

ADVANCED HIGHER FRENCH GRAMMAR BOOKLET

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The tenses at Higher

Immediate future

Present

Gerund

Conditional

Simple future

Imperfect

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Present Tense

Conditional Tense

Future Tense

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Preterite Tense

Immediate future

The immediate future tense is used to as a method of describing actions that are right about to happen

The immediate future is normally translated as 'going to'

To form the present continuous we need to use the verb 'aller' in the present tense, then the verb action in its infinitive form

** Remember 'aller' is an irregular verb in the present tense, we conjugate it as follows,

Je - vais

Tu - vas

Il, elle - va

Nous - allons

Vous - allez

Ils, elles - vont

Examples:

Je vais acheter - I'm going to buy

Nous allons choisir - We're going to choose

Present Tense

The present tense is used to as a method of describing actions that are currently happening (in the present)

The infinitive endings in the present tense are as follows:

| | -ER | -IR | -RE |
|--------------|-----|--------|---------|
| I | e | is | s |
| You | es | is | s |
| He/she/it | e | it | nothing |
| We | ons | issons | ons |
| You (plural) | ez | issez | ez |
| They | ent | issent | ont |

Common irregulars:

| <u>Avoir</u> | <u>Être</u> | <u>Pouvoir</u> | <u>Faire</u> | <u>Aller</u> | <u>Dire</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| ai | suis | peux | fais | vais | dis |
| as | es | peux | fais | vas | dis |
| a | est | peut | fait | va | dit |
| avons | sommes | pouvons | faisons | allons | disons |
| avez | êtes | pouvez | faites | allez | dites |
| ont | sont | peuvent | font | vont | disent |

To form it simply remove the -ER, -IR or -RE and add the appropriate ending

Gerund

In French, we use the gerund to express the idea 'ing', for example doing, playing, going etc.

To form the gerund, we remove the -ER, -IR, -RE endings and conjugate the verb in the nous form

How to form

| Infinitive | Nous conjugation | Remove 'ons' | Add 'ant' |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Manger (irregular) | Mange e ons | Mange | Mange e ant |
| Choisir | Choisissons | Choisiss | Choisissant |
| Comprendre | Comprendons | Comprend | Comprendant |

Conditional Tense

In French, we use the conditional tense to express probability, possibility or wonder.

The conditional tense is usually translated as would, could, must have or probably.

We conjugate verbs in the conditional by adding the following endings to the verb; (the verb stays the same, nothing is removed) and the endings are the same no matter what the verb is

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

The following are sentences in the conditional tense;

Je pense que j'étudierais pour une heure plus.

I think that I could study for one hour more.

Nous voudrions trois pommes

We would like three apples

The ten common verbs that are irregular in the conditional tense are also irregular in the future tense. Their endings are regular, but their stems change in the same way they change in the future tense. Because the endings are the same as all other conditional tense verbs, we show only the “je” form, and have underlined the irregular stem. If you also speak Spanish, you’ll notice that many of the French stems become the same as the Spanish ones

The irregulars are as follows;

aller

J’irais

avoir

J’aurais

être

Je serais

faire

Je ferais

pouvoir

Je pourrais

devoir

Je devrais

venir

Je viendrais

voir

Je verrais

vouloir

Je voudrais

Simple Future Tense

The future tense is used to tell what “will” happen in the future, or what “shall” happen.

Regular verbs in the future tense are conjugated by adding the following endings to the infinitive form of the verb;

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

There are ten common verbs that are irregular in the future tense. Their endings are regular, but their stems change. Since the endings are the same as all other future tense verbs, we show only the “je” form, and have underlined the irregular stem. We have also grouped them according to their patterns of change.

The irregulars are as follows;

aller

J'irais

avoir

J'aurais

être

Je serais

faire

Je ferais

pouvoir

Je pourrais

devoir

Je devrais

venir

Je viendrais

voir

Je verrais

vouloir

Je voudrais

Imperfect Tense

The imperfect tense is used to describe things that happened in the past and haven't got a specific time frame or continuously happened in the past. For example, we used to run together. It can also be used for actions that were interrupted in the past, I was looking at the photos, when I remembered our old house.

Regular Imperfect Verb Endings

To form to the imperfect tense, we remove the -ER, -IR or -RE and add the following endings

| | <u>-ER</u> | <u>-IR</u> | <u>-RE</u> |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| I | ais | ais | ais |
| You | ais | ais | ais |
| He/She/It | ait | ait | ait |
| We | ons | ions | ions |
| You (pl) | ez | iez | iez |
| They | ent | aient | aient |

The uses of the Imperfect Tense

1. Repeated actions
2. Actions that were in progress in the past
3. Times and dates
4. Age
5. Descriptions of characteristics, conditions and feelings

Irregulars

Luckily, there is only one verb that is irregular in the imperfect tense in French, être

| | <u>Être</u> |
|-----------|-------------|
| I | étais |
| You | étais |
| He/she/it | était |
| We | étions |
| You (pl) | étiez |
| They | étaient |

Perfect Tense

The perfect tense is used to describe things or actions that have been completed in the past. For example, I visited the zoo, we took the bus.

To form the perfect tense, we must first know whether to use the avoir or être to tell us who is doing the action, we then remove the -ER, -IR or -RE and add the appropriate endings

| | | <u>-ER</u> | <u>-IR</u> | <u>-RE</u> |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| I | I | é | i | u |
| You | You | é | i | u |
| He/she /it | He/She/It | é | i | u |
| We | We | é | i | u |
| You (pl) | You (pl) | é | i | u |
| They | They | é | i | u |

Être verbs

In French, there are fourteen verbs that are used with être in the imperfect tense, all other verbs are conjugated with avoir.

| French verb | English translation | Past participle |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Monter | To go up | monté |
| Retourner | To return | retourné |
| Rester | To stay | resté |
| Venir | To come | venu |
| Arriver | To arrive | arrivé |

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| Naître | To be born | né |
| Sortir | To go out | sorti |
| Tomber | To fall | tombé |
| Rentrer | To go back in | rentré |
| Aller | To go | allé |
| Mourir | To die | mort |
| Partir | To leave | parti |
| Entrer | To enter | entré |
| Descendre | To go down/descend | descendu |

Irregulars

Four of the most common verbs that are irregular in the preterite are; Ser, Ir, Dar & Ver.

| Verb | Past participle | English |
|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Avoir | Eu | Had |
| Boire | Bu | Drunk |
| Comprendre | Compris | Understood |
| Connaître | Connu | Known |
| Croire | Cru | Believed |
| Devoir | Dû | Had to |
| Dire | Dit | Spoke |
| Écrire | Écrit | Written |
| Être | Été | Been |
| Faire | Fait | Made or Done |

| | | |
|---------|--------|--------------|
| Lire | Lu | Read |
| Mettre | Mis | Put |
| Ouvrir | Ouvert | Opened |
| Pouvoir | Pu | Been able to |
| Prendre | Pris | Taken |
| Savoir | Su | Known |
| Voir | Vu | Seen |
| Vouloir | Voulou | Wanted |

Pluperfect

The pluperfect tense in French, is the furthest we can go back in time. It is used to describe actions that have happened before other actions in the past. The word pluperfect literally means more perfect, so the more 'perfect' you are in grammar, the further in the past you are. For example, they had lived in France before moving to Spain.

To form the pluperfect, we need to employ rules from the imperfect tense and perfect tenses and combine them.

First, we need to know whether the verb is part of the avoir or être group.

Second, we need to conjugate the avoir or être verb into the imperfect tense

| Pronoun | Avoir | Être |
|------------|---------|---------|
| J' | avais | étais |
| Tu | avais | étais |
| Il/Elle/On | avait | était |
| Nous | avions | étions |
| Vous | aviez | étiez |
| Ils/Elles | avaient | étaient |

How to improve your grammar

Grammar is an essential part of the Spanish language. It is used in all parts of the Higher exam.

You will need to know grammar for your writing element of the exam at Higher, but also having a strong understanding and knowledge of grammar can aid you in the reading and listening elements of the exam as well.

There are many websites you can use to improve your grammar such as:

- spanishdict.com
- grammar.collinsdictionary.com
- fluentu.com

There are also lots of grammar worksheets available on the Google Drive shared area which you all have access to.

Grammar booklets such as Schaums Outline of Spanish Grammar are really helpful, as they contain notes for all tenses and activities all the way up to advanced level.

The Present Subjunctive

It is imperative at Advanced Higher level that you understand how the subjunctive works. Although we seldom use it in English, it is used quite often in French and it will become a part of your speaking exam. You will find that many different resources you come across will try to provide you with a huge list of verbs and phrases that use the subjunctive but this isn't helpful when you're put on the spot and it's also very time consuming. Let's take the word subjunctive for a moment. It applies *subjectivity*, i.e. the thing may or may not happen or has not yet taken place, then we use the subjunctive. If an action has already taken place or will definitely take place then we use the indicative. We recommend that you try to make a list of things yourself that might come under the category of 'subjunctive', such as; doubt, demands or requests (this is only a tiny portion of what the subjunctive is used for).

Recognising the subjunctive:

Whenever we want to express uncertainty, the subjunctive is used. A short number of things that subjunctive can be used for are; wishes and desires, fears, opinions and for expressing how you feel about something.

It also appears in some expressions that use 'il' such as *il faut que* or *il vaut mieux que*

Expressions followed by the subjunctive

Il faut que

Il vaut mieux que

Il est important que

Il est dommage que

Pour que

Afin que

Avant que

En attendant que

Jusqu'à ce que

Bien que

À moins que

Avant and Après

You must remember that avant que uses the subjunctive and après que uses the indicative

How to form the present subjunctive

It is in fact, relatively easy to form the present subjunctive. First we take the infinitive, chop off the -ER, -IR or -RE and then add on the endings.

| <u>-ER</u> | <u>-IR</u> | <u>-RE</u> |
|------------|------------|------------|
| e | isse | e |
| es | isses | es |
| e | isse | e |

| | | |
|------|---------|------|
| ions | issions | ions |
| iez | issiez | iez |
| ent | issent | ent |

Irregulars

| Verbs | <u>Aller</u> | <u>Avoir</u> | <u>Devoir</u> | <u>Dire</u> | <u>Être</u> |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Je | aille | aie | doive | dise | sois |
| Tu | ailles | aies | doives | dises | sois |
| Il/elle | aille | ait | doive | dise | soit |
| Nous | allions | ayons | devions | disions | soyons |
| Vous | alliez | ayez | deviez | disiez | soyez |
| Ils/Elles | aillent | aient | doivent | disent | soient |

| Verbs | <u>Faire</u> | <u>Pouvoir</u> | <u>Prendre</u> | <u>Savoir</u> | <u>Venir</u> | <u>Vouloir</u> |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Je | fasse | puisse | prenne | sache | viene | veuille |
| Tu | fasses | puisses | prennes | saches | viennes | veuilles |
| Il/elle | fasse | puisse | prenne | sache | viene | veuille |
| Nous | fassions | puissions | prenions | sachons | venions | voulions |
| Vous | fassiez | puissiez | preniez | sachiez | veniez | vouliez |
| Ils/Elles | fassent | puissent | prennent | sachent | viennent | veillent |