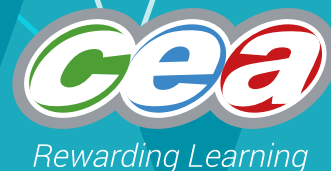


FACTFILE: GCSE FRENCH GRAMMAR



GRAMMAR

Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- show understanding of a range of spoken language that contains a wide variety of structures and more complex language;
- show understanding of written texts that contain a variety of structures; and
- use a variety of structures and verb tenses, as appropriate.

Skills

Here are some key points to help you with Grammar and Structure.

Refer to the Specification, Appendix 4, for a full list and for examples.

Nouns

Gender (masculine or feminine)

Singular and plural forms

Articles

Definite, Indefinite or partitive articles

Adjectives

Agreement – Remember that the adjective agrees with the gender of the noun. For regular adjectives, the rules are:

Masculine Singular	Masculine plural	Feminine Singular	Feminine Plural
No change	Add -s eg amusants	Add -e eg amusante	Add -es eg amusantes

There are quite a few adjectives which do not follow these rules exactly (eg bon, nouveau, vieux) so be sure to learn them also.

Position: Remember that most adjectives are placed after the noun - with the exception of BAGS (Beauty, Age, Goodness, Size) adjectives. BAGS adjectives (such as beau, vieux, bon, grand) are placed before the noun.

Comparative and superlative: regular and irregular (including meilleur (better) and pire (worse).

Comparative - Il est plus grand que son frère mais elle est moins sérieuse que son père.

Superlative - Paul est l'élève le plus intelligent de sa classe et Aïcha est la fille la plus intelligente de sa classe.

Demonstrative: ce, cet, cette and ces (this/that/ these/those)

Indefinite: chaque (each), quelque (some)

Possessive: Remember that the possessive adjective agrees with the gender of the item possessed.

Subject	Masculine singular	Feminine singular	Plural	Meaning
je	mon	ma	mes	my
tu	ton	ta	tes	your
il/elle	son	sa	ses	his/her/its
nous	notre	notre	nos	our
vous	votre	votre	vos	your
ils/elles	leur	leur	leurs	their

Interrogative: quel (what) can have four spellings: quel, quelle, quels, quelles, depending on the gender of the noun which it precedes.

Prepositions

Common prepositions:

À, au, à l', à la, aux (to or at)

De, du, de l', de la, des (from)

Common compound prepositions:

À côté de, près de, en face de, à cause de, au lieu de

Pronouns

Personal: je, tu, il, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, elles

Reflexive: me, te, se, nous, vous, se

Direct object: me, te, le, la, nous, vous, les

Indirect object: lui, leur

Use of y and en

Present tense of Regular Verbs: -er, -ir, -re verbs

Remove the last two letters and add the correct ending:

	-er verbs	-ir verbs	-re verbs
je	-e	-is	-s
tu	-es	-is	-s
Il/elle/on	-e	-it	-
nous	-ons	-issons	-ons
vous	-ez	-issez	-ez
Ils/elles	-ent	-issent	-ent

Jouer (to play) becomes je joue (I play)

Finir (to finish) becomes je finis (I finish)

Vendre (to sell) becomes je vends (I sell)

Present tense of Common Irregular Verbs

Aller - je vais, tu vas, il va, nous allons, vous allez, ils vont.

Avoir - j'ai, tu as, il a, nous avons, vous avez, ils ont.

Être - je suis, tu es, il est, nous sommes, vous êtes, ils sont.

Faire - je fais, tu fais, il fait, nous faisons, vous faites, ils font.

Pouvoir - je peux, tu peux, il peut, nous pouvons, vous pouvez, ils peuvent.

Check your verb tables for other common irregular verbs.

Perfect tense: Remember that the perfect tense has two parts – the auxiliary verb (avoir or être) and the past participle.

- Most verbs use avoir to form the perfect tense and for regular verbs, the past participle is created by removing the last two letters from the infinitive - ie - er, - ir or - re and by adding one letter - é, i or u. see the examples below for the three main verb groups:

j'ai joué

j'ai fini

j'ai vendu

This table shows the past participles of some of the most frequently used irregular verbs:

Infinitive	Past Participle	Infinitive	Past Participle
avoir	eu	faire	fait
savoir	su	prendre	pris
pouvoir	pu	mettre	mis
vouloir	voulu	dire	dit
devoir	dû	écrire	écrit
boire	bu	offrir	offert
lire	lu	ouvrir	ouvert
recevoir	reçu	être	été

- To remember the verbs which use être as the auxiliary verb, many people use DR and MRS VAN DER TRAMP - each letter represents one of the 16 être verbs:

Descendre, Rester, Monter, Rentrer, Sortir, Venir, Aller, Naître, Devenir, Entrer, Revenir, Tomber, Retourner, Arriver, Mourir, Partir. Check verb tables to see how to form these past participles.

These past participles will change their spellings because they agree with the subject of the verb e.g il est tombé, elle est tombée, ils sont tombés, elles sont tombées

- Reflexive verbs also use être as the auxiliary verb - eg se lever becomes:

Je me suis levé, elle s'est levée, nous nous sommes levé(e)s, ils se sont levés.

Not every reflexive verb will have an agreement in its past participle - speak to your teacher or check your grammar textbook to find out which verbs and why!

Future tense: There are two ways to form the future:

- Use aller + infinitive eg je vais jouer, je vais finir, je vais vendre

or

- For regular verbs, take the infinitive (remove the final -e from -re verbs) & add the following endings:

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

je jouerai, tu joueras, il jouera, nous jouerons, vous jouerez, ils joueront

je finirai, tu finiras, il finira, nous finirons, vous finirez, ils finiront

je vendrai, tu vendras, il vendra, nous vendrons, vous vendrez, ils vendront

Check your verb tables for the future tense of common irregular verbs

Imperfect tense: For regular verbs, take the nous form of the present tense (remove the final -ons) & add the following endings:

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

je jouais, tu jouais, il jouait, nous jouions, vous jouiez, ils jouaient

je finissais, tu finissais, il finissait, nous finissions, vous finissiez, ils finissaient

je vendais, tu vendais, il vendait, nous vendions, vous vendiez, ils vendaient

If you know the present tense of irregular verbs, they also follow this pattern - apart from **être** which changes to **j'étais** etc

Know when to use this tense - for a description or for a repeated action in the past.

Conditional tense: this is formed by taking the future stem and adding imperfect endings - see below

je jouerais, tu jouerais, il jouerait, nous jouerions, vous joueriez, ils joueraient

je finirais, tu finirais, il finirait, nous finirions, vous finiriez, ils finiraient

je vendrais, tu vendrais, il vendrait, nous vendrions, vous vendriez, ils vendraient

Miscellaneous

- Negative forms
ne....pas (not) , ne....plus (no more, no longer)
ne...jamais (never), ne ...rien (nothing), ne... personne (no one). Check the vocabulary list (Appendix 5) p94 to see the full list of negative expressions in the Specification.
- Number, quantity, dates and time
- Use of depuis with present tense
In English, we use past tense to express the idea of 'since' but French uses present:
'J'apprends le français depuis cinq ans' translates as 'I have been learning French for 5 years'.
- Use of 'il y a' with time phrase to express 'ago'
Normally 'il y a' translates as 'there is OR there are' but when used with a time phrase, it means 'ago':
'Il y a trois ans, j'ai commencé à...' translates as 'Three years ago, I started to...' This works with any time phrase eg jour, heure, minute etc..

Check the specification for a more complete list.

Grammar is the glue which holds language together; if you can grasp it, then the rest of your language learning will fall naturally into place.

