

Jobs, contracts, strikes and unemployment

French B2 (upper intermediate) · Lesson

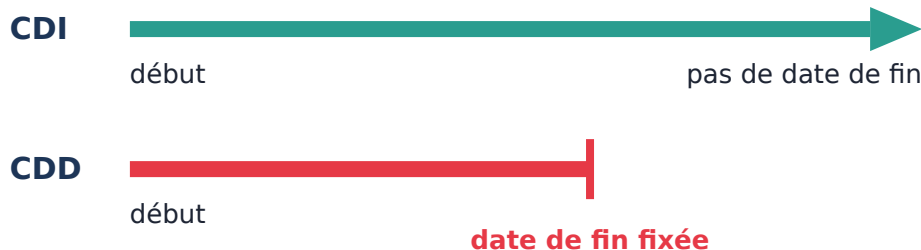
Quick answer: In French, a CDI is an open-ended work contract and a CDD has a fixed end date. To explain economic news, use le chômage, le télétravail and faire grève, and link causes and results with grâce à, à cause de, si bien que and de sorte que.

Level: French B2 (CEFR upper intermediate) · **Standards:** CEFR B2, Reading

What are the main work contracts in France?

Newspaper articles about jobs keep returning to a few acronyms. Knowing them lets a B2 reader follow the debate on unemployment, telework and strikes.

Contract	Meaning	Key feature
un CDI	contrat à durée indéterminée	open-ended; the standard contract
un CDD	contrat à durée déterminée	fixed end date; allowed for a precise reason, such as replacing an absent employee
l'intérim	temporary work through an agency	short missions
un indépendant	self-employed worker	no employer, invoices clients



18 mois au maximum en règle générale

A CDI has no end date; a CDD ends on a fixed date.

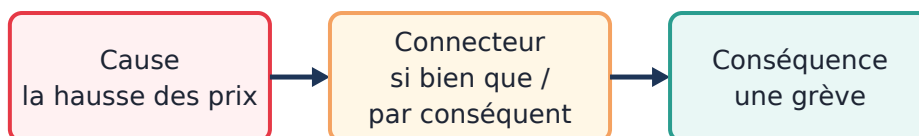
How do you talk about unemployment, telework and strikes?

- le chômage, le taux de chômage, un demandeur d'emploi — unemployment, jobless rate, job seeker.
- embaucher, licencier, démissionner — to hire, to dismiss, to resign.
- le télétravail, travailler à distance, en présentiel — telework, to work remotely, on site.

- un syndicat, un préavis de grève, faire grève, revendiquer — union, strike notice, to strike, to demand.

Typical sentence: Le taux de chômage est passé de 9 % à 7,5 % en deux ans. — The unemployment rate fell from 9% to 7.5% in two years.

How do you explain cause and consequence?



grâce à = effet positif | à cause de = effet négatif

en raison de = neutre, style formel

From cause to consequence.

Cause and consequence

- Cause: grâce à / à cause de / en raison de + noun; puisque / comme + clause.
- Consequence: donc, par conséquent, si bien que + indicative.
- Goal or result: de sorte que + subjunctive for a goal, indicative for a plain result.
- Intensity: tellement / si ... que + indicative.

In a news report

En raison de la hausse des prix, les salariés ont fait grève, si bien que les trains sont restés au dépôt. — Because of rising prices, workers went on strike, so the trains stayed in the depot.

Le directeur organise le planning de sorte que chacun puisse télétravailler. — The manager arranges the schedule so that everyone can telework.

Common mistake

English says "on strike" and "unemployed", but French needs fixed prepositions: être en grève, être au chômage, never à grève or en chômage. Also, grâce à cannot introduce a bad outcome: write à cause de la crise, not grâce à la crise.

Culture note

The legal workweek in France is 35 hours, and full-time employees get five weeks of paid leave. The right to strike is guaranteed by the preamble of the 1946 Constitution.

Zoé's tip

Say *grâce à* when you would write "thanks to" and *à cause de* when you would blame someone. In a formal report, *en raison de* stays neutral and is always safe.

Key points to remember

- Être en grève and être au chômage are fixed expressions.
- Grâce à is positive, à cause de is negative, en raison de is neutral.
- Si bien que takes the indicative; de sorte que of purpose takes the subjunctive.
- The legal workweek in France is 35 hours.

Jobs, contracts, strikes and unemployment: frequently asked questions

What is the difference between a CDI and a CDD?

A CDI has no end date, whereas a CDD stops on a fixed date and needs a legal reason, like replacing an absent employee. In general, a CDD lasts at most 18 months.

How do you say "to be on strike" in French?

Use être en grève for the state and faire grève for the action. Both are fixed expressions without an article.

When do you use si bien que?

Use si bien que to introduce a real consequence, followed by the indicative: Les prix ont monté, si bien que les salariés ont protesté.

What is the difference between grâce à and à cause de?

Grâce à introduces a positive cause and à cause de a negative one. En raison de is neutral and formal.

How do you say that someone works from home?

Say Il télétravaille or Il travaille à distance. The opposite, working at the office, is travailler en présentiel.