

FRENCH PREPOSITION «APRÈS»



The French Preposition “Après”

Mastering French prepositions can be one of the most challenging parts of learning the language, and the French preposition *après* is no exception. While it may seem like a simple word at first glance, *après* plays a vital role in many expressions and sentence structures in French.

What is “après”?

The preposition *après* is one of the most common and versatile words in French. It translates most often to "after" in English, but its usage can vary depending on the context.

Basic Uses of "Après"

1. Indicating Time

Après is used to refer to events that happen following a specific time or moment.

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Je vais déjeuner après le travail.	I'm going to have lunch after work.
Nous partirons après dix heures.	We will leave after ten o'clock.

2. Indicating Order or Sequence

Après can show the order in which events or actions occur. Note that in French, "après" is often the last word in a sentence, unlike in English.

Après toi, c'est mon tour.	After you, it's my turn.
On verra ça après .	We'll see about that later.

Past Infinitive

When *après* is [followed by a verb](#), you must use the past infinitive. This rule is tricky for learners because it doesn't have an exact equivalent in English.

Après avoir mangé, il est parti.	After eating, he left.
Après être arrivés, ils ont commencé.	After arriving, they started.

Important:

The auxiliary verb (*être* or *avoir*) must agree with the main verb's subject when necessary. For example:

Après s'être levé(e)(s), ils sont sortis.

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After getting up, they went out.

"Après que" + Passé Composé

When "après que" is followed by a clause, the verb is often in the passé composé to describe an event that occurred in the past.

Après qu' ils ont fini le déjeuner, ils sont partis.	After they finished lunch, they left.
Après que j'ai vu le film, je suis rentré.	After I saw the movie, I went home.

Important:

Unlike some other [conjunctions](#), "après que" is not followed by the subjunctive. This is because the phrase introduces a factual statement about something that has occurred or will occur, rather than expressing doubt, emotion, or subjectivity.

"Après que" + Present Tense

"Après que" can also introduce a clause in the present tense when the action occurs habitually or is happening now.

Après qu' il finit son travail, il regarde la télé.	After he finishes work, he watches TV.
Après que je mange, je me repose.	After I eat, I rest.

Note:

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As with the passé composé, "après que" is not followed by the subjunctive because it introduces statements of fact.

"Après que" + Future Tense

When referring to a future event, "après que" is often followed by a verb in the future tense.

Après que tu auras terminé, nous partirons.	After you have finished, we will leave.
Après que j'aurai parlé avec lui, je te dirai.	After I have spoken to him, I will tell you.

Reminder:

Even when discussing future events, "après que" does not require the subjunctive, as the actions described are considered certain.

"Après" in Expressions

"Après" appears in many expressions, and some don't translate literally.

Après tout	After all
Courir après quelqu'un	To chase after someone
Passer après quelqu'un	To follow someone (in turn)
Venir après quelqu'un	To come after someone

Common Mistakes with "Après"

Forgetting the Past Infinitive: When "après" precedes a verb, learners often mistakenly use the

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present infinitive. Make sure to use the past infinitive instead.

Misusing "après que": Remember, "après que" must be followed by a complete clause, not an infinitive.

Overusing "après": Some learners try to use "après" where "ensuite" (then) or "plus tard" (later) would be more natural.

No subjunctive after "après que": The phrase introduces a factual statement about something that has occurred or will occur, rather than expressing doubt, emotion, or subjectivity.

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