

Negation is a grammatical term for the contradiction of some or all of the meaning of an affirmative (positive) sentence. In English, a sentence is commonly negated by inserting a single negative word (not, don't, didn't, won't , etc.) into the appropriate place in the sentence. In French, a sentence is commonly negated by inserting two words.



basic negation

Ne ... pas is placed around the conjugated verb to negate an affirmative sentence in French. Note that the **ne** changes to **n'** before a verb beginning with a vowel.

Joe-Bob, l'écureuil, court vite.

Joe-Bob, the squirrel, runs fast.

Edouard, l'escargot, **ne** court **pas** vite.

Edouard the snail **doesn't** run fast.

Trey aime le rap.

Trey likes rap.

Joe-Bob **n'**aime **pas** le rap.

Joe-Bob **doesn't** like rap.

alternate forms of negation

There are many other French words that one can use to negate a positive statement besides the basic form **ne ... pas**. Moreover, negative words can be used to contradict the verb as well as other parts of the original affirmative sentence.

Joe-Bob écoute de la musique country.

Joe-Bob listens to country.

Tex **n'**écoute **jamais** de musique country.

Tex **never** listens to country.

Trey **n'**écoute **que** du rap.

Trey **only** listens to rap.

Fiona **n'**écoute **rien**.

Fiona listens to **nothing**.

Presque **personne n'**écoute de musique country en France.

Almost **nobody** listens to country music in France.