

Describing your day from morning to night

French A1 (beginner) · Lesson

Quick answer: To talk about your daily routine in French, use reflexive verbs with a pronoun before the verb (je me lève, elle se couche), add clock times (à 7h30), and link actions with d'abord, ensuite, puis. Give your work schedule with je commence à and je finis à.

Level: French A1 (CEFR beginner) · **Standards:** CEFR A1, Spoken production

What is a reflexive verb in French?

Reflexive verb

A reflexive verb is conjugated with a small pronoun that points back to the subject: me, te, se, nous, vous, se. Many daily actions use it: se réveiller (to wake up), se lever (to get up), se laver (to wash), s'habiller (to get dressed), se coucher (to go to bed).

	se laver	se lever
je	me lave	me lève
tu	te laves	te lèves
il / elle	se lave	se lève
nous	nous lavons	nous levons
vous	vous lavez	vous levez
ils / elles	se lavent	se lèvent

The pronoun sits right before the verb. Before a vowel it elides: Je m'habille à 7h30. In a negative sentence, ne and pas wrap the pronoun and the verb: Je ne me lève pas tôt le dimanche. — I don't get up early on Sundays.

How do you place your day in time?

French	English
le matin, l'après-midi	in the morning, in the afternoon
le soir, la nuit	in the evening, at night
à midi, à minuit	at noon, at midnight

French	English
tôt, tard	early, late

Une journée de travail

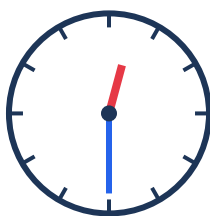


A weekday in order, from se réveiller to se coucher.

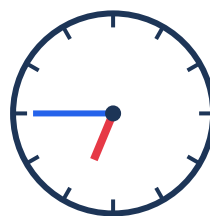
For clock time, say the hour first, then the minutes: sept heures quinze or sept heures et quart, douze heures trente or midi et demi. Add du matin or du soir only in the 12-hour style.



7h15



12h30



18h45

Read the short hand first (hour), then the long hand (minutes).

A work schedule

- Je commence à 9h et je finis à 17h30. — I start at 9 and finish at 5:30 p.m.
- D'abord, je me douche ; ensuite, je prends le petit-déjeuner. — First I shower; then I have breakfast.
- Nous déjeunons à midi, puis nous retravaillons à 13h30. — We have lunch at noon, then go back to work at 1:30 p.m.

Link actions with d'abord, ensuite, puis and enfin to build a routine in order.

Watch out

English says “I wash” or “I get dressed” with a plain verb, but French needs the pronoun: Je me lave. For body parts, use le, la, les instead of “my”: Je me lave les mains. Also, “in the morning” is just le matin, and “at 8” is à 8h.

The lunch break

In many French offices, the lunch break lasts about an hour, and a sit-down meal at noon is still common. A shop or small office sometimes closes between noon and 2 p.m. in smaller

towns.

Zoé's tip

Say your routine out loud while you brush your teeth: Je me réveille, je me lève, je me lave...
Your own morning is the best vocabulary list.

Key points to remember

- The reflexive pronouns are me, te, se, nous, vous, se.
- Se lever takes an accent on the singular and third person plural: je me lève, ils se lèvent.
- In a negative sentence, ne ... pas surrounds the pronoun and verb: je ne me lève pas.
- Use le matin, l'après-midi, le soir, la nuit without a preposition for "in the ...".
- For body parts after a reflexive verb, use the article: je me lave les mains.

Describing Your Day from Morning to Night: frequently asked questions

Which French verbs are reflexive in a daily routine?

The most common are se réveiller, se lever, se laver, se doucher, s'habiller, se brosser les dents and se coucher. Each one needs a pronoun that matches the subject.

How do you say I start work at nine in French?

Say Je commence à 9h. or Je commence à neuf heures. To say when you finish, use Je finis à 17h30. Official hours often use the 24-hour clock.

How do you make a reflexive verb negative?

Put ne before the pronoun and pas after the verb: Je ne me couche pas tard. Before a vowel, ne becomes n': Il ne s'habille pas vite.

What is the difference between le matin and du matin?

Le matin means "in the morning" as a time of day, as in Je travaille le matin. Du matin follows a clock time: 7 heures du matin. The 24-hour clock does not need it.

How do you say first, then, next and finally?

Use d'abord, ensuite or puis, and enfin for the last step. They help you sequence your day in speaking and writing.