

# Saying yes or no to invitations

## French A2 (elementary) · Lesson

**Quick answer:** To invite someone in French, give the occasion, the day and the place, then ask: Ça te dit de venir ? To accept, say Volontiers ! or Avec plaisir ! To decline, follow four steps: thank, say you are sorry, give a short reason with pouvoir or devoir, and suggest another time.

**Level:** French A2 (CEFR elementary) · **Standards:** CEFR A2, Written interaction

## How do you invite someone in French?

Give the occasion, the day, the time, the place, then ask. In a text message, the friendliest question is Ça te dit de + infinitive ?, literally *does it say something to you to...?*.

### Ways to invite

- Ça te dit de venir dîner chez nous vendredi ? — Do you feel like coming to dinner at our place Friday?
- Tu es libre samedi soir ? — Are you free Saturday night?
- Je t'invite au restaurant pour ton anniversaire. — I'm taking you to a restaurant for your birthday.
- Voudriez-vous venir à notre fête ? — Would you like to come to our party? (formal)

### Awa et Moussa

vous invitent à fêter

**leurs 10 ans de mariage**

Samedi 14 juin · 19 h 30

Salle des fêtes, 12 rue des Lilas, Annecy

**RSVP avant le mercredi 4 juin**

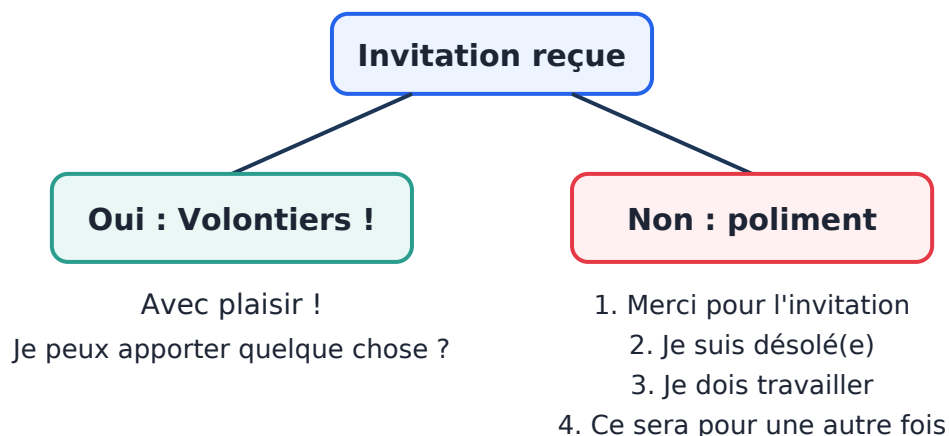
*A written invitation always gives who, when, where and a reply date.*

## How do you accept or decline?

To accept

To decline

| To accept                  | To decline                          |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Volontiers !               | Malheureusement, je ne peux pas.    |
| Avec plaisir !             | Je suis désolé(e), je suis pris(e). |
| Super idée, j'arrive !     | Je regrette, je ne suis pas libre.  |
| C'est gentil, je viendrai. | Ce sera pour une autre fois.        |



*Accepting is short; declining has four small steps.*

### Decline in four steps

1. Thank: Merci pour l'invitation. 2. Say sorry: Je suis désolé(e) (add -e if you are a woman writing). 3. Give a short reason with pouvoir or devoir. 4. Offer another time.

| Pronoun     | pouvoir | devoir  |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| je          | peux    | dois    |
| tu          | peux    | dois    |
| il / elle   | peut    | doit    |
| nous        | pouvons | devons  |
| vous        | pouvez  | devez   |
| ils / elles | peuvent | doivent |

### A full refusal

Merci beaucoup pour l'invitation ! Malheureusement, je ne peux pas venir : je dois travailler samedi. Ce sera pour une autre fois. — Thank you very much for the invitation! Unfortunately, I can't come: I have to work Saturday. Another time.

### Common mistake

After *ça te dit de* use the infinitive: not *ça te dit venir*. And do not copy English *thanks for inviting me* word for word: say *Merci pour l'invitation* or *Merci de m'avoir invité(e)*.

### Culture note

French invitations often end with RSVP, short for *Répondez, s'il vous plaît*. When you are invited to dinner at someone's home, bring flowers, a dessert or a bottle of wine. Skip chrysanthemums: in France they are linked to funerals.

### Zoé's tip

When you refuse, never write just *Non*. Add thanks and a reason in one short line, and suggest another date. Your friend remembers the kindness more than the refusal.

### Key points to remember

- *Ça te dit de* + infinitive is the friendly way to invite.
- *Volontiers* and *avec plaisir* accept an invitation.
- Decline in four steps: thanks, apology, reason, another time.
- *Désolé* takes an -e when a woman writes it.
- RSVP means *Répondez, s'il vous plaît*.

## Saying Yes or No to Invitations: frequently asked questions

### What does *Ça te dit de venir* mean?

It means *Do you feel like coming?* Literally it is *does it say something to you to come*. Use it with friends; the formal version is *Voudriez-vous venir ?*

### How do I accept an invitation in French?

Say *Volontiers !*, *Avec plaisir !* or *Super idée !* Add a detail such as *J'arrive vers 19 h*, or ask *Je peux apporter quelque chose ?*

### How do I decline politely?

Thank the host, say *Je suis désolé(e)*, give a short reason with *je ne peux pas* or *je dois*, and finish with *Ce sera pour une autre fois*.

### Does *désolé* change in writing?

Yes. A man writes *désolé* and a woman writes *désolée*. In speech both sound the same.

### What does RSVP mean on a French invitation?

RSVP stands for Répondez, s'il vous plaît. It asks you to tell the hosts whether you will come, usually before a given date.