

Verbes + Prépositions

Grammar Capsule & Compare-and-Contrast Cheat Sheet — companion to the drill

Part 1 — Grammar Capsule

The Core Test

Every verb in French either takes no preposition, *à*, *de*, or another preposition before what follows it (an infinitive, a noun, or a *que*-clause). This is not something you can reliably derive from the English translation — it is memorized per verb, the same way noun gender is memorized. "To decide" and "to hesitate" both sound like they'd work the same way in French, but *décider de* and *hésiter à* take different prepositions. There is no shortcut around learning them individually — the drill's job is to build that recall through repetition; this sheet's job is to give you the patterns and exceptions in one place.

Rough Tendencies (Useful, Not Reliable)

These patterns hold often enough to be a helpful first guess, but they break constantly — treat them as a tiebreaker, never as a rule you can trust blindly.

Pattern	Tendency	Example
à + infinitive	Movement toward a goal, an ongoing effort, or getting used to something	s'habituer à, réussir à, continuer à
de + infinitive	Completion, cessation, judgment/emotion about the action, or a source	finir de, décider de, avoir peur de
Direct infinitive	Modal-like verbs (wanting, being able, liking) and perception verbs	vouloir, pouvoir, aimer, devoir

Same Verb, Different Preposition

A handful of verbs change preposition — and meaning — depending on what follows. These are the pairs most worth memorizing on their own, because getting them wrong doesn't just sound clumsy, it changes what you're saying. Several of these deliberately appear twice in the drill (once in an earlier group, once in a later one) so you meet both sides of the pattern.

penser

- *penser à* + infinitif — to think about doing something
- *penser que* — to think that
- *penser* + infinitif (direct) — to plan/intend to do something (more literary)

compter

- *compter sur* qqn/qqch — to count/rely on
- *compter* + infinitif (direct) — to intend to do something

consister

- *consister à* + infinitif — to consist in doing something
- *consister en* qqch — to consist of something

veiller

- *veiller sur* qqn — to watch over someone
- *veiller à* + infinitif — to see to it / make sure to do something
- *veiller à ce que* + subjonctif — to make sure that

tenir

- *tenir à* + infinitif — to be keen on doing something
- *tenir à ce que* + subjonctif — to insist / be adamant that

s'attendre

- *s'attendre à* + infinitif — to expect to do something
- *s'attendre à ce que* + subjonctif — to expect that

se souvenir / se rappeler

- *se souvenir de* qqch — takes "de"
- *se rappeler* qqch (no preposition) — same meaning, different construction — "se rappeler de" is common in speech but considered incorrect in careful writing

manquer

- *manquer de* + infinitif — to nearly do something
- *manquer de* qqch — to lack something
- *manquer à* qqn — to be missed by someone ("tu me manques" = I miss you)

jouer

- *jouer à* — for games and sports (jouer au tennis)
- *jouer de* — for musical instruments (jouer du piano)

servir / se servir

- *servir à* + infinitif (non-reflexive) — to be used for doing something; the subject is the thing doing the serving — "Cet outil sert à réparer les vélos."
- *se servir de* qqch (reflexive) — to use something; the subject is the person using it — "Je me sers de cet outil tous les jours."
- Not interchangeable, and easy to conflate because they share a root: *se servir de* is the everyday word for "to use" and is a *de*-verb, not an *à*-verb — don't let *servir à* above pull you toward *à* here.

persévérer

- *persévérer à* + infinitif — to keep on doing something
- *persévérer dans* + nom — to persevere in (one's efforts, a course of action)

faillir

- *faillir* + infinitif (direct, today) — to nearly / almost do something — j'ai failli tomber
- historically *à* or *de* — used centuries ago; the preposition has been dropped in modern French

Other Ways to Practice This Beyond the Drill

- Write 10 original sentences about your own life using 10 different verb+preposition pairs — mix à, de, and at least one "other preposition" verb rather than drilling isolated flashcards.
- Pick a French article, email, or blog post and highlight every verb followed by an infinitive, a noun, or que. Guess the construction before checking, then verify against this sheet or *Le Rouleau des prépositions*.
- When you hit one of the "same verb, different preposition" pairs above in real reading, pause and say the other construction out loud from memory before moving on.
- Use the drill's "Verb + Preposition" mode (not just "Preposition only") once a pattern feels solid — typing the full construction builds stronger recall than picking it from a list of choices.

How the Drill's Groups Map to Level

Group A is the original core set (unchanged). Group B adds roughly 50 further verbs aimed at solid B2 coverage. Group C adds roughly 45 more, weighted toward formal register, subjunctive-triggering constructions, and nuance pairs — genuinely useful at C1, not just decorative. Levels 1–3 control which *categories* of preposition are in play (à/de only, + other prepositions, + direct and que); Groups A–C control which *tier* of verb within those categories. The two axes are independent, so "Level 2, Group C" is a real, useful combination — not every learner needs to clear Group A before trying Group C at a lower level.

Part 2 — Full Reference by Category

Every verb currently in the drill, organized by category and tagged with its group. Use this as a lookup table, not a study list — the drill itself is the better tool for actual practice and spaced repetition of missed items.

à + infinitive

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	aider à	à	to help (to do something)
A	apprendre à	à	to learn (to do something)
A	arriver à	à	to manage (to do something)
A	aspirer à	à	to aspire (to do something)
A	chercher à	à	to try / seek (to do something)
A	commencer à	à	to begin (to do something)
A	consentir à	à	to consent (to do something)
A	consister à	à	to consist (in doing something)
A	continuer à	à	to continue (to do something)
A	encourager à	à	to encourage (to do something)
A	enseigner à	à	to teach (to do something)
A	hésiter à	à	to hesitate (to do something)
A	inviter à	à	to invite (to do something)
A	parvenir à	à	to succeed (in doing something)
A	passer (du temps) à	à	to spend time (doing something)
A	penser à	à	to think about / think of (doing something)
A	persister à	à	to persist (in doing something)
A	renoncer à	à	to give up (doing something)
A	réfléchir à	à	to think over / consider (doing something)
A	réussir à	à	to succeed (in doing something)
A	s'amuser à	à	to have fun (doing something)
A	s'attendre à	à	to expect (to do something)
A	s'engager à	à	to commit (to doing something)
A	s'habituer à	à	to get used to (doing something)
A	s'intéresser à	à	to be interested (in doing something)
A	se décider à	à	to make up one's mind (to do something)
A	se mettre à	à	to start (doing something)
A	se préparer à	à	to prepare (to do something)
A	se résigner à	à	to resign oneself (to doing something)
A	servir à	à	to be used (for doing something)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	songer à	à	to think about / consider (doing something)
A	tarder à	à	to delay (in doing something)
A	tenir à	à	to be keen (on doing something)
A	viser à	à	to aim (to do something)
B	aboutir à	à	to end up / result (in doing something)
B	contribuer à	à	to contribute (to doing something)
B	jouer à	à	to play (a sport/game)
B	s'accoutumer à	à	to get accustomed (to doing something)
B	s'appliquer à	à	to apply oneself (to doing something)
B	s'exercer à	à	to practise (doing something)
B	se hasarder à	à	to risk / venture (to do something)
B	se plaire à	à	to enjoy oneself (doing something)
B	se résoudre à	à	to resolve / bring oneself (to do something)
B	tendre à	à	to tend (to do something)
C	concourir à	à	to work together (toward doing something)
C	persévérer à	à	to persevere (in doing something)
C	procéder à	à	to proceed (to do something)
C	répugner à	à	to be reluctant (to do something)
C	s'acharner à	à	to persist relentlessly (in doing something)
C	s'employer à	à	to devote oneself (to doing something)
C	s'obstiner à	à	to persist stubbornly (in doing something)
C	se borner à	à	to limit oneself (to doing something)
C	se consacrer à	à	to devote oneself (to doing something)
C	se limiter à	à	to limit oneself (to doing something)
C	veiller à	à	to see to it / make sure (that something happens)

de + infinitive

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	accepter de	de	to accept / agree (to do something)
A	accorder de	de	to grant (someone permission to do something)
A	avoir besoin de	de	to need (to do something)
A	avoir envie de	de	to feel like (doing something)
A	avoir hâte de	de	to look forward to (doing something)
A	avoir l'air de	de	to seem (to be doing something)
A	avoir l'intention de	de	to intend (to do something)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	avoir peur de	de	to be afraid (to do something)
A	avoir raison de	de	to be right (to do something)
A	avoir tort de	de	to be wrong (to do something)
A	cesser de	de	to stop / cease (doing something)
A	choisir de	de	to choose (to do something)
A	conseiller de	de	to advise (to do something)
A	convenir de	de	to agree (to do something)
A	demandeur de	de	to ask (someone to do something)
A	décider de	de	to decide (to do something)
A	empêcher de	de	to prevent (someone from doing something)
A	essayer de	de	to try (to do something)
A	finir de	de	to finish (doing something)
A	manquer de	de	to nearly / fail (to do something)
A	mériter de	de	to deserve (to do something)
A	négliger de	de	to neglect (to do something)
A	offrir de	de	to offer (to do something)
A	ordonner de	de	to order (someone to do something)
A	oublier de	de	to forget (to do something)
A	permettre de	de	to allow (someone to do something)
A	persuader de	de	to persuade (someone to do something)
A	profiter de	de	to take advantage of (doing something)
A	promettre de	de	to promise (to do something)
A	proposer de	de	to suggest / propose (doing something)
A	refuser de	de	to refuse (to do something)
A	regretter de	de	to regret (doing something)
A	remercier de	de	to thank (for doing something)
A	risquer de	de	to risk (doing something)
A	rêver de	de	to dream (of doing something)
A	s'arrêter de	de	to stop (doing something)
A	s'efforcer de	de	to strive (to do something)
A	s'excuser de	de	to apologize (for doing something)
A	s'occuper de	de	to take care of / deal with (doing something)
A	se dépêcher de	de	to hurry (to do something)
A	se garder de	de	to be careful (not to do something)
A	se souvenir de	de	to remember (doing something)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
—*	se servir de	de	to use (something) — see "Same Verb, Different Preposition" above
A	suggérer de	de	to suggest (doing something)
A	tenter de	de	to attempt (to do something)
A	tâcher de	de	to make sure to / see to it (that you do something)
A	venir de	de	to have just (done something)
A	éviter de	de	to avoid (doing something)
A	être en train de	de	to be in the process (of doing something)
B	accuser de	de	to accuse (someone of doing something)
B	brûler de	de	to be eager / burning (to do something)
B	craindre de	de	to fear (doing something)
B	envisager de	de	to envisage / consider (doing something)
B	jouer de	de	to play (an instrument)
B	menacer de	de	to threaten (to do something)
B	omettre de	de	to omit / fail (to do something)
B	projeter de	de	to plan (to do something)
B	s'abstenir de	de	to refrain (from doing something)
B	se charger de	de	to take charge (of doing something)
B	se contenter de	de	to content oneself / settle (for doing something)
B	se hâter de	de	to hasten (to do something)
B	se lasser de	de	to grow tired (of doing something)
B	se plaindre de	de	to complain (about doing something)
B	se réjouir de	de	to be delighted (to do something)
B	se soucier de	de	to worry / care (about doing something)
B	souffrir de	de	to suffer (from doing something)
C	convaincre de	de	to convince (someone to do something)
C	dispenser de	de	to exempt (someone from doing something)
C	dissuader de	de	to dissuade (someone from doing something)
C	décourager de	de	to discourage (someone from doing something)
C	féliciter de	de	to congratulate (someone on doing something)
C	interdire de	de	to forbid (someone from doing something)
C	prier de	de	to beg / request (someone to do something)
C	supplier de	de	to beg / implore (someone to do something)

* Every other verb in this table is followed by an infinitive (se plaindre de *travailler*, s'abstenir de *commenter*) — that's what this drill actually tests. *se servir de* is the odd one out: it's normally followed by a noun (se servir d'un couteau, d'un outil), not a second verb, so it doesn't fit this drill's own item pool and isn't practiced here. It's drilled for conjugation and agreement in the Reflexive Verbs drill instead — listed here purely so it's easy to find next to servir à above, its non-reflexive, different-meaning look-alike.

Other prepositions (sur, avec, contre, en, dans, pour, par)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	avoir confiance en	en	to have confidence (in someone)
A	commencer par	par	to start (by doing something)
A	compter sur	sur	to count (on doing something)
A	croire en	en	to believe (in something)
A	finir par	par	to end up (doing something)
A	insister sur	sur	to insist (on doing something)
A	lutter contre	contre	to fight (against something)
A	opter pour	pour	to opt (for something)
A	partir pour	pour	to leave (for a place)
A	protester contre	contre	to protest (against something)
A	rompre avec	avec	to break up (with someone)
A	s'appuyer sur	sur	to rely / lean (on something)
A	se battre pour	pour	to fight (for something)
A	se fâcher contre	contre	to get angry (at someone)
A	sortir avec	avec	to go out (with someone)
A	veiller sur	sur	to watch (over something)
A	vivre dans	dans	to live (in a place)
A	voter pour	pour	to vote (for something)
B	collaborer avec	avec	to collaborate (with someone)
B	consister en	en	to consist (of something)
B	miser sur	sur	to bank / count (on something)
B	plaider pour	pour	to plead / advocate (for something)
B	porter sur	sur	to focus / bear (on a subject)
B	s'interroger sur	sur	to wonder / question oneself (about something)
B	se familiariser avec	avec	to familiarize oneself (with something)
B	se pencher sur	sur	to look into / consider (a question)
B	se transformer en	en	to transform / turn (into something)
B	sombrer dans	dans	to sink / descend (into a state)
B	voter contre	contre	to vote (against something)
C	avoir foi en	en	to have faith (in something)
C	cohabiter avec	avec	to cohabit / coexist (with someone)
C	déboucher sur	sur	to lead / open out (onto something)
C	militer pour	pour	to campaign / advocate (for something)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
C	persévérer dans	dans	to persevere (in one's efforts — with a noun)
C	rivaliser avec	avec	to rival / compete (with someone)
C	s'insurger contre	contre	to rise up / protest (against something)
C	se prémunir contre	contre	to guard oneself (against something)
C	tabler sur	sur	to count / bank (on something)

Direct infinitive — no preposition

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	adorer	—	to love / adore (doing something)
A	aimer	—	to like / love (doing something)
A	aimer mieux	—	to prefer (to do something)
A	aller	—	to be going (to do something)
A	devoir	—	must / to have (to do something)
A	désirer	—	to desire / wish (to do something)
A	détester	—	to hate (doing something)
A	espérer	—	to hope (to do something)
A	faire	—	to have (something done)
A	falloir (il faut)	—	to be necessary (to do something)
A	laisser	—	to let / allow (someone to do something)
A	oser	—	to dare (to do something)
A	paraître	—	to appear / seem (to do something)
A	pouvoir	—	to be able (to do something)
A	préférer	—	to prefer (to do something)
A	prétendre	—	to claim (to do something)
A	savoir	—	to know how (to do something)
A	sembler	—	to seem (to do something)
A	souhaiter	—	to wish (to do something)
A	valoir mieux (il vaut mieux)	—	to be better (to do something)
A	vouloir	—	to want (to do something)
B	avouer	—	to admit (to doing something)
B	compter	—	to intend / plan (to do something)
B	nier	—	to deny (doing something)
B	penser	—	to plan / intend (to do something)
B	se rappeler	—	to remember (doing something — no preposition)
C	affirmer	—	to affirm / assert (that one will do something)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
C	confesser	—	to confess (to doing something)
C	daigner	—	to deign / condescend (to do something)
C	entendre	—	to intend / mean (to do something)
C	faillir	—	to nearly / almost (do something)

+ que + clause

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
A	avoir peur que	que	to be afraid (that...)
A	croire que	que	to believe (that...)
A	douter que	que	to doubt (that...)
A	exiger que	que	to demand (that...)
A	il est important que	que	it is important (that...)
A	il faut que	que	it is necessary (that...)
A	il vaut mieux que	que	it is better (that...)
A	penser que	que	to think (that...)
A	proposer que	que	to propose (that...)
A	préférer que	que	to prefer (that someone)
A	regretter que	que	to regret (that...)
A	souhaiter que	que	to wish (that someone would)
A	suggérer que	que	to suggest (that...)
A	vouloir que	que	to want (someone to do something)
A	être content(e) que	que	to be glad (that...)
B	accepter que	que	to accept (that...)
B	craindre que	que	to fear (that...)
B	empêcher que	que	to prevent (that...)
B	il est nécessaire que	que	it is necessary (that...)
B	il est possible que	que	it is possible (that...)
B	il semble que	que	it seems (that...)
B	s'attendre que	que	to expect (that...)
B	s'étonner que	que	to be surprised (that...)
B	être désolé(e) que	que	to be sorry (that...)
C	approuver que	que	to approve (that...)
C	il est essentiel que	que	it is essential (that...)
C	il n'est pas certain que	que	it is not certain (that...)
C	il se peut que	que	it may be (that...)

Grp	Verb	Preposition	Meaning
C	insister que	que	to insist (that...)
C	nier que	que	to deny (that...)
C	ordonner que	que	to order (that...)
C	permettre que	que	to allow (that...)
C	tenir que	que	to insist / be adamant (that...)
C	veiller que	que	to see to it (that...)
C	être surpris(e) que	que	to be surprised (that...)

Companion reference sheet for the Verbes + Prépositions drill.