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.
- Edouard, l'escargot, ne court pas vite.
- Trey aime le rap.
- Joe-Bob n’aime pas le rap.

- Joe-Bob, the squirrel, runs fast.
- Edouard the snail doesn't run fast.
- Trey likes 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.
- Tex n’écoute jamais de musique country.
- Trey n’écoute que du rap.
- Fiona n’écoute rien.
- Presque personne n’écoute de musique country en France.

- Joe-Bob listens to country.
- Tex never listens to country.
- Trey only listens to rap.
- Fiona listens to nothing.
- Almost nobody listens to country music in France.