

Stacking two pronouns before the verb

French 3 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: When a French verb has two object pronouns, both stand before the verb in a fixed order: me/te/se/nous/vous, then le/la/les, then lui/leur, then y, then en. For example, Je te le donne means I give it to you. In the negative, ne goes before the first pronoun.

Level: French 3 (high school, ACTFL Intermediate Low) · **Standards:** ACTFL Intermediate Low, WL 1.1 Interpersonal, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational

What is a double object pronoun?

Definition

A double object pronoun is a pair of pronouns that replace two complements of the same verb, usually a thing and a person. Both pronouns move in front of the verb and keep a fixed order.

Before and after

Léa prête sa raquette à Idriss. — Léa lends her racket to Idriss.

Léa **la lui** prête. — Léa lends it to him.

In what order do the pronouns go?

The five-car train

Car 1: me, te, se, nous, vous. Car 2: le, la, les. Car 3: lui, leur. Car 4: y. Car 5: en. A sentence may use two cars, but never in a different order.



Object pronouns line up in five fixed positions.

Pair	Example	Meaning
me/te/nous/vous + le/la/les	Mamadou nous les montre.	Mamadou shows them to us.
le/la/les + lui/leur	Camille les leur envoie.	Camille sends them to them.
me/te/nous/vous + en	Je t'en donne deux.	I give you two of them.
lui/leur + en	Nadia lui en offre un.	Nadia gives him one.
y + en	Il y en a six.	There are six of them.

Common mistake

English says “give it to him”, so learners write *Je lui le donne*. Correct: *Je le lui donne*. With first and second person the order flips: *Il me le donne*, not *Il le me donne*. Me, te, nous and vous cannot sit next to lui or leur: say *Il me présente à elle*.

How do negation and the passé composé work?

Negation and past tense

Put *ne* before the first pronoun and *pas* after the conjugated verb: *Je ne te le prête pas*. In the passé composé the whole group stands before *avoir* or *être*: *Elle ne me l'a pas envoyée*. The participle agrees with a preceding *le, la, les*, never with *me, te, lui, leur* or *en*.

Elle	ne	me	l'	a	pas	envoyée
who	no	to me	it	has	not	sent

Both pronouns stay before the auxiliary; ne and pas wrap the whole block.

With an infinitive

Je veux te le dire. — I want to tell you. *Elle va nous les rendre.* — She will give them back to us.

Spoken French

In everyday conversation in France and Québec, many speakers drop *ne*: *Je te le dis pas*. Written French and exams still expect the full negation.

Zoé's tip

Say the train out loud: “me-te-nous-vous, le-la-les, lui-leur, y, en”. Cars can be skipped, but they never swap places. The chant turns the order into a habit.

Key points to remember

- Both pronouns go directly before the conjugated verb (or before the infinitive).
- Fixed order: me/te/se/nous/vous, then le/la/les, then lui/leur, then y, then en.
- Me, te, nous or vous never combine with lui or leur; use à + a stress pronoun instead.
- In the passé composé the pronouns stand before avoir or être, and the participle agrees with a preceding le, la or les.

Stacking Two Pronouns Before the Verb: frequently asked questions

What is the order of two object pronouns in French?

The order is me/te/se/nous/vous, then le/la/les, then lui/leur, then y, then en. Example: Il me les prête. Skip any car you do not need, but keep the sequence.

Can I use me and lui together in one sentence?

No. Me, te, nous and vous never combine with lui or leur. Use the direct pronoun plus à and a stress pronoun: Elle me présente à lui.

Where do ne and pas go with two pronouns?

Ne goes right before the first pronoun and pas after the conjugated verb: Je ne le lui dis pas. In the passé composé, pas follows avoir or être.

Does the past participle agree with double pronouns?

It agrees in gender and number with a preceding le, la or les: Je te les ai rendues. It does not agree with me, te, lui, leur or en.

Where do double pronouns go with an infinitive?

They stand directly before the infinitive, in the usual order: Je vais la lui montrer. The conjugated verb stays in front of them.