

Pronoun Y

The pronoun “Y” represents a place, a thing, an idea, a concept, an animal. (not a person)
Y can be a place complement.

It replaces a place complement introduced by à, à la, à l', au, en, dans, chez, sur

Example 1:

Paul et Marie vont souvent à Londres. Ils y vont deux fois par mois.
Paul and Marie often go to London. They go there twice a month.

Y = à Londres (to London)

Example 2:

Ma sœur vit en Italie. Elle y vit depuis trois ans.
My sister lives in Italy. She has been living there for three years.

Y = en Italie (in Italy)

Example 3:

Jean est dans sa chambre. Il y est depuis ce matin.
Jean is in his room. He has been there since this morning.

Y = dans sa chambre (in his room)

Example 4:

Mon portefeuille est dans mon sac. Il y est depuis ce matin.
My wallet is in my bag. It has been there since this morning.

Y = dans mon sac (in my bag)

Attention:

The use of the pronoun Y is mandatory except with the simple future of the verb “aller.”

Observe:

Elle va à Nice. → Elle y va. She is going to Nice. → She is going there.
Elle ira à Nice. → Elle ira. She will go to Nice. → She will go.

ATTENTION to the placement of Y in the imperative, compound tenses, and negative form. (exercise)

- **présent** : j'y vais – je n'y vais pas (I go there – I do not go there)
- **passé composé** : j'y suis allé – je n'y suis pas allé (I went there – I did not go there)
- **futur simple** : j'irai – je n'irai pas (I will go there – I will not go there)
- **futur proche** : je vais y aller – je ne vais pas y aller (I am going to go there – I am not going to go there)
- **impératif présent** : Vas-y ! – N'y va pas ! (Go there! – Don't go there!)

Y can be an indirect object complement (COI).

A. Y REPLACES NAMES OF THINGS, CONCEPTS, IDEAS INTRODUCED BY “À, À LA, AU, AUX, EN “

Example 1:

*Elles pensent à leurs problèmes ? Oui, elles y pensent.
Do they think about their problems? Yes, they think about them.*

Y = à leurs problèmes (about their problems)

Example 2:

*Tu t'intéresses aux sciences ? Oui, je m'y intéresse.
Are you interested in science? Yes, I am interested in it.*

Y = aux sciences (in science)

Example 3:

*Elle croit en ses chances ? Oui, elle y croit.
Does she believe in her chances? Yes, she believes in them.*

Y = en ses chances (in her chances)

B. Y REPLACES A CLAUSE OR AN INFINITIVE VERB

Example 1:

*Elle pense à ce qu'ils lui ont dit hier ? – Oui, elle y pense.
Is she thinking about what they told her yesterday? – Yes, she is thinking about it.*

Y = à ce qu'ils lui ont dit hier (about what they told her yesterday)

Example 2:

*Tu arrives à comprendre ? – Oui, j'y arrive.
Can you understand? – Yes, I can understand it.*

Y = à comprendre (to understand)

Y IS PRESENT IN CERTAIN FIXED EXPRESSIONS

- Ça y est ? (= It's done)
- s'y connaître : (= to be knowledgeable about)
- Il s'y connaît bien en informatique. (He is very knowledgeable about computers.)
- Vas-y ! (= Stop / you're exaggerating, hurry up, start, ... depending on the intonation)
- Allez-y, je vous en prie. (Go ahead, please.)
- Pfff, tu t'y prends vraiment n'importe comment ! (Pfff, you're doing it all wrong!)

Note:

In the imperative, an S must be added to the second person singular of -er verbs when followed by Y.

Example:

Passe à Paris !

Passes-y ! (Visit Paris! – Visit there!)

Y = à Paris (to Paris)