

Family life and community bonds in the francophone world

AP French Language and Culture · Lesson

This AP French lesson explains **AP French families and communities** step by step, with examples in French and English. Then practise with the worksheet on AP French families and communities and check yourself with the quiz.

Quick answer: The AP French theme Families and Communities asks how people live together: family structures, child care, customs, volunteering and citizenship. To succeed, a student needs precise vocabulary, the subjunctive for opinions and duties, and the ability to compare francophone societies in interpretive, interpersonal and presentational tasks.

Level: AP French Language and Culture · **Standards:** AP French Language and Culture (College Board CED), Theme: Families and Communities

AP French families and communities: the lesson

What does the AP theme Families and Communities include?

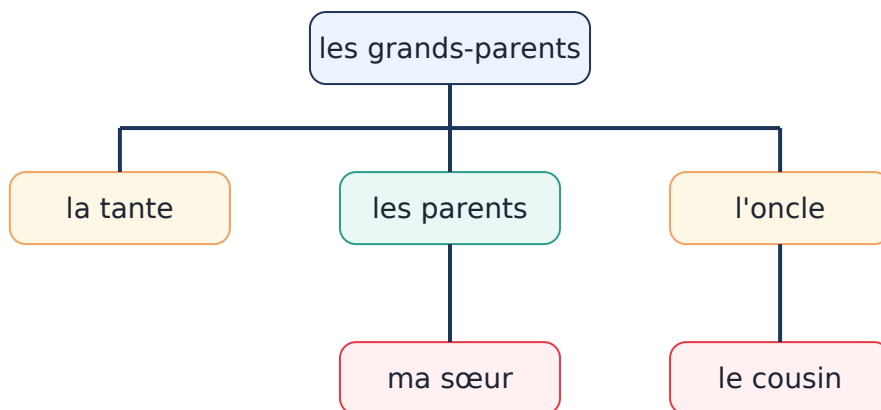
Theme definition

On the AP French Language and Culture exam, *Families and Communities* covers family structures, child care and education, customs and ceremonies, social networks, citizenship and volunteering. Texts and tasks ask how people live together and what they owe one another.

How do family structures differ across the francophone world?

A family can be nucléaire, monoparentale, recomposée or élargie. In many West African households, cousins and neighbors are treated as close kin, while in a city like Lyon a household may be just two people. Describing these differences precisely is a high-value AP skill, because graders reward specific vocabulary and concrete examples over vague statements such as *les familles changent*. Notice also that a household and a family are not the same thing: a household shares a roof, while a family is a network of relatives.

French	English	Example
la famille recomposée	blended family	Nolwenn retrouve ses demi-frères le week-end. — Nolwenn sees her half-brothers on weekends.
la famille monoparentale	single-parent family	Mon voisin élève seul ses deux filles. — My neighbor raises his two daughters alone.
la famille élargie	extended family	Chez Awa, quatre générations partagent la cour. — At Awa's, four generations share the courtyard.
la garde alternée	shared custody	Les jumeaux passent une semaine chez chaque parent. — The twins spend a week with each parent.



A family tree with the vocabulary used in AP reading passages.

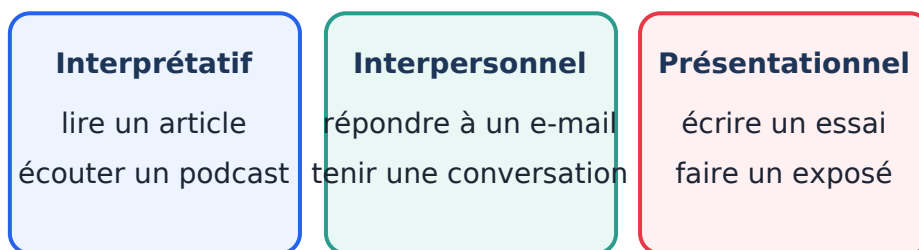
Which words describe citizenship and community life?

- le bénévolat — volunteering; une association — a nonprofit club
- la mairie — city hall; le quartier — neighborhood
- le vivre-ensemble — living together; la solidarité — solidarity

Duty and opinion take the subjunctive

Il faut que chacun **participe** à la vie du quartier. — Everyone must take part in neighborhood life. After *je ne pense pas que* or *il est important que*, use the subjunctive too.

How do the three AP modes use this theme?



The three communication modes tested on the AP exam.

Watch out: parents

In French, les parents means mother and father, but des parents can mean relatives. English speakers often misread it. Look at the context.

Culture note

In France, every wedding must first take place at the mairie before any religious ceremony. The PACS, a civil partnership open to all couples, has existed since 1999.

Zoé's tip

Before writing, name the family model, give one example from a francophone place, then compare it with your own town. Three moves, and a clear paragraph appears!

Key points to remember

- The theme covers family structures, education, customs and ceremonies, social networks, citizenship and volunteering.
- Francophone families include nuclear, single-parent, blended and extended models.
- Opinions and civic duties often need the subjunctive: il faut que, je ne pense pas que.
- AP tasks test three modes: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational.
- Comparing francophone communities with your own is a core skill on the exam.

Family Life and Community Bonds in the Francophone World: frequently asked questions

What does the AP French theme Families and Communities cover?

It covers family structures, child care, education, customs, ceremonies, social networks, citizenship and volunteering. Tasks ask students to compare francophone communities with their own.

Which family terms should an AP French student know?

Know la famille nucléaire, monoparentale, recomposée and élargie, plus la garde alternée and le PACS. These appear often in articles and in spoken interviews.

Why does the subjunctive matter for this theme?

Duties, wishes and opinions about society use it: il faut que, il est important que, je ne pense pas que. Accurate subjunctives raise the grammar score.

How can students compare cultures in an AP essay?

State the francophone custom, add one precise example, then contrast it with local customs. Connectors such as alors que and tandis que make the comparison clear.

What are the three AP communication modes?

Interpretive means reading and listening, interpersonal means two-way conversation or email, and presentational means a prepared essay or talk. Each mode appears with this theme.