

FRENCH PREPOSITIONS «EN» VS «DANS»



EN vs DANS

In French, the prepositions *en* and *dans* both mean *in*, and they can both express time and location. However, they are not interchangeable. Their usage depends on context and grammar.

EN

Use EN to express the length of time an action takes.

- 👉 Je peux mettre la table **en** 5 minutes.
- 👉 I can set the table in 5 minutes. (It will take me 5 minutes)

- 👉 Il a lu le livre **en** une heure.
- 👉 He read the book in an hour.

- 👉 J'ai appris à parler français **en** trois ans.
- 👉 I learned how to speak French in 3 years.

Use EN to express the month, season, or year in which something happens.

- 👉 Nous rentrons à l'école **en** septembre.
- 👉 We go back to school in September.

[View the full lesson](#)

[Level A1 French Course for Self Learners](#)

[Beginner Level French Masterclass](#)

- 👉 Il viendra **en** été.
- 👉 He will come in the summer.

! Exception: Au printemps (in the spring)
*au printemps, **en** été, **en** automne, **en** hiver*

Use EN to mean *in* or *to* in terms of location when followed directly by a noun that doesn't need an article.

- 👉 Vous allez **en** prison.
- 👉 You're going to prison.

- 👉 Il est **en** cours.
- 👉 He's in class.

- 👉 Je suis **en** réunion.
- 👉 I'm in a meeting.

- 👉 Tu habites **en** banlieue?
- 👉 Do you live in the suburbs?

EN means *to* or *in* with feminine countries, states, provinces, and with all continents.

- 👉 J'habite **en** Californie.
- 👉 I live in California.

- 👉 On va **en** France.
- 👉 We are going to France.

- 👉 Nous passons trois semaines **en** Provence.
- 👉 We are spending three weeks in Provence.

- 👉 L'Italie est **en** Europe.
- 👉 Italy is in Europe.

[View the full lesson](#)

[Level A1 French Course for Self Learners](#)

[Beginner Level French Masterclass](#)

DANS

DANS tells the amount of time before something happens.

- 👉 J'arrive **dans** cinq minutes.
- 👉 I will be there in five minutes.

- 👉 On revient **dans** une heure.
- 👉 We will be back in an hour.

- 👉 Je pars **dans** une semaine.
- 👉 I'm leaving in one week.

DANS refers to what happens during a decade.

- 👉 **Dans** les années cinquante
- 👉 In the fifties

- 👉 **Dans** les années quatre-vingt
- 👉 During the eighties

DANS means *in* a location when followed by an article with a noun.

- 👉 Je suis **dans** la cuisine.
- 👉 I am in the kitchen.

- 👉 Je suis **dans** la salle de bains.
- 👉 I am in the bathroom.

[View the full lesson](#)

[Level A1 French Course for Self Learners](#)

[Beginner Level French Masterclass](#)

! Exception: Je suis **aux** toilettes.
I am in the restroom (bathroom where the toilet is).
DANS means to or in with some states and provinces.

👉 J'habite **dans** le Montana.

👉 I live in Montana.

👉 Je vais **dans** l'Ontario.

👉 I'm going to Ontario.

Use EN with feminine states and provinces, usually ending in e.

Use DANS LE with masculine states and provinces beginning with a consonant. You can also use AU with these, and always use AU with *Texas* and *Nouveau-Mexique*.

Use DANS L' with masculine states and provinces beginning with a vowel. You can also use EN with these.

! There are some exceptions **!**
[Click here for a list of US states in French with their prepositions](#)

[View the full lesson](#)

[Level A1 French Course for Self Learners](#)

[Beginner Level French Masterclass](#)