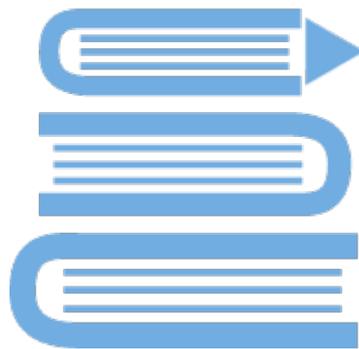


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Verbs Rules (Regulars)

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Introduction

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.

****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

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.

Les pronoms personnels sujets (subject pronouns)

The person or thing doing the action is called the subject of the sentence. It can be a noun or a pronoun.

The French subject pronouns are:

- je = I
- tu = you (to one person, informal way)
- il = he/it
- elle = she/it
- nous = we
- vous = you (one person formal form or more than one person)
- ils = they (masculine)
- elles = they (feminine)

L'infinitif (the infinitive)

In the dictionary, the form of a verb is called the infinitive. The infinitive is the naming part of the verb.

French verbs in the infinitive have one of the following endings:

- -er ending
- -ir ending
- -re ending

Le présent (present tense)

****Present tense of '-er' verbs:****

- These verbs all end in '-er'. In French, the ending of a verb changes depending on the subject.
- When the subject is a mixture of masculine and feminine, you use the masculine plural pronoun (ils).

How to make -er in the present tense -

- Cross out -er. Then, add the following endings:

Je	-e	Nous	-ons
Tu	-es	Vous	-ez
Il/elle/on	-e	Ils/elles	-ent

Example of conjugated '-er' verb in present tense:

Passer (to spend time)

Je	passe
Tu	passes
Il/elle/on	passe
Nous	passons
Vous	passez
Ils/elles	passent

*If you want to make any verb negative, you must put 'ne' before the verb and 'pas' after the verb, eg. je ne passe pas

Present tense of '-ir' verbs:

How to make -ir in the present tense -

- Cross out -ir. Then, add the following endings:

Je	-is	Nous	-issons
Tu	-is	Vous	-issez
Il/elle/on	-is	Ils/elles	-issent

Example of conjugated '-ir' verb in present tense:

Finir (to finish)

Je	finis
Tu	finis
Il/elle/on	finit
Nous	finissons
Vous	finissez
Ils/elles	finissent

Present tense of '-re' verbs:

How to make -re in the present tense -

- Cross out -re. Then, add the following endings:

Je	-s	Nous	-ons
Tu	-s	Vous	-ez
Il/elle/on	No ending	Ils/elles	-ent

Example of conjugated '-re' verb in present tense:

Attendre (to wait for)

Je	attends
Tu	attends
Il/elle/on	attend
Nous	attendons
Vous	attendez
Ils/elles	attendent

Les verbes pronominaux (reflexive verbs)

Reflexive verbs are verbs which use an extra pronoun (reflexive pronoun). This pronoun refers back to the person or thing which is the subject of the verb (eg. myself, ourselves).

Example - se laver (to wash oneself):

Je me lave	I wash myself
Tu te laves	You wash yourself
Il se lave	He washes himself
Elle se lave	She washes herself
Nous nous lavons	We wash ourselves
Vous vous lavez	You wash yourself/yourself
Ils se lavent	They wash themselves
Elles se lavent	They wash themselves

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.

Note: Savoir vs. Connaître

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.

Modal Verbs (Vouloir, Pouvoir, 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.

Pouvoir

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

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.

Falloir = '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.

a) Il faut que nous sachions la vérité b) Il nous faut des preuves c) Il faut une enquête d) Il faut te calmer

Partir, Sortir, Quitter, Laisser

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**.

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**.

Quitter

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

Laisser

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

Present Participle

This is basically the '-ing' part of the verb. So, the infinitive of the verb run is "to run" and the present participle is "running".

The present participle is formed by dropping the **-ons** ending from the nous form in the present tense and adding **-ant**, EG. Chanter (to sing) - chantant (singing).

- Present participles are invariable.

Only three verbs, **être**, **avoir** and **savoir**, have 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**.

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'.

The main French irregular verbs are on the other file, and you should learn these, along with all the above rules, all to help you with your written expression.

All the irregulars include:

- aller (to go)
- avoir (to have)
- boire (to drink)
- comprendre (to understand)
- connaître (to know- people/places)
- devoir (to have to)
- dire (to say/tell)
- écrire (to write)
- envoyer (to send)
- être (to be)
- faire (to make/do)
- lire (to read)
- mettre (to put)
- partir (to leave)
- pleuvoir (to rain)
- pouvoir (to be able to)
- prendre (to take)
- recevoir (to get/receive)
- savoir (to know - information/knowledge)
- sortir (to go out)
- tenir (to hold on)
- venir (to come)
- voir (to see)
- vouloir (to want)