



How to Ask Questions in French

KS4 FRENCH

LANGUAGE LEARNING

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 4 min read

Why Questions Are Important in French

Being able to ask questions is one of the most useful skills in any language. Whether you're travelling to **France**, talking to a French-speaking friend, or doing your homework, you need to know how to ask for information, directions, and help. The good news is that French has several different ways to ask questions, and once you understand the patterns, they become easy to use.

The Simplest Way: Rising Intonation

The easiest way to ask a question in French is to take a normal sentence and say it with a questioning tone at the end. For example, if you wanted to say "You like chocolate," you could say "**Tu aimes le chocolat?**" By raising your voice at the end, it becomes a question: "Do you like chocolate?" This works because your tone tells the listener you're asking something, not making a statement.

Think of it like texting a friend. When you write "You're coming to the party?" your friend knows it's a question even though it looks like a statement—the question mark and your tone make it clear.

Inverting the Word Order

In more formal French, people swap the order of the subject (who is doing the action) and the verb (the action word). For example, instead of "**Tu aimes le chocolat?**" you could say "**Aimes-tu le chocolat?**" (literally "Like you chocolate?"). This is called **inversion**, and it's very common in written French and formal speech. You'll notice a hyphen connects the verb and subject when they're swapped.

Using "Est-ce que"

Another popular way to ask questions is by adding "**Est-ce que**" at the beginning of a sentence. This phrase literally means "Is it that" in English, but it's really just a question marker. So "**Est-ce que tu aimes le chocolat?**" means "Do you like

chocolate?" Many French speakers prefer this method because you don't have to change word order—it feels more natural to say.

Think of it like putting a question label on the front of your sentence. It signals to the listener: "Hey, I'm about to ask you something!"

Question Words

French also has special **question words** that ask about specific information. These include "**Qui?**" (Who?), "**Quoi?**" (What?), "**Où?**" (Where?), "**Quand?**" (When?), "**Pourquoi?**" (Why?), and "**Comment?**" (How?). You can use these at the start of a sentence with inversion or with "Est-ce que." For example: "**Où habites-tu?**" (Where do you live?) or "**Pourquoi est-ce que tu aimes le français?**" (Why do you like French?)

Choosing Your Method

All three methods work, but different situations call for different approaches. Rising intonation is casual and friendly, inversion is more formal and written, and "Est-ce que" is balanced and natural. As you practice French, you'll develop a feel for which one sounds right in each situation.