

NEW 8TH EDITION

English Grammar for Students of French

***The Study Guide
For Those Learning French
Eighth Edition***

Jacqueline Morton

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English Grammar for Students of French

*The Study Guide
for Those Learning French*

Eighth edition

Jacqueline Morton

The Olivia and Hill Press®

THE **OH** STUDY GUIDES

JACQUELINE MORTON, EDITOR

English Grammar for Students of Spanish
English Grammar for Students of French
English Grammar for Students of German
English Grammar for Students of Italian
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Gramática española para estudiantes de inglés

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The **PAST TENSE** is used to indicate that an action took place in the past.¹

I **saw** you yesterday.

IN ENGLISH

There are several verb forms that indicate that the action took place in the past.

I worked	SIMPLE PAST
I have worked	PRESENT PERFECT
I was working	PAST PROGRESSIVE
I used to work	WITH HELPING VERB USED TO
I did work	PAST EMPHATIC

The simple past is called “simple” because it is a simple tense; that is, it consists of one word (*worked* in the example above). The other past tenses are compound tenses; that is, they consist of more than one word, an auxiliary + a main verb (*was working*, *did work*). See p. 69 in *What is Meant by Tense?*.

IN FRENCH

There are two French tenses that correspond to all the English past verbal forms listed above: “**LE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ**” and “**L’IMPARFAIT**.” We’ll refer to these two tenses by their French names because their usage does not correspond to a specific English tense.

19.1 LE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ (Present Perfect)

The **passé composé** is formed with the auxiliary verb **avoir** (*to have*) or **être** (*to be*) conjugated in the present tense + the past participle of the main verb (see *Auxiliary verbs*, p. 56; *Participles*, p. 75).

j’ai parlé	<i>I spoke, I have spoken, I did speak</i>
nous avons parlé	<i>we spoke, we have spoken, we did speak</i>
avoir + past participle of parler (<i>to speak</i>)	
je suis allé	<i>I went, I have gone, I did go</i>
il est allé	<i>he went, he has gone, he did go</i>
être + past participle of aller (<i>to go</i>)	

1. A separate section is devoted to the past perfect (*I had worked*). See *Past perfect tense*, p. 86.

SELECTION OF THE AUXILIARY “Avoir” or “Être”

Most verbs use the auxiliary **avoir**. Therefore, it is easier for you to memorize the list of verbs conjugated with **être** and assume that the other verbs are conjugated with **avoir**.

There are approximately sixteen common verbs, sometimes referred to by grammar books as “verbs of motion,” that are conjugated with **être**. “Verbs of motion” is not an accurate description of these verbs since some of them, such as **rester** (*to stay, to remain*), do not imply motion, and some “verbs of motion,” such as **courir** (*to run*), are conjugated with **avoir**. You will find common “**être** verbs” easy to memorize in pairs of opposites:

aller	<i>to go</i>	≠	venir	<i>to come</i>
retourner	<i>to return</i>	≠	rester	<i>to remain</i>
entrer	<i>to come in</i>	≠	sortir	<i>to go out</i>
arriver	<i>to arrive</i>	≠	partir	<i>to leave</i>
monter	<i>to climb</i>	≠	descendre	<i>to go down</i>
			tomber	<i>to fall</i>
naître	<i>to be born</i>	≠	mourir	<i>to die</i>

Verbs derived from the above verbs are also conjugated with **être**: **rentrer** (*to return*), **revenir** (*to come back*), and **devenir** (*to become*), among others.

AGREEMENT OF THE PAST PARTICIPLE

The rules of agreement of the past participle depend on whether the auxiliary verb is **avoir** or **être**.

Être — When the auxiliary verb is **être**, the past participle agrees in gender and number with the subject (review *Subject*, p. 35; *Subject pronouns*, p. 39).

Max **est allé** au cinéma.
 subject past participle
 masc. sing. masc. sing. → **allé**
Max went to the movies.

Marie **est allée** au cinéma.
 subject past participle
 fem. sing. fem. sing. → **allée + e**
Mary went to the movies.

Max et Marie **sont allés** au cinéma.

masc. + fem. → **ils** past participle
masc. pl. → **allé + s**

Max and Mary went to the movies.

Avoir — When the auxiliary verb is **avoir**, the past participle agrees in gender and number with the direct object of the verb, provided that the direct object comes before (not after) the verb. (Review the section on direct objects, p. 142 and direct object pronouns, p. 149.)

- direct object pronouns always come before the verb → past participle agrees with the antecedent of the pronoun (see *Pronouns*, p. 37).

Roger veut cette chemise. Il l'a **achetée**.

antecedent	pronoun (la)	past participle + e
fem. sing.	dir. obj.	fem. sing. → acheté + e
	fem. sing.	

Roger wants this shirt. He bought it.

Roger veut ces livres. Il **les a achetés**.

antecedent	pronoun	past participle + s
masc. pl.	dir. obj.	masc. pl. → acheté + s
	masc. pl.	

Roger wants these books. He bought them.

Roger veut ces chemises. Il **les a achetées**.

antecedent	pronoun	past participle + es
fem. pl.	dir. obj.	fem. pl. → acheté + es
	fem. pl.	

Roger wants these shirts. He bought them.

- direct object nouns can come before the verb → past participle agrees with the noun(s)

Voici **la chemise** que Roger a **achetée**.

noun dir. obj.	past participle + e
fem. sing.	fem. sing. → acheté + e

Here is the shirt that Roger bought.

Le fauteuil et **la chaise** qu'il a **achetés** sont confortables.

noun	noun	past participle + s
masc. sing.	fem. sing.	masc. pl. → acheté + s
direct objects → masc. sing. + fem. sing. = masc. pl. (see p. 44)		

The armchair and the chair that he bought are comfortable.

- direct object nouns can come after the verb → no agreement, the past participle remains in the masculine singular

Roger a acheté ces chemises.
 past participle dir. object after the verb
 masc. sing. fem. pl.
 Roger **bought** these shirts.

Remember the following when using the **passé composé**:

1. Determine whether the verb takes **avoir** or **être** as the auxiliary.
2. Depending on which auxiliary verb is required, apply the appropriate rules of agreement.

19.2 L'IMPARFAIT (Imperfect)

The **imparfait** is a simple tense formed with the stem of the 1st person plural of the present tense of regular and irregular verbs + a set of endings **-ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, -aient**: nous **aimons** → j'**aimais** (*I loved*); nous **prenons** → il **prenait** (*he took*); nous **finissons** → ils **finissaient** (*they finished*).

Two English verb forms indicate that the **imparfait** should be used in French:

1. the verb form includes, or could include, **used to, would**

*As a child, I **used to go** to France every year.*

*As a child, I **would go** to France every year.*

Comme enfant, j'allais en France chaque année.
 imparfait

2. the verb form is in the past progressive tense

*At 10:00 p.m.. last night I **was sleeping**.*
 past progressive

A dix heures hier soir je dormais.
 imparfait

Except for these two English verb forms, the English verb does not indicate whether you should use the **imparfait** or the **passé composé**.

19.3 SELECTION: “Le Passé composé” or “L’imparfait”

Whether to put a verb in the **passé composé** or the **imparfait** often depends on the context. Here are a few guidelines for the tense of the French verb.

- the English verb can't include *used to, would* (see 1 above) → **passé composé**

What exercise **did** you **do** last week?

I **went** to the pool three times last week.

Did do, went cannot be replaced by **used to do (go)**.

Quel exercice **as-tu fait** la semaine dernière?

Je **suis allé** trois fois à la piscine la semaine dernière.

passé composé

Compare to when English verb could include *used to, would* → **imparfait**

What exercise **did** you **do** when you **were** young?

I **went** to the pool three times a week.

Did do, were, went could be replaced by **used to do (be, go)**.

Quel exercice **faisais-tu** quand tu **étais** jeune?

J'**allais** à la piscine trois fois par semaine.

imparfait

- past actions were taking place simultaneously and one action was interrupted by another: action going on → **imparfait**, interrupted by another action → **passé composé**

I **was reading** when he **arrived**.

The actions “reading” and “arrived” took place at the same time in the past: what was going on? I was reading → **imparfait**; what happened? He arrived → **passé composé**.

Je **lisais** quand il **est arrivé**.

imparfait

passé composé

Compare to independent past actions → **passé composé**

I **read**, he **arrived**, then we **ate**.

The series of actions “read,” “arrived,” and “ate” happened one after another in the past → **passé composé**.

J' **ai lu**, il **est arrivé**, ensuite nous **avons mangé**.

_____ passé composé _____

Sometimes both tenses are possible, but usually one of the two is more logical. Consult your textbook for additional guidelines.

English and French use a different tense in sentences with the word **since** or **for** (when *for* refers to a period of time).

IN ENGLISH

The verb preceding **since** or **for** is in a past tense when the action began in the past and is continuing in the present.

I've studied French **since** H.S.

I've been studying French **since** H.S.

past tense (still going on in the present)

I've studied French **for** ten years.

I've been studying French **for** ten years.

past tense (still going on in the present)

IN FRENCH

The verb preceding **depuis** (*since* or *for*) is in the present tense when the action began in the past and is continuing in the present.

J'étudie le français depuis l'école secondaire.

present

since

I've studied French **since** H.S.

I've been studying French **since** H.S.

J'étudie le français depuis dix ans.

present

for

I've studied French **for** ten years.

I've been studying French **for** ten years.

STUDY TIPS

LE PASSÉ COMPOSÉ

Pattern (see *Tips for Learning Word Forms*, p. 4)

- ① Auxiliary verb (**avoir** or **être**)
 - Some students find it helpful to pair the verbs that take **être** with their opposites so as to remember them more easily (see p. 79).
 - You might also find it helpful to remember that the first letters of the verbs that take **être** spell “Dr. Mrs. Vandertramp.”
Descendre **R**ester (Dr) **M**onter **R**etourner **S**ortir (Mrs)
Venir **A**ller **N**âître **D**evenir **E**nter **R**evenir **T**omber **R**entrer
Arriver **M**ourir **P**artir (Vandertramp)
- ② Main verb (past participle)
 - Regular past participle: (see p. 75).
 - Irregular past participle: To be learned as vocabulary.

Practice

- ① Sort out the verb cards that take **être** as the auxiliary verb.
 - Look at the French side and write or say sentences, putting the verb in the **passé composé**.
 - Look at the English side and repeat the same exercise as above.
- ② Sort out the verb cards that take **avoir** as the auxiliary verb. Repeat the two steps under 1 above.
- ③ Once you’ve mastered separately the verbs that take **être** as an auxiliary and those that take **avoir**, mix the two piles.
- ④ Look at the English side and write or say French sentences putting the verb in the **passé composé**. This time you’ll have to remember the auxiliary verb and the past participle.

Flashcards

Add to each of your verb flashcards the **je** form of the **passé composé**. This will show you whether the verb is conjugated with **avoir** or **être** and will give you the past participle form of the main verb.

prendre	to take
j’ai pris	I took

REVIEW ACTIVITY

- Circle the verbs that would be put in the imparfait and underline the verbs that would be put in the "passé composé".

Last summer, I **went** to France with my family. Everyone **was** very excited when we **arrived** at the airport. While my mother **checked** the luggage and my father **handled** the tickets, my little sister Mary **ran** away. My parents **dropped** everything and **tried** to catch her, but she **ducked** behind the counter. Finally, a manager **grabbed** her and **brought** her back to us. She **was crying** because she **was** sad she **was leaving** her dog for two weeks. Everyone **comforted** her and she **went** on the plane and **left** with a smile.

An **INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN** is a word that replaces a noun and functions as an indirect object of a verb (see *Pronouns*, p. 37; *Object*, p. 143).

Roger spoke **to her**.

Roger spoke **to whom**? Answer: Her.

Her is the indirect object of the verb **spoke**.

In this chapter we shall look at indirect object pronouns. Other object pronouns are studied in *What is a Direct Object Pronoun?*, p. 149 and *What is a Disjunctive Pronoun?*, p. 161.

IN ENGLISH

Most object pronouns are different from subject pronouns. However, the same form is used for all object pronouns, direct, indirect, and disjunctive.

	SINGULAR PRONOUN	OBJECT PRONOUN
SINGULAR		
1 st person	I	me
2 nd person	you	you
3 rd person	he	him
	she	her
	it	it
PLURAL		
1 st person	we	us
2 nd person	you	you
3 rd person	they	them

Let us look at two examples of indirect object pronouns.

He wrote a letter to him.

subject
pronoun

indirect object
pronoun

They lent them a car.

subject indirect object
pronoun pronoun

 IN FRENCH

As in English, pronouns used as indirect objects are different from pronouns used as subjects. Unlike English, direct and indirect object pronouns do not always have the same form. Unlike French nouns that are indirect objects, indirect objects pronouns are not preceded by the preposition *à* (*to*).

Let us look at French indirect object pronouns to see how they are formed. We have divided them into two groups.

1st AND 2nd PERSONS SING. AND PL. (me, you, us)

The indirect object pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons are the same as the direct object pronouns (see p. 150). Just select the form you need from the chart below.

	SUBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT	SUBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
Singular				
1 st person	je	me	l	(to) me
2 nd person	tu	te	you	(to) you
Plural				
1 st person	nous	nous	we	(to) us
2 nd person	vous	vous	you	(to) you

To simplify our examples, we have used the verb *to speak to* (*parler à*) because both the English and French verbs take an indirect object.

Paul speaks to me.

1. Identify the verb: to speak
2. What is the French equivalent: **parler**
3. Is the French verb followed by *à*: Yes
4. Function of the pronoun in French: indirect object
5. Selection: **me**

Paul **me** parle.

Paul speaks to you.

Paul **te** parle.

Paul **vous** parle.

Paul speaks to us.

Paul **nous** parle.

Establishing the function of **nous** and **vous** can be confusing. Not only are the same forms used as subject and object, but both subject and object pronouns are placed before the verb. In case of doubt, look at the verb. Remember that verbs agree with their subject. If **nous** is the subject, the verb will end in **-ons**; if it doesn't, **nous** is an object of some kind. The same is true with **vous**. If it is the subject of the verb, the ending of regular verbs will be **-ez**.

Nous **vous** parlons.
We are talking to you.

Vous **nous** parlez.
You are talking to us.

3rd PERSON SING. AND PL. (him, her, it, them)

The indirect object pronouns of the 3rd persons have a different for depending on whether they refer a person or a thing or idea.

1. **PERSON** — a singular and plural form

	SUBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT	SUBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
Singular				
Masculine	il	lui	<i>him, it</i>	(to) him
Feminine	elle		<i>her, it</i>	(to) her
Plural				
Masculine	ils	leur	<i>them</i>	(to) them
Feminine	elles			

Are you speaking to Mary? Yes, I am speaking **to her**.

1. Identify the verb: to speak.
2. What is the French equivalent: **parler**
3. Is the French verb followed by **à**: Yes
4. Function of the pronoun in French: indirect object
5. Number of antecedent: singular (*Mary*)
6. Selection: **lui**

Parlez-vous à Marie? Oui, je **lui** parle.

Are you speaking to Paul and Mary? Yes, I am speaking **to them**.

- 1-4. See above.
5. Number of antecedent: plural (*Paul and Mary*)
6. Selection: **leur**

Parlez-vous à Paul et à Marie? Oui, je **leur** parle.

Since the 3rd person indirect object pronoun **lui** refers to both genders, the only way you can tell if it refers to a male or female is from what has been said before.

Also, do not confuse the possessive pronoun **leur** above which doesn't change form and **leur** as a possessive adjective which agrees in number with the noun it modifies (see p. 123–4).

2. THING AND IDEA — one form → **y**

Are you answering the letter? Yes, I am answering it.

1. Identify the verb: to answer
2. What is the French equivalent: **répondre**
3. Is the French verb followed by **à**: Yes
4. Function of the pronoun in French: indirect object
5. Type of antecedent: thing (the letter)
6. Selection: **y**

*Répondez-vous à la lettre? Oui, j'**y** réponds.*

Unlike English where indirect object pronouns are placed after the verb, in French they are usually placed before the verb. Consult your textbook for the placement of pronouns.

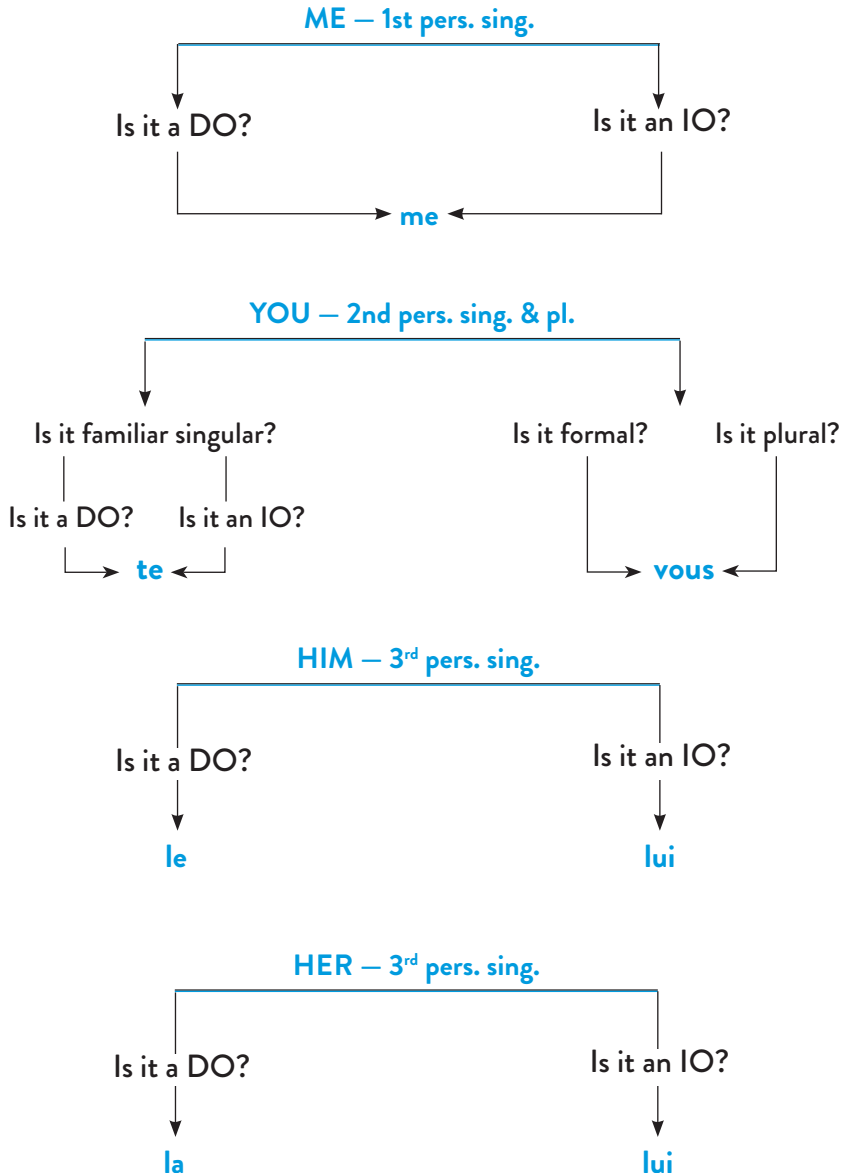
CAREFUL — Make sure you establish the type of object appropriate for the French verb, not necessarily the same type as for the English verb (see *Object*, p. 142). For object pronouns used with verbs in the affirmative imperative see p. 163 in *What is a Disjunctive Pronoun*.

See 39.1, pp. 165–6 for a *Summary of French Object Pronouns* which covers the various functions of pronouns: direct and indirect objects, objects of preposition, disjunctive and after affirmative imperative verbs.

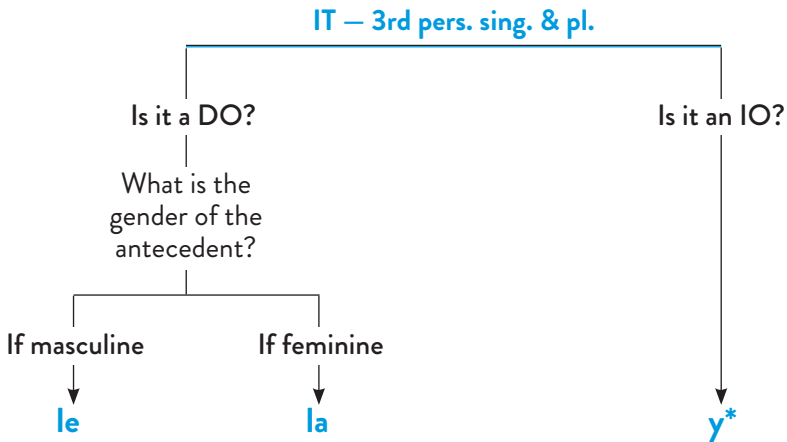
38.1 Choosing French Direct and Indirect Object Pronouns

DO → Direct object of the French verb

IO → Indirect object of the French verb



Choosing French Direct and Indirect Object Pronouns (cont.)

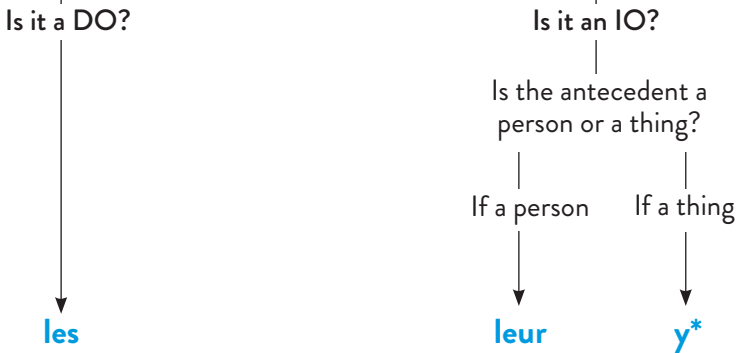


US – 1st pers. pl.

↓

nous

THEM – 3rd pers. pl.



* Consult your textbook for other uses of “y”.

STUDY TIPS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

Pattern (see *Tips For Learning Word Forms*, p. 4)

Learn the forms of direct and indirect object pronouns separately.

- ① Look for similarities between direct object pronouns and other parts of speech. Refer to the charts on p. 150 and p. 151.
What similarities can you think of?
 - 1st & 2nd pers. sing.: initial **m-** and **t-** same as the initial letters of the possessive adjectives (**mon, ton**)
 - 1st & 2nd pers. pl.: same as subject pronouns
 - 3rd pers. sing. & pl.: same as definite articles

- ② When you learn indirect object pronouns, look for similarities with direct object pronouns as well as other parts of speech.
What similarities do you notice?
 - 1st, 2nd pers. sing. & pl.: same forms for direct and indirect object pronouns
 - 3rd pers. pl.: indirect object pronoun is the same as the singular form of the 3rd pers. pl. possessive adjective **leur**. (Careful: the possessive adjective has a singular and plural form (**leur, leurs**), while the indirect object pronoun has only one form, **leur**.)

Practice

- ① Since function determines a pronoun's form, it is important to learn object pronouns in a sentence.
- ② Write a series of short French sentences with masculine, feminine and plural direct and indirect objects. Rewrite the sentences replacing the object with the appropriate object pronoun.

Il donne le cadeau.	<i>He gives the gift.</i>
Il le donne.	<i>He gives it.</i>
Il parle à Marie.	<i>He speaks to Mary.</i>
Il lui parle.	<i>He speaks to her.</i>

Flashcards

On the subject pronoun flashcards, add sentences illustrating the pronoun's direct and indirect object forms.

il	<i>he, it</i>
Je la (le) vois.	<i>I see her (him, it).</i>
Je lui donne un livre.	<i>I give her (him) a book.</i>

Review by going through the cards on the English side and creating French sentences illustrating the various forms.

REVIEW ACTIVITY

- Underline the indirect object pronoun in the sentences below.
- Fill in the blanks by referring to pp. 157-8.
- Circle the appropriate answer: person (P), thing (T), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO).

- a. The teacher spoke to her. (to speak to → **parler à**)

Le professeur _____ a parlé.

- b. The teacher spoke to him.

Le professeur _____ a parlé.

- c. The boy spoke to them yesterday.

TYPE OF ANTECEDENT: P T

Le garçon _____ a parlé hier.

- d. Did you answer his letters? No, we're answering them today.

(to answer → répondre à)

FUNCTION OF PRONOUN IN ENGLISH: DO IO

FUNCTION OF PRONOUN IN FRENCH: DO IO

ANTECEDENT IN ENGLISH:

TYPE OF ANTECEDENT: P T

Avez-vous répondu à ses lettres? Non, nous _____ répondons aujourd'hui.

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