

Recommended grammatical terminology (French)

Utilising a standard set of terminology across Key Stage 2 and 3 will equip children with a clearly defined set of terms and definitions, which they can use to talk about their knowledge and learning. Being able to understand and apply such terminology in their learning can boost students' confidence and help them to make links between the languages they are learning, including English.

This list has been compiled based on a) the core terminology needed in language teaching at Key Stage 3 and b) the terminology taught and tested at Key Stage 2. Use of this terminology will enable teachers to build on students' existing knowledge and apply these concepts to their future language learning.

The National Curriculum Programme of study for English contains the [full glossary](#) of grammatical terminology. The terms listed below include those that students are expected to know by the end of KS2, along with any additional grammatical concepts that arise in the KS3 SoW.

Key:

* indicates a term that is not included in the KS2 English programme of study. However, students may have met these terms in their KS2 foreign language teaching.

[] indicates (non-cognate) target language terminology which is not explicitly taught in the KS3 SoW.

Rows highlighted in **grey** indicate grammatical concepts which are not explicitly taught in the KS3 SoW.

Core terminology

| English term | French term | Definition (with relevance to French) | Examples |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Noun | le nom / [le substantif] | A noun is a word that can be used after a determiner. They are words for a person, place, thing or idea. In French they are classified as masculine or feminine, and singular or plural. | un animal (m) une chambre (f) des chiens (mpl) des choses (fpl) |
| Noun phrase | [la locution nominale] | A noun phrase is a phrase with a noun as its head and which performs the function of a noun (e.g. subject or object of the verb) | J'ai un ordinateur puissant . (I have a powerful computer) |
| Pronoun | le pronom | A pronoun is a word that can be used instead of a noun. It is used like a noun. | je, tu, il, elle |
| Possessive adjective | un adjective possessif | A possessive adjective is a type of determiner and shows ownership. | mon, ma, mes |
| Possessive pronoun | le pronom possessif | A possessive pronoun replaces a noun or noun phrase and shows ownership. | le mien, la mienne, les miens, les miennes |
| Reflexive pronoun* | [le pronom réfléchi] | A reflexive pronoun shows when the subject and object of a verb are the same. | je me lave (I wash myself) tu te laves (you wash yourself) |
| Subject | le sujet | The subject of a verb is the person or thing that is doing (or being) the verb. The form of the verb depends on its subject. | La chambre est grande. (the room is big) Léa fait l'activité. (Léa does the activity) |
| Object <i>Direct</i> <i>Indirect</i> | [le complément d'objet] | An object is used with a verb, and shows what the verb is acting on. | Je fais le lit . (I am making the bed) J'ai un portable . (I have a mobile phone) |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Singular | singulier | Singular means one. | un livre, une liste |
| Plural | pluriel | Plural means 'more than one'. | des livres, des listes |
| Determiner | le déterminant | A determiner is a word that modifies a noun and provides more information about the noun. In French, determiners are classified as masculine or feminine, and singular or plural. | (see examples below) |
| Article <i>Definite</i> <i>Indefinite</i> | un article | Definite and indefinite articles are types of determiners. Definite articles modify nouns that are known to both the person who is listening/reading and the person who is speaking/writing. Indefinite articles modify nouns that are unknown. | [definite examples] le livre, la liste, les amis [indefinite examples] un ordinateur, une voiture, des professeurs |
| Demonstrative | le pronom démonstratif | Demonstratives are types of determiners. Demonstratives identify the noun that is referred to. | ce garçon, cette fille, cet homme, ces personnes |
| Quantifier | | Quantifiers are a type of determiner. Quantifiers give an indication of quantity. | des livres dix personnes chaque semaine |
| Gender* <i>Masculine*</i> <i>Feminine*</i> | [le genre] | Gender refers to the grammatical gender of the noun (either masculine or feminine in French). Gender determines the form of other words (e.g. determiners, adjectives) which appear with the noun. | <i>Masculine:</i> le frère (m) <i>Feminine:</i> la sœur (f) |
| Adjective | un adjectif | An adjective is used to describe a noun, or after verbs like "be/become". | Je suis petit . (I am small) C'est un livre intéressant . (It is an interesting book) |
| Adverb | un adverbe | An adverb is used to modify (add detail to) a verb, an adjective or another adverb. | Je vais souvent aux magasins. (I often go to the shops) Tu parles bien français. (You speak French well) |
| Compound (word) | [(le mot) composé] | A compound word is a word made up of at least two root words. | |
| Word | [le mot] | A word is a unit of language. The main function of a word is to convey meaning. | |
| Word family | [la famille de mots] | The words in a word family are related to each other by grammar and/or meaning. | aller, vais, vas, va lire (to read) - lisible (readable) la lecture (lecture)- le lecteur (lecturer) |
| Verb | le verbe | A verb has a subject, which is the noun that carries out (or is) the verb. Verbs have a non-finite form (infinitive) – the base form found in dictionaries. Verbs can also express tense (present/past/future). Verbs can express a wide range of meanings, like being, becoming, imagining, doing. | être (to be) avoir, (to have) faire (to do) aller (to go) |
| Infinitive* | un infinitif | The 'dictionary form' of the verb, equivalent to "to ..." in English (and sometimes "...ing"). There are 3 types of regular infinitive in French: -ER, -IR and -RE (although many verbs are irregular). The infinitive does not express tense, aspect, person or number. | jouer (to play) choisir (to choose) vendre (to sell) |
| Auxiliary verb* | un auxiliaire | A 'helping' verb that appears with certain forms of another verb (infinitive or participle). It can indicate tense and aspect (ongoing or completed) of the verb. | j' ai fini (I have finished) je suis allé (I went) |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Modal verb | le modal | A modal verb is used to change the meaning of other verbs. They can express certainty, ability, or obligation. | pouvoir (to be able to ; can) devoir (to have to ; must) vouloir (to want to) |
| Conjugation* | la conjugaison | Changing an infinitive verb into an inflected form to specify tense, aspect, person, and/or number. | jouer (to play) → je joue (I play) jouer (to play) → j' ai joué (I played) |
| Verb inflection* | [la déclinaison] | Verb inflection (often at the end of a verb) refers to letter(s) added to the base form of the verb and which specify information like the tense, person (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd), and number (singular, plural) of the verb. | il/elle joue (he/she plays) ils/elles jouent (they play) |
| Tense Future* Past Present - Continuous* - Simple* | [le temps] le futur [le futur proche] [le passé (composé)] [l'imparfait] le présent (continu, simple) | Tense tells us when an event occurred (e.g. in the past, present, or future). It is often signalled by inflections on the verb. | [future tense example] je jouerai (I will play) / je vais jouer (I am going to play) [past tense example] j' ai joué (I played) / je jouais (I was playing / used to play) [present tense example] je joue (I play / am playing) |
| Active | actif | In an active construction, the subject of the sentence is the subject (doer) of the verb. | Le garçon étudie le français. (The boy studies French) |
| Passive | passif | In a passive construction, the subject of the sentence is the object (receiver) of the verb. It is used to place emphasis on the action rather than the subject (doer) of the verb. | Le français est étudié par le garçon. (French is studied by the boy) |
| Prefix | le préfixe | A prefix is added at the beginning of a word to turn it into another word. | refaire (to redo) |
| Suffix | le suffixe | A suffix is added to the end of one word to turn it into another word. Suffixes cannot stand on their own as a complete word. | content (m); contente (f) idée (sing) ; idées (pl) |
| Preposition | la préposition | A preposition links a following noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence. | à (to) avec (with) |
| Sentence | [la phrase] | A sentence is a group of words, which are grammatically connected to each other, but not to any words outside the sentence. A sentence may consist of one or more clauses, connected by subordination or co-ordination. | |
| Main clause | [la proposition principale] | A main clause can stand-alone as a complete sentence. It contains at least a subject and a verb. | Je mange du chocolat , ce que j'adore ! |
| Subordinate clause | [la proposition subordonnée] | A subordinate clause cannot stand-alone and does not form a simple sentence by itself. It is connected to the main clause of the sentence, by modifying the main clause or some part of it. | Je mange du chocolat, ce que j'adore ! |
| Relative clause | [la proposition relative] | A relative clause is a type of subordinate clause, which modifies a noun. | Le football est un sport que j'aime . (Football is a sport that I like) |
| Relative pronoun | le pronom relatif | A relative pronoun is used in a relative clause, to refer back to the noun that is being modified. | qui (who) que (what) |
| Conjunction | la conjonction | A conjunction links two words or phrases together. | et (and), mais (but), ou (or) |

Definitions adapted from those provided in Appendix 2 of the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for English (DfE, 2013)