

27. The subjunctive (5) - other uses

1 Use in relative clauses

The subjunctive is sometimes used in relative clauses when the sense of the sentence is to put something into a certain class. There are three contexts which generally require the subjunctive:

1.1 After **superlatives** and words acting like superlatives such as *seul, premier, dernier, unique*:

C'est l'homme le plus intelligent que je **connaisse**

He's the cleverest man I know

C'est la fleur la plus belle que j'**aie** jamais vue

It's the prettiest flower I have ever seen

C'est la première personne que j'**aie** rencontrée ici

He / she's the first person I met here

1.2 Where a person / thing is being sought but is hypothetical rather than real. For example:

Je cherche quelqu'un qui **fasse** ce genre de travail

I'm looking for someone who does this type of work

Y a-t-il quelqu'un ici qui **sache** parler japonais?

Is there someone here who speaks Japanese?

Trouvez-moi quelqu'un qui **soit** capable de le faire!

Find me someone who is capable of doing it!

1.3 After the negative structures such as *ne ... pas, ne ... rien, ne ... personne* etc.:

Je n'ai pas trouvé de traitement qui **puisse** me guérir

I haven't found a treatment that can cure me

Je n'ai rien trouvé qui me **plaise**

I've found nothing I like

Il n'y a personne ici qui **sache** la bonne réponse

There's no-one here who knows the right answer

2 Clauses beginning *whoever, whatever* etc.

The subjunctive is also used in subordinate clauses beginning with *whoever, whatever, wherever, wherever* and *however*. For example:

*Qui que vous **soyez*** - Whoever you are

*Quoi que vous **fassiez*** - Whatever you do

*Quelle que **soit** ta décision* - Whatever your decision may be

*Où que vous **alliez*** - Wherever you go

*D'où que tu **viennes*** - Wherever you come from

*Si difficile que **soit** la tâche* - However difficult the task is

3 Use in set expressions

As in English, the subjunctive in French is also used in certain set expressions expressing a wish, command or hypothesis:

Qu'il **viene** me le dire!

Let him come and tell me that!

Dieu vous **bénisse**!

God bless you!

Vaille que **vaille**

Somehow or other

Vive la France!

Long live France!