

Continue



The French subjunctive is a mood that expresses the speakers attitude toward an action, often conveying wishes, hopes, fears, or uncertainties. Unlike in English, where the subjunctive is rare, its commonly used in French, especially in subordinate clauses following expressions like il faut que (it is necessary that). Usage Conditions The subjunctive typically appears when two different subjects are involved: one expressing a desire, emotion, or doubt about anothers action. For example, in Je veux que tu viennes (I want you to come), je and tu are different subjects, triggering the subjunctive viennes. Common Expressions Requiring the Subjunctive Certain verbs and expressions inherently require the subjunctive mood. These include expressions of necessity (e.g., il faut que), desire (e.g., je doute que), and emotion (e.g., je suis heureux que). Memorizing these expressions is essential for proper usage. Avoiding the Subjunctive In some cases, the subjunctive can be avoided by restructuring the sentence. For instance, instead of saying a me ferait plaisir que tu viennes (It would make me happy if you came), one might say Viens, a me ferait plaisir (Come, I would make me happy), eliminating the need for the subjunctive. Now lets see how to use the French subjunctive (and some tips on how to avoid it if you can.)In English, the subjunctive is very rare (I wish I were in Paris like the girl in the picture!). In French, it is quite common. However, if you are a beginner in French, I would not worry about the subjunctive right now but concentrate on the tenses of the indicative.So, now, let me answer this question: what is the French subjunctive?The subjunctive is a mood; a grammatical term which describes the subjects attitude. In English, using the subjunctive is rare and formal. Nowadays, most people no longer use it.The subjunctive in French is very common. It shows the subjects mood (wish, hope, fear, uncertainty) toward a fact or an idea often involving another person.The French subjunctive in a nutshell: often, 2 different people are involved: the first one wanting/hoping/ fearing that the other one does something. Sometimes, it is an expression followed by the subjunctive, such as il faut que.Click to PostYou will need to memorize by heart which expressions are followed by the subjunctive (versus the expressions followed by the indicative) I will explain why certain French phrases use the French subjunctive , and why others use the indicative + provide lists of subjunctive French phrases.This is a long lesson. I suggest you take your time to go through it, let the concepts sink in, and bookmark it for future reference. You wont conquer Subjunctive in one reading!In my opinion, to memorize your French irregular Subjunctive forms, drilling with audio is the only solution: you need to create reflexes, hear the form in your head.Concentrate on the most common verbs : aller, tre, avoir, prendre. This is pure memorization, it has nothing to do with understanding, so I wont talk about it here. The French subjunctive uses and conjugations are explained in depth in my Advanced French audiobook learning method, and then illustrated by an ongoing novel recorded at several levels of enunciation (traditional French and modern spoken French).The conjunction that isfollowed by the subjunctive ismostlyque.You may have the subjunctive in French after que (in very rare cases qui or o). Other little words like quand or si never use the subjunctive.Click to PostYet, a sentence with que doesnt mean the verbs is going to be in the subjunctive. Unfortunately, its not so easy! This is why you need to understand the conditions that need to exist to have a subjunctive in French. To have a Subjunctive in French, you need to have 2 conditions:At least 2 subjects = subject 1 wanting, wishing, ordering, fearing that subject 2do this action, or an expression which is specifically followed by the subjunctive (list below to be learned by heart.) Lets take some examples of sentences using the Subjunctive and the Indicative and examine the conditions of the situations:Je veuxque vous fassiez la vaisselle. (me wanting you to do it = several involved = subjunctive) Je veux faire la vaisselle. (me being happy that I do the dishes= oneperson = indicative)Je veux partir Je veux que tu partes Il faut choisir Je veux que tu choisisses. If the same person isdoing both actions, or if its a general statement, you can avoid the Subjunctive and usean infinitive construction.Click to PostYou can use a subjunctive clause in a question, for example Voulez-vous que je vienne avec vous? , but there is no way to turn a subjunctive clause itself into a question.What follows works most of the time, Im sure youll find exceptions, but I hope it helps making most cases clearer.The French Subjunctive States 2 things:Je veux que tu fasses la vaisselle. I = first person, want = verb of influence, you = different person, do the dishes = the action the first person is trying to influence. Je suis contente que tu fasses la vaisselle. I = first person, am happy = feeling, you = different person, do the dishes = the action the first person has a feeling about.Je constate que il est L.Actually, I can see him. FOR ME, this is a 100% sure thing = indicative. The actual reality is that he is an holographic projection that the truth lies in the eyes of the beholder.Jaimerais qu'il vienne.Je ne suis pas sûr que tu viennes. I dont know his plans are stuck in NY. Probability of my wish becoming a reality is almost zero = subjective. So, between 100% chance (indicative) and 0% chance (subjunctive), what mood should you use? There do you draw the line?If you know for sure its the reality = Indicative in French. Over 70% chance of action becoming a reality = Indicative in French. If there is under 70% chance of action becoming a reality = Subjunctive in French.So as you can see, the French subjunctive is subjective! It est certain que sera I demand 100% chance of becoming a reality = indicative Il est probable qu'il sera I demand 70% chance of becoming a reality = indicative Il est possible qu'il soit I demand 50% chance of becoming a reality = subjectiveJe crois qu'il va partir. Im positive about it. Say 90% he is going to leave = indicative. Je dsire qu'il parte. But he really wants to stay So there is only a 2% chance he is going to leave = subjunctive. J'exige que tu ailles lone. OK, but you have no intention of going. So even if I want it, its not the reality, and I know it = little chance of becoming a reality = subjunctiveRegarde! Une maison avec un toit orange au milieu dun grand jardin. I am actually looking at that house. 100% chance of the house existing = indicative. Je rve dune maison qui ait un toit orange et soit entouré dun grand jardin. I am at a realtors place and describing my dream house. He might or might not have one, I am not sure it exists for my budget that is: -) = indicativeThe French subjunctive is quite subjective! If you believe the situation is 100% to 70% real = indicative. Less than 70% chance of it being real = subjunctiveClick to PostIn French, verbs of hope and belief introduce the subjunctive in the negative, since now the percentage of chance of the action becoming a reality is very low:Je pense qu'il viendra.His coming, to me, has a 90% chance of becoming a reality = indicative Je ne pense pas qu'il vienne.His coming, to me, has a 5% of becoming a reality = subjunctiveWatch out: I dont think he will come or not the same thing as I think he will not come!Je ne pense pas qu'il vienne. I dont think he will come. Je pense qu'il ne viendra pas. I think he will not come.You have to keep the action you are talking about very clear, and make sure you are applying the negative the correct part of the sentence and not changing your sentence altogether.Je crains que tu ne viennes. Im afraid you will come. Je ne crains pas que tu ne viennes. Im not afraid you will come. Elle souhaite que tu viennes. She wishes you would come. Elle ne souhaite pas que tu viennes. She doesnt wish you would come. The action of taking place in the future. So the outcome is not certain, hence the subjunctive. Il lui avait prvenue de sorte que nest pas une indication. He had warned her hence she didnt go out. The action already took place. The outcome is certain, hence the indicative.Now, as I said before, these sentences do exist. But thankfully there are ways around them!Je te tiendrais au courant de tout ce que tu auras. I will call you and therefore youll have the info on time. Il lui avait prvenue et donc elle nest pas sortie. He had warned her hence she didnt go out. To be really fluent in a language, you have to be able to anticipate and avoid tricky constructions, and quickly transform your sentence to find a simpler way to express what you want to say.Sometimes, when you are sure of yourself (often because youve memorized a sentence by heart),you may drop a subjunctive construction and gloat (if only just on the inside, for yourself)!Then justgive yourself a high five ;-)The best way to develop a feeling for when to use the French Subjunctive is to learn it in context. Check out French Todays downloadable audiobooks: French Todays bilingual novels are recorded at different speeds and enunciation, and focus on todays modern gilded pronunciation.I hope this long lesson make things clearer about the French Subjunctive. If you like it, share it on your social medias its a huge help for us!You may also be interested in:I often post new articles, so make sure you subscribe to the French Today newsletter or follow me onFacebook, Instagram, ThreadsandPinterest.Please react! Leave a comment, make a suggestion, share this article Your engagement really encourages me to create more free French lessons! Le subjunctif (the subjunctive) is one of the French grammatical moods along with the indicative, the passive, the conditional and the imperative.The subjunctive emphasises the subjectivity of a sentence, and it is mostly used in dependent clauses that start with que. The subjunctive expresses possibilities, hypotheses, feelings, thoughts, wishes, doubts, uncertainty, or advice.Master the use of the subjunctive mood in French grammar with Lingolias quick and easy examples, then put your knowledge to the test in the free exercises. 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