir, pouvoir and devoir are called modal verbs. When used with infinitives, they act as auxiliary verbs or semi-auxiliaries.

**vouloir**

Vouloir expresses a strong will or desire; in the present tense it has the same feeling as a command. It is an irregular verb in the present tense. Note how the present tense forms a "boot"; the stems (in this case the vowels) change only in the nous and vous forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vouloir  'to wish, want, will'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je veux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu veux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on veut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: voulu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vouloir may be followed by an infinitive or a noun (Je veux du calme, I want some quiet. Je veux dormir, I want to sleep). This verb is also often paired with the adverb bien to express the meaning "to be willing" (Je veux bien).

**pouvoir**

Pouvoir expresses the physical ability or permission to do something ie possibility. It is also an irregular verb with formation similar to vouloir. The "boot" formation is also evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pouvoir  'to be able, be permitted to'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je peux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu peux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on peut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: pu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pouvoir may be followed by an infinitive construction or may stand alone.

As in English, pouvoir is used to give or to ask permission translated by the English "may" (Est-ce que je peux m’asseoir?, May I sit down?).

It is important not to confuse the roles of pouvoir and savoir in French. Savoir expresses "to know how" whereas pouvoir expresses "to be able to."

**devoir**

Devoir expresses obligation, probability and supposition but if followed by a noun, expresses the idea "to owe". This verb is irregular in its present form. Once again, the "boot" formation is seen with this verb; the stem changes in the 1st and 2nd person plural conjugations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>devoir  'to have to, be supposed to/ to owe'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je dois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu dois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle/on doit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle: dû</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impersonal verbs & expressions: faut, il est important...

The impersonal pronoun il ('it') is used in French when an action has no agent, that is, when there is no person or animate being responsible for the action. The conjugated verb is always in the third person singular, no matter what tense the impersonal verb takes.

Tex: Tiens, il pleut très fort! Tex: Wow, it is raining really hard!

The action of the verb (pleut, 'is raining') is an impersonal, natural force. The impersonal pronoun il is often referred to as a 'dummy subject' because it fills the syntactic position of subject but doesn't have any real meaning.

weather expressions

Weather expressions in both French and English require impersonal subjects. The infinitive of 'weather verbs' can only be conjugated in the third person singular form (the il form).

pleuvoir, to rain Il pleut. It's raining.
neiger, to snow Il neige. It's snowing.
grêler, to sleet Il grêle. It's sleetimg.
geler, to freeze Il gèle. It's freezing.
bruiner, to drizzle Il bruine. It's drizzling.

Weather conditions are also expressed in French using the verb faire followed by an adjective or noun. Of course, when the verb faire is used impersonally in such weather expressions, it can only be conjugated in the third person singular form (il fait). See faire expressions for a more complete list of weather expressions.

Il fait chaud. It's hot.
Il fait du vent. It's windy.
Il fait beau. It's beautiful.

falloir (il faut ...) 'to be necessary'

The verb falloir only exists in the impersonal form (il faut). It always expresses the notion of necessity or obligation which is translated into English in various ways ('must,' 'should,' 'have to'). Falloir may be followed by an infinitive as in (d), by a noun as in (c), or by a subordinate clause introduced by que as in (a); note that the verb in the subordinate clause in (a) requires the subjunctive mood. Finally, it may be preceded by a pronoun acting as an indirect object as in (b), a way to avoid the subjunctive.

Comme la majorité des Français, Tex ne voit pas l'intérêt du scandale Lewinsky. Like the majority of the French, Tex does not see the point of the Lewinsky scandal.

Tammy (scandalisée):

(a) Il faut que nous sachions la vérité. [faut que + clause] It is necessary that we know the truth. We should/must know the truth.

(b) Il nous faut des preuves. [indirect object + faut] We need evidence.

(c) Il faut une enquête. [faut + noun] An investigation is necessary.

Tex: Mais tu sais bien ce qui s'est passé! Tex: But you know what happened!

(d) Il faut te calmer. [faut + infinitive] It is necessary that you calm down. You have to calm down.
impersonal expressions with 'être' + [adjective]
The impersonal subject *il* may appear with the verb *être* followed by an adjective and an infinitive. Note that the infinitive is always introduced by the preposition *de* in such impersonal expressions:

*Il est* + [adjective] + *de* + [infinitive]

Tex: *Il est amusant de* lire les journaux américains!

Tammy: *Il est difficile de* comprendre ton humour.

Tammy: It is difficult to understand your sense of humor.

Tex: It’s fun to read American newspapers!

other common impersonal expressions

*Il y a*, there is, there are

*il est* + clock time (*il est deux heures*, It’s two o’clock.)

*Il s’agit de*, to be about, to be a matter of, to be a question of

*Il vaut mieux*, to be better, to be advisable


Tex: Ah non, ça alors. *Il s’agit seulement de* tourmenter les présidents et les tatous!

*Il vaut mieux* changer de chaîne!

Tammy: It's 6 o'clock. Let's watch the news. There's a report on infidelity.

Tex: Oh, no, not that. It's only about tormenting presidents and armadillos! It's better to change the channel!
The verbs *partir*, *sortir*, *quitter* and *laisser* all mean ‘to leave’ in English, but they have distinguishing nuances and uses in French. An important distinction among these verbs is the idea of transitivity. *Partir* and *sortir* are intransitive in this context; they do not take a direct object (but may be followed by a prepositional phrase). On the other hand, *quitter* and *laisser* are transitive; they take a direct object in a sentence.

**partir**

*Partir* is an irregular -ir verb that conveys the particular meaning of 'leaving with the intention of going somewhere.' It is often followed by the preposition *pour*.

Joe-Bob: Je *pars* pour College Station.

Joe-Bob: I am leaving for College Station.

**sortir**

*Sortir* is an irregular -ir verb that conveys the particular meaning of 'going out or to exit from an enclosed space.' It is often followed by the preposition *de*.

Bette: Je vais *sortir* ce soir.

Bette: I’m going to go out tonight.

Corey *sort* de sa chambre sans fermer la porte.

Corey goes out of his room without locking the door.

**quitter**

*Quitter* is a regular -er verb that is used when 'leaving someone or someplace.'

Tammy *quitte* la maison à 8 heures chaque matin.

Tammy leaves the house at 8 o'clock every morning.

Rita *quitte* son mari.

Rita is leaving her husband.

Note that *quitter* is a transitive verb, that is, it always takes a direct object: *son mari* or *la maison* in the examples above. *Sortir* is usually intransitive (no object), and needs the preposition *de* to express the idea of leaving from somewhere.
laisser

Laisser is a regular -er verb that means 'to leave something or someone behind.'

Rita: Les gosses laissent leurs jouets partout.
And you, good-for-nothing, leave me alone!
Quelle vie de chien!
What a dog's life!

Consider the following dialogue:

Tammy fait un cauchemar:

Tammy: Tu me quittes mon chéri?
Tammy: You're leaving me, darling?
Tex: Je pars maintenant pour la France. Je rentre à Lyon.
Tex: Yes, Tammy, it's over.
Tammy: Oui, Tammy c'est fini.
Tammy: But, no!
Tex: Non, je pars maintenant pour la France. Je rentre à Lyon.
Tex leaves Tammy's apartment, but he comes back a minute later.
Tammy: Mais non!
Tex: Mais non!
Tammy: Mais non!
Tex sort de l'appartement de Tammy. Mais il revient un moment plus tard.
Tex: J'ai laissé mes cigarettes dans la cuisine.
Tex: I left my cigarettes in the kitchen.
Puis il quitte l'appartement pour toujours.
Then he leaves the apartment forever.
infinitive constructions

The infinitive expresses the idea or concept of a verb’s meaning, without specifying a specific subject or point in time (tense). In most cases, use of the infinitive in French corresponds to the English. Infinitive constructions may be categorized according to the following uses:

as a noun
The infinitive may sometimes function as a noun. For example, it may be the subject of a sentence. Note that the French infinitive is often translated as a gerund (the ‘-ing’ form of the verb) in English.

Joe-Bob: **Etudier** n'est pas facile! Joe-Bob: Studying is not easy!

as an imperative (command)
The infinitive may be used to give a written order when there is no specific addressee. You will often see this form on signs.

Ne pas **marcher** sur l’herbe. Do not walk on the grass.

after verbs
The infinitive is often used directly after these conjugated verbs:

- Verbs of movement: (In this category, the infinitive indicates purpose.)
  - all er, descendre, partir, rentrer, retourner, revenir, sortir, venir, etc.
- Verbs of preference:
  - adorer, aimer, désirer, détester, préférer, vouloir
- Verbs of opinion:
  - compter, croire, espérer, nier, penser, valoir mieux ( impersonal: il vaut mieux)
- Verbs of perception:
  - écouter, entendre, regarder, sentir, voir
- Verbs of ability, obligation and necessity:
  - avoir beau (to do something in vain),
  - devoir, faillir (to almost do something),
  - falloir ( impersonal: il faut) pouvoir, savoir
Tex et ses amis sortent dîner.
Tex and his friends are going out to have dinner.
Tex compte savourer un bon dîner français, mais Joe-Bob veut manger un hamburger.
Tex is counting on enjoying a good French dinner, but Joe-Bob wants to eat a hamburger.
Edouard les écoute discuter un moment et puis il dit: J'ai failli manger un hamburger une fois. Non, je ne peux pas faire ça, tout de même. Il faut trouver un vrai restaurant français.
Edouard listens to them discuss for a moment and then he says: I almost ate a hamburger once. No, I really can't do that. We have to find a real French restaurant.

After prepositions
The infinitive is the verb form generally used after a preposition in French. The infinitive expresses purpose when it is used after pour or afin de. In the case of avant de and sans, the English translation is often a conjugated verb (Before they left), or a present participle (Before leaving), rather than the English infinitive. The infinitive follows the preposition par after the verbs commencer and finir.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>preposition</th>
<th>Tammy arrives [in order] to go out with Tex and his friends.</th>
<th>Tammy arrives pour sortir avec Tex et ses amis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avant de and sans</td>
<td>Before leaving, they ask her to choose a restaurant. She starts by suggesting the new Thai restaurant. Tex and his friends talk without listening to Tammy.</td>
<td>Avant de partir, ils lui demandent de choisir un restaurant. Elle commence par suggérer le nouveau restaurant thai. Tex et ses copains parlent sans écouter Tammy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>par</td>
<td>She finally understands that choosing a restaurant was impossible.</td>
<td>Elle finit par comprendre que choisir un restaurant était impossible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the preposition en is followed by a present participle, not the infinitive. (En sortant, Joe-Bob a dit au revoir. On leaving, Joe-Bob said good-bye.)

The infinitive may be used to complete the sense of an adjective or a pronoun. Generally infinitives following a noun or adjective are preceded by the preposition de. (Edouard ne serait pas content de manger un hamburger. Edouard would not be happy to eat a hamburger.) However, adjectives and nouns are followed by the preposition à + infinitive to indicate a passive sense or a function: C'est bon à manger. (It's good to eat.), une salle à manger (dining room), de l'eau à boire (drinking water).

Verbs followed by ‘à’ before an infinitive
When the following verbs are followed by an infinitive, the preposition à is required:

- aider à, to help to
- s'amuser à, to have fun at
- apprendre à, to learn to
- arriver à, to succeed in, to manage to
- s'attendre à, to expect to
- chercher à, to try to, to attempt to
- commencer à, to start to
- se décider à, to make up one's mind to
- encourager à, to encourage to
- s'habiter à, to get used to
- hésiter à, to hesitate to
- inviter à, to invite to
- se mettre à, to start to
- se préparer à, to prepare to
- renoncer à, to give up
- réussir à, to succeed at
- servir à, to be used for
- tenir à, to be anxious to, to be eager to
Causative faire

The causative faire construction (faire + infinitif) indicates that the subject ‘causes’ an action to be done by someone or something else. Contrast the following sentences:

- Tex répare sa voiture? Mais non, Tex ne sait pas réparer les voitures.  
  Tex is fixing his car? (himself) But no, Tex doesn’t know how to fix cars.
- Tex fait réparer sa voiture au garage.  
  Tex is having his car fixed at a garage. (by a mechanic)

In causative constructions the verb faire may be conjugated in any tense, for example the periphrastic future (futur proche) or the passé composé (Tex va faire réparer sa voiture. Tex a fait réparer sa voiture. etc.)

objects in causative faire constructions

The causative faire construction is often followed by noun or pronoun objects. If there is one object, it is a direct object (sa voiture in the example above, or Tammy in the first sentence below). In the case of two objects, as in the second sentence below, one will be direct (la Marseillaise) and the other indirect (Tammy).

- Tex fait chanter Tammy.  
  Tex makes Tammy sing.
- Tex fait chanter la Marseillaise à Tammy.  
  Tex makes Tammy sing the Marseillaise.

pronouns

Object pronouns precede faire, except in the affirmative imperative. Note the position of the pronouns in the following examples.

- Tex la fait réparer.  
  Tex is having it fixed. (his car)
- Tex la fait chanter.  
  Tex makes her sing. (Tammy)
- Corey: Fais-la chanter!  
  Corey: Have her sing!
- Tammy: Allons, enfants de la patrie ...  
  Tammy: Allons, enfants de la patrie ...
- Joe-Bob: Ne la fais pas chanter!  
  Joe-Bob: Don’t have her sing!

‘se faire’ + infinitive

Another causative construction involves the use of se faire + infinitive to indicate something a person or thing has done to himself.

- Rita s’est fait faire une robe noire pour l’enterrement de ses parents.  
  Rita had a black dress made (for herself) for the funeral of her parents.

However, sometimes this construction may be used to describe actions that happen inadvertently, despite the wishes of the subject. Tex explains what happened:

- Tex: Mes parents se sont fait écraser par un camion.  
  Tex: My parents were killed by a truck. (They got themselves run over by a truck.)

Note that the past participle fait is always invariable in the causative construction.
transitive vs. intransitive

definitions: transitive direct, transitive indirect, intransitive

Transitive verbs by definition have an object, either a direct object or an indirect object. Intransitive verbs never have objects.

A transitive-direct verb acts directly on its object. In the first sentence below, the telephone is the direct object. The verb 'entendre' (to hear) always takes an object; one hears someone or something.

A transitive-indirect verb acts to or for its object. Tex is the object of the preposition à in the second sentence since Joe- Bob is talking to him.

Intransitive verbs, on the other hand, have no object at all. The verb dormir (to sleep) in the last example, does not need any object to complete it. In fact, because the verb is intransitive, it cannot take an object. Intransitive verbs (as well as transitive ones) may be modified by adverbs or prepositional phrases: 'Joe-Bob sleeps in the car; he sleeps all the time.'

For more examples and discussion, review the remarks on transitive vs intransitive verbs in the introduction.

transitive verbs

Because transitivity has to do with meaning, most English and French verbs usually maintain the same distinction. Thus, verbs that are transitive in English are also transitive in French, and verbs that are intransitive in French are also intransitive in English. The following examples are transitive in both French and English.

Joe-Bob explains what happened:

J'écouteais de la musique country à la radio.
And then, oh, la, la. I had an accident. The police came and the cop asked for my papers.

J'ai cherché ma carte d'identité, mais je ne l'ai pas trouvée.
No luck! I'm at the police station and I'm waiting for my lawyer.

Pas de chance! Je suis au commissariat et j'attends mon avocat.
Tex, I hope that you will pay for the ticket.

Tex entend le téléphone.  Tex hears the telephone.
Joe-Bob parle à Tex.  Job-Bob is talking to Tex.
Joe-Bob dort souvent au volant.  Joe-Bob often sleeps at the wheel.

special cases
direct object in French / preposition + object in English

There are, however, special cases where the transitivity of French and English verbs contrast. There are several very common verbs which take a direct object in French, while the English equivalent is followed by a preposition (at, to, for) and object. REDCAP is an acronym for the most frequent verbs in this category: Regarder, Écouter, Demander, Chercher, Attendre, Payer.

Joe-Bob: Je roulais en voiture. Je regardais les filles.

J'écoutais de la musique country à la radio.

Et puis, oh, là là. J'ai eu un accident de voiture. La police est arrivée et le flic m'a demandé mes papiers.

J'ai cherché ma carte d'identité, mais je ne l'ai pas trouvée.

Pas de chance! Je suis au commissariat et j'attends mon avocat.

Tex, j'espère que tu vas payer la contravention!
preposition + object in French/direct object in English
There are also several verbs which have a preposition and object in French, whereas the English equivalent takes a direct object.


Here are examples of such verbs. These are discussed more fully with indirect objects and indirect object pronouns.

obéir à, to obey  répondre à, to answer
pardonner à, to pardon, to forgive  résister à, to resist
rendre visite à, to visit (someone)  ressembler à, to resemble
renoncer à, to give up, renounce  téléphoner à, to telephone

stated and implied objects
For many transitive verbs, in both French and English, the object is sometimes implied or understood. Do not be concerned about labelling these verbs, since the meaning will be clear from the context; and, like most verbs, they will form their passé composé with avoir.

transitive verb / implied object
En voiture, Joe-Bob chante toujours. (Joe-Bob always sings in the car.)
Il parle fort. (He talks loudly.) Il rêve. (He dreams.)
Il grignotte tout le temps. (He snacks all the time.)

transitive verb / stated object
En voiture, Joe-Bob chante Freebird. (Joe-Bob always sings Freebird in the car.)
Il parle anglais. (He speaks English.)
Il rêve de hamburgers et de filles. (He dreams of hamburgers and girls.)
Il grignotte des cacahouettes. (He snacks on peanuts.)

intransitive verbs
Perhaps you have already seen verbs which use être to form the passé composé. These être verbs (aller, arriver, partir, sortir, etc.) are the most frequent intransitive verbs and they are summarized in the Alamo d'être. Etre verbs are often described as verbs of motion, but it’s important to note that there are many other intransitive verbs of motion which use the auxiliary avoir, for example, ‘marcher’ (to walk) and ‘courir’ (to run): ‘Tex a marché vite. Les enfants de Rita ont couru.’

transitive or intransitive
Some verbs may be either transitive or intransitive. Contrast the following verbs. Note that the verb sortir uses the auxiliary verb être in the passé composé as an intransitive verb, but avoir in the passé composé when it is used transitively.

intransitive/no object
Le week-end passé, Joe-Bob est sorti. (Last weekend Joe-Bob went out.)
Au commissariat, la tension de Joe-Bob monte. (At the police station Joe-Bob’s blood pressure goes up.)

transitive/used with an object
Le week-end passé, Joe-Bob a sorti son beau camion. (Last weekend Joe-Bob took out his fine truck.)
Joe-Bob monte l’escalier. (Joe-Bob goes up the stairs.)
There are several cases where a verb which may be transitive or intransitive in English must be translated by two different verbs in French: 'to return' (retourner, rendre), 'to leave' (partir, laisser, quitter).

**verbs with direct and indirect objects**

Many transitive verbs may have both a direct and an indirect object, for example:

Tex donne des conseils à Joe-Bob.  
Tex gives advice to Joe-Bob.

Here is a list of some common bivalent verbs:

- *acheter*, to buy
- *apporter*, to bring
- *apprendre*, to learn
- *demander*, to ask
- *donner*, to give
- *écrire*, to write
- *emprunter*, to borrow
- *envoyer*, to send

- *expliquer*, to explain
- *montrer*, to show
- *offrir*, to offer (give)
- *prêter*, to lend
- *promettre*, to promise
- *rendre*, to give back
- *servir*, to serve
- *vendre*, to sell
**Present participle**

The present participle is formed by dropping the -ons ending from the nous form in the present tense and adding -ant. Present participles are invariable.

**regular formation**
- chanter (nous chantons) → chantant
- finir (nous finissons) → finissant
- lire (nous lissons) → lisant
- boire (nous buvons) → buvant
- suivre (nous suivons) → suivant
- commencer (nous commençons) → commençant
- manger (nous mangeons) → mangeant
- se laver (nous nous lavons) → se lavant

Only three verbs, être, avoir and savoir, have irregular present participles.

**irregular present participles**
- être: étant
- avoir: ayant
- savoir: sachant

The present participle can be used to modify a noun, similar in meaning to either a relative clause with qui + conjugated verb or a relative clause with puisque.

Tex: Les tatous ayant une voiture ont beaucoup de succès avec les filles. (Les tatous qui ont une voiture ont beaucoup de succès avec les filles.)
Since Tammy is not here, I can take you on a ride in my car, Bette.

(Puisque Tammy est absente, je peux t’emmener faire une balade en voiture, Bette.)

**En + present participle**, commonly known as the gerund form, is used to indicate that two actions are simultaneously performed by the same subject. This corresponds to the English 'while', 'upon', or 'by'.

Tex drague les filles en conduisant sa décapotable. Tex hits on girls by driving his convertible.
Tex conduit en écoutant la radio. Tex drives while listening to the radio.

**Tout en + present participle** is used to stress that two actions are simultaneous (and sometimes contradictory). Remember to make the liaison between tout and en.

Tex siffle tout en conduisant. Tex whistles and drives at the same time.
Tex drague Bette tout en pensant à Tammy. Tex hits on Bette, all the while thinking of Tammy.
Note that the English -ing forms are usually translated by an infinitive construction in French rather than a present participle. For example:

**Before coming** to Texas, Tex did not like kittens.

But Tex is changing his mind.

**Avant de venir** au Texas, Tex n'aimait pas les minettes.

Mais Tex est entrain de changer d'avis.
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.

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.


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.


Presque personne 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.

 Tex: Tu ne vas pas en cours aujourd'hui, Tammy?
 Tex: Tu n'as pas de chance! Ce soir, il y a une fête chez Edouard!
 Tammy: Tu n'es pas d'un grand réconfort, tu sais!

Tex: You're not going to class today Tammy?
Tammy: No. I am not well. I cannot eat and I have a headache.
Tex: That's too bad [literally 'you are not lucky']! Tonight there is a party at Edouard's!
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.
 Tammy ne va pas passer la soirée chez Edouard.

Tex was not very nice.
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.
alternate forms (1) ne ... jamais, rien, personne, etc.

Different nuances of negation are achieved by using the following negative expressions:

- **ne ... jamais**
  - never, not ever
- **ne ... pas encore**
  - not yet
- **ne ... rien**
  - nothing, not anything
- **ne ... personne**
  - nobody, no one, not anybody
- **ne ... plus**
  - no more, not any longer
- **ne ... pas du tout**
  - not at all

Note that **ne** becomes *n'* in front of a verb starting with a vowel or a mute *h*. In spoken French, the *ne / n'* is sometimes dropped. The second element of the negation is usually placed right after the conjugated verb and before the object, as in this dialogue:

C'est dimanche matin. It is Sunday morning.

Tammy: Tex, tu es réveillé? Tammy: Tex are you awake?

Tex: Non, je ne suis pas réveillé. Tex: No, I am not awake.

Tammy: Tu dors encore? Tammy: Are you still asleep?

Tex: Maintenant, je ne dors plus! Avec toi, je ne peux jamais faire la grasse matinée! Tex: Now I am no longer asleep! With you, I can never sleep in!

Tammy: Mais regarde, je t’apporte une tasse de café et un croissant. Tammy: But look, I'm bringing you a cup of coffee and a croissant.

Tex: Non merci, je ne veux rien. Je n’ai pas du tout faim. Tex: No thanks, I don't want anything. I am not hungry at all.

Tammy: Eh bien, tu es charmant ce matin. Tammy: Well, aren’t you charming this morning.

**Personne** and **rien** are negative pronouns; they may function as the subject or direct object of a sentence, or as the object of a preposition. When **personne** is an object, it is placed after the verb or the preposition it complements:

- Ce matin, Tex **ne** veut voir **personne**. This morning Tex does not want to see anybody.
- Il **ne** veut parler à **personne**. He does not want to talk to anybody.
- Il **ne** pense à **rien**. He’s not thinking about anything.

**Personne** and **rien** may be used at the beginning of a sentence, as pronoun subjects, followed by **ne / n’**:

- **Personne** n’aime se lever tôt un dimanche. Nobody likes to get up early on a Sunday.
- **Rien** n’est pire. Nothing is worse.

Some of the negations listed above can be combined, as shown in these examples:

- Tammy: Je **ne** te ferai **plus jamais** le petit- déjeuner. Tammy: I will never make your breakfast again.
- Tex: Mais Tammy, tu sais que je **ne** prends **jamais rien** au petit-déjeuner. Tex: But Tammy, you know I never have anything for breakfast.
alternate forms (2) ne ... aucun, ni ... ni, que

Ne / n’ ... aucun(e) + noun conveys the idea of ‘absolutely no, not a single’ + noun. Aucun agrees in gender with the word that follows.

Bette: Alors Tex, Tammy est malade?
Tex: Aucune idée. Je suis passé chez elle hier soir et il n’y avait personne. Je n’ai reçu aucun coup de téléphone et aucune nouvelle depuis deux jours ...

Bette: So Tex, is Tammy ill?
Tex: I have no idea. I went to her place last night and there was nobody there. I have received no phone call and no news for two days ...

Ne ... ni ... ni is commonly translated as ‘neither ... nor’. It is used in a similar way as the English expression. Note, however, that in French the verb has to be preceded by ne (or n’ in front of a vowel or a mute h).

Bette: Et moi, je n’ai vu Tammy ni hier ni aujourd’hui.
Bette: And me, I saw neither yesterday nor today.

Tex: Ni moi ni Fiona n’avons vu Tammy hier. Et aujourd’hui, Tammy ne m’a ni téléphoné ni écrit un e-mail. Je m’inquiète. Tu crois qu’elle est partie avec un autre tatou?
Tex: Neither I nor Fi saw her yesterday. And today, Tammy neither called me nor wrote me an e-mail. I am worried. Do you think she left with another armadillo?

Ne ... que is used to express a restriction. It is usually translated as ‘only’.

Bette: Peut-être ... Après tout, cela ne fait qu’un an que vous êtes ensemble ...
Bette: Maybe ... After all it has only been a year that you’ve been together ...

Tex: Oh, merci Bette! Il n’y a que toi pour dire des choses pareilles!
Tex: Oh, thanks Bette! Only you can say such things!
one-word negative sentences si, jamais, etc.

Oui is a 'yes' answer to an affirmative question, while si is a 'yes' to a negative question.

Chez Tammy:
Tex: Tammy, tu es là?
Tammy: Oui.
Tex: Tu ne m’aimes plus?
Tammy: Si, un peu.

At Tammy’s house:
Tex: Tammy, are you there?
Tammy: Yes.
Tex: You don’t love me anymore?
Tammy: Yes, I do, a little.

Non is a one-word negative answer to a yes/no question; pas, by itself, negates part of a sentence:

Tex: Tammy, tu es malade?
Tammy: Non!
Tex: Tu es fâchée?
Tammy: Pas vraiment.

Tex: Tammy, are you sick?
Tammy: No!
Tex: Are you mad?
Tammy: Not really.

Rien (nothing), personne (no one), and jamais (never) may be used in one-word answers:

Tex: Tammy, qu’est-ce que tu fais? Tammy: Rien!
Tex: Qui est avec toi? Tammy: Personne!
Tex: Tu vas me quitter pour un autre? Tammy: Jamais!

Tex: Tammy, what are you doing? Tammy: Nothing!
Tex: Who is with you? Tammy: No one!
Tex: Are you going to leave me for another? Tammy: Never!
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 become in the cases of the definite articles (le, la, les).

Translating prepositions is notoriously tricky. Never assume that French will use the same preposition for 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.

Tex téléphone à 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 attends the bus.

Joe-Bob écoute la radio.  
Joe-Bob listens to the radio.

Joe-Bob listens the radio.
common prepositions

Prepositions are used to establish relationships between nouns, between nouns and verbs, and between different parts of a sentence.

À (to) and de (from, about) are the most common prepositions in French. They form contractions with definite articles: Tex parle aux étudiants. Il parle des devoirs. Il regarde la question en haut du tableau. (Tex talks to the students. He is talking about homework. He is looking at the question at the top of the blackboard.)

When prepositions have literal, spatial meanings, using them is straightforward: sur (on), sous (under), avec (with), sans (without). There are, in addition, many idiomatic uses of prepositions, especially à and de. Dictionaries include listings of idiomatic meanings.

In addition to prepositions + noun (or pronoun) objects, discussed here, there are specific guidelines for using prepositions with place names. Finally, many prepositions, including some on this page, may be followed by infinitives.

à = to, at
See contractions with definite articles, the use of à with place names, and à + infinitive.

Tex parle à ses amis au café. Ils vont à Opelousas.
Tex is talking to his friends at the café. They're going to Opelousas.

à cause de = because of, due to
The preposition à cause de is followed by a noun, whereas the conjunction parce que (because) is followed by a subordinate clause.

Ils vont en Louisiane à cause de la fête. They're going to Louisiana because of the celebration.

• au centre de = at the center of

Opelousas se trouve au centre de la Louisiane.
Opelousas is in the center of Louisiana.

à côté de = beside

Bette veut s’asseoir à côté de Tex.
Bette wants to sit beside Tex.

à droite de = to the right of, on the right of

Tammy est à droite de PawPaw Louis.
Tammy is on PawPaw Louis’ right.

à gauche de = to the left of, on the left of

Tex est à gauche de PawPaw.
Tex is on PawPaw’s left.
après = after (temporal)
See also après used in past infinitive constructions.

Après le dîner, ils vont danser. After dinner, they’re going dancing.

à travers = across, through

Tammy voit Bette à travers la foule. Tammy sees Bette through the crowd.

au milieu de = in the middle of

PawPaw danse au mi lieu de la salle. PawPaw is dancing in the middle of the room.

au sujet de / à propos de = on the subject of; about

Paw-Paw parle au sujet de la Résistance et à propos de sa longue vie de séducteur. PawPaw is talking about the Resistance and about his long life as a womanizer.

autour de = surrounding, around

Les amis sont assis autour de la table. The friends are seated around the table.

avant = before [temporal]
Contrast avant with devant meaning ‘before’ in a spatial sense. See also avant de + infinitive.

Ils ne vont pas se coucher avant cinq heures du matin. They are not going to bed before five o’clock in the morning.

avec = with
Avec + noun is often translated as an ‘-ly’ adverb: avec joie (joyfully).

Tex est en Louisiane avec ses amis. Ils dansent avec joie à l’anniversaire de PawPaw. Tex is in Louisiana with his friends. They are dancing joyfully at PawPaw’s birthday celebration.

chez = at X’s (house), at the house of, at the store of; to X’s (house), to the store of
Chez may refer to individual’s homes as well as to someone’s shop, as in the first example below. When applied to larger groups of people, such as nationalities, it means among: Chez nous les Texans, on adore la sauce piquante = ”We Texans love hot sauce” (literally: Among us Texans we love hot sauce).

Le lendemain matin, ils vont acheter des croissants chez le boulanger. The next morning they are going to buy croissants at the baker’s.

Tout le monde a adoré le séjour chez Paw-Paw. Everyone loved their stay at Paw-Paw’s.

Après un an à Austin, Tex se sent vraiment à l’aise chez les Texans. After a year in Austin, Tex really feels at ease with (among) Texans.
contre = against

Contre is used in several idiomatic expressions.

- Bette a dansé tout contre Tex.
- Tammy est en colère contre Bette; elle se fâche contre Tex.
- Tammy est contre la bigamie.

contre = against

Contre is used in several idiomatic expressions.

- Bette danced right against Tex.
- Tammy is mad at Bette; she's getting angry with Tex.
- Tammy is against bigamy.

dans = in

Dans is always followed by a determiner (definite, indefinite or possessive). See also en.

- Tammy est dans la cuisine. Elle prépare le dîner pour Tex qui arrive dans une heure.
- Tammy's in the kitchen. She's cooking dinner for Tex who's coming in one hour.

d'après = according to

D'après Edouard, les Américains mangent très mal. Mais Tammy cuisine bien!

- According to Edouard, Americans eat very poorly.
- But Tammy cooks well.

de = of, from, about

- See also the use of de with place names and de + infinitive.

- Au dîner, Tex et Tammy parlent de leur voyage en Louisiane.
- At dinner, Tex and Tammy talk about their trip to Louisiana.

de l'autre côté de = on the other side of

- Puis ils font une promenade et regardent les gratte-ciel de l’autre côté du fleuve.
- Then they take a walk and look at the skyscrapers on the other side of the river.

derrière = in back of, behind (spatial)

- Ils admirent le soleil se coucher derrière les collines.
- They admire the sun setting behind the hills.

devant = in front of, before (spatial sense)

- Contrast devant with avant (temporal sense).

- Enfin, ils s'embrassent passionément devant le Capitole.
- Finally, they kiss passionately in front of the Capitol.
en = in

*En* means ‘in’ and immediately precedes the noun (i.e., it does not require a determiner; it is followed directly by its object, for example, *en* France). It is also used in many idiomatic expressions: Tex roule *en* voiture (Tex is driving in a car); Trey vient *en* vélo (Trey comes on a bike); and in some time expressions: *en* automne (in the fall); *en* août (in August). Compare with *dans*.

See also the use of *en* with place names and *en* with a present participle.

**en bas de** = at the bottom of, at the end of

*Ils prennent un verre dans un bar *en bas de* la cinqième rue.*

They have a drink in a bar **at the end of** Fifth Street.

**en dehors de** = outside of, excluding

*En dehors de* Tammy, Tex ne connaît pas beaucoup de Texans.

Outside of Tammy, Tex doesn’t know many Texans.

**en dépit de** = in spite of

*En dépit de* l’alcool, Tex se conduit en gentleman.

In spite of the alcohol, Tex behaves like a gentleman.

**en face de** = in front of, across from

*Tex est assis *en face de* Tammy.*

Tex is (seated) **across from** Tammy.

**en haut de** = at the top of; to the top of

*Tout d’un coup Bette apparaît *en haut de* l’escalier.*

All of a sudden, Bette appears **at the top of** the staircase.

**entre** = between

*Entre* means ‘between’ and it is used when referring to two people or things (or two groups of people or things). Contrast with *parmi* (‘among’).

*Tammy ressent une certaine antipathie entre Tammy et Tex.*

Then she comes and sits down **between** Tammy and Tex.

**envers** = toward (figurative sense)

*Envers* means ‘toward’ in a figurative sense, indicating an attitude or gesture toward someone. Contrast with *vers*, which means toward in a spatial or temporal sense.

*Tammy ressent une certaine antipathie envers Bette.*

Tammy feels a certain animosity **toward** Bette.
grace à = thanks to

Tex a découvert son grand-père grâce à l’album de photos de Rita.

language in the world.

Tex discovered his grandfather thanks to Rita’s photo album.

hors de = outside of, out of (idiomatic)

Paw-Paw habite hors de la ville d’Opelousas. Il est hors de question que Tex vive à Opelousas.

Paw-Paw lives outside of the city of Opelousas. It is out of the question that Tex live in Opelousas.

jusqu’à = until

Distinguish between the preposition jusqu’à and the conjunction jusqu’à ce que.

Tex et Tammy vont jusqu’à Opelousas. Tex and Tammy are going as far as Opelousas.

loin de = far from

Tex habite loin de son grand-père Paw-Paw Louis.

Tex lives far from his grandfather Paw-Paw Louis.

mal gré = in spite of

Mal gré la distance, Tex aime aller voir son grand-père.

In spite of the distance, Tex likes to go see his grandfather.

par = by, through, per

Par has several idiomatic meanings. It means 'by' when it is used with the passive voice. See also the use of par + infinitive.

Tex va à Opelousas une fois par mois.

Tex goes to Opelousas once a month (one time per month).

Tex est invité à Opelousas par Paw-Paw.

Tex is invited to Opelousas by Paw-Paw.

Pour aller à Opelousas, Tex passe par Houston.

Tex goes through Houston to get to Opelousas.

parmi = among

Parmi means ‘among’ and it is used when referring to three or more people or things (or groups of people or things). Contrast with entre (between).

Tex compte beaucoup de Cajuns parmi ses cousins.

Tex counts many Cajuns among his cousins.

pendant = during

Pendant son séjour chez Paw-Paw, Tex mange des écrevisses.

During his stay with Paw-Paw, Tex eats crawfish.

pour = for, in favor of

See also the use of pour + infinitive.

Paw-Paw est pour la défense du Cajun. Pour lui, le français est la plus belle langue du monde.

Paw-Paw is in favor of the defense of Cajun. For him, French is the most beautiful language in the world.
près de = near to

Opelousas est près de Baton Rouge. Opelousas is near Baton Rouge.

quant à = as for

Paw-Paw est content de voir Tex. Quant à Tex, il est heureux de pouvoir enfin parler français.

Paw-Paw is happy to see Tex. As for Tex, he is happy to finally be able to speak French.

sans = without

Sans often is translated by ‘-less’ or a negative prefix ‘in-’ or ‘un-’: un travail sans effort (effortless work); un film sans intérêt (an uninteresting film). See also the use of sans + infinitive.

Sans doute, le français se parle dans sa famille depuis longtemps.

Without doubt, French has spoken in his family for a long time.

sauf = except

Toute sa famille parle français, sauf son oncle Elmer, qui habite en Californie.

Everyone in his family speaks, except Uncle Elmer, who lives in California.

sel on = according to

Sel on Paw-Paw, Tex a un drôle d’accent français.

According to Paw-Paw, Tex has a funny French accent.

sous = under, in (idiomatic)

Sous means ‘under,’ but it is often translated by ‘in’ in expressions such as sous la pluie (in the rain); sous le soleil (in the sun).

En route pour Opelousas, Tex et Tammy ont vu un alligator sous un pont.

On the road to Opelousas, Tex and Tammy saw an alligator under a bridge.
**sur = on, upon, on top of**

*Sur* means ‘on,’ but it is also used in several idiomatic expressions: *un sur deux* (one out of two); *tourner son attention sur quelquechose* (to turn one’s attention to something); *sur le moment* (at the time); *sur invitation* (by invitation). etc.

En Louisiane, on sert souvent des écrevisses directement *sur* la table, sans assiette.

In Louisiana, crawfish are often served directly on the table, with no plate.

**vers = toward(s)**

*Vers* means ‘toward, around’ in both a spatial and a temporal sense. Contrast with *envers*, which has a figurative sense.

**Vers midi, Tex et Tammy repartent vers Austin.**

Bette et Tammy entrent *dans* un restaurant ensemble. Elles ont toutes les deux pris rendez-vous *avec* Tex *sans* le savoir! Elles regardent *autour de* la salle. En même temps, elles aperçoivent Tex assis *à une table*. Elles se précipitent vers lui. Elles se regardent, hésitent un moment, puis s’asseyent. Tammy s’assied *à droite de* Tex et Bette s’assied *à gauche de* lui. Elles se regardent à nouveau d’un air confus.

Tex s’amuse *mal gré* le drame *entre* Bette et Tammy.

**Around noon, Tex and Tammy head back towards Austin.**

Bette and Tammy enter a restaurant together. Unknowingly, they both have a date *with* Tex. They look *around* the room. At the same time they see Tex seated *at a table*. They rush *towards* him. They look at each other, hesitate a moment, then sit down. Tammy sits on *Tex’ right* and Bette sits down *to his left*. They look at each other again, confused. Tex is having *fun in spite of* the drama *between* Bette and Tammy.
contractions of à and de with definite article

The prepositions à or de contract with the definite articles le and les to give the following forms: de + le = du  de + les = des
à + le = au  à + les = aux

La and l’ on the other hand do not contract after à and de. Note that these contractions also occur with two- and three-word prepositions ending with à or de (jusqu’à, près de, loin de, à côté de, etc.).

Tammy et Bette sont dans un café près du campus, à côté des commerces, pas loin de la tour.
Tammy: Je vais prendre un thé à la vanille et un muffin au chocolat. Et toi?
Bette: Pour moi, un biscuit aux amandes et un café au lait.
Tammy: Bon, demain on va au gymnase, hein?

Tammy et Bette are in a café near campus, not far from the stores, not far from the Tower.
Tammy: I am going to have a vanilla tea and a chocolate muffin. What about you?
Fiona: For me, an almond cookie and a latte.
Tammy: And tomorrow we’ll go to the gym, eh?
**depuis vs. il y a ... que, ça fait ... que, and voilà ... que**

*depuis*

To indicate the starting date or duration of an action or situation which is still going on in the present, use the preposition *depuis* + a time expression. Note that *depuis* can mean two different things in English. When *depuis* is followed by a length of time, as in the first example below, it indicates duration and is translated into English by *for*. When *depuis* is followed by a date or a point in time, as in the second example, it indicates the starting point and is translated by *since*.

| **Tex sort avec Tammy depuis un an.** | Tex has been going out with Tammy **for** one year. |
| **Tex sort avec Tammy depuis septembre.** | Tex has been going out with Tammy **since** September. |

In a question, *depuis* is generally translated as 'how long' or 'since when'. In most cases, such questions with *depuis* can be answered with either the expression of duration or the beginning point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>duration</strong> (for how long?)</th>
<th><strong>starting point</strong> (since when?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depuis combien detemps ...</strong></td>
<td>How long ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... Bette est-elle amoureuse de Tex?</strong></td>
<td>... has Bette been in love with Tex?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elle est amoureuse de lui ...</strong></td>
<td>She has been in love with him ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis un an.</strong></td>
<td>... for one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis deux minutes.</strong></td>
<td>... for two minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis une éternité.</strong></td>
<td>... for ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depuis quand ...</strong></td>
<td>Since when ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... Bette est-elle amoureuse de Tex?</strong></td>
<td>... has Bette been in love with Tex?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elle est amoureuse de lui ...</strong></td>
<td>She has been in love with him ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis le 20 août.</strong></td>
<td>... since August 20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis lundi.</strong></td>
<td>... since Monday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... depuis son arrivée.</strong></td>
<td>... since his arrival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*other uses of *depuis*

When used at the beginning of a sentence without any complement and followed by a comma, *depuis* is usually translated as 'since then'. For example:

Bette a vu Tex le jour de son arrivée à UT et **depuis**, elle n'arrête pas de penser à lui.  
Bette saw Tex on the day of his arrival at UT and since then, she has not stopped thinking about him.

In negative sentences, depending on the meaning, *depuis* may be used with either the present (action still going on) or the passé composé to indicate how long something has **not** been going on (non-action).

Tex: **Je ne suis pas** au Texas depuis longtemps.  
Tex: I haven't been in Texas for long. *(Tex is still in Texas)*

Tex: **Je ne suis pas allé** en France depuis l'été dernier.  
Tex: I haven't been to France since last summer.
Bette: Tex, *depuis* quand es-tu au Texas?
Bette: Tex, *depuis* quand connais-tu Tammy?
Tex: Je connais Tammy *depuis* deux ans.
Bette: *Depuis* quand veux-tu devenir poète?
Tex: Oh, *depuis* toujours!
Bette: *Depuis* quand n'es-tu pas allé en France?
Tex: Je ne suis pas allé en France *depuis* l'été dernier. Et toi, Bette, *depuis* quand as-tu ce tatouage?! Bette: Oh, *depuis* lundi. Ça fait cool, tu ne trouves pas? *Depuis*, les mecs ne me quittent pas des yeux!

Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu enseignes le français?
Tex: *Ça fait* un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Tex: Voilà un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Tex: *Ça fait* deux ans.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Tex: Ça fait deux ans.
Bette: *Depuis* quand connais-tu Tammy?
Tex: Je connais Tammy *depuis* deux ans.
Bette: *Depuis* quand connais-tu Tammy?
Tex: Je connais Tammy *depuis* deux ans.

Bette: How long have you been in Texas?
Tex: I have not been in Texas for long. I have been in Texas since 1998.
Bette: Tex, how long have you known Tammy?
Tex: I have known Tammy for two years.
Bette: How long have you wanted to become a poet?
Tex: Oh, I have always wanted to!
Bette: How long have you not been in France?
Tex: I haven't been in France since last summer. And you, Bette, how long have you had this tattoo?!
Bette: Oh, since Monday. Cool, isn't it? Since then, guys have not been able to take their eyes off me!

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*S'il y a* ... *que*, *ça fait* ... *que*, *voilà* ... *que*

*S'il y a* ... *que*, *ça fait* ... *que* and, more emphatic, *voilà* ... *que* express duration only. Unlike *depuis*, they are always used at the beginning of a sentence. For example:

Bette: Tex, *ça fait* longtemps *que* tu enseignes le français?
Tex: *Ça fait* un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Bette: Tex, *ça fait* un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Tex: Voilà un an *que* j'enseigne le français.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Tex: *Ça fait* deux ans.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Tex: Ça fait deux ans.
Bette: *Depuis* quand connais-tu Tammy?
Tex: Je connais Tammy *depuis* deux ans.
Bette: *Depuis* quand connais-tu Tammy?
Tex: Je connais Tammy *depuis* deux ans.

Although *s'il y a* ... *que* and *ça fait* ... *que* may occasionally be found in the future (*s'il y aura* ... *que*, *ça fera* ... *que*), the subordinate clause introduced by *que* is never in the future. It remains in the present. For example:

Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
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Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.

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Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
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Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
Bette: Tex, *il y a* combien de temps *que* tu connais Tammy?
Il y aura deux ans demain que je connais Tammy.
The preposition *depuis* with the imperfect indicates how long something had been going on in relation to a past event. Basic sentence meaning and construction are similar to those of *depuis* with present. *Depuis* with imperfect may indicate either duration or a temporal starting point.

**what had been going on ...**  
**Tammy attendait** Tex *depuis* une heure ...  
**past event** ... quand il est entré.  
**translation** Tammy had been waiting for Tex for an hour ... when he came in.

**Tammy souhaitait** avoir une discussion sérieuse *depuis* lundi ...  
**... quand enfin le moment s'est présenté.**  
**Tammy had been wanting to have a serious discussion since Monday ... when at last the opportunity presented itself.**

Duration may also be indicated with *il y avait ... que, cela faisait ... que* and, more emphatic, *voilà que*. The first sentence above could also be expressed as:

**Il y avait ... une heure que** Tammy had been waiting for Tex for an hour.

**Cel a fai sai...** Tammy *attendait*  
**Voilà ...** Tex.  

Tammy: Salut, Tex. Ça va?  
Tex: Non! Hier, j’*étais* à la bibliothèque *depuis* deux minutes quand l’alarme à incendie a sonné. Je n’ai pas pu travailler!  
Ensuite à la cafétéria, je *faisais* la queue *depuis* une demi-heure, lorsqu’ils ont annoncé qu’il n’y avait plus de sandwiches! Je suis allé faire cours sans avoir mangé!  
Tammy: Pour moi non plus, rien ne va comme je veux! *Depuis* lundi je *voulais* te parler, mais ce matin tu as dit que tu avais trop de travail!

Tammy: Hi Tex. How are you?  
Tex: Not well! Yesterday, I had been in the library for two minutes when the fire alarm went off. I was not able to work! Then at the cafeteria, I had been waiting in line for half an hour when they announced they had run out of sandwiches! I went to teach without eating!  
Tammy: Nothing is going the way I want either! I had been wanting to talk to you since Monday, but this morning you said you had too much work!
**depuis, pendant, pour: ‘for’**

There are three prepositions in French, **depuis**, **pendant** and **pour**, that are translated as ‘for’ and are used to indicate the duration of an event.

**depuis**
If an event began in the past and is continuing into the present, use ‘depuis’ with the present tense. For example:

Tammy: Tex et moi sommes ensemble depuis un an.

Tammy: Tex and I have been together for a year.

**pendant**
**Pendant** literally means ‘during’, but it is usually best expressed in English as ‘for’ plus a certain amount of time. It can be used with all tenses.

Tex: Tous les jours, je parle avec Tammy pendant une heure.

Tex: Everyday, I talk with Tammy for an hour.

Tex: A Noël, Tammy et moi resterons chez ses parents pendant deux semaines.

Tex: For Christmas, Tammy and I will stay at her parents’ for two weeks.

**Pendant** is used with the passé composé to indicate how long a completed activity lasted. Be careful not to use **depuis** with the passé composé in this context.

Tex: J’ai attendu Edouard pendant une heure. Finalement, il est arrivé. Il est toujours en retard.

Tex: I waited for Edouard for an hour. Finally he arrived. He is always late.

**pour**
The preposition **pour** is used in a variety of contexts. When translated as ‘for’ in English, it may designate the duration of a future event with the verbs **partir** and **aller**. Note that the verb may be conjugated in either the present or future tense.

Tammy: A Noël, Tex et moi, nous allons chez moi pour deux semaines.

Tammy: For Christmas, Tex and I are going to my house for two weeks.

Tex: C’est vrai, nous partirons pour deux longues semaines.

Tex: It’s true, we will leave for two long weeks.

Tammy: Salut, Tex. Ça va?

Tammy: Hi Tex. How are you?

Tex: Non, ce n’est pas mon jour! Je pars pour le week-end. Je vais rendre visite à Paw-Paw. J’ai attendu le bus pendant une heure ce matin. Puis je l’ai raté à cause de Bette.

Tex: Not well! This is not my day! I am leaving for the weekend. I am going to visit Paw-Paw. I waited for the bus for an hour this morning. Then I missed it because of Bette.

Tammy: Qu’est-ce qu’elle a fait? Tex:

Tammy: What did she do?

Je ne vais pas te le dire.

Tex: I am not going to tell you.

Tammy: Nous sortons ensemble depuis un an. Tu ne peux plus garder de secrets comme ça!

Tammy: We have been going out for a year. You can’t keep secrets like that anymore!
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: à
  - from: de (d’)

- **cites** (Paris, Londres, Austin)
- **islands** (Cuba, Tahiti)
- **feminine** (usually ending in -e)
  - cites (Paris à Cuba)
  - from: d’Austin de Tahiti

- **countries** (la France)
- **states** (la Californie)
- **provinces** (la Bourgogne)
- **continents** (l’Europe)

- **masculine**
  - countries (le Canada, le Texas)
    - to/in: au
    - from: du
  - provinces/states (le Colorado)
    - en
    - de (d’)

- **masculine beginning with a vowel**
  - countries (l’Iran)
    - en
    - de (d’)
  - provinces/states (l’Ontario)
    - aux
    - des

- **plural countries and regions**
  - (les Etats-Unis)
    - aux
    - des

- **en**
- **à**
- **de (d’)**
- **en**
- **de**
- **aux**
- **des**
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 États-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!
prepositions with infinitives

The infinitive is the verb form generally used after a preposition in French. À (to) and de (from, about) are the most common prepositions in French. In many expressions, the choice of the preposition à or de before an infinitive is purely idiomatic; that is, it is unrelated to meaning. In such cases, one must memorize which preposition is used.

à + infinitive
When the following verbs are followed by an infinitive, the preposition à is required.

Tex a du mal à trouver l’inspiration.  Tex finds it difficult to find inspiration.

ai der à, to help to
s’amuser à, to have fun at
apprendre à, to learn to
arriver à, to succeed in, to manage to
s’attendre à, to expect to
avoir du mal à, to find it difficult to
chercher à, to try to, to attempt to
commencer à, to start to
continuer à/ de, to continue to
(either à or de)
se décider à, to make up one’s mind to

de + infinitive
When the following verbs are followed by an infinitive, the preposition de is required.

Tex arrête d’écrire, parce qu’il rêve d’embrasser Tammy.  Tex stops writing, because he is dreaming of kissing Tammy.

(s’)arrêter de, to stop
choisir de, to choose to
conseiller de, to advise to
se contenter de, to content oneself with
continuer à/ de, to continue to
(either à or de)
décider de, to decide to
s’efforcer de, to try hard to, to endeavor to
essayer de, to try to
s’excuser de, to apologize for
finir de, to finish
mériter de, to deserve, to be worth

oublier de, to forget to
permettre (à quelqu’un) de, to permit someone to
persuader de, to persuade to
se presser de, to hurry to
promettre de, to promise to
proposer de, to propose to
refuser de, to refuse to
rêver de, to dream of
se soucier de, to care about
se souvenir de, to remember to
Most idiomatic expressions with *avoir* also require *de* + infinitive:

- Oh, Tex *a l'air de rêver.* Oh, Tex seems to be dreaming.
- Tex *a peur de réveiller.* Tex is afraid of waking up.
- Tex *a envie de dormir.* Tex feels like sleeping.
- Tex *a besoin de se reposer.* Tex needs to rest.
- Tex *a honte d'être américain.* Tex is ashamed of being American.
- Tex *a tort d'être susceptible.* Tex is wrong in being touchy / should not be touchy.
- Tex *a raison d'être fier.* Tex is right to be proud.

The infinitive may be used to complete the sense of an adjective or a pronoun. Generally infinitives following a noun or adjective are preceded by the preposition *de.* (Tex est *content de voir* Tammy dans ses rêves romantiques. Tex is glad to see Tammy in his romantic dreams.)

However, adjectives and nouns are followed by the preposition *à* + infinitive to indicate a passive sense or a function: "cette eau est *bonne à boire*" (this is drinking water), "ce livre est *amusant à lire*" (this book is fun to read), "c'est *triste à voir*" (it's a sorry sight), "c'est *difficile à dire*" (this is difficult to say).

**pour, afin de, avant de, sans, par + infinitive**

The infinitive expresses purpose when it is used after *pour* or *afin de* (in order to).

In the case of *avant de* (before) and *sans* (without), the English translation is often a conjugated verb (before they left), or a present participle (without speaking), rather than the English infinitive.

The infinitive follows the preposition *par* (by) after the verbs *commencer* (to start) and *finir* (to finish).

- **pour/afin de**
  - Tex s'allonge sur son lit *pour lire.* Tex lies down on his bed to read.
  - Avant de s'endormir, Tex lit toujours un poème romantique. Before going to sleep, Tex always reads an romantic poem.
  - Il ne peut pas dormir *sans rêver de Tammy.* He can not sleep without dreaming of Tammy.
  - Il finit *par rêver de Tammy toute la nuit.* He ends up dreaming of Tammy all night long.

**après (past infinitive constructions)**

The infinitive of *avoir* or *être* plus the past participle of a verb is used after the preposition *après* (after) to describe a preceding action in the past. Note the past participle agreement in past constructions with *être.*

- *Après avoir rêvé* de Tammy, Tex retrouve son inspiration. After dreaming of Tammy, Tex finds his inspiration again.
- *Après être devenu* la muse de Tex, Tammy est passée à la postérité! After becoming Tex' muse, Tammy is immortalized!
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 romantique, Tex wrote an romantic poem and
et puis il l’a envoyé à Tammy. Elle a été then he sent it to Tammy. She
choqué 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, nous, vous, ils, elles
l, you, he, she, one, we, you, they (m), they (f)

direct object pronouns
me, te, le, la nous, vous, les
me, you, him / it, her / it us, 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 en
there (replaces preposition + location) some,
any, not any (replaces ‘de’ + noun)

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

reflexive pronouns
me, te, senous, vous, se
myself, yourself, him, herself, ourselves,
yourselves, themselves

interrogative pronouns
qui
who
que
what

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

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

indefinite pronouns
quelqu’un
someone
quel que chose
something
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>je, I</td>
<td>nous, we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>tu, you</td>
<td>vous, you/y'all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>il, he/it</td>
<td>ils, they (masc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elle, she/it</td>
<td>elles, they (fem.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on, one/we (colloquial)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Paw-Paw: Ah, oui! Et vous, mes enfants, Tex, Tammy, vous allez bien? 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 musique est bonne, n'est-ce pas? Bette: The music is good, isn't it?
Tex: Non, elle est terrible! Je déteste la musique country. Tex: No, it's terrible. I hate country music.
Bette: Oh, qu'est-ce que tu as fait, Tex? Le juke-box est cassé? Bette: Oh, what did you do, Tex? The juke-box is broken
Tex: Oui, il est casse! Tex: Yes, it is broken!
ils/elles

 ils and elles 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 masculine 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!

Fiona: Bonjour Tex, tu vas bien?

Tex: Pas du tout, je vais très mal. Je veux écouter de la musique française. Et puis Bette et moi, on s’est disputé.

Fiona: Ah bon? Elle est toujours là?


Fiona: Tiens, nous y allons, toi et moi?

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!

Fiona: Hi Tex, are you doing well?

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: Oh really? Is she still here?

Tex: Non, she left with Tammy. They went to the Broken Spoke.

Fiona: Hey, why don’t you and I go there?

Tex: Didn’t you hear me? I don’t like country music!!! Argh! People really like country music in Texas!
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:

| + proper noun | Tammy et Tex? Non, ce ne sont pas des chats! Ce sont des tatous. | Tammy et Tex? Non, ce ne sont pas des chats! Ce sont des tatous. |
| + disjunctive pronoun | C'est Tex. | Il est sympa. |
| + an infinitive as subject | Tammy: Qui est-ce? Ah, c'est toi Tammy! | Tammy: Qui est-ce? Ah, c'est toi Tammy! |
| + adjective for non-specific referents | Text: Vive, c'est parler français. | Text: Vive, c'est parler français. |
| | Text: Ah c'est chouette! C'est incroyable! | Text: Ah c'est chouette! C'est incroyable! |

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

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

| + nationality, occupation, religion (used as adjectives in French) | Tammy? Elle est gentille. | Tammy? Elle est gentille. |

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)
**disjunctive pronouns**

**forms**
Disjunctive pronouns (also known as tonic or stressed pronouns) refer to people whose names have already been mentioned or whose identity is obvious from context. They are used in a variety of situations in French, most often in short answers without verbs, for emphasis, or for contrast with subject pronouns. Here are all the disjunctive pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disjunctive pronouns</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>moi (I, me)</td>
<td>nous (we, us)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toi (you)</td>
<td>vous (you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lui (he, him)</td>
<td>eux (they, them; masc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elle (she, her)</td>
<td>elles (they, them; fem.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soi (one)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**uses**

- **after prepositions**
  - C'est samedi soir: Tammy adore Tex. Elle ne peut pas vivre sans lui. Elle vit pour lui.
  - It's Saturday night: Tammy loves Tex. She can't live without him. She lives for him.

- **in short answers or exclamations**
  - when no verb is expressed
    - Corey: Qui sort avec Tammy?
    - Tex: Moi!
    - Tex (à Tammy): Je n'aime que toi ma chérie.
    - Tammy: I love only you, my dear.

- **in a compound subject or object**
  - Tammy: Tex et moi, nous aimons aller en boîte.
  - Joe-Bob: Moi aussi!
  - Corey: Pas moi!
  - Fiona: Moi non plus!

- **in simple agreements or disagreements when no verb is expressed**
  - Joe-Bob: Eux, ils s'amusent, mais vous, vous ne sortez jamais.
  - Dimanche matin:
  - Corey: C'est moi le plus nul.
  - Corey: I'm the biggest loser.

- **for emphasis**
  - Joe-Bob: Eux, ils s'amusent, mais vous, vous ne sortez jamais.
  - Dimanche matin:
  - Corey: C'est moi le plus nul.
  - Corey: I'm the biggest loser.

- **after c'est or ce sont**
  - Corey: C'est moi le plus nul.
  - Tammy: Arrête de t'apitoyer
  - Corey: I'm the biggest loser.
  - Tammy: Stop pitying yourself!

- **with -même, to mean 'self'**
  - sur toi-même!
  - Corey: Il n'y a personne qui soit plus pitoyable que moi!
  - Corey: There is nobody who is more pitiful than me.
**Direct object pronouns**

A direct object is a noun following the verb that answers the questions ‘what?’ or ‘whom?’ Remember a pronoun replaces a noun, and in this case the noun is a direct object. For example, Tammy might ask: ‘Tex, will you kiss me tonight?’, where the direct object pronoun ‘me’ stands for Tammy. Whether a verb takes a direct object or not depends on whether the specific verb is transitive or intransitive.

### forms and uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>direct object pronouns</th>
<th>me, me</th>
<th>nous, we/us</th>
<th>te, you</th>
<th>vous, you</th>
<th>le, him/it</th>
<th>les, them (masc./fem.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In front of a word starting with a vowel, le and la become l’; me becomes m’; te becomes t’.

Tammy: Dis, tu m’appelles ce soir, Tex?
Tex: Oui, ma belle, je t’appelle ce soir.
Corey: Edouard et moi, tu nous appelles ce soir, Tex?
Tex: Non, je ne vous appelle pas ce soir.
Joe-Bob: Moi, je peux les appeler ce soir!

Note that le/l’ can replace an adjective or a verb.

Tex et Tammy sont amoureux? Oui, ils le sont.
Tex est quelquefois jaloux? Oui, il l’est.
Joe-Bob: Tu veux que j’appelle Tammy?
Tex: Non, moi, je vais le faire.

Tex and Tammy are in love? Yes, they are.
Tex is sometimes jealous? Yes, he is.
Joe-Bob: Do you want me to call Tammy?
Tex: No, I’ll do it.
placement

Direct object pronouns precede the verb of which they are the object. In a composed tense (like the passé composé), the pronoun precedes the auxiliary. In infinitive constructions, the pronoun goes immediately before the infinitive. When the conjugated verb is negative, the ne precedes the object pronoun.

Tammy: Tex m'aime.  
Tammy: Tex loves me. Bette: 
Bette: Tex does not love you. 
Tex ne t'aime pas.  
Tammy: Tex va m'épouser.  
Tammy: Tex is going to marry me. 
Bette: Sois raisonnable, Tammy. Tex ne veut pas t'épouser.  
Bette: Be reasonable, Tammy. Tex doesn't want to marry you. 
Tammy: Mais si. Il l'a promis quand je l'ai rencontré à Lyon.  
Tammy: Yes he does. He promised when I met him in Lyon. 
Bette: Mais il ne m'avait pas encore rencontrée!  
Bette: But he hadn't yet met me!

In the negative imperative, the pronoun follows the normal placement before the verb. However, in the affirmative imperative, the object pronoun goes after the verb and is attached to it by a hyphen. In addition, me and te become moi and toi.

Bette: Tex, embrasse-moi!  
Bette: Tex, kiss me! 
Joe-Bob: Attends, ne l'embrasse pas devant moi. Je m'en vais.  
Joe-Bob: Wait, don't kiss her in front of me. I'm leaving. 
Bette: Eh bien, il est parti. SMACK!  
Bette: Eh bien, he's left. SMACK!

agreement of the past participle

The past participle agrees in gender and in number with a preceding direct object. In other words, if the direct object pronoun is feminine, add an e to the end of the past participle; if the pronoun is masculine plural, add an s (unless the past participle already ends in s); if it is feminine plural, add es.

Un peu plus tard ...  
A little later ...
Bette: Tammy? Tu sais, Tex m'a embrassée.  
Bette: Tammy? Tex kissed me. 
Tammy: Ce n'est pas vrai!  
Tammy: That's not true. 
Bette: Demande-lui. Il arrive.  
Bette: Ask him. Here he comes. Tammy: Tex, tu l'as embrassée, Bette?  
Tammy: Tex, did you kiss her, Bette? 
Tex: Who? Bette? Why no. I didn't kiss her. She kissed me! POW! Ow!
**pronoun y**

**uses**

**y expressing place**

Y replaces a preposition indicating location plus its object: ‘à UT’ (at UT), ‘devant la Tour’ (in front of the Tower). It is usually translated as there. Prepositions which indicate location include à, en, dans, devant, derrière, sous, sur. The noun objects of these prepositions are places and things which indicate a place. The exception is the preposition chez which is used with a person, as in ‘chez Bette’ (Bette’s place). Note that à + person is replaced by an indirect object pronoun except with certain verbs.

Bette: Tammy, tu vas à Waco?
Tammy: Oui, j’y vais ce week-end pour un bal à Baylor.
Bette: Mais on ne peut pas y danser.
Tammy: Mais si, les étudiants à Baylor ont maintenant le droit de danser.
Bette: Super, on y va!

Bette: Tammy, are you going to Waco?
Tammy: Yes, I’m going there this weekend for a dance at Baylor.
Bette: But you can’t dance there.
Tammy: But yes, Baylor students now have the right to dance.
Bette: Super, let’s go there!

**y with certain verbs**

With certain verbs y replaces the preposition à when its object is an idea or thing, but not a person. Some of these verbs are penser à, réfléchir à (to think about), s’intéresser à (to be interested in), répondre à (to answer to), participer à (to participate in). In these expressions, the preposition à is idiomatic. It does not indicate location in or movement toward.

Tex s’intéresse à la philo. Il s’y intéresse énormément.
Tex pense toujours à l’existentialisme. Il y pense jour et nuit.

Tex is interested in philosophy. He’s terribly interested in it.
Tex always thinks about existentialism. He thinks about it night and day.

When these verbs are followed by a person, the disjunctive pronoun will be used, for example, ‘Bette pense souvent à Tex. Elle pense souvent à lui.’ (Bette often thinks of Tex. She often thinks of him.)

**placement**

Placement of y is the same as that of direct and indirect pronoun objects: y precedes the verb it refers to, except in the affirmative imperative. In compound tenses, like the passé composé, it precedes the auxiliary. Note that there is no agreement between y and the past participle, since y does not replace a direct object.

Edouard: Où allez-vous?
Bette: A Waco. Tu veux y aller avec nous? avec nous?

Edouard: Where are you going?
Bette: To Waco. Do you want to go there with us?

Edouard: Je n’y suis jamais allé. On m’a dit que Waco était une expérience anthropologique, le musée Dr. Pepper, le musée Texas Rangers, Baylor ...
Bette: Nous y allons tout de suite.

Edouard: I’ve never been there. I’ve been told that Waco was an anthropological experience: the Dr. Pepper museum, the Texas Rangers museum, Baylor ...
Bette: We’re going there right away.

Edouard: Bon, attendez-moi, j’y vais aussi. Allons-y!

Edouard: Good, wait for me I’m going there, too. Let’s go (there)!
Pronoun en

uses

En is a pronoun that typically replaces de + a noun; this includes nouns introduced by partitive or indefinite determiners (de, du, de l’, de la, des). En may be translated as 'some', 'any', or 'not any'.

Tammy, Edouard et Tex sont à table. Tammy, Edouard and Tex are eating. Tammy:
Edouard, tu veux de la soupe? Tammy: Edouard, do you want some soup?
Edouard: Oui, merci. Elle est délicieuse. Edouard: Yes, thank you. It is delicious.
Tex: Il y a du vin? Tex: Is there any wine?
Tammy: Oui il y en a. Tu en veux? Tammy: Yes, there is some. Would you like some?

In a similar fashion, en replaces a noun introduced by a number or an expression of quantity. Notice that the equivalent of en is not always expressed in English, although en must still be used in the French sentence:

Tammy: Edouard, tu as assez de pain? Tammy: Edouard, do you have enough bread?
Edouard: Oui, merci, j’en ai assez. Edouard: Yes, thank you, I have enough (of it).
Tammy: Tex, tu veux un peu de pain? Tammy: Tex, do you want a little bread?
Tex: Non, merci, je n’en veux pas. J’en ai encore une tranche. Tex: No, thank you, I do not want any. I still have a slice (of it).

En also replaces expressions introduced by the preposition de with the following verbs:

s’occuper de, to deal with
parler de, to speak of
remercier de, to thank for
revenir de, to return from
venir de, to come from

Tammy: Alors Edouard, comment s’est passée ton interview au restaurant? Tammy: So Edouard, how did your interview at the restaurant go?
Edouard: J’en reviens tout juste! C’était dégoûtant. Edouard: I’ve just returned from it! It was disgusting.

Tammy: Tu veux en parler? Tammy: Do you want to talk about it?
Edouard: Tu sais bien que j’ai envie de gagner plus d’argent, j’en ai vraiment besoin, mais servir du barbecue! Jamais! Edouard ne travaillera jamais dans un restaurant qui s’appelle le Bon Barbecue! Edouard: You know that I want to earn more money. I really need some (money), but serve barbecue! Never! Edouard will never work in a restaurant named Good Barbecue!
Note that a disjunctive pronoun is used with these verbs to replace expressions when the object of the preposition de is a person rather than a thing.

**Placement**

Placement of *en* is the same as direct and indirect pronoun objects. *En* precedes the verb it refers to, except in the affirmative imperative. In compound tenses (such as the passé composé), it precedes the auxiliary verb. Note that there is no agreement between *en* and the past participle, since *en* does not replace a direct object. When *en* is used with *il y a* (‘there is, there are’), it comes between *y* and *a*: Du pain sur la table? *Il y en a* (Some bread on the table? There is some there.)

Tex: De nouveaux poèmes? Ne m’en parle pas!

Editeur: Mais si, parlons-en.

Tex: Je n’en ai pas écrit depuis longtemps et je ne vais plus en écrire. Ma muse m’a quitté et je n’ai plus d’idées.

Editeur: Mais si tu en as. Elles sont bizarres, tes idées, mais tu en as beaucoup quand même.

Tex: Some new poems? Don’t talk to me about them.

Editor: But yes, let’s talk about them.

Tex: I haven’t written any for a long time and I’m not going to write any more. My muse has left me and I don’t have any more ideas.

Editor: But yes, you have some ideas. Your ideas are strange, but you have a lot of them nevertheless.
Indirect object pronouns

forms and uses
An indirect object is a person which receives the action of a verb indirectly. In French the indirect object is always preceded by the preposition à and in English by the preposition 'to': Tex offre des fleurs à Tammy. (Tex gives flowers to Tammy.) An indirect object pronoun indicates à + a person. In the sentence 'Tex offre des fleurs à Tammy', 'Tammy' is the indirect object. The indirect object pronoun that replaces 'à Tammy' is lui : Tex lui offre des fleurs. (Tex gives flowers to her.) Following are the French indirect object pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>me</th>
<th>(to me)</th>
<th>nous</th>
<th>(to us)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>(to you)</td>
<td>vous</td>
<td>(to you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lui</td>
<td>(to him/to her)</td>
<td>leur</td>
<td>(to them)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In front of a word starting with a vowel, me and te become m' and t'.

Tammy: Tex, tu m'offres des fleurs? Et à Bette, tu lui offres des fleurs aussi, n'est-ce pas?
Tex: Oui, mais je t'offre des fleurs plus souvent.
Joe-Bob: Tu leur as offert des fleurs, à toutes les deux! Bravo, quel tombeur!
Tammy: Paf!

Tammy: Tex, tu m'offres des fleurs? But Bette, you give her flowers, too, don't you?
Tex: Yes, I give you flowers more often.
Joe-Bob: You gave them both flowers!
Bravo, what a womanizer!
Tammy: Pow!

placement
An indirect object pronoun is placed just before the verb of which it is the object. In a composed tense (like the passé composé), the pronoun precedes the auxiliary. In infinitive constructions, the pronoun goes immediately before the infinitive. When the conjugated verb is negative, the ne precedes the object pronoun. Note that, in compound tenses (such as the passé composé), there is no agreement between the past participle and the indirect object. In the affirmative imperative, the indirect object pronoun is placed after the verb it is the object of and attached to it by a hyphen. In addition, me and te become moi and toi.

Tex: Regarde, quelqu'un m'a envoyé un cadeau.
Tammy: Qui t'offre un cadeau?
Tex ouvre le cadeau.

Tammy: Oh, regarde. Il y a une petite carte... Bon anniversaire, mon petit tatou. Je compte partager cette bouteille... et la vie avec toi. Avec toi? Mais, il n'y a pas de signature. Eh bien, monsieur, explique-moi!

Tex: Euh...

Tammy: C'est bien cette petite chatte maline, n'est-ce pas? Je vais aller lui parler.
Tex: Ne lui parle pas! C'est une bagatelle, c'est un petit rien...
Tammy: Un petit rien? Paf!

Tex: Look, someone sent me a gift.
Tammy: Who is giving you a gift?
Tex opens the gift.

Tammy: Oh, look. There is a little card... Happy birthday, my little armadillo. I'm counting on sharing this bottle... and life with you. With you? But, there's no signature. Well, now, sir, explain (this to) me.

Tex: Uh...

Tammy: It's that cunning little cat, isn't it? I'm going to go talk to her about it.
Tex: Don't talk to her! It's a small thing, it's nothing... Tammy: Nothing? Pow!
**Order of object pronouns present tense**

**overview**
A single pronoun object is placed before the verb with which it is associated, except in the affirmative imperative when the pronoun object follows the verb. The following table outlines the order and placement of pronouns when there is more than one object pronoun in a sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>me</th>
<th>te</th>
<th>le</th>
<th>lui</th>
<th>y</th>
<th>en</th>
<th>VERB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>vous</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Joe-Bob prépare sa leçon: Mon dieu, comme c'est difficile, l'ordre des pronoms objets! Le prof me dit qu'il faut les apprendre par cœur. Voici ma chanson ...

Joe-Bob is preparing for class: My god, the order of object pronouns sure is difficult! The teacher says I have to memorize them. Here is my song ...

However, in the affirmative imperative, the pronoun objects follow the verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>y</th>
<th>en</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-le</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-la</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-les</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-lui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-leur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-moi (m')</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-toi (t')</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-nous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-vous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**y and en**
Y always precedes en, and both precede the verb except in the affirmative imperative. When used with other pronouns, y and en always follow any other pronoun object, even in the affirmative imperative.

Bette: Tu vas au gymnase?
Tammy: Oui, j'y vais. Et toi, Fiona? About you, Fiona?
Fiona: Non, j'en viens. Vas-y avec Bette.
Tammy: il y a des footballeurs là-bas?
Fiona: Oui, il y en a. Je te retrouve dans une heure chez toi?
Tammy: D'accord. Dis Fiona, je n'ai pas de rouge à lèvres. Tu m'en donnes?

Bette: Are you going to the gym?
Tammy: Yes, I'm going there. And how about you, Fiona?
Fiona: No, I've just been there. Go with Bette.
Tammy: Are there any football players there?
Fiona: Yes, there are some. Should I meet you at your house in an hour?
Tammy: OK. Say, Fiona, I don't have any lipstick. Can you give me some?
Bette: And don't forget the perfume. It's also essential, right? Go on, give us some.
Direct and indirect object pronouns together

Sometimes there will be both a direct and an indirect object pronoun in the same sentence. The direct object pronoun is usually closest to the verb of which it is the object. However, the order of direct / indirect object pronouns is reversed in the third person singular and third person plural (le lui, le leur, etc.). In this case, the indirect object is closest to the verb.

son parfum?

Remember that in the affirmative imperative, me and te become moi and toi.

Tammy: Fiona! Fiona! Ton parfum, tu me le donnes!? Tu vas me le donner? Donne-le-moi!

Fiona: Pardon, je ne comprends pas. Vous voulez du parfum pour aller au gymnase?

Fiona: Sorry, I do not understand. You want perfume to go to the gym?

negation

In simple tenses, like the present, future, imperfect, and passé simple, the object pronouns are placed between the ne and the verb. In compound tenses, like the passé composé, the plus-que-parfait etc., the object pronouns are placed between the ne and the auxiliary verb.

Plus tard au gymnase.

Tammy: Personne ne fait attention à nous! Tu vois, sans parfum, aucun mec! Pourquoi est-ce que Fiona ne nous en a pas donné?

Bette: Et bien, c'est parce qu'elle ne comprend pas l'art de la séduction.

Later in the gym.

Tammy: No one is paying any attention to us. You see, no perfume, not a single guy! Why didn't Fiona give us any?

Bette: Well, that's because she doesn't understand the art of seduction.
Indefinite pronouns

A pronoun replaces a noun which has been mentioned or is obvious from context. An indefinite pronoun refers to people or things without identifying them precisely.

quelqu’un, quelque chose
Quelqu’un (somebody) is used in affirmative or interrogative sentences to refer to a person, whether male or female. Quelque chose (something) is the equivalent pronoun used to refer to a thing. If quelqu’un or quelque chose is followed by an adjective, the adjective needs to be preceded by de.

Tammy: Quelque chose d’extraordinaire est arrivé aujourd’hui. J’ai rencontré quelqu’un de légendaire.

Tammy: Something exceptional happened today. I met somebody legendary.

The negative form of quelqu’un is personne (no one, nobody) and the negative form of quelque chose is rien (nothing). Remember that ne precedes the verb when personne and rien are used in negative sentences.

Tammy: Personne que tu connais. Personne ne veut me croire.

Tammy: No one you know. Nobody wants to believe me.

Quelques-uns (a few, masculine) and quelques-unes (a few, feminine) are pronouns used in the plural to speak about people or things. Note that the s at the end of quelques is pronounced before the following uns or unes.

Tex: Quoi? Tu as rencontré Ricky Williams? Quelques-uns de mes amis me disent que tu es amoureuse de lui ...

Tammy: Un peu ... Parmi mes copines, quelques-unes sont complètement folles de lui.

Tex: What? You met Ricky Williams? Some of my friends tell me you are in love with him ...

Tammy: A little ... Among my girlfriends, some are completely crazy about him.

chacun vs. aucun
Chacun (each one) is singular and masculine, chacune is singular and feminine. Chaque, on the other hand, is an indefinite determiner used to modify a noun.

Tammy: Mais non, calme-toi!

Tammy: Of course not, calm down!

The negative form of chacun is aucun. Aucun (none, not a one, not a single) is singular and masculine, aucune is singular and feminine. They are used with ne.

Tammy: J’ai rencontré beaucoup de footballeurs, mais aucun ne me fait cet effet.

Tammy: I have met many football players, but none has this effect on me.
more indefinite pronouns

**Plusieurs** (several), **certains** (some; masculine) / **certes** (some; feminine), **tous** (all, everybody; masculine) / **toutes** (all, everybody; feminine) are plural indefinite pronouns. They are used in place of plural nouns. Note that the *s* is pronounced in **tous** when it is a pronoun.

Les copines de Tammy? **Plusieurs** sont folles de Ricky Williams.

Les copines de Fiona? **Certains** sont folles de Joe-Bob.

Les copains de Tex? **Certains** sont amoureux de Tammy.

Les copains de Tammy? **Tous** sont folles de Tex!

Tammy's girlfriends? Several are crazy about Ricky Williams.

Fiona's girlfriends? Some are crazy about Joe-Bob.

Tex's friends? Some are in love with Tammy.

Tammy's girlfriends? All are crazy about Tex!

tout

Tout (everything), on the other hand, is always singular. For example:

Tammy: Tex, **tous** va bien? Tammy: Tex, everything's ok?

autre

Autre is always preceded by a determiner: **un autre** (another, masculine), **l'autre** (the other, masculine or feminine); **une autre** (another, feminine); **d'autres** (others, masculine or feminine), **les autres** (the others, masculine or feminine).

Tex: Non! Il y a **un autre** dans ta vie!? Tex: No! There is another in your life!?

Note the following phrases with **autre**: autre chose (something else), l'*un et l'autre* (the one and the other, both, masc), l'*une et l'autre* (the one and the other, both, fem), les unes et les autres (one and every, masc), les unes et les autres (one and every, fem), ni l'*un ni l'autre* (neither one nor the other), l'*un à l'autre* (to one another), l'*un pour l'autre* (for one another).

n'importe qui

N'importe qui means 'anybody', 'anyone at all'; n'importe quoi means 'anything', 'whatever', 'nonsense'. You may also find qui que ce soit (anybody) and quoi que ce soit (anything).

Tex: Tammy, je ne suis pas **n'importe qui**! Tu ne peux pas me traiter comme ça! Tex: Tammy, I am not just anybody! You cannot treat me this way!

Tammy: Tu racontes n'importe quoi, Tex! Tammy: You are talking nonsense, Tex!

quiconque

Quiconque means 'whoever'.

Tammy: **Quiconque** nous écoute en ce moment doit te trouver ridicule! Tammy: Whoever is listening to us right now must think you are ridiculous!

tel(s), telle(s)

Tel(s) (masc), telle(s) (fem) may be translated as 'such', 'such as', 'like' or 'as' according to the context. For example, 'Tel père, tel fils' would be the translation of 'Like father, like son'.

Tammy: Je n'ai jamais vu une jalousie **tel**l eque là tienne! Tammy: I have never seen such jealousy as yours!
**demonstrative pronouns**

**celui, celle, ceux, celles**

*Celui, celle, ceux, celles* (’this one’ or ’that one’ in the singular; ’these,’ ’those’ or ’the ones’ in the plural) are demonstrative pronouns. They replace a specific noun, which has been mentioned or is obvious from context, in order to avoid repeating it. They agree in gender and number with the nouns they replace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>celui</td>
<td>celle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>ceux</td>
<td>celles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Celui de/d’, celle de/d’* etc. show possession. They are generally translated by ’that of’, ’those of’ or by the possessive form.

Tammy: Tu aimes l'accent d'Edouard? Bette: Je préfère celui de Tex.

Tammy: Tu aimes la voix d'Edouard? Bette: Oh, je préfère celle de Tex.

Tammy: Tu aimes les yeux d'Edouard? Bette: Oui, mais je préfère ceux de Tex.

Tammy: Tu aimes les oreilles d'Edouard? Bette: Oui, mais je préfère celles de Tex.

Tammy: Do you like Edouard’s accent? Bette: I prefer Tex’s.

Tammy: Do you like Edouard’s voice? Bette: Oh, I prefer that of Tex.

Tammy: Do you like Edouard’s eyes? Bette: Yes, but I prefer Tex’s.

Tammy: Do you like Edouard’s ears? Bette: Yes, but I prefer those of Tex.

- *-ci and -là* are added to the demonstrative pronouns to indicate nearness or farness like the distinction between ’this one’ and ’that one’ in English.

Bette: Tammy, regarde mes dernières photos de Tex! Tu préfères celle-ci ou celle-là?
Bette: Tammy, look at my latest pictures of Tex! Do you prefer this one or that one?

**Celui qui ... , celle qui ...** mean ’the one that’, ’the one who’ and **ceux qui ... , celles qui ...** mean ’those that / who’. They introduce a relative clause in which they are used as subjects. In the example below, **ceux qui** is the subject of the verb ’portent’.

Bette: Moi, j’aime les tatous.
Bette: Me, I like armadillos.

Tammy: Moi aussi, surtout **ceux qui** portent le béret.
Tammy: Me too, especially those who wear berets.
**Celui que ...** and **celle que ...** mean 'the one that / whom / which', **ceux que ...** and **celles que ...** mean 'the ones that / whom / which'. They introduce a relative clause in which they are used as objects. In the example below, **celui que** is the object of 'j’aime'.

Tammy: Et toi Bette, qui est-ce que tu aimes?  
Bette: **Celui que** j’aime ne m’aime pas!

Bette: The one I love does not love me!

**Celui dont ...** and **celle dont ...** mean 'the one whose', 'the one of which', **ceux dont ...** and **celles dont ...** mean 'those whose', 'the ones of which'. They introduce a relative clause in which the verb takes an object introduced by **de** (**parler de**, 'to talk about')

Tammy: De qui tu parles?  
Bette: Tu ne connais pas **celui dont** je parle.

Bette: You don't know the one I am talking about!

**ceci, cela**

**Ceci** (this) and **cel a** (that) are invariable demonstrative pronouns. They refer to things that cannot have a specific gender assigned to them, like ideas or statements. **Ça** is used in familiar or conversational style in place of **cel a** for emphasis.

Tammy: Tu es amoureuse de Tex, **cela** me semble évident!!  
Bette: Qu’est-ce que tu racontes?! Tu crois vraiment que je ne respecte pas l'amour entre toi et Tex?! **Ça** me fait de la peine, **ça**!

Bette: What are you saying!? Do you really believe that I don't respect the love between you and Tex? Now that really upsets me!
possessive pronouns

forms and uses

A possessive pronoun replaces a noun preceded by a possessive determiner like mon, ton, son, etc.

Tammy: C’est ton béret Tex?
Tex: Oui, c’est le mi en.

Tammy: Is this your beret Tex?
Tex: Yes, it is mine.

In French, possessive pronouns indicate both the possessor and the number and the gender of the object possessed: le mi en indicates that the possessor is ‘I’ and that the possession is masculine singular.

In the following table, the choice between the singular or plural form and between the masculine or feminine form depends on the number and gender of the item possessed. (Note the difference in spelling and in pronunciation between the possessive determiners notre and votre and the possessive pronouns nôtre and vôtre.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mine#</td>
<td>le mien</td>
<td>la mienne</td>
<td>les miens</td>
<td>les miennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours</td>
<td>le tien</td>
<td>la tienne</td>
<td>les tiens</td>
<td>les tiennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his/hers/its</td>
<td>le sien</td>
<td>la sienne</td>
<td>les siens</td>
<td>les siennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ours</td>
<td>le nôtre</td>
<td>la nôtre</td>
<td>les nôtres</td>
<td>les nôtres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours</td>
<td>le vôtre</td>
<td>la vôtre</td>
<td>les vôtres</td>
<td>les vôtres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theirs</td>
<td>le leur</td>
<td>la leur</td>
<td>les leurs</td>
<td>les leurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on the context, le sien, la sienne, les siens, les siennes may mean ‘his’, ‘hers’, or ‘its’. Note that for the others, all four forms of each possessive pronoun have one English translation.

Tex: Mon frère est musicien.
Tammy: Le mien est professeur.
Tex: Ma soeur est secrétaire.
Tammy: La mienne est PDG.
Tex: Mes parents sont américains.
Tammy: Les miens aussi.

Tex: My brother is a musician.
Tammy: Mine is a professor.
Tex: My sister is a secretary.
Tammy: Mine is a CEO.
Tex: My parents are American
Tammy: Mine too.

Note that à + the definite articles le et les form the contractions au and aux respectively. For example:

Tammy: Je pense souvent à mes neveux.
Tex: Je pense rarement aux miens.
Tammy: Oh! Tex, tu es si égoïste!

Tammy: I often think about my nephews.
Tex: I seldom think about mine.
Tammy: Oh! Tex you are so selfish!
other ways of expressing possession

Possessive pronouns are one way to express possession of things or people. However, you may also use the construction

\[ \text{être + à + disjunctive pronoun}, \text{ the possessive determiners or [de + noun]}:\]

Fiona: A qui appartient cette photo?  Fiona: Who does photo belong to?
Tex: Elle est à moi.  Tex: It’s mine.
Tammy: Oui c’est la sienne. Tu ne connais pas Rita?  Tammy: Yes it is his. Don’t you know Rita?
Fiona: Qui est Rita?  Fiona: Who is Rita?
Tammy: C’est la soeur de Tex.  Tammy: It is Tex’s sister.
Fiona: Ta soeur est très belle. Tu lui ressembles.  Fiona: Your sister is very beautiful. You resemble her.
Tex: Non, je ne lui ressemble pas.  Tex: No, I don’t look like her.

idiomatic uses

The masculine plural forms of the possessive pronouns may be used alone to refer to parents, friends, allies etc. \text{Etre des nôtres.}

Tammy: Quand j’étais à Lyon, je pensais souvent aux miens.  Tammy: When I was in Lyon, I often thought of my folks.
Tammy: Fiona, j’invite des amis ce soir. Tu es des nôtres?  Tammy: Fiona, I am inviting a few friends tonight. Are you joining us?

\text{Y mettre du sien} is a common phrase that may be used with any of the possessive pronouns to mean that you are doing your share, trying your best, making a real effort to contribute.

Tammy: Tex, nous avons des invités ce soir. Il y a beaucoup de choses à préparer. J’espère que tu vas y mettre du tien.  Tammy: Tex, we are having guests tonight. There are a lot of things to prepare. I hope you are going to do your share.

\text{Faire des + miennes, tiennes, siennes, nôtres, vôtres, or leurs} are phrases suggesting misbehavior.

Tammy: Bette a encore fait des siennes. Hier elle a dragué Tex toute la soirée devant tout le monde.  Tammy: Bette has been up to her tricks again. She flirted with Tex all evening in front of everybody.
relative pronouns: qui and que

forms and uses
A relative pronoun introduces a clause that explains or describes a previously mentioned noun, which is called the antecedent. Relative pronouns are used to link two related ideas into a single sentence, thereby avoiding repetition.

Tex écrit un roman. Le roman s'appelle Guerre et amour.
Tex is writing a novel. The novel is called War and Love.

Tex écrit un roman qui s'appelle Guerre et amour.
Tex is writing a novel which is called War and Love.

In the above example, the relative pronoun qui introduces the subordinate clause, that is, the clause that adds additional information about the novel. In French there are two main relative pronouns, qui and que. The choice between qui and que in French depends solely on the grammatical role, subject or direct object, that the relative pronoun plays in the subordinate clause.

qui
Qui functions as the subject of the subordinate clause.

Tex interviewe Paw-Paw qui a combattu pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale.
Tex interviews Paw-Paw who fought during World War II.

Paw-Paw: Yes, I was with Americans who liberated Paris.

On a célébré notre victoire dans le quartier latin qui déborde de jolies Parisiennes.
We celebrated our victory in the Latin Quarter which was overflowing with pretty Parisian girls.

que
Que functions as the direct object of the subordinate clause. Remember that que becomes qu’ before a word beginning with a vowel.

Paw-Paw: Une jolie Parisienne que j'ai connue est devenue ta grand-mère, Tex!
Paw-Paw: A pretty Parisian whom I met became your grandmother, Tex!

Tex: Ma grand-mère! Une héroïne de la Résistance française? Tiens, le livre que j'écris c'est l'histoire de deux héroïnes de la Résistance. Ce n'est pas une pure coïncidence!
Tex: My grandmother! A heroine of the French Resistance? Say, the book that I'm writing is the story of two heroes from the Resistance. It is not entirely a coincidence!

agreement
Although qui and que are invariable, they assume the gender and number of the antecedent. Que functions as a direct object preceding the verb. Therefore, when the verb of the subordinate clause is in the passé composé, or any other compound tense, the past participle agrees in number and gender with que. The past participle also agrees in number and gender with qui if the verb forms its passé composé with être.

Tex: Marie-Tammy et Jean-Tex sont les deux héros que j'ai vus dans un rêve.
Tex: Marie-Tammy and Jean-Tex are the two heroes whom I saw in a dream.

Ce sont deux espions qui se sont rencontrés en mission.
They are two spies who met on a mission.
Relative pronouns: ce qui, ce que

Ce qui and ce que are relative pronouns like qui and que; that is, they introduce a subordinate clause. However, ce qui and ce que are used in sentences in which there is no expressed antecedent. They do not refer to a specific noun, but rather to an idea or an entire statement, which may or may not have been previously expressed: they refer to something unstated and unspecified.

The choice between ce qui and ce que depends solely on the grammatical role, subject or direct object, that the relative pronoun plays in the subordinate clause.

ce qui

Ce qui (what, that, which) functions as the subject of the subordinate clause.

Tammy: Edouard, tu as lu le roman de Tex sur la deuxième guerre mondiale?
Edouard: Ah oui! Ce qui est fascinant, c'est sa description de l'époque.
J'adore tout ce qui se rapporte à la Résistance!
Et puis, il y a une intrigue amoureuse, ce qui ne m'étonne pas puisque l'héroïne du livre s'appelle Marie-Tammy!

Ce qui is often used for emphasis followed by c'est. Note how the sentence 'Ce qui est fascinant, c'est sa description de l'époque.' is more emphatic than saying simply 'Sa description de l'époque est fascinante.'

ce que

Ce que (what, that, which) functions as the direct object of the subordinate clause. Ce que becomes ce qu' before a word beginning with a vowel.

Tammy: Edouard, have you read Tex's novel on WWII?
Edouard: Ah, yes I have! What's fascinating is his description of the period.
I love everything that is related to the Resistance!
And there's also a love interest, which does not surprise me since the book's heroine is called Marie-Tammy!

Ce que is used in indirect discourse (see reported speech).
**Relative pronouns: dont, où, etc. present tense**

A relative pronoun introduces a clause that explains or describes a previously mentioned noun. In instances where the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, relative pronouns other than *qui* and *que* must be used. *De* is the most common of these prepositions, and *dont* is the relative pronoun representing both the preposition *de* + its object.

**dont, où, lequel: relative pronouns with antecedent**

**dont** Use *dont* if the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by *de/d'*. Such clauses may indicate possession or they may contain verbs which are followed by the preposition *de*. Some of these verbs include ‘parler de’ (to talk about); ‘avoir besoin de’ (to need); ‘avoir peur de’ (to be afraid of); ‘tenir de’ (to take after).

Text: Le livre *dont* je suis l’auteur est un roman historique.

Text: The book of which I’m the author is an historical novel.

**Dont** often indicates possession; ‘whose’ is its English equivalent.

Edouard, parlant du livre de Tex: Tex, *dont* le grand-père a combattu en France, en 40, a dédié ce livre à Paw-Paw.


**où**

The relative pronoun *où* means ‘where, in which, on which.’ Use *où* if the subordinate clause needs an object indicating location introduced by *dans, à, sur, sous*. When used after adverbs of time, *où* means ‘when.’


Paris, where the story starts, is going to be liberated by the Americans.

Paw-Paw était à Paris le jour *où* les Américains sont entrés dans la ville.

Paw-Paw was in Paris the day [when] the Americans entered the city.

**preposition + lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles**

The relative pronouns *lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles* (which) are used when the relative clause is introduced by a preposition other than *de/d’*. These pronouns make the usual contractions with the prepositions *à* and *de*. Note that the preposition in French must always be placed immediately in front of the relative pronoun.

Ce roman, *dans lequel* Tex utilise les souvenirs de guerre de Paw-Paw, est très réaliste.

This novel, *in which* Tex uses Paw-Paw’s war memories, is very realistic.
Ses personnages, auxquels Tex s’identifie, sont des héros de la Résistance.

L’homme à côté duquel Marie-Tammy est assise est un officier nazi.

Les hommes parmi lesquels Marie-Tammy se trouve sont tous des nazis.

Les deux femmes entre lesquelles l’officier se trouve font partie de la Résistance.

His characters, with whom Tex identifies, are heroes of the Resistance.

The man next to whom Marie-Tammy is seated is a nazi officer.

The men among whom Marie-Tammy finds herself are all nazis.

The two women between whom the officer is seated are part of the Resistance.

Note: The form dont is generally used in spoken French instead of the forms duquel, de laquelle, desquels, and desquelles; however, these latter forms may also be found, especially in written texts. Dont may be substituted only for the simple preposition de and its object, but a form of lequel must be used when de is part of a two- or three-word preposition, such as ‘à propos de, près de, loin de, à côté de.’

**ce dont, ce + preposition + quoi : relative pronouns with no antecedent**

In all the preceding examples, the relative pronouns have an antecedent; in other words, a specific word in the sentence for which the relative pronoun stands. Just as the forms ce qui and ce que are used when there is no explicit antecedent, so the forms ce dont and ce + preposition + quoi refer to something unstated and unspecified.

Use ce dont if the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by de.

On comprend très bien ce dont les Parisiens avaient peur pendant l’Occupation. One understands very well what the Parisians were afraid of during the Occupation.

Use ce + preposition + quoi when the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by a preposition other than de. Remember that, unlike English, the preposition in French must always be placed immediately in front of the relative pronoun.

Tout le monde va comprendre ce à quoi Tex fait allusion quand il décrit Jean-Tex et Marie-Tammy—il s’agit bien de Tex et Tammy, nos tatous favoris! Everybody’s going to understand what Tex is alluding to when he describes Jean-Tex and Marie-Tammy—it’s indeed a matter of Tex and Tammy, our favorite armadillos!
Conjunctions

Introduction to conjunctions

A conjunction is a word used to link or ‘conjoin’ words or phrases into a coherent whole. There are two classes of conjunctions: coordinate and subordinate.

Coordinating conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction ‘coordinates’ two equivalent elements in a sentence, that is, words belonging to the same grammatical category (nouns + nouns, verbs + verbs, independent clause + independent clause, etc.). The most commonly used coordinating conjunctions in French are:

- mais (but)
- ou (or)
- et (and)
- donc (so, thus)
- or (so, now)
- ni ... ni (neither ... nor)
- car (for)
- puis (then)

Edouard n’aime ni le barbecue ni les hamburgers. Tex fume des cigarettes et boit du vin rouge.

Edouard likes neither barbecue nor hamburgers. Tex smokes cigarettes and drinks red wine.

Subordinating conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction links an independent clause to a dependent clause. In other words, a subordinating conjunction joins two unequivalent clauses (independent and dependent). An independent clause is any clause that can stand alone to form a grammatical sentence. A dependent clause, on the other hand, cannot stand alone and thus ‘depends’ on the main clause in order to form a complete thought.

The most commonly used subordinate conjunctions:

- que (that)
- pendant que (as, while)
- quand (when)
- lorsque (when)
- depuis que (since (indicating time))
- tandis que (while, whereas)
- puisque (since)
- parce que (because)

Il est évident que Tex fume trop. (dependent). It is obvious que Tex smokes too much.
... (independent)
Coordinating conjunctions link words, phrases or independent sentences. The most commonly used are **mais** (but), **ou** (or), **et** (and), **donc** (so, thus), **or** (so, now, but), **ni...ni** (neither ... nor), **car** (for), **puis** (then). These conjunctions conjoin forms of the same grammatical category (adjective + adjective, noun + noun, clause + clause, etc.).

With the exception of **or**, all of these conjunctions can be used to link **adjectives**, **nouns** or **verbs** within a sentence.

In addition, **ou**, **et**, **ni**, **car**, **mais**, **donc**, and **puis** are also used to combine two **clauses** into one:

Tex, **puis** Tammy, ont essayé de comprendre les goûts de Trey.

Ils trouvent que le rap est une musique intéressante **mais** fatigante.

Ils préfèrent la musique française **ou** le jazz.

Trey est jeune **donc** curieux.

Trey n’est **ni** intellectuel **ni** cultivé.

Pour Trey, le saut à l’élastique est **fascinant car** dangereux.

Tex, **puis** Tammy, ont essayé de comprendre les goûts de Trey.

Ils trouvent que le rap est une musique intéressante **mais** fatigante.

Ils préfèrent la musique française **ou** le jazz.

Trey est jeune **donc** curieux.

Trey n’est **ni** intellectuel **ni** cultivé.

Pour Trey, le saut à l’élastique est **fascinant car** dangereux.

Tex, then Tammy, tried to understand Trey’s tastes.

They think that rap is interesting but / yet tiring music.

They prefer French music or jazz.

Trey is young, thus curious.

Trey is neither intellectual nor cultivated.

For Trey, bungee jumping is fascinating because (it’s) dangerous.

In addition, **ou**, **et**, **ni**, **car**, **mais**, **donc**, and **puis** are also used to combine two **clauses** into one:

Tex parle de poésie, de philosophie, **ou** il ne parle pas du tout.

Trey fait du skate-board **et** écoute de la musique.

Tex n’aime pas écouter de la musique **rap** **ni** faire du skate-board.

Tex ne veut certainement pas essayer le saut à l’élastique **car** c’est très dangereux.

Tex aime bien son frère Trey **mais** ils n’ont rien en commun.

Tex talks about poetrey, philosophy, or he does not talk at all.

Trey does skate-boarding and listens to music.

Tex does not like to listen to rap music nor does he like to skate-board.

Tex certainly does not want to try bungee jumping for it is very dangerous.

Tex really likes his brother Trey but they have nothing in common.
Ou, or, puis, donc, mais indicate a link between two separate sentences. Or, mais and puis are usually placed at the very beginning of the second sentence. Donc is usually placed either at the beginning or right after the conjugated verb of the second sentence.

En France, Tex ignorait l'existence de son frère. Puis, un jour, il a rencontré Trey. 

Tex et Trey n'ont rien en commun. Ils ont donc quelques problèmes de communication. 

Or cela inquiète Tex. 

Mais que faire? 

Tex and Trey have nothing in common. So they have a few communication problems. Consequently, this worries Tex. 

But what can be done?
subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate, or dependent, clauses. The most commonly used are que (that), pendant que (as, while), quand / lorsque (when), depuis que (since, indicating time), tandis que (while, whereas) puisque (since), parce que (because).

Il est évident que Trey est un curieux personnage.

It is evident that Trey is a curious character.

Trey et Tex sont tous les deux des artistes, mais tandis que Tex est poète, Trey est musicien.

Trey and Tex are both artists, but while Tex is a poet, Trey is a musician.

Depuis que Tex connaît Trey, il a découvert le monde du rap.

Since Tex has known Trey, he has discovered the world of rap.

Trey se lève quand le soleil se couche. Il travaille pendant que Tex dort.

Trey gets up when the sun goes down. He works while Tex is asleep.

Puisque Tex et Trey sont frères et artistes, ils devraient se comprendre. Mais ce n'est pas le cas.

Since Tex and Trey are brothers and artists, they should understand each other. But this is not the case.

Some of these conjunctions may occur with other tenses besides the present, including the future, conditional, and imperfect. There are other conjunctions which require the subjunctive.
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. Thetime 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 occurred 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 aurait 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)
**present tense**

The present tense indicates an action that is either actually occurring at the time of speaking, or a general truth, a so-called 'eternal verity.'

The French present may be translated in three different ways in English depending on the intended meaning.

- **Tex is drinking** coffee. (right now, progressive action)
- **Tex boit** du café. **Tex drinks** coffee (in general, habitual action)
- **Tex does drink** coffee. (emphatic or contrastive)

While a French present tense utterance may be translated by three different English sentences, the specific meaning is recoverable from context. In fact, French indicates the different nuances of the English progressive, habitual, or emphatic forms by adding elements to clarify the context.

Note the following examples:

- Tex oublie **toujours** de prendre un bon petit déjeuner.
- Tammy: Tex, il faut manger au petit déjeuner. C'est le repas le plus important de la journée.
- Tex: Oh, ma chérie, tu t'inquiètes trop. **Regarde**, je mange un beignet.

- Tammy: Un beignet!? Tu rigoles? Mais, ça ne compte pas!
- Tex: Mais **si**, ça compte. Du sucre et du beurre me font du bien le matin ... et ensuite une cigarette.

**In addition, the present tense is sometimes used in place of the past or future in informal narration:**

- La vie de Tex est toute une histoire ... En 1975, alors bébé, Tex se perd à l'aéroport Bush International à Houston. On le met par erreur avec les bagages dans un avion à destination de la France. A Paris, il rencontre des nonnes qui viennent de faire un voyage aux États-Unis. Elles ont pitié de ce pauvre tatou égaré et elles l'amènent au couvent à Lyon. Tex passe son enfance en France. Un jour, on découvre que Tex n'a pas de papiers--pas de passeport, pas de visa. Alors, il retourne au Texas. Malheureusement, il ne se sent pas chez lui au Texas. La vie américaine n'est pas facile pour un tatou francisé.
- Tex's life is quite a story ... In 1975, just a baby, Tex gets lost at Bush International Airport in Houston. He is put by accident with the baggage in a plane headed for France. In Paris he meets some poor nuns who have just taken a trip to the United States. They feel sorry for this poor, lost armadillo and they take him to their convent in Lyon. Tex spends his childhood in France. One day, it is discovered that Tex has no papers--no passport, no visa. So he returns to Texas. Unfortunately, he doesn't feel at home in Texas. American life is not easy for a Frenchified armadillo!
**recent past (venir de + infinitive)**

When *venir* is conjugated in the present and followed by *de + infinitive*, it means 'to have just done something.' This is called the recent past (le passé immédiat).

Tex et Tammy *viennent de* regarder une vidéo romantique. Et ils *viennent de* finir toute une bouteille de vin. Il n'en reste plus une goutte!

Tammy: Oh chéri, je t'aime de tout mon coeur.
Tex: Embrasse-moi, mon petit quadrupède! [SMACK!]

Tex et Tammy have just finished watching a romantic video. And they have just finished a whole bottle of wine. There isn't a drop left!

Tammy: Oh darling, I love you with all my heart.
Tex: Kiss me, my little quadruped!

---

When *venir* is conjugated in the imparfait followed by *de + infinitive*, it means 'had just done something:’

Tex et Tammy *venaient de* s'embrasser quand Bette est arrivée.
Bette: Oh, excusez-moi ... Je vous interromps?
Tammy: En effet, nous passons une soirée tranquille ...
Tex: Salut Bette, oh, c'est pas grave. On *vient de* regarder une vidéo. Assieds-toi.
Tammy: Mais Tex ...
Bette ronronne.

Tex and Tammy had just kissed when Bette arrived.
Bette: Oh, excuse me ... Am I interrupting you?
Tammy: Yes, you are. We are spending a quiet evening ...
Tex: Hi Bette. Oh, it's OK. We just saw a video. Sit down.
Tammy: But Tex ...
Bette purrs.
The passé composé is the most commonly used tense to refer to actions completed in the past, translated into English in three different ways depending on the context.

Tex ate all the meat!

Tex a mangé toute la viande!

Tex has eaten all the meat!

Tex did eat all the meat!

Tex a mangé toute la viande!

Formaton

This tense is called the passé composé because it is composed of two elements: the present tense of an auxiliary verb (either avoir or être), followed by a past participle:

passé composé = present tense of auxiliary + past participle

Note that in most instances the auxiliary verb is avoir, but some verbs require être as the auxiliary.

For regular verbs with an infinitive ending in -er, the past participle is formed by replacing the final -er of the infinitive with -é. The past participle (parlé) is pronounced the same as the infinitive (parler), even though they are spelled differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parler 'to talk'</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'ai parlé, I (have) talked</td>
<td>nous avons parlé, we (have) talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu as parlé, you (have) talked</td>
<td>vous avez parlé, you (have) talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on a parlé, he, she (it) / one (has) talked</td>
<td>ils / elles ont parlé, they (have) talked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past participle of regular verbs with an infinitive ending in -ir is formed by dropping the final -r from the infinitive. For example, the past participle of finir is fini.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>finir 'to finish'</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'ai fini, I (have) finished</td>
<td>nous avons fini, we (have) finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu as fini, you (have) finished</td>
<td>vous avez fini, you (have) finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on a fini, he, she (it) / one (has) finished</td>
<td>ils / elles ont fini, they (have) finished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past participle of regular verbs with an infinitive ending in -re is formed by replacing the final -re of the infinitive with -u. For example, the past participle of perdre is perdu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perdre 'to lose'</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j'ai perdu, I (have) lost</td>
<td>nous avons perdu, we (have) lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu as perdu, you (have) lost</td>
<td>vous avez perdu, you (have) lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on a perdu, he, she (it) / one (has) lost</td>
<td>ils / elles ont perdu, they (have) lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that many verbs, however, have irregular past participles. The past participles of many common irregular verbs which have avoir as an auxiliary are listed below.
**Negation**

Negation of the passé composé is formed by placing *ne ... pas* around the conjugated verb, which, in this case, is the auxiliary *avoir*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avoir</td>
<td>to have</td>
<td>eu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>être</td>
<td>to be</td>
<td>été</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faire</td>
<td>to do</td>
<td>fait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ouvrir</td>
<td>to open</td>
<td>ouvert</td>
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<tr>
<td>prendre</td>
<td>to take</td>
<td>pris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mettre</td>
<td>to put</td>
<td>mis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suivre</td>
<td>to follow</td>
<td>suivi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boire</td>
<td>to drink</td>
<td>bu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>croire</td>
<td>to believe</td>
<td>cru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voir</td>
<td>to see</td>
<td>vu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savoir</td>
<td>to know</td>
<td>su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connaître</td>
<td>to know</td>
<td>connu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dire</td>
<td>to say</td>
<td>dit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lire</td>
<td>to read</td>
<td>lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>écrire</td>
<td>to write</td>
<td>écrit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td>to be able to</td>
<td>pu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vouloir</td>
<td>to want</td>
<td>voulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoir</td>
<td>to have to</td>
<td>dû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenir</td>
<td>to hold</td>
<td>tenu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recevoir</td>
<td>to receive</td>
<td>reçu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Oh, regardez! Tex a mangé toute la viande! Tammy, au contraire, *n'a pas* mangé de viande! Elle est végétarienne, comme la plupart des tatous.

Joe-Bob arrive chez Tammy. Il meurt de faim. Mais il est trop tard.

Joe-Bob: Tammy, j'*ai perdu* ma collection de noix. Est-ce que je peux dîner avec vous?

Tammy: Je suis désolée, Joe-Bob. Tex *a fini* toute la viande. A mon avis, il *a trop mangé*.

Joe-Bob: Ce n'est pas grave Tammy. Je peux trouver quelque chose dans la cuisine ...

... Mon dieu, Tammy! Est-ce que tu *as vu*? Tex *a dégobillé* partout. C'est dégueulasse!

Tammy: Ça ne m'étonne pas. Ce petit tatou carnivore, il n'est pas aussi évolué que moi!

Oh, look! Tex ate all the meat! Tammy, on the other hand, did not eat any meat! She is a vegetarian, like most armadillos.

Joe-Bob arrives at Tammy's house. He is dying of hunger. But it is too late.

Joe-Bob: Tammy, I lost my nut collection.

Can I have dinner with y'all?

Tammy: I am sorry Joe-Bob. Tex finished all the meat. In my opinion, he ate too much.

Joe-Bob: It's okay Tammy. I can find something in the kitchen ... My god, Tammy! Have you seen? Tex threw up everywhere. It's disgusting!

Tammy: That doesn't surprise me. That little carnivorous armadillo. He is not as enlightened as I am!
**passé composé with être**

**uses**
There are several past tenses in French, and each is used in very specific situations. The *passé composé* is the most common past tense; it is used to relate actions or events completed in the past. The *passé composé* may be translated into English in three different ways depending on the context.

- Tex went to the Alamo.
- Tex *est allé* à l’Alamo.
- Tex has gone to the Alamo.

**formation**
The *passé composé* consists of two parts, the present tense of an auxiliary, or helping verb (either *avoir* or *être*), and a past participle. In most instances the auxiliary verb used is *avoir*.

- The negation is formed by placing *ne ... pas* around the conjugated verb, which in this case, is the auxiliary *être*: *Je ne suis pas allé(e)*, *Tu n’es pas allé(e)*, etc.

**the Alamo of être**
Many intransitive verbs, that is, verbs not followed by a direct object, take *être* in the *passé composé*. Many of these verbs also indicate motion. They are verbs of coming and going. Even *naître* (to be born) and *mourir* (to die) can be thought of as coming and going in metaphorical terms. The *Alamo d’Être* illustrates this group of verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aller</th>
<th><em>to go</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>je suis allé(e)</em>, I went (have gone)</td>
<td><em>nous sommes allé(e)s</em>, we went (have gone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tu es allé(e)</em>, you went (have gone)</td>
<td><em>vous êtes allé(e)s</em>, you went (have gone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>il / on est allé</em>, he / one went (has gone)</td>
<td><em>ils sont allés</em>, they went, (have gone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>elle est allée</em>, she went (has gone)</td>
<td><em>elles sont allées</em>, they went, (have gone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negation is formed by placing *ne ... pas* around the conjugated verb, which in this case, is the auxiliary *être*: *Je ne suis pas allé(e)*, *Tu n’es pas allé(e)*, etc.
A few of these verbs of movement (monter, descendre, sortir, passer, retourner) may sometimes take a direct object, thus becoming transitive. When they do, the auxiliary used is avoir, instead of être. Example:

- Tex est sorti. Tex went out.
- Tex n’a pas sorti la poubelle. Tex did not take out the garbage.

It is important to note that many intransitive verbs of movement, like courir and marcher, do not use être but avoir. The pronominal verbs form another important group of verbs which use être as the auxiliary in the passé composé. 

irregular past participles
The past participles of the verbs that use être as an auxiliary are regular except for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>venir</td>
<td>to come</td>
<td>venu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devenir</td>
<td>to become</td>
<td>devenu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revenir</td>
<td>to come back</td>
<td>revenu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naître</td>
<td>to be born</td>
<td>né</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mourir</td>
<td>to die</td>
<td>mort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

agreement of the past participle
The past participle of a verb which takes être agrees in gender and number with the subject; that means an -e is added to the past participle to agree with a feminine subject and an -s is added for a plural subject. If the subject is feminine plural, -es is added.

- Joe-Bob: Tex, Corey et toi, vous êtes rentrés de l’Alamo?
- Tex: Oui. Mais Tammy et Bette sont restées à San Antonio pour faire des achats.
- Corey: Tu n’as pas entendu? Tout d’un coup Tammy est devenue toute pâle et elle est tombée dans la rivière!
- Joe-Bob: Mais, qu’est-ce qui s’est passé?
- Corey: Calme-toi. Elle n’est pas morte! Tex et moi sommes arrivés pour la sauver!
- Joe-Bob: Tex, did you and Corey come back from the Alamo?
- Tex: Yes. But Tammy and Bette stayed in San Antonio to go shopping.
- Corey: Didn’t you hear? All of a sudden Tammy turned very pale and she fell in the river!
- Joe-Bob: But, what happened?
- Corey: Calm down. She didn’t die! Tex and I arrived to save her!
future: usage

A pronominal verb is a verb which has a reflexive pronoun, that is, a pronoun referring back to its subject. These verbs are easily recognized by the pronoun se before the infinitive: se lever, se laver, se promener, etc.

formation
In the passé composé, pronominal verbs are conjugated with être as their auxiliary. Past participles of pronominal verbs are formed like nonpronominal past participles. Note that the reflexive pronoun (me, te, se, nous, vous, se) precedes the auxiliary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>singular subject</th>
<th>plural subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s’amusé(e)</td>
<td>je me suis amusé(e), I had fun</td>
<td>nous nous sommes amusé(e)s, we had fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu t’es amusé(e), you had fun</td>
<td>vous vous êtes amusé(e)(s), you had fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>il / on s’est amusé, he / one had fun</td>
<td>ils se sont amusés, they had fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elle s’est amusée, she had fun</td>
<td>elles se sont amusées, they had fun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

past participle agreement
It is important to note that, in most cases, the past participle of pronominal verbs agrees in gender and number with the gender and number of the reflexive pronoun, that is, an e is added to the past participle to agree with a feminine subject and an s is added for a plural subject.

Tammy: Je me suis réveillée très tôt ce matin. Tammy: I got up really early this morning.
Tex: Moi, je me suis réveillé très tard! Tex: I got up really late!

past participle agreement: exceptions
The past participle does not agree if there is a direct object following the verb which is a part of the body:

Tammy: Je me suis lavée. Tammy: I washed.
Et ensuite je me suis lavé les cheveux. And then, I washed my hair.

In the second example, the direct object les cheveux is placed after the verb, so there is no agreement.

Furthermore, in cases where the reflexive pronoun is an indirect object rather than a direct object, as in the verb se parler (parler à), there is no agreement.

Tammy: Puis, Bette et moi, nous nous sommes parlé. Tammy: Then, Bette and I talked to each other.

negation
In the negative, the ne precedes the reflexive pronoun and the pas follows the auxiliary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>singular subject</th>
<th>plural subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s’amusé(e)</td>
<td>je ne me suis pas amusé(e)</td>
<td>nous ne nous sommes pas amusé(e)(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu ne t’es pas amusé(e)</td>
<td>vous ne vous êtes pas amusé(e)(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>il / on ne s’est pas amusé</td>
<td>ils ne se sont pas amusés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elle ne s’est pas amusée</td>
<td>elles ne se sont pas amusées</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tammy: Bonjour Tex! Oh là là! Tu ne t'es pas rasé ce matin?

Tex: Oh ça va hein! Mon réveil n'a pas sonné! Je me suis réveillé trop tard. Et toi, tu t'es rasée?

Tammy: Monsieur Tex s'est levé du pied gauche aujourd'hui!

Tammy: Hi Tex! Oh dear! You did not shave this morning?

Tex: Oh that’s enough, OK! My alarm clock did not go off! I woke up too late. Did you shave?

Tammy: Mister Tex got up on the wrong side of the bed today!
The imperfect tense (l'imparfait), one of several past tenses in French, is used to describe states of being and habitual actions in the past. It also has several idiomatic uses.

**stem**
The stem of the imparfait is the first person plural (nous) form of the present tense, minus the -ons. The imparfait stem is regular for all verbs except être:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>present tense 'nous' form</th>
<th>imparfait stem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-er verbs: parler</td>
<td>nous parlons</td>
<td>par-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ir verbs: finir</td>
<td>nous finissons</td>
<td>finiss-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-re verbs: descendre</td>
<td>nous descendons</td>
<td>descend-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faire</td>
<td>nous faisons</td>
<td>fais-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prendre</td>
<td>nous prenons</td>
<td>pren-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partir</td>
<td>nous partons</td>
<td>part-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>être</td>
<td>nous sommes</td>
<td>ét-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**endings**
To the stem, add the endings -ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, and -aient. Note that -ais, -ais, -ait, and -aient are all pronounced alike. That means that the singular forms and 3rd person plural (the boot) all sound the same!
Stem changing verbs like *voyager* and *commencer* add an *e* or *ç* to maintain the soft *g* or *s* sound, before imparfait endings which begin with an *a* (je voyageais, tu voyageais, il / elle / on voyageait, ils / elles voyageaient), in other words, before all forms except nous and vous (nous voyagions, vous voyagiez).

The imparfait of pronominal verbs is regular, with the addition of the reflexive pronoun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>je m’amusais</th>
<th>nous nous amusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu t’amusais</td>
<td></td>
<td>vous vous amusiez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on s’amusait</td>
<td></td>
<td>ils / elles s’amusaient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negation is formed as usual by placing *ne ... pas* around the conjugated verb: Je *ne* dansais *pas* (I wasn’t dancing / I didn’t used to dance), Tu *ne* t’amusais *pas* (You weren’t having a good time / You didn’t used to have a good time).

Tex: Je suis allé chez Tammy ce matin. Je *voulais* la voir, mais elle *n’était* pas chez elle. J’avais un cadeau à lui donner. Je *ne pouvais* quand même pas le laisser devant sa porte! Donc je l’ai offert à Bette! J’espère qu’elle l’aimera.

Joe-Bob: Bravo! Quel tombeur tu *fais*!

Tex: I went to Tammy’s this morning. I wanted to see her, but she was not home. I had a present to give her. I could not really leave it outside her door! So I gave it to Bette! I hope she will like it.

Joe-Bob: Bravo! What a Casanova you *are*!
The imperfect tense (l'imparfait) has two primary uses: to describe on-going actions and states of being in the past, and to state habitual actions in the past. The imparfait also has several idiomatic uses. The passé composé and imparfait are each used quite differently in narration.

**States of being or past description**
The imparfait is used to describe people, places, conditions or situations in the past. Some verbs occur more frequently in the imparfait when they are in the past since they typically describe states of being: être, avoir, vouloir, pouvoir. But these verbs do sometimes occur in the passé composé.

*Quand Edouard était adolescent, il n'avait qu'un rêve – devenir un grand cuisinier. Il voulait créer des chefs-d'œuvre culinaires.*

*Notre jeune escargot gourmand, qui adorait la cuisine française classique, fréquentait les meilleures tables de Paris.*

**Habitual actions in the past**
The imparfait is also used to state habitual actions in the past. These past habits are often translated as 'used to, or 'would.' Distinguish between the use of 'would' for habitual past actions (imparfait) and the use of 'would' for the conditional. Note that the imparfait may also be translated by the simple past in English; however, the context, and often adverbs, let you know the action is a past habit.

*Edouard: Tu te rappelles, en été à Paris, quand il faisait chaud? On allait toujours à 10 heures du soir chez Berthillon ... Oh, là, là, leurs glaces, leurs sorbets–fraise, framboise, noisette, pistache, des parfums exotiques. Et puis, on se promenait le long des quais, on voyait la Seine qui coulait, on chantait, on se récitant même des vers. Ah, Paris la nuit, Paris là-bas, mmm, en été.*

*Edouard: Do you remember, in the summer in Paris, when the weather was hot? We always used to go to Berthillon's at 10 o'clock in the evening ... Oh, la, la, their ice cream, their sorbets–strawberry, raspberry, hazelnut, pistachio, exotic flavors. And then, we would take walks along the quays. We would see the Seine which was flowing. We would sing, we would even recite verses. Ah, Paris in the night, Paris over there, mmm, in the summer.*
The imperfect tense (l'imparfait) has two primary uses: to describe on-going actions or states of being in the past, and to state habitual actions in the past. The imparfait also has several idiomatic uses found in the following contexts:

**Suggestions**
The imparfait is used to suggest an action in phrases beginning with **Si on** ...

```
Tammy: Si on achetais une grosse Suburban?
Tex: Si on achetais une Harley Davidson?
```

Tammy: What if we bought a big Suburban? (note: 'on' is often used in the sense of 'nous')
Tex: What about buying a Harley Davidson?

**Wishes**
The imparfait is used to express wishes such as 'If only we didn't have a test this week!' The French equivalent structure, **si** + imparfait, may, or may not, contain the adverb **seulement**:

```
Tex: Si (seulement) on avait plus d'argent!
Tammy: Ah, si (seulement) mes parents nous prêtaient de l'argent!
```

Tex: If (only) we had more money!
Tammy: If only my parents would lend us some money!

Note that the question mark at the end of the sentence indicates a suggestion, and the exclamation mark a wish. In spoken French, however, you have to rely on context and intonation to distinguish between wish and suggestion.

```
Tammy: Si je me faisais tatouer?
Tex: Si seulement je pouvais avoir une moto!
```

Tammy: What if I got tattooed?
Tex: If only I could have a motorcycle!

For other uses of **si** + imparfait, see **si clauses + conditional**. The imparfait also occurs in idiomatic uses with **depuis** and **venir de**.
narration: passé composé vs. imparfait

The passé composé is used in French in answer the question 'What happened?' On the other hand, you will usually put a verb in the imparfait if it answers the question 'What was going on when something else happened?' Generally, the passé composé is used to relate events while the imparfait is used to describe what was going on in the past, states of being in the past, or past habits.

All this takes on special importance in narration of past actions, when both tenses often occur in the same story. Narrating a story entails both describing a setting (habitual actions, atmosphere, places and people) and recounting a plot or a series of events, actions, changes of feelings or thoughts. In general, all stories have a well delineated line of events, the foreground, and a background of supporting details and description. Some literary texts might subvert this rule but this is out of a conscious effort to surprise or unsettle their reader.

imparfait (setscene)
Tammy habitaît à Fort Worth ...
Tammy lived in Fort Worth ...

passé composé (event) Avant,
et puis un jour, elle a déménagé. Before,
at and then, one day, she moved.

The following adverbs are commonly associated with each of the past tenses:

adverbs/imparfait
- tous les jours, tous les matins ...
every day, every morning
- chaque jour, chaque matin, chaque mois ...
each day, each morning, each month
- en général, généralement, d'habitude ...
in general, usually
- autrefois, à l'époque ...
in the past, long ago, at the time
- toujours, souvent ...
always, often
- rarement ...
rarely

adverbs/pasé composé
- un jour, un matin, un soir ...
one day, one morning, one evening
- soudain, brusquement, brutalement ...
suddenly, abruptly, brusquely
- tout d'un coup, tout à coup ...
all of a sudden, suddenly
- tout de suite, immédiatement ...
right away, immediately
- d'abord, enfin ...
first of all, finally
- puis, ensuite ...
then, next

Usually, when verbs like être, avoir, pouvoir, vouloir, and savoir are in a past narration, they will be in the imparfait, since they most likely describe a past state of being or condition. However, when these verbs (and others like them) occur in the passé composé, they indicate a change of state or a change of condition. Compare these examples:

Tammy: Quand j'avais 15 ans, j'habitaît à Fort Worth.
Tammy: When I was 15, I used to live in Fort Worth.

Quand j'ai eu 18 ans, j'ai déménagé à Austin.
When I turned 18, I moved to Austin.
The passé composé is also generally used for activities that lasted for a precise length of time, with a definite beginning and end. On the other hand, the imparfait is used for indefinite lengths of time. Look at these examples:

**definite period of time:**

De 1997 à 1998,

Pendant un an,

Entre dix-huit et dix-neuf ans,

Tex a été vendeur de T-shirts.

**indefinite period of time:**

Avant,

Quand il était enfant,

cette époque-là,

Tex était dans un couvent de Lyon. A

But ultimately it is the entire context that determines which of these two past tenses to use and not a given adverb. For example, in the sentences below, the same adverb, un jour, is used with the imperfect or the passé composé according to the context.

Un jour, Tex vendait des T-shirts à Paris quand il a été arrêté pour activité illégale.

One day, Tex was selling T-shirts in Paris when he was arrested for illegal activity. (The imparfait sets the scene to be interrupted)

Un jour, les autorités françaises ont expulsé Tex. One day, the French authorities deported Tex. (Event)

In the following story, note how the narration opens with an extended description of Tex’ early childhood in the imparfait, which serves as explanatory background to the plot-line events in the passé composé.

Quand Tex était tout petit, il habitait dans la banlieue de Houston avec sa famille. Ce petit tatou, curieux de nature, aimait toujours faire de longues promenades avec ses amis pour explorer les coins etrecoins de la banlieue, surtout les autoroutes!

Heureusement, après des heures et des heures, il a trouvé l’entrée de aéroport Bush International. Fasciné par le bruit et le mouvement, il s’est précipité vers les avions. Tandis qu’il examinait unavion de plus près, un homme l’a brusquement pris et il l’a jeté à l’intérieur avec les bagages. Huit heures plus tard, l’avion est arrivé à Paris, où Tex commencerait sa nouvelle vie française!

Un jour, pendant une promenade, il s’estperdu. When Tex was very small, he lived in the suburbs of Houston with his family. This little armadillo, curious by nature, always loved to take long walks with his friends to explore the nooks and crannies of the suburbs, above all the highways!

Un jour, pendant une promenade, il s’estperdu. En fait, il est devenu cent pour cent français. Quand il était adolescent, il se considérait comme un disciple de Sartre. Il ne connaissait rien au baseball, détestait tout ce qui était américain. Mais en 1998, tout d’un coup sa vie a changé quand il a découvert que ses parents étaient... américains.

Tex a passé le reste de son enfance en France. En fait, il a été disculpé de ses parents 100% français. Quand il était adolescent, il se considérait comme un disciple de Sartre. Il ne connaissait rien au baseball, détestait tout ce qui était américain. Mais en 1998, tout d’un coup sa vie a changé quand il a découvert que ses parents étaient... américains.

Tex spent the rest of his childhood in France. In fact, he became one hundred percent French. When he was an adolescent, he considered himself a disciple of Sartre. He knew nothing about baseball and he detested everything American. But in 1998, all of a sudden, his life changed when he discovered that his parents were... American.
**plus-que-parfait**

**formation**
The pluperfect (le plus-que-parfait) is formed with the auxiliary in the imparfait followed by the past participle of the verb. The choice of auxiliary, être or avoir, is the same as for the passé composé (the Alamo of être applies).

_Plus-que-parfait = auxiliary in the imparfait + past participle of verb_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Present Indicative</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>manger</strong> 'to eat'</td>
<td>I had eaten</td>
<td>had eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu avais mangé, you had eaten</td>
<td>vous aviez mangé, you had eaten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on avait mangé, he, she (it) / one had eaten</td>
<td>ils / elles avaient mangé, they had eaten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Present Indicative</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>aller</strong> 'to go'</td>
<td>I had gone</td>
<td>had gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu étais allé(e), you had gone</td>
<td>vous étiez allé(e)(s), you had gone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on était allé(e), he, she (it) / one had gone</td>
<td>ils / elles étaient allé(e)(s), they had gone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negation is formed in the usual manner by placing _ne ... pas_ around the conjugated verb, which in this case is the auxiliary: Je n'avais pas mangé (I had not eaten), Je n'étais pas allé (I had not gone) etc.

**uses**
In past narration, the plus-que-parfait is used to express an **action which precedes another past action** or moment. In other words, the action in the plus-que-parfait is prior to another past action or moment. In English the plus-que-parfait is indicated by _had + past participle_. In affirmative sentences in French, it is often, but not always, accompanied by the adverb _déjà_ (already).

_A l'âge de sept ans, Tex avait déjà rédigé dix poèmes._
At the age of seven, Tex had already composed ten poems.

_Quelques années plus tard, il avait abandonné tout espoir de gloire littéraire._
A few years later, he had abandoned all hope of literary fame.

_Elle a adoré les poèmes innocents que Tex avait écrits pendant sa jeunesse._
She adored the innocent poems that Tex had written during his youth.

Not all instances of _had + past participle_ in English are translated into plus-que-parfait in French. For example, _in French depuis is usually used with the imperfect (not the pluperfect) and 'had just done something' is generally translated by _venir de_ in the imparfait._

_Le public littéraire attendait depuis des années la nouvelle poésie de Tex quand il a enfin retrouvé son inspiration._
The literary public had been waiting for years for new poetry from Tex when at last he found his inspiration again.

_En fait, Tex venait de commencer un nouveau poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné._
In fact, Tex had just started a new poem when his editor called.
Contrast the plus-que-parfait in this sentence with the examples above:

Tex avait (déjà) commencé son poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné.

Tex had begun his poem when his publisher called.

Remember that the opposite of déjà is the negative expression pas encore, just as 'already' is replaced by 'yet' in English.

Tex n’avait pas encore fini son poème quand son éditeur a téléphoné.

Tex had not (yet) finished his poem when his editor called.

In French and in English alike, the plus-que-parfait is also used to express wishes about the past, as in this example:

Editeur: Si seulement tu avais fini ton nouveau poème!

Editor: If only you had finished your new poem!

The plus-que-parfait is also commonly used in si clauses followed by the past conditional. For example:

Tex à son éditeur: Imbécile! Si vous ne m’aviez pas interrompu, j’aurais pu finir mon nouveau poème. A cause de vous, je sens que je perds à nouveau mon inspiration.

Tex to his editor: Imbecile! If you had not interrupted me, I would have been able to finish my new poem. Because of you, I’m losing my inspiration again.

Editeur: Mon Dieu, si j’avais su combien les artistes étaient difficiles, je serais devenu comptable!

Editor: My God. If I had known how difficult artists were, I’d have become an accountant!
The **passé simple** is a past tense reserved primarily for written discourse. It may, however, be used in very formal spoken language, such as presidential addresses, sermons, or news broadcasting. It has traditionally been used only for events completed in the distant, historical past; however, twentieth century writers sometimes use it for stylistic effect.

The passé simple will generally be translated into English by a preterit, that is, the simple past: 'I talked'. But like the passé composé, the passé simple is used in French only to mention changes and events, while the imparfait remains the tense used for describing the setting, the atmosphere, an ongoing state of mind, or the general situation.

### Regular infinitives ending in **-er, -ir & -re**

For all regular **-er**, **-ir**, and **-re** verbs, the passé simple is formed by dropping the infinitive ending, the final two letters of the infinitive, and replacing them with the following endings. There is **no auxiliary** and this is the reason why it is called a 'simple' tense: it is a one-word tense (unlike the two-word passé composé). Many verbs, such as **aller**, **sortir**, and **suivre**, which are irregular in the present indicative follow the paradigm of regular verbs in their passé simple forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endings for <strong>-er</strong> verbs</th>
<th>Endings for <strong>-ir</strong> &amp; <strong>-re</strong> verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ai</td>
<td>-âmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-as</td>
<td>-âtes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-èrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-is</td>
<td>-îmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-îtes</td>
<td>-rent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>parler</strong> 'to speak'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je parlai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu parlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on parla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>finir</strong> 'to finish'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je finis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu finis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on finit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>perdre</strong> 'to lose'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je perdis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu perdis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on perdit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**irregular verbs: avoir, être, faire**

These verbs are irregular in the passé simple.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>avoir ‘to have’</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j’eus</td>
<td>nous eûmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu eus</td>
<td>vous eûtes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on eut</td>
<td>ils / elles eurent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>être ‘to be’</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je fus</td>
<td>nous fûmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu fus</td>
<td>vous fûtes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on fut</td>
<td>ils / elles furent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>faire ‘to do’</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je fis</td>
<td>nous fismes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu fis</td>
<td>vous fîtes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on fi</td>
<td>ils / elles firent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**other irregular verbs**

There are two sets of endings for the passé simple of irregular verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>endings in -i-</th>
<th>endings in -u-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-is</td>
<td>-i mes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-is</td>
<td>-îtes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-it</td>
<td>-i rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | -is            | -ûmes          |
|                  | -us            | -ûtes          |

Irregular verbs generally have irregular stems for the passé simple. In some cases, the stems are the same as the past participle of the verb. Stems of a few other verbs, marked with an *, are completely irregular (such as naître, mourir, voir). The endings are regular, however, except for venir and tenir which have irregular plural forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>past participle</th>
<th>passé simple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boire</td>
<td>bu</td>
<td>je bus, tu bus, il but, nous bûmes, vous bûtes, ils burent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connaître</td>
<td>connu</td>
<td>je connus, tu connus, il connut, nous connûmes, vous connûtes, ils connurent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>croire</td>
<td>cru</td>
<td>je crus, tu crus, il crut, nous crûmes, vous crûtes, ils crurent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoir</td>
<td>dü</td>
<td>je dus, tu dus, il dut, nous dûmes, vous dûtes, ils durent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dire</td>
<td>dit</td>
<td>je dis, tu dis, il dit, nous dîmes, vous dîtes, ils dirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>écrire</td>
<td>écrit</td>
<td>j'écris, tu écris, il écrivit, nous écrivîmes, vous écrivîtes, ils écrivirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>falloir</td>
<td>fallu</td>
<td>il fallut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lire</td>
<td>lu</td>
<td>il lus, tu lus, il lut, nous lûmes, vous lûtes, ils lurent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mettre</td>
<td>mis</td>
<td>je mis, tu mis, il mit, nous mîmes, vous mîtes, ils mirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mourir *</td>
<td>mort</td>
<td>je mourus, tu mourus, il mourut, nous mourûmes, vous mourûtes, ils moururent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naitre *</td>
<td>né</td>
<td>je naquis, tu naquis, il naquit, nous naquîmes, vous naquîtes, ils naquirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ouvrir</td>
<td>ouvert</td>
<td>je ouvris, tu ouvris, il ouvrit, nous ouvrîmes, vous ouvrîtes, ils ouvrirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleuvoir</td>
<td>plu</td>
<td>il plût</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td>pu</td>
<td>je pus, tu pus, il put, nous pûmes, vous pûtes, ils purent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prendre</td>
<td>pris</td>
<td>je pris, tu pris, il prit, nous prîmes, vous prîtes, ils prirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recevoir</td>
<td>reçu</td>
<td>je reçus, tu reçus, il reçut, nous reçûmes, vous reçûtes, ils reçurent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rire</td>
<td>ri</td>
<td>je ris, tu ris, il rit, nous rîmes, vous rîtes, ils rirent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savoir</td>
<td>su</td>
<td>je sus, tu sus, il sut, nous sûmes, vous sûtes, ils surent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenir *</td>
<td>tenu</td>
<td>je tins, tu tins, il tint, nous tînmes, vous tînmes, ils tinrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venir *</td>
<td>venu</td>
<td>je viens, tu viens, il vient, nous vînmes, vous vînmes, ils vinrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vivre</td>
<td>vécu</td>
<td>je vécus, tu vécus, il vécut, nous vécûmes, vous vécûtes, ils vécurent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voir *</td>
<td>vu</td>
<td>je vis, tu vis, il vit, nous vîmes, vous vîtes, ils virent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vouloir</td>
<td>voulu</td>
<td>je voulus, tu voulus, il voulut, nous vouluûmes, vous vouluûtes, ils vouluurent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the [conjugation reference](#) for the conjugation of other irregular verbs in the passé simple.
Rita: Allez les enfants, c'est l'heure d'aller se coucher!

Les enfants: Ooh! Maman, maman, lisez-nous une histoire! Oui, une histoire ...

Rita: Bon, d'accord. Installez-vous. Je commence ... "Il était une fois une ravissante jeune fille du nom de Cendrillon. Pour lui faire plaisir, son père épousa en seconde noce une veuve qui avait deux filles, Anastasia et Javotte. Mais hélas, le brave homme mourut peu après. Tout changea alors pour la fillette. Sa belle-mère lui confia les tâches les plus rudes et la força à coucher au grenier. Un jour, le roi organisa un grand bal pour marier son fils. La famille de Cendrillon fut invitée. Anastasia, Javotte et leur mère se rendirent au bal mais défendirent à Cendrillon de les accompagner. Une fois seule, Cendrillon se mit à pleurer. Soudain, Cendrillon entendit une voix, la voix de sa marraine la Fée ..."

Rita: Ah ... ils se sont endormis!

Rita: Let's go, children. It's time to go to bed!

Children: Ooh! Mommy, mommy, read us a story! Yes, a story ...

Rita: Oh, OK. Get settled. Here we go ... "Once upon a time there was a beautiful young girl named Cinderella. To make her happy, her (widowed) father married for a second time a widow who had two girls, Anastasia and Javotte. But, alas, the good man died soon after. Everything changed for the young girl. Her stepmother gave her the hardest chores and forced her to sleep in the attic. One day, the king organized a grand ball to marry his son. Cinderella's family was invited. Anastasia and Javotte and their mother went to the ball, but they forbade Cinderella to go with them. Once alone, Cinderella started to cry. Suddenly, Cinderella heard a voice, the voice of her fairy godmother ..."

Rita: Ah ... they have fallen asleep!
**passé antérieur**

Like the 'passé simple', the *passé antérieur* is a literary tense. They are often found together in the same text. The passé antérieur is used in literature, in formal writing, and in very formal speeches, when speaking of past events which are prior to other past actions; it is the literary equivalent of the *plus-que-parfait*. In other words, it is used for a past action that was completed before another action in the past (usually expressed in the passé simple).

**formation**

The passé antérieur is formed with the passé simple of the appropriate auxiliary (*avoir* or *être*) plus the past participle of the main verb.

**Passé antérieur = auxiliary in the literary past + past participle of main verb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parler</th>
<th>to speak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je eus parlé, I had spoken</td>
<td>nous eûmes parlé, we had spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu eus parlé, you had spoken</td>
<td>vous eûtes parlé, you had spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on eut parlé, he / she / it had spoken</td>
<td>ils / elles eurent parlé, they had spoken</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aller</th>
<th>to go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je fus allé(e), I had gone</td>
<td>nous fûmes allé(e)s, we had gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu fus allé(e), you had gone</td>
<td>vous fûtes allé(e)(s), you had gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on fut allé(e), he / she / it had gone</td>
<td>ils / elles furent allé(e)s, they had gone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a list of verbs that use *être* as an auxiliary, like *aller*, see the Alamo of *être*. Remember that all pronominal verbs require *être* as the auxiliary verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>se coucher</th>
<th>go to bed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je me fus couché(e), I had gone to bed</td>
<td>nous nous fûmes couché(e)s, we had gone to bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu te fus couché(e), you had gone to bed</td>
<td>vous vous fûtes couché(e)(s), you had gone to bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on se fut couché(e), he / she / it had gone to bed</td>
<td>ils / elles se furent couché(e)s, they had gone to bed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The passé antérieur occurs most often in subordinate clauses; it is introduced by conjunctions such as après (after), aussitôt que or dèsque (as soon as). Note that, in this case, the main clause is always in the passé simple. The English equivalent is usually (but not always) had + past participle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prior action in the past (passé antérieur)</th>
<th>action in the past (passé simple)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aussitôt qu’il fut né,</td>
<td>Tex commença à parler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as he was born,</td>
<td>Tex began to speak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Après qu’il eut vécu quelques années à Paris,</td>
<td>Tex retourna dans son pays d’origine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After he had lived several years in Paris,</td>
<td>Tex returned to his native land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quand il eut publié son premier recueil de poèmes romantiques,</td>
<td>il y eut un grand scandale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When he had published his first collection of romantic poems,</td>
<td>there was a big scandal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With quand and lorsque (when), the choice of tense depends on the meaning of each clause, as to which action occurs first. In the last example, Tex published his poems first (passé antérieur in the dependent clause) and then there was a scandal. However, the passé antérieur may also occur in the main clause, and the passé simple in the dependent clause: Quand il arriva au Texas, Tex eut déjà fait la connaissance de Tammy.

Les enfants: Maman, maman, raconte-nous la suite de l’histoire de Cendrillon!

Rita: Bon, d’accord. "On défendit à Cendrillon d’aller au bal du roi et on lui ordonna de faire le ménage dans toute la maison. Une fois seule, Cendrillon se mit au travail ... Quand elle eut fini de nettoyer les fenêtres, elle fit les lits. Lorsque les chambres furent propres, elle fit la vaisselle. Enfin, après qu’elle eut rangé toute la maison, elle éclata en sanglots ... . Alors sa marraine la Fée apparut ... ."

On entend les enfants ronfler.

Children: Mommy, mommy, tell us the rest of the story of Cinderella!

Rita: Oh, OK. "Cinderella was forbidden to go to the king’s ball and was ordered to clean the house from top to bottom. Once alone, Cinderella started to work ... When she had finished cleaning the windows, she made the beds. When the bedrooms were clean, she did the dishes. Finally, after she had tidied up the whole house, she broke into sobs ... . Then her fairy godmother appeared ... ."

Sound of the children snoring.
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nager 'to swim'</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je vais nager, I am going to swim</td>
<td>nous allons nager, we are going to swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu vas nager, you are going to swim</td>
<td>vous allez nager, you are going to swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on va nager, he, she (it) / one is going to swim</td>
<td>ils / elles vont nager, they are going to swim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?
The subjunctive is one of four moods in French (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and conditional). A mood is a grammatical term which helps categorize verb tenses. The subjunctive mood is used more frequently in French than in English. It has two tenses: present and past. It expresses several concepts, such as a wish, hope, or doubt, as well as an obligation or a necessity. One such expression which is always followed by the subjunctive is *il faut que* (it is necessary that ...).

### -er, -re, and -ir verbs

The subjunctive endings are the same for all verbs: -e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent. For most verbs, the subjunctive mood is formed by dropping the *-ent* ending from the third person plural of the present indicative and adding the subjunctive endings. Note the similarities between the present indicative and the present subjunctive of -er verbs. This is due to the fact that the same stem is used for the subjunctive and the present indicative; the endings are also identical except for the nous and vous forms. This means that the 'boot' forms of the subjunctive of regular -er verbs look and sound exactly like the present indicative.

Because the subjunctive occurs in subordinate clauses, the subordinating conjunction *que* is usually included as part of the paradigm for the subjunctive forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>parler 'to speak'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... que je parle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... que tu parles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... qu'il/elle/on parle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>finir 'to finish'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... que je finisse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... que tu finisses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... qu'il/elle/on finisse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>attendre 'to wait for'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... que j'attende</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... que tu attends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... qu'il/elle/on attende</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the singular for -re and -ir verbs, the subjunctive looks and sounds different from the present indicative since the stem is different for the two moods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>present indicative</th>
<th>present subjunctive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je finis</td>
<td>... que je finisse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j'attends</td>
<td>... que j'attende</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that, for all conjugations, the third person plural of the present subjunctive always looks and sounds like the present indicative since the stem for the subjunctive comes from the third person plural.

\[ \text{ils parlent} \quad \ldots \quad \text{qu'ils parlent} \]
\[ \text{ils finissent} \quad \ldots \quad \text{qu'ils finissent} \]
\[ \text{ils attendent} \quad \ldots \quad \text{qu'ils attendent} \]

irregular verbs with regular subjunctive forms (dormir, etc.)

Many verbs that are irregular in the present indicative are regular in forming the subjunctive. In other words, the stem is formed by removing the -ent ending from the third person plural of the present indicative and then the endings -e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent are added. Following are some irregular verbs, with the corresponding regular subjunctive forms.

- dormir: to sleep
  ... que je dorme
- sortir: to go out
  ... que je sorte
- partir: to leave
  ... que je parte
- lire: to read
  ... que je lise
- sourire: to smile
  ... que je sourie
- dire: to say
  ... que je dise
- écrire: to write
  ... que je écrive
- mettre: to put
  ... que je mette
- connaître: to know
  ... que je connaisse

stem changing verbs

Verbs with stem changes in the present indicative have one stem for the subjunctive of the 'nous' and 'vous' forms and another stem for the 'boot' forms. These verbs, such as acheter, appeler, manger, commencer, use the same two changes in the present subjunctive.

Tex: Il faut que j'\textit{appelle} le Paw-Paw ce soir. \hspace{1cm} Tex: I have to call Paw-Paw tonight.
Tammy: D'accord. A quelle heure est-ce qu'il faut que nous \textit{appelions} Paw-Paw? \hspace{1cm} Tammy: Okay. What time do we have to call Paw-Paw?

Tex explique les règles à ses étudiants:
Il faut que vous \textit{parliez} clairement; pas de chewing-gum!
Bien sûr, il faut qu'on \textit{finsse} avant midi. Le déjeuner, c'est sacré!
Joe-Bob, il faut que tu \textit{attendes} la fin du cours avant de dormir.
Et il faut que nous \textit{sortions} ensemble après le cours de révision pour prendre un verre.

Tex explains the rules to his students:
You must speak clearly; no chewing gum!
Of course, we must end before meal times. Lunch is sacred!
Joe-Bob, you must wait until the end of class before sleeping.
We must go out together after the review to have a drink.
The subjunctive is one of four moods in French (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and conditional). A mood is a grammatical term which helps categorize verb tenses. The subjunctive is used more frequently in French than in English. One important use of the subjunctive is after the expression *il faut que*, indicating necessity. The subjunctive also expresses a feeling or emotion such as a wish, hope, or doubt.

For most verbs, the subjunctive mood is formed by dropping the -ent ending from the third person plural of the present indicative and adding the endings: -e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent. This is known as the regular formation of the subjunctive.

verbs with two stems

There are several categories of irregular subjunctive formations. The first of these categories concerns verbs with two stems in the subjunctive. These verbs have a similar two-stem irregularity in the present indicative (for example, 'ils viennent' BUT 'nous venons'). The *boot stem* (for the forms je, tu, il / elle, ils / elles) is the third person plural of the present indicative, the very same as the stem for regular formation of the subjunctive. The first person plural of the present indicative provides the *second stem* for the 'nous' and 'vous' forms of the subjunctive. The regular subjunctive endings are added to these two stems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>boot stem, for:</th>
<th>2nd stem, for: nous, vous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aller (to go)</td>
<td>que j’aillle</td>
<td>que nous allions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boire (to drink)</td>
<td>que je boive</td>
<td>que nous buvions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>croire (to believe)</td>
<td>que je croie</td>
<td>que nous croyions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoir (to have to)</td>
<td>que je doive</td>
<td>que nous devions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mourir (to die)</td>
<td>que je meure</td>
<td>que nous mourions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prendre (to take)</td>
<td>que je prenne</td>
<td>que nous prenions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recevoir (to receive)</td>
<td>que je receve</td>
<td>que nous recevions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenir (to hold)</td>
<td>que je tienne</td>
<td>que nous tenions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voir (to see)</td>
<td>que je voie</td>
<td>que nous voyions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vouloir (to want)</td>
<td>que je veuille</td>
<td>que nous voulions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

irregular verbs: avoir and être

*Avoir* and *être* are highly irregular in the subjunctive and must be memorized. Note that the 'nous' and 'vous' forms are spelled with the letter *y* (instead of the *i* characteristic of the regular subjunctive endings). Note in particular the pronunciation of the subjunctive forms of *avoir*, which have the same vowel sound as found in *j’ai* (I have), the first person singular in the present indicative.
Note the similarity of the subjunctive forms of the verbs être and avoir to their respective imperative forms.

irregular verbs: faire, savoir, pouvoir
The verbs faire, savoir and pouvoir have completely irregular stems. The endings, however, are regular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>être</th>
<th>‘to be’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>que je sois</td>
<td>que nous soyons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que tu sois</td>
<td>que vous soyez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qu’il / elle / on soit</td>
<td>qu’ils / elles soient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>faire</th>
<th>‘to do’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>que je fasse</td>
<td>que nous fassions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que tu fasses</td>
<td>que vous fassiez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qu’il / elle / on fasse</td>
<td>qu’ils / elles fassent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

infinitive first person present subjunctive
savoir (to know) que je sache
puvoir (to be able) que je puisse

Note the similarity between the subjunctive and imperative forms of the verb savoir

Paw-Paw donne des conseils à son petit-fils, Tex.

Paw-Paw: Tex, mon cher, il faut que tu saches que la vie est courte. Tammy est une tatou formidable. Tu ne vas pas trouver une meilleure femme. Il ne faut pas que Tammy et toi ayiez peur de vous marier.

Dépêchez-vous! Comme je l’ai dit . . . la vie est courte. Moi, je veux seulement que vous soyez heureux. Et une autre chose: après votre mariage, il faut que vous veniez me voir. Je suis tout seul en Louisiane et la famille me manque. Il faut que nous fassions plus de choses ensemble. Il faut que j’aie plus de compagnie.

Paw-Paw is giving advice to his grandson Tex.

Paw-Paw: Tex, my dear, you have to know that life is short. Tammy is a fabulous armadillo. You are not going to find a better wife. You and Tammy must not be afraid to get married. Hurry up! As I said . . . life is short. As for me, I only want you to be happy. And another thing. After your marriage, you must come see me. I am all alone in Louisiana and I miss my family. We have to do more things together. I’ve got to have more company.
*subjunctive usage: obligation*

The subjunctive is required after impersonal expressions of necessity and obligation. An impersonal expression is any expression introduced by the impersonal pronoun *il*, usually translated into English by "it". One of the most frequent is *il faut que* (it is necessary to). When the main clause uses *il faut que*, the verb of the dependent clause which follows must be in the subjunctive. Note that there are always two different subjects in the two clauses.

Paw-Paw: Tex, *il faut que tu choisisses* le vin.  
PawPaw: Tex, it is necessary that you choose the wine.

Note that the expression *il faut que* is stronger and more emphatic than the verb 'devoir' (which is followed by an infinitive): Tex doit choisir le vin (Tex must/is supposed to choose the wine).

Below are other common impersonal expressions of obligation and necessity. Note that they are all followed by the conjunction *que* which introduces a subordinate clause with a verb in the subjunctive:

- *il est important que*, it is important that
- *il est nécessaire que*, it is necessary that
- *il est essentiel que*, it is essential that
- *il est inévitable que*, it is unavoidable that
- *il vaut mieux que*, it is better that
- *il est préférable que*, it is preferable that
- *il est indispensable que*, it is indispensable that

Paw-Paw: Peut-être que ce ne sont pas mes affaires, mais... j'ai remarqué que Tammy a choisi le vin à ta place. Ecoute, mon cher, *il est préférable que les hommes choisissent* le vin et *que les femmes fassent* la cuisine.

Tex: Merci pour les conseils, PawPaw, mais *il est important que vous compreniez* que les temps changent. Aujourd'hui les femmes font beaucoup de choses qu'elles ne pouvaient pas faire autrefois.

Paw-Paw: Ah, je comprends! C'est Tammy qui porte la culotte et pas toi! Alors *il faut que je t'achète* un tablier, ma petite.

Paw-Paw: Maybe, it's none of my business, but... I noticed that Tammy chose the wine instead of you. Listen, my dear, it's better that men choose the wine and that women do the cooking.

Tex: Thanks for the advice, PawPaw, but it is important that you understand that times are changing. Now women do a lot of things that they used to not be able to do.

Paw-Paw: Oh, I understand. It's Tammy who wears the pants, not you! Well now, I'll have to buy you an apron, my little girl.
**subjunctive usage: doubt**

The choice of mood indicates the speaker's degree of uncertainty: subjunctive implies the speaker doubts the existence or possibility of what is being described; indicative implies the speaker believes or is certain that what is being described is possible or does exist.

**expressions of doubt and uncertainty**
The subjunctive occurs in dependent clauses introduced by verbs and expressions of doubt or uncertainty whenever there are two different subjects in the two clauses linked by the subordinating conjunction _que_.

- *il est possible que*, it is possible that
- *il est impossible que*, it is impossible that *il est*
- *incroyable que*, it is unbelievable that *il est douteux*
- *que*, it is doubtful that _douter que_, to doubt that

Où est Edouard? Chez MacDo?  
Where is Edouard? At MacDonald’s?

Oh non! _il est impossible que_ Edouard soit chez MacDo!  
Oh no! It is impossible that Edouard be at MacDonald’s!

**interrogatives and negatives**
Doubt is commonly expressed by questioning or negating a statement.

- _Crois-tu que_, Corey soit chez MacDo?  
  Do you believe that Corey is at MacDonald’s?
- Oui, je crois que Corey est chez MacDo.  
  I believe Corey is at MacDonald’s.
- Mais Edouard? Non, je _ne crois pas qu’_ Edouard soit chez MacDo.  
  But Edouard? No, I don’t believe that Edouard is at MacDonald’s.

The following expressions imply _certainty_, so when they are used in affirmative statements, they are followed by the _indicative._

- _croire que_, to believe that
- _penser que_, to think that
- _être sûr que_, to be sure that
- _trouver que_, to find that
- _se douter que_, to suspect that
- _supposer que_, to suppose that
- _avoir l’impression que_, to have the impression that
- _il est vrai que_, it is true that
- _il paraît que_, it appears that
- _il est probable que_, it is probable that
- _il (me) semble que_, it seems (to me) that
- _il est clair que_, it is clear that
- _il est évident que_, it is evident that
- _il est certain que_, it is certain that
However, when these expressions are used in either the *interrogative* or the *negative, doubt* is introduced. Consequently, in the subordinate clause, the *subjunctive* is used. On the other hand, when expressions of doubt are negated, they indicate certainty and thus are followed by the indicative: *Je ne doute pas qu’Edouard est un escargot distingué* (I do not doubt that Edouard is a distinguished snail = I am certain that ...).

In the following dialogue, the subjunctive is highlighted in blue and the indicative in orange.

**Tammy:** Je suppose que nous *allons* nous marier. Il est clair que tu m’*aimes*.

**Tex:** Mais Tammy, euh, je ne crois pas que tu *sois* prête pour le mariage. Et puis, je ne suis pas sûr que tes parents *soient* d’accord. Non, non, vraiment, je ne trouve pas que ce *soit* une bonne idée.

**Tammy:** Te semble-t-il que je *sois* trop jeune? Tu n’es pas certain que je *sois* la femme de ta vie?

**Tex:** Oh, chérie, je ne doute pas que tu *es* la femme de ma vie. Mais il est évident que nous *sommes* trop jeunes pour le moment. En plus, il est certain que je n’ai pas encore assez d’argent.

**Tammy:** Je cherche un tatou qui *est* intelligent, bilingue et intéressant. Mais à vrai dire, je l’ai déjà trouvé!

**Tex:** Existe-t-il une seule fille qui ne *soit* pas obsédée par le mariage? N’y a-t-il rien qui *puisse* la détourner?

**Tammy:** Y-a-t-il quelque chose qui *puisse* le convaincre?

**Tammy:** I suppose that we are going to get married. It is clear that you love me.

**Tex:** But, Tammy, uh, I don’t think that you are ready for marriage. And then, I am not sure your parents would approve. No, no, really, I don’t think this is a good idea.

**Tammy:** Does it seem to you that I am too young? You’re not sure that I am the woman of your life?

**Tex:** Oh, my dear, I do not doubt that you are the woman of my life. But it is obvious that we are too young right now. Also, it is certain that I don’t have enough money yet.

**relative clauses**

When *relative clauses* express *uncertainty*, they also trigger the use of the *subjunctive*. If the existence of the antecedent, or referent, is not certain, then the subjunctive is used to highlight this uncertainty. On the other hand, if the existence or possibility of the antecedent is likely and/or definite, then the doubt is removed and the indicative is used.

In the following dialogue, the subjunctive is highlighted in blue and the indicative in orange.

**Tammy:** Je cherche un armadillo qui *est* intelligent, bilingue et intéressant. Mais à vrai dire, je l’ai déjà trouvé!

**Tex:** Existe-t-il une seule fille qui ne *soit* pas obsédée par le mariage? N’y a-t-il rien qui *puisse* la détourner?

**Tammy:** Y-a-t-il quelque chose qui *puisse* le convaincre?

**Tammy:** I am looking for an armadillo who is intelligent, bilingual and interesting. But, actually, I have already found him!

**Tex:** Is there one girl who is not obsessed with marriage? Isn’t there anything that can divert her?

**Tammy:** Is there anything that might convince him?
superlatives

The use of a superlative can influence the choice between the subjunctive and the indicative. The subjunctive is used after superlative expressions that contain a subjective opinion. On the other hand, if the superlative expression contains a fact or a completely objective opinion, then the indicative is used since the idea is devoid of any sort of doubt.

The following list contains a group of common expressions that are superlative-like in their use.

- le seul, the only
- l’unique, the only
- il n’y a que, there is only
- le dernier, the last
- le premier, the first
- le meilleur, the best

In the following dialogue, the subjunctive is highlighted in blue and the indicative in orange.

Tex: Tammy est la plus belle tatou que je connaisse.
Mais quand même, j’ai, j’ai peur du mariage.

Tammy: Tex est le seul tatou français que je connais.
Il est vraiment unique.

Tex: Tammy is the prettiest armadillo that I know. But even so, I’m, I’m afraid of marriage.

Tammy: Tex is the only French armadillo that I know. He is truly unique.
**subjunctive usage: will, emotion, desire**  

**will and desire**
The subjunctive is used in dependent clauses after expressions of will and desire whenever there are two different subjects in the two clauses linked by the subordinating conjunction *que*. Here is a list of common verbs expressing will and desire:

- **aimer que**, to like that ...
- **aimer mieux que**, to prefer that ...
- **attendre que**, to wait, expect that ...
- **désirer que**, to desire that ...
- **exiger que**, to require that ...
- **préférer que**, to prefer that ...
- **souhaiter que**, to hope that ...
- **vouloir que**, to want that ...
- **vouloir bien que**, to be willing that ...

Tex *veut qu'* Edouard *fasse* la cuisine ce soir. Tex wants Edouard to cook this evening.

Note however that *espérer* (to hope) is an exception and is followed by the indicative: 'Tex espère qu'Edouard préparera du couscous ce soir' (Tex hopes that Edouard will prepare couscous this evening). Remember that when there is only one subject, the conjugated verb is followed by an infinitive: 'Edouard ne veut pas faire la cuisine' (Edouard does not want to cook).

**emotion**
The subjunctive is used after expressions of emotion and opinion. Remember that the subjunctive is found in the subordinate clause of sentences that contain a change of subject from the main clause to the subordinate clause. Here is a list of common expressions of emotion with which the subjunctive is found in the subordinate clause:

- **être content(e) que**, to be happy that
- **être heureux(/ se) que**, to be happy that
- **être ravi(e) que**, to be delighted that
- **être étonné(e) que**, to be surprised that
- **être mécontent(e) que**, to be unhappy that
- **être triste que**, to be sad that
- **être surpris(e) que**, to be surprised that

Tammy *est ravie que* nous *venions* dîner chez elle ce soir. Tammy is delighted that we are coming to dinner at her house this evening.

Fiona *craint qu' on mette* un pesticide autour de l'immeuble de Tammy.

Fiona is afraid that they're putting pesticides around Tammy's apartment building.

OR

Fiona is afraid that they will put pesticides around Tammy's apartment building.
Notice how there are two ways of translating these two sentences. Because the subjunctive is the tense for hypotheses and potentialities, it sometimes has a future meaning. Only the context will determine if the action in the subjunctive refers to the present or future time.

**opinion**

Here is a list of common impersonal expressions of opinion; there are many more such expressions since any adjective may be used. Remember that impersonal expressions always have ‘il’ as the subject. These expressions are followed by a dependent clause in the subjunctive.

- **il est bon que**, it is good that
- **il est juste que**, it is fair that
- **il est dommage que**, it is unfortunate that
- **il est utile que**, it is useful that
- **il est urgent que**, it is urgent that
- **il est logique que**, it is logical that

**one subject**

If expressions of emotion or opinion have only one subject throughout the sentence, then the preposition de + infinitive replaces que + subjunctive (See ways to avoid the subjunctive). Contrast the previous examples with these sentences:

**Tammy**

- **est ravie de recevoir** des amis.
- **Il est bon de pouvoir** s'amuser avec ses amis.

**Fiona**

- **craint de ne pas pouvoir** venir.
- **Il est bon de pouvoir** s'amuser avec ses amis.

**Tammy:** Tex, je voudrais que tu choisisisses un bon vin. Mais je préfère que ce soit un rouge s'il te plaît. Il serait dommage que nous buvions du vin blanc avec du boeuf.

**Tammy:** Tex, I would like you to pick a good wine. But I would prefer a red wine please. It would be a pity to drink a white wine with beef.

**Tammy:** Mais enfin Tex, pas un vin américain! Il serait préférable que nous ouvrions une bouteille de Bordeaux ou de Bourgogne.

**Tammy:** My dear Tex, it's not an American wine! It would be better if we opened a bottle of Bordeaux or Burgundy!

**Tammy:** Tu es sûr? Je suis étonnée qu'il n'y ait plus de vin français en réserve!

**Tammy:** Are you sure? I'm really surprised that there isn't any more French wine.
**Conjunctions that take the subjunctive**

When the following conjunctions introduce a subordinate clause with a new subject, they always trigger the subjunctive. Remember that the subjects of the subordinate clause and of the main clause are different. In the examples below, the verb in the subjunctive is underlined.

**Conjunctions expressing intention: pour que, afin que, de sorte que (in order that, so that)**

Bette drague Tex **pour qu’** il lui donne de bonnes notes.  
Bette drague Tex **afin que** Tammy soit jalouse.  
Bette drague Tex **de sorte que** Tammy et Tex se disputent.

Bette is hitting on Tex so that he will give her good grades.  
Bette is hitting on Tex so that Tammy will be jealous.  
Bette is hitting on Tex so that Tammy and Tex will fight.

**Conjunctions expressing fear: de crainte que, de peur que (for fear that, I est)**

Mais Tex n’a rien dit à Tammy **de crainte qu’** elle (ne)* se fâche.  
Il ne veut pas en parler **de peur que** Tammy soit blessée.

But Tex hasn’t said anything to Tammy for fear that [lest] she be angry.  
He doesn't want to bring it up for fear that [lest] Tammy be hurt.

* ne is optional. It is sometimes added to certain subjunctive clauses for stylistic purposes, in these cases it does not negate the verb.

**Conjunctions expressing time: avant que (before), en attendant que (while waiting), jusqu’à ce que (until)**

Pourant, il doit faire quelque chose **avant que** Tammy (ne) se rende compte de ce qui se passe!  
Tex prend un café **en attendant que** Tammy le rejoigne.  
Il va réfléchir au problème **jusqu’à ce qu’elle arrive.**

Yet he must do something before Tammy realizes what’s going on!  
Tex is having a cup of coffee while waiting for Tammy to join him.  
He’s going to think about this problem until she arrives.
Conjunctions expressing obstacles or restrictions: bien que, quoique (although), à moins que (unless)

Tammy a du mal à croire l'histoire de Tex, bien qu'il ait l'air sincère.
Tammy finds it difficult to believe Tex's story, although he looks sincere.

Tammy: Alors Bette n'est pas une vraie amie, à moins que ce (ne) soit toi qui la drague.
Tammy: So Bette is not a true friend, unless it is you who has been hitting on her.

Conjunctions expressing a condition: à condition que (on the condition that), pourvu que (provided that), sans que (without)

Tammy: Ecoute, Tex, je veux bien te faire confiance, à condition que tu me promettes de tout me dire.
Tammy: Listen Tex, I'm willing to trust you, if you promise that you will tell me everything.

Je veux bien pardonner aussi à Bette, pourvu qu'elle ne recommence pas.
I am also willing to forgive Bette, provided that she never does it again.

Conjoining conjunctions which have the same subject
The subjunctive is required after a few conjunctions even when the subject stays the same from the main clause to the dependent clause. These four conjunctions are bien que, quoique, pourvu que, jusqu'à ce que.

Tammy aime Tex bien qu'elle le trouve puéril par moments.
Tammy loves Tex although she finds him childish at times.

Quoi que Tammy soit sûre de vouloir épouser Tex, elle ne veut pas précipiter les choses.
Although Tammy is certain she wants to marry Tex, she does not want to rush things.

Tex veut attendre jusqu'à ce qu'il se sente prêt.
Tex wants to wait until he feels ready.

Tammy veut bien patienter un peu pourvu que Tex n'attende pas trop longtemps.
Tammy is happy to wait a bit more provided that Tex doesn't wait too much longer.
**past subjunctive**

**Formation**

The past subjunctive resembles the passé composé in that it is formed with the present subjunctive of the appropriate auxiliary verb (avoir or être) and the past participle of the main verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>present subjunctive</th>
<th>past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rire</td>
<td>que j’aie rire</td>
<td>qu’il / elle / on ait rire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>que nous ayons rie</td>
<td>que ils / elles aient rie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>que tu aies rie</td>
<td>que vous ayez rie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sortir</td>
<td>que je sois sorti(e)</td>
<td>qu’il / elle / on soit sorti(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>que nous soyons sorti(e)s</td>
<td>que ils / elles soient sorti(e)s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>que tu sois sorti(e)</td>
<td>que vous soyez sorti(e)(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**uses**

The past subjunctive is normally used in dependent clauses that describe an action which precedes the action of the main clause. The past subjunctive is introduced by the same kinds of clauses that introduce the present subjunctive (See subjunctive of obligation, doubt, will, emotion, desire and conjunctions that take the subjunctive). Note the past tense meaning of the event encoded in the past subjunctive. The present subjunctive, on the other hand, indicates a simultaneous action or a future action. Compare these sentences (present subjunctive in orange, past subjunctive in blue):

Tammy: Je suis surprise que tu écrives ce livre. Tammy: I am surprised that you are writing this book.

Tex: Je suis surpris que tu aies lu ce livre. Tex: I am surprised that you have read this book.

Tammy: J’ai été surprise que tu écrives ce livre. Tammy: I was surprised that you were writing this book.

Tex: J’ai été surpris que tu aies lu ce livre. Tex: I was surprised that you had read this book.

Note that the tense of the verb in the main clause in French does not predict the tense of the subjunctive in the dependent clause. The choice between the present and past subjunctives depends on the chronological relationship between the two clauses.

Tammy: Tex est content que la France ait gagné la Coupe du Monde en 98. Tammy: Tex is happy that France won the 1998 World Cup.

Mais je doute qu’il soit sorti après la finale parce qu’il avait trop bu. But, I doubt that he went out after the final game because he had drunk too much.

Ma mère n’était pas sûre que Tex ait aimé le vin qu’elle avait envoyé. My mom wasn’t sure that Tex had liked the wine that she sent for the game.

Mais j’ai peur que Tex et Edouard l’aient trop aimé ! But, I’m afraid that Tex and Edouard liked it too well!
**subjunctive summary**

**WEDDINGS** is a mnemonic device that can help you recall the main points concerning the subjunctive. What are some of the essential components of a wedding?

First, there are always two people who get married at a wedding. And just like a wedding, the subjunctive requires two different subjects in two different clauses.

Second, a ring is often used to symbolize the couple's union at a wedding. And just like the ring, the subordinating conjunction *que* is essential in joining together the two clauses.

Remember that there are also certain other conjunctions which always require the subjunctive.

And finally, the wedding party (the bride and groom and parents and friends) often run the gamut of emotions during the marriage ceremony: **doubt, happiness, sadness, desire**. Similarly, the subjunctive is a mood that indicates a speaker's attitude or opinion about the events expressed. The use of the subjunctive is often triggered by an expression of emotion.

In summary, remember that a wedding always contains the following: **two different people (subjects)** joined by a ring (**que**) in an **emotion-laden context**! The different categories that describe the contexts for the subjunctive spell out **weddings**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WILL</th>
<th>Moi, je veux seulement que vous soyez heureux.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMOTION</td>
<td>Je suis heureuse que tu veuilles m'épouser, Tex!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOUBT</td>
<td>Mais Tammy, euh, je ne crois pas que tu sois prête pour le mariage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESIRE</td>
<td>Je désire que tu m'épouses, Tex!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERROGATIVES</td>
<td>Existe-t-il une seule fille qui ne soit pas obsédée par le mariage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVES</td>
<td>Je n'ai pas l'impression que Tammy soit la femme de ta vie, Tex!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL STATEMENTS</td>
<td>Tex, mon cher, il faut que tu saches que la vie est courte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERLATIVES</td>
<td>Tammy est la plus belle tatou que je connaisse!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ways to avoid the subjunctive**

Although the subjunctive is commonly used in French, many alternative turns of phrase are often used to avoid the subjunctive.

### impersonal expressions with infinitive clauses

Many impersonal expressions which take the subjunctive can be modified and completed with infinitive clauses instead. Note that the infinitive construction eliminates the subject of the original dependent clause.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subjunctive</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Il est important que tu boives du vin.</td>
<td>Il est important de boire du vin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il est préférable que tu sois poli.</td>
<td>Il est préférable d’être poli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il est essentiel que tu lises les journaux.</td>
<td>Il est essentiel de lire les journaux.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il est dommage que tu fumes autant.</td>
<td>Il est dommage de fumer autant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### conjunction replaced by preposition + infinitive

Some conjunctions which are normally followed by the subjunctive have corresponding prepositions, so the sentence can often be rephrased using one subject, with an infinitive following the preposition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>conjunction + subjunctive</th>
<th>translation</th>
<th>preposition + infinitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>à condition que</td>
<td>on the condition (that)</td>
<td>à condition de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afin que</td>
<td>so that, in order to</td>
<td>afin de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>à moins que</td>
<td>unless</td>
<td>à moins de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avant que</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>avant de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de crainte que</td>
<td>for fear that (of), lest</td>
<td>de crainte de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de peur que</td>
<td>for fear that (of), lest</td>
<td>de peur de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en attendant que</td>
<td>while waiting for (to)</td>
<td>en attendant de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pour que</td>
<td>in order that (to)</td>
<td>pour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sans que</td>
<td>without</td>
<td>sans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bette drague Tex pour que Tammy soit jalouse. Tex est victime de harcèlement sexuel! (Bette is hitting on Tex in order that Tammy be jealous. Tex is a victim of sexual harassment!)

Tex ne dit rien à Tammy de peur qu’elle se mette en colère. (Tex does not say anything to Tammy for fear that she get angry.)

---

conjunction replaced by preposition + object

Some conjunctions, like jusqu’à ce que and bien que, which introduce the subjunctive, may be restated using prepositions followed by a noun:

Bette drague Tex pour rendre Tammy jalouse. Tex est victime de harcèlement sexuel! (Bette is hitting on Tex in order to make Tammy jealous. Tex is a victim of sexual harassment!)

Tex ne dit rien à Tammy de peude mettre en colère. (Tex does not say anything to Tammy for fear of making her angry.)

---

other structural transformations

The following pairs of sentences will give you still more ways to avoid the subjunctive.

Jusqu’à ce que Tammy arrive, Tex est très pensif. (Until Tammy arrives, Tex is very pensive.)

Quand elle arrive, il lui sourit, bien qu’il ait des soucis. (When she arrives, he smiles at her, although he is worried.)

Jusqu’à l’arrivée de Tammy, Tex est très pensif. (Until Tammy's arrival, Tex is very pensive.)

Quand elle arrive, il lui sourit, malgré ses soucis. (When she arrives, he smiles to her despite his worries.)

---

subjunctive

Tammy: Je ne suis pas sûre que tu sois prêt pour le mariage. (I am not sure that you are ready for marriage.)

Tammy: Il est possible que tu sois l’homme de ma vie. (It is possible that you may be the man of my life.)

Bette: Je n’ai pas l’impression que Tammy soit la femme de ta vie, Tex. (I don’t think that Tammy is the woman of your life.)

Tex: Tammy, j’ai besoin que tu viennes me voir. (Tammy, I need you to come and see me.)

---

avoiding the subjunctive

Tex: Je ne sais pas si je suis prêt pour le mariage. (I don’t know if I am ready for marriage.)

Tex: Je suis peut-être l’homme de ta vie. (Maybe I am the man of your life.)

Tammy: J’ai l’impression que Bette n’est pas la femme de ta vie, Tex. (I think that Bette is not the woman of your life.)

Bette: Viens me voir chez moi, Tex. J’ai besoin de te voir. (Come and see me, Tex. I need to see you.)
The conditional is used to refer to hypothetical events. It occurs in polite requests and most frequently with if clauses. In French, it is called le conditionnel and is most often translated by would in English.

**formation**

The stem used to form the conditional is the same as the stem of the future (usually the infinitive). The conditional endings are -ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient (These are also the imperfect endings).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>je jouer<strong>ais</strong>, I would play</th>
<th>nous jouer<strong>ions</strong>, we would play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu jouer<strong>ais</strong>, you would play</td>
<td>vous jouer<strong>iez</strong>, you would play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il, elle / on jouer<strong>ait</strong>, he, she (it) / would play</td>
<td>ils / elles jouer<strong>aient</strong>, they would play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above formation works for -er verbs (aimer, j’**aimer**ais), -ir verbs (finir, je finir**ais**) and -re verbs (vendre, je vendr**ais**) . Remember to drop the final e from the infinitive stem of -re verbs .

**pronunciation**

The r in the stem is representative of the conditional, as well as the future. Only the difference in the pronunciation of the endings distinguishes the two. The difference between the je forms is subtle. Note also how the e of the infinitive of -er verbs changes in the future and conditional forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>regarde<strong>r</strong> <strong>‘to look at’</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>future</strong></td>
<td><strong>conditional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je regarde<strong>rai</strong></td>
<td>je regarde<strong>rais</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu regarde<strong>ras</strong></td>
<td>tu regarde<strong>rais</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle regarde<strong>ra</strong></td>
<td>il / elle regarde<strong>rait</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous regarde<strong>rons</strong></td>
<td>nous regarde<strong>rions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous regarde<strong>rez</strong></td>
<td>vous regarde<strong>riez</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils / elles regarde<strong>ront</strong></td>
<td>ils / elles regarde<strong>r</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
irregular stems
Verbs with irregular future stems use the same irregular stems in the conditional. Here is a list of the most common irregular stems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>stem</th>
<th>conditional</th>
<th>translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aller</td>
<td>ir-</td>
<td>f’irais</td>
<td>I would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoir</td>
<td>aur-</td>
<td>f’aurais</td>
<td>I would run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courir</td>
<td>cour-</td>
<td>je courrais</td>
<td>I would run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoir</td>
<td>devr-</td>
<td>je devrais</td>
<td>I would be obliged to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>envoyer</td>
<td>enverr-</td>
<td>f’enverrais</td>
<td>I would send</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>être</td>
<td>ser-</td>
<td>je serais</td>
<td>I would be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faire</td>
<td>fer-</td>
<td>je ferais</td>
<td>I would do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>falloir</td>
<td>faudr-</td>
<td>il faudrait</td>
<td>it would be necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mourir</td>
<td>mour-</td>
<td>je mourrais</td>
<td>I would die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obtenir</td>
<td>obtiendr-</td>
<td>j’obtiendrais</td>
<td>I would obtain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleuvoir</td>
<td>pleuvr-</td>
<td>il pluvrait</td>
<td>it would rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td>pourr-</td>
<td>je pourrais</td>
<td>I would be able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recevoir</td>
<td>recevr-</td>
<td>je recevrais</td>
<td>I would receive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>savoir</td>
<td>saur-</td>
<td>je saurais</td>
<td>I would know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenir</td>
<td>tiendr-</td>
<td>je tiendrais</td>
<td>I would hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venir</td>
<td>viendr-</td>
<td>je viendrais</td>
<td>I would come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voir</td>
<td>verr-</td>
<td>je verrais</td>
<td>I would see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vouloir</td>
<td>voudr-</td>
<td>je voudrais</td>
<td>I would want</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

verbs with spelling changes
Some verbs with spelling changes in the present form their future/conditional stem regularly. These include verbs like préférer, espérer, manger, and commencer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>stem</th>
<th>conditional</th>
<th>translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>préférer</td>
<td>préférer-</td>
<td>je préférerai</td>
<td>I would prefer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>espérer</td>
<td>espérer-</td>
<td>j’espérerai</td>
<td>I would hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manger</td>
<td>manger-</td>
<td>je mangerai</td>
<td>I would eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commencer</td>
<td>commencer-</td>
<td>je commencerai</td>
<td>I would start</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs with spelling changes like appeler, employer and acheter add -r to the present of the je form to create their future stem.
uses

wishes or requests

The conditional expresses potentiality. It is used to express a wish or a suggestion, to make a request, or to accept or extend invitations. It is less direct and more polite than the imperative. The verbs 'pouvoir', 'vouloir', and 'devoir' are often found in the conditional to diminish the strength of a command. In most cases, the conditional is translated as meaning *would* in English. However, *je pourrais* means 'I could', *je devrais* means 'I should' and *je voudrais* means 'I would like'. Also do not confuse *would* in English meaning 'used to' which should be translated as an *imparfait* in French, and NOT as the conditional: A Paris, Joe-Bob allait au MacDo tous les jours. (In Paris, Joe-Bob would used to go to McDonald’s everyday).

Joe-Bob et Tammy se trouvent au restaurant où Edouard travaille comme serveur.

Edouard: Bonsoir Madame, Monsieur. Aimeriez-vous commander un apéritif pour commencer?

Tammy: Oh oui! Pourrions-nous avoir un Ricard et un Perrier? Ensuite, je voudrais une salade verte, s'il vous plaît.

Joe-Bob: Je veux un hamburger.

Edouard: Monsieur, vous devriez être plus poli dans ce restaurant, sinon, je pourrais oublier votre commande!

Hypothetical action

The conditional is used when making statements which are contrary to present facts. It expresses a hypothetical result which depends on (stated or implied) circumstances which do not exist. In order for the action expressed by the conditional to occur, something else must take place first. Note that the condition in the *si* or *if* clause, is always stated in the *imparfait*. (See *si* clauses for further examples.)

Tex et Joe-Bob regardent la télé. 'Le gros lot se monte à 30 millions de dollars. Que feriez-vous si vous gagniez?'

Tex: Moi, j'écrirais sans cesse des livres de philosophie.

Joe-Bob: Moi j'achèterais mon diplôme d'université.

Possibility or uncertainty

The conditional is also used to give information whose accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Journalists often use it to report events which are not known to be true.

Tammy et Bette regardent la télé. Soudain, leur programme préféré est interrompu et un commentateur annonce:

Une tornade vient de s’abattre sur Hubbard, Texas. Il y aurait plusieurs victimes. Un tatou et un écureuil seraient gravement blessés. Restez avec nous, nous devrions avoir plus de détails d’ici quelques secondes…

Presque immédiatement, le téléphone sonne. Tammy répond: A ..., Allô?*

A l’autre bout, Tex dit: ‘Tammy, c’est moi, Tex. Ne t’inquiète pas, on va très bien. Je rentrerai bientôt.’

*JE VEUX UN HAMBURGER!*

Reported speech (indirect discourse)

Tammy and Bette are watching television. Suddenly, their favorite program is interrupted and a commentator announces:

A tornado just struck in Hubbard, Texas. Allegedly, there are several casualties. An armadillo and a squirrel seem to be seriously wounded. Stay with us, we should have more details in a few seconds …

Almost immediately, the phone rings. Tammy answers: ‘He ..., Hello?’

At the other end, Tex says: ‘Tammy, it’s me Tex. Don’t worry we’re fine. I’ll be home soon.’
In addition, the conditional is used to represent the future in relation to a narration in the past when reported speech is used to tell what someone said.

Tex a dit qu'il **rentrerait** bientôt.  Tex said he would be home soon.
Past Conditional

The past conditional represents, as its name implies, the past of the present conditional mood. In French, the past conditional is called le passé du conditionnel or le conditionnel antérieur. Both the present and past conditional express hypothetical situations or conditions.

formation

The past conditional is a compound tense, i.e. it has two parts, an auxiliary and the past participle. The past conditional is formed with the conditional of the auxiliary (either avoir or être) and the past participle of the main verb.

Past conditional = auxiliary in the conditional + past participle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
<th>Past Conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je</td>
<td>serait parti(e)</td>
<td>j’aurais parti(e), I would have left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu</td>
<td>serait parti(e)</td>
<td>tu aurais parti(e), you would have left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on</td>
<td>aurait dit, he, she (it) / one would have said</td>
<td>ils / elles auraient dit, they would have said</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the past conditional (as with the passé composé), you have to choose between avoir and être as the auxiliary. While most verbs use avoir as an auxiliary, pronominal verbs and verbs of movement generally use être (see the Alamo of être). Just as for the passé composé with être, in the past conditional with être, the past participle agrees in gender and in number with the subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
<th>Past Conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je</td>
<td>serais parti(e)</td>
<td>je serais parti(e), I would have left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu</td>
<td>serais parti(e)</td>
<td>tu serais parti(e), you would have left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il / elle / on</td>
<td>serait parti/partie, he, she (it) / one would have left</td>
<td>ils / elles seraient partis/parties, they would have left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

uses

Like the present conditional, the past conditional is used for hypotheses. Unlike the present conditional, however, it is used to describe or imagine events and actions which failed to happen. This is why it is often used to express regret about events which did not occur. In most cases, the past conditional is translated as meaning would have as in English. However, j’aurais pu means ‘I could have’, j’aurais dû means ‘I should have’, and j’aurais voulu means ‘I would have liked’.

Tex: J’aurais aimé être artiste.
Corey: J’aurais voulu être beau.
Tammy: Je n’aurais pas dû écouter Bette.
Edouard: J’aurais pu être un chef célèbre!

Tex: I would have liked to be an artist.
Corey: I would have liked to be handsome.
Tammy: I should not have listened to Bette.
Edouard: I could have been a famous chef!
The past conditional is found in si clauses with the pluperfect. This is because si clauses with the pluperfect also describe events that did not occur, or rather conditions which were not fulfilled so that the event in the past conditional could occur. In the dialogue below, all the verbs in the past conditional describe events that would have happened had the original condition been fulfilled. Note that the unfulfilled condition is implied in each occurrence of the past conditional.

Tex et Edouard discutent de la vie en Amérique.

Edouard: Si tu n'avais pas vendu de T-shirts aux touristes, qu'est-ce qui serait arrivé?

Tex: Ben, d'un côté, je serais resté en France, bien sûr. Mais, de l'autre, je n'aurais pas connu le Texas et je ne serais pas devenu ami avec Tammy. Et tous mes copains ici auraient perdu l'occasion de connaître un philosophe distingué!

possibility or uncertainty

The past conditional, like the present conditional, gives information on a past event about which the accuracy cannot be guaranteed. It is used by journalists and reporters.

Tammy et Bette regardent la télé. Soudain, leur programme préféré est interrompu et un commentateur announce:

‘Une tornade vient de s'abattre sur Hubbard, Texas. Elle aurait fait plusieurs victimes. Un tatou et un écureuil auraient été gravement blessés ... ’

Presque immédiatement, le téléphone sonne. Tammy répond ‘He ... , Allô?’ A l'autre bout, Tex dit ‘Tammy, c'est moi. Ne t'inquiète pas, on va très bien. Je rentrerais bientôt.’

reported speech (indirect discourse)

Just as the conditional represents the future in a past time narration, the past conditional represents the future perfect (futur antérieur) in a past time narration to tell what someone would have done.

Tex a dit qu'il serait rentré plus tôt, si l'orage n'avait pas éclaté.

Tex and Edouard are discussing life in America.

Edouard: If you hadn't sold t-shirts to tourists, what would have happened?

Tex: Well, on the one hand, I would have stayed in France, of course. But on the other hand, I would not have seen Texas and I would not have become friends with Tammy. And all my friends here would have lost the opportunity to know a distinguished philosopher!

Tammy and Bette are watching television. Suddenly, their favorite program is interrupted and a commentator announces:

‘A tornado just struck in Hubbard, Texas. It is said to have caused several casualties. An armadillo and a squirrel seem to have been seriously wounded ...’

Almost immediately, the phone rings. Tammy answers, ‘He ... , Hello?’ At the other end, Tex says, ‘Tammy, it's me Tex. Don't worry we're fine. I'll be home soon.’

Tex said he would have been home sooner, if it had not stormed.
Si clauses (if clauses in English) indicate possibilities, which may or may not become reality. They refer to the present, past, and future. These conditional sentences have two parts: the condition, or si clause, and the main or result clause which indicates what will happen if the condition of the si clause is met.

The tense of the result clause depends on the tense of the si clause. In other words, the tense of the two clauses follow a prescribed sequence.

### si + present (présent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>si clause</th>
<th>result clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Si + present</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(possible condition)</td>
<td>or future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or imperative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This first type of si clause is used in cases where the condition may be fulfilled and thus the consequence is seen as possible. In the following dialogue, you will see si clauses in the present followed by result clauses in the present, in the future and in the imperative:

Tammy est en train de lire un petit quizz sur la personnalité et l’amour dans un magazine.

Tammy: Si tu veux, tu peux répondre aux questions, Tex.

Tex: D’accord. Mais si tu peux, choisis les questions les plus croustillantes!

Tammy: Entendu. Première question: Qu’est-ce que vous ferez demain ... si vous trouvez l’amour de votre vie?

Tex: Si je rencontre l’amour de ma vie, je l’épouserai, bien sûr!

Note that either the si clause or the result clause may begin a sentence, but the same tenses remain specific to each clause (‘Qu’est-ce que vous ferez demain si vous trouvez l’amour de votre vie?’ is the same as ‘Si vous trouvez l’amour de votre vie, qu’est-ce que vous ferez?’)

### si + imperfect (imparfait)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>si clause</th>
<th>result clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Si + imperfect</td>
<td>conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(contrary to current facts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This second type of si clause is contrary to fact in the present. The consequence is thus seen as impossible. Note that in French, the imperfect is used in the si clause, never the conditional.
Le quizz continue. The quiz continues.

Tammy: Si vous étiez une voiture, que seriez-vous?

Tex: Si j’étais une voiture, je serais la légendaire 2CV.

Tammy: Si vous étiez un fruit, lequel choisiriez-vous?

Tex: Si j’étais un fruit, je choisirais le raisin pour pouvoir me transformer en vin.

Tammy: Si vous étiez une femme, que feriez-vous?

Tex: Si j’étais une femme, je ne lirais pas les quiz dans les magazines.

The quiz continues.
If you were a car, what would you be?
Tex: If I were a car, I would be the legendary 2CV.
Tammy: If you were a fruit, which one would you choose?
Tex: If I were a fruit, I would choose grapes, so that I could be transformed into wine.
Tammy: If you were a woman, what would you do?
Tex: If I were a woman, I would not read the quizzes in magazines.

**si + pluperfect (plus-que-parfait)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>si clause</th>
<th>result clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>si + pluperfect (contrary to past facts)</td>
<td>past conditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This last type of *si* clause is used for situations that are contrary to past fact. The result clause thus expresses an unrealized past possibility.

Et le quizz continue. And the quiz continues.

Tammy: Qu’est-ce que vous auriez fait, si vous étiez né à College Station?

Tex: Si j’étais né à College Station, j’aurais préféré Texas A&M à UT. Quelle horreur!

Tammy: Si vous n’auriez pas connu Tammy, qu’est-ce que vous auriez fait?

Tex: Je n’aurais jamais répondu à un tel quizz, si je n’avais pas connu Tammy!

Tammy: What would you have done, if you had been born in College Station?
Tex: If I had been born in College Station, I would have preferred Texas A&M over UT! How terrible!
Tammy: If you hadn’t met Tammy, what would you have done?
Tex: I would never have taken such a quiz, if I hadn’t met Tammy!

**Distinguish between *si* clauses (if-clauses) and questions that are reported in indirect speech. Observe the difference between these two sentences:**

**Question in indirect speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Si clause</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tex demande si Tammy est prête.</td>
<td>Tex is asking if Tammy is ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tex: Tammy, si tu es prête, on peut partir tout de suite.</td>
<td>Tex: Tammy, if you are ready, we can leave right now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Reported Speech in the Present**

**reporting statements**

To report what someone else says or thinks, link the main clause (il dit, il pense, etc.) and the subordinate clause with que (qu’ in front of a word beginning with a vowel):

Tex et Tammy ont une querelle d’amoureux. Fiona essaie de les raccommoder.

Tammy: Tu ne m’écoutes jamais!
Tex (devant la télé): Je n’ai pas entendu.
Fiona: **Elle dit que tu ne l’écoutes jamais.**

Tex and Tammy are having a lovers’ tiff. Fiona is trying to patch things up.

Tammy: You never listen to me!
Tex (in front of the TV): I did not hear.
Fiona: She is saying that you never listen to her.

**reporting questions**

To report simple yes/no questions, use si. Note that si changes to s’ in front of a word beginning with an i (s’il), but does not change before other vowels (si elle, si on).

Tammy: Est-ce que tu vas faire un effort?
Tex (toujours devant la télé): Quoi?
Fiona: **Elle te demande si tu vas faire un effort.**
Tex: Bien sûr, mais après le match de foot.
Fiona: She is asking you if you are going to make an effort.

Tammy: Are you going to make an effort?
Tex (still in front of the TV): What?
Fiona: She is asking you if you are going to make an effort.
Tex: Sure, but after the soccer game.

To report an information question use the interrogative word quand, comment, où, etc.:

Tammy: Où étais-tu hier soir? Comment as-tu rencontré cette grande blonde?
Quand finit ce match?
Tex: Comment?
Fiona: **Elle te demande où tu étais hier soir, comment tu as rencontré cette grande blonde et quand ce match finit.**

Tammy: Where were you last night? How did you meet that tall blonde? When does this game finish?
Tex: Excuse-me?
Fiona: She is asking you where you were last night, how you met that tall blonde and when this game finishes.

To report questions starting with que, qu’est-ce que, and qu’est-ce qui, use ce que and ce qui. Note that the inverted subject and verb return to normal order when reporting a que question:

Tex: Je ne comprends pas! Qu’est-ce qu’elle veut dire? Qu’est-ce qui se passe?
Fiona: Tammy, **Tex ne comprend pas ce que tu veux dire. Il ne comprend pas ce qui se passe.**
Tammy: Que faisait-il avec cette grande blonde?
Fiona: Tex, **Tammy veut savoir ce que tu faisais avec cette grande blonde.**

Tex: I don't understand! What does she mean? What's going on?
Fiona: Tammy, Tex does not understand what you mean. He does not understand what's going on.
Tammy: What was he doing with that tall blonde?
Fiona: Tex, Tammy wants to know what you were doing with that tall blonde.
reporting orders
To report an order, replace the imperative by de (d') + infinitive:

Tammy: Tex, éteins tout de suite cette télévision! Ecoute-moi! Ne fais pas l'idiot!

Tex: Pardon?

Fiona: Tammy t'ordonne d'éteindre tout de suite cette télévision. En plus, elle te dit de l'écouter. Elle te demande de ne pas faire l'idiot.

Tammy: Tex, turn this TV off immediately! Listen to me! Don't be stupid!

Tex: Excuse me?

Fiona: Tammy is ordering you to turn this TV off immediately. And she is telling you to listen to her. She is asking you not to be stupid.

reporting answers
To report yes and no answers, use que:

Plus tard, Fiona raconte la fin de l'histoire à ses amis.

Fiona: . . . et soudain, Tammy demande à Tex s'il peut éteindre la télé et il lui répond que NON.

Later, Fiona tells the end of the story to her friends.

Fiona: . . . and suddenly, Tammy asks Tex if he can turn off the TV and he answers NO.
**Reported Speech in the past**

**reporting statements**
To report what has been said or thought in the past, link the main clause introduced by *il a dit*, *je pensais*, etc. and the subordinate clause with *que/qu’*. The tense of the verb in the subordinate clause also changes.

*Trey: Je suis amoureux de toi* Tammy!
*Trey: I am in love with you* Tammy.

*Tammy: Comment? Tex m’a dit que tu avais une petite amie!*
*Tammy: What? Tex told me you had a girlfriend!*

**what tense in the subordinate clause?**
When the main clause is in the past, the subordinate clause must also be in the past tense. They belong to the same time frame. This rule is known in French as the *concordance des temps,* the agreement or concordance of the tenses. Look at these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>quote</th>
<th>reported speech</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>imparfait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tammy: Hé Tex, j’aime beaucoup ton frère Trey. (Hey Tex, I really like your brother Trey.)
| Elle a dit qu’elle aimait beaucoup Trey. (She said that she really liked Trey.) |
| passé compose | plus -que-parfait |
| Tammy : Trey est devenu sexy. (Trey has become sexy.)
| Elle a dit que Trey était devenu sexy. (She said that Trey had become sexy.) |
| future | conditional |
| Tammy : Nous louerons la vidéo ‘Les Liaisons dangereuses.’ (We’ll rent the video ‘Dangerous Liaisons.’) |
| Elle a dit qu’ils loueraient la vidéo ... (She said that they would rent the video ...) |

**reporting questions**
To report yes/no questions, use *si*. Note that *si* changes to *s’* in front of a word beginning with an *i* (*s’il*), but does not change before other vowels (*si elle, sion*).

*Tammy: Tu aimes les films horreur?*
*Tammy: Do you like horror films?*

*Trey: Qu’est-ce que tu as dit?*
*Trey: What did you say?*

*Tammy: Je t’ai demandé si tu aimais les films horreur.*
*Tammy: I asked if you liked horror films.*

To report an information question use the interrogative word *quand, comment, où*, etc.:

*Trey: Quand vas-tu quitter mon frère?*
*Trey: When are you going to leave my brother?*

*Tammy: Qu’est-ce que tu disais?*
*Tammy: What were you saying?*

*Trey: Je te demandais quand tu allais quitter mon frère.*
*Trey: I was asking you when you were going to leave my brother.*
To report questions starting with *que*, *qu'est-ce que*, and *qu'est-ce qui*, use *ce que* (*ce qu')* and *ce qui* :

Tex: Trey, qu'est-ce que tu vas faire ce soir avec Tammy?
Trey: Qu'est-ce que tu as dit?
Tex: Je te *demandais ce que tu allais faire ce soir* avec Tammy.

reporting orders

To report an order, replace the imperative by *de/d' + infinitive*:

Tex: Sois poli avec Tammy! Ne flirte pas avec elle!
Corey: *Tex t'a dit d'être poli avec Tammy et de ne pas flirter* avec elle!

reporting answers

Note that to report yes/no sentences use *que*:

Tammy: Non.
Trey: Qu'as-tu dit? Tammy: Je t'ai dit *que* non. C'est Tex que j'aime!

Fiona et Bette ont entendu dire que Trey a demandé à Tammy de l'épouser.

Fiona: Je t'assure Bette, Trey m'a *raconté qu'il avait acheté* une grosse bague en diamants pour Tammy.
Bette: Et moi qui *croyait que* Trey était amoureux de moi! Quelle déception!
Fiona: Mais je n'ai pas *sus* Tammy *avait raconté* l'histoire à Tex ou *si elle avait gardé* le secret! Alors chut!
Active vs. passive voice

"Voice" refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb in a sentence. A sentence is said to be in the **active voice** if the subject is performing the action of the verb. For example, 'Tex is calling Tammy.' In this sentence, the subject (Tex) performs the action of calling Tammy. Active subjects are called "agents".

The **passive voice**, on the other hand, refers to a sentence in which the subject receives the action. In other words, the subject is passive, or acted upon by the agent. For example: 'Tammy is being called by Tex.' In this sentence, Tammy receives the action performed by Tex, the agent.

**formation**

= conjugated form of être + past participle of main verb (+ par + agent)

Note that the past participle always agrees in number and gender with the subject.

Les Aggies sont battus (par les Longhorns).

Les Aggies ont été battus (par les Longhorns).

Les Aggies seront battus (par les Longhorns).

The Aggies are beaten (by the Longhorns).

The Aggies were beaten (by the Longhorns).

The Aggies will be beaten (by the Longhorns).

The agent, when mentioned, is usually preceded by par. However, with the verbs aimer, connaître, and respecter, the agent is introduced by de instead.

Tammy est aimée de Tex.

Tex est bien connu de toutes les étudiantes et respecté de tous les professeurs.

Tammy is loved by Tex.

Tex is well-known to all the female students and respected by all the professors.

**uses**

The passive voice places the focus on the object of the verb rather than the subject:

**Tex a écrit le livre Guerre et Amour.**

**Le livre Guerre et Amour a été écrit par Tex.**

Tex wrote the book *War and Love.*

The book *War and Love* was written by Tex.

The passive voice draws attention to an event without necessarily mentioning who is responsible for it:

Oh, Corey et Fiona ont été enlevés!

Oh, Corey and Fiona were abducted!

The passive voice is often used for inventions, laws, and, logically enough, for events that one falls victim to:

Les parents de Tex ont été écrasés.

La loi SOS-tatou a été votée.

Un nouveau genre de grammaire a été créé.

Tex' parents were run over.

The SOS-armadillo law has been passed.

A new kind of grammar was created.
ways to avoid the passive

The passive voice is used more frequently in English than in French. Thus, in French, when the agent of the verb can be identified, it is better to use the active voice and make the agent the subject of the verb.

A common way to avoid the passive in French is to use the active voice with *on* as the subject. For example, 'I was told that Tex loves Tammy' would be translated as 'On m’a dit que Tex aimait Tammy'.

When making general statements about known facts, pronominal verbs are often used:

- Le football américain *se joue* à onze.
- Le vin rouge *se boit* à température ambiante.
- Les frites *se mangent* avec du ketchup.
- Le français *se parle* en Louisiane.

Tammy et Tex regardent les informations à la télé. Le journaliste déclare:

Aujourd’hui, l’équipe des Aggies *a été battue* et le moral des joueurs *est profondément affecté par* cette défaite, la dixième fois de suite cette saison. Par contre, les Longhorns ont beaucoup de succès. Depuis que le trophée Heisman *a été remporté par* le légendaire Ricky Williams, rien ne les arrête.

Tammy et Tex are watching the news on TV. The journalist states:

Today, the team of the Aggies was defeated and the morale of the players is deeply affected by this defeat, the tenth time in a row this season. In contrast, the Longhorns are having a lot of success. Since the Heisman trophy was won by the legendary Ricky Williams, nothing can stop them.
**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

**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?
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 d'oeuvre existentialiste, La Nausée.  ar

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?
Trey: Est-ce que tu connais Yoda?  Trey: Do you know Yoda?
Tex: Non. Qui est-ce?  Tex: No. Who is that?
Trey: Duh ...

questions using 'n'est-ce pas ?'
N'est-ce pas? ar

Trey: Tu connais 'La guerre des étoiles,' n'est-ce pas? Yoda, c'est le petit sage.
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 es d'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!

*Tsi is used to answer 'yes' to a negative question.
Questions with subject/verb inversion

inversion
Formal questions may be asked by reversing the subject pronoun/verb order and linking the two with a hyphen. You may have already seen inversion in fixed expressions like the following greetings: 'Comment allez-vous?', 'Comment vous appelez-vous?', 'Quelle heure est-il?'.

Joe-Bob choisit ses cours pour le semestre prochain.
Joe-Bob is choosing his classes for next semester.

Job-Bob: Corey, as-tu des idées?
Joe-Bob: Corey, do you have any ideas?

Tammy et Bette, connaissez-vous de bons cours?
Tammy and Bette, do you know any good courses?

addition of -t- in third person singular
In the third person singular, when the verb ends in a vowel, a -t- is added to make the liaison possible.

Corey se parle à lui-même: Corey thinks to himself:

Voyons. Joe-Bob aime-t-il les lettres? Non!
Let's see. Does Joe-Bob like the humanities? No!

A-t-il envie d'étudier les maths? Non!
Does he want to study math? No!

Va-t-il devenir médecin? Oh, jamais!
Is he going to become a doctor?

Aime-t-il les filles? Oui!
Oh, never! Does he like girls? Yes!

Alors, j'ai une idée. Corey: Joe-Bob: Mmm.
So, I have an idea. Corey: Joe-Bob: Mmm.

Corey: J'ai un cours pour toi: 'La vie intime des animaux.'
Corey: I have a course for you: ‘Animal Intimacy.’

addition of a pronoun with a noun or proper name
When the subject is a proper name or noun, the corresponding subject pronoun (il, elle, ils, or elles) is added for inversion with the verb.

Joe-Bob: Et les belles filles suivent-elles ce cours?
Joe-Bob: Do pretty girls take this class?

Corey: Oh, oui.
Corey: Oh, yes.

Joe-Bob: Ce cours est-il difficile?
Joe-Bob: Is this class difficult?

Corey: Oh, non ça.
Corey: Oh, no.
**compound tenses**
In compound tenses, such as the passé composé, the subject pronoun is inverted with the auxiliary (the conjugated verb).

Joe-Bob: Corey, as-tu suivi ce cours?  Joe-Bob: Corey, did you take this class?
Corey: Oui, mais j'ai raté l'examen final.  Corey: Yes, but I flunked the final exam.

**negation**
Ne precedes the conjugated verb and the second half of the negative (pas, j'ai mai s, pl us, etc.) follows the pronoun.

Joe-Bob: Pourquoi n'as-tu pas réussi l'examen?  Joe-Bob: Why didn't you pass the exam?
Corey: Oh, j'ai trouvé que l'examen était trop technique. Moi, je suis plus romantique que scientifique.
Corey: Oh, I thought that the exam was too technical. I am more romantic than scientific.

'**est-ce' and 'y a-t-il'**
The inverted forms of 'c'est' and 'il y a' are est-ce and y a-t-il

Joe-Bob: Est-ce possible?  Joe-Bob: Is this possible?
N'y a-t-il pas un seul cours facile pour moi?  Isn't there a single easy course for me?
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**).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mascul ine singular</th>
<th>mascul ine plural</th>
<th>feminine singular</th>
<th>feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quel</td>
<td>quels</td>
<td>quelle</td>
<td>quelles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Un petit tatou: **Quel** âge a Tex?  
Rita: On ne sait pas.

Un petit tatou: **Quelles** sont les qualités de Tex?  
Rita: Oh, il est intelligent, débrouillard, mais aussi cynique et pessimiste.

A little armadillo: What's the name of this armadillo?  
Rita: Oh, it's Tex, your uncle.

A little armadillo: How old is Tex?  
Rita: We don't know.

A little armadillo: What are Tex's good points?  
Rita: Oh, he's intelligent, resourceful, but also cynical and pessimistic.

**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!
interrogative pronouns

questions about people

**Qui** is used to ask questions about people. It may be the subject or the direct object in a sentence or ‘whom?’ You may also choose to use the longer forms: **qui est-ce qui** to ask ‘who?’, **qui est-ce que** to ask ‘whom?’

As the subject: **qui**, **qui est-ce qui**
As the direct object: **qui**, **qui est-ce que**

Bette: **Qui** est à la porte? Oh, c'est toi, Tammy.
**Qui** cherches-tu?
Tammy: Je cherche Tex.
Bette: Il n'est pas là.
Cinq minutes plus tard ...
Bette: Encore! **Qui est-ce qui** est à la porte? Oh! C'est toi, Tex!
**Qui est-ce que** tu cherches? Moi peut-être?
Tex: Non, je cherche Tammy.
Bette: Elle n'est pas là.

Bette: **Qui** est à la porte? Oh, it's you Tammy.
**Who** are you looking for?
Tammy: I'm looking for Tex.
Bette: He's not here.
Five minutes later ...
Bette: Again! **Who** is at the door? Oh! It's you Tex!
**Whom** are you looking for? Me perhaps?
Tex: No, I'm looking for Tammy.
Bette: She's not here.

As the object of a preposition: **qui**

Tex: Ouvre! Ouvre!
Bette: Oui?!
Tex: Tu as vu Tammy?
Bette: Oui.
Tex: **Avec qui** est-ce qu'elle est partie?
Bette: **Pour qui** me prends-tu? Je ne la surveille pas!
Tex: Oh, la, la, calme-toi, ma petite.

Tex: Open! Open!
Bette: Yes?!
Tex: Have you seen Tammy?
Bette: Yes.
Tex: **Whom** did she leave **with**?
Bette: Who do you think I am (who do you take me **for**)? I don't watch her!
Tex: Oh, la, la, calm down, my little one.
questions about things

Qu'est-ce qui, que and its longer form qu'est-ce que are used to ask questions about things. They are used to ask 'what?'. Que and its longer form qu'est-ce que are direct objects in a sentence, whereas qu'est-ce qui may be used only as the subject. (There is no short form of qu'est-ce qui.)

As the subject: qu'est-ce qui
As the direct object: que, qu'est-ce que
As the object of a preposition: quoi

Tammy arrive chez Bette. Elle voit Tex et Bette ensemble.
Tammy: Qu'est-ce qui se passe, Tex?
Tex: Rien, mon chou, je te cherchais.
Tammy: Oui, d'accord, mais qu'est-ce que tu fais avec ... elle!
Tex: Oh, de quoi tu parles?
Tammy: Tex, ne fais pas l'innocent avec moi.

Tammy arrives at Bette's house. She sees Tex and Bette together.
Tammy: What's going on, Tex?
Tex: Nothing, my dear. I was looking for you.
Tammy: Yes, ok, but what are you doing with ... her!
Tex: Oh, what are you talking about?
Tammy: Don't act innocent with me!
**Interrogative pronoun lequel**

*Lequel, lesquels, laquelle, lesquelles* are pronouns, i.e. they are used in place of a noun. They are used to ask the questions 'which one?' or 'which ones?' They assume the number and gender of the nouns they replace and contract with the prepositions à and de.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Masculine plural</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
<th>Feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lequel</td>
<td>lesquels</td>
<td>laquelle</td>
<td>lesquelles</td>
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<tr>
<td>with à</td>
<td>auquel</td>
<td>auxquels</td>
<td>à laquelle</td>
<td>auxquelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with de</td>
<td>duquel</td>
<td>desquels</td>
<td>de laquelle</td>
<td>desquelles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corey: Oh Tammy, j'adore les films sur les insectes!

Tammy: *Lesquels* tu aimes?

Corey: Oh, 'A Bug's Life,' et puis 'Antz,' les classiques quoi!

Tammy: Et tu préfères *lequel*?

Corey: Hmm ... Probablement 'The Fly.'

Tex: I love bug movies!

Tammy: Which ones do you like?

Tex: Oh, 'A Bug's Life,' and then 'Antz,' in other words, the classics!

Tammy: Which one do you prefer?

Corey: Hmm ... Probably 'The Fly.'
interrogative words: où, quand, comment

ou (where), quand (when), comment (how), pourquoi (why), combien en (how much), combien de (how many) may be used to ask questions with subject/verb inversion or with est-ce que. Note that the question word goes before est-ce que.

Bette pose des questions à Edouard pour en savoir davantage sur Tex.
Bette: Où Tex est-il né?
Edouard: Comment?
Bette: Où est-ce que Tex est né?
Edouard: Au Texas.
Bette: Quand a-t-il rencontré Tammy?
Edouard: Comment?
Bette: Quand est-ce qu’il a rencontré Tammy?
Edouard: Il y a deux ans à Lyon.
Comment est-il venu aux Etats-Unis?
Edouard: Qu’est-ce que tu as dit?
Comment est-ce qu’il est venu aux Etats-Unis?
Edouard: Il a été expulsé de France!
Bette: Pourquoi porte-t-il toujours un béret?
Edouard: Comment?
Bette: Pourquoi est-ce qu’il porte toujours un béret?
Edouard: Il n’a pas de cheveux. Sans chapeau il risque des coups de soleil.
Bette: Combien en est-il payé?
Edouard: Comment?
Bette: Combien en est-ce qu’il est payé?
Edouard: Pas assez. Les tuteurs sont mal payés.
Bette: Combien de cigarettes fume-t-il par jour?
Edouard: Comment?
Bette: Combien de cigarettes est-ce qu’il fume par jour?
Edouard: Je ne sais pas, mais il fume de moins en moins depuis son arrivée au Texas. Dis donc, tu es bien curieuse

Bette asks Edouard questions to find out more about Tex.
Bette: Where was Tex born?
Edouard: Pardon?
Bette: Where was Tex born?
Edouard: In Texas.
Bette: When did he meet Tammy?
Edouard: Pardon?
Bette: When did he meet Tammy?
Edouard: Two years ago in Lyon.
Bette: How did he come to the United States?
Edouard: What did you say?
Bette: How did he come to the United States?
Edouard: He was deported from France.
Bette: Why does he always wear a beret?
Edouard: Pardon?
Bette: Why does he always wear a beret?
Edouard: He doesn’t have any hair. Without a hat he risks getting sunburned.
Bette: How much is he paid?
Edouard: Pardon?
Bette: How much is he paid?
Edouard: Not enough. Tutors are not paid well.
Bette: How many cigarettes does he smoke every day?
Edouard: Pardon?
Bette: How many cigarettes does he smoke every day?
Edouard: I don’t know, but he’s smoking less and less since he came to Texas. Say, you are very curious.