

Pronoun power for everyday French talk

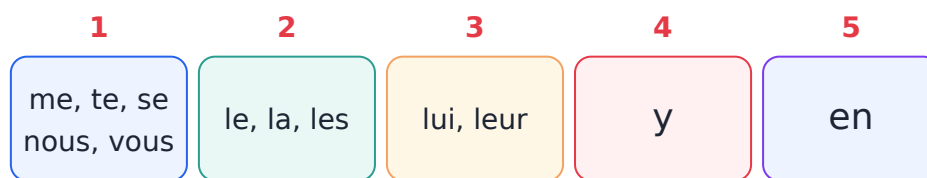
AP French Language and Culture · Lesson

Quick answer: Double object pronouns stack before the verb in one fixed order: me/te/nous/vous, then le/la/les, then lui/leur, then y, then en. Use y for à plus a thing or place, en for de plus a thing or quantity, and moi, toi, lui, eux after prepositions.

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

How do double object pronouns work?

When a sentence has two object pronouns, both sit right before the conjugated verb (or before the infinitive) in one fixed order. Memorize the chart, then build the sentence from left to right.



sujet + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + verbe

The fixed order of object pronouns before the verb.

Order rule

Column 1 comes before column 2, then 3, 4 and 5. Never combine me, te, nous or vous with lui or leur; use à plus a disjunctive pronoun instead.

Pair	Example	Meaning
me + le	Elle me l'a envoyé hier.	She sent it to me yesterday.
le + lui	Je le lui ai expliqué.	I explained it to him.
les + leur	Nadia les leur rend demain.	Nadia returns them to them tomorrow.
lui + en	Je lui en ai offert deux.	I gave her two of them.
y + en	Il y en a dix.	There are ten of them.

In affirmative commands the pronouns follow the verb, joined by hyphens, direct before indirect: Donne-le-moi. — Give it to me. Donne-m'en. — Give me some. Negative commands keep the normal order: Ne me le dis pas.

Elle	me	l'	a envoyé
subject	to me	it	verb

She sent it to me.

Reading a double-pronoun sentence piece by piece.

When do you use y and en?

Y and en

- y replaces à + a thing or idea, or a place: J'y pense. — I'm thinking about it. Nous y allons en juin. — We're going there in June.
- en replaces de + a noun, or a noun after a number or quantity: Elle en a trois. — She has three. Il en revient. — He is coming back from there.

How do disjunctive pronouns work?

Subject	je	tu	il	elle	nous	vous	ils	elles
Disjunctive	moi	toi	lui	elle	nous	vous	eux	elles

- After a preposition: chez eux — at their place.
- For emphasis: Moi, je préfère rester. — Me, I'd rather stay.
- After c'est: C'est elle qui a gagné. — She is the one who won.
- In comparisons: Il court plus vite que moi.
- After verbs like penser à or faire attention à with a person: Je pense à lui.

Common mistakes of English speakers

- English says "I give it to him"; French says Je le lui donne, never Je lui le donne.
- English drops "of them"; French needs en: J'en ai deux. — I have two.
- For a person, use à + disjunctive, not y: Je pense à ma tante becomes Je pense à elle.

Spoken French

In conversation, speakers often open with a disjunctive pronoun: Moi, je ne sais pas. The pattern is completely natural and sounds fluent in an AP interpersonal conversation.

Zoé's tip

Chant the chart like a rhythm: me, le, lui, y, en. Replace one noun at a time, say the sentence aloud, then add the second pronoun and test it against the chant.

Key points to remember

- Order before the verb: me/te/se/nous/vous, le/la/les, lui/leur, y, en.
- Y replaces à + a thing or place; en replaces de + a noun or a counted quantity.
- In affirmative commands, pronouns follow the verb with hyphens: Donne-le-moi.
- Disjunctive pronouns: moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux, elles.
- For people, use à + a disjunctive pronoun: Je pense à elle.

Pronoun Power for Everyday French Talk: frequently asked questions

What is the order of double object pronouns in French?

The order is me/te/se/nous/vous, then le/la/les, then lui/leur, then y, then en. All of them sit before the conjugated verb, or before the infinitive.

Can you use me and lui together?

No. French does not allow me lui or te leur. Keep the direct pronoun and add à plus a disjunctive pronoun: Elle m'a présenté à lui.

Does the past participle agree with the pronouns?

It agrees with a preceding direct object: Elle me l'a envoyée if the thing is a feminine word like la lettre. It never agrees with lui, leur or en.

When should I use y instead of à + a pronoun?

Use y for things, ideas and places: J'y pense. For people after verbs such as penser à, use à plus a disjunctive pronoun: Je pense à lui.

What are disjunctive pronouns used for?

They stand alone or follow a preposition. Use them for emphasis (Moi, je viens.), after c'est, in comparisons and with compound subjects such as Léa et moi.