

Notes, texts and postcards for friends

French A1 (beginner) · Lesson

Quick answer: A short message in French has three parts: an opening that matches the reader (Salut or Bonjour Madame), one or two present-tense facts such as Je suis à Nice. Il fait beau., and a closing like À bientôt or Cordialement. Dates put the day first: le 3 mai.

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

How do you open and close a short message in French?

The opening and the closing follow the reader, not the topic. Choose the tone first; the middle of the message is then made of short present-tense sentences.

Reader	Opening	Closing
Friend, sibling	Salut Inès, Coucou Léa !	À bientôt ! Gros bisous
Coworker you know	Bonjour Thomas,	À demain. Bonne journée !
Landlord, teacher	Bonjour Madame,	Cordialement, Merci d'avance.

Friends sign with Bises (kisses) or Amitiés (best wishes); with a stranger, Cordialement is the safe choice.

What goes into a postcard or a quick text?

Four small facts are enough: where you are, the weather, one activity, and the day you come home.

Bonjour de Tahiti ! Il fait beau : 30 degrés. Je visite le marché. Je rentre samedi. Bises, Malia	Famille Roux 12 rue des Lilas 69003 Lyon France
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A postcard: message on the left, address and stamp on the right.

Four building blocks

- Je suis à Tahiti. — I'm in Tahiti.
- Il fait beau. — The weather is nice.
- Je visite le marché. — I'm visiting the market.
- Je rentre samedi. — I'm coming home on Saturday.

How do you propose a meeting or answer an invitation?

On se voit samedi ?

Désolé, je travaille.

Dimanche, alors ? À 15 h.

D'accord ! À dimanche !

A text conversation: propose, decline, agree on a new day.

Proposing and answering

Raise your voice at the end, or write a question mark: Tu es libre ce soir ? — Are you free tonight? Give the hour with à and the letter h: à 19 h. Say yes with D'accord ! and no with Désolé, je ne peux pas.

Which short forms can you use in texts?

Short form	Full form	Meaning
stp	s'il te plaît	please (to a friend)
bcp	beaucoup	a lot
dsl	désolé	sorry
a+	à plus tard	see you later

Watch out

English "Dear Sam" becomes Cher Sam for a man but Chère Amina for a woman: the adjective agrees with the reader. Dates put the day first and take no ordinal: le 3 mai, not "May 3rd" (only the first of the month is le 1er mai). Never use short forms with a landlord or

an employer.

Culture note

French writers often use the 24-hour style even in friendly notes: Rendez-vous à 18 h 30. A postcard is usually signed with a first name only, and the stamp goes in the top right corner.

Zoé's tip

Build every message in three beats: a greeting, one useful fact, a goodbye. If the message has more than four lines, split it in two texts!

Key points to remember

- Pick the opening and closing by tone: friend, colleague or stranger.
- Cher agrees with the reader: Cher Sam, Chère Amina.
- Dates put the day first with no ordinal: le 14 juillet, le 1er mai.
- Hours are written with h: à 19 h 30.
- Short forms such as stp or bcp are for friends only.

Notes, Texts and Postcards for Friends: frequently asked questions

What is the most neutral way to end a message in French?

Cordialement works for almost any non-friend reader, from a landlord to a coworker. It is short, polite and never wrong. Add Merci d'avance when you ask for something.

Should I write Cher or Chère?

Match the reader: Cher for a man, Chère for a woman. In a friendly text, most people simply write Salut or the first name, so the problem disappears.

How do I write the date on a postcard?

Write the day first, then the month in lowercase: le 12 août. Only the first of the month uses an ordinal: le 1er août.

Can I use text abbreviations such as stp and bcp?

Yes, with friends and family. Avoid them with a boss, a teacher or an official office, where complete words look more respectful.

How do I say I am coming home on a given day?

Use the present tense with a bare day name: Je rentre samedi. means I'm coming home this

Saturday. With *le samedi*, the sentence means every Saturday.