

# When to use the subjunctive

The subjunctive is not a tense but a mood!

In fact, the subjunctive can be used in several tenses but here we shall concentrate on the present. It is used to express:

- what is thought/felt to be the case
- how certain actions or situations are considered to be (certain/uncertain, possible/probable, possible/impossible etc.)

# Subjunctive or indicative?

If something is known for sure to be reality = **indicative**.

If the chance of the action becoming a reality is over 70% = **indicative**.

If the chance of the action becoming a reality is under 70% = **subjunctive**.

# Subjunctive or indicative?

*Je suis certain qu'il a le talent nécessaire pour réussir.*

100% chance of becoming a reality =

**indicative**

# Subjunctive or indicative?

*Il est probable qu'il a le talent  
nécessaire pour réussir.*

75%

chance of becoming a reality =

**indicative**

# Subjunctive or indicative?

*Il est possible qu'il ait le talent nécessaire pour réussir.*

50%

chance of becoming a reality =

**subjunctive**

# How to form the subjunctive

## Regular verbs:

1. take the *ils* form of the present tense of the verb
2. drop the *-ent* ending to form the stem
3. add the subjunctive endings  
*-e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent*

e.g. *Ils deviennent* > *devienn-* > *je devienne.*

# How to form the subjunctive

## Irregular verbs

Use a verb table or [website](#) to look up the subjunctive forms for the following verbs:

*Être, avoir, faire, aller, pouvoir, savoir, vouloir, valoir, falloir*

Do you notice any patterns?

# When to use the subjunctive

The verb that requires conjugation usually appears in a subordinate clause (the second part of a sentence) and is very often preceded by *que*.

It is used in a broad range of situations, and widely used in spoken and written French.

# When to use the subjunctive

## After certain conjunctions with *que*

- Conceding something: *bien que* / *quoique* (although)
- Indicating an aim: *afin que* (so that), *pour que* (in order that)
- Time phrases: *avant que* (before), *jusqu'à ce que* (until)
- Conditions: *à moins que* (unless), *pourvu que* (provided that), (*à condition que* (on condition that))

# When to use the subjunctive

## A will, wish or necessity

*Vouloir, ordonner, exiger, souhaiter, désirer, suggérer, proposer, conseiller + que*

*Il voudrait que tu restes avec toi.*

- **He would like you to stay with him.**

*Je suggère qu'il aille aussitôt que possible.*

- **I suggest that he leaves as soon as possible.**

# When to use the subjunctive

## A doubt or fear

*Douter, avoir peur, craindre + que*

*Je doute qu'il ait raison.*

- I doubt that he's right.

*J'ai peur qu'elle soit trop timide.*

- I'm afraid that she might be too shy.

# When to use the subjunctive

## Emotions or opinions

*Adorer, aimer, préférer, détester + que*

*Je préfère qu'il soit moins difficile.*

- I'd rather that he were less difficult.

*J'adore qu'elle ne soit pas orgueilleuse.*

- I love that she's not proud.

# When to use the subjunctive

## Regret or happiness

*Regretter, être désolé, être content + que*

*Ils regrettent qu'ils ne soient pas là pour la fête.*

- **They are sorry that they are not there for the party.**

*Moi, je suis contente qu'elle ait un petit ami.*

- **I'm happy that she has a boyfriend.**

# When to use the subjunctive

## Certain impersonal expressions

*Il faut, il vaut, il semble, il est important + que*

*Il faut que tu sois plus sage!*

- You must be better behaved.

*Il vaut mieux qu'on reste ensemble.*

- It would be better if we stuck together.

# When to use the subjunctive

## Sentence starter with que

*qui que, quel que, quoi que, où que, que*

*Quoi que soit le prix, je viens!*

- **Whatever the cost, I'm coming!**

*Que je finisse ou pas, je suis heureux que je l'ai essayé.*

- **Whether I finish it or not, I'm happy that I tried it.**