

In this lesson, we will look at the most commonly used grammar tenses in French. I will also teach you some of the everyday situations in which you can use each of these tenses. Don't forget to do the quiz at the end to check your understanding of each verb tense.

## VERB TENSES

### Present Simple : 40%

used for general truths, habits and permanent situations.

*Ex : L'eau **bout** à 100 degrés.*

*Il **pleut** dehors.*

*Tous les matins, je **quitte** la maison à 8 heures.*

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**Tip:** To make it easier to remember this tense, every evening write 3 sentences about your day in the present tense. You'll remember this tense very quickly.

### The passé composé : 30%

is the number one tense for talking about past actions that are connected to the present, or

for sharing experiences.

Ex : *J'ai visité Paris.*

*Tu as déjà vu ce film ?*

It is also used to talk about actions that were completed in the recent past.

Ex: – *Tu as mangé ?*

– *Oui, j'ai déjà déjeuné.*

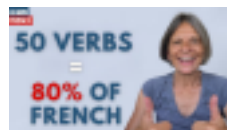
Tip: To remember the passé composé, first learn the auxiliaries avoir and être and the past participles of the most common verbs.

Ex : *J'ai mangé une pomme*

*Tu es parti tôt.*

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To find out the most useful verbs in French, go [watch my video](#).



**L'imparfait : 10%**

It is the tense for memories, descriptions, and past habits.

Ex : – *Quand j'étais petit, je jouais dehors tous les jours.*

– Il **faisait** froid cet hiver-là.

We use the imperfect tense to set the scene in a story, to describe what was ongoing or repeated.

Ex : Il **pleuvait** et les gens **attendaient** sous les arbres.

Tip : When you tell a story, remember to use the imperfect tense for descriptions and the passé composé for the main actions.

### **Le futur simple : 5%**

The simple future is used less often than the near future in spoken French, but it is still important for talking about forecasts, promises, or in a formal context.

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Ex : – Il **fera** beau demain.  
– Je vous **appellerai** ce soir.

Tip: To form the simple future, take the infinitive of the verb and add the endings: -ai, -as, -a, -ons, -ez, -ont.

### **Le conditionnel présent : 5%**

1. Be polite when making a request or asking a question.

Ex : – *Je voudrais un café, s'il vous plaît.*

– *Pourriez-vous m'aider ?*

– *Est-ce que vous aimeriez venir avec nous ?*

2. To express a wish or a desire.

Ex : – *J'aimerais visiter Paris un jour.* –

*Nous voudrions partir en vacances.* –

*Elle souhaiterait apprendre le français.*

3. To talk about a hypothesis, an imaginary situation, or a conditional situation. Ex : – *Si j'avais plus de temps, je voyagerais plus.*

– *Si tu étais là, ce serait plus facile.*

– *On irait au parc s'il faisait beau.*

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4. To give advice, make suggestions, or offer proposals, often in a gentle or polite way. Ex

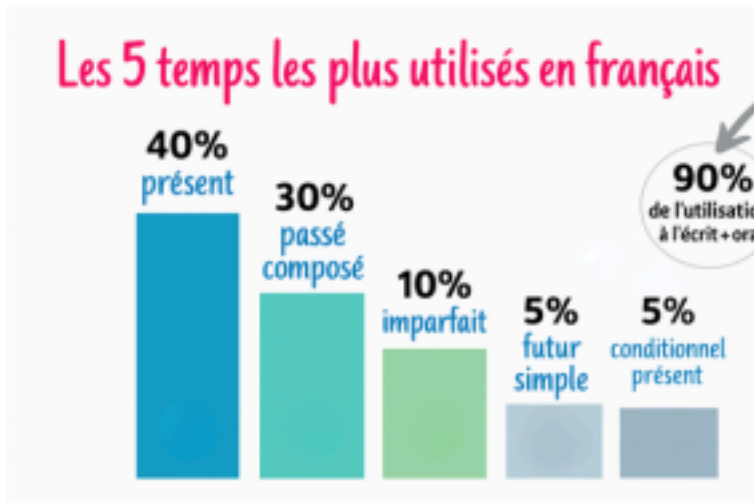
: – *Tu devrais prendre un parapluie.*

– *Vous pourriez essayer ce restaurant.* – *On pourrait commencer la réunion à 10*

heures.

Tip : To form the present conditional, use the simple future stem (often the verb's infinitive) + the imperfect endings: -ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient.

Recap : Pareto's law applied to learning French: the 5 tenses that cover 90% of written and spoken French.



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## Quiz: The 5 Essential French Tenses

(Covering about 90% of spoken and written French)

1. Which tense is used to describe an action

## **happening right now ?**

- A) Passé composé
- B) Présent
- C) Imparfait
- D) Futur simple

## **2. Complete the sentence in the passé composé:**

Hier, nous \_\_\_\_ au cinéma.

- A) allons
- B) irons
- C) sommes allés
- D) allions

## **3. Which tense is used to set the scene in a story ?**

- A) Présent
- B) Passé composé
- C) Imparfait
- D) Futur simple

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## **4. Choose the sentence in the futur simple:**

- A) Je vais travailler demain.
- B) Je travaillerai demain.

- C) Je travaille demain.
- D) Je travaillais demain.

**5. In which situation do we use the conditional present (conditionnel présent)?**

- A) To express a certain fact in the past
- B) To give an order
- C) To express a wish or a hypothesis
- D) To describe a habitual action

**6. Complete with the imparfait:**

Quand j'étais petit, je \_\_\_\_ du vélo tous les jours.

- A) fais
- B) faisais
- C) ferai
- D) ai fait

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**7. What tenses are used in this sentence: "Si j'avais le temps, je voyagerais plus" ?** A) Présent

- B) Imparfait + conditionnel présent
- C) Passé composé + futur simple
- D) Imparfait + futur proche

**8. Find the correct sentence in the passé composé:**

- A) Nous avons mangé au restaurant hier soir.
- B) Nous mangions au restaurant hier soir. C) Nous mangeons au restaurant hier soir. D) Nous mangerons au restaurant hier soir.

**9. Which tense is often used for a formal promise ?**

- A) Présent
- B) Futur simple
- C) Passé composé
- D) Imparfait

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**10. Complete in the conditional present:**

À ta place, je \_\_\_\_ plus de français.

- A) apprends

- B) ai appris
- C) apprendrais
- D) apprenais

- ✓ Answer: B) Présent
- ✓ Answer: C) sommes allés
- ✓ Answer: C) Imparfait
- ✓ Answer: B) Je travaillerai demain ✓

Answer: C) To express a wish or a hypothesis

- ✓ Answer: B) faisais
- ✓ Answer: B) Imparfait + conditionnel présent
- ✓ Answer: A) Nous avons mangé au restaurant hier soir.
- ✓ Answer: B) Futur simple
- ✓ Answer: C) apprendrais

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