

Going places and making plans in French

French 1 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: The verb aller (to go) is irregular: je vais, tu vas, il va, nous allons, vous allez, ils vont. Use it with à plus a place (au, à la, à l', aux) to say where someone goes, or with an infinitive to build the near future: Je vais manger means I am going to eat.

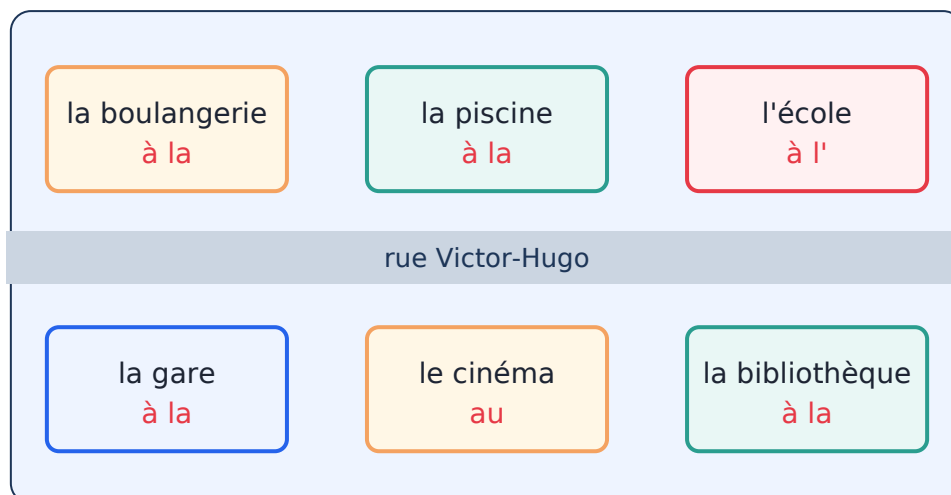
Level: French 1 (high school, ACTFL Novice) · **Standards:** ACTFL Novice Mid, WL 1.1 Interpersonal, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational

How do you conjugate the verb aller?

Definition

Aller means to go. It is an irregular verb, so its forms do not follow the regular -er pattern. Learn the six forms as a set.

Subject	Form	Example
je	vais	Je vais au gymnase. — I go to the gym.
tu	vas	Tu vas où ? — Where are you going?
il / elle / on	va	On va à la piscine. — We are going to the pool.
nous	allons	Nous allons à Lyon. — We go to Lyon.
vous	allez	Vous allez au musée ? — Are you going to the museum?
ils / elles	vont	Elles vont à l'école. — They go to school.



A small town: the red word shows what à becomes before each place.

How do you say to the with places?

Rule: à + article

The preposition à joins with le and les. It stays separate before la and before a vowel.

- à + le → **au**: Je vais au parc.
- à + les → **aux**: Il va aux Galeries.
- à la and à l' stay: Elle va à la mairie. Je vais à l'hôpital.

Common mistake

English says I go home or I go to the store. French needs à in every case, and never à le. Write Je vais au marché, not Je vais à le marché. For a person's house, use chez: Nous allons chez Moussa.

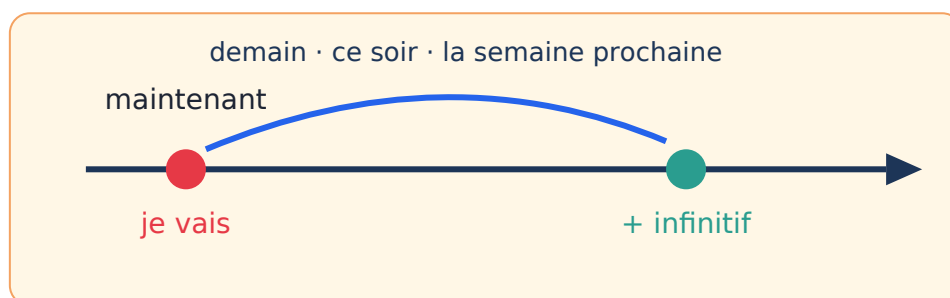
How do you say what is going to happen?

Rule: the near future

Conjugate aller in the present, then add an infinitive. No other word goes between them.

Examples

- Demain, je vais visiter Québec. — Tomorrow, I am going to visit Québec.
- Ce soir, Léa et Amadou vont regarder un film. — Tonight, Léa and Amadou are going to watch a film.
- Nous **n'allons pas** prendre le bus. — We are not going to take the bus.



The near future points forward from now, using aller as the launch pad.

Culture note

In everyday French, on va often replaces nous allons. Friends text On va au cinéma ? far more

than the longer form. The greeting Ça va ? also comes from aller.

Zoé's tip

Picture a taxi: aller drives you to the place, and the infinitive is what you will do when you arrive. Say the pair out loud: je vais + verbe.

Key points to remember

- Aller has six forms to memorize: vais, vas, va, allons, allez, vont.
- À + le becomes au and à + les becomes aux; à la and à l' do not change.
- Near future = a form of aller + an infinitive: Nous allons jouer.
- In a negative near future, ne ... pas surrounds aller only: Je ne vais pas dormir.
- To go to a person's home, use chez, not à: Je vais chez Inès.

Going Places and Making Plans in French: frequently asked questions

Why is aller called irregular?

Its present forms (vais, vas, va, vont) do not follow the regular -er endings, and the stem changes between vais and allons. There is no shortcut, so memorize the six forms.

When do I use au instead of à le?

Always. French never writes à le or à les; they merge into au and aux. Before la or a vowel sound, à stays separate: à la gare, à l'école.

How do I form the near future in French?

Conjugate aller in the present tense and add the infinitive of the action. For example, Nous allons manger means We are going to eat.

Where does ne ... pas go in the near future?

Put ne ... pas around the conjugated form of aller only. Say Je ne vais pas partir, and keep the infinitive after pas.

What is the difference between à and chez?

Use à with places and businesses, like à la poste. Use chez with a person or a person's home, like chez ma cousine.