

Unit 7: Getting Around Town (En Ville)

Now that you can describe things and talk about food, let's learn how to get around! This unit will teach you the essential verb "to go," how to ask for and understand directions, and an easy way to talk about future plans. Time to explore!

Lesson 19: Going Places with aller (Aller quelque part)

Thoughts: The verb **aller** (to go) is absolutely vital! It's one of the most common verbs in French, and it's irregular. We'll learn how to use it to say where you're going, which involves some special little words called prepositions.

Casual Introduction: Imagine you want to tell someone "I'm going to the park" or "Are you going to school today?" You need the verb "to go." In French, this is *aller*, and it's a bit of a chameleon – its forms change quite a lot. But once you master it, you'll be able to talk about going everywhere! We'll also learn the French equivalents of "to the" or "at the."

Grammar Spotlight: The Verb ALLER (To go)

Aller is one of the most important irregular verbs in French. Memorize its conjugation well!

ALLER - Present Tense Conjugation

Subject Pronoun	ALLER Form	Pronunciation	English Equivalent
Je	vais	VAY	I go / I am going
Tu	vas	VAH	You go / You are going
Il / Elle / On	va	VAH	He/She/One goes / is going
Nous	allons	Ah-LOHN (nasal)	We go / We are going
Vous	allez	Ah-LAY	You go / You are going
Ils / Elles	vont	VOHN (nasal)	They go / They are going

Prepositions of Place with ALLER (à, au, à la, à l', aux)

When you use *aller* to say where you're going, you need a preposition meaning "to" or "at." In French, this is usually **à**. However, **à** combines with the definite articles (**le**, **la**, **l'**, **les**) to form contractions:

- **à + le = au** (oh) - to the / at the (for masculine singular nouns)
 - Je vais **au** parc. (I am going to the park.)
 - Tu vas **au** restaurant. (You are going to the restaurant.)
- **à + la = à la** (ah lah) - to the / at the (for feminine singular nouns)
 - Elle va **à la** plage. (She is going to the beach.)
 - Nous allons **à la** maison. (We are going home.)
- **à + l' = à l'** (ah l') - to the / at the (for singular nouns starting with a vowel/silent h)

- Vous allez **à l'école**. (You are going to school.)
- Ils vont **à l'hôtel**. (They are going to the hotel.)
- **à + les = aux** (oh) - to the / at the (for plural nouns of any gender)
 - Elles vont **aux** toilettes. (They are going to the restrooms.)
 - Nous allons **aux** musées. (We are going to the museums.)

Summary Table of à + Definite Article:

Preposition + Article	Contraction	Usage	Example
à + le	au	Masculine Singular	au marché (to the market)
à + la	à la	Feminine Singular	à la boulangerie (to the bakery)
à + l'	à l'	Vowel/H Singular	à l'hôpital (to the hospital)
à + les	aux	Plural (masc. or fem.)	aux magasins (to the stores)

Common Destinations & Places (Vocabulary)

French Place (with article)	English Translation
la ville (f)	the city / town
le parc (m)	the park
la gare (f)	the train station
la plage (f)	the beach
le cinéma (m)	the cinema / movie theater
le musée (m)	the museum
le restaurant (m)	the restaurant
le café (m)	the café
la maison (f)	the house / home
l'école (f)	the school
l'hôpital (m)	the hospital
la banque (f)	the bank
le marché (m)	the market
le supermarché (m)	the supermarket
la poste (f)	the post office

Example Sentences:

- Je **vais au** marché. (I am going to the market.)
- Tu **vas à la** plage ? (Are you going to the beach?)
- Il **va à l'hôpital**. (He is going to the hospital.)

- Nous **allons à la** maison. (We are going home.)
- Vous **allez aux** magasins. (You are going to the stores.)
- Elles **vont au** cinéma. (They are going to the cinema.)

Exercises/Quiz:

1. Conjugate **aller** for the following pronouns:

- a) Je __
- b) Nous __
- c) Il __
- d) Vous __

2. Fill in the blank with the correct form of **à** + article (**au, à la, à l', aux**):

- a) Elle va __ gare. (train station - feminine)
- b) Nous allons __ restaurant. (restaurant - masculine)
- c) Tu vas __ école. (school - feminine, vowel)
- d) Ils vont __ musées. (museums - plural)

3. Translate into French:

- a) I am going to the bank.
- b) We are going to the park.
- c) Are you (formal) going to the supermarket?

Solutions:

1. a) vais, b) allons, c) va, d) allez
2. a) à la, b) au, c) à l', d) aux
3. a) Je vais à la banque. b) Nous allons au parc. c) Vous allez au supermarché ?

Lesson 20: Asking for Directions (Demander son chemin)

Thoughts: Now that you know how to say you're *going* somewhere, let's learn how to find your way there! We'll cover essential phrases for asking for and understanding simple directions.

Casual Introduction: You're in a new town, and you want to find the post office. How do you ask? And once someone tells you, how do you understand "turn right" or "go straight"? This lesson gives you those practical phrases so you don't get lost!

Asking for Directions

- **Pardon, Monsieur/Madame, pour aller à [place], s'il vous plaît ?**
 - (Pahr-DOHN, muh-SYUH/mah-DAHMH, poor ah-LAY ah [place], seel voo pleh?)
 - *Excuse me, Sir/Madam, to go to [place], please?*
- **Où est [place], s'il vous plaît ?**
 - (Oo eh [place], seel voo pleh?)
 - *Where is [place], please?*

Giving Simple Directions (Key Phrases)

- **Allez tout droit.** (Ah-LAY too DRWAH) - Go straight ahead.

- *Note: tout droit* means "straight ahead" or "straight on."
- **Tournez à droite.** (Toor-NAY ah DRWAHT) - Turn right.
- **Tournez à gauche.** (Toor-NAY ah GOASH) - Turn left.
- **C'est ici.** (Seh ee-SEE) - It's here.
- **C'est là.** (Seh LAH) - It's there.

Prepositions of Place (Where is it?)

These prepositions tell you exactly *where* something is in relation to something else.

- **sur** (syur) - on / on top of
 - Le livre est **sur** la table. (The book is on the table.)
- **sous** (soo) - under / underneath
 - Le chat est **sous** la chaise. (The cat is under the chair.)
- **dans** (dahn) - in / inside
 - Je suis **dans** la maison. (I am in the house.)
- **devant** (duh-VAHN) - in front of
 - La voiture est **devant** la porte. (The car is in front of the door.)
- **derrière** (deh-RYEHR) - behind
 - Le parc est **derrière** l'école. (The park is behind the school.)
- **à côté de** (ah koh-TAY duh) - next to / beside
 - La banque est **à côté de** la poste. (The bank is next to the post office.)
- **en face de** (ahn FAHS duh) - opposite / across from
 - Le café est **en face de** la gare. (The café is opposite the train station.)

Example Dialogue: Asking for Directions

Vous: Pardon, Madame, pour aller à la gare, s'il vous plaît ? (Excuse me, Madam, to go to the train station, please?) **Madame:** La gare ? Bien sûr. Allez tout droit, puis tournez à gauche au feu. C'est en face du supermarché. (The station? Of course. Go straight ahead, then turn left at the traffic light. It's opposite the supermarket.) **Vous:** Merci beaucoup ! (Thank you very much!) **Madame:** De rien ! (You're welcome!)

Vocabulary Box: Asking for Directions

French Phrase	English Translation	Notes
tout droit	straight ahead / straight on	
à droite	to the right	
à gauche	to the left	
tourner	to turn	Verb used for directions
sur	on / on top of	Preposition of place
sous	under	Preposition of place
dans	in	Preposition of place

French Phrase	English Translation	Notes
devant	in front of	Preposition of place
derrière	behind	Preposition of place
à côté de	next to	Preposition of place (remember de changes to du/de la/d' /des if followed by article)
en face de	opposite / across from	Preposition of place
un feu (m)	a traffic light	Lit. a fire, but used for traffic lights
une porte (f)	a door	
une chaise (f)	a chair	
un chat (m)	a cat	
un livre (m)	a book	
un argent (m)	money	
un bus (m)	a bus	
un train (m)	a train	

Exercises/Quiz:

1. Translate these directional phrases into French:

- a) Go straight ahead.
- b) Turn right.
- c) Turn left.

2. Fill in the blank with the correct preposition of place (sur, sous, dans, devant, derrière):

- a) Le téléphone est __ la table. (on)
- b) Le chien est __ le lit (bed - masculine). (under)
- c) Je suis __ ma voiture. (in)
- d) La banque est __ la poste. (in front of)
- e) Le parc est __ la maison. (behind)

3. Translate into French (using *pour aller*):

- a) Excuse me, to go to the park, please?
- b) Where is the hospital, please?

Solutions:

- 1. a) Allez tout droit. b) Tournez à droite. c) Tournez à gauche.
- 2. a) sur, b) sous, c) dans, d) devant, e) derrière
- 3. a) Pardon, Monsieur/Madame, pour aller au parc, s'il vous plaît ? b) Où est l'hôpital, s'il vous plaît ?

Lesson 21: The Near Future: What You're Going to Do (Le futur proche)

Thoughts: You've learned how to talk about the present. Now, let's talk about what's coming up next! The *futur proche* is incredibly easy and useful, like saying "I'm going to do something" in English.

Casual Introduction: Have you ever said, "I'm going to eat dinner soon," or "They're going to visit us tomorrow"? French has a super simple way to express these "going to do something" ideas. It's called the *futur proche* (near future), and it literally uses the verb *aller* (to go) plus another verb in its basic, unconjugated form. It's one of the easiest ways to talk about the future!

Grammar Spotlight: The Futur Proche (Near Future)

The *futur proche* is used for actions that will happen soon, in the near future. It's very common in spoken French.

Structure: Conjugated ALLER + Infinitive Verb

- 1. Take the conjugated form of **aller** (from Lesson 19) that matches your subject.
- 2. Add the **infinitive** (the "to do" form, like *parler*, *finir*, *attendre*) of the action verb. **Do not conjugate the second verb!**

Example:

- **Je vais** (I am going) + **parler** (to speak) = **Je vais parler.** (I am going to speak.)
- **Nous allons** (We are going) + **manger** (to eat) = **Nous allons manger.** (We are going to eat.)

ALLER + INFINITIVE Examples:

Subject Pronoun	Aller Form	Infinitive Verb	Futur Proche Sentence	English Translation
Je	vais	parler	Je vais parler.	I am going to speak.
Tu	vas	finir	Tu vas finir.	You are going to finish.
Il / Elle / On	va	manger	Il va manger.	He is going to eat.
Nous	allons	attendre	Nous allons attendre.	We are going to wait.
Vous	allez	choisir	Vous allez choisir.	You are going to choose.
Ils / Elles	vont	regarder	Ils vont regarder.	They are going to watch.

Czech Connection: This is very similar to the English "going to" construction. While Czech uses a different future tense system (e.g., *budu jíst* - I will eat), the *futur proche* offers a simple, direct way to express immediate future plans, much like you might casually say "chystám se jíst" (I am getting ready to eat) in Czech.

Common Time Expressions for the Future

You can use these with the *futur proche* to specify *when* something will happen.

- **demain** (duh-MANG) - tomorrow
- **ce soir** (suh SWAR) - this evening / tonight
- **cet après-midi** (set ah-PREH-mee-DEE) - this afternoon
- **la semaine prochaine** (lah suh-MEN proh-SHEN) - next week
- **le week-end prochain** (luh week-END proh-SHEN) - next weekend
- **bientôt** (byang-TOH) - soon

Example Sentences:

- **Je vais travailler** demain. (I am going to work tomorrow.)
- **Tu vas manger** ce soir ? (Are you going to eat tonight?)
- **Il va étudier** cet après-midi. (He is going to study this afternoon.)
- **Nous allons visiter** Prague la semaine prochaine. (We are going to visit Prague next week.)
- **Vous allez regarder** la télé bientôt ? (Are you going to watch TV soon?)
- **Elles vont acheter** une nouvelle voiture. (They are going to buy a new car.)

Exercises/Quiz:

1. **Form sentences in the *futur proche*:**

- a) Je (aller) + (manger)
- b) Tu (aller) + (finir)
- c) Nous (aller) + (regarder)
- d) Elles (aller) + (travailler)

2. **Translate into French using the *futur proche*:**

- a) I am going to study tonight.
- b) We are going to go to the cinema tomorrow.
- c) He is going to buy a book.
- d) Are you (formal) going to eat soon?

Solutions:

1. a) Je vais manger. b) Tu vas finir. c) Nous allons regarder. d) Elles vont travailler.
2. a) Je vais étudier ce soir. b) Nous allons aller au cinéma demain. c) Il va acheter un livre. d) Vous allez manger bientôt ?

Key Takeaways for Unit 7: Getting Around Town

- **The Verb ALLER (to go):** Essential and irregular!
 - **Je vais, Tu vas, Il/Elle/On va, Nous allons, Vous allez, Ils/Elles vont.**
- **Prepositions with ALLER:**
 - **à** (to/at) combines with definite articles:
 - **au** (à + le) for masculine singular places.
 - **à la** (à + la) for feminine singular places.
 - **à l'** (à + l') for singular places starting with a vowel/h.
 - **aux** (à + les) for plural places.
- **Asking for Directions:**

- Pardon, pour aller à [place], s'il vous plaît ? (To go to [place], please?)
- Où est [place], s'il vous plaît ? (Where is [place], please?)
- **Giving Directions:** Allez tout droit (Go straight), Tournez à droite (Turn right), Tournez à gauche (Turn left).
- **Prepositions of Place:** sur (on), sous (under), dans (in), devant (in front of), derrière (behind), à côté de (next to), en face de (opposite).
- **The Futur Proche (Near Future):** The easiest way to talk about the future!
 - **Conjugated ALLER + Infinitive Verb.**
 - Use for actions happening soon.

You've learned to navigate French-speaking environments, give simple directions, and talk about your immediate plans. Your ability to communicate in French is truly expanding! Keep practicing these essential verbs and structures.