

Glossary

Abbreviation *abbrev, abrégé* A shortened form of a word or **phrase**: **etc.**, **DNA**

Active In the active form the **subject** of the **verb** performs the action: **ils** [subject] **parlent encore de politique** = *they're talking (about) politics again*. See **Passive**.

Adjectival phrase *loc adj* A phrase that functions as an **adjective**: **en vigueur** = *in force*

Adjective *adj* A word describing a **noun**: **un crayon gras** = *a soft pencil*

Adverb *adv* A word that modifies a **verb**, an **adjective**, or another **adverb**: **j'ai parlé trop vite** = *I spoke too hastily*; **assez souvent** = *quite often*

Adverbial phrase *loc adv* A phrase that functions as an **adverb**: **d'abord** = *first*

Article The **definite article** *art déf*, **le, la, l', les** = *the*, and **indefinite article** *art indéf*, **un, une** = *a/an* are used before a **noun**

Attributive An **adjective** or **noun** is **attributive** when it is used directly before a **noun**: **le grand escalier** = *the main staircase*. See **Predicative**.

Auxiliary verb *v aux* A **verb** used with another **verb** to form **compound tenses**; in French **avoir** and **être**: **j'ai fait une affaire** = *I got a bargain*; **il est parti il y a cinq minutes** = *he left five minutes ago*

Cardinal number A whole **number** representing a quantity: **un/une, deux, trois** = *one, two, three*. See **Ordinal number**.

Clause A self-contained section of a **sentence** that contains a **subject** and a **verb**

Collective noun A **noun** that is **singular** in form but refers to a group of persons or things, e.g. **la royauté, le gouvernement**

Collocate A word that regularly occurs with another; for example, typical collocates of *lire* are [*mot, journal, auteur, langue*]; collocates are shown in italics in square brackets in the *Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary*. **Subject** collocates are shown before a **verb** and **object** collocates are shown after a **verb**.

Comparative The form of an **adjective** or **adverb** for comparing two or more **nouns** or **pronouns**, often using **plus, moins, aussi** (*more, less, as*): **plus petit** = *smaller*; **moins fréquemment** = *less frequently*; **aussi étrange** = *as strange*

Compound A unit of two or more separate words with a specific meaning: **tout-puissant** = *all-powerful*; **porte-clés** = *keyring*

Compound tense A tense made up of two parts, **auxiliary verb** and **past participle**: **je suis allée de Bruxelles à Anvers** = *I went from Brussels to Antwerp*; **quand tu auras tâté de la prison** = *when you've had a taste of prison*

Conditional tense A tense of a **verb** that expresses what might happen if something else occurred: **je n'aimerais pas être à sa place** = *I wouldn't like to be in his/her shoes*

Conjugation Variation of the form of a **verb** to show **tense, person**, etc.

Conjunction *conj* A word used to link **clauses**: **et** = *and*, **parce que** = *because*

Conjunctive phrase *loc conj* A phrase that functions as a **conjunction**: **alors que** = *while*

Consonant All the letters other than **a, e, i, o, u** or **y** (**y** can be a vowel in French)

Countable **C** **Countable nouns** are those that have both **singular** and **plural** forms and can take **determiners** that accompany distinctions in number: **the book** = *le livre*; **the books** = *les livres*; **un chat** = *a cat*; **des chats** = *some cats*

Definite article *art déf*: **the** = *le, la, l', les*

Demonstrative adjective *adj dém* An **adjective** indicating the person or thing referred to: **cette voiture** = *this car*; **ce stylo** = *this pen*

Demonstrative pronoun *pron dém* A **pronoun** indicating the person or thing referred to: **prends une autre chaise, celle-ci est cassée** = *take another chair, this one is broken*

Determiner *det, dét* A word used before a **noun** to make clear what is being referred to: **le, la, l', les** = *the*; **du/de l'/de la/des** = *some*; **mon/ma/mes** = *my*

Direct object *direct obj* The **noun** or **pronoun** directly affected by the **verb**: **je mange du chocolat pour me donner du courage** = *I eat chocolate to keep myself going*

Direct speech A speaker's actual words or the use of these in writing

Elliptical Having a word or words omitted, especially where the sense can be guessed from the context

Ending Letters added to the stem of **verbs, nouns and adjectives**, according to **tense, number, gender**

Exclamation *excl* A sound, word, or remark expressing a strong feeling such as anger, fear, or joy: **attention!** = *look out!*

Exclamatory adjective *adj excl* An **adjective** used to express an **exclamation**: **quel imbécile!** = *what an idiot!*; **quelle horreur** = *how dreadful!*

Feminine *f* One of the two **genders** in French: **la femme** = *the woman*; **la carte** = *the card*

Future tense The tense of a **verb** that refers to something that will happen in the future: **I will go** = *j'irai*

Gender One of the two groups of **nouns** in French: **masculine** and **feminine**

Imperative A form of a **verb** that expresses a command: **dépêche-toi de finir ton travail** = *hurry up and finish your work*

Imperfect tense The tense of a **verb** that refers to an uncompleted or a habitual action in the past: **chaque année ils allaient faire du ski** = *they used to go skiing every year*

Impersonal verb *v impers* A **verb** used in English only with **'it'** and in French only with **'il'**: **it's raining** = *il pleut*

Indefinite adjective *adj indéf* An **adjective** that does not identify a specific person or **object**: **pour maint lecteur** = *for many a reader*; **nulle autre ville** = *no other town*

Indefinite article *art indéf*: **un, une** = *a/an*

Indefinite determiner *dét indéf* A **determiner** that does not identify a specific person or **object**: **il y a trop d'accidents** = *there are too many accidents*;

prenez davantage de viande = *have some more meat*

Indefinite pronoun *pron indéf* A **pronoun** that does not identify a specific person or **object**: **on** = *one*; **quelque chose** = *something*

Indicative form The form of a **verb** used when making a statement of fact or asking questions of fact in various **tenses**:

il aime commander tout le monde = *he loves ordering everyone about*

Indirect object *indirect obj* The **noun** or **pronoun** indirectly affected by the **verb**, at which the **direct object** is aimed:

je lui ai donné un double des clés = *I gave him a spare set of keys*

Indirect speech A report of what someone has said which does not reproduce the exact words

Indirect transitive verb *vtr ind* In French, a **transitive verb** whose **object** is preceded by the **preposition à** or **de**: **assister à** = *to be at*; **parler de quelque chose/quelqu'un** = *to speak about something/somebody*

Infinitive The basic form of a **verb**: **to play** = *jouer*

Inflect To change the ending or form of a word to show its **tense** or its grammatical relation to other words: **donne** and **donnez** are inflected forms of the **verb donner**

Interrogative adjective *adj inter* An **adjective** that modifies a **noun** in a question: **dans quels pays as-tu vécu?** = *which countries have you lived in?*; **quelle heure est-il?** = *what time is it?*

Interrogative determiner *dét inter* A **determiner** used to form a question: **de ces deux médicaments, quel est le plus efficace?** = *which of these two medicines is more effective?*; **c'est à combien de kilomètres?** = *how far away is it?*

Interrogative pronoun *pron inter* A **pronoun** that asks a question: **qui?** = *who?*

Intransitive verb *vi* A **verb** that does not have a **direct object**:

il est mort à 95 ans, c'est un bel âge = *he died at 95, a fine old age*

Invariable adjective *adj inv* An **adjective** that is unchanged in the **singular** and the **plural**, as French **ivoire, transmanche**

Invariable noun *n inv* A **noun** that is unchanged in the **singular** and the **plural**, as English **sheep, species**, French **aide-mémoire, rabais**

Irregular verb A **verb** that does not follow one of the set patterns and has its own individual forms, e.g. English **to be**, French **être**

Masculine *m* One of the two **genders** in French: **le garçon** = *the boy*; **le livre** = *the book*

Additional exercises are available online at: www.askoxford.com/languages/dictionarieskills

Modal verb A verb that is used with another verb to express permission, obligation, possibility, such as **might, should**. The French modal verbs are **devoir, pouvoir, savoir, vouloir, falloir**.

Mood A category of verb use, expressing fact (**indicative**), command (**imperative**), or wish or conditionality (**subjunctive**)

Negative Expressing refusal or denial: **il n'y en a pas** = *there aren't any*; **le bois ne veut pas brûler** = *the wood won't burn*

Noun *n* A word that names a person, thing, or concept such as **Peter, a child, un livre, la paix**

Noun modifier *modif* A modifier that adds extra information about a noun: **altitude training** = *entraînement en altitude*; **transition period** = *période de transition*

Number The state of being either **singular** or **plural**

Object The word or words naming the person or thing acted on by a verb: **il a laissé une abondante correspondance** = *he left a wealth of correspondence*; **j'ai lavé les rideaux de la chambre** = *I washed the bedroom curtains*. Object collocates are shown in square brackets after a verb.

Ordinal number A number that shows the position of a person or thing in a series: **la deuxième fois** = *the second time*, **la Cinquième République** = *the Fifth Republic*. See **Cardinal number**.

Part of speech A grammatical term for the function of a word; **noun, verb, adjective**, etc., are parts of speech

Passé simple (or **preterite**, or **past historic**) is used in written French to refer to a completed event in the past. It is no longer used in spoken French, but frequently found in narrative: **il fut couronné d'épines** = *he was crowned with thorns*. See **Perfect tense**.

Passive In the passive, the **subject** of the verb experiences the action rather than performs it: **il a été puni de sa paresse** = *he has been punished for his laziness*. See **Active**.

Past participle *pp* The part of a verb used to form past compound tenses with **être** and **avoir**: **je n'avais pas vu la situation sous cet aspect** = *I hadn't seen the situation in that light*

Past participle adjective *pp adj* An adjective formed from the past participle of a verb: **dressed** = *habillé, vêtu*; **furnished** = *meublé*

Perfect tense In French the perfect tense is used to refer to a completed event in the past: **il a mangé au restaurant** = *he ate out* / **ils ont trouvé qui a volé la voiture** = *they found the person who stole the car*. See **Passé simple**.

Person Any of the three groups of personal pronouns and forms taken by verbs. In the singular the **first person** (e.g. **je/I**) refers to the person speaking; the **second person** (e.g. **tu/you**) refers to the person spoken to; the **third person** (e.g. **il, elle/ he, she, it**) refers to the person spoken about. The corresponding plural forms are **nous/we, vous/you, ils, elles/they**.

Personal pronoun *pron pers* A pronoun that refers to a person or thing

Phrasal verb A verb in English combined with a **preposition** or an **adverb** to give a particular meaning: **run away**. There are no phrasal verbs in French.

Phrase *phr* A self-contained section of a sentence that does not contain a full verb

Pluperfect tense The tense of a verb that refers to something that happened before a particular point in the past: **je n'ai pas eu le temps de dire ouf, il était déjà parti** = *before I could say Jack Robinson, he'd gone*

Plural *pl* Meaning more than one: **the children** = *les enfants*

Possessive adjective *adj poss* An adjective that shows possession, belonging to someone or something: **mon/ma/mes** = *my*

Possessive pronoun *pron poss* A pronoun that shows possession, belonging to someone or something: **le mien/la mienne/les miens/les miennes** = *mine*

Predicative An adjective is predicative when it comes after a verb such as **be** or **become** in English, or after **être** or **devenir** in French: **il est intelligent et beau, ce qui ne gâte rien** = *he's intelligent, and handsome into the bargain*. See **Attributive**.

Prefix Letter or letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, e.g. **anti-, ultra-, non-**

Preposition *prep, prép* A word standing in front of a **noun** or **pronoun**, usually indicating movement, position or time: **on the chair** = *sur la chaise*; **he came towards me** = *il vint vers moi*

Prepositional phrase *loc prép* A phrase that consists of a **preposition** and a complement: **au-dessous du genou** = *below the knee*; **de sorte à ne pas faire** = *so as not to do*

Present participle *p prés* The part of a verb in English that ends in **-ing**; the corresponding ending in French is **-ant**, e.g. **étant** = *being*

Present participle adjective *pres p adj* An adjective formed from the present participle of a verb: **competing** = *rival*; **dizzying** = *vertigineux/euse*

Present tense *pres, prés* The tense of a verb that refers to something happening now: **je fais** = *I make*

Preterite *pret, prêt* Another term for the simple past tense in English, e.g. **I went**, or the **passé simple** in French, e.g. *j'allai*. Note that the simple past tense in English also corresponds to the perfect tense in French: **I went** = *je suis allé(e)*.

Pronoun *pron* A word that stands instead of a noun: **il** = *he*, **elle** = *she*, **le mien/la mienne/les miens/les miennes** = *mine*

Proper noun *pr n* The name of a person, place, institution, etc, generally written with an initial capital letter: **France, the Alps, Madeleine, l'Europe** are all proper nouns

Quantifier *quantif* A word or phrase that specifies the quantity of a noun: **several** = *plusieurs*; **a lot of** = *beaucoup de*

Reflexive pronoun A pronoun that goes with a **reflexive verb**: in French **me, te, se, nous, vous, se**

Reflexive verb *v refl* A verb whose object is the same as its **subject**. In French it is used with a **reflexive pronoun** and conjugated with **être**: **le chat s'est glissé sous la voiture** = *the cat crept under the car*

Regular verb A verb that follows a set pattern in its different forms

Relative pronoun *pron rel* A pronoun that introduces a **subordinate clause**, relating to a person or thing mentioned in the main clause: **le livre que j'ai choisi** = *the book which I chose*

Reported speech Another name for **Indirect speech**

Sentence A sequence of words, with a **subject** and a **verb**, that can stand on their own to make a statement, ask a question, or give a command

Singular *sg* One only: **the tree** = *l'arbre*

Stem The part of a verb to which endings are added; **donn-** is the stem of **donner**

Subject In a clause or sentence, the **noun** or **pronoun** that causes the action of the verb: **il a attrapé le ballon après le rebond** = *he caught the ball on the rebound*. Subject collocates are shown in square brackets before a verb.

Subjunctive *subj* A verb form used in French after certain **conjunctions** and with verbs of wishing, fearing, ordering, forbidding followed by **que**: **elle veut que tu sois heureux** = *she wants you to be happy*; **il est bien possible que le concert soit annulé** = *the concert might very well be cancelled*

Subordinate clause A clause which adds information to the main clause of a sentence, but cannot function as a sentence by itself, e.g. **I knew him when he was plain Mr Spencer** = *je l'ai connu quand il s'appelait M. Spencer tout court*

Suffix A group of letters added to the end of a word to form another word, e.g. **-able** in **workable**; **-eur** in **grandeur** or **-able** in **véritable**

Superlative The form of an adjective or adverb that makes it the 'most' or 'least': **the biggest house** = *la plus grande maison*; **the cheapest CD** = *le CD le moins cher*

Tense The verb form that tells when the action takes place: **present, future, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect** are all tenses

Transitive verb *vt* A verb used with a **direct object**: **il a bu trois bons verres** = *he's drunk three good ou big glasses*

Uncountable Uncountable nouns do not have a plural form: **water** = *l'eau*; **understanding** = *la compréhension*

Verb *v* A word or group of words that describes an action: **les enfants jouent** = *the children are playing*

Vowel One of the following letters: **a, e, i, o, u** and in addition, **y** in French