

# Try these memory tricks for yourself!

## Avoir (to have) and être (to be) - the leading verbs

j'	ai
tu	as
il/elle/on	a
nous	avons
vous	avez
ils/elles	ont

The letters in common with "have" are underlined.

je changes to **j'** before a vowel.

je	suis
tu	es
il/elle/on	est
nous	sommes
vous	ete <i>s</i>
ils/elles	sont

The presence of **s** in the conjugated forms of "être" reminds us that it is a **special verb**. Note the circumflex accent (which looks like a hat) on the first **e** of être and étes.

Note: **ai**, **es** and **est** are all pronounced "ay". Note the special **s** in the conjugation of "être":

j'ai I have  
tu es you are  
il est he is

ils sont = they are  
ils ont = they have

j'e*s*uis  
tu e*s*

tu e*s*v  
il est

i*l* e*s**t*  
ils s*o**n*t

## Verbs ending in -er

### Verbs ending in -er, starting with a consonant

**jouer** (to play)

je	joue
tu	joues
il/elle/on	joue
nous	jouons
vous	jouez
ils/elles	jouent

To remember **jouer**, think that it is a **joy** to play.

### Pay attention to the stem of some -er verbs

**manger** (to eat)

je	mange
tu	manges
il/elle/on	mange
nous	mangeons
vous	mangez
ils/elles	mangent

Note the **e** before **ons** to retain the soft "g" of "manger". Imagine the letter **e** is opening its mouth to eat.



Most French verbs in the present tense have three things in common:

1. With **je**, **tu** and **il/elle/on**, the verb is pronounced in the same way despite the different spellings, apart from "avoir" (to have), "être" (to be) and "aller" (to go).
2. The verb in the **tu** form ends in **s**. To remember this, note **s** is close to **t** and **u** in the alphabet.



3. The plural forms are:  
**nous** ... **ons** (the letters **ons** are in **nous**)  
**vous** ... **ez** (think of **rendezvous**)  
**ils/elles** ... **ent** (the letters **nt** are not pronounced)