

Will have done: future perfect made clear

French 4 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: The French future perfect (futur antérieur) names an action that will be completed before another future moment. Form it with the future of avoir or être plus a past participle: j'aurai fini, elle sera partie. It follows quand and dès que, and it also expresses probability about the past.

Level: French 4 (high school, ACTFL Intermediate Mid) · **Standards:** ACTFL Intermediate Mid, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational, WL 4.1 Language Comparisons

What does the future perfect express?

Definition

The *futur antérieur* describes an action that will already be finished at a certain point in the future. Think of English *will have + participle*.

Demain à midi, Hind aura terminé son exposé. — By noon tomorrow, Hind will have finished her presentation.



The futur antérieur sits between now and a later point in the future.

How do you form the future perfect?

Rule

Future of avoir or être + past participle. The choice of auxiliary and the agreement are exactly the same as in the passé composé.

Subject	With avoir: écrire	With être: arriver
je	j' aurai écrit	je serai arrivé(e)
tu	tu auras écrit	tu seras arrivé(e)

Subject	With avoir: écrire	With être: arriver
il / elle	il aura écrit	elle sera arrivée
nous	nous aurons écrit	nous serons arrivé(e)s
vous	vous aurez écrit	vous serez arrivé(e)(s)
ils / elles	elles auront écrit	ils seront arrivés

When do quand, dès que and lorsque take the future perfect?

Rule

After quand, lorsque, dès que, aussitôt que and une fois que, put the first action in the futur antérieur and the next one in the simple future (or the imperative) when the first must be over.

Examples

- Dès que nous aurons visité le Vieux-Port, nous prendrons un thé. — As soon as we have visited the Old Port, we will have tea.
- Quand j'aurai économisé 500 €, j'achèterai une guitare. — When I have saved €500, I will buy a guitar.
- Une fois que tu auras lu ce chapitre, tu comprendras mieux. — Once you have read this chapter, you will understand better.

Watch out

English uses the present: *when I get home, as soon as I finish*. French needs a future: Quand j'arriverai, Dès que j'aurai fini, never Dès que j'ai fini for a future plan.

How do you express probability about the past?

The futur antérieur can also make a guess about something that has probably already happened. It often appears with sûrement or sans doute.

French	Meaning
Il aura raté son train.	He probably missed his train.
Elles auront oublié l'heure.	They have probably forgotten the time.
Tu te seras trompé de salle.	You probably went to the wrong room.

Où est Samir ? Il est 8 h 30 !

Il aura raté son bus.

Ou il aura oublié son téléphone.

Friends guess at the reason for a delay with the futur antérieur.

Culture note

The baccalauréat is the national exam that ends lycée in France, with results in early July. French teenagers often say Dans un mois, j'aurai mon bac while they wait.

Zoé's tip

Draw a mini timeline. The event that happens first gets aurai / serai + participle; the later event stays in the simple future.

Key points to remember

- Formation: future of avoir or être + past participle (nous aurons fini, ils seront arrivés).
- After quand, lorsque, dès que, aussitôt que and une fois que, French uses a future tense where English uses the present.
- Use the futur antérieur for the action that comes first, the simple future for the next one.
- It can also guess about the past: Il aura raté son train means he probably missed his train.
- The same auxiliary rules as the passé composé apply, including agreement with être.

Will Have Done: Future Perfect Made Clear: frequently asked questions

How do you form the futur antérieur?

Conjugate avoir or être in the simple future and add the past participle: j'aurai fini, elle sera partie, nous nous serons levés. The auxiliary and the agreement follow the same rules as the passé composé.

Why does French use the future after quand and dès que?

French marks the time of the event itself, so a future plan needs a future tense even in the time clause. English uses the present instead, which is why dès que j'aurai fini is the right translation of

as soon as I finish.

When do I choose the futur antérieur and not the simple future?

Choose the futur antérieur when the first action must be completely over before the second begins. If the actions are simultaneous or the order is unimportant, both clauses can use the simple future.

How does the futur antérieur show probability?

It guesses about a past event: il aura oublié means he has probably forgotten. Adverbs like sûrement or sans doute often reinforce the guess.

Is the futur antérieur common in everyday French?

Yes, especially after quand, dès que and lorsque, and in casual guesses about what happened. It is also frequent in plans, such as dans deux ans, j'aurai fini mes études.