

## Subjonctif - French Subjunctive - Usage

The subjunctive [mood](#) is used to express actions which are **subjective**: will/wanting, emotion, doubt, possibility, necessity, judgment. It is nearly always found in **dependent clauses introduced by que**. The **subjects** of the dependent and main clauses are usually **different**. Remember that "that" is not always required in English.

Je veux que tu le fasses. I want you to do it.

Il faut que nous partions. It is necessary that we leave.

The subjunctive is used when the main clause expresses subjectivity, as with the following cases:

**I.** Verbs/expressions of **will** which express an [order](#), a need, a piece of advice, or a want.

**aimer mieux que** to like better / to prefer that

**demander que** to ask (someone to do something)

**désirer que** to desire that

**donner l'ordre que** to order that

**empêcher que\*** to prevent

**éviter que\*** to avoid

**exiger que** to demand that

**ordonner que** to order that

**préférer que** to prefer that

**proposer que** to propose that

**souhaiter que** to wish that

**suggérer que** to suggest that

**vouloir que** to want that

**il est à souhaiter que** it is to be hoped

**il est essentiel que** it is essential

**il est important que** it is important that

**il est naturel que** it is natural

**il est nécessaire que** it is necessary that

**il est normal que** it is normal that

**il est temps que** it is time that

**il faut que** it is necessary that

**il est urgent que** it is urgent

**il vaut mieux que** it is better that

**II.** Verbs/expressions of **emotion or feeling** which indicate fear, happiness, anger, regret, surprise, or other sentiments.

**avoir peur que** to be afraid that

**craindre que** to fear that

**être content que** to be happy that

**être désolé que** to be sorry that

**être étonné que** to be amazed that

**être heureux que** to be happy that

**être surpris que** to be surprised that

**être triste que** to be sad that

**il est bizarre que** it is odd

**il est bon que** it is good that

**il est dommage que** it is too bad that

**il est étonnant que** it is amazing that

**il est étrange que** it is strange

**il est heureux que** it is fortunate

**il est honteux que** it is shameful that

**il est inutile que** it is useless that

**il est rare que** it is rare that

**il est regrettable que** it is regrettable that

**il est surprenant que** it is surprising

**il est utile que** it is useful that

**regretter que** to regret that

\*these verbs are followed by the [ne explétif](#):  
Évitez qu'il ne parte - Prevent him from leaving.

### III. Verbs/expressions of **doubt**, **possibility**, and **opinion**

<b>chercher ... qui</b>	to look for Je cherche un homme qui sache la vérité (he may not exist = doubt)
<b>détester que</b>	to hate
<b>douter que</b>	to doubt
<b>nier que</b>	to deny
<b>il est convenable que</b>	it is proper/fitting
<b>il est douteux que</b>	it is doubtful that
<b>il est faux que</b>	it is false
<b>il est impossible que</b>	it is impossible that
<b>il est improbable que</b>	it is improbable that
<b>il est juste que</b>	it is right/fair
<b>il est possible que</b>	it is possible that
<b>il est peu probable que</b>	it is improbable that
<b>il n'est pas certain que</b>	it is not certain that
<b>il n'est pas clair que</b>	it is not clear that
<b>il n'est pas évident que</b>	it is not obvious that
<b>il n'est pas probable que</b>	it is improbable that
<b>il n'est pas sûr que</b>	it is not certain that
<b>il n'est pas vrai que</b>	it is not true that
<b>il semble que</b>	it seems that
<b>il se peut que</b>	it may be that

**Note:** the following verbs and expressions **do not** take the subjunctive when they are used in the **affirmative**, because they express facts which are considered certain. When **negative** or **interrogatory**, they require the subjunctive (Example: Penses-tu qu'il soit sympa ? Oui, je pense qu'il est sympa, Non, je ne pense pas qu'il soit sympa.):

<b>connaître</b> (quelqu'un) <b>qui</b>	to know (someone) that
<b>croire que</b>	to believe that
<b>espérer que</b>	to hope that
<b>être certain que</b>	to be certain that
<b>être sûr que</b>	to be sure that
<b>il est certain que</b>	it is certain that
<b>il est évident que</b>	it is obvious that
<b>il est probable que</b>	it is probable that
<b>il est sûr que</b>	it is certain that
<b>il est vrai que</b>	it is true that
<b>il me</b> (te, lui...) <b>semble que</b>	it seems to me (you, him...) that
<b>penser que</b>	to think that
<b>savoir que</b>	to know that
<b>trouver que</b>	to find/think that

**IV.** The following conjunctions

<b>à condition que</b>	provided that
<b>à moins que*</b>	unless
<b>afin que</b>	so that
<b>avant que*</b>	before
<b>bien que</b>	although
<b>de crainte que*</b>	for fear that
<b>de peur que*</b>	for fear that
<b>en attendant que</b>	while, until
<b>jusqu'à ce que</b>	until
<b>pour que</b>	so that
<b>pourvu que</b>	provided that
<b>quoique</b>	even though
<b>quoi que</b>	whatever, no matter what
<b>sans que</b>	without

\*these conjunctions are followed by the ne explétif:  
Mangeons avant que nous ne partions - Let's eat before we leave

**Note:** the following conjunctions **do not** take the subjunctive, because they express facts which are considered certain:

<b>ainsi que</b>	just as, so as
<b>alors que</b>	while, whereas
<b>après que*</b>	after, when
<b>aussitôt que*</b>	as soon as
<b>car</b>	since, because
<b>en même temps que</b>	at the same time that
<b>depuis que</b>	since
<b>dès que*</b>	as soon as, immediately
<b>lorsque*</b>	when
<b>parce que</b>	because
<b>pendant que</b>	while
<b>plutôt que</b>	instead of, rather than
<b>puisque</b>	since, as
<b>quand*</b>	when
<b>tandis que</b>	while, whereas
<b>une fois que*</b>	once

\*These verbs are followed by the future tense.

**V.** The verbs in sentences with the indefinite pronoun ne ... personne, ne ... rien, quelqu'un, or quelque chose as the subject of the main clause.

**VI.** Main clauses which contain the words **seul, unique, premier, dernier**, or any superlative

C'est la seule personne que je connaisse.  
C'est l'étudiante la plus intelligente que j'aie.

**NOTE: There is no future subjunctive.** Even if the action is to happen in the future, the present subjunctive is used. However, there is a past subjunctive.

I know it seems overwhelming, but the thing to remember is the subjunctive = subjective. That should help you figure it out at least 90% of the time.