

Making plans and projects for the years ahead

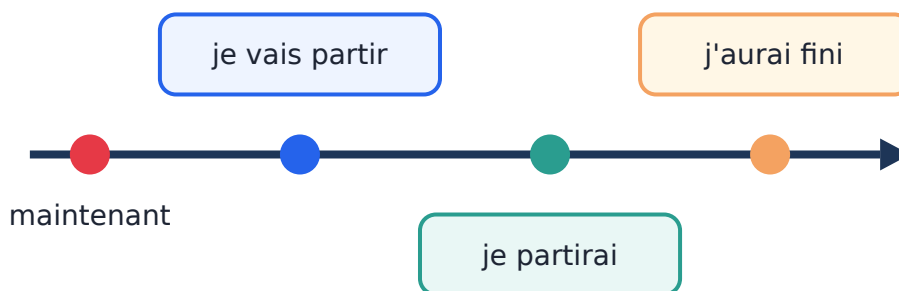
French B1 (intermediate) · Lesson

Quick answer: To talk about future projects in French, use the futur simple for plans and promises (je partirai), avoir l'intention de or compter followed by an infinitive for intentions, and the futur antérieur for an action finished before another one (quand j'aurai fini). After quand and dès que, French uses the future.

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

How do you talk about future plans in French?

French gives adults several tools, and each one has its own tone. The *futur proche* (Je vais postuler demain.) covers the near and almost certain future. The *futur simple* is the voice of projects, promises and predictions. Two verbs state a plan you already have in mind: avoir l'intention de and compter.



Four ways to place an action on the future line.

How do you form the futur simple?

Rule

Start from the infinitive and add **-ai, -as, -a, -ons, -ez, -ont**. Verbs in -re drop the final -e first: prendre becomes je prendrai.

Verb	je	nous	ils
parler	parlerai	parlerons	parleront
finir	finirai	finirons	finiront
prendre	prendrai	prendrons	prendront



je parlerai, nous parlerons, ils parleront

The endings are the same for every verb.

Some stems are irregular, but the endings never change. Learn the stems as a short list.

Infinitive	Stem	Example
être	ser-	Je serai prêt.
avoir	aur-	Nous aurons le temps.
aller	ir-	Elle ira à Dakar.
faire	fer-	Tu feras un stage.
pouvoir, vouloir	pourr-, voudr-	Vous pourrez réserver.
venir, voir, savoir	viendr-, verr-, saur-	Ils viendront en mai.

Spelling verbs double or accent the consonant: j'appellerai, j'achèterai, j'enverrai.

What do avoir l'intention de and compter add?

Examples

J'ai l'intention de changer de métier. — I intend to change careers.

Nous comptons ouvrir un café à Nantes. — We plan to open a café in Nantes.

Elle compte sur son frère pour déménager. — She is counting on her brother to move.

Avoir l'intention de needs *de* before the infinitive. Compter takes the infinitive directly, with no preposition. Both are less binding than a promise in the futur simple.

What is the futur antérieur and when do you need it?

Rule

Put the auxiliary (avoir or être) in the futur simple, then add the past participle: j'aurai fini, elle sera partie. It describes an action finished before another future action.

Examples

Quand j'aurai signé le bail, je commanderai les meubles. — When I have signed the lease, I will order the furniture.

Dès que nous serons arrivés à Lausanne, nous t'appellerons. — As soon as we arrive in Lausanne, we will call you.

Common mistake

English uses the present after *when* and *as soon as* ("when I arrive"). French needs the future after *quand*, *lorsque*, *dès que* and *aussitôt que*: Quand j'arriverai, never Quand j'arrive. After *si* (if), the opposite rule applies: present, not future.

Culture note

In a French job interview, the question *Où vous voyez-vous dans cinq ans ?* is common. A confident answer mixes *je compte* for the goal and the *futur simple* for the steps.

Zoé's tip

Say the plan out loud in two steps: first the finished action in the *futur antérieur*, then the new action in the *futur simple*. Quand j'aurai fini, je partirai. The pattern becomes automatic.

Key points to remember

- Futur simple endings: -ai, -as, -a, -ons, -ez, -ont, added to the infinitive (-re verbs drop the e).
- Irregular stems include *ser-*, *aur-*, *ir-*, *fer-*, *pourr-*, *viendr-*, *verr-* and *saur-*.
- *Avoir l'intention de* takes *de*; *compter* takes the bare infinitive.
- The *futur antérieur* is the *futur simple* of *avoir* or *être* plus the past participle.
- After *quand*, *lorsque* and *dès que*, French uses a future tense where English uses the present.

Making plans and projects for the years ahead: frequently asked questions

What is the difference between the *futur proche* and the *futur simple*?

The *futur proche* (*aller* + infinitive) is for near, planned events and is common in speech. The *futur simple* suits distant projects, promises, predictions and formal writing. In many everyday cases

both are possible.

How do you form the futur simple of an irregular verb?

Use the irregular stem and the normal endings. For faire, the stem is fer-, so you get je ferai, nous ferons. There is no shortcut, so learn the stems of être, avoir, aller, pouvoir and venir first.

Does compter take de before an infinitive?

No. Say Je compte partir en juin, without a preposition. The verb avoir l'intention de is different and always needs *de* or *d'* before a vowel.

When do you use the futur antérieur?

Use it for an action that will be completed before another future moment or action. It is common after quand, dès que and lorsque, and with a deadline such as d'ici juin.

Why not say quand j'arrive demain?

French logic puts both actions in the future after quand, so the correct form is quand j'arriverai demain. English speakers often keep the present by habit. Note that si works differently: si j'arrive takes the present.