Stem-Changing -ER Verbs Intro/Notes

We've already learned to conjugate regular -ER verbs. We know to remove the -er from the end of the stem, and add the correct ending for each subject pronoun, as in the example below:

Chanter				
Je	chante	Nous	chantons	
Tu	chantes	Vous	chantez	
II/Elle/On	chante	IIs/Elles	chantent	

There are some verbs, however, that change a little bit from this pattern. The endings will never change; if a verb ends in -er, then the endings are always e, es, e, ons, ez, and ent. Let's look at a few different types of special -ER verb.

-GER Verbs

Verbs that end in -ger are easy. Only one of the conjugations changes: Nous. In the nous form, your stem gets an extra e on the end of it before you add ons. Some examples of this are arranger, bouger, changer, corriger, manger, nager, and voyager. For example:

Manger				
Je	mange	Nous	mangeons	
Tu	manges	Vous	mangez	
II/Elle/On	mange	IIs/Elles	mangent	

So if you see a verb that ends in -ger, then you know to change nous. None of the other subject pronouns are affected.

You try!

Nager		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	IIs/Elles	



-CER Verbs

-CER verbs are a lot like -GER verbs. This group includes verbs like avancer, commencer, effacer, lancer, prononcer, and remplacer. It's still the nous form that changes, but the difference is that instead of adding an e, we change the c to ç, like this:

Lancer			
Je	lance	Nous	lançons
Tu	lances	Vous	lancez
II/Elle/On	lance	IIs/Elles	lancent

You try!

Commencer		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	IIs/Elles	

-YER Verbs

There are several verbs in this category, including appuyer, balayer, employer, essayer, payer, and renvoyer. This type of verb changes for several subject pronouns. In fact, the only ones that DON'T change are nous and vous. Fortunately, it's the same change every time: the y turns into an i. See the example below.

Nettoyer				
Je	netto <mark>i</mark> e	Nous	nettoyons	
Tu	nettoles	Vous	nettoyez	
II/Elle/On	netto <mark>i</mark> e	IIs/Elles	netto <mark>i</mark> ent	

You try!

Payer		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	lls/Elles	



-ETER/-ELER

Many verbs that end in -eter/-eler double the t/l for most subject pronouns. Some common verbs that follow this pattern are appeler, épeler, feuilleter, jeter, hoqueter, projeter, rappeler. Here's an example:

Rejeter			
Je	reje <mark>tt</mark> e	Nous	rejetons
Tu	reje <mark>tt</mark> es	Vous	rejetez
II/Elle/On	rejette	IIs/Elles	rejettent

Note: not all verbs ending in -eter follow this pattern. Some common **exceptions** are the verbs acheter, celer, fileter, geler, haleter, and harceler.

You try!

Rappeler		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	IIs/Elles	

-É ER

For this type of verb, it doesn't matter what letter fills in the blank. These verbs change in all forms except nous and vous, and the change is that é becomes è. Some examples of these verbs are célébrer, compléter, espérer, modérer, préférer, répéter, and suggérer.

Répéter				
Je	rép <mark>è</mark> te	Nous	répétons	
Tu	rép <mark>è</mark> tes	Vous	répétez	
II/Elle/On	rép <mark>è</mark> te	IIs/Elles	répètent	

Please be careful to only change the SECOND é, if there are 2. It's always the one closest to the -er part of the verb.

You try!

Préférer		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	IIs/Elles	



-E ER

There's one more type. This set of verbs can look different, and I recommend that you just memorize which ones they are as you see them. Some common verbs included in this group are amener, acheter, peser, enlever, geler, lever, peler, and promener.

The change here is that the e before the consonant (whatever filled in the blank) changes to è. See the example below.

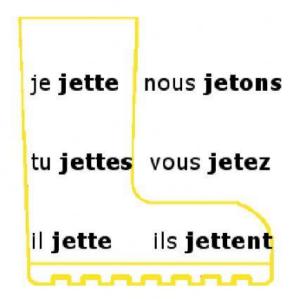
Peser			
Je	pèse	Nous	pesons
Tu	pèses	Vous	pesez
II/Elle/On	pèse	IIs/Elles	pèsent

You try!

Lever		
Je	Nous	
Tu	Vous	
II/Elle/On	lls/Elles	

One last thing

The verbs that change stems for je, tu, il/elle/on, and ils/elles follow what is sometimes called a "boot" pattern. If you see/hear this term, it is referring to verbs that change for those specific subject pronouns. Here's an illustration of why it is called the "boot":



The "boot" demonstrates which conjugations in the table are similar. It is pretty common in French for nous and vous to be different from the others.

