



The Grey Coat Hospital

Languages Department

French GCSE / A-Level Transition Summer
2025

Bienvenue!

A-Level French Key Words: spontaneity, accuracy, debating, rephrasing and summarising, essay writing, translation, critical appreciation of issues and trends, critical appreciation of literature and film, independent research.

This is a very rewarding course which will challenge you in many ways. To be as best prepared as possible, we would like you to develop further your active grammatical understanding and to start to explore French-language culture and society.

You will be required to:

- enhance your **linguistic skills** and promote and develop your capacity for **critical thinking** on the basis of your knowledge and understanding of the **language, culture and society** of the country or countries where the language is spoken
- develop control of the language system to convey meaning, using spoken and written skills, including an **extended range of vocabulary**, for both practical and intellectual purposes as an increasingly confident, accurate and independent user of the language
- develop knowledge about **matters central to the society and culture, past and present**, of the country or countries where the language is spoken
- develop as an **independent researcher** through the language of study.

To this end you should:

- consolidate and extend your knowledge of grammatical structures by revising the key structures in this booklet and extending at <https://www.lawlessfrench.com/>.
- start to read / watch / listen to the French news such as at <https://www.bfmtv.com/>
- watch French films, find out about French music and read French fiction
- find out about aspects of French culture and society that interest you, eg art, politics, history, science, fashion...
- Keep a French notebook / diary to record your observations about the news and your independent cultural research. Be ready to discuss in September!

We would like you to hand in your notebook in September with at least 4 activities completed.

Example List of Work to do this summer:

1. Watch a French-language film and write a review. You might like to sign up to the BFI discount scheme for young people so that you can see films for £4: [BFI under 25s](#)
2. Explore films of la nouvelle vague and critical approach eg at <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/upper-intermediate-french-discovering-french-cinema/content-section-4.1>
3. Find an exhibition in London / go to the (free) National Gallery and find out about an artist. Write your reflections. Paying exhibitions you might be interested in are the Millet at NG and Cartier at the V&A.
4. Explore Francophone music and keep a log of what you are listening to and your reflections. Find out about the artists and write down what you find out.
5. Watch the news every week and keep a log. Write up one news story eg at <https://www.tf1info.fr/>
6. Listen to a podcast about a historical / philosophical movement at In our Time and write your reflections. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl/episodes/downloads>
7. Watch documentary clips which interest you and make a bank of new vocabulary and phrases as at: https://apprendre.tv5monde.com/fr/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_competence%3A61
8. Read the novel *L'étranger* by Albert Camus in French / English and jot down your reflections.

GCSE French Higher Tier / A-Level Transition: Checklist of Verbs and Tenses

Impersonal verbs (*il faut*)

Verbs followed by an infinitive (aimer, détester, préférer, devoir, pouvoir etc, *j'aime jouer au football*)

Present tense

Perfect tense (*j'ai mangé une glace, je suis allé(e) en Italie*)

Imperfect tense (*quand j'étais petit j'allais au parc*)

Immediate future (aller + infinitive, *ce soir je vais aller au cinéma*)

Future tense (*l'année prochaine j'irai au lycée*)

Conditional tense (*si j'avais beaucoup d'argent, j'irais aux Etats-Unis*)

Pluperfect tense (*J'avais fini de parler quand elle est sortie*)

Passive voice: present, future, imperfect and perfect tenses (R) (*le livre a été publié*)

Imperative (giving orders in tu and vous form) (*Fais tes devoirs! Sortez de la salle!*)

Present participle (*En faisant du sport je me suis cassé le bras.*)

Perfect infinitive (*Après avoir fini mes devoirs, je suis sorti.*)

Subjunctive mood: present, in commonly used expressions (R) (*Il faut que tu sois poli.*)

Present Tense: Regular Verbs

-ER Verbs	-RE Verbs	-IR Verbs
jou	attend	fin
je jou e	j'attend s	je fin is
tu jou e s	tu attend s	tu fin is
il jou e	il attend	il fin it
nous jou on s	nous attend on s	nous fin iss on s
vous jou ez	vous attend ez	vous fin is ez
ils jou ent	ils attend ent	ils fin iss ent

Present Tense Irregular Verbs

You will need to learn the common irregular verbs: get yourself a VERB TABLE which is an essential piece of kit. Here are some of the most common ones which you should learn off by heart:

acheter j'achète tu achètes il achète nous achetons vous achetez ils achètent	aller je vais tu vas il va nous allons vous allez ils vont	avoir j'ai tu as il a nous avons vous avez ils ont
boire je bois tu bois il boit nous buvons vous buvez ils boivent	connaître je connais tu connais il connaît nous connaissons vous connaissez ils connaissent	croire je crois tu crois il croit nous croyons vous croyez ils croient
devoir je dois tu dois il doit nous devons vous devez ils doivent	dire je dis tu dis il dit nous disons vous dites ils disent	dormir je dors tu dors il dort nous dormons vous dormez ils dorment
écrire j'écris tu écris il écrit nous écrivons vous écrivez ils écrivent	être je suis tu es il est nous sommes vous êtes ils sont	faire je fais tu fais il fait nous faisons vous faites ils font
falloir il faut	lire je lis tu lis il lit	mettre je mets tu mets il met

	nous lisons vous lisez ils lisent	nous mettons vous mettez ils mettent
partir je pars tu pars il part nous partons vous partez ils partent	pleuvoir il pleut	pouvoir je peux tu peux il peut nous pouvons vous pouvez ils peuvent
prendre je prends tu prends il prend nous prenons vous prenez ils prennent	recevoir je reçois tu reçois il reçoit nous recevons vous recevez ils reçoivent	sortir je sors tu sors il sort nous sortons vous sortez ils sortent
suivre je suis tu suis il suit nous suivons vous suivez ils suivent	venir je viens tu viens il vient nous venons vous venez ils viennent	voir je vois tu vois il voit nous voyons vous voyez ils voient
vouloir je veux tu veux il veut nous voulons vous voulez ils veulent		

Some verbs can be compounds and have the first verb followed by a second in the infinitive:

- **aimer**
- **adorer**
- **préférer (je préfère)**
- **détester**
- **vouloir (je veux / je voudrais)**
- **devoir (je dois)**
- **pouvoir (je peux)**
- **savoir (je sais = to know how to do something, eg je sais nager)**
- **il faut**

J'aime nager. = I like to swim.
J'adore aller au marché. = I love to go to the market.
Il faut marcher vite. = You have to walk quickly.

French expressions using ‘avoir’

Avoir faim	to be hungry
Avoir soif	to be thirsty
Avoir chaud	to be hot
Avoir froid	to be cold
Avoir _____ ans	to be _____ years old
Avoir peur	to be scared
Avoir droit	to be right
Avoir tort	to be wrong
Avoir honte	to be ashamed
Avoir de la chance	to be lucky

The Perfect Tense

Use of the Perfect Tense

The perfect tense is used to talk about things that you did in the past on one occasion which are completed, and no longer happening now.

Formation

The Perfect Tense in French is formed of two parts:
i) an **AUXILIARY VERB** ii) a **PAST PARTICIPLE**

The auxiliary verb is always the present tense of either AVOIR or ETRE. The past participle is formed from the verb being used in the sentence, as explained below.

AVOIR verbs

Auxiliary verb is the present tense of avoir:

j'ai
tu as
il a
nous avons
vous avez
ils ont

Regular Verbs form their past participle in the following ways:

ER Verbs	RE Verbs	IR Verbs
jouer = jou é	vendre = vend u	finir = fin i

IRREGULAR VERBS:

avoir = eu	être = été	faire = fait
boire = bu	conduire = conduit	connaître = connu
courir = couru	croire = cru	devoir = dû
dire = dit	dormir = dormi	écrire = écrit
falloir = fallu	lire = lu	mettre = mis
ouvrir = ouvert	pleuvoir = plu	prendre = pris comprendre = compris apprendre = appris
pouvoir = pu	recevoir = reçu	rire = ri
savoir = su	tenir = tenu	vivre = vécu
voir = vu	vouloir = voulu	suivre = suivi

ETRE VERBS (MRS VAN DE TRAMP)

A number of verbs take ETRE as their auxiliary verb instead of AVOIR.
The Auxiliary verb is therefore the present tense of ETRE:

je suis
tu es
il est
nous sommes
vous êtes
ils sont

The main verbs involved here are as follows. They often come in opposites, and there are a few irregulars to look out for:

aller = allé	venir = venu
entrer = entré	sortir = sorti
arriver = arrivé	partir = parti
desendre = descendu	monter = monté
naître = né	mourir = mort
rester = resté	
tomber = tombé	
retourner = retourné	
rentrer = rentré	
revenir = revenu	

There is one further point to bear in mind here. Verbs taking être as an auxiliary verb need to agree with their subject. If the subject of the sentence is feminine, we add an "e", and if the subject is plural we add an "s".

Reflexive Verbs in the Perfect Tense

ALL reflexive verbs take ETRE as their auxiliary verb, and consequently their past participle also needs to agree. The reflexive pronoun goes before the auxiliary verb. The verb "se coucher" looks like this in all its forms with possible agreements where needed:

je me suis couché (e)
Tu t'es couché (e)
Il s'est couché
Elle s'est couchée
Nous nous sommes couché (e) (s)
Vous vous êtes couché (e)(s)
Ils se sont couchés
Elles se sont couchées

The Imperfect Tense

The Imperfect tense is an easy tense to learn.
To form the Imperfect we take the **NOUS** form of the **PRESENT TENSE**, and take off the **–ONS** to get the **Imperfect stem**.

To this stem we add the endings as follows:

je		ais
tu		ais
il		ait
nous		ions
vous		iez
ils		aient

EXCEPTION: There are very few exceptions to this rule. The main one in ETRE, whose stem is **ét**. In addition, verbs like manger and ranger, which have an extra "e" in the nous form of the present tense, retain this in the imperfect to make the "g" sound soft (Mon frère mangeait). Similarly verbs like commencer, which have a "ç" in the nous form, retain this to make the "c" sound soft (Je commençais).
All very easy – as long as you have a good working knowledge of the present tense!!

USES OF THE IMPERFECT TENSE

The Imperfect tense is used in the following cases:

- ❖ Description in the past: La maison était énorme et avait trois fenêtres.
- ❖ Describing the weather at a time in the past: Il faisait très beau.
- ❖ Giving an opinion in the past, c'était + adjective: C'était magnifique.
- ❖ Talking about something that used to happen regularly in the past: Nous allions en France chaque année. On faisait du ski dans les Alpes.
- ❖ Talking about how things used to be over a period of time in the past: Mon père avait une voiture rouge et ma mère travaillait à l'hôpital.
- ❖ Making excuses: Ce n'était pas de ma faute. Je voulais aider!
- ❖ Saying what was happening, when something else happened; (one action (in the perfect tense) cuts across another on-going one (in the imperfect) Je lisais le journal quand mon père est entré dans le salon. Ma mère travaillait dans le jardin, quand le téléphone a sonné.

The FutureTense

The future tense in French is formed in French in the following way:

Take the stem of the verb, as follows:

- ER Verbs: the infinitive, i.e. jouer
- IR Verbs: the infinitive, i.e. finir
- RE verbs: the infinitive minus the "e", i.e. attendre = attendr

Now add the endings below:

je ai
tu as
il a
nous ons
vous ez
ils ont

Easy way to remember these endings:

They are the verb "avoir" in the present tense, minus the "av" in the nous and vous forms. i.e.

j'ai
tu as
il a
nous (av)ons
vous (av)ez
ils ont

EXCEPTIONS:

There are a number of verbs which have irregular stems. The most common are given below:

acheter	achète
avoir	aur
être	ser
aller	ir
faire	fer
courir	courr
devoir	devr
envoyer	enverr
se lever	se lèver
pouvoir	pourr
recevoir	recevr
savoir	saur
venir	viendr
voir	verr
vouloir	voudr

The Conditional Tense in French

The Conditional Tense in French is used in a largely similar way to that in which it is used in English.

- □ It expresses a condition, i.e. "would" in English. The conditional clause will often be dependent upon a "si clause" (which will be in the imperfect (See note below))

e.g. S'il **faisait** beau, j'**irais** à la plage avec ma famille.
*If the weather **was** good, I **would go** to the beach with my family.*
Si elle **avait** plus d'argent, elle **sortirait** plus souvent avec ses amis.
*If she **had** more money, she **would go** out with her friends more often.*
Mes parents **viendraient** avec nous, s'ils n'**étaient** pas obligés de travailler.
*My parents **would come** with us, if they **didn't have** to work.*

- □ It can also express a future-in-the-past:

e.g. Elle a dit qu'elle **partirait** vers neuf heures.
*She said he **would leave** around nine o'clock.*

Formation of the Conditional Tense:

This is easy in French. The Conditional Tense is formed by taking the **FUTURE STEM** of the verb, and adding the **IMPERFECT ENDINGS**.

e.g.	VENIR	=	VIENDR				
				+	je	_____ais	je viendrais
					tu	_____ais	tu viendrais
					il	_____ait	il viendrait
					nous	_____ions	nous viendrions
					vous	_____iez	vous viendriez
					ils	_____aient	ils viendraient

The **IMPERFECT** and **CONDITIONAL** are used together in "si clauses" in the same way as they are used in English.

- e.g. **If I won the lottery, I would buy a larger house.**
 Si je gagnais à la loterie, j'achèterais une plus grande maison.
- If my friend was not on holiday, we would go to the cinema together.**
 Si mon ami n'était pas en vacances, nous irions ensemble au cinéma.

This tense rule should be NOTED WELL as English learner of French tend to want to use the conditional in both parts of the sentence, even though this is not the case in English!

Grade 9 EXTENSION 1: the conditional perfect

ONLY USE THIS WHEN YOU ARE ALREADY USING A PAST TENSE.
This works in the same way as English,

- eg I would have preferred to go on holiday to France.
 J'aurais préféré passer mes vacances en France.
- If you had worked, you would have passed your exams.
 Si tu avais travaillé, tu aurais réussi à tes examens.
- If I had known, I would have come with you.
 Si j'avais su, je serais venu(e) avec toi.
- If I had earned more money, I would have gone on holiday.
 Si j'avais gagné plus d'argent, je serais allé(e) en vacances

Si clause : imperfect auxiliary + past participle (*si j'avais travaillé* if I had worked)
would have clause: conditional auxiliary + past participle (*j'aurais préféré* I would have preferred).

Grade 9 EXTENSION 2: The Subjunctive

This is not a tense but a mood that indicates subjectivity. The subjunctive is used in a number of circumstances, and is usually dependent on QUE. These are outlined below, with some examples of each category. The lists are by no means exhaustive.

1. Verbs of emotion

être content que, être désolé que, être triste que, c'est dommage que,
préférer que, aimer que, être heureux que, être surpris que, regretter que

2. Verbs of wishing and willing

vouloir que, souhaiter que, désirer que, demander que, exiger que,

3. Impersonal constructions expressing necessity, possibility, doubt, denial, preference.

il faut que, il se peut que, il est important que, il est nécessaire que,

4. Some verbs or impersonal constructions expressing DOUBT or UNCERTAINTY (mainly used negatively or interrogatively) eg

ne pas penser que, il est douteux que, il est peu probable que, il n'est pas sûr que, ne pas croire que, il n'est pas vrai que, il n'est pas certain que

5. Some subordinating conjunctions

Eg bien que (although)

6. Superlative + que or qui (or adjectives like premier, dernier, seul when expressing opinion, not fact.)

le plus rapide que, le plus cher que

Formation

The subjunctive tense in French is formed in the following way:
To form the STEM, take the "ils" form of the Present Tense and take off the "ent". Next, add the following endings:

je	-e
tu	-es
il	-e
nous	-ions
vous	-iez
ils	-ent

Je sois (etre)
Je fasse (faire)
J'aille (aller)
J'aie (avoir)
Je puisse (pouvoir)
Je sache (savoir)

