

Rooms, furniture and who does the chores

French 2 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: To talk about your home in French, name the room with *le* or *la*, place objects with prepositions like *sur*, *sous* and *à côté de*, and describe chores with *faire* (*faire la vaisselle*) or *devoir* plus an infinitive (*je dois ranger ma chambre*). Remember that *de* merges with *le* and *les*.

Level: French 2 (high school, ACTFL Novice High) · **Standards:** ACTFL Novice High, WL 1.1 Interpersonal, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational, WL 2.1 Cultural Practices

What are the main rooms and furniture words in a French home?

French nouns have a gender, so learn each room and object together with its article. Here are the words you need most for describing where you live.

Rooms	Furniture and objects
la cuisine — kitchen	le lit — bed
la chambre — bedroom	le bureau — desk
le salon — living room	le canapé — couch
la salle de bains — bathroom	l'armoire (f.) — wardrobe
les toilettes (f. pl.) — toilet	l'étagère (f.) — shelf
le garage, le jardin	le fauteuil — armchair

la cuisine	le salon	la chambre
la salle de bains	les toilettes	le bureau

Plan of a small house: the rooms you will name in French.

How do you say where something is?

Prepositions of place

sur (on), sous (under), dans (in), devant (in front of), derrière (behind), entre ... et ... (between), au-dessus de (above), à côté de (next to), en face de (across from), à gauche de and à droite de (left of, right of).

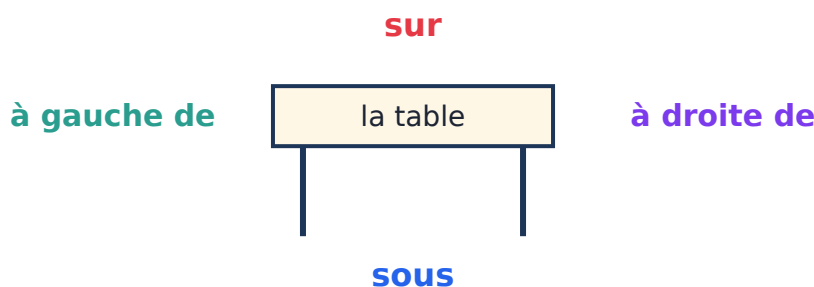
Prepositions that end in de merge with the article: de + le = du, de + les = des, but de la and de l' stay as they are.

Examples

Le sac de Mamadou est **sous** la chaise. — Mamadou's bag is under the chair.

La lampe est **à côté du** canapé. — The lamp is next to the couch.

Mon lit est **en face de l'**armoire. — My bed is across from the wardrobe.



Four position words around one table.

Common mistake

English says "next to the bed" with no extra word. French needs de: à côté **du** lit, never à côté le lit. Also remember that les toilettes is plural in French.

How do you talk about chores with faire and devoir?

The general expression is faire le ménage (to clean the house). Many chores use faire: faire la vaisselle, faire la lessive, faire son lit. Others have their own verb: passer l'aspirateur, sortir les poubelles, ranger sa chambre, mettre la table, débarrasser la table, balayer.

Subject	devoir (must, to have to)
je	dois
tu	dois
il / elle / on	doit
nous	devons

Subject	devoir (must, to have to)
vous	devez
ils / elles	doivent

Samedi, Awa **doit** passer l'aspirateur. — On Saturday, Awa has to vacuum.

Culture note

In France the ground floor is le rez-de-chaussée, so the "second floor" of an American building is le premier étage. Toilets are often a separate small room from the bathroom.

Zoé's tip

Picture your own house room by room and stick a mental label on every object: la lampe est sur le bureau. A walk through your home is the fastest way to lock in these words.

Key points to remember

- Every room and piece of furniture has a gender: le salon, la cuisine, l'armoire.
- De + le becomes du and de + les becomes des: à côté du lit, en face des toilettes.
- Faire is used for many chores: faire la vaisselle, faire la lessive, faire son lit, faire le ménage.
- Devoir + infinitive means must or have to: nous devons mettre la table.
- Other chore verbs are not faire: passer l'aspirateur, sortir les poubelles, ranger sa chambre.

Rooms, Furniture and Who Does the Chores: frequently asked questions

How do you say 'next to' in French?

Use à côté de. When the noun is masculine singular, de becomes du (à côté du lit); with plural nouns it becomes des (à côté des fenêtres). With la or l' it stays de la or de l'.

What is the difference between faire le ménage and faire la vaisselle?

Faire le ménage means to do the general housework or cleaning. Faire la vaisselle is one specific task, washing the dishes. Each chore has its own set phrase, so learn them as chunks.

How do you say 'I have to' in French?

Use devoir conjugated, followed by an infinitive: je dois ranger ma chambre. The verb is irregular: dois, dois, doit, devons, devez, doivent.

Are 'les toilettes' singular or plural?

Les toilettes is plural in French, even when you mean one toilet. You say Où sont les toilettes ? Some people also say les WC, pronounced vay-say.

Which verb do you use for taking out the trash?

Use sortir les poubelles, not faire. Sortir means to take out. For vacuuming, say passer l'aspirateur, and for tidying your room, ranger sa chambre.