

## Acronyms and Abbreviations in French

Acronyms, initialisms, and abbreviations are common in French. Here, we summarize some basic rules and list some common examples.

### Acronyms and Initialisms

Acronyms and initialisms are both utilized to shorten a phrase by using the first letter of each word. The difference between an acronym and an initialism is that the former is pronounced as one word, e.g., “NASA” and “LASER,” whereas the latter is pronounced as separate letters, e.g., “ATM” and “UN.”

In most cases, we follow the same rules to form acronyms and initialisms in French. For example:

<i>United Nations</i>	UN	<b>O</b> rganisation des <b>N</b> ations <b>U</b> nies	ONU
<i>International Monetary Fund</i>	IMF	<b>F</b> onds <b>M</b> onétaire <b>I</b> nternational	FMI
<i>World Health Organization</i>	WHO	<b>O</b> rganisation <b>M</b> ondiale de la <b>S</b> anté	OMS
<i>Non-Governmental Organization</i>	NGO	<b>O</b> rganisation <b>N</b> on <b>G</b> ouvernementale	ONG
<i>Value Added Tax</i>	VAT	<b>T</b> axe sur la <b>V</b> aleur <b>A</b> justée	TVA

### Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or phrase. It uses the initial part of a word or a combination of the initial and final parts and is often characterized by a period at the end.

Examples of such abbreviations are titles and professions, such as:

M.	monsieur	<i>Mr.</i>
Mme.	madame	<i>Mrs./Ms.</i>
Mlle.	mademoiselle	<i>Miss.</i>
Dr.	docteur	<i>Dr.</i>
Prof.	professeur	<i>Prof.</i>
Ing.	ingénieur(e)	<i>Eng.</i>

The months of the year are abbreviated as follows:

<i>January</i>	janv.	<i>July</i>	juil.
<i>February</i>	févr.	<i>August</i>	août
<i>March</i>	mars	<i>September</i>	sept.
<i>April</i>	avr.	<i>October</i>	oct.
<i>May</i>	mai	<i>November</i>	nov.
<i>June</i>	juin	<i>December</i>	déc.

Notice that the months of “**mars**” (*Mars*), “**mai**” (*May*), “**juin**” (*June*), and “**août**” (*August*) are not abbreviated.

The days of the week are often abbreviated as follows:

<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tue.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thur.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Sun.</i>
lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi	dimanche
lun.	mar.	mer.	jeu.	ven.	sam.	dim.

The *Before Christ (BC)* era is referred to as “**avant Jésus-Christ**,” and is abbreviated as “**av. J-C.**” The *Common Era (CE)* is often referred to as “**après Jésus-Christ**,” and is abbreviated as “**ap. J-C.**”

The four cardinal directions are abbreviated as “**N**” for “**nord**” /*nord*/ (north), “**S**” for “**sud**” /*sud*/ (south), “**E**” for “**est**” /*est*/ (east), and “**O**” for “**ouest**” /*ouest*/ (west). The four ordinal directions are abbreviated as “**NE**” for “**nord-est**” (*northeast*), “**NO**” for “**nord-ouest**” (*northwest*), “**SE**” for “**sud-est**” (*southeast*), and “**SO**” for “**sud-ouest**” (*southwest*).

In addition to the above, there are lots of abbreviated and shortened words that are often used in daily life in France, such as:

un/une coloc	un/une colocataire	<i>a roommate</i>
les actus	les actualités	<i>the news</i>
un appart	un appartement	<i>an apartment</i>
un ordi	un ordinateur	<i>computer</i>
le bac	le baccalauréat	<i>secondary education diploma</i>
la fac	la faculté	<i>university</i>
le foot	le football	<i>soccer (football)</i>