

Fact Sheet, Verbs that use the preposition ‘à’ and verbs that use ‘de’

Using verbs followed by ‘à’

Some verbs in French can be followed by **à** plus either a noun or an infinitive.

Verbs followed by ‘à’ and a noun

Some verbs are followed by **à** and a person or thing, such as *dire à* (to say to).

For example:

J’ai dit « bonjour » à mon frère. – I said 'hello' to my brother.

Some more useful verbs that are followed by **à** and a noun are:

French	English	Example
demander à	to ask	Elle a demandé au prof s’il y avait des devoirs. – She asked the teacher if there was any homework.
donner à	to give to	Je vais donner une glace à mon ami. – I’m going to give my friend an ice cream.
écrire à	to write to	As-tu écrit à tes grands-parents ? – Have you written to your grandparents?
parler à	to speak to	Avez-vous parlé à votre prof ? – Have you spoken to your teacher?
répondre à	to answer	Il ne voulait pas répondre à sa mère. – He didn’t want to answer his mother.
téléphoner à	to phone	Ma mère téléphone à sa sœur une fois par semaine. – My mother phones her sister once a week.
s’intéresser à	to be interested in	Je m’intéresse au sport. – I’m interested in sport.
jouer à	to play (a sport)	Elles aiment jouer au tennis. – They like playing tennis.

When using **à** with a definite article, you need to contract the article:

masculine	feminine	before a vowel or silent h	plural
à + le → au	à la	à l’	à + les → aux

For example:

Je parle au garçon. – I’m talking to the boy.

Elle répond aux e-mails. – She’s replying to the emails.

Verbs followed by ‘à’ and an infinitive

Some verbs are followed by **à** and an infinitive, such as *apprendre à* (to learn to).

For example: *Il apprend à danser.* – He’s learning to dance.

Some more useful verbs followed by **à** and an infinitive are:

French	English	Example
commencer à	to start/begin to	Nous avons commencé à recycler. – We’ve started to recycle.
continuer à	to continue to	Il continue à travailler. – He’s continuing to work.
réussir à	to succeed in/manage to	Je vais réussir à faire un marathon. – I’m going to succeed in/manage to run a marathon.

Verbs followed by 'de'

Some verbs can be followed by ‘de’ plus either a noun or an infinitive.

Verbs followed by 'de' and a noun

Some verbs are followed by de and a person or thing, such as penser de (to think about, have an opinion) and jouer de (to play an instrument).

For example:

Qu’est-ce que tu penses des devoirs ? – What do you think of homework? (What is your opinion of homework?)

Je joue du piano. – I play the piano.

When using de with a definite article, you need to contract the article:

masculine	feminine	before a vowel or silent h	plural
de + le → du	de la	de l’	de + les → des

Verbs followed by 'de' and an infinitive

Some verbs are followed by de and an infinitive, such as décider de (to decide to).

For example:

Nous avons décidé d’aller à la piscine. – We’ve decided to go to the pool.

Some more useful verbs followed by de and an infinitive are:

French	English	Example
essayer de	to try to	Ils essaient de lire un livre. – They’re trying to read a book.
refuser de	to refuse to	Je refuse de travailler ce week-end. – I’m refusing to work this weekend.
arrêter de	to stop	Tu dois arrêter de parler. – You should stop talking.