French 2: 100 Essential Verbs (Present Tense Guide)

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This guide opens with the conjugation rules and the most important irregular verbs, followed by a list of 115 French verbs with their meanings.

How to use this guide

Start with the endings below. Regular verbs follow them exactly; the spelling-change, irregular and reflexive verbs need extra practice.

Pronoun	-ER (parler)	-IR (finir)	-RE (vendre)
je	-e	-is	-s
tu	-es	-is	-s
il / elle / on	-e	-it	(no ending)
nous	-ons	-issons	-ons
vous	-ez	-issez	-ez
ils / elles	-ent	-issent	-ent

- **je** becomes **j'** before a vowel or a silent h (j'aime, j'habite).
- **on** (one, we) uses the same form as il / elle.
- Irregular verbs have no reliable pattern, so memorize them as a set.

Spelling changes in -ER verbs

- **-ger verbs** (manger, nager, voyager) add an e in the nous form: nous mangeons.
- **-cer verbs** (commencer) change c to ç in the nous form: nous commençons.
- **e + consonant + -er verbs** (acheter, préférer, répéter, espérer) change the stem vowel in je, tu, il / elle / on and ils / elles: j'achète, ils préfèrent. Nous and vous do not change.
- **-yer verbs** (payer, envoyer, essayer, nettoyer) change y to i in the same forms: j'envoie, ils nettoient.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

- **appeler and jeter** double the consonant in the same forms: j'appelle, ils jettent.
- **Reflexive verbs** add me, te, se, nous, vous, se before the verb: je me lève, nous nous levons (m', t', s' before a vowel).

Key irregular verbs: present tense

These are the most important verbs in French. Memorize all six forms of each one.

Verb	Meaning	je	tu	il / elle / on	nous	vous	ils / elles
être	to be	je suis	tu es	il est	nous sommes	vous êtes	ils sont
avoir	to have	j'ai	tu as	il a	nous avons	vous avez	ils ont
aller	to go	je vais	tu vas	il va	nous allons	vous allez	ils vont
faire	to do, to make	je fais	tu fais	il fait	nous faisons	vous faites	ils font
venir	to come	je viens	tu viens	il vient	nous venons	vous venez	ils viennent
prendre	to take	je prends	tu prends	il prend	nous prenons	vous prenez	ils prennent
pouvoir	to be able to, can	je peux	tu peux	il peut	nous pouvons	vous pouvez	ils peuvent
vouloir	to want	je veux	tu veux	il veut	nous voulons	vous voulez	ils veulent
devoir	to have to, must	je dois	tu dois	il doit	nous devons	vous devez	ils doivent
savoir	to know (a fact, how to)	je sais	tu sais	il sait	nous savons	vous savez	ils savent
voir	to see	je vois	tu vois	il voit	nous voyons	vous voyez	ils voient
dire	to say, to tell	je dis	tu dis	il dit	nous disons	vous dites	ils disent

Verb list

The lists below give each verb and its meaning, grouped by type.

Regular -ER verbs (35)

Drop -er from the infinitive and add -e, -es, -e, -ons, -ez, -ent.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
aider	to help
aimer	to like, to love
arriver	to arrive
chanter	to sing
chercher	to look for
danser	to dance
demander	to ask
détester	to hate
donner	to give
écouter	to listen (to)
entrer	to enter
étudier	to study
fermer	to close
gagner	to win, to earn
habiter	to live (in a place)
jouer	to play
laisser	to leave (behind), to let
marcher	to walk
montrer	to show
oublier	to forget
parler	to speak, to talk
passer	to pass, to spend (time)
penser	to think
porter	to wear, to carry

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
préparer	to prepare
regarder	to watch, to look at
rester	to stay
retourner	to return, to go back
rêver	to dream
téléphoner	to phone, to call
tomber	to fall
travailler	to work
trouver	to find
utiliser	to use
visiter	to visit (a place)

Regular -IR verbs (10)

Drop -ir and add -is, -is, -it, -issons, -issez, -issent.

Verb	Meaning
choisir	to choose
finir	to finish
grandir	to grow (up)
grossir	to gain weight
maigrir	to lose weight
obéir	to obey
réfléchir	to think, to reflect
remplir	to fill (in, out)
réussir	to succeed, to pass (a test)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
rougir	to blush

Regular -RE verbs (8)

Drop -re and add -s, -s, (nothing), -ons, -ez, -ent.

Verb	Meaning
attendre	to wait (for)
défendre	to defend, to forbid
descendre	to go down, to get off
entendre	to hear
perdre	to lose
rendre	to give back, to return
répondre	to answer
vendre	to sell

Spelling-change -ER verbs (14)

These take regular -ER endings, but the stem changes in some forms (see the spelling rules above).

Verb	Meaning
manger	to eat
nager	to swim
voyager	to travel
commencer	to begin, to start
acheter	to buy

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
espérer	to hope
préférer	to prefer
répéter	to repeat
appeler	to call
jeter	to throw (away)
payer	to pay (for)
envoyer	to send
essayer	to try
nettoyer	to clean

Irregular verbs (40)

These do not follow the regular endings. The twelve most important are conjugated near the top of this guide.

Verb	Meaning
être	to be
avoir	to have
aller	to go
faire	to do, to make
venir	to come
revenir	to come back
devenir	to become
tenir	to hold, to keep
prendre	to take
apprendre	to learn

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
comprendre	to understand
pouvoir	to be able to, can
vouloir	to want
devoir	to have to, must; to owe
savoir	to know (a fact, how to)
connaître	to know (a person, a place)
voir	to see
croire	to believe
recevoir	to receive
dire	to say, to tell
écrire	to write
lire	to read
rire	to laugh
mettre	to put, to place
permettre	to allow, to permit
promettre	to promise
boire	to drink
partir	to leave, to depart
sortir	to go out, to leave
dormir	to sleep
servir	to serve
ouvrir	to open
offrir	to offer, to give (a gift)
suivre	to follow
vivre	to live (be alive)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Verb	Meaning
courir	to run
conduire	to drive
mourir	to die
plaire	to please

Reflexive verbs (8)

Reflexive verbs add a pronoun (me, te, se, nous, vous, se) before the verb, then follow a regular pattern.

Verb	Meaning
s'amuser	to have fun
se brosser	to brush
se coucher	to go to bed
s'habiller	to get dressed
se laver	to wash (oneself)
se lever	to get up
se promener	to take a walk
se réveiller	to wake up

LIVEWORKSHEETS