

Français I—Le Grammaire

The following grammar points are ones that are essential to your success in French II. Please review these over the summer!

❖ Subject Pronouns

Subject Pronoun	English Translation
je	I
tu	you (informal or singular)
il	he/it
elle	she/it
on*	we/they/one
nous	we
vous	you (formal or plural)
ils	they (all masc. or masc. and fem.)
elles	they (all fem.)

*Note: When writing or in formal conversations, use **nous** to refer to **we**.

Ex: **Je** vais à l'école. **Tu** vas au centre commercial.

❖ Definite Articles

Definite Article	English Translation
le	the (masculine singular noun)
la	the (feminine singular noun)
l'	the (masculine or feminine noun before a vowel/vowel sound)
les	the (masculine or feminine plural noun)

Ex. **le** garçon, **la** pomme, **l'**élève, **les** livres

Use definite articles when talking about the noun in general.

❖ Indefinite Articles

Indefinite Article	English Translation
un	a, an (masculine singular noun)
une	a, an (feminine singular noun)
des	some, any (masculine or feminine plural noun)

Ex. **un** stylo, **une** gomme, **des** feuilles de papier

Use indefinite articles when talking about an or some object(s).

❖ Partitive Articles

Partitive Article	English Translation
du	some (masculine singular)
de la	some (feminine singular)
de l'	some (masculine or feminine singular before a vowel/vowel sound)
des	Some (masculine or feminine plural)

Ex. Je prends du poulet. Vous prenez de la glace. Tu prends des oeufs.
Use partitive articles when talking about having part or some of an item.

❖ Adjective Agreement and Placement

Masculine Singular Adjective	Feminine Singular Adjective	Masculine Plural Adjective	Feminine Plural Adjective
bleu	bleue	bleus	bleues
mignon	mignonne	mignons	mignonnes
beau	belle	beaux	belles

Ex. Il est **beau**. Elle est **belle**. C'est une jupe **verte**. C'est un tee-shirt **vert**.

In general, you add -e to an adjective to make it feminine (if it ends in a consonant). Add -s to make an adjective masculine plural, and -es to make an adjective feminine plural. There are also many irregular adjectives (like the adjectives mignon and beau) and these must be memorized. Adjectives agree with the nouns that they describe.

❖ Possessive Adjectives

Possessive Adjective (English)	My	Your (Informal)	His/Her/Its	Our	Your (Formal)	Their
Masculine Singular	mon	ton	son	notre	votre	leur
Feminine Singular	ma	ta	sa	notre	votre	leur
Masculine plural	mes	tes	ses	nos	vos	leurs
Feminine Plural	mes	tes	ses	nos	vos	leurs

Ex. C'est **mon** chat. C'est **ton** père. C'est **sa** grand-mère. Ce sont **nos** poissons. C'est **votre** canari. Ce sont **leurs** chiens.

Possessive adjectives agree with the noun that they are modifying (which is generally not the subject of the sentence).

❖ Demonstrative Adjectives

Demonstrative Adjective (English)	This/That	These/Those
Masculine Singular	ce	-----
Masculine Singular (In Front of a Vowel/Vowel Sound)	cet	-----
Feminine Singular	cette	-----
Masculine Plural	-----	ces
Feminine Plural	-----	ces

Ex. J'aime **ce** garçon. Nous connaissons **cet** homme. Elle a **cette** casquette. Ils aiment **ces** chaussures.

Demonstrative adjectives agree with the noun that they are modifying (which is generally not the subject of the sentence).

❖ Adverbs and Their Placement

Adverb (French)	Adverb (English)	Placement of Adverb
de temps en temps	from time to time	beginning or end of sentence
d'habitude	usually	beginning of sentence*
# par semaine	...times a week	end of sentence*
ne...jamais	never	around the conjugated verb
quelquefois	sometimes	beginning or end of sentence
rarement	rarely	after the conjugated verb
souvent	often	after the conjugated verb

Ex. Tu fais **souvent** du ski. Vous **ne faites jamais** de ski. Je fais du ski **une fois par semaine**.

Short adverbs usually come after the verb. Longer adverbs can be placed at the beginning or the end of a sentence (with the exceptions noted above in the table*).

❖ Direct Object Pronouns

Direct Object Pronoun (English)	Direct Object Pronoun (French)
it	le (masculine singular)
it	la (feminine singular)
it	l' (masculine or feminine singular before a vowel or vowel sound)
them	les (masculine or feminine plural)

Ex. Vous prenez ces bottes? Oui, je **les** prends. Vous aimez ce pantalon? Oui, je l'**aime**.

Direct object pronouns are placed immediately before the conjugated verb in the present tense, immediately before the infinitive in the near future tense (le futur proche), and in front of the avoir helping verb in the past tense (passé composé).

❖ Present Tense Verb Conjugation

Regular -er Verbs	Regular -re Verbs	Regular -ir Verbs
danser	vendre	choisir
je danse	je vends	je choisis
tu danses	tu vends	tu choisis
il/elle/on danse	il/elle/on vend	il/elle/on choisit
nous dans ons	nous vend ons	nous chois issons
vous dansez	vous vendez	vous chois issez
ils/elles dans ent	ils/elles vend ent	ils/elles chois issent

For any regular -er, -re, or -ir verb, drop those endings and add the endings in bold to each stem.

❖ Irregular Verbs

There are many irregular verbs in French. Some of these verbs are very frequently used when writing and speaking in French. As these verbs are irregular, there is not a pattern to their conjugations. Therefore, they must be MEMORIZED!

Irregular Verb in French	English Translation
aller	to go
avoir	to have
être	to be
faire	to do; to make
mettre	to put, to place, to put on, to wear
pouvoir	can; to be able to
prendre	to take, to have food or drink in a café
sortir	to go out
vouloir	to wish; to want

The above are some commonly used irregular verbs in French; there are still plenty more of them not listed here!

❖ The Past Tense (Le Passé Composé)

Avoir Helping Verb	Past Participle (regular -er, -re, -ir verbs)	Past Participle (irregular verbs)
j'ai	dansé, vendu, choisi	lu (P.P. of lire, to read)
tu	“	fait (P.P. of faire, to do or to make)
il/elle/on	“	mis (P.P. of mettre, to put, to place, to put on, to wear)
nous	“	pris (P.P. of prendre, to take or to have food or drink)
vous	“	vu (P.P. of voir, to see)
ils/elles	“	“

Ex. Mon frère **a grandi** (My brother grew). Ma mère **a lu** un bon livre. J'**ai pris** un coca.

Remember, with the Passé Composé, you must always have two parts: the avoir helping verb and the past participle!

To get your regular past participle endings, do the following: for regular -er verbs, drop the -er and add -é. For regular -re verbs, drop the -re and add -u. For regular -ir verbs, drop the -ir ending and add -i. Irregular past participles must be MEMORIZED!

*Passé Composé of aller: Je suis allé(e), tu es allé(e), il/elle/on est allé(e), nous sommes allé(e)s, vous êtes allé(e)s, ils/elles sont allé(e)s.

❖ The Near Future (Le Futur Proche)

Aller, Conjugated in the Present Tense	Infinitive of Verb
je vais	chanter
tu vas	nager
il/elle/on va	faire
nous allons	prendre
vous allez	choisir
ils/elles vont	vendre

Ex. Je **vais chanter**. (I'm going to sing.) Nous **allons prendre** du poulet et des légumes.

The near future is used to tell what is going to happen.

❖ Command Forms/The Imperative

Subject Pronoun	Regular -er Verb	Other Verbs
tu	Chante!	fais; prends
vous	Chantez!	faites; prenez
nous	Chantons!	faisons; prenons

Command forms are only used with the subject pronouns tu, vous, and nous. For regular -er verbs ONLY, conjugate in the present tense for the tu form and drop the -s (as well as the subject pronoun). Ex. **Tu manges. Mange!** For all other verbs, just drop the subject pronouns and keep the present tense verb conjugations as they are.

Ex. **Faites** vos devoirs! **Allons** au musée! **Prends-les!**

❖ Prepositions With à and de

Preposition	Masculine Singular	Masculine Singular (Before a Vowel or Vowel Sound)	Feminine Singular	Plural
à (to, at, in)	au	à l'	à la	aux
de (from, of)	du	de l'	de la	des

Ex. Tu vas **à la** plage. Evelyne va **au** musée. Il fait **du** jogging.

Remember, à le and à les **do not** exist! They change to **au** and **aux**. Similarly, de le and de les **do not** exist. They change to **du** and **des**.

❖ Question Words

Question Word (in French)	Question Word (in English)
Avec qui?	With who/whom?
Quand?	When?
Où?	Where?
A quelle heure?	At what time?

Ex. **Quand** est-ce que tu vas au cinéma? **Avec qui?**

Remember, **est-ce que** indicates that a **yes or no question** is forthcoming, whereas **qu'est-ce que** means **what**.

❖ Other Important Items

1. **Know how to tell time:** Quelle heure est-il? Il est _____ heures. Also, you will need to review the vocabulary for quarter past the hour, half past the hour, quarter till the hour, and how to tell the “correct” time once you go past the half hour mark. You need to be familiar with the 24 hour clock as well.
2. **Numbers:** Know how to write these out in numerals as well as spell them out.
Ex. 80=**quatre-vingts**, 110=**cent dix**
3. Making sentences negative: Put ne...pas around the conjugated verb.
Ex. Je **n’aime** pas les gombos. Il **n’a pas** de frères.
4. In the negative, the indefinite articles (un, une, des) and the partitive articles (du, de la, de l’) change to de.
Ex. Tu prends du poulet? Non, je ne prends pas **de** poulet.