

Unit 55 - Expressing goal

1 Finite clauses

In terms of language function, a goal is a form of result that is desired. For this reason, when the goal is expressed in a finite subordinate clause (i.e. one containing a conjugated verb), the verb is often in the subjunctive.

1.1 Adverbial clauses

1.1.1 *Pour que / afin que* (less common) (both + subjunctive) - *so / in order that*

Le patron m'a laissé partir 2 heures en avance **pour / afin que** je puisse prendre mon train
The boss let me leave 2 hours early so that I could catch my train

1.1.2 *Que - so that*. This is used in spoken French after the imperative with the same sense of *pour que* :

Apporte-le ici **que** je puisse le regarder de plus près
Bring it here so I can take a closer look at it

1.1.3 *De peur que (ne) / de crainte que (ne)* (less common) (both + subjunctive) - *for fear that*. These are used when the aim is to avoid a particular result. Note that the *ne* (called an "expletive" *ne*) does **not** express a negative, and is not compulsory :

Le docteur a prescrit des antibiotiques **de peur / crainte que** son état (ne) s'aggrave
The doctor prescribed antibiotics for fear that his / her condition would get worse

1.1.4 *De sorte que / de façon (à ce) que / de manière (à ce) que* + subjunctive - *so that*. These are used with the subjunctive when expressing a desired result :

Ils ont changé la date de la soirée **de sorte que** je puisse venir
They rearranged the party so that I could come
J'ai rangé les livres par ordre alphabétique **de façon (à ce) que** l'on puisse les retrouver facilement
I've arranged the books in alphabetical order so (that) they can be found easily
Il a pris un jour de congé de maladie **de manière (à ce) qu'il** puisse regarder le match
He took a day off sick so that he could watch the match

Note, however, that these constructions take the indicative when expressing a simple consequence. Compare, for example :

Quelqu'un a enlevé le panneau de sorte que les gens ne **sachent** plus où aller
Someone has taken down the sign so that (i.e. in order that) people don't know which way to go
Quelqu'un a enlevé le panneau de sorte que les gens ne **savent** plus où aller
Someone has taken down the sign so that (i.e. with the result that) people don't know which way to go

1.2 Completive (*que*) clauses

For a list of verbs expressing a desired result, see the section marked "personal will" in the table of verbs in Unit 16.

1.3 Relative clauses

Goal is often expressed using a relative clause structure with verbs of seeking (*chercher, ne pas trouver, il y a, montrer, etc.*) or wishing (*aimer, souhaiter, vouloir, avoir envie*). Where the goal expressed is non-existent or hypothetical, the subjunctive is generally used :

Il cherche un livre qui **ait** une bonne intrigue
I'm looking for a book which has a good story line

However, when the goal expressed is existent, the indicative is generally used :

L'Homme au masque de fer est un livre qui **a** une bonne intrigue
 The Man in the Iron Mask *is a book which has a good story line*

2 Nonfinite clauses

2.1 Infinitive clauses

Where the subject of the subordinate verb would be the same as that of the main clause verb, an infinitive must be used. The following prepositions can take an infinitive :

2.1.1 *Pour / afin de* (less common) - *in order to / so as to*

Elle est partie une heure en avance **pour / afin d'**être sûre d'arriver à son rendez-vous à l'heure
She left an hour earlier so as to be sure of getting to her appointment on time

Note, however, that after most *être* verbs (*aller, venir* etc.) the *pour* is omitted where there is nothing between the verb and its infinitive :

Je suis allé(e) chercher le livre dans ma chambre
I went to fetch the book from my room

Where there is something between the verb and its infinitive, the *pour* generally reappears :

Je suis monté(e) dans ma chambre **pour** chercher le livre
I went upstairs to my room to fetch the book

Note that where English uses the construction (*in order*) *for* + [subject] + [infinitive], French uses *pour / afin que* + [subject] + [finite verb] :

(In order) for these measures **to succeed** there needs to be a period of low inflation
***Pour / afin que* ces mesures **réussissent**, il faut une période de faible inflation**

2.1.2 *De peur de / de crainte de* (less common) - *for fear of*

Ils ont traversé la chambre sur la pointe des pieds **de peur / crainte de** réveiller les enfants
They walked through the bedroom on tiptoe for fear of waking the children

2.1.3 *De façon à / de manière à* - *so as to*

Le cycliste a mis un vêtement aux couleurs vives **de façon / manière à** être plus visible pour les automobilistes
The cyclist wore bright-coloured clothing so as to be more visible to motorists

2.1.4 *En vue de* (less common) - *with a view to, in order to*

Le Ministre a publié une mise au point **en vue de** clarifier la situation
The Minister issued a statement with a view to clarifying the situation

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2.1.5 *Histoire de* (informal) - *just to*

Elle a décidé de prendre quelques jours de congé, **histoire de** changer d'air un peu
She decided to take a few days holiday, to have a bit of a change of scene

2.2 Verbless clauses

Some of these structures can be followed by a noun rather than an infinitive. The resultant clause is called a verbless clause, as it expresses an implied action without containing a verb.

2.2.1 *Pour* - *for*

Il a fallu cinq ans **pour** la mise en oeuvre de cette réforme
It took five years for this reform to be implemented
Pour plus de renseignements, écrivez à notre service clientèle
For more information, write to our customer service department

2.2.2 *De peur de / de crainte de* (less common) - *for fear of*

Les forces de l'ONU sont restées sur place **de peur / crainte d'**une reprise des hostilités
The UN forces remained where they were for fear that fighting should break out again

3 Verbal expressions

3.1 *Viser quelque chose / à faire* - *to aim to do*

Ce projet de loi **vise à** améliorer la situation des immigrants
This bill aims to improve the situation of immigrants

3.2 *Cibler* - *to be aimed at, target*

Cette nouvelle boisson **cible** les jeunes en priorité
This new drink is aimed mainly at young people

3.3 *Être destiné à faire* : note that when the subject / head noun is not a person, this generally has the meaning *to be intended / meant to do* and **not** *to be destined to do* :

Des mesures **destinées à** réduire le taux de chômage ont été discutées au parlement
Measures aimed at reducing unemployment were discussed in Parliament

3.4 *Parvenir / réussir à faire* - *to manage to do*

Il **est parvenu / a réussi à** finir tous ses projets avant de partir en vacances
He managed to finish all his projects before going off on holiday

3.5 *Avoir pour but de faire* :

Cette dissertation **a pour but de** discuter du pour et du contre de l'Union Européenne
The aim of this report is to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the European Union

3.6 *S'assurer que (+ indicative) / de quelque chose* - *to make sure that / of something* : this means *to make sure* in the sense of checking something :

Après avoir acheté votre billet, **assurez-vous que** votre passeport est valide
After buying your ticket, make sure that your passport is valid

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Note that *assurer* used with a noun means *to carry out* or *provide something* rather than *to make sure of something* :

Nous **assurons** aussi **un service** de livraison à domicile
We also provide a home-delivery service

When translating into English, it is often best to discard the *assurer* altogether, and simply verbalize the noun to which it refers :

La gestion de l'association **est assurée** par un groupe de bénévoles
*The association **is run** by a group of volunteers*

3.7 *Faire en sorte que* (+ subjunctive) - *to make sure that, to see to it that* : this means *to make sure* in the sense of actually doing something :

Mon passeport étant périmé, j'ai **fait en sorte qu'il** soit renouvelé
As my passport was out of date, I made sure that it was renewed

3.8 *Faire que* + subjunctive (informal) - *to make sure that*

Fais que ta chambre soit rangée avant que je rentre
Make sure your room is tidy when I get back

3.9 *Être à la recherche de / être en quête de* - *to be looking for / in search of*

Ils sont toujours **à la recherche / en quête d'un** nouveau logement
They're still looking for somewhere else to live