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The subjunctive is one of four moods in French (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and conditional). A mood is a grammatical term which helps categorize verb tenses. The subjunctive [mood](#) is used more frequently in French than in English. It has two tenses: present and past. It expresses several concepts, such as a wish, hope, or doubt, as well as an obligation or a necessity. One such expression which is always followed by the subjunctive is **il faut que** (it is necessary that ...).

-er, -re, and -ir verbs

The subjunctive endings are the same for all verbs: **-e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent**. For most verbs, the subjunctive mood is formed by dropping the **-ent** ending from the third person plural of the present indicative and adding the subjunctive endings. Note the similarities between the present indicative and the present subjunctive of **-er** verbs. This is due to the fact that the same stem is used for the subjunctive and the present indicative; the endings are also identical except for the **nous** and **vous** forms. This means that the 'boot' forms of the subjunctive of regular **-er** verbs look and sound exactly like the [present indicative](#).

Because the subjunctive occurs in subordinate clauses, the subordinating conjunction **que** is usually included as part of the paradigm for the subjunctive forms.



parler 'to speak'	
... que je parle	... que nous parlions
... que tu parles	... que vous parliez
... qu'il/elle/on parle	... qu'ils/elles parlent

finir 'to finish'	
... que je finisse	... que nous finissions
... que tu finisses	... que vous finissiez
... qu'il/elle/on finisse	... qu'ils/elles finissent

attendre 'to wait for'	
... que j' attende	... que nous attendions
... que tu attendes	... que vous attendiez
... qu'il/elle/on attende	... qu'ils/elles attendent

In the singular for **-re** and **-ir** verbs, the subjunctive looks and sounds different from the present indicative since the stem is different for the two moods. Listen:




present indicative

je **finis**
j'**attends**

present subjunctive


... que je **finisse**
... que j'**attende**

Note that, for all conjugations, the third person plural of the present subjunctive always looks and sounds like the present indicative since the stem for the subjunctive comes from the third person plural.

 present indicative	present subjunctive
ils parlent	... qu'ils parlent
ils finissent	... qu'ils finissent
ils attendent	... qu'ils attendent


irregular verbs with regular subjunctive forms (dormir, etc.)

Many verbs that are irregular in the present indicative are regular in forming the subjunctive. In other words, the stem is formed by removing the **-ent** ending from the third person plural of the present indicative and then the endings **-e**, **-es**, **-e**, **-ions**, **-iez**, **-ent** are added. Following are some irregular verbs, with the corresponding regular subjunctive forms.


	dormir	to sleep	... que je dorme
	sortir	to go out	... que je sorte
	partir	to leave	... que je parte
	lire	to read	... que je lise
	sourire	to smile	... que je sourie
	dire	to say	... que je dise
	écrire	to write	... que j' écrive
	mettre	to put	... que je mette
	connaître	to know	... que je connaisse

stem changing verbs

Some verbs with stem changes in the present indicative have one stem for the subjunctive of the 'nous' and 'vous' forms and another stem for the 'je' and 'tu' forms. These verbs, such as **acheter**, **appeler** use the same two changes in the present subjunctive.

	Tex: Il faut que j' appelle Paw-Paw ce soir.	Tex: I have to call Paw-Paw tonight.
	Tammy: D'accord. A quelle heure est-ce qu'il faut que nous appelions Paw-Paw?	Tammy: Okay. What time do we have to call Paw-Paw?



	Tex explique les règles à ses étudiants: Il faut que vous parliez clairement; pas de chewing-gum!	Tex explains the rules to his students: You must speak clearly; no chewing gum!
	Bien sûr, il faut qu'on finisse avant midi. Le déjeuner, c'est sacré!	Of course, we must end before meal times. Lunch is sacred!

Joe-Bob, il faut que tu **attendes** la fin du cours avant de dormir.

Joe-Bob, you must wait until the end of class before sleeping.

Et il faut que nous **sortions** ensemble après le cours de révision pour prendre un verre.

We must go out together after the review to have a drink.



texercises

fill in the blanks

Fill in the blank with the subjunctive of the verb in parentheses.

1. Tex : Il faut que j' _____ à Paw-Paw. (écrire)
2. Bette : Il faut que Tex m' _____ mieux que Tammy! (aimer)
3. Tex : Il faut que nous _____ en vacances. (partir)
4. Paw-Paw : Il faut que Tex m' _____ plus souvent. (appeler)
5. Tex : Il faut que vous _____ davantage. (travailler)
6. Tammy : Il faut que Tex _____ moins. (sortir)
7. Fiona : Il faut que je _____ un cours intéressant. (choisir)
8. Tammy : Tex préfère que je _____ le couvert. (mettre)
9. Tammy : Tex veut que nous _____ quelques années avant le mariage. (attendre)
10. Edouard : Il faut que nous _____ dans un bon restaurant. (manger)
11. Tammy : Il ne faut pas que vous _____ en mangeant ('while eating')! (parler)
12. Tex : Il faut que Tammy _____ mes poèmes! (lire)