

# French National 4 & 5 Grammar Notes Booklet



Grammar Terms	
I can make nouns agree (masculine/feminine/singular/plural)	
I can use the words for 'a' and 'the' correctly.	
I can make adjectives agree with nouns and position them correctly, including irregular adjectives.	
I know what a possessive adjective is and can use them successfully.	
I know what an adverb is and how to form them.	
I can use simple relative pronouns.	
I can understand how to form time phrases.	
I can make comparisons using 'more/less...than' and 'as...as'	
I can use superlatives correctly.	
I can make sentences negative.	
I understand what a pronoun is.	
I can use possessive pronouns.	
I can use the 'Present' tense.	
I can use reflexive verbs.	
I am able to use 'avoir expressions'	
I can use the 'passé composé' tense.	
I can use 'etre' taking verbs correctly in the 'passé composé'	
I can use the 'Imperfect Tense'.	
I can form past participles.	
I can use the near future tense using the verb 'aller	
I can turn verbs into the future tense, including irregular verbs.	
I can turn verbs into the conditional tense.	



**What?**

A noun is a word that names people, things and ideas.

**How?**

In French, every noun has a gender. It is either masculine or feminine. The dictionary can tell us if nouns are masculine or feminine.

Nouns also change in the plural. You normally add 's' to form the plural, just like English. (There are some exceptions you have to learn).

**What?**

In French, there are several different words for 'a' and 'the'. You must firstly think of whether the noun (a person or thing) is masculine or feminine and then secondly, you must think about how many.

	Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Masculine plural	Feminine plural
a	un	une	des	des
the	Le	La	Les	les

**Note.**

When le/les comes after the word for 'to' (à), the two words combine.

A + le = au

A + les = aux

When le/les comes after the word for 'for/from' (de), the two words combine.

De + le = du

De + les = des

**What?**

An adjective is a word which describes a noun. In French, adjectives agree with the noun they describe. You must firstly think of whether the noun is masculine or feminine and then secondly, you must think about how many.

## How?

- In French, adjectives come after the noun.
- You then make it agree with 'masculine' or 'feminine' and then how many.

<u>Masc sing</u>	Masc pl	Fem sing	Fem pl
Un crayon bleu	Deux crayons bleus	Une gomme bleue	Deux gommes bleues

## Position of adjectives:

Most adjectives go after the noun they are describing, unlike English.

e.g. un crayon bleu

a blue pencil



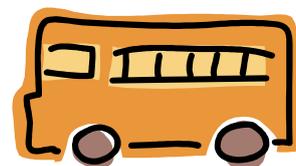
## Exceptions:

Some adjectives come before the noun. They are adjectives that describe beauty, age, goodness and size (Remember them as B.A.G.S. adjectives.)

These are:



Beau/belle	Handsome/pretty
jeune	young
Vieux/ vieille	old
Nouveau/nouvelle	New
Long	long



e.g. la vieille voiture. the old car.

**What?**

A possessive adjective is a word that tells us who owns something, whose is it or to whom it belongs.

**How?**

- In French, the possessive adjective has to agree. It ALWAYS agrees with the thing possessed, not the owner.

	Masc singular	Fem singular	Masc and Fem plural
my	<b>mon</b>	<b>ma</b>	<b>mes</b>
your	<b>ton</b>	<b>ta</b>	<b>tes</b>
his / her	<b>ton</b>	<b>sa</b>	<b>ses</b>

**Examples**

	Masc sing	Fem sing	Masc pl	Fem pl
our	<b>notre</b>	<b>notre</b>	<b>nos</b>	<b>nos</b>
your / ustedes	<b>votre</b>	<b>votre</b>	<b>vos</b>	<b>vos</b>
their	<b>leur</b>	<b>leur</b>	<b>leurs</b>	<b>leurs</b>

- Mon livre                      My book
- Tes parents                    Your parents
- Sa maison \*                    His/hers/\* house.

**\*You would know which one it is by the names in the sentences previously.**

- Notre livres.                    Our books.



**What?**

Articles are words that describe actions. Often they end in 'ly' in English.  
(Probably/ quickly)

**How?**

In French, most adverbs are formed by adding 'ment' to the adjective.

- Rarement          rarely
- Facilement        easily

**Exceptions:**

There are some that do not follow this rule. They are:



Assez	Quite
trop	Too much
Beaucoup	A lot
Ensuite	then
Maintenant	Now

**What?**

A relative pronoun is used to join a clause to a noun in order to give you more information about it. They relate back to somebody or something that has been mentioned previously in the sentence.

- E.g: The plane which leaves at ten o'clock
- E.g: The teacher who gave us this homework is mad.

**How?**

- In English, we usually use the word 'who' or 'that'
- In French, you can mainly use the words 'que' or 'qui'
- It follows a noun and the rest of the sentence comes after it.

**Examples:**



- Le bus **qui** va à l'aéroport part de la place
  - The bus **that** goes to airport leaves from the square.
- Le prof **qui** nous a donné les devoirs est fou.
  - The teacher **who** gave us this homework is mad.
- La matière **que** j'aime est le français
  - The subject **that** I like is French.

## TOPIC: COMPARATIVES.

### What?

- A comparative is when you are comparing two or more things, people, ideas etc.

### Comparing more than

- You use the following construction to compare '**more than**' or '**er**' (**shorter, taller etc**)
  - **plus ... que**
  - An *adjective* would go in between the two words.

### Examples:

- L'espagnol est **plus facile que** l'anglais.
  - Spanish is **easier** than English.
- Daniel travaille **plus vite que** moi.
  - Daniel works **quicker** than me.

### **Some exceptions.**

When you want to compare using the words '**better than**' or '**worse than**' you must use the following constructions:

- **meilleur que = better than**
  - En España le café est **meilleur que** le thé.
  - In Spain, coffee is better than tea.
- **pire que = worse than**
  - En España le thé est **pire que** le café
  - In Spain, tea is worse than coffee.



## Comparing less than

- You use the following construction to compare 'less than' or 'er' (shorter, taller etc)
  - moins ... que
  - An adjective would go in between the two words.

### Example:

- L'espagnol est moins difficile que l'anglais.
  - Spanish is less difficult than English.



## Comparing similarities.

- You use the following construction to compare 'as... as' or 'not as...as'
  - aussi...que
  - as...as
  - An adjective would go in between the two words.

### Example:

- J'écris aussi vite que tu.
  - I write as quick as you.



## TOPIC: SUPERLATIVOS SUPERLATIVES.

### What?

- A superlative is when you are comparing a thing or person using the construction 'the most' or 'the least' or 'the shortest'. (Adjective ending in 'est')

### The most

- You use the following construction to compare 'the most' or 'er' (shorter, taller etc)
  - Noun + le plus+ adjective =the most/ -est (masculine nouns)
  - Noun+ la plus+ adjective =the most/ -est (feminine nouns)

### Example:

- La plage la plus populaire de la région.
  - The most popular beach of the area.

### The least

- You use the following construction to compare 'the least' or 'er' (shorter, taller etc)

- **Noun +le moins+ adjective** =the least/ -est (masculine nouns)
- **Noun +la moins+ adjective** = the least/ -est (feminine nouns)

**Example:**

- La plage la moins populaire de la région.
  - The least popular beach of the area.

**Exceptions**

There are some irregular words which will not follow the rules above.

1. **Bueno** and **malo** have irregular comparative and superlative forms



<i>Bon/ bonne</i> <i>Bons/bonnes</i>	<i>Meilleur/meilleure</i> <i>Meilleurs/meilleures</i>	<i>Le meilleur / la meilleure</i> <i>Les meilleurs/ les meilleures</i>
good	better	the best
<i>Mauvais/mauvaise</i> <i>Mauvais/mauvaises</i>	<i>pire</i> <i>pires</i>	<i>Le/la pire</i> <i>Les pires</i>
bad	worse	the worst

**TOPIC:**

**NEGATIVES.**

**What?**

In English, the negative form is made by saying **not, don't, didn't, won't**.

In French, we can make a verb negative by simply putting '**ne....pas**' in between it.

**Examples:**

- Je **ne** vais **pas** – I am **not** going
- Je **ne** parle **pas** - I **don't** speak



- Some other negative words in French which can be used are:
- **Ne** is still needed in front of the verb, which is followed by the following:

<b>rien</b>	<b>nothing, not ... anything</b>
<b>plus</b>	<b>no more</b>
<b>jamais</b>	<b>never, not ... never</b>
<b>personne</b>	<b>no-one, not anybody</b>
<b>ne.....ni....ni...</b>	<b>neither, nor ... either</b>

### Examples:

Je **ne** fais **rien** I **don't** do **anything**

Je **ne** parle à **personne** I **don't** speak with **anyone**.

Nous **ne** buvions **ni** café **ni** thé We **don't** drink **neither** coffee **nor** tea.

## TOPIC : PRONOUNS

### What?

These are words used in place of noun, to avoid repeating it.

The following are subject pronouns.



I	<b>Je</b>	We	<b>Nous</b>
You (singular/ friendly)	<b>Tu</b>	You (plural/ poilte)	<b>Vous</b>
He	<b>il</b>	They (m)	<b>ils</b>
She	<b>elle</b>	They (f)	<b>elles</b>

There are 2 different ways to say 'you' in French.

Description	Use
When talking to <b>one</b> person you know well <b>(friends/family)</b>	<b>Tu</b>
When talking to <b>more than one</b> person you	<b>Vous</b>

know well (friends/family).	
When talking to <b>one person/people</b> you don't know.	<b>Vous</b>

**TOPIC : POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS**

**What?**

Possessive pronouns indicate the owner of something. They are used to avoid repeating the noun.

- e.g My book is more expensive than **your book**.
- e.g My book is more expensive than **yours**.



**'Yours' is a possessive pronoun as it replaces 'your book'.**

	Masculine Singular	Masculine Plural	Feminine Singular	Feminine Plural
mine	Le mien	Les miens	La mienne	Les miennes
yours	Le tien	Les tiens	La tienne	Les tiennes
His/hers/ its/	Le sien	Les siens	la sienne	Les siennes
Ours	Le nôtre	Les nôtres	La nôtre	Les nôtres
Yours	Le vôtre	Les vôtres	La vôtre	Les vôtres
Theirs	Le leur	Les leurs	La leur	Les leurs
Yours (polite/plural)				

**TOPIC: PRESENT TENSE VERBS**

**What?**

- A verb is a doing/action word.
- There are 3 main types of verbs in the present tense in Spanish.

**ER / IR/ RE.**

**Formation:**

- Lets take the verbs:
  - **PARLER** (to speak)
  - **FINIR** (to eat)
  - **ATTENDRE** (to live).
- To form the tense- take off the '**ER / IR/ RE.**'
  - parl -
  - fin -
  - attend-
- Add these endings for the correct person.



Person in English	Person in French	ER	IR	RE
I	Je/ j'	E	IS	S
You	Tu	ES	IS	S
He/she/it	Il/elle/on	E	IT	
We	Nous	ONS	ISSONS	ONS
You (plural /polite)	Vous	EZ	ISSEZ	EZ
They	Ils/elles	ENT	ISSENT	ENT

**Examples:**

<u>Person</u> <u>in</u> <u>French</u>	<u>Parl-</u>	<u>Fin-</u>	<u>Attend-</u>
Je/J'	Parle	Finis	attends
Tu	Parles	Finis	Attends
Il/elle/on	Parle	Finit	Attend
Nous	Parlons	Finissons	Attendons
Vous	Parlez	Finissez	Attendez
Ils/elles	Parlent	Finissent	attendent

**TOPICS:**

**VERBS**

Here are some common key verbs in the present tense. They are irregular so you need to learn them by heart.

<b>Avoir = to have</b>		
<b>J'ai</b>	<b>I have</b>	
<b>Tu as</b>	<b>You have</b>	Singular/friendly
<b>Il/elle/on a</b>	<b>He/ she has</b>	
<b>Nous avons</b>	<b>We have</b>	
<b>Vous avez</b>	<b>You have</b>	Plural/ polite
<b>Ils/elles ont</b>	<b>They have</b>	



<b>faire = to do/make</b>		
<b>Je fais</b>	<b>I do / I make</b>	
<b>Tu fais</b>	<b>You do / You make</b>	Singular/friendly
<b>Il/elle fait</b>	<b>He /she does/ makes</b>	
<b>Nous faisons</b>	<b>We do/ we make</b>	
<b>Vous faites</b>	<b>You do / You make</b>	Plural/polite
<b>Ils/elles font</b>	<b>They do/make</b>	

aller = to go		
Je vais	I go	
Tu vas	You go	Singular/friendly
Il/elle/ on va	He /she goes	
Nous allons	We go	
Vous allez	You go	Plural/polite
Ils/elles vont	They go	

pouvoir = to be able to		
Je peux	I can	
Tu peux	You can	Singular/friendly
Il/elle peut	He /she can	
Nous pouvons	We can	
Vous pouvez	You can	Plural/polite
Ils/elle peuvent	They can	

être = to be		
Je suis	I am	
Tu es	You are	Singular/friendly
Il/elle/on est	He /she is	
Nous sommes	We are	
Vous êtes	You are	Plural/polite
Ils/elles sont	They are	



**What?**

Reflexive verbs are verbs whose basic meaning suggests that a person or a thing does something to himself/herself/itself.

e.g. He cut himself.



**Spotting Reflexive Verbs:**

In French reflexive verbs start with 'se'

e.g se laver = to get washed.

**Forming Reflexive Verbs in the Present Tense.**

- The first thing you do is to decide on the person you are talking about.
- Replace the 'se' with the correct reflexive pronoun.
- Remember your rules from the present tense and conjugate the verbs correctly.
  - Take off 'ar' / 'er' / 'ir'
  - Add the endings for the correct person.
- Then you add the correct pronoun **in front** of the verb.

Reflexive Pronouns			
myself	<b>me</b>	ourselves	<b>nous</b>
yourself	<b>te</b>	yourselves	<b>vous</b>
Himself/herself/you rself/oneself	<b>se</b>	Themselves/ yourselves.	<b>se</b>

**Example:**

- Lets take the verb 'se laver = to get washed.
  - Aim to say 'I get washed'
1. Decide on the person you are talking about. As per the example above, it is 'I' = Je
  2. Take off the 'se' so you are left with 'laver'
  3. Now take off the 'er' so you are left with 'lav'
  4. Add on the ending to the verb that goes with 'I' for 'er' verbs

a. Je lave.

5. Now we need to add the reflexive pronoun for 'I' before the verb.

a. Reflexive pronoun for 'I' is 'me'

6. Put it all together:

a. Je me lave = I get washed

**TOPIC:**

**EXPRESSIONS WITH AVOIR**

### What?

A number of French expressions use the verb 'avoir' to have where in English we would use 'to be'. Although the French use 'to have' we would still translate it as 'to be'.

### Formation:

- Choose the phrase
- Decide on the tense.
- Decide on the person and change 'avoir' to match the tense and the person.

<u>Tener phrases</u>	<u>English Translation</u>
avoir....ans	To be....years old
Avoir chaud/froid	To be hot/cold
Avoir faim/soif	To be hungry/thirsty
Avoir besoin de	To need
Avoir raison	To be right
Avoir honte de	To be ashamed of/about
Avoir envie de	To want
Avoir de la chance	To be lucky



### Examples:

- J'ai faim. I am hungry.
- Nous avons faim. We are hungry.
- J'ai eu de la chance I was lucky

**TOPIC: THE PASSE COMPOSE TENSE WITH AVOIR  
(PAST TENSE)**

**What?**

- Used to describe an action in the past, that is over and done with.
  - She slammed a door.
  - I went to the shops.
  - The phone rang.

**Formation.**

- This tense is made up of two parts:
  - A helper verb (AVOIR) in the present tense
  - and a Past Participle.
- Take the helper verb:

avoir = to have		
<b>J'ai</b>	<b>I have</b>	
<b>Tu as</b>	<b>You have</b>	Singular/friendly
<b>Il/elle/ on a</b>	<b>He /she has</b>	
<b>Nous avons</b>	<b>We have</b>	
<b>Vous avez</b>	<b>You have</b>	Plural/polite
<b>Ils/elles ont</b>	<b>They have</b>	

Forming the past participle:

- Take the infinitive
  - parler (to speak)
  - finir (to finish)
  - attendre (to wait).
- take off the 'ER / IR/ RE.
  - parl -
  - fin -
  - attend-

- Add these endings:

Forming past participle		
ER	IR	RE
é	i	U

Forming past participle		
Parl	Fin	Attend
parlé	fini	attendu

- Now put it all together:
  - J'ai parlé            I have spoken
  - Nous avons fini    We have finished
  - Ils ont attendu    They have waited.

### Exceptions:

- There are some past participles that do not follow the rule above. You have to learn these off by heart. To use with other people, all you have to do is replace the 'j'ai' with the correct form of 'avoir' in the present tense.

1. avoir	j'ai eu	I had
2. boire	j'ai bu	I drank
3. conduire	j'ai conduit	I drove
4. connaître	j'ai connu	I knew/got to know
5. courir	j'ai couru	I ran
6. croire	j'ai cru	I believed
7. devoir	j'ai dû	I had to
8. dire	j'ai dit	I said/told
9. disparaître	j'ai disparu	I disappeared

10. être	j'ai été	I have been
11. écrire	j'ai écrit	I wrote
12. faire	j'ai fait	I did/made
13. lire	j'ai lu	I read
14. mettre	j'ai mis	I put
15. mourir	je suis mort(e)* uses être	I died
16. naître	je suis né(e)* uses être	I was born
17. offrir	j'ai offert	I offered
18. ouvrir	j'ai ouvert	I opened
19. pleuvoir	il a plu	it rained
20. pouvoir	j'ai pu	I could
21. prendre	j'ai pris	I took
22. recevoir	j'ai reçu	I received
23. rire	j'ai ri	I laughed
24. savoir	j'ai su	I knew
25. suivre	j'ai suivi	I followed
26. tenir	j'ai tenu	I held
27. venir	je suis venu(e)* uses être	I came
28. vivre	j'ai vécu	I lived
29. voir	j'ai vu	I saw
30. vouloir	j'ai voulu	I wanted



**TOPIC: THE PASSE COMPOSE TENSE WITH ETRE (PAST TENSE)**

There are a certain number of verbs which cannot use 'avoir' as their helper verb to form the past tense. These verbs are known as Mrs Van De Tramp. Each letter stands for a French verb.

**What?**

- Used to describe an action in the past, that is over and done with.
  - She slammed a door.
  - I went to the shops.
  - The phone rang.

**Formation.**

- This tense is made up of two parts:
  - A helper verb (ETRE) in the present tense
  - and a Past Participle.
- Take the helper verb:

etre = to be		
Je suis	I am	
Tu es	You are	Singular/friendly
Il/elle/ on est	He /she is	
Nous sommes	We are	
Vous etes	You are	Plural/polite
Ils/elles sont	They are	

Now take the verbs below and turn them into the past participle, using the rules above. **Remember there may be some irregular ones.**

MONTER	=	TO CLIMB
RETOURNER	=	TO RETURN
SORTIR	=	TO GO OUT
VENIR	=	TO COME
ALLER	=	TO GO
NAÎTRE	=	TO BE BORN
DESCENDRE	=	TO DESCEND
ENTRER	=	TO ENTER
TOMBER	=	TO FALL
RESTER	=	TO STAY
ARRIVER	=	TO ARRIVE
MOURIR	=	TO DIE
PARTIR	=	TO LEAVE

### Attention

Mrs. Van de Tramp's verbs also have extra rules that the other verbs don't follow. They "agree" with the gender and number of people that you are talking about.



This means that if you say "She has returned" the past participle "agrees" with the feminine pronoun by adding another **e** on the end of the past participle:

Il est retourn**é**

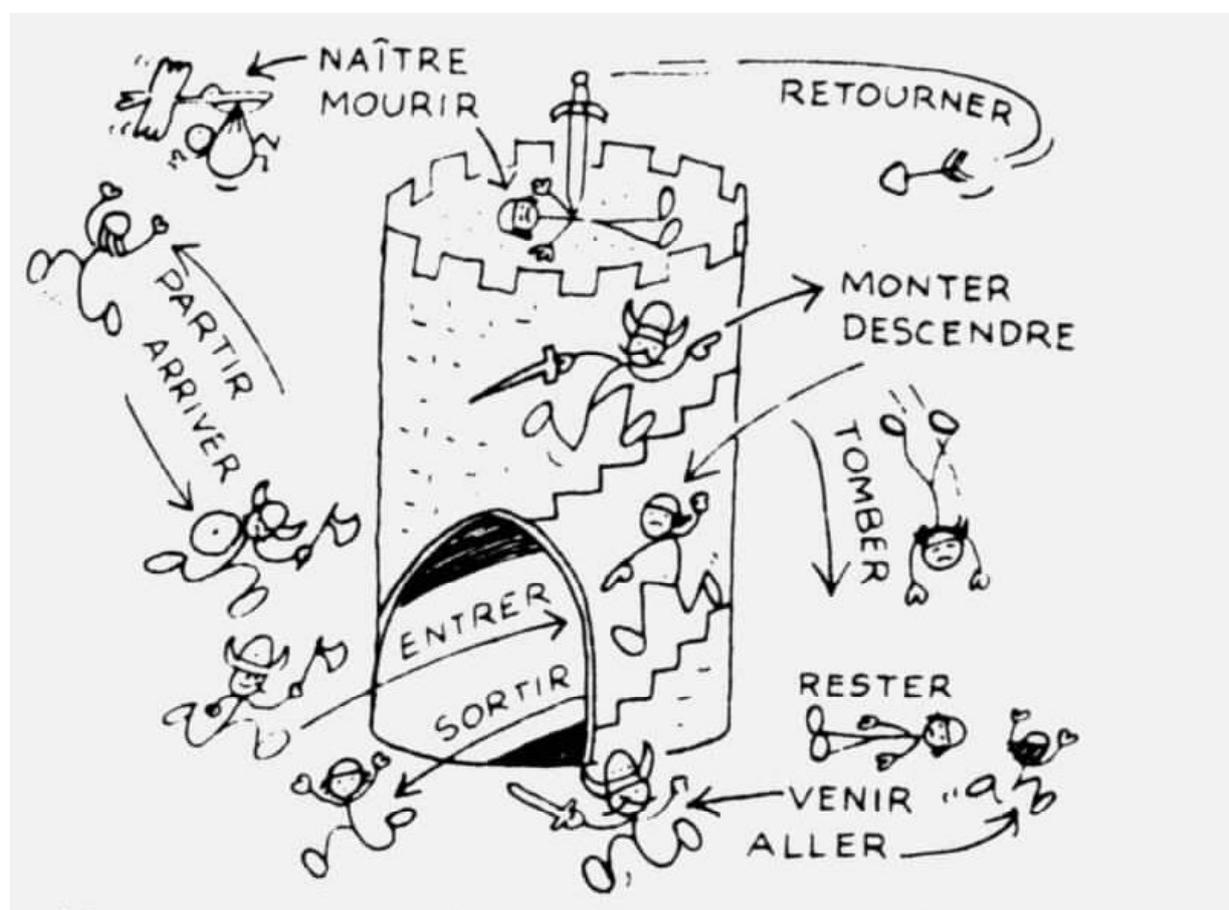
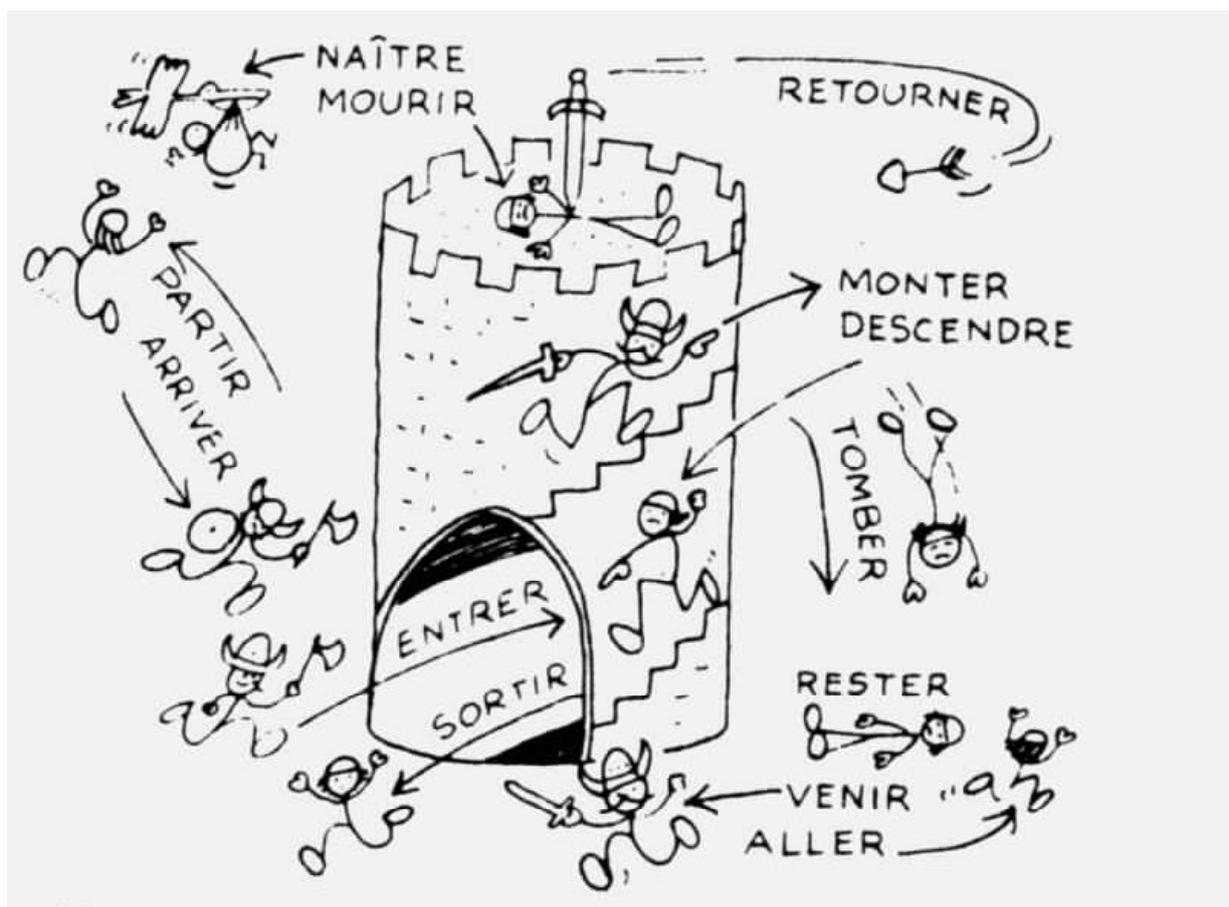
Elle est retourn**ée**

And if you are talking about more than one person you must add an **extra s** on the end:

Tu es arriv**é**

Vous êtes arriv**és**

These images may help you remember which verbs use 'être' as the helper verb.



**What?**

- Used to describe an action in the past or for something that used to happen regularly in the past
  - Every week, I played football.
  - She was hungry.
  - It was sunny.

**Formation.**

- There are 3 main types of verbs.
  - ER / IR/RE.
- Let's take the verbs:
  - Parler (to speak)
  - finir (to finish)
  - attendre (to wait).
- To form the tense you firstly need to conjugate them into the present tense 'NOUS' form.
  - parlons
  - finissons
  - attendons
- Once you have done that, take off the -ons
  - Parl-
  - Finiss-
  - Attend-
- Add these endings for the correct person.

Person in English.	Person in French	ER	IR	RE
I	Je/ j'	ais	ais	ais
You (sing /friendly)	Tu	ais	ais	ais
He/she/it	Il/elle/on	ait	ait	ait
We	Nous	ions	ions	ions
You (plural /friendly)	Vous	iez	iez	iez
They	Ils/elles	aient	aient	aient

**Examples:**

Person in English.	Person in French	Parl	Finiss	Attend
I	Je/ j'	parlais	finissais	attendais
You (sing /friendly)	Tu	parlais	finissais	attendais
He/she/it	Il/elle/on	parlait	finissait	attendait
We	Nous	parlions	finissions	attendions
You (plural /friendly)	Vous	parliez	finissiez	attendiez
They	Ils/elles	parlaient	finissaient	attendaient

**Je parlais = I talked/ I used to talk**

**Vous attendiez = they waited/ used to wait.**

## Exceptions

There are of course, some verbs which do not follow the rules above. They use the following imperfect stems.

Infinitive	Present tense 'nous' form	Imperfect stem
avoir	avons	av-
aller	allons	all-
boire	buvons	buv-
manger	mangeons	mange-
lire	lisons	lis-
faire	faisons	fais-
être	sommes	ét-

**Examples:**

**J'allais = I used to go**

**Nous lisions = We used to read**

**Ils faisaient = They used to do/make**



## Formation using 'I will'

- You need to take the infinitive of the word. Remember there are three types in French.
  - **ER / IR/ RE.**
  - **TRAVAILLER** to work.
  - **FINIR** to have
  - **ATTENDRE** to study
- You need to have the magic 'r' ending for all infinitives (this means taking off the 'e' for 're' verbs)
- You then add on the following endings:

Person in English.	Person in French.	ER/IR/RE
I	Je/J'	ai
You (sing /friendly)	Tu	as
He/she/it	Il/elle/on	a
We	Nous	ons
You (plural /friendly)	Vous	ez
They	Ils/elles	ont

### So putting it together:

- Je travailler + **ai** = **Je travaillerai** = I will work.
- Nous finir+ **ons** = **Nous finirons** = We will finish
- Ils attendr+ **ont** = **Ils attendront** = They will wait

## Irregular verbs:

- There are some verbs that don't follow this pattern.
  - Here they are:
  - To use, simply add the person in front of the stem and then add on the correct future tense ending to the stem.



Verb infinitive	Meaning	Future stem to use
aller	.....to go.....	ir
avoir	.....to have.....	aur
être	.....to be.....	ser
faire	.....to do/make.....	fer
Pouvoir	.....to be able to.....	pourr
devoir	.....to have to.....	devr
savoir	.....to know.....	saur
venir	.....to come.....	viendr
voir	.....to see.....	verr
vouloir	.....to want to.....	voudr

### So putting it together:

- Je verr + **ai** = **je verrai** = I will see.
- Vous aur+ **ez** = **Vous aurez** = You will have
- Elles saur+ **ont** = **elles sauront** = They will know

What?

- Used to describe uncertainty and is identified by the word ‘would’.
  - I would like to go to university.
  - She would play outside if it weren’t raining.
  - They would spend the money on cars.



Formation

- There is no word for ‘would’ in French.
- To form the conditional tense in Spanish, you take the infinitives:
  - **ER / IR/ RE.**
  - Travailler to work.
  - Finir to finish
  - attendre to wait.
- You need to have the magic ‘r’ ending for all infinitives (this means taking off the ‘e’ for ‘re’ verbs)
- You then add on the following endings:

Person in English.	Person in French.	AR/ER/IR
I	Je/ J’	ais
You (sing /friendly)	Tu	ais
He/she/it	Il/elle	ait
We	Nous	ions
You (plural /polite)	Vous	iez
They	Ils/elles	aient

**So putting it together:**

- Je travailler + **ais** = je **travaillerais** = I would work.
- Nous finir+ **ions** = nous **finirions** = We would eat
- Ils **attendr**+ **aient** = ils **attendraient** = They would study

# I HAVE...

BEEN SUCCESSFUL WHEN...

BEEN RESPONSIBLE WHEN...

MADE A CONTRIBUTION WHEN...

BEEN CONFIDENT WHEN...