

Lequel, auquel, duquel after prepositions

French 4 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: Compound relative pronouns (lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles) follow a preposition and agree with the noun they replace: le stylo avec lequel j'écris. With à they contract to auquel, auxquels, auxquelles; with de they contract to duquel, desquels, desquelles. Dont replaces de plus a noun after verbs, but never after a compound preposition ending in de.

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 are compound relative pronouns?

Definition

A compound relative pronoun joins two clauses after a preposition. It stands for a noun already mentioned and agrees with it in gender and number. English often strands the preposition ("the pen I write with"); French places it first, before the pronoun.

	masc. sing.	fem. sing.	masc. pl.	fem. pl.
prep.	lequel	laquelle	lesquels	lesquelles
à +	auquel	à laquelle	auxquels	auxquelles
de +	duquel	de laquelle	desquels	desquelles

The twelve forms: plain, contracted with à, contracted with de.

How do you use them after a preposition?

Rule

Preposition + lequel for things; preposition + qui for people. After parmi and entre, use lequel forms even for people.

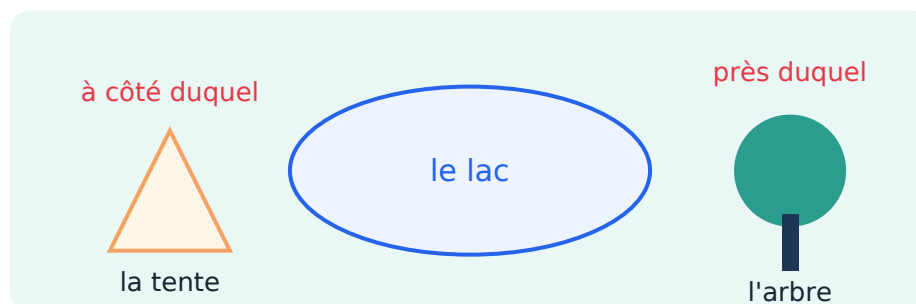
Examples

- Le stylo avec **lequel** Zoé écrit est rouge. — The pen Zoé writes with is red.
- La salle dans **laquelle** le club se réunit est au deuxième étage. — The room the club meets in is on the second floor.
- Voici les raisons pour **lesquelles** Kofi a changé d'avis. — Here are the reasons why Kofi changed his mind.
- L'amie avec **qui** je voyage s'appelle Noémie. — The friend I travel with is named Noémie.

Preposition	Pronoun	Example
dans, sur, avec, pour, sans	lequel forms	les chaises sur lesquelles on s'assoit
à (penser à, répondre à)	auquel forms	la lettre à laquelle il répond
à côté de, près de, en face de	duquel forms	la gare en face de laquelle j'attends

When do auquel and duquel appear?

Verbs and expressions followed by à (penser à, participer à, s'intéresser à) give auquel forms: Le concours **auquel** Léa participe est difficile. — The contest Léa takes part in is hard. Compound prepositions ending in de (à côté de, près de, en face de, au milieu de, autour de) give duquel forms: Voici le lac à côté **duquel** nous avons campé. — Here is the lake next to which we camped.



The lake is the antecedent; duquel stands for it after à côté de and près de.

Dont or duquel?

Dont replaces de plus a noun after a verb or noun that takes de: Le film **dont** tout le monde parle sort demain. — The movie everyone is talking about comes out tomorrow. It can also mean "whose": L'équipe **dont** Ibrahim est le capitaine a gagné. But dont never follows a preposition: say le parc au milieu **duquel** se trouve un lac.

Common mistake

English speakers drop the pronoun or leave the preposition at the end: *le stylo que j'écris avec. Always bring the preposition forward: le stylo avec lequel j'écris. Never write *à côté dont.

Culture note

Compound relatives belong mostly to written and formal French. In conversation, French speakers often split a long sentence in two instead, but you will meet these pronouns constantly in essays, newspapers and exams.

Zoé's tip

Find the preposition first, then the noun it points back to. Its gender and number choose the form of lequel. If the preposition is à or de, check the contraction.

Key points to remember

- Preposition + lequel / laquelle / lesquels / lesquelles replaces a thing.
- For people after a preposition, French usually prefers qui: l'amie avec qui je voyage.
- À + lequel becomes auquel; à + lesquels / lesquelles becomes auxquels / auxquelles.
- À côté de, près de, en face de, au milieu de take duquel / de laquelle, not dont.
- Dont is used for verbs and nouns linked with de: le film dont je parle.

Lequel, Auquel, Duquel After Prepositions: frequently asked questions

When do I use qui instead of lequel after a preposition?

Use qui when the antecedent is a person: l'amie avec qui je voyage. Use a lequel form when it is a thing, and also after parmi or entre, even for people: les élèves parmi lesquels j'ai choisi.

Why is it auquel and not à lequel?

À contracts with masculine singular lequel to form auquel, and with plural lesquels and lesquelles to form auxquels and auxquelles. The feminine singular does not contract: à laquelle.

Can I say à côté dont?

No. Dont never follows a preposition. Compound prepositions ending in de take duquel, de laquelle, desquels or desquelles, as in le lac à côté duquel nous avons campé.

How do I choose between dont and duquel?

Dont replaces de plus a noun after a verb or noun with de (parler de, avoir besoin de, whose). Duquel is used when a preposition comes before the pronoun, as in au milieu duquel.

Does où replace a preposition plus lequel?

Often, yes. For places and times, où usually replaces dans lequel, sur lequel and similar: la ville où j'habite. It cannot replace avec, pour or sans.