

The French Present Tense

When to use it?

It is used to talk about facts, current situations and repeated actions in the present.

1. L'herbe est verte (the grass is green)
2. Je fais mes devoirs (I'm doing my homework)
3. Le lundi, je joue au foot (On Mondays, I play football)



Conjugation



In French, the form of a verb vary according to the subject pronoun used, the tense or the mood.

The pronouns are:

je (I), tu (you, singular), il/elle/on (he/she/it/one)
nous (we), vous (you, plural or formal), and ils/elles (they)

Regular Verbs

Each group has its conjugation pattern.

French verbs are categorised into three regular groups based on their infinitive endings:

-er, -ir, and -re

To conjugate regular verbs: drop the -er, -ir or -re from the infinitive and then add the correct ending

	-er	-ir	-re
je	-e	-is	-s
tu	-es	-is	-s
il/elle/on	-e	-it	-
nous	-ons	-issons	-ons
vous	-ez	-issez	-ez
ils/elles	-ent	-issent	-ent



Irregular Verbs

Some French verbs don't follow the regular conjugation patterns and must be memorised individually.

Here are the four most important irregular verbs:

avoir (to have)	être (to be)	aller (to go)	faire (to do)
j'ai	je suis	je vais	je fais
tu as	tu es	tu vas	tu fais
il/elle/on a	il/elle/on est	il/elle/on va	il/elle/on fait
nous avons	nous sommes	nous allons	nous faisons
vous avez	vous êtes	vous allez	vous faites
ils/elles ont	ils/elles sont	ils/elles vont	ils/elles font



Spelling Changes

Despite being regular, some '-er' verbs have spelling changes in the present tense for pronunciation purposes.



e.g. 'manger' (to eat) changes to 'nous mangeons' rather than 'mangons' to keep the soft -g sound.

Other common '-er' verbs with spelling irregularities are: s'appeler, commencer, essayer, acheter

Reflexive Verbs

Reflexive verbs (when the subject and object of the sentence are the same) are conjugated in the same way, with the addition of a reflexive pronoun placed in front of the conjugated verb or the infinitive.

Reflexive pronouns:

me/m', te/t', se/s', nous, vous, se/s'

e.g. Nous nous habillons.

e.g. Il veut se laver.



Negative forms

To make a verb negative in French present tense, place 'ne' before the verb and 'pas' after it.

'Je n'aime pas le sport'

Note that: ne becomes 'n' when the verb starts with a vowel



Questions

In the present tense, they can be formed by:

1. Simply raising your tone at the end of a statement (Tu aimes le sport?)
2. Inverting the subject pronoun and verb, and adding a hyphen (Aimes-tu le sport?)
3. Using 'est-ce que' at the beginning of the sentence. (Est-ce que tu aimes le sport?)

