

Fixing phone problems and forgotten passwords

French A2 (elementary) · Lesson

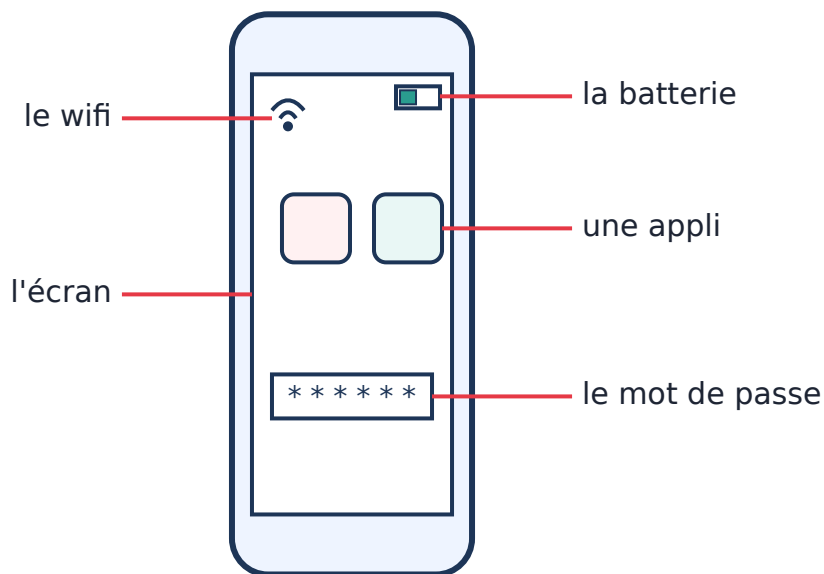
Quick answer: In French, the pronouns le, la and les replace a direct object and stand before the verb: Je télécharge l'appli becomes Je la télécharge. They let you talk about phones, apps and passwords without repeating the noun, together with repair phrases like ça ne marche pas and il est en panne.

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

What words do you need for phones, apps and passwords?

Most of this vocabulary looks like English, but the gender is not obvious. Learn each noun with its article.

French	English
un smartphone, un portable	smartphone, cell phone
une appli (from application)	app
un mot de passe	password
la batterie, le chargeur	battery, charger
ma batterie est à plat	my battery is dead
l'écran (m.), le wifi	screen, wifi
une mise à jour	update
ça ne marche pas, il est en panne	it doesn't work, it has broken down
télécharger, installer, redémarrer	to download, install, restart



Parts of a smartphone and what you see on its screen.

How do you replace a noun with le, la or les?

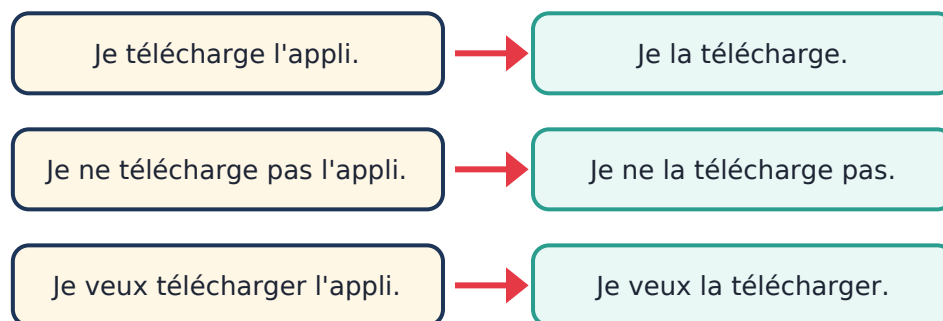
Rule: direct object pronouns

A direct object answers *what?* or *whom?* right after the verb, with no little word like *à* or *de* in between. Replace it with *le* (masculine), *la* (feminine) or *les* (plural). The pronoun goes **before** the verb. *Le* and *la* become *l'* before a vowel or a mute *h*.

Noun	Pronoun	Sentence
le chargeur	le	Je le cherche.
la batterie	la	Je la recharge.
l'appli (f.)	l'	Je l'ouvre.
les photos	les	Je les envoie.

Examples

- Mon écran est cassé. Je le répare demain. — My screen is cracked. I'm fixing it tomorrow.
- Awa cherche son mot de passe, mais elle ne le trouve pas. — Awa is looking for her password, but she can't find it.
- Cette appli est gratuite ? Je la télécharge tout de suite. — Is this app free? I'll download it right now.



The pronoun jumps in front of the verb.

Where does the pronoun go in other sentences?

- Negative: ne + pronoun + verb + pas — Je ne la trouve pas.
- Verb + infinitive: the pronoun stands before the infinitive — Je vais le changer.
- Passé composé: before the auxiliary — Je l'ai perdu. The participle agrees with the pronoun: J'ai perdu ma carte SIM. Je l'ai perdue.
- Command: after the verb with a hyphen — Installe-la ! But in a negative command, before it — Ne la perds pas !

Watch out

English puts the pronoun last: *I download it*. French never does: Je télécharge la is wrong, Je la télécharge is right. Also, la in Je la ferme is a pronoun, not the article in Je ferme la porte.

Zoé's tip

Ask *quoi ?* or *qui ?* after the verb. If the answer follows the verb directly, you can replace it. Then check the article of the noun: un gives le, une gives la, des gives les.

Culture note

In everyday French, a text message is un SMS or un texto, an email is often un mail, and a cell phone is simply un portable.

Key points to remember

- Le replaces a masculine noun, la a feminine noun, les any plural noun; le and la become l' before a vowel.
- The pronoun comes before the conjugated verb, unlike English: Je la change means I change it.
- In a negative sentence, ne and pas wrap around pronoun and verb: Je ne le trouve pas.

- With a verb and an infinitive, the pronoun goes before the infinitive: Je veux la réinitialiser.
- Un mot de passe and un écran are masculine; une appli and une batterie are feminine.

Fixing Phone Problems and Forgotten Passwords: frequently asked questions

What do le, la and les mean when they are not articles?

They are direct object pronouns meaning it or them. They replace a noun already mentioned and sit right before the verb: Tu aimes cette appli ? Je la télécharge.

Where does the pronoun go in a negative sentence?

Between ne and the verb, with pas after the verb: Je ne le trouve pas. With an infinitive, ne and pas stay around the first verb: Je ne veux pas le changer.

How do you say that a phone or an app does not work?

Say Ça ne marche pas or Mon téléphone ne marche plus. For a machine that has completely broken down, say Il est en panne.

Why does the past participle sometimes get an extra e?

With avoir, the participle agrees with a direct object pronoun placed before it. Feminine adds -e, plural adds -s: Je l'ai installée, Je les ai installés.

How do you say that you forgot your password?

Say J'ai oublié mon mot de passe. On a website, look for the link Mot de passe oublié ? to create a new one.