

Giving your opinion and defending it

French B1 (intermediate) · Lesson

Quick answer: To give an opinion in French, open with *je pense que*, *je trouve que*, *il me semble que* or *à mon avis*, then add a reason with *parce que*, *car* or *puisque*. After an affirmative opener use the indicative; after *je ne pense pas que* use the subjunctive.

Level: French B1 (CEFR intermediate) · **Standards:** CEFR B1, Spoken production

How do you give an opinion in French?

French has a handful of ready-made openers. Pick one, then add the clause. After an affirmative opener, the verb is in the indicative, exactly like a normal sentence.

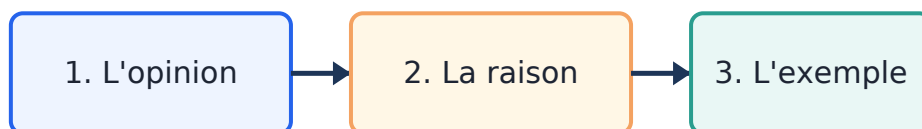
Opener	Meaning	Force
Je pense que...	I think that...	neutral
Je trouve que...	I find that... (a feeling)	personal
Je crois que...	I believe that...	softer
Il me semble que...	It seems to me that...	polite, careful
À mon avis, ... / Selon moi, ...	In my opinion, ...	no que, add a comma
Pour moi, ...	For me, ...	spoken, friendly

Rule: opinion verbs and mood

Affirmative: *Je pense que* + indicative. Negative: *Je ne pense pas que* + subjunctive, because you now doubt the idea. The same happens in a question with inversion: *Penses-tu qu'il soit prêt ?*

Examples

- Je pense que le nouveau tramway de Nantes est très pratique. — I think the new Nantes tram is very practical.
- Je ne pense pas que ce soit trop cher. — I don't think it's too expensive.
- À mon avis, Luc a raison. — In my opinion, Luc is right.



À mon avis, le télétravail est une bonne idée, **(la raison)** parce qu'on gagne du temps. Moi, je perds 2 h dans le RER.

A good spoken opinion has three parts: the opinion, the reason, an example.

How do you justify an opinion with parce que, car and puisque?

An opinion without a reason sounds thin at B1. Choose the connector according to what the listener already knows.

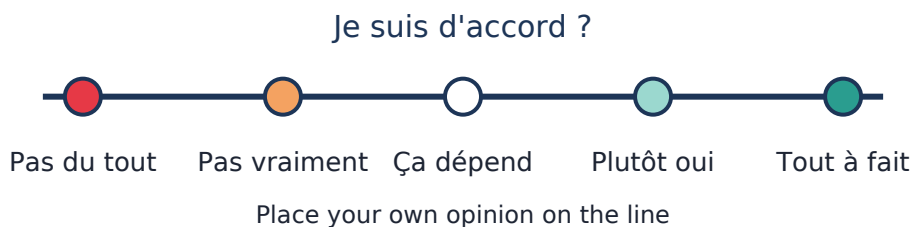
Connector	Use	Example
parce que	gives new information; answers pourquoi	Je reste, parce que j'aime ce quartier.
car	formal or written; never at the start; cannot answer pourquoi	Il est fatigué, car il a veillé.
puisque	the reason is already known to both speakers	Puisqu'il pleut, prenons le bus.
comme	reason placed first in the sentence	Comme j'ai un rendez-vous, je pars.

Watch out

English "because" covers all four. In French, Pourquoi pars-tu ? — Car je suis pressé is wrong: answer a pourquoi question with Parce que. Also, "I agree" is Je suis d'accord, never "je suis agree" or "j'ai d'accord".

How do you agree, disagree and nuance?

The five phrases below cover most conversations, from a firm no to a firm yes.



Choose the phrase that matches how strongly you agree.

Nuance with contrast

- D'un côté, le train est écologique ; de l'autre, il coûte cher. — On one hand... on the other...
- Il a raison. Cependant, il oublie les familles. — However, ...
- Je suis plutôt d'accord, mais pas sur tout. — I mostly agree, but not on everything.

Culture note

French schools train students to build an argument in three steps: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. In the DELF B1 speaking test, one task asks the candidate to defend a point of view on a short topic, so reasons and examples count.

Zoé's tip

Before you speak, think "un avis, une raison, un exemple". If you freeze, start with Alors, pour moi... and buy yourself two seconds.

Key points to remember

- À mon avis and selon moi are followed by a comma, never by que.
- Parce que answers pourquoi; car is formal and cannot start a sentence.
- Puisque introduces a reason both speakers already know.
- Je ne pense pas que takes the subjunctive: ce soit, il ait, on puisse.
- A B1 answer has three parts: opinion, reason, example.

Giving Your Opinion and Defending It: frequently asked questions

What is the difference between parce que and car?

Parce que is the everyday choice and can answer pourquoi. Car is more formal, appears mostly in writing, and always sits in the middle of the sentence after a comma.

Does je pense que take the subjunctive?

Not in the affirmative: Je pense qu'il a raison uses the indicative. In the negative, Je ne pense pas qu'il ait raison uses the subjunctive because doubt is expressed.

How do I say 'in my opinion' in French?

Say à mon avis, selon moi or pour moi. None of them is followed by que, and each is separated from the clause by a comma.

When do I use puisque instead of parce que?

Use puisque when the reason is obvious or already mentioned, as in Puisque tu as le temps, aide-moi. It means 'since' or 'given that'.

How do I politely disagree in French?

Soften the refusal with Je ne suis pas vraiment d'accord, Je vois les choses autrement or Oui, mais.... Add a reason so the answer sounds constructive.