

The verbs **partir**, **sortir**, **quitter** and **laisser** all mean 'to leave' in English, but they have distinguishing nuances and uses in French. An important distinction among these verbs is the idea of **transitivity**. **Partir** and **sortir** are **intransitive** in this context; they do not take a direct object (but may be followed by a prepositional phrase). On the other hand, **quitter** and **laisser** are **transitive**; they take a direct object in a sentence.

### partir

**Partir** is an irregular -ir verb that conveys the particular meaning of 'leaving with the intention of going somewhere.' It is often followed by the preposition **pour**.



 Joe-Bob: Je **pars** pour College Station.

Joe-Bob: I am leaving for College Station.

### sortir

**Sortir** is an irregular -ir verb that conveys the particular meaning of 'going out or to exit from an enclosed space.' It is often followed by the preposition **de**.

 Bette: Je vais **sortir** ce soir.


Bette: I'm going to go out tonight.

Corey **sort** de sa chambre sans fermer la porte.

Corey goes out of his room without locking the door.

### quitter

**Quitter** is a **regular -er verb** that is used when 'leaving someone or someplace.'

 Tammy **quitte** la maison à 8 heures chaque matin.

Tammy leaves the house at 8 o'clock every morning.

Rita **quitte** son mari.

Rita is leaving her husband.



Note that **quitter** is a transitive verb, that is, it always takes a direct object: **son mari** or **la maison** in the examples above. **Sortir** is usually intransitive (no object), and needs the preposition **de** to express the idea of leaving from somewhere.

## laisser

**Laisser** is a regular -er verb that means 'to leave something or someone behind.'



Rita: Les gosses **laissent** leurs jouets partout.

Et toi, bon à rien, **laisse**-moi tranquille.  
Quelle vie de chien!

Rita: The kids leave their toys everywhere.

And you, good-for-nothing, leave me alone! What a dog's life!

Consider the following dialogue:



Tammy fait un cauchemar:

Tex: Tammy, je **pars** maintenant pour la France. Je rentre à Lyon.

Tammy: Tu me **quittes** mon chéri?

Tex: Oui, Tammy c'est fini.

Tammy: Mais non!

Tex **sort** de l'appartement de Tammy. Mais il revient un moment plus tard.

Tex: J'**ai laissé** mes cigarettes dans la cuisine.

Puis il **quitte** l'appartement pour toujours.

Tammy has a nightmare:

Tex: Tammy, I'm leaving now for France. I'm going back to Lyon.

Tammy: You're leaving me, darling?

Tex: Yes, Tammy, it's over.

Tammy: But, no!

Tex leaves Tammy's apartment, but he comes back a minute later.

Tex: I left my cigarettes in the kitchen.

Then he leaves the apartment forever.



exercices

### fill in the blanks

Fill in the blank with the correct form of 'quitter', 'partir', 'sortir' or 'laisser'. Use either the infinitive, the present tense, the imperative or the past participle.

1. Rita à son mari: '\_\_\_\_\_! Je ne t'aime plus.'
2. Rita à son ex-mari: '\_\_\_\_\_ -moi seule.'
3. Tex était triste de \_\_\_\_\_ la France.
4. Tex \_\_\_\_\_ souvent avec Tammy.
5. Corey ne \_\_\_\_\_ jamais de sa chambre pendant la journée.
6. Tex et ses amis \_\_\_\_\_ pour Opelousas.
7. Joe-Bob \_\_\_\_\_ souvent ses devoirs à la maison.
8. On se demande si Rita va \_\_\_\_\_ son mari.
9. Tex à Trey: 'Où as-tu \_\_\_\_\_ mon manuscrit?'
10. Les parents de Tex ont \_\_\_\_\_ cette vie après un accident sur l'autoroute.
11. Les chattes \_\_\_\_\_ la nuit.
12. Tex: Le dernier autobus est déjà \_\_\_\_\_ .