

Debating news and social networks in French

French B1 (intermediate) · Lesson

Quick answer: To discuss the news and social networks in French, use key words such as un réseau social, partager, une infox and une source, then structure your opinion: à mon avis, a reason, an example. Use the indicative after je pense que and the subjunctive after je ne pense pas que.

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

How do you talk about the news and social networks?

Start with a small set of words. Notice that une information is countable in French: you read des informations, while the plural les actualités (or les infos) means the news as a whole.

French	English
un réseau social	social network
un abonné / s'abonner	follower / to subscribe, to follow
publier, partager	to post, to share
un fil d'actualité	news feed
une infox, une rumeur	fake news, rumor
une source, démentir	source, to deny officially

How do you spot fake news?

Before sharing a story, ask four questions. They also give you perfect material for a spoken discussion.

Vérifier une information

1. Qui est l'auteur ?
2. Quelle est la source ?
3. Quelle est la date ?
4. Une autre source confirme-t-elle ?

Four questions to check a piece of news before sharing it.

Culture

French language authorities recommend the word *infox* (a blend of information and intoxication) as the French equivalent of *fake news*. You will hear both in the media.

How do you give your opinion in a debate?

A B1 speaker does more than say yes or no: he or she gives a reason and recognizes the other side.

Function	Phrases
Give an opinion	À mon avis, ... · Je pense que ... · Selon moi, ...
Agree	Je suis d'accord. · Tout à fait ! · C'est vrai, mais ...
Disagree	Je ne suis pas d'accord. · Pas du tout. · Je ne suis pas convaincu(e).
Nuance	Certes, ... mais ... · D'un côté ..., de l'autre ... · En revanche, ...

Pour

on reste en contact
on partage vite
on découvre des idées

Contre

les rumeurs circulent
on perd du temps
le harcèlement existe

Arguments for and against social networks, ready for a debate.

Opinion verbs and the mood

Je pense que and *je crois que* take the indicative: *Je pense que ce compte dit la vérité*. But in the negative or in a question, the doubt calls for the subjunctive: *Je ne pense pas que ce soit vrai*. — I don't think it's true.

A mini-debate

— À mon avis, les réseaux sociaux nous isolent. — In my opinion, social networks isolate us.
— Certes, mais ils permettent à Awa de parler chaque jour avec sa famille à Dakar. — True, but they let Awa talk every day with her family in Dakar.

Watch out

Actuellement means *currently*, not *actually* (that is *en fait*). Also, say *Je suis d'accord* with *être*, never *j'ai d'accord* or *je suis accord*.

Zoé's tip

Build every answer in three steps: opinion, reason, example. Je pense que... parce que... Par exemple, ... keeps a conversation going for a full minute.

Key points to remember

- Une information is countable; les actualités means the news.
- Infox is the recommended French word for fake news.
- Verify four things: author, source, date, confirmation.
- Je pense que + indicative; je ne pense pas que + subjunctive.
- Certes ... mais ... lets you concede a point and still disagree.

Debating News and Social Networks in French: frequently asked questions

How do you say fake news in French?

Say une infox or une fausse information. The English term les fake news is also common in conversation.

How do you check whether a piece of news is reliable?

Ask who wrote it, what the source is, when it was published and whether another source confirms it. In French: Qui est l'auteur ? Quelle est la source ?

How do you politely disagree in French?

Use Je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord or Certes, mais Then give a reason, so the other person feels heard.

Why does je ne pense pas que take the subjunctive?

Because the speaker doubts the idea instead of stating it as a fact. Compare Je pense que c'est vrai with Je ne pense pas que ce soit vrai.

What is the difference between une information and les actualités?

Une information is one piece of news, and you can count it. Les actualités (or les infos) is the general news of the day.