

Coming, returning and just happened

French 2 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: Venir means to come, and revenir, devenir and tenir follow the same pattern: je viens, nous venons, ils viennent. Use venir de plus an infinitive for something that just happened, and the present tense with depuis for an action that began in the past and continues now.

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

How do you conjugate venir and the verbs like it?

Venir and its family

Venir means "to come." Three verbs copy its pattern: revenir (to come back), devenir (to become) and tenir (to hold, to keep).

Subject	venir	revenir	devenir	tenir
je	viens	reviens	deviens	tiens
tu	viens	reviens	deviens	tiens
il / elle / on	vient	revient	devient	tient
nous	venons	revenons	devenons	tenons
vous	venez	revenez	devenez	tenez
ils / elles	viennent	reviennent	deviennent	tiennent

stem vien-

je viens · tu viens
il vient · ils viennent
(ils: double n)

stem ven-

nous venons
vous venez

Only nous and vous lose the letter i.

What do revenir, devenir and tenir mean in a sentence?

Examples

- Nadia revient de Marseille demain. — Nadia comes back from Marseille tomorrow.
- Mon petit frère devient plus grand que moi ! — My little brother is becoming taller than me!
- Je tiens à ma guitare. — My guitar matters a lot to me.
- D'où venez-vous ? — Where do you come from?

How do you say that something just happened?

Rule: venir de + infinitive

Put venir in the present and add de plus the infinitive. Before a vowel, de becomes d'. The structure describes the immediate past.



Venir de looks back; aller looks ahead.

Tu viens de rater le bus. — You just missed the bus. Ils viennent d'arriver à Lausanne. — They have just arrived in Lausanne.

Common mistake

English uses the past tense: "I just ate." French uses the present of venir. Never write Je suis venu de manger. Also, Je viens de Dakar (place) and Je viens de manger (action) look alike, but the word after de tells you which meaning applies.

How do you say how long something has been going on?

Use the present tense with depuis: Elle joue au basket depuis cinq ans. — She has been playing basketball for five years. Nous habitons à Nantes depuis septembre. — We have lived in Nantes since September. Ask with Depuis combien de temps ... ? or Depuis quand ... ?

Culture note

When someone hands you an object, a French speaker often says *Tiens !* (informal) or *Tenez !* (formal). It literally means "hold!" and works like "Here you go!"

Zoé's tip

To remember the stem change, picture a pair of boots: the forms with *nous* and *vous* stay outside the boot and keep the short stem *ven-*. Everyone else steps into the boot and gets *vien-*.

Key points to remember

- Present of *venir*: *viens, viens, vient, venons, venez, viennent*.
- *Revenir* (to come back), *devenir* (to become) and *tenir* (to hold) use the same endings.
- *Venir de* + infinitive describes the immediate past: *Je viens de manger*.
- *Depuis* + present tense is used where English says "have been ... for."
- *Venir de* followed by a place means "to come from": *Je viens de Dakar*.

Coming, Returning and Just Happened: frequently asked questions

How do you say "I just arrived" in French?

Say *Je viens d'arriver*. Conjugate *venir* in the present, add *de* (*d'* before a vowel) and then the infinitive. The sentence refers to the immediate past even though the verb is in the present.

Which verbs are conjugated like *venir*?

The most common are *revenir* (to come back), *devenir* (to become) and *tenir* (to hold). Others from the same family include *retenir* (to retain), *obtenir* (to obtain) and *appartenir* (to belong). They all follow the *vien-* and *ven-* pattern.

What is the difference between *venir de* and *aller*?

Venir de plus infinitive looks back at an action that has just ended. *Aller* plus infinitive looks ahead to an action that is about to happen. Compare *Je viens de manger* with *Je vais manger*.

How do you use *depuis* with the present tense?

Use the present tense for an action that started in the past and is still going on: *J'étudie le français depuis deux ans*. English would use "have been studying," but French does not use a past tense here.

How do you ask where someone comes from?

Say *Tu viens d'où ?* (informal) or *D'où venez-vous ?* (formal). The answer uses *Je viens de* followed by the city or country, such as *Je viens de Liège*.