

Tant pis vs Tant mieux



These two tiny expressions pop up constantly in French conversations. They are ways to react quickly when something goes wrong (*tant pis*) or when things turn out well (*tant mieux*).

1. Tant pis - Too bad / Oh well / Never mind

Tant pis expresses disappointment, regret, or acceptance of something that didn't go as planned. It literally means "so worse", but in natural English it's more like:

- "Oh well"
- "Too bad"
- "Never mind"
- "That's a pity"

It's often used when something can't be helped.

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Examples:

- Il a oublié de venir? **Tant pis!**
- He forgot to come? **Oh well!**

- **Tant pis** pour moi.
- **Too bad** for me.

- Je n'ai pas gagné au loto, **tant pis**.
- I didn't win the lottery, **oh well**.

- Tu ne peux pas venir? **Tant pis**, une autre fois.
- You can't come? **Never mind**, another time.

Tant pis can sound neutral or slightly resigned, depending on how it's said. If you say it with a sigh: *Tant pis...* it sounds like mild disappointment. Said lightly, it's more casual, like "*No big deal.*"

2. Tant mieux - That's great / Even better / Good for you

Tant mieux expresses happiness or relief when something turns out well or better than expected. Literally it means "*so much the better,*" but we usually translate it as:

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- “That’s great!”
- “Even better!”
- “Good for you!”
- “I’m glad to hear that.”

Examples:

- Tu as réussi ton examen? **Tant mieux!**
- You passed your exam? **That’s great!**

- **Tant mieux** si ça te plaît.
- **Even better** if you like it.

- Il fait beau demain? **Tant mieux!**
- It’s nice tomorrow? **Great!**

- Tu pars en vacances? **Tant mieux pour toi!**
- You’re going on vacation? **Good for you!**

Tant mieux always has a positive, upbeat tone. It’s the opposite of **tant pis**, which expresses disappointment, and the other shows relief or happiness.

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3. Think of them as opposites

Situation	Expression	Meaning
Something didn't work out	Tant pis	Oh well Too bad
Something turned out well	Tant mieux	Great Even better

4. Politeness

Sometimes **tant pis** can sound a bit blunt if you're responding to someone else's disappointment. For example, if a friend says, "*Je ne peux pas venir à ta fête*" and you reply "*Tant pis!*", it might sound slightly cold, like "*Whatever.*"

To soften it, you can add a little phrase that keeps it friendly and polite:

- Ah, **tant pis**, ce sera pour une autre fois!
- **Oh well**, another time!

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