

French Verb Summary

Indicative Tenses

The Present (<i>Le Présent</i>) <i>J'étudie les verbes français.</i>	I study / am studying French verbs.
The Past Perfect (<i>Le Passé Composé</i>) <i>J'ai étudié les verbes français.</i>	I studied French verbs.
The Imperfect Past (<i>L'Imparfait</i>) <i>J'étudiais les verbes français.</i>	I was studying French verbs.
The Pluperfect Past (<i>Le Plus-Que-Parfait</i>) <i>J'avais étudié les verbes français.</i>	I had studied French verbs.
The Immediate Past <i>Je viens d'étudier les verbes français.</i>	I just studied French verbs.
The Future (<i>Le Futur</i>) <i>J'étudierai les verbes français.</i>	I will study French verbs.
The Future Perfect (<i>Le Futur Antérieur</i>) <i>J'aurai étudié les verbes français.</i>	I will have studied French verbs.
The Immediate Future (<i>Le Futur Proche</i>) <i>Je vais étudier les verbes français.</i>	I am going to study French verbs (right now).

Conditional Tenses

The Conditional (<i>Le Conditionnel</i>) <i>J'étudierais les verbes français.</i>	I would study French verbs.
The Past Conditional (<i>Le Conditionnel Passé</i>) <i>J'aurais étudié les verbes français.</i>	I would have studied French verbs.

The Imperative

The Imperative (<i>L'Impératif</i>) – <i>tu form</i> <i>Étudie les verbes français.</i>	Study French verbs.
The Imperative (<i>L'Impératif</i>) – <i>vous form</i> <i>Étudiez les verbes français.</i>	Study French verbs.
The Imperative (<i>L'Impératif</i>) – <i>suggestive</i> <i>Étudions les verbes français.</i>	Let's study French verbs.

Subjunctive Tenses

The Present Subjunctive (<i>Le Présent du Subjonctif</i>) <i>Il faut que nous étudions les verbes français.</i> We have to study French verbs.	
The Past Subjunctive (<i>Le Passé du Subjonctif</i>) <i>Je veux que vous ayez étudié les verbes français avant demain.</i> I want you to have studied French verbs before tomorrow.	

COMPOUND CONJUGATIONS

être/avoir auxiliary usage

Compound tenses are formed using a conjugated form of *être* or *avoir* plus the past participle of the verb. Most verbs use *avoir*, with the following two exceptions (in which case *être* is used):

- 1) Reflexive verbs- all reflexive verbs use *être* as the auxiliary verb

Je me suis levé les mains.
I washed my hands.

- 2) The so-called "house" verbs: *aller, arriver, devenir, entrer, mourir, naître, partir, rester, retourner, revenir, tomber, venir*. Also included in this list are 5 other verbs that use *avoir* when used with a direct object, and *être* otherwise (the meaning of the verb changes slightly depending on the presence of a direct object):

descendre

Elle est descendue vite.
She came down quickly.

Elle a descendu la valise.
She brought down the suitcase.

monter

Elle est montée vite.
She went up quickly.

Elle a monté l'escalier.
She went up the stairs.

passer (note: *se passer*, "to take place", is a different verb from *passer*)

Elle est passée chez moi.
She came by my house.

Elle m'a passé le sel.
She passed me the salt.

Elle a passé l'examen.
She took the test.

rentrer

Elle est rentrée tôt.
She returned early.

Elle a rentré le chat dans la maison.
She brought the cat into the house.

sortir

Elle est sortie hier soir.
She went out last night.

Elle a sorti son mouchoir.
She took out her handkerchief.

Participle Agreement

When using a compound tense, there are certain cases when the ending of the past participle is changed to agree in gender and number of another object in the sentence (subject or direct object). There are three main cases in which this happens:

- 1) *être* verbs- the "house" verbs listed above, when using *être* as the auxiliary verb, change the past participle to agree in gender and number with the subject. Note that *montrer, descendre, passer, rentrer, and sortir* do not use *être* as their auxiliary verb when they have a direct object, and in those cases, the past participle remains unchanged (see the examples above for details).

Il est allé au cinéma hier soir.
He went to the movies last night.

Elles sont allées au cinéma hier soir.
They (f) went to the movies last night.

Nous avons acheté une nouvelle voiture.
We bought a new car.

Nous sommes arrivés à la heure.
We arrived on time.

2) When the compound verb appears with a preceding direct object, the past participle agrees with the direct object.

J'ai descendu les valises. (no agreement; the direct object follows the verb)
I took down the suitcases.

Tes valises? Je les ai descendues. (agreement; the direct object precedes the verb)
Your suitcases? I took them down.

Quelles valises est-ce que tu as descendues? (agreement; the direct object precedes the verb)

Note that this is totally independent of *avoir/être* usage:

J'ai perdu mes portefeuilles.
I lost my wallets.

Ces sont les portefeuilles que j'ai perdus.
These are the wallets that I lost.

3) Reflexive verbs have past participles that agree with the subject/object, but only if the reflexive pronoun is a direct object. This is really just a special case of the second case (listed above):

Elle s'est lavée.
She washed herself.

Elle s'est lavé les mains.
She washed her hands.

Note that some verbs, like *parler* and *téléphoner* only take indirect objects (*à*), and as such the past participle does not change in compound tenses:

Ils se sont téléphoné.
They called each other on the phone.

Elles se sont parlé.
They talked to each other.

Pronoun/Negative/Adverb placement

All personal and adverbial (*y* and *en*) pronouns precede the auxiliary verb:

Je te l'ai donné.
I gave it to you.

Nous y serons allés.
We will have gone there.

When a compound tense is used with a negative construction, or with an adverb, the additional words surround the auxiliary verb, or in other words, appear after the auxiliary verb but before the past participle:

Si je n'avais pas lu le livre, j'aurais mieux aimé le film.
If I hadn't read the book, I would have enjoyed the movie better.

Je n'ai pas le fait.
I didn't do it.

Nous n'aurions jamais su.
We never would have known.

If you have both an pronoun and a negative adverb,

There are two exceptions to this: when using the past infinitive (negative constructs precede the verb as a single unit), and when using the negative pronouns *personne*, *nulle part*, and *aucun* (the pronouns

follow the part participle):

J'espère ne pas avoir perdu.
I hope I didn't lose.

Je n'ai vu personne.
I didn't see anyone.

Je ne l'ai trouvé nulle part.
I didn't find it anywhere.

PRESENT/PAST PARTICIPLES

The Present Participle (*le Participe Présent*)

Formation:

Take the *nous* form of the present, drop the *-ons* and add *-ant*

Usage:

To tell how someone is doing something, or describe a simultaneous action:

Je suis partie en courant.
I took off at a run.

En ouvrant son sac, elle en sort une photo.
Opening her purse, she takes out a photograph.

Also used to show cause and effect; or the manner in which things are done:

Il gagne d'argent en lavant des voitures.
He makes money by washing cars.

On ne maigrit pas en mangeant des glaces.
You don't get thinner by eating ice cream.

The present participle can also be used as an adjective, in which case it usually agrees in gender and number with noun it modifies:

de l'eau courante
running water

les numéros gagnants
the winning numbers

des histoires touchantes
touching stories

Note:

When verbs take a pronoun, it comes before the present participle:

Je retiens l'homme en l'interrogeant à nouveau.
I stopped the man, asking him more questions.

Important Irregulars:

ayant (avoir), étant (être), sachant (savoir)

The Past Participle (*le Participe Passé*)

Formation:

Take the infinitive form of the verb, drop the ending (*-er, -ir, -re*) and add *-é* for *-er* verbs, *-i* for *-ir* verbs, and *-u* for *-re* verbs.

Usage:

The past participle is used in many compound tenses; please refer to those sections for details on its usage.

Note:

When used in a compound tense with the verb *être* the past participle agrees in number and gender with the subject.

Elle est arrivée à Paris.
She arrived in Paris.

Les garçons sont arrivés à Paris.
The boys arrived in Paris.

When used with a reflexive verb, this gets a little complicated. In such a case, the past participle agrees with the reflexive pronoun if and only if it is the direct object (the reflexive pronoun is the direct object if it is what is receiving the action).

Elle s'est lavée.
She washed herself.

Elle s'est lavé les cheveux.
She washed her hair

When used in a compound tense with the verb *avoir* the past participle agrees in number and gender with a preceding direct object (note that this extends across phrase boundaries, as in the last example).

Où sont les petits gâteaux? Paul les a mangés.
Where are the little cakes? Paul ate them.

Qui a écrit les lettres? Paul les a écrites.
Who wrote the letters? Paul wrote them.

Paul a oublié le nom de la personne que nous avons rencontrée ce matin.
Paul forgot the name of the person whom we met up with this morning.

Important Irregulars:

asseoir - assis
conduire - conduit
craindre - craint
dire - dit
faire - fait
mettre - mis
offrir - offert
plaire - plu
recevoir - reçu
suivre - suivi
valoir - valu
voir - vu

avoir - eu
courir - couru
croire - cru
écrire - écrit
falloir - fallu
mourir - mort
ouvrir - ouvert
pouvoir - pu
rire - ri
taire - tu
venir - venu
vouloir - voulu

boire - bu
couvrir - couvert
devoir - dû / due
être - été
lire - lu
naître - né
paraître - paru
prendre - pris
savoir - su
tenir - tenu
vivre - vécu

INDICATIVE MOOD (L'INDICATIF)

The Present (*le Présent*)

Formation:

-er verbs

-e -ons
-es -ez
-e -ent

-re verbs

-s -ons
-s -ez
- -ent

-ir verbs

-is -issons
-is -issez
-it -issent

Usage:

Present action, habitual action, state of being, near future, present perfect (*Je suis ici depuis dix minutes*, I have been here for ten minutes)

Important irregulars:

aller - to go

vais	allons
vas	allez
va	vont

avoir - to have

ai	avons
as	avez
a	ont

boire - to drink

bois	buvons
bois	buvez
boit	boivent

croire - to believe

crois	croyons
crois	croyez
croit	croient

devoir - must/should

dois	devons
dois	devez
doit	doivent

être - to be

sois	sommes
es	êtes
est	sont

faire - to do/make

fais	faisons
fais	faites
fait	font

lire - to read

lis	lisons
lis	lisez
lit	lisent

mettre - to put or place

mets	mettons
mets	mettez
met	mettent

mourir - to die

meurs	mourons
meurs	mourez
meurt	meurent

naître - to be born

nais	naissons
nais	naissez
nait	naissent

partir - to leave

pars	partons
pars	partez
part	partent

pouvoir - to want

peux	pouvons
peux	pouvez
peut	peuvent

prendre - to take

prends	prenons
prends	prenez
prend	prennent

savoir - to know

sais	savons
sais	savez
sait	savent

suivre - to follow/take

suis	suivons
suis	suivez
suit	suivent

valoir - to be worth, deserve, merit

vaut	valons
vaut	valez
vaut	valent

venir - to come

viens	venons
viens	venez
vient	viennent

vivre - to live

vis	vivons
vis	vivez
vit	vivent

voir - to see

vois	voyons
vois	voyez
voit	voient

vouloir - to want

veux	voulons
veux	voulez
veut	veulent

The Past Perfect (*le Passé Composé*)

Formation:

This is a compound verb with the present (*le présent*) form of *être/avoir* plus the past participle (*le participe passé*).

Usage:

This describes an action in the past with an emphasis on its completion. Often used in conjunction with the imperfect (*l'imparfait*).

Je suis allé à l'école.
I went to school.

Je dormais quand tu m'a téléphoné.
I was sleeping when you called.

The Imperfect (*l'Imparfait*)

Formation:

Take the *nous* form of the present, drop the *-ons* and add:

-ais	-ions
-ais	-iez
-ait	-aient

Usage:

An ongoing action in the past (either habitually, while another action was occurring or occurred, a mental/physical condition, etc)

Il lisait pendant que j'écrivais
He was reading while I was writing

Il lisait quand je suis entré.
He was reading when I came in.

Nous allions à la plage tous le jours.
We went to the beach every day.

J'attendais l'autobus depuis dix minutes quand il est arrivé.
I had been waiting for the bus for ten minutes when it arrived.

Quand ma mère était jeune, elle était belle.
When my mother was young, she was beautiful.

Ça allait être merveilleux, mais rien du tout est allé comme nous prévisions.
It was going to be wonderful, but nothing at all went according to our expectations.

Also, when used in a *si* clause on its own, this means a wish or a suggestion.

Dis, si tu m'aidais?
Hey, what about helping me out?

Si on allait regarder un film?
Hey, how about going to see a movie?

Ah, si j'étais riche....
Oh, if only I were rich....

Important Irregulars:

être - to be
étais étions
étais étiez
était étaient

Important but not irregular:

avoir - to have
avais avions
avais aviez
avait avaient

Note:

See *si clauses* for usage with the conditional mood (see below for details).

Note:

Some verbs have slightly different meanings between the imperfect (*l'imparfait*) and the past perfect (*le passé composé*):

savoir (su)-	<i>knew</i> (<i>l'imparfait</i>) vs. <i>found out</i> (<i>le passé composé</i>)
connaître (conné)-	<i>knew</i> (<i>l'imparfait</i>) vs. <i>met</i> (<i>le passé composé</i>)
devoir (dû/dué)-	<i>was supposed to</i> (<i>l'imparfait</i>) vs. <i>probably/must have</i> (<i>le passé composé</i>)

The Pluperfect (Le Plus-Que-Parfait)

Formation:

This is a compound verb with the imperfect (*l'imparfait*) of *être/avoir* plus the past participle (*le participe passé*).

Usage:

Describes a past event that happened before another event in the past.

Ma mère avait déjà mangé quand nous sommes arrivés.
My mother had already eaten when we arrived.

J'avais étudié la leçon que le professeur a expliquée.
I had studied the lesson which the professor explained.

(note the agreement of the proceeding direct object with the past participle, even across clauses).

J'étais fatigué ce matin parce que je n'avais pas dormi heir soir.
I was tired this morning because I hadn't slept last night.

Gustav Eiffel, qui n'avait pas encore construit la fameuse tour parisienne portant son nom, donnera corps à la vision de Frédéric-August Bartholdi.
Gustav Eiffel, who hadn't yet built the famous Parisian tower that carries his name, would work on the vision of Frederic-August Bartholdi.

Note:

This is used in *si* clauses with the past subjunctive (*le passé subjunctif*); see sections below for details.

The Immediate/Near Past

Formation:

Present tense (*le présent*) of *venir* + *de* + infinitive.

Usage:

Used to express something that is just happened in the near past.

Il vient de manger.
He just ate.

Je viens de retourner.
I just got back.

The Future (*Le Futur*)

Formation:

Add the following endings to the infinitive form of the verb:

-ai -ons
-as -ez
-a -ont

Note that with verbs that end in -re, the final e is dropped (*lire* becomes *lirai*, *liras*, and *naître* becomes *naîtrai*, *naîtras*, etc). Also note some common orthographic changes (given below): -eler verbs (*appeler*) and -yer verbs (*payer*).

Usage:

Action that will take place in the future.

J'irai à Paris l'été prochain.
I will go to Paris this next summer.

J'y penserai.
I'll think about it.

Je te dirai tout quand tu seras ici.
I'll tell you all of it when you are here.

Important irregulars: (only the *je* form is given for the future)

<i>acheter – achèterai</i>	<i>appeler – appellerai</i>	<i>aller – irai</i>
<i>avoir – aurai</i>	<i>devoir – devrai</i>	<i>envoyer - enverrai</i>
<i>être – serai</i>	<i>faire – ferai</i>	<i>mourir - mourrai</i>
<i>payer – paierai</i>	<i>pouvoir – pourrai</i>	<i>recevoir – recevrai</i>
<i>savoir – saurai</i>	<i>tenir – tiendrai</i>	<i>venir – viendrai</i>

voir – verrai *vouloir – voudrai*

Also: *il faudra* (falloir) and *il pleuvra* (pleuvoir)

Note:

This is used in *si* clauses with the present tense (*le présent*); see sections below for details.

The Future Perfect (*Le Futur Antérieur*)

Formation:

Future tense of *être/avoir* followed by the past participle of the verb you are using (*le participe passé*).

Usage:

This tense expresses what will have happened, usually in relation to some other event.

Quand tu arriveras, nous serons déjà partis en vacances.
When you arrive, we will have already left for vacation.

J'aurai fini vers cinq heures du soir.
I will have finished around 5pm.

Je te téléphonerai quand le lettre sera arrivé.
I will call you when the letter arrives.

Nous partirons aussitôt que Bridget aura fini son travail.
We will leave as soon as Bridget has finished her work.

The Near Future (*Le Futur Proche*)

Formation:

Present tense (*le présent*) of *aller* + *infinitive*.

Usage:

Used to express something that is going to happen in the near future.

Il va t'appeler.
He's going to call you.

Nous allons manger.
We're going to eat.

CONDITIONAL MOOD (*LE CONDITIONNEL*)

The Present Conditional (*Le Conditionnel Présent*)

Formation:

The present conditional mood (*le conditionnel présent*) is formed very similarly to the indicative future, only with a slight change in endings:

-ais	-ions
-ais	-iez
-ait	-aient

Usage:

The conditional (*le conditionnel*) is used:

1. to make polite requests
2. offer advice
3. talk about things that might happen if something else were possible
4. express a desire, and in particular what someone stated, hoped, or decided (in the past) would happen in the future (just as in English).
5. when you want to convey a sense of not being sure of something that will happen in the future (contrast with the certainty of the future tense)

Je voudrais du café.
I would like some coffee.

Est-ce que vous pourriez m'aider dans mon recherches?
Can you help me with my research?

À votre place, j'abandonnerais cette idée.
If I were you, I would give up that idea.

Dans un monde parfait, il n'y aurait plus jamais de guerre.
In a perfect world, there would be no more war.

J'aimerais bien le voir!
I would love to see it!

Je voudrais une grande maison.
I would like to have a big house.

L'Institut sera fermé demain. (future) / L'Institut serait fermé demain. (conditional)
The Institute will be closed tomorrow. / The Institute might be closed tomorrow.

Also, the conditional is used in past declarative speech:

Maintenant, elle dit qu'il ira au cinéma. (now = present tense, later = future tense)
Right now, she says that he will go to the movies.

Heir, elle a dit qu'il irait au cinéma. (yesterday = past tense, later = conditional tense)
Yesterday, she said that he would go to the movies.

Marianne a dit qu'elle ferait ses devoirs après le dîner.
Marianna said that she would do her homework after dinner.

Le prof a décidé qu'il n'y aurait plus d'examens.
The professor decided that there would be no more exams.

One more important use of the conditional is in regards to reported facts/events that have been reported but not yet confirmed:

Selon les études, le chocolat serait bon pour la santé.
According to the studies, chocolate is good for your health.

Dans l'accident aujourd'hui, il y aurait deux morts et plusieurs blessés.
There were reportedly two people killed and several injured in today's accident.

Important Irregulars:

See the indicative future (*le futur*).

Note:

This is used in *si* clauses with the imperfect (*l'imparfait*); see sections below for details.

The Past Conditional (*Le Conditionnel Passé*)

Formation:

This is a compound verb with the conditional present (*le conditionnel présent*) of *être/avoir* plus the past participle (*le participe passé*).

Usage:

This is used to express a conditional action that would have happened (but didn't), or would have been (but wasn't).

À ta place, je n'aurais pas pris ma voiture.
In your place, I would not have taken my car.

Si j'avais étudié, j'aurais réussi à l'examen.
If I had studied, I would have passed the exam.

J'aurais fait le travail si j'avais eu le temps.
I would have done the work if I had had the time.

J'aurais voulu voir ce film.
I would have liked to see that movie.

Vous auriez dû étudier pour l'examen.
You should have studied for the exam.

Tu aurais pu me dire plus tôt.
You could have told me sooner.

Note:

This is used in *si* clauses with the past perfect (*le plus-que-parfait*); see sections below for details.

Tout le monde serait ici, si il ne avait pas plu.
Everybody would have been here, if it hadn't rained.

IMPERATIVE MOOD (*L'IMPÉRATIF*)

Formation:

There are two forms to the imperative (*l'impératif*), based on *tu* and *vous*. In both cases, you use the present tense (*l'présent*) and drop the subject pronoun, and drop any final -s in the *tu* form if it exists. You can use the same construct in the *nous* form to make a suggestion for the group that includes yourself.

Usage:

This mood gives a command.

Va me chercher du sucre, s'il vous plaît.
Go and get me some sugar, please.

Soyez à l'heure!
Be on time!

Allons au marché.
Let's go to the market.

Important Irregulars:

être - *sois, soyez, soyons*
avoir - *aie, ayez, ayons*

Note:

In positive commands, pronouns come after the verb, and *me/te* are changed to *moi/toi*.

Réponds-moi!
Answer me!

Lavez-vous!
Wash yourself!

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD (*LE SUBJONCTIF*)

The Present Subjunctive (*Le Présent du Subjonctif*)

Formation:

Take the *-ils* form of the present, drop *-ent*, and add:

-e	-ions *
-es	-iez *
-e	-ent

Another way to think about it (which makes things a lot easier), is that the *nous* and *vous* forms are identical to the imperfect (*l'imparfait*). This makes a difference when it comes to verbs with two stems; rather than thinking about these as irregular verbs, if you just think that the *nous* and *vous* forms as being identical to *l'imparfait* it is a bit easier. For example:

venir - to come

present tense

viens *venons*
viens *venez*
vient *viennent*

imperfect

venais
venais
venait

venions
veniez
venaient

present subjunctive

vienne ***venions***
viennes ***veniez***
vienne *viennent*

Important Irregulars:*être*

sois *soyons*
sois *soyez*
soit *soient*

aller

aille *allions*
ailles *alliez*
aille *aient*

avoir

aie *ayons*
aies *ayez*
ait *aient*

faire

fasse *fassions*
fasses *fassiez*
fasse *fassent*

pouvoir

puisse *puissions*
puisses *puissiez*
puisse *puissent*

savoir

sache *sachions*
saches *sachiez*
sache *sachent*

vouloir

veuille *voulions*
veuilles *vouliez*
veuille *veuillent*

Usage:

To express feelings, judgments, what is desirable, opinions/advice, possibility, uncertainty, what may or may not be, wish, fear, or supposition- that which is not real. Specifically:

1. Verbs of desire: *vouloir, rêver, désirer, attendre, donner...*
2. Verbs of sentiment: *aimer, adorer, détester, regretter, être <adjective> de...*
3. After impersonal statements: *il faut que, il est nécessaire que, il semble que...*

This is used much more frequently in French than in English. One reason is that with the subjunctive there is no concordance of time as there is with the indicative. For example:

Je pense qu'il viendra ce soir.
I think that he will come tonight.

Je pensais qu'il viendrait ce soir.
I thought that he would come tonight.

Note that in the examples above (indicative mood), the present tense is followed by a subordinate clause in the future, while a past tense is followed by the conditional. When using the subjunctive mood, time is much more simple:

<i>Je veux que tu fasse...</i>	I want you to do...
<i>Je voulais que tu fasse...</i>	I wanted you to do...
<i>Je voudrais que tu fasse...</i>	I would like you to do...

The subjunctive used to have different tenses for time (*subjonctif imparfait*, etc), but these forms are no longer used. You might run into them in very formal or old writings however. The only instance where time matters is when you want to put the subjunctive action definitively before the action in the main clause (see *Le Subjonctif Passé* below).

The idea of doubt/uncertainty becomes very important when you negate certain phrases. "I believe that..." is an assertion of truth so it takes the indicative, but "I don't believe that..." is an assertion of doubt, which takes the subjunctive. On the other hand, "I doubt that..." is an assertion of doubt, so it is followed by the subjunctive, whereas "I don't doubt that..." takes the indicative.

Je crois qu'il a 20 ans.
I believe he is 20 years old.

Je ne crois pas qu'il ait 20 ans.
I don't believe that he is 20 years old.

Je doute qu'il vienne.
I doubt that he will come.

Je ne doute pas qu'il viendra.
I don't doubt that he'll come.

Je pense qu'elle me prête sa voiture.
I think that she'll lend me her car.

Je ne pense pas qu'elle me prête sa voiture.
I don't think that she'll lend me her car.

Note: for the example above, *prêter* in the 3rd person singular has the same form as the subjunctive; this is one of the difficult things about the subjunctive, as there is a lot of overlap in form with the present indicative, depending on the verb. So in the phrase on the left above, *prête* is an example of the present indicative, and in the phrase on the right above, *prête* is an example of the subjunctive.

However, not all negated phrases change between the subjunctive and the indicative. For example, negating a statement of sentiment, is still a statement of sentiment!

Je suis heureux que nous allions.
I'm happy that we're going.

Je ne suis pas heureux que nous allions.
I am not happy that we're going.

So you need to use care when using the subjunctive and negation; sometimes the negation means that you switch between the indicative and the subjunctive, sometimes not. Just remember that the subjunctive means subjective, unreal, unsure, and that should get you through most of the time. This includes some forms of interrogation:

J'insiste que vous soyez ici à l'heure.
I insist that you be here on time.

Je n'insiste jamais que vous soyez ici à l'heure.
I never insist that you be here on time.

Il vaut mieux qu'il vienne.
It would be better if he came.

Il ne vaut pas mieux qu'il vienne.
I wouldn't be better if he came.

Il est important que vous fassiez le travail.
It is important that you do the work.

I n'est pas important que vous fassiez le travail.
It isn't important that you do the work.

Il paraît que nous avons besoin d'aller.
It seems that we need to go.

Il ne paraît pas que nous ayons besoin d'aller.
It doesn't seem that we need to go.

Il est évident qu'elle te dit la vérité.
It's clear that she is telling you the truth.

Il n'est pas évident qu'elle te dise la vérité.
It isn't clear if she is telling you the truth (or not).

Penses-tu qu'il soit sympa?
Do you think that he is nice?

Oui, je pense qu'il est sympa.
Yes, I think he is nice.

Non, je ne pense pas qu'il soit sympa.
Non, I don't think that he is nice.

Note: *Il faut que* is an interesting construct, which I find to be a bit illogical when it comes to negation and expressing obligation:

Il faut qu'il soit puni.
It is necessary that he be punished.

Il ne faut pas qu'il soit puni.
It is necessary that he not be punished.

Negating *falloir* does not mean negating the obligation, it negates what is required/necessary (and still takes *le subjonctif!*). If you want to express the lack of obligation, you have to use another construct altogether (see the Personal Obligation section below):

Il faut que tu partes.
You need to leave.

Il ne faut pas que tu partes.
You need to not leave.

Il n'est pas nécessaire que tu partes.
Tu n'es pas obligé de partir.
Tu n'as pas besoin de partir.
Tu n'as pas à partir.
You don't have to leave.

Note that the subjunctive is used only when the subjects of the main clause and the subordinate clause are different; if they are the same then the infinitive is used.

Je veux que tu reviennes.
I want you to come back.

Je veux revenir.
I want to come back.

Ils préfèrent que nous restions.
They prefer that we stay.

Ils préfèrent rester.
They prefer to stay.

The subjunctive is also used with phrases/clauses that modify a superlative:

Voilà la plus belle femme que j'aie jamais vue.
There is the most beautiful woman that I have ever seen.

La seule voiture bleue que nous puissions conduire se trouve là bas.
The only blue car that we can drive is over there.

Another use of the subjunctive is for indefinite antecedents, which is when an object is talked about in the main clause that is nonexistent or whose existence is in doubt.

Nous cherchons quelqu'un qui puisse travailler indépendamment.
We are looking for someone who can work independently.

Il ne connaît personne qui veuille venir à la fête.
He doesn't know anyone who would want to come to the party.

The important aspect is the doubt or lack of existence. If the implication is that something does indeed exist, the indicative is used:

Il connaît quelqu'un qui veut venir à la fête.
He knows someone who wants to come to the party.

Note on Conjunctions:

The subjunctive is required after some conjunctions. This seems to be a somewhat confusing and arbitrary topic, and probably is best to be memorized and/or learned by rote. These conjunctive phrases usually end in *que*, and if the two clauses have the same subject are usually replaced by a form without *que*, which would take the indicative.

These conjunctions always take the subjunctive case, as there is no prepositional forms to use without *que* (therefore using the same subject in both clauses is OK):

<i>jusqu'à que</i>	until
<i>bien que</i>	although / despite (opposite of <i>donc</i>)
<i>quoique</i>	although / despite (opposite of <i>donc</i>)
<i>pourvu que</i>	provided that

Quoiqu'elle soit belle, il ne l'aime pas.
Although she is beautiful, he does not love her.

Tu ne peux pas recevoir ton diplôme jusqu'à ce que tu finisses tes cours.
You cannot receive your diploma until you finish your classes.

Le gâteau doit rester au four jusqu'à qu'il soit cuit.
The cake should stay in the oven until it is cooked.

Bien que j'aie faim, je n'ai rien mangé.
Although I was hungry, I didn't eat anything.
(note that the passé composé is what defines the past tense here)

Note on *bien que* and *quoique*: these are used with phrases and clauses. If you want to express although/despite with a noun, you use *malgré*: *Malgré la pluie, je ne prends pas mon parapluie.*

These conjunctions take the subjunctive if the subjects differ, otherwise they are replaced by the non-*que* form given, and the subjunctive is not used (rather, the infinitive is used):

<i>pour que (-)</i>	so that	
<i>afin que (de)</i>	so that	
<i>à moins que (de)</i>	unless	
<i>à condition que (de)</i>	provided that	
<i>avant que (-)</i>	before	(note that <i>après que</i> takes the indicative)
<i>sans que (-)</i>	without	
<i>où que</i>	wherever	
<i>quoi que</i>	whatever	
<i>qui que</i>	whoever	
<i>quel que</i>	whichever	
<i>si <adjective> que</i>	however	

Je partirai à moins qu'il ne vienne pas.
I will leave unless he does not come.

Phillippe est parti sans que tu lui dises au revoir.

Phillip left without you saying goodbye to him.

Phillippe est parti sans te dire au revoir.
Philip left without saying goodbye to you.

Téléphone à tes parents, afin qu'ils sachent où nous sommes.
Call your parents, so they know where we are.

Je vais leur téléphoner afin de commander une pizza.
I'm going to call them to order a pizza.

Où que j'aille dans la vie, je me souviendrai de votre gentillesse.
Wherever I go in life, I will remember your kindness.

Si idiot que ce soit, rends-moi ce service.
However idiotic it may be, do me this favor.

Note:

Again, if you are stating something that you hold/feel to be true, do not use the subjunctive. If you are denying or otherwise doubting something, then the subjunctive is used:

Je crois que tu es fatigué.
I believe that you are tired.

Je ne crois pas que tu sois fatigué.
I don't believe that you are tired.

Also note that neither *espérer* nor *penser* take the subjunctive:

J'espère qu'il fait le ménage.
I hope that he does the housework.

Je pense qu'il est malade aujourd'hui.
I think that he is sick today.

The Past Subjunctive (*Le Passé du Subjonctif*)

Formation:

This is a compound verb tense, formed by the present subjunctive (*le présent du subjonctif*) of *être/avoir* plus the past participle (*le participe passé*).

Usage:

Same as the present subjunctive (*le présent du subjonctif*), only the wish/desire clause describes an action that took place before the action in the main clause. This is a very important distinction,

Il est possible qu'il soit parti.
It is possible that he has left.

Je doute qu'il ait fait cela.
I doubt that he did that.

How you mix the tense of the main clause with the subjunctive present/past are all grammatically fine, but do change the meaning to allow complex constructs of meaning:

Je regrette qu'il vienne.

I regret (now) that he is coming.

Je regrette qu'il soit venu.

I regret (now) that he came.

J'ai regretté qu'il vienne.

I regretted (in the past, maybe not any longer) that he is coming (he is coming now or in the future).

J'ai regretté qu'il soit venu.

I regretted (in the past) that he came (he came prior to my regretting it).

Just like the regular subjunctive, if you have the same subject in both clauses, it collapses to use an infinitive form. To keep the idea of the secondary/subjunctive action happening before the action of the main clause, this means you use the past infinitive:

Je regrette que je sois allé... **WRONG!**
Je regrette d'être allé... **RIGHT!**

See the Past Infinitive below.

OTHER TOPICS

Si Clauses

Formation:

The word *si* can be used to create sentences with multiple clauses that correspond to if-then clauses in English. There are three main types:

First conditional:

This is formed with the *si* clause in the present indicative (*le présent*) or the past perfect (*le passé composé*), and the main clause in either the present, future, or imperative, depending on the intention.

Nous ne sortons pas s'il pleut.
We don't go out if it rains.

Si j'ai le temps, je le ferai.
If I have the time, I will do it.

Viens me voir si tu peux.
Come and see me if you can.

Si tu as fini, tu peux partir.
If you have finished, you can leave.

Si tu n'as pas finis, dis-moi.
If you haven't finished, tell me.

Second conditional:

This is formed with the *si* clause in the imperfect (*l'imparfait*), and the main clause in the present conditional (*le conditionnel présent*). This expresses something that is contrary to fact or unlikely to occur; a hypothetical that is outside of reality.

Si nous habitions à Paris, nous parlerions français tout le temps.
If we lived in Paris, we would speak in French all the time.

Si je gagnais à la loterie, j'achèterais une nouvelle moto.
If I won the lottery, I would buy a new car.

Si j'avais le temps, je le ferais.
If I had the time, I would do it (implies that I do not have the time).

Si tu étudiais, tu serais intelligent.
If you studied, you would be smart (implies that you do not study)

Third Conditional:

This is formed with the *si* clause in the pluperfect (*le plus-que-parfait*) and the main clause in the past conditional (*le conditionnel passé*). This expresses a hypothetical situation in the past that is different from reality.

Si vous étiez allés à la boum, vous seriez amusés.
If you had gone to the party, you would have had fun.

Si elle vous avait vu, elle vous aurait aidé.
If she had seen you, she would have helped you.

Si j'avais su, je ne t'aurais pas écouté.
Had I known, I would not have listened to you.

There are other patterns besides the three common ones above; context will help you figure out the sequence of tenses. The tenses will be the same in English as in French, so just follow your intuition and you should be OK.

Si tu avais étudié (plus-que-parfait), tu pourrais répondre à ces questions (le conditionnel).
If you had studied (pluperfect), you would be able to answer these questions (conditional).

S'il fait beau (présent), on fait souvent une promenade (présent).
If the weather is nice (present), we often take a walk (present).

On pourrait aller au restaurant (conditionnel), si j'avais fini (plus-que-parfait) mes devoirs.
We could go to the restaurant (conditional), if I had finished my homework (pluperfect).

Passive Voice

Formation:

The passive voice is when the action is being done to the subject, rather than the other way around (the actor is can be given with the preposition *par*, unless the verb expresses a state of being, in which case it is *de*). For example:

Benoît lit le livre.
Benoît is reading the book.

Le livre est lit par Benoît.
The book is read by Benoît.

Tout le monde le respecte.
Everybody respects him.

Il est respecté de tout le monde.
He is respected by everybody.

Anne fait la tarte.
Anne is making the cake.

La tarte est faite par Anne.
The cake is being made by Anne.

Mes amis aiment bien ma mère.
My friends like my mother.

Ma mère est aimée bien de mes amis.
My other is like by my friends.

There are two ways of forming the passive voice in French The first is formed by some conjugation of *être* followed by the past participle (*le participe passé*), where the mood/tense of *être* is dependent on what the phrase is saying (all moods/tenses can apply). Note that since the recipient of the action appears before the conjugated *être* verb, the past participle needs to agree in gender/number with the subject (just like in other compound tenses).

Françoise lit le livre.
Françoise is reading the book.

Le livre est lité par Françoise.
The book is being read by Françoise.

The passive voice can be used in any tense:

Le livre a été lité par Gabrielle.
The book was read by Gabrielle.

Le livre sera lité par Gabrielle.
The book will be read by Gabrielle.

Le livre serait lue par Gabrielle.
The book would be read by Gabrielle.

Je veux que le livre soit lue par Gabrielle.
I want the book be read by Gabrielle.

The passive voice is used as it is in English- to put more emphasis on the performer of the action, or to not identify the performer of the action at all.

Un enfant écrit ce livre.
A child wrote this book.

Ce livre a été lit par un enfant.
This book was written by a child.

Quelqu'un a écrit ce livre en 1975.
Someone wrote this book in 1975.

Ce livre a été lit en 1975.
This book was written in 1975.

Note:

The passive voice is used in French, but it is preferable to avoid it if you can. There are a couple of ways of rewording a sentence to avoid a passive construct:

To focus on the performer, use *c'est*:

Cette film a été faite par Marie-Claire.
This film was made by Marie-Claire.

C'est Marie-Claire qui a fait cette film.
It was Marie-Claire who made this film.

Le record a été battu par Thierry.
The record was broken by Thierry.

C'est Thierry qui a été battu le record.
It was Thierry who broke the record.

To avoid identifying the performer of the action, you can use the impersonal pronoun *on*:

Ils ont été dits de venir à midi.
They were told to come a noon.

On leur a dit de venir à midi.
They were told to come at noon.

La voiture avait été vendue samedi.
The car was sold on Saturday.

On avait vendu la voiture samedi.
The car was sold on Saturday.

You can also avoid mentioning the performer of the action by using the *se passive*: using a reflexive pronoun with a normally non-reflexive verb, to demonstrate the passive nature of the action:

Elle s'appelle Isabelle.
She is called Isabelle.

Cela ne se fait pas.
That is not done.

Ce livre se compose de 8 chapitres.
This book is comprised of 8 chapters.

La glace se vend ici.
Ice cream is sold here.

Les mûres ne se vendent pas ici.
Blackberries are not sold here.

Ce produit devrait s'utiliser quotidiennement.
This product should be used daily.

faire + <infinitive>

Usage:

This is not really the passive voice, but the expression *faire + <infinitive>* is used to describe actions that we make or have other people do:

Je fais développer les photos.
I am having the pictures developed.

Ta voiture est sale- fais-la laver.
Your car is dirty- have it cleaned!

It is also used to describe situations where people are made or forced to perform an action:

Le professeur fait étudier les élèves.
The teacher makes the students study.

The use of *se faire* + <infinitive> is used to describe actions that people are having done for/to themselves:

Je vais me faire couper les cheveux.
I'm going to have my hair cut.

J'ai fait réparer ma montre.
I had my watch fixed.

Idiomatic usage:

faire savoir means "to let someone know":

Faites-le moi savoir dès que possible.
Let me know as soon as possible.

Personal Obligation

Note:

<i>Il faut que</i> + <infinitive>	One should ... / One has to ...
<i>Il faut que</i> + <subjunctive>	It is necessary that ...
<i>Devoir</i> + <infinitive>	I/you/etc. have to ...
<i>Il ne faut pas que</i> + <subjunctive>	One should not ...
<i>Il n'a pas à</i> + <infinitive>	It is not necessary to ...
<i>Je n'ai pas besoin de</i> + <infinitive>	I don't have to ...
<i>Vous n'avez obligé de</i> + <infinitive>	You don't have to ...

Note that you do not put a negative clause after *il faut que*.... The negative comes wrapped around the *il faut que*:

Il ne faut pas au'on achète plus du chocolat.
You shouldn't buy more chocolate.

If you want to say that it is not imperative that you don't do something, you have to use another form:

Vous n'avez obligé d'acheter plus du chocolat.
You don't have to buy more chocolate.

The Past Infinitive (*L'Infinitif Passé*)

Formation/Usage:

The past infinitive is used whenever an infinitive is called for, but you want to express that the action takes place before the action of the main verb. It is formed from the infinitive of *avoir* or *être* + the

past participle. Note that agreement of the participle and the subject happens as per normal.

Je suis content d'avoir trouvé un emploi.
I'm happy to have found a job.

Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire après avoir fini tes études?
What are you going to do after having finished your studies?

Alice a étudié après s'être reposée.
Alice studied after having rested.

This form is used when you have two clauses, one of which would be in the past subjunctive but you have identical subjects in both clauses:

Je regrette que nous soyons allés au cinéma hier soir.
I regret that we went to the movies last night.

Je regrette d'être allé au cinéma hier soir.
I regret that I went to the movies last night / I regret going to the movies last night.

Note that in the above example, a *de* was used before the infinitive; this is dependent on the verb you are using so caveat emptor.

Note:

When using a negative form (past infinitive or otherwise), if you want to use a negative construct with it, all words of the negative construct go before the infinitive:

Je regrette de ne pas être allé au cinéma hier soir.
I regret not going to the movies last night.

Je suis heureux de ne jamais avoir fumé.
I am happy to have never had smoked before.

Object, Adverbial and/or Reflexive Pronoun Order

Pronoun ordering:

When multiple pronouns are used in a sentence, they all are placed in front of the verb and their ordering is set:

<i>me</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>lui</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>en</i>
<i>te</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>leur</i>		
<i>se</i>	<i>les</i>			
<i>nous</i>				
<i>vous</i>				

Je montre la carte à mon père.
I'm showing the letter to my father.

Je la lui montre.
I'm showing it to him.

Je mets la carte sur la table.
I'm putting the letter on the table.

Je l'y mets.
I'm putting it there.

Ne me les donnez pas.
Don't give them to me.

Il leur en a donné.
He gave them some.

This is true for all tenses and moods except for the affirmative imperative. In this tense, the pronouns do not come before the verb, but instead are hyphenated suffixes to the verb:

Donnez-le-moi.
Give it to me.

Vendez-nous-en.
Sell us some

Trouvez-le-moi.
Find it for me

Parlez-nous-y.
Talk to us there

Envoyez-le-lui.
Send it to him

Va-t'en !
Go away!

For compound tenses, the verb is considered to be the entire construction, so all pronouns come before the auxiliary verb:

Je lui ai parlé.
I talked to him.

Il t'aurait aimé.
He would have loved you.

Nous l'avons fait.
We made it.

This contrasts with dual-verb constructions, such as when using *pouvoir*, *devoir*, *vouloir*, *aller*, *promettre*, or *espérer*. In this case, the pronouns go in front of the verb who's action they are involved with:

Je vais te le donner.
I am going to give it to you.

Je promets de le manger.
I promise to eat it.

Je dois me brosser les dents.
I need to brush my teeth.