



Sun on the Seine: each summer a man-made beach called "Plage Paris" is created on the banks of the river Seine in central Paris

it, and so on.

How do you express these? The "futur proche" can be a less complicated alternative to the future tense.

So, instead of saying "I will go to school", you can say "I am going to go to school".

This uses "aller" + the infinitive. Note its use (and the other verbs that take the infinitive) in the following excerpt:

"La semaine prochaine, je vais faire un voyage scolaire avec mes camarades de classe. Nous allons aller en Allemagne pour une semaine. Ce sera génial!

Le mois prochain, j'ai l'intention de faire une excursion à Londres pour voir un match de foot entre QPR et Hull. Ce sera chouette. Je me passionne pour le foot.

L'été prochain, ma famille et moi allons faire du camping en France. Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire cet été? Tu veux venir chez moi?"

SAMPLE LETTERS

Your French pen-friend has invited you to spend three weeks at his/her home in France in August

In your letter of reply, you might include some, or all, of the following.

- ◆ Thank him/her for the letter and say you are delighted to accept the invitation
- ◆ Say how you will travel to France
- ◆ Say what you would like to do there
- ◆ Describe a visit to the cinema last weekend
- ◆ Send your regards to his/her parents

Dublin, le 3 juillet.

Chère Laurence,

Bonjour ! Ça va? J'espère que tu vas bien. Merci de ton invitation que j'ai reçue hier. Je suis heureux d'accepter l'invitation et je voudrais te rendre visite en France cet été.

Je prendrai l'avion à Paris. Je vais acheter mon billet de voyage demain. J'arriverai à Paris le 1er août et je prendrai le métro chez toi. Peux-tu me rencontrer à la station de métro?

Pendant ma visite chez toi, je voudrais voir le Louvre et monter la Tour Eiffel.

J'aimerais faire une promenade en bateau-mouche sur la Seine. Ce serait chouette. Ça me ferait aussi grand plaisir de faire des achats à Paris.

Samedi dernier, mon petit ami et moi avons vu un bon film au cinéma. Il s'appelle 'Ocean's Twelve'. C'était très amusant, mais l'histoire n'était pas formidable. J'ai aimé les acteurs, surtout George Clooney.

Alors, c'est tout pour l'instant. J'attends mon séjour à Paris avec impatience. Dis bonjour à tes parents de ma part.

Grosses bises,
Charlotte

[160 MOTS]

Your French pen-friend, Alexandre/Anne-Marie has sent you a present for your birthday in May

In your letter of reply you could cover several of the following topics.

- ◆ Thank him/her for the present
- ◆ Say how you spent your birthday
- ◆ Tell him/her about the new clothes you bought for your birthday
- ◆ Ask your pen-friend about his/her plans for the summer
- ◆ Send your regards to his/her family

Athlone, le 2 mars

Cher Alexandre,

Comment vas-tu? J'espère que tu vas bien. Moi, je vais bien. Merci de ton cadeau. Ça me plaît tellement. Le stylo est utile, et très cher aussi! Tu es très généreux.

Pour mon anniversaire, moi et Philippe sommes allés au cinéma et nous avons vu 'Casino Royale'. C'était génial! J'aime le nouveau James Bond. Après ça, nous avons dîné dans un restaurant Italien. J'ai pris une lasagne avec frites, et Philippe a choisi le ragoût. La cuisine italienne me plaît beaucoup. Malheureusement, Philippe n'a pas aimé son repas.

J'ai reçu beaucoup d'argent pour mon anniversaire. Donc, le lendemain, je suis allé en ville et j'ai acheté des vêtements. J'ai acheté des baskets blanches, un blouson en cuir, un jean bleu et une chemise rouge.

Alors, qu'est-ce que tu vas faire pour l'été? Moi, je jouerai au golf et je ferai de la natation avec la bande. J'espère trouver un petit boulot dans un supermarché. J'économiserai de l'argent pour partir en vacances en août. Où vas-tu en vacances? Vas-tu rester en France? J'espère que tu t'amuseras bien pendant les grandes vacances.

Comment va ta famille? Dis bonjour de ma part à tes parents. Ecris-moi vite.

Ton ami,
Anthony.

[205 MOTS]

Note the use of the present, past and future tenses in each of the sample letters.

The A student



Sophie Gaughran got an A in her Junior Cert French at St Mary's, Glasnevin

Personally, French is my best subject and it has been since first year. Since then I've been told: "you need to learn your vocab off by heart", and I did that. So by the time I reached third year I'd built up a large range of vocabulary and that made it much easier.

A lot of our teachers gave us ideas, like a night-by-night plan. At first, I didn't really stick to it, but coming up to the mocks I studied hard to do well. I realised that I'd need to study consistently if I wanted to get good marks, even to maintain what I managed in the mocks. I still wanted to have fun with my friends, so I tried to balance the study with time off.

With French, our homework every day was to learn the vocabulary we'd done in class. Then you'd go on and do your written homework. That way, we were reinforcing what we were doing all the time. We did a lot of revision. Our teacher did lots of extra classes with us, even lunchtime ones, and that really helped us cover everything. She was very good – I didn't need to do any extra grinds.

The mocks were okay. I'd worked hard, revising. There wasn't anything I didn't know off by heart, because I'd put in the work over the year. After the mocks, I focused more on different areas, rather than doing lots of extra work on subjects I was worried about. I didn't want to ignore the ones I was good at, like French, but I probably put less into them and more into maths and science.

When I was studying, I started with vocabulary. I read through all the words, wrote them out and corrected them so I knew I had them down. Then I'd go over my homework, which was easier because of the vocab work.

After that I'd do some exam papers. We did loads, as far back as 1998. That was so helpful, getting to know the paper. Our teacher explained how long to spend on each section so we weren't panicking in the exam and had time to look back over at the end. We did orals in second year to get us prepared. Also, we spoke French in class all the time, which was a great help.

I went into the exam fairly confident, because I knew I'd done the work. I was a little nervous – it was my favourite subject and I wanted to do well, but I wasn't too bad. I knew how long to spend on each section and what to do first.

I'd recommend what our teacher called "the triangle method", where at the top of the triangle, you learn the new thing (vocab, grammar) then you write out what you've learnt and correct it, then at the end you do your written homework. That way, you don't go near your writing until you really know the vocab.

If our teacher told us something was important for the exam, I always highlighted it and went over it carefully. Do the work. There are only so many tomorrows left before you're sitting in the exam.

– In conversation with Eoin Cunningham

