

Juggling tenses in conversation

- It's vital you listen to the examiners questions as clues for which tense to use will be in the question.
- The examiner may indicate which tense to use by slipping a time phrase into the question, like one of these:
 - L'été dernier
 - L'année dernière
 - Le week-end dernier
 - Hier

These are all past tense time phrases. You will need to respond in the past tense, but can start your answer with the time phrase to give yourself time to think.

- Similarly, these are all indicators that you should reply in the future tense:
 - Demain
 - L'année prochaine
 - Le week-end prochain
 - Dans deux ans
- If you're asked a question which has 'Tu vas' plus an infinitive, like **manger** or **faire**, then you need to respond in the future tense. You can start your answer with 'Je vais...'
- For example, if you're asked 'Tu vas aller en vacances l'année prochaine ?' You can answer with 'Je vais aller en France l'année prochaine.'
- If you're asked a question which has 'Tu as' or 'Tu es' plus a past participle, like **mangé** or **allé(e)**, then you need to respond in the perfect tense. You can start your answer with 'J'ai...' or 'Je suis...'
- As an example, if you're asked 'Qu'est-ce que tu as fait en vacances l'année dernière ?' You can answer with 'J'ai joué au foot, j'ai écouté de la musique et j'ai lu des livres.'

Your teacher might give you some sample questions to give you an idea of what they might ask you in the conversation. Use these to practise with a friend. Try to make up some answers for each question. Prepare some sample answers as this will give you more confidence for the real exam.