



## THANKS FOR TRYING THIS LESSON !

Congratulations on studying French with OuiCommunicate.

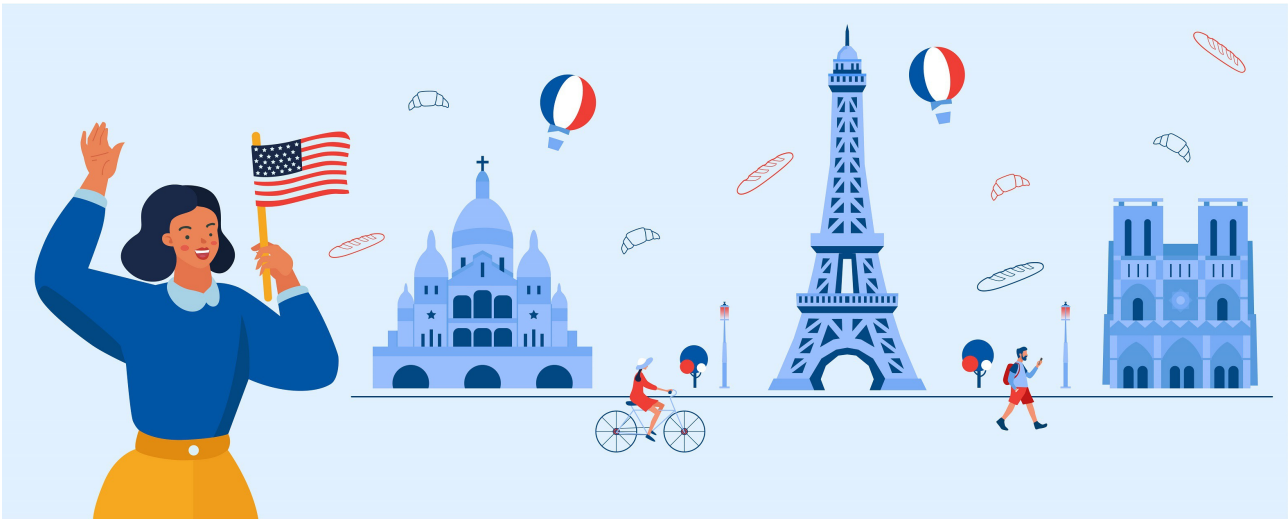
We hope it will serve you well on your journey to fluency and that you will find the clear explanations you deserve.

Enjoy your learning!

## HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF THIS PDF?

1. Read through the PDF while making notes.
2. Complete the exercises.
3. Watch the video for this particular PDF
4. Listen to the pronunciation and check your spelling.
5. Go out and apply !

**Merci et à bientôt !!!**



## What is Conjugation?

### 1. English VS French

When **learning English** in school, we don't spend that much time focusing on such topics as “**conjugation**”. Why? In a sense, there isn't that much to know!

But because **French** functions in a different way, it is a much **larger part** of the programme.

**Conjugation** simply means “**using tenses**” such as the present, the past or the future.

It could also be explained as **the way the verb changes** in order to show **when** the action happened.

### 2. Quick Example

When we say “**I spoke**” we are conjugating the verb “**speak**” in the **past**. French does **the same thing** by also **changing** the way the verb looks.

The **major difference** is that French tenses produce **more changes** to verbs. Let's see what this means exactly...

### 3. First change: the Subject

When we say “I spoke” or “They spoke” it doesn't make a difference to the verb. It does not show on the verb how many people are doing the action.

However in French, this is very different. The verb does actually show who performed the action.

Example: The verb TO SPEAK / PARLER in French

ENGLISH	FRENCH
1. I speak	1. JE parle
2. WE speak	2. NOUS parlons
3. THEY speak	3. ILS/ELLES parlent

The endings we have added to the verb is an indication of who is doing the action: I, YOU, HE, WE... (JE, TU, IL, NOUS...)

### 4. Second change: the time of the action

English and French have in common that the verb indicates if the action happened in the past or the future.

We saw the example of “I spoke” in which “speak” took an “o” to indicate the past. We might also add on “ed” as in “I wanted”.

Overall, this is an unusual behaviour for English because we prefer to bring in extra words than to change our verbs.

Ex: Yesterday I did speak.

Past tense

Ex: Tomorrow I will speak.

Future tense

Ex: Next week I could speak.

Conditional tense

## 5. How are French tenses different?

**French tenses** (conjugation) cause the verbs to **change** a lot more than in English.

We mentioned that English tends to **bring in new words** such as **could/would/will** to form tenses. In French however, it's the actual verb that changes.

ENGLISH	FRENCH
1. I want / I <b>would</b> want	1. Je veux / Je voudrais
2. We walk / We <b>were</b> walking	2. Nous marchons / Nous marchions
3. You go / You <b>would</b> go	3. Tu vas / Tu irais

As we can see, we more easily recognize **the initial verb** in English. (want / walk / go) French has more cases of verbs that go through a noticeable **transformation**.

1. In the first example, “**Je veux**” and “**Je voudrais**” come from the verb **VOULOIR**. (To want)
2. Next, “**Nous marchons**” and “**Nous marchions**” come from **MARCHER**. (To walk)
3. Lastly, “**Tu vas**” and “**Tu irais**” come from **ALLER**. (To go)

Only **example 2** shows a case of conjugation which reflects the initial verb. Thankfully, this is the **norm** rather than the **exception**!

## 6. Regular and Irregular Verbs

We just saw how French verbs go through a **bigger change** when used in **various tenses**.

English does the same, but **only in the past tenses** and only if the verb qualifies as an **“irregular”** verb.

Examples of such include the verb **“to see”** which becomes **“I saw”** in the past. **“I go”** becomes **“I went”**. Only **“to be”** is irregular in the **present** as well as in the **past**. (I am, you are, she is...)

French just happens to have **irregularity** across a **larger number of tenses**: past, present, future...

## 7. What's next?

In this short presentation, we learned about the notion of **“conjugation”** and saw that it is the fact of **changing a verb** according **who** is doing the action and **when** the action is done.

It carries **more importance** in French, since in English the **conjugation** is more **repetitive**. There is a lot **less** to **think** about.

The **next steps** are to learn the **functioning** of the various French tenses starting with the **Present** and the **Passé Composé**.

While some conjugations will seem **surprising** at first, a learner soon develops a type of **“instinct”** for them and is able to guess how similar verbs are likely to behave.