

Survival Phrases - French (Part 1) Lessons 1-30



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In Part 2 the following are just a few of the topics you'll master:

- ★ Taking a taxi without being taken advantage of
- ★ Getting around and asking directions and actually understanding the answer!
- ★ Learning French using French, and making lots of friends in the process
- ★ Making the most of a hotel stay, and exploring alternatives to the beaten path
- ★ Visiting the Post office and mailing thing home
- ★ Phone rentals and phone cards, don't travel without one!
- ★ Critical phrases for vegetarians and allergy sufferers!
- ★ Talking to the doctor and explaining symptoms correctly
- ★ Getting the right medicine
- ★ Expressing yourself with adjectives and being understood
- ★ Home visits and proper protocol that will "wow" hosts
- ★ Getting help, this may be the most useful phrase you ever learn



Lesson 1: Thank You!

Merci!

LESSON NOTES

In French, there is only one word you need for expressing gratitude: "merci." And for emphasis, "merci beaucoup". In either case, there is no situation in which "merci" and "merci beaucoup" are inappropriate. They can be used as often as you like without regard for age difference, gender difference, formality or casualness. However, since there is no other way to express gratitude in speech, "merci" is often said in a mechanical way. We will look at two ways in which to make "merci" more personal.

PHRASES

French	English
Merci beaucoup.	Thank you very much.

VOCABULARY

French	English
Merci.	Thank you. / Thanks
Monsieur	Sir
Madame	Madam

QUICK TIP

As mentioned, you can never say "merci" too much in France. Showing gratitude, especially for newcomers, can be a very successful way to have the French warm up to you. So one way to make "merci" more personal is to use it generously. For instance, in a shop or restaurant, if you ask a question, it is a good idea to make eye contact and say "merci" or "merci beaucoup" at the end of the exchange. This is the same when getting off the bus or out of a taxi, after an exchange with a waiter, or really, anyone. If you make the extra effort to look the person in the eye and say "merci," the person feels acknowledged. It can be refreshing, especially in a culture that can be quite formal and make gratitude somewhat automatic. However, on the flip side, don't be surprised if you don't have as many "merci's" coming back to you—at first.

QUICK TIP 2

Showing gratitude with people you don't know personally is done by adding the word "Monsieur" or "Madame" at the end. For instance, if someone helps you, say a shopkeeper, and you want to show you're appreciation while keeping a distance, say "Merci, monsieur" (Thank you, sir) for a man, and "Merci, madame" (Thank you, madam) for a woman. In fact, you can add "Monsieur" or "Madame" at the end of any address to a stranger to make it ring with more politeness and respect.



Lesson 2: You're Welcome!

Je vous en prie.

LESSON NOTES

In French there are several ways to say "you're welcome," each depending on a particular context. Essentially, for our purposes, there are two categories of context: formal and informal. Each has its own form of the word "you": "tu" (informal) "vous" (formal). First we'll take a look at the informal contexts and then the formal. The difference is quite subtle at times, so if ever in doubt, use the formal.

In French "You're welcome." is "de rien". The first word "de" means "of". It is followed by "rien", which in French is "nothing". So all together we have "de rien". Literally this means "of nothing"

Another way of responding to a phrase of gratitude is "Je vous en prie" which is more formal. The first word "Je" means "I". It is followed by "vous", which in French is the formal "you". So to recap here, we have "Je vous". Literally this means "I you" The next word "en" means "of it". It is followed by "prie", which in French is "pray".

PHRASES

French	English
Je vous en prie.	"You are welcome" or "by all means" (formal)
Je t'en prie.	"You are welcome" (informal "you," but somewhat formal expression)
De rien.	"You're welcome" (informal)
C'est moi.	"The pleasure's mine." (informal, personal)

QUICK TIP

We use "tu" in contexts where we know the person personally and the environment is casual. People of one's own age, classmates, family, and friends are such people. At home, at school, friendly social settings are such contexts. "Tu" is the most common form of "you" that you will hear, so don't feel nervous about using it. In fact, over-use of "vous" can come off as old-fashioned or stuffy. If there is a doubt, start with "vous" and let the other person invite you to use the "tu" form.

To say "you're welcome" in an informal setting, say "de rien". If you feel you want to express this more emphatically, you can use the formal phrase we learned "je vous en prie" and replace the formal, "vous," with the informal "tu" which in this case is "te" (the reflexive form of "tu") . This makes "je t'en prie". This is a more gracious expression than the more common and perfunctory "de rien". Finally, to express "you're welcome" in a sincere and personal way we can say "c'est moi" which literally means "it's me (who gives thanks)" and is similar to "the pleasure is mine." "C'est moi" is considered very touching and authentic, so to use this as a traveler will surely impress.

QUICK TIP 2

We use "vous" when we want to show respect to the other person or when the context requires formality. For instance, when meeting someone for the first time, at a shop, at work, with a professor, or with an older person. However, "vous" is not always required when you meet someone for the first time if the setting is casual, say at a party with people of your own age. Younger people, especially, are using "vous" less and less. They often speak directly in "tu" with each other and even their grandparents. They reserve "vous" for their teachers and bosses. The use of "vous" is not so much a strict rule as it is a way to create a formal distance with others and this is at personal discretion. For instance, one can be on a very friendly basis with the local baker for years and still say "vous". Or two motorists who have a disagreement in the street who may be angry with each other, will still argue in "vous" form to keep a distance.

To say "You're welcome" in a formal setting, say "Je vous en prie", as we have learned. This phrase is very courteous and will work in almost any situation. So to adopt this expression would be as important for travelers as "de rien", if not more so. It shows good manners and respect, which are imperative in French culture.



Lesson 3: Please (This Please)

S'il vous plaît

LESSON NOTES

In French, "please" is "s'il vous plaît" and is the formal type of the expression. This form is the most common and can be used in any situation in which you feel you need to express respect, such as asking for directions on the street and with shopkeepers. However, there is also a familiar form, "s'il te plaît," used between people who are personally acquainted such as friends and family members. For traveling, this is less useful as you will need language to speak with people you don't know. It would be good to know "s'il te plaît" in any case, so you won't be confused when you hear it, or so you can say please once you make friends!

In French "please" is "s'il vous plaît". The first word "s'il" is actually the contraction of two words, "si" and "il". "Si" means "if", and "il," in this case, means "it". So all together we have "s'il" which means "if it". It is followed by "vous", which in French is "you" or "to you". So to recap here, we have "s'il vous". Literally this means "If it you". This is followed by "plaît" which means "pleases".

So all together we have "s'il vous plaît". Literally this means "if it pleases you".

The most rudimentary way of using "please" is pointing at something while saying "s'il vous plaît", but let's try and build this up a bit, shall we? Let's start with the expression, "This please." which in French is "ça, s'il vous plaît". In English, "this" comes before please. In French the word order is the same. In French the word for "this", "ça", precedes "s'il vous plaît".

Looking at the word for "this", warrants a look at the word for "that" which, for our purposes, is the same word "ça". The phrase "that please" is the same as "this please", "ça, s'il vous plaît".

PHRASES

French	English
S'il vous plaît	Please (formal "vous" form)
Pardon	Pardon me
Veillez patienter	Please wait
Veillez excuser la gêne occasionnée	Please excuse the momentary disturbance.
S.V.P., respectez la silence	Please keep quiet.

QUICK TIP

As we have seen, we can use "s'il vous plaît" as a polite way to ask for someone's attention like "excuse me" in English. It can also be a direct way to tell someone you want to get by, also like "excuse me." This is useful in crowded areas such as the metro. Teachers use "s'il vous plaît" to get their classroom to quiet down. Police officers also use it to control crowds. If someone is in your way, you can say "s'il vous plaît" and they will know to move. Another word for "excuse me" that is less forceful but equally polite is "pardon" which is obviously close to the English "pardon me". "Pardon" is generally the better term for when you want to get by as it is less forceful, but the French are not shy about using "s'il vous plaît" to make their point. Thus, "s'il vous plaît" is a term that you may not say as much as you will have said to you.

QUICK TIP 2

"S'il vous plaît" and "s'il te plaît" are not as commonly used as the English "please". For instance in English, announcements and signs would employ "please" where in French they would use "veuillez": the imperative tense of the verb "vouloir" (to want). For example, "veuillez patienter" translates as "please wait" and literally means "want to wait". "Veuillez" is always followed by a verb in infinitive form (verbs with the "er" ending) as in the above example and in the following: "Veuillez excuser la gêne occasionnée" ("Please excuse the momentary disturbance" a phrase you will hear a lot in France.) If "s'il vous plaît" is used on signs, it is often written like this "S.V.P." as in "S.V.P., respectez la silence." ("Please keep quiet" or literally "please respect the silence".) Again, these are not terms you need to use yourself, but you will hear and read them often.



Lesson 4: Basic Greetings

Bonjour.

LESSON NOTES

In French the phrase "bonjour" can be used as a universal greeting. The first word "bon" means "good". It is followed by "jour", which in French is "day". All together that makes "bonjour" which literally means "good day".

Afterwards, we have the evening greeting which in French is "bonsoir". The first word "bon" means "good", as we saw with "bonjour". It is followed by "soir", which in French is "evening".

Bonjour and Bonsoir are the only greetings you will need on your trip, but there are a couple more that might be useful, if only for knowing what someone is saying to you. For saying hello in a very sweet and endearing way, the French say "coucou." This is reserved for your closest friends and romantic partners, so don't say it to a police officer unless you have personal intentions! When on the phone, everyone answers with "allô", and not "bonjour" or "bonsoir." As we will see in the following quick tip, "bonjour" or "bonsoir" are used to open up conversation while "allô" is more like asking "is someone there?" After one says "allô" on the phone, then you can say "Bonjour" or "Bonsoir". The exchange goes something like this:

The phone rings. PERSON 1 picks it up

PERSON 1: Allô?

PERSON 2: Bonjour, Marc. C'est Julien. (Hello, Marc. It's Julien.)

PERSON 1: Bonjour....

Now the conversation can continue.

VOCABULARY

French	English
Bonjour.	Hello.
bon	good
jour	day
soir	evening
Bonsoir.	Good evening.
bisous	kiss hello

QUICK TIP

When it comes to customer service, the French have earned a reputation for rudeness. But this is due to travelers who have not learned the magic word “Bonjour”. To politely get someone’s attention, first say “Bonjour,” but don’t just rush into your question. Wait for the reply “Bonjour”. Now the person is all ears and you can ask away. It’s the difference between being ignored in a shop, and being served. But remember, after 6 o’ clock say “Bonsoir.”

This little French custom of saying “Bonjour” or “Bonsoir” to open up conversation is widely overlooked by foreigners, much to French irritation. The “bonjour” or “bonsoir” acts like the question “may I have your attention please,” establishing that you recognize the other person as an equal, and not just a source of information that you can order around. The “bonjour” in response acts like “Yes, you may” and establishes the other person recognizes you as an equal. If Bonjour or Bonsoir is not said, it is interpreted as quite rude because it takes away the other person’s right to decide whether they want to talk to you or not, and therefore, it does not establish equality. This is doubly true in customer service situations such as shops, restaurants and hotels, where service employees feel their equality with customers must be asserted. It may sound strange to the outsider who may be used to the motto “the customer is always right”, but France does not subscribe to that philosophy. If this little custom is upheld, service people almost always respond. If it is overlooked, they can make things quite hard on you.

QUICK TIP 2

When meeting someone in France, one of the first questions a traveler asks him or herself is “do I shake hands or do I do the French “bisous” (kiss hello)”? This is an awkward spot for many a newcomer so don’t feel bad if you don’t figure it out right away. Here are some guidelines to help you.

Traditionally, the “bisous” is reserved only for social situations:

- in which you are introduced to someone by a third person
- in which you already know the other person, such as a friend, and you are seeing them for the first time that day.

The “bisous” is performed like this: you and the other person touch cheek to cheek, usually starting on the left, and kiss the air. Then again on the other side. The number of kisses depends on the region, but most often it’s just two, one for each side.

While women kiss each other hello, there is no strict rule between men, though when they meet for the first time, they often shake hands. If you’re not sure what to do, follow the other person’s lead. If you are not comfortable with a kiss hello, a handshake always works, especially if you are foreign. The French are quite used to travelers in their country (it’s the number one tourist destination in the world!) and adapt this customary greeting easily to newcomers. Lastly, in a professional setting, everyone shakes hands.



Lesson 5: Parting greetings (Goodbye)

Au revoir.

LESSON NOTES

Customs for greeting and parting are essential in French culture. How you leave things, perhaps more than how you start them, can truly mark the moment. In the following quick tips we will cover some of the varying ways of saying goodbye. If you can't master them all, don't worry. There are way too many to remember. "Au revoir" works fine for any situation.

PHRASES

French	English
Au revoir.	Good bye.
à bientôt	See you soon.
à la prochaine	Until next time.
à plus tard	See you later.
à plus	See ya.
ciao	Bye
à demain	See you tomorrow.
à tout a l'heure	See you later. (today)
à tout de suite	See you very shortly / see you in a minute.
À la semaine prochaine	See you next week.
Bonne journee	Have a good day.
Bon après midi	Have a good afternoon.
Bonne soirée	Have a good evening.
Bonne nuit	Good night.
Bonne fin de journée	Have a good end to your day.
Bonne fin d'après midi	Have a good end to your afternoon.
Bonne fin de soirée	Have a good end to your evening.
Bon travail	Enjoy your work.
Bonne course	Enjoy your shopping.
Bon repas	Have a good meal.
Bonne continuation	All the best.
Bon courage	Best of luck.
Bonne chance	Good luck.

QUICK TIP

In French, one very common way to construct a parting phrase is to start with the article "à" ("until") and follow it with a future moment in time. This ranges from the general to the specific. These are rather perfunctory and can be used in formal and informal contexts, unless otherwise noted. Here is a list of such expressions.

Informal:

a bientôt: see you soon

a la prochaine: until next time

à plus tard : see you later

à plus: literally "until more" which is translated as "see ya"

ciao: bye

Neutral:

à demain: see you tomorrow

à tout a l'heure: see you later (today)

à tout de suite: see you very shortly / see you in a minute.

à _____ : here you put in the exact time, date or period of time you'd like such as "à la semaine prochaine" which is "see you next week".

Formal

à dieu : quite, until God. This is only said when you believe you will never see the person again in this lifetime and is never used except in literature. Only the French would have such a dramatic parting expression.

Again, as with any extra language I give you, this is good to know not so much for future use, but so you know what you hear or read.

QUICK TIP 2

A way to leave things on a more positive note is to wish the other person, or persons, a good day, afternoon, evening, etc.. This is done by starting the phrase with the word "bon" (masculine) or "bonne" (feminine) depending on the gender of the following noun. Then add the time of day or activity that is coming after your departure. As with the other parting phrases, these can be used in formal or informal situations, unless indicated otherwise.

Bonne journee: have a good day

Bon après midi: have a good afternoon

Bonne soirée: have a good evening

Bonne nuit: good night. This is strictly used for saying good bye right before going to bed.

In France, you can get even more precise about the time of day you want to talk about by adding "fin" ("end") to the phrase. "fin" is feminine, so it always takes "bonne"

Bonne fin de journée: have a good end to your day

Bonne fin d'après midi: have a good end to your afternoon

Bonne fin de soirée: have a good end to your evening

You can also specify the activity that the other person is going to engage in following your parting.

Bon travail: enjoy your work

Bonne course: enjoy your shopping

Bon repas: have a good meal

Bon / bonne _____: put in the noun of your choice.

There are other more general well-wishing phrases that you might hear.

Bonne continuation: literally "good continuation" (with whatever it is we talked about) which is translated as "all the best!"

Bon courage: literally "good courage" and translates as "best of luck"

Bonne chance: good luck



Lesson 6: Where is the Bathroom?

toilette

LESSON NOTES

Finding the bathroom in France is a snap. All you really need is the words "les toilettes" and someone will show you the way. However, one common mistake is to say the phrase in singular form "la toilette" which means, essentially, "washing and grooming" and not bathroom. So be sure to say "LES toilettes", as in general there are more than one.

In French "where is the bathroom?" is "où sont les toilettes?"

Let's take a look at the components. The first word "où" means "where". It is followed by "sont", which in French is "are". So to recap, we have "Où sont". Literally this means "where are" The next word "les" means "the". It is followed by "toilettes", which means "toilets".

So all together we have "Où sont les toilettes?". Literally this means "where are the toilets?".

A shorter way of asking for the bathroom is to say "les toilettes, s'il vous plaît", which means "the bathroom, please." Thankfully, is made of words we have already learned.

VOCABULARY

French	English
toilette	toilet
wc (pronounced)	WC
la commode	toilet (more colloquial)
salle de bains	bathroom (not toilet)
salle d'eau	bathroom
papier toilette	toilet paper
Hommes	Men's
Femmes	Women's
chez les hommes	men's (area)
chez les femmes	women's (area)
messieurs	Gentlemen
dames	Ladies

QUICK TIP

In French, there are several words for toilet that you may hear or read. Other than "toilette" you will often see and hear "wc" which is pronounced "vay-say". A very gruff way of saying toilet is "la commode". You can impress your close French friends with this one. Another word for bathroom is "salle de bains" but this is not the toilet. "Salle de bain" literally means "room of baths" and is translated as bathroom. This room has sinks, showers and baths but no toilets. The French often keep showers and toilets separate. Another term for "salle de bains" is "salle d'eau" or "water room" but this is rare.

Lastly, if you are looking for toilet paper, the term is "papier toilette".

QUICK TIP 2

Men's and women's bathrooms are marked in different ways. Most commonly, the men's is marked "Hommes" and the women's "Femmes". Sometimes this is shortened to just "H" and "F". Remember which is which so you don't make a mistake! In general, to express the men's area and the women's area, say for dressing rooms, the French say "chez les hommes" for the men and, "chez les femmes" for the women. Another more fancy way to write and say it is "messieurs" for men and "dames" for women. You may find this in more upscale places like restaurants.



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Lesson 7: Can You Speak English?

Parlez-vous anglais?

LESSON NOTES

As mentioned, English is taught very early on in French schools, so almost everyone will know some basic English. However, it is not advised to rely on this everywhere you go. Older people, and rural people tend not to speak it very much. Younger people, on the other hand, tend to speak quite a lot of English as popular culture like movies, music and the internet, is more and more Anglophone. The Académie Française, the government institution that regulates the French language, sees this change as a problem. There are laws controlling how much English can be broadcast in the media. For instance, all radio stations and movie theaters must have a majority of French language content, that is to say, no more than 50 % of it can be in English, and most stations and movie theatres push this quota to the limit. So if you are looking for an English break on your trip, the movie theatre and the radio have plenty. If you are looking for signs or brochures in English look for the British flag or the letters GB (Great Britain), as most of the English speakers in France come from England.

In French "do you speak English" is "parlez-vous anglais?". The first word "parlez" means "speak". It is followed by "vous", which in French is "you". It is followed by "Anglais". So all together we have "Parlez – vous anglais". Literally this means "Speak you English?" and is translated as "do you speak English?"

Now let's try a different language. How about "German".

"Can you speak German" is "parlez-vous Allemand?". The word for "German" is "Allemand". Here just the word for the language changes. The rest is the same.

PHRASES

French	English
Parlez-vous anglais?	Do you speak English (formal "vous" form)
Parlez anglais?	Speak English?
Parles anglais?	Speak English (informal "tu" form)
Je parle un peu de français.	I speak a little French.

QUICK TIP

In French, there are two ways of asking someone if they speak English, one is the way we learned in the podcast. "Parlez-vous anglais?" which is the more common and more respectful form. The second and more informal form using "tu," is almost never said: "parle-tu anglais?". So another way to make the expression more informal is to take away the inversion and say simply "Parlez anglais?" or in the "tu" form, " parles anglais?" Again, the first phrase is the best for our purposes, but the second two maybe asked of you, since the person you are speaking with may hear your accent. But we won't let that happen, will we ? :)

QUICK TIP 2

Now that you speak a little French, it may be useful to express this fact in French. For instance, if someone you meet does not speak English, you will need to find another common language. The obvious one is French. To say you speak a bit of French, say "Je parle un peu de français" Here is a conversation you may have.

You: "Parlez-vous anglais?"

French person: "Non"

You: "Parlez-vous allemand?"

French person: "Non"

You: "Ok, je parle un peu de français."



Lesson 8: I Don't Understand.

Je ne comprend pas.

LESSON NOTES

Not understanding what you hear when visiting a foreign country is a normal part of the process. So don't be frustrated if you don't understand. The French know that their language is not easy, and they often appreciate seeing a foreigner make a sincere effort to speak it, no matter how incorrect. So if you don't understand, they are likely to be patient if you show you are trying. However, if on the contrary, you show no effort in speaking French and say "je ne comprend pas" as an excuse to speak in English, they may not accept it and continue in French, just to show you what for. It is important to show a respect for the language and customs, as the French are raised to hold them somewhat sacredly. In French "I don't understand" is "Je ne comprend pas".

The first word "Je" means "I". It is followed by "ne", which in French is put before a verb to make it negative, similar to "don't" in English. So to recap here, we have "Je ne". Literally this means "I don't". The next word "comprend" means "understand". It is followed by "pas" which, along with the "ne" completes the negation of the verb.

So all together we have "Je ne comprend pas". Literally this means "I don't understand".

Another short way to express this is to say "comment?" This literally means "how?" and is similar to "I'm sorry?". The person will repeat what they said following this response.

PHRASES

French	English
Je ne comprend pas.	I do not understand.
Je ne parle pas Français.	I don't speak French.
Non, merci.	No thank you.

QUICK TIP

Even though we often do not like not understanding, it can come in handy, for instance, if you won't to be left alone by someone peddling wares or asking for money, as is very common in France. Being that it is the number one tourist destination in the world, clandestine souvenir sellers are there in droves. Sometimes they can be hard to shake, especially since they are often immigrants and speak better English than most French people. To give them a little surprise say "I don't understand. I don't speak French." in French. This combines the two phrases we have recently learned "Je ne comprend pas. Je ne parle pas français."

QUICK TIP 2

Another way to shake off someone in French, is simply to say "Non merci," which means "no thank you". This may prove a more useful phrase in these situations as it is more polite and easier to say.



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Lesson 9: Can You Say It Again?

répétez s'il vous plaît

LESSON NOTES

If you've ever traveled in a foreign country like I have, you are sure to come across the problem of having mastered a few questions, but having no idea what the answer coming back to you is. However, it is at this opportunity that we really learn the language, with the locals as our teachers. The phrase "répétez s'il vous plaît" will be instrumental in your learning French.

In French "Once again please" is "répétez s'il vous plaît". The first word "répétez" means "repeat". It is followed by "s'il vous plaît", which we learned in a previous chapter and in French is "please".

So all together we have "répétez s'il vous plaît". Literally this means "repeat if it pleases you".

Another common way of asking someone to repeat what they have just said is to say "comment?" This literally means "how?" And is similar to "I'm sorry?" or "what's that?".

At times, even repetition of what is said isn't enough to understand the speaker, as the words are still too fast. For situations like this, you can use the phrase "slowly please". In French "slowly please" is "doucement, s'il vous plaît". The first word "doucement" literally means "softly or sweetly" and is translated as "slowly". It is followed by "s'il vous plaît", which we saw in the earlier phrase.

So all together we have "doucement, s'il vous plaît". Literally this means "softly please".

These phrases, "Once again please", "slowly please", can be used together, as in "once again slowly, please": "répétez doucement, s'il vous plaît".

In order to make this phrase even more courteous we can add "can you?" to the front of it, making, "Can you say it once again please?" Or "Pourriez-vous répétez s'il vous plaît". In French "can you?" is "Pourriez-vous". The first word "pourriez" means "can". It is followed by "vous", which in French is, as we have learned, "you". So to recap here, we have "pourriez vous". Literally this means "can you" So all together we have "pourriez vous répétez s'il vous plaît?".

This can be used together with "Slowly" or "doucement" to make "Can You say it once again slowly please?" "pourriez vous répétez doucement s'il vous plaît".

PHRASES

French	English
répétez s'il vous plaît	Once again, please
Excusez moi, je ne comprend pas	Excuse me, I don't understand
Pourriez vous répéter s'il vous plaît	Can you say it once again?
encore	again, more (depending on context)

QUICK TIP

In the lesson, the phrase "Once again, please" is translated as "répétez s'il vous plaît", literally "repeat please". I would like to draw our attention to the word for "again" in French. It is "encore," a word you may recognize from concerts. "Encore" is used in many ways that "again" is not used in English and is why we do not directly translate it for the phrase "once again, please." To literally translate it, we would say "encore une fois, s'il vous plaît", or "one more time, please". This a bit too direct in French and is why we say "répétez s'il vous plaît".

Here, "encore" is used is to mean "more", it's primary meaning in French. For example, if someone asks if you want some more, say when he or she is serving you at a dinner, he or she might say "encore?" which is similar to "more?". Keep your ears peeled for this one, especially if you do want some more.

QUICK TIP 2

When you don't understand something and you would like the other person to repeat themselves, there is one way to impress, if you feel revved up for it. You can try putting together the two phrases we learned from the last two lessons. Together, they go like this "Excusez moi, je ne comprend pas. Pourriez vous répéter s'il vous plaît?" meaning "Excuse me, I don't understand. Can you say it once again?" If someone repeats, it's always a pleasure to show your gratitude. Say "merci beaucoup"!



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Lesson 10: Apologies(I'm Sorry)

Excusez-moi.

LESSON NOTES

In today's lesson we'll cover phrases used for apologizing. Now, as you haven't quite mastered French it's probably very prudent to go over the phrases for apologizing as they just might come in handy.

We'll start with "pardon".

This phrase is used when you want to get by someone, when you want to apologize for bumping into someone, and when you don't understand what someone says. This phrase is quite common and you will hear it a lot in crowded places like markets and the metro.

Next we'll take a look at: "excusez-moi".

This phrase is also used to get by someone, but is a bit stronger and a bit more forceful without losing any politeness. It is also used to apologize for oneself in a more emphatic way than "pardon." Whereas "pardon" can be said in passing, like "excuse me" in English, "excusez moi" is used to communicate directly ones apology to a particular person. "Excusez moi" be said alone, like "pardon." It always comes before a sentence explaining what you are apologizing for. For example, "Excusez-moi, je ne parle pas Français".

Now, what if someone says "excusez-moi to you?" If someone uses this expression towards you, the proper response is to say the phrase we learned for "you're welcome", which is "Je vous en prie".

As we have seen, apologizing for bumping into people, or needing to get by someone are a daily need. However, there are more specific situations in which apologizing needs a different tone and different words. For example, if you are in an informal situation, say with family and/or friends, and you want to say "excusez-moi", the other person is familiar and so does not need to be addressed with the formal "vous." so you say "excuse-moi", which is the tu form. The following are other situations that call for different phrases.

PHRASES

French	English
Excusez-moi.	Excuse me. (informal « tu » form)

French	English
Bonjour/soir. (wait for reply) Excusez moi de vous déranger, mais j'ai un problème.	Hello. Excuse-me for disturbing you, but I have a problem.
Bonjour/soir, excusez-moi. J'ai un problème	Hello. Excuse me, I have a problem.
Je suis désolé.	I'm sorry.
Je suis vraiment désolé.	I'm really sorry.

QUICK TIP

When traveling, we often find ourselves needing to ask for help from strangers, such as asking directions. In France, this can be tricky as the French have a very particular way of going about asking each other for information when they don't know each other. We studied this problem earlier when we looked at basic greetings. Do you remember the magic word to use to get someone's attention? It's "bonjour" ("bonsoir" past six o' clock). Well, it's also customary to apologize for interrupting someone before you ask your question. Here is a phrase that you can use in almost any situation where you need to do this:

"Bonjour/soir. (wait for reply) Excusez moi de vous déranger, mais j'ai un problème." This means "Hello. Excuse-me for disturbing you, but I have a problem." Then you say your question. This phrase will disarm any French person who you need help from. If it seems too complicated, here is a shorter version that is less fancy, but for a traveler it works great. "Bonjour/soir, excusez-moi. J'ai un problème." which means "Hello. Excuse me, I have a problem."

QUICK TIP 2

So far we learned how to excuse ourselves for slight problems such as not understanding someone, or bumping into someone. What about apologizing for more serious mistakes, like breaking something? For these situations we say "Je suis désolé" which means "I'm sorry." This is used regardless of formality or gender differences. If we want to be more emphatic we can say "Je suis vraiment désolé." which means "I'm really sorry."



Lesson 11: Business Greetings

Combien de personnes?

LESSON NOTES

There is a wide variety of French food, and your job as a visitor is to eat as much of as many things as possible! However, before you start eating you have to get the table! So in today's lesson we'll cover getting to the table in restaurant. As for ordering...well, you'll just have to hang on until next week.

When entering a restaurant in France you will be greeted with "Bonjour or Bonsoir".

The first question you'll be asked is "How many people in your party?" which in French is "Combien de personnes?". The first word "combien" means "how many" or "how much". This is followed by "de", which in French is "of". Lastly this is followed by "personnes", which in French is "people".

Now let's go over how to answer.

First, let's just recap numbers here. From one to five they are: "un" "deux" "trois" "quatre" "cinq" with the word for "person": "une personne", "deux personnes", "trois personnes", "quatre personnes", and "cinq personnes".

PHRASES

French	English
Combien de personnes?	How many people in your party?

VOCABULARY

French	English
une personne	One person
deux personnes	Two people
trois personnes	Three people

French	English
quatre personnes	Four people
cinq personnes	Five people

QUICK TIP

Another question a restaurant host may ask you after you enter is whether you want to eat or drink. Many restaurants function as bars at the same time, even high-class establishments. The question is "C'est pour manger ou pour boire?". The key words here are "manger" (to eat) and "boire" (to drink). The waiter needs to know, as restaurants are usually divided into two areas and he needs to place you accordingly.

QUICK TIP 2

Another way to answer the question "Combien de personnes" is to show fingers. If you have ever traveled, you will notice that different cultures count differently with the fingers. In France, "one" is indicated with the thumb. At "Two" you put the thumb back and show the index and middle fingers. "Three" are the index, middle and ring fingers. At, "four" you add the pinky, and five the thumb.



Lesson 12: Restaurant 1

non-fumeur

LESSON NOTES

Dining in restaurants is one of the favorite activities of the French. Some restaurants are very popular and you must reserve in advance, whereas some restaurants do not take reservations at all. Most restaurants do both reservations and walk-ins. If you already know a place you'd like to eat, be sure to call and find out if you can reserve a table.

Now remember when you enter a restaurant you'll hear "Combien de personnes?". This will likely be followed by one of the following.

"Non-smoking" in French is "non-fumeur". The first word "non" means "no". This is followed by "fumeur", which in French is "smoker".

"Smoking" is simply "fumeur".

Together, the question is often asked "Fumeur ou non fumeur?" which means "smoking or non-smoking?"

Now you can beat them to the punch by saying how many people in your party and non-smoking first. For example, you can say "Trois personnes, non-fumeurs s'il vous plaît."

Now, second-hand smoke may not be the only obstacle on your path towards the perfect meal, as you may not like the location of the table selected for you. Perhaps you want a table by the window, or one not next to the kitchen door! The first word "pourrions" means "could". It is followed by "nous", which in French is "we". So to recap we have "pourrions nous?". This is followed by "s'asseoir", which in French is "sit". Lastly, we have "là" which in French means "there".

So all together, we have "pourrions-nous s'asseoir là?" which literally means "could we sit there?"

PHRASES

French

Bonjour/Bonsoir. J'aimerais une table pour (X) personnes, non-fumeur (or fumeur) à (X) heure.

English

Hello. I would like a table for (X number of) people, non-smoking, (or smoking) at (X) o' clock.

French

Excusez-moi de vous déranger, mais pourriez vous fumer avec l'autre main / dans l'autre direction ?

English

Sorry to disturb you, but can you smoke with the other hand / in the other direction ?

VOCABULARY

French

non-fumeur

fumeur

English

non-smoking

smoking

QUICK TIP

You can reserve a table using some of the phrases you have just learned. Say "Bonjour/Bonsoir. J'aimerais une table pour (X) personnes, non-fumeur (or fumeur) à (Y) heure." (Hello. I would like a table for (X number of) people, non-smoking, (or smoking) at (Y) o' clock.)

For example, "Bonsoir. J'aimerais une table pour deux personnes, non-fumeur, à vingt heures." (Good evening. I would like a table for two people, non-smoking, at eight o' clock.) You may have noticed that the hour in the example is not "eight" o' clock but "twenty" o' clock. All "pm" hours in France are spoken using the twenty four hour clock and not the twelve hour clock. For example, one o' clock in the afternoon is "treize (13) heures." We will take a look at numbers again later. Lastly, restaurant dinner hours are almost always later than what most travelers are used to. The earliest dinner service is at eight pm and the last one sometime between eleven and midnight. So if you walk up to a restaurant at seven pm, you will likely be turned away. However, there are restaurants that run all day long called "brasseries". The food is never the best, but you are sure to be served.

QUICK TIP 2

Right behind eating out, smoking is the second favorite activity in French culture and for a non smoker this can be frustrating. Restaurants have been going to the trouble of creating non-smoking areas for some years, but these are never truly separated from the smoking sections. Sometimes, there is simply no escape, and the most we can do is ask someone to move their cigarette or smoke in another direction. This can be tricky as it means interrupting someone in their private conversation. Remember that magic phrase we learned? "Excusez-moi de vous déranger, mais..." This is the perfect opportunity to put it to use. Say "Excusez-moi de vous déranger, mais pourriez vous fumer avec l'autre main / dans l'autre direction ?" (Sorry to disturb you, but can you smoke with the other hand / in the other direction ?)

However, all this may not be necessary as French law will forbid smoking in restaurants and bars starting in January 2008.



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Lesson 13: Restaurant 2

Monsieur, excusez moi

LESSON NOTES

Restaurant service in France can vary widely from highly attentive and welcoming to practically non-existent. This seems to be due to the fact that French culture does not seem to adhere to any particular service philosophy. Rather, each waiter is left to run things how he or she sees fit. I find it useful to see a restaurant or a shop as someone else's home. This person has left his door open to offer strangers the opportunity to shop or eat in his home. In a sense, he is doing you, the stranger, a favor by offering this opportunity to enter his territory. The fact that you bring money does not change this relationship. Therefore, it is important to respect or even ingratiate yourself with the establishment in order to be well served. Waiters do not walk around looking to see how they can serve you in every way possible. You have to get their attention a lot. So bone up on the terms you have learned, and put your nose out a little.

"Excusez-moi" which we learned earlier, means "excuse me". As we said, this phrase can be used generally to get a stranger's attention, including waiters.

Another way to get a waiter's attention is to say "Monsieur" which means "sir" or "Madame" which means "madam". We learned about these words earlier as well. They are used generally to get a person's attention.

If you like, you can say these two phrases together. For example, "Monsieur, excusez moi."

Once the waiter or waitress comes to your table, you can go with the standard point and "this please"

As we have learned in the first lesson, In French "this please" is "ça s'il vous plaît".

Now if you're feeling ambitious, you could go for what do you recommend?"

In French what do you recommend?" is "Qu'est-ce que vous recommandez". The first word "Qu'est-ce que" means "what is it that?" and is translated as "what". It is followed by "vous", which, as we have learned, in French is "you". This is followed by "recommandez" which means "recommend".

All together we have "Qu'est-ce que vous recommandez".

Now two more phrases that will come in handy have to do with water and ice! In France the water is safe to drink.

In French "water please" is "de l'eau s'il vous plaît". The first word "de l'eau" means "some water". It is followed by "s'il vous plaît", which we know means "please".

Now on to the ice issue! Whether it is a health concern or economic decision,

In French "no ice please" is "sans glaçons, s'il vous plaît". The first word "sans" means "without". It is followed by "glaçons", which in French is "ice cubes". All together, we have "sans glaçons, s'il vous plaît".

PHRASES

French	English
Monsieur, excusez moi	Excuse me sir.
ça s'il vous plaît	This please.
Qu'est-ce que vous recommandez	What do you recommend?
De l'eau s'il vous plaît	Water please.

QUICK TIP

Sometimes when you ask for water it only comes in small glasses, and you remain thirsty. To avoid asking for water over and over, ask for a pitcher of water. This is done with the term "Une carafe d'eau, s'il vous plaît" (a pitcher of water please).

QUICK TIP 2

When it comes to ice, restaurants and bars sometimes don't offer it automatically and you have to ask for it if you want it. To ask for ice, say "Avec glaçons, s'il vous plaît", which means, "with ice, please".



Lesson 14: Restaurant 3

a votre santé

LESSON NOTES

As mentioned, it is proper to let the host take the lead in all things meal. In more informal occasions, others may take the lead and serve food and drinks as well if the host agrees. If you ever feel the initiative, it is customary to serve everyone else before serving your self. When it comes to serving seconds, present the item you wish to serve and ask "Vous en voulez?" (formal "You") or "Tu en veux?" (informal you), which means, "Would you like some?" Be sure to ask everyone and serve yourself last.

PHRASES

French	English
a votre santé	to your health (formal and plural "you" form)
à vous	To you
à ta santé	to your health (informal and singular "you" form)
à toi	to you (informal and singular "you" form)

QUICK TIP

When you do the toast, there are a couple of customs, which are a little superstitious to outsiders, but I enjoy them. First, you don't toast when the beverages are non-alcoholic. I am not sure why. Second, each person must take the time to touch their glass with everyone else's. Generally, this means no two pairs of people are to toast at the same time (though most people cheat on this) and certainly no two pairs of people are to cross arms trying touching their glasses across the table. Third, you are to look each person kindly in the eyes as you touch glasses. If you miss this detail, the French people will swiftly correct you. Once everyone has toasted, you may drink.

Other expressions for a toast are:

"a votre santé." (to your health)

"à vous" (to you)

"à ta santé" and "à toi" (If there is just one person and informal)

QUICK TIP 2

When ordering a bottle of wine in a restaurant, the waiter will open the bottle at the table and offer a taste sample to the person who ordered it. If the person likes it, he will then serve everyone at the table. I have never seen a person refuse a wine he or she has ordered, but that does not mean it is out of the question. If you sincerely don't like the wine, return it and order another.



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Lesson 15: Restaurant 4 getting the check(paying bill)

l'addition s'il vous plaît

LESSON NOTES

Closing out a meal in France can be a slow affair. France takes pride in its cuisine and so, whether in a restaurant or a person's home, meals can take their time. One often gets three courses, even in low cost establishments and discussion, the other French pride, can eat up the hours. After the desert, it is common to have an apéritif. Lunch service in restaurants, however, is usually quite fast as many are on their one-hour lunch break.

Today we'll cover getting out of the restaurant. First you may have to get a hold of the staff. Again you can accomplish this by saying

"Excusez-moi".

Once at your table, you can ask for the check.

In French "check please" is "l'addition s'il vous plaît". The first word " l'addition" means "the bill". It is followed by " s'il vous plaît ", which, as we have learned, in French is "please".

If you'd like to tell them how good the food is or if you're eating with someone and you want to let them know how good you feel the food is you can say: "délicieux".

Don't forget to say thank you.

In France it is not a common practice to tip. So your amount will be on your check. However, it is always a kind gesture to leave your loose change.

One last useful phrase has to do with credit cards. In French "Do you take credit cards?" is "Prenez vous la carte de crédit?" The first word "Prenez" means "take". It is followed by "vous", which, as we have learned, in French is "you". So to recap we have "prenez vous" which literally means "take you"? This is followed by "la" which is French for "the" in the feminine form. Next is carte, which means "card". So to recap we have "Prenez vous la carte" which literally means "Take you the card". This is followed by "de" which as we have learned means "of". Lastly, we have "crédit" which means credit.

So all together that makes "prenez vous la carte de crédit". Literally, this is "take the you the card of credit?" and translates as "do you take credit cards?"

PHRASES

French	English
l'addition s'il vous plaît	Check please
prenez vous la carte de crédit	Do you take credit cards?

VOCABULARY

French	English
pour boire	tip

QUICK TIP

Credit cards in France all come equipped with a chip that other countries don't use. Therefore, some automated machines will not take foreign cards. It best to use your cards where a person is involved where you will be sure to be able to swipe. Foreign ATM cards are taken at most if not all ATMs in France. Check with your bank if there are any partnerships with a French bank. This can circumvent any expensive transaction fees. Also, ATMs have the best exchange rate going around. It is best to leave your travelers cheques and currency at home and take out Euros once you are there. Lastly, if you are a group in restaurant and you want to pay separately, France allows a single bill to be divided among several cards. If you are low on cash, cards are very handy.

QUICK TIP 2

On the matter of tipping, restaurant bills say that gratuity is included. However, most waiters rely on the small tips or "pour boire" (literally "for drinking") they get every day. Being a waiter is considered a legitimate profession with unions and regulated salaries, but the pay is low and they work hard. Even if the waiter is somewhat unpleasant, I always leave something. So a good rule with tipping is to be as generous as you want. Americans in particular often get special attention as they tip heavily compared to most tourists. I've even seen waiters dispute over who gets to serve the American group.



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Lesson 16: Counting 1-10

un/une



LESSON NOTES

French uses the same cardinal numbers (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0) as you do, so reading numbers will be a snap. You will have to count a lot on your trip, (tickets, beds, the clock, etc.) so knowing the first ten is important.

1 un

2 deux

3 trois

4 quatre

5 cinq

6 six

7 sept

8 huit

9 neuf

10 dix

0 zéro

Counting things in French is very straightforward as the number is followed by the thing. For example, one person is "une personne". The number comes first followed by the thing, in this case people. In French nouns have singular and plural forms. Therefore, if there are 2 people you say "deux personnes".

In French nouns also have gender. In case of the word for people, the gender is feminine. so you say "une" personne and not "un" personne. One is the only number that changes gender.

VOCABULARY

French	English
un/une	one
deux	two
trois	three
quatre	four
cinq	five
six	six
sept	seven
huit	eight
neuf	nine
zéro	zero
premier/1er	first/1st
deuxième/second/2eme	second/2nd
troisième/3eme	third/3rd
quatrième/4eme	fourth/4th
cinquième/5eme	fifth/5th
sixième/6eme	sixth/6th
septième/7eme	seventh/7th
huitième/8eme	eighth/8th
neuvième/9eme	ninth/9th
dernier	last

QUICK TIP

Sometimes you will not see the cardinal number but the word. Here is a list of the numbers written as words.

Ordinals

first/1st - premier /1er

second/2nd - deuxième OR second (interchangeable) 2eme

third/3rd - troisième 3eme

fourth/4th - quatrième 4eme

fifth/5th - cinquième 5eme

sixth/6th - sixième 6eme

seventh/7th - septième 7eme

eighth/8th - huitième 8eme

ninth/9th - neuvième 9eme

last - dernier

QUICK TIP 2

Sometimes we can master saying the numbers in a foreign language but hearing and understanding them is another matter. Most french people know one through ten in English so if you are not understanding, you can always ask "parlez vous anglais?"



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Lesson 17: Counting 11 - 20



LESSON NOTES

English: Today, we're going to continue on with counting as we cover 11 through 100. So let's just quickly review 1 through 10.

1 un

2 deux

3 trois

4 quatre

5 cinq

6 six

7 sept

8 huit

9 neuf

10 dix

In French, counting from 11 to 20 is also very straightforward. So let's jump right in.

11 onze

12 douze

13 treize

14 quatorze

15 quinze

16 seize

17 dix-sept

18 dix-huit

19 dix-neuf

20 vingt

Numbers 21 to 29 are formed by combining numbers we have already covered. To make numbers 21 to 29, for example, simply follow vingt with the numbers 1 through 9, just like in English. For example, 22 vingt-deux this is true for all the numbers up to 69.

After 70, however, the rules change. But first, let's learn 30 through 60

30 trente

40 quarante

50 cinquante

60 soixante

The words for 70, 80 and 90 are rather strange. So let me take a second to explain. We say 70 by adding 10 or dix after soixante. It goes like this, 70 soixante-dix. For the numbers 71 to 79, we add to soixante the numbers from 11 to 19. For example 72 soixante-douze, literally sixty-twelve. And 73 soixante-treize, literally sixty-thirteen. 80, however, is a whole other story. We say quatre-vingts, which literally means four 20s. 80 quatre-vingts.

90 is made in the same way we made 70. We add the number for 10 dix to the end of quatre-vingts or quatre-vingt-dix, 90. quatre-vingt-dix The numbers from 91 to 99 are made in the same fashion as 71 to 79. We add to the end of quatre-vingt-dix the numbers 11 to 19. For example, 92 is quatre-vingt-douze which is literally four 20s, 12.

Read the PDF write up to learn all of the numbers from 70 to 99. Finally, we have the number for 100, which is 100 cent. There are other French speaking countries that do not use France's funny way of saying 70, 80 and 90. For instance, Switzerland and Belgium say septante, instead of soixante-dix for 70, octante instead of quatre-vingts for 80 and nonante instead of quatre-vingt-dix for 90. However, the French versions are the most common, and you would do well to learn them even if the country you are travelling to is not France.

All right, that's going to do it for today. Remember to stop by survivalphrases.com, pick up the accompanying PDF and transcript of today's lesson. If you do stop by, be sure to leave us a post. See you tomorrow, which in French is A demain.

Numbers 70 to 99.

70 soixante-dix

71 soixante et onze

72 soixante-douze

73 soixante-treize

74 soixante-quatorze

- 75 soixante-quinze
- 76 soixante-seize
- 77 soixante-dix-sept
- 78 soixante-dix-huit
- 79 soixante-dix-neuf
- 80 quatre-vingts
- 81 quatre-vingt-un
- 82 quatre-vingt-deux
- 83 quatre-vingt-trois
- 84 quatre-vingt-quatre
- 85 quatre-vingt-cinq
- 86 quatre-vingt-six
- 87 quatre-vingt-sept
- 88 quatre-vingt-huit
- 89 quatre-vingt-neuf
- 90 quatre-vingt-dix
- 91 quatre-vingt-onze
- 92 quatre-vingt-douze
- 93 quatre-vingt-treize
- 94 quatre-vingt-quatorze
- 95 quatre-vingt-quinze
- 96 quatre-vingt-seize
- 97 quatre-vingt-dix-sept
- 98 quatre-vingt-dix-huit
- 99 quatre-vingt-dix-neuf



Lesson 18: How much? c'est combien pour un café?

LESSON NOTES

As in English, commerce can happen with very little language. You can simply point at something and say "combien?". But you may enjoy your shopping more if you learn more elaborated phrases. Commerce, in France, is a highly appreciated and delicate art with all kinds of phrases and posturing. In the following quick tips, we will learn some of these.

In French "how much" is "combien". Shopping at the market, at an eatery, depending on your spending habits this may be an extremely high frequency phrase!

The most rudimentary way of using "How much" is pointing at something while saying "combien?", but let's try and build this up a bit, shall we? Let's start with the expression, "How much is this?" In French this is " combien ça coûte?". The first word "combien" means "how much" as we have seen. This is followed by "ça", which we covered in lesson three and in French is "that". This is followed by "coute", which in French is "cost".

So all together we have "combien ça coûte?" which literally translates as "how much does that cost?"

Another more common and easier way to say this phrase is "c'est combien?" which literally means "it's how much?". The first word "c'est" as we have learned in an earlier lesson, means "it's". All together we have "c'est combien?"

PHRASES

French	English
c'est combien pour un café?	How much is a coffee ?
ce sont combien	How much are they ?
c'est combien le kilo?	How much is it per kilo?
c'est combien les cent grammes?	How much is it per 100 grams?
c'est combien la botte?	How much is it per bunch ?

QUICK TIP

When you know the name of the item you would like buy, for instance, a coffee (un café) you can ask its price buy saying "c'est combien pour un café?" When you don't know the name but you can point to it or carry it to the seller you can use the phrase we already learned "c'est combien". If what you want to buy is plural, such as some flowers, say "ce sont combien?"

QUICK TIP 2

One of the most exciting cultural experiences one can have is shopping at an outdoor market. France has a strong tradition of fresh produce markets that are erected in public squares and on sidewalks a couple times a week. Here the question "c'est combien" may not be enough. For example, one needs to know the price of something per kilo (tomatoes) or per 100 grams (cheese) or per bunch (carrots). If you want to know the price per kilo, show or point to the item and say "c'est combien par kilo?". "Per 100 grams" is "c'est combien par cent grammes?" and "per bunch" is "c'est combien par botte?". Price and weight signs are often written by hand and even though numbers are printed the same as in Anglophone countries, they are not written the same. For example, the 1 is written like a tee-pee or a ship's sail and the 9 is written like a lower case "g". Letters also look different when hand written, but this we will cover another time!



Lesson 19: Please Lower the Price Combien

LESSON NOTES

Haggling prices is not common everywhere in France. Grocery stores and clothing shops, for example have set prices. However, negotiating prices is common at flea markets and to some extent at outdoor produce markets. Read the following quick tips to learn some tricks.

The phrase covered in this lesson is related to the phrase "How much?" which in French is "Combien?". We also introduced "How much is this?", "combien ça coute". When you come to France one of the most interesting and fun things to do is haggle at the market! So when you're at the market and talking prices, there is another phrase that will come in very handy! That phrase is "too expensive."

In French "too expensive" is "trop cher". The first word "trop" means "too much". This is followed by "cher", which in French is "expensive". All that makes "trop cher".

Another phrase that can be used in combination with this is "less expensive, please." which in French is "moins cher, s'il vous plaît". The first word "moins" means less. All together that makes "moins cher, s'il vous plaît".

PHRASES

French	English
Combien	How much?
Non, Trop cher.	No, it's too expensive
D'accord. C'est bon.	Ok, I'll take it.
Non merci	No thank you.

QUICK TIP

French flea markets are a blast. They are one of the few places where commerce is a little more wild, more personal. You can rummage through a clothing bin or a pile of vintage records and propose a deal. Often, the sales people are immigrants and the normal French decorum can be done away with. If you want to lower a price, first ask the seller: "combien?" He will tell you his price. Then refuse saying: "c'est trop cher." If he makes a second offer and it is still too high, make a very low counter-offer. He will try to convince you of the quality of his product rather than

change the price. Offer a second time, a little higher. Do not act convinced by him. Act like you are doing him a favor by getting the item off his hands. Once you have an offer from him you like say "D'accord. C'est bon."

QUICK TIP 2

Travelers in France are sniffed out by vendors because they are a much easier sell than the French themselves. But you don't have to play along. If you are interested, but don't want to be seen as an easy sell, start by refusing flatly. "Non merci." This won't turn him away and he'll continue to press you to buy. If you say "trop cher" he will know to go down. >From this point, continue as elucidated in the first quick tip.



Lesson 20: Currency centimes



LESSON NOTES

In France the currency is the euro with denominations consisting of 1s 2s 5s 10s 20s 50s 100s 200s and 500s. As of October 2007 the exchange rate is roughly 70 euro cents to one US dollar and roughly 60 euro cents to 100 Japanese Yen. Paper currency includes 6 bills and 8 coins.

In French, the word for euro is pronounced “euro”. The word “cents” is translated in two ways. One is to simply say the word in English but with a French accent. “cents”. The second and more common way is to say “centimes”. When saying a price, we often do not say the word for cents. For example, 1 euro 20 translates as “un euro vingt”. If the price is made only of cents, then we say the price and then “centimes”. For example, 50 cents is “cinquantes centimes”.

As the euro is the common currency for 11 of the 25 countries of the European Union, also known as the Euro Zone, the currency was designed to appeal to different European cultures. However, the euro zone countries could not agree on what to put on what bills, with everyone fighting to represent their country on the largest bill, the

VOCABULARY

French	English
centimes	cents



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Lesson 21: Internet Cafe Internet



LESSON NOTES

In France, when you walk into the store, approach the reception desk and tell them what you're here for. Just say "Internet" or in French "Internet".

They'll print out a tab that states the time you signed in. When you leave, simply bring that tab to the counter and they'll charge you for the hours you stayed. The price is usually about 1 euro per half hour. The price is all inclusive for the time you stayed there. Some places have a discount for longer stays, so be sure to look over the entire price list before making a decision.

Another system critical question for all you laptop-packing world trekkers is "Does this store have WIFI?" In French "Do you have WIFI?" is "Avez-vous le wifi?". The first word "avez" means "have". It is followed by "vous", which, as we have learned, in French is "you". This is followed by "le wifi" which means "wifi". So all together we have "Avez vous le wifi". Literally this means "Have you the wifi?".

And finally here is one more phrase that might prove useful:

"Password and username please." In French "Password and username please" is "mot de passe et pseudo, SVP". The first word "mot" means "word". It is followed by "de passe", which in French is "pass". So far we have "mot de passe" which means password. This is followed by "et", which, as we have learned, in French is "and". This is followed by "pseudo", which in French is "username". This is followed by "SVP", which, as we have learned, in French is "please".

So all together we have " mot de passe et pseudo, SVP ".

Internet cafés in France are a foreigner's home away from home and for this reason French internet cafés often have signs in English. (When looking for the café, just look for the "@" on a sign.) However, the Anglophone (qwerty) keyboard is not so common, as most of the keyboards are French (azerty). Some cafés carry them. Some don't. Thankfully, the French keyboard is not entirely different and has all the same letters as the Anglophone, just in a slightly different order. To ask for a qwerty keyboard say "Avez-vous un clavier américain" (Do you have an American keyboard) to the person at the reception.

PHRASES

French	English
Avez-vous le wifi?	Do you have wi-fi?
Mot de passe et pseudo, SVP.	Username and password please.
Avez-vous un clavier américain?	Do you have an American keyboard?

VOCABULARY

French	English
Internet	Internet
imprimante	printer
fichier	file
Tabac	Tobacconist

QUICK TIP

If you would like to print something, the word for printer is "imprimante". Click under the word for file, "fichier", and click on "imprimante". Be sure to look at the price board to know what you can afford. Prices tend to vary a lot between internet cafés. Secondly, many internet cafés double as copy shops (or many copy shops double as internet cafés) so if you need to get any copying and printing done, bring what you need with you.

QUICK TIP 2

Internet cafés also double as phone centers quite often, especially in immigrant neighborhoods where the population needs to call out of the country. You will see rooms with computers and rooms lined with phone booths. These phone booths have their own rates separate from the public phones on the street that are set by the establishment, usually cheaper for calling abroad. These stores also sell very cheap phone cards. You can also get one at a tobacco shop, or Tabac, symbolized on the street by a red diamond.



Lesson 22: Riding the Bus 1. Will this bus go to...?

Est-ce que ce bus va à Chatelet?

LESSON NOTES

Taking the right bus in France can be a snap. All you need is the handy phrase "Est-ce que ce bus va à ___?". When a bus comes walk up to the door and ask the driver this question, filling in the destination you want. If his bus does not go there, he will know which one will.

In today's lesson we'll use the station "Chatelet". In French "station" is "station".

In French "Will this bus go to Chatelet" is "Est-ce que ce bus va à Chatelet?". The first word "Est-ce que" literally means "is it that" and is translated as "does". It is followed by "ce", which in French is "this". So to recap here, we have "est-ce que ce". Literally this means "is it that this". The next word "bus" means "bus". This is followed by "va", which in French is "go". The next word is "à", which in French is "to". Finally we have the "Chatelet", which is the name of our destination.

So all together we have " Est-ce que ce bus va à Chatelet?". Literally this means "Is it that this bus goes to Chatelet?".

Once you have the right bus there are a few things you need to know about riding the bus:

City buses in France are different in each city, and so prices and ticketing systems vary. Few buses provide text explanations in English so be sure to ask the driver or another local, for instance a tourist office employee, how it all works. However, there are a few commonalities.

1" First you almost always can buy your ticket from the bus driver if you don't have one already.

2" Prices vary system to system so ask at the local tourist office.

3" You can pay with coins or bills.

4" An average fare is one euro fifty.

PHRASES

French	English
Est-ce que ce bus va à Chatelet?	Does this bus go to Chatelet?
S'il vous plaît, pourriez vous me dire quand nous sommes arrivés à (your destination)	Please, could you tell me when we've arrived at (your destination)

French

Dites-moi quand nous sommes arrivés à (your destination)

English

Tell me when we've arrived at (your destination)

VOCABULARY

French

bus de nuit

English

night bus

QUICK TIP

If you are worried about missing your stop, you can request that the driver alert you when you get there. The way to ask for this is to say "S'il vous plaît, pourriez vous me dire quand nous sommes arrivés à (your destination)". In English, this is "Please, tell me when we arrive at (your destination)." An easier, but less cordial way of saying this is "Dites-moi quand nous sommes arrivés à (your destination)." Don't forget to stay at the front so he can find you when the time comes.

QUICK TIP 2

French cities do not offer 24h metro service, but they make up for it with night buses. These usually have different routes than the day buses and run less frequently. The word in French for night bus is "bus de nuit".



Lesson 23: Riding the Bus 2. How much is it to...?

Quel est le prochain arrêt?

LESSON NOTES

Once on the bus, you'll hear announcements informing the passengers of where the bus will stop next. Now, in the case that there is no English announcement, you may not catch the location just announced. So the phrase "What is the next stop?" may be indispensable.

In French "What is the next stop?" is "Quel est le prochain arrêt?". The first word "Quel" means "what". It is followed by "est", which in French is "is". So to recap here, we have "quel est". Literally this means "what is". The next word "le" means "the". It is followed by "prochain" which means "next". Finally we have "arrêt" which means "stop".

So all together we have "Quel est le prochain arrêt?". Literally this means "What is the next stop?".

Another way of inquiring could be asking if your desired destination is the next stop. For this phrase we'll use the Eiffel tower as the destination. So the phrase "Is the Eiffel tower the next stop?" is "Est la tour eiffel le prochain arrêt?". The first word "Est" means "is", as we have learned. This is followed by "La tour eiffel", which is "The Eiffel Tower". So to recap here, we have "Est la tour Eiffel". Literally this means "is the Eiffel tower" Let's take a look at the next part of the phrase "le prochain arret" as we just learned, this means "the next stop".

So all together we have "Est la tour eiffel le prochain arret?". Literally this means "Is the Eiffel tower the next stop?".

City buses in France are run by a different company for each city, and so prices and ticketing systems vary. Very few buses provide text explanations in English so be sure to ask the driver or another local how it all works. There is no national bus service within France (though there is an international bus service within Europe), but the train system is fairly good.

PHRASES

French

Quel est le prochain arrêt?

Est la tour eiffel le prochain arrêt?

English

What is the next stop?

Is the Eiffel tower the next stop?

VOCABULARY

French	English
Quel	What
Prochain	Next
arrêt	Stop
La tour eiffel	the Eiffel tower
est	Is

QUICK TIP

If you are visiting a major city in France, such as Paris, there are several public transportation systems at your disposal. If you have a choice between the metro and the bus, the bus has a major advantage: views. The metro may be quicker, but you spend up to 30 minutes underground when you could be above ground taking in the sights. It is also a good way to understand how the city is laid out. As with most bus systems, the bus never comes exactly when scheduled, but for the most part, they are reliable in France.

QUICK TIP 2

Another public transportation system that has recently become quite successful is the public bicycle. Paris and Lyon, for example, have a network of automated public bike stations where you can use your credit card to rent a bike for a day. The stations are numerous enough to make it workable and you get a little exercise.



Lesson 24: Riding the Rails I. Buying train tickets subway

Est-ce que ce train va à Chatelet?



LESSON NOTES

The Parisian metro is one of the most efficient and extensive subways in the world. In fact there are two. The second is called the RER and is the commuter train that serves the suburbs. It is also used within the city and can be much faster as it makes fewer stops. The two systems combined make it possible to get anywhere in the city in under 30 minutes. Other French cities have subway systems, but the Parisian is France's icon. Its entrances are maintained in the original art nouveau style from when it first opened in the 20s. If you make it to Paris, it is definitely a must-see.

Once you make it to a metro platform, you may want to confirm the train you're about to board is heading the right way. So in French "Will this train go to Chatelet" is "Est-ce que ce train va à Chatelet?". The first word "Est-ce que" literally means "is it that" and is translated as "does". It is followed by "ce", which in French is "this". So to recap here, we have "est-ce que ce". Literally this means "is it that this". The next (French) word "train" means (in English) "train". It is followed by "va", which in French is "go". The next word is "à", which in French is "to". Finally we have "Chatelet", which is our destination.

So all together we have " Est-ce que ce train va à Chatelet?". Literally this means "Is it that this train goes to Chatelet?".

PHRASES

French	English
Est-ce que ce train va à Chatelet?	Does this train go to Chatelet?

VOCABULARY

French	English
Est-ce que	Is it that
Ce	This
Va	Go
à	To

QUICK TIP

For all its efficiency, there is nothing more frustrating than when the public transportation goes on strike. Strikes are often announced well in advance as so many people rely on it. Some strikes only last a day, but some have lasted up to a month. French culture has a strong sense for workers rights and so people tolerate such disturbances. If public transportation does go on strike, walking or biking is your best way to get around. Cars and taxis will be jammed in traffic.

QUICK TIP 2

Another peculiarity of the French metro is the silence. Many travelers are surprised to find that everyone rides in silence, staring off into their own world, unless of course they are with friends. But even conversations between friends are kept hushed. One theory is that the metro is one of the few places in the city where one can have some quiet. The city is so boisterous that once everyone finally sits, they want to recuperate. The ones who don't seem to pick up on this are, of course, the tourists. One can always tell them apart by the loudness of their voices. It would be a respectful gesture to watch your voice in the metro, so as not to disturb the meditating Parisians.



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Lesson 25: Riding the Rails II.

Un billet pour Dijon SVP

LESSON NOTES

Taking the train is one of the best ways to see all France has to offer. With the phrases you have just learned, you will be able to travel the rails with ease. To make your rail travel even smoother, here are some quick tips to guide you through some kinks.

In France one can buy train tickets at the ticket gate window, a vending machine, and on the train, though this last option is more expensive. When traveling long distances, there are several types of tickets, which we'll take a look at in a minute, but first let's work on asking for the ticket. We can accomplish this by asking "Ticket to (destination) please". Now, of course, we need a destination. So let's use Dijon. This city is located in the eastern part of France and is well known for its mustard.

So to ask for one ticket to Dijon in French is "Un billet pour Dijon SVP" or "One ticket to Dijon please". The first word "Un" means "a". It is followed by "billet", which in French is "ticket". So to recap here, we have "un billet". Literally this means "a ticket". The next word is "pour" which means "for". This followed by Dijon, our destination. Lastly, we have "SVP", which as we have learned, means "please".

So all together we have "Un billet pour Dijon, SVP". Literally this means "One ticket for Dijon, please".

Now if you want to buy more than one ticket, for example if you wanted to buy 2 tickets, you can accomplish this by saying "Deux billets pour Dijon, SVP". Notice that we simply substitute "Un" with "Deux", and change "billet" to "billets".

However, just the destination may not be enough, as there are several types of seats on trains in France. There are first class seats, and second class seats.

Once we have established the destination, it is time to select the type of seat you want. In French "first class" is "premiere classe". The first word "premiere" means "first". It is followed by "classe", which in French is "class". So all together we have "première classe". Literally this means "first class".

"Second class" is "seconde classe". The first word "seconde" means "second". It is followed by "classe", which in French is "class" as we have learned.

PHRASES

French	English
Un billet pour Dijon SVP	One ticket to Dijon please.
Deux billets pour Dijon, SVP	Two tickets to Dijon please.

VOCABULARY

French	English
premiere classe	First class
seconde classe	Second class
Billet	Ticket
Billets	Tickets
Pour	For
SVP	Please

QUICK TIP

The French train system is one of the best in the world. They run high speed trains, or TGV (trains de grande vitesse, French for "high speed trains") to all corners of the country. One can travel from Paris to Marseille in under four hours, whereas by car it would take at least 8 hours. However, not all trains are TGV. There are two other systems, Corail and TéoZ, that access the minor cities. These can run at a snails pace as they stop at every town along the way. Be sure to go through the options with the ticket agent to make sure you get the train you want. The slower trains can be a nice way to see the countryside, if you have the time.

QUICK TIP 2

Buying a ticket on the French train system can be easily done on their website <http://www.voyages-sncf.com> . Scroll down to the bottom of the page and look for the British flag to read the site in English. They have special internet deals as well in there "promos" section, though you must be in the French version to see them.



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Lesson 26: Taking a Taxi à l'arc de triomphe

LESSON NOTES

France offers a multitude of quality public transportation options: the metro, the bus, the public bicycle, etc.. But sometimes a taxi is just what you want. For example, the public transportation in Paris can be jam packed at rush hour and you need some peace and quiet. Or maybe you need to get somewhere in a hurry. Taxis are always the fastest. Or its late and the public transportation has closed. If you are worried about prices, splitting the ride can make it worth it. Travel with in Paris, for example, will never exceed 25 euros. Between four people, a taxi can be the best option.

In this lesson we'll cover a phrase used to get you to your destination when riding a taxi. We'll look at the most basic way to express this, which is the word "to" followed by a destination. In today's lesson we'll use the arc de triomphe. Now let's here is it once again "arc de triomphe". This location is known for its "eight lane traffic circle". So now let's go over what to say to the taxi driver to get there.

In French "to the arc de triomphe" is "à l'arc de triomphe". The word for "to" in French is "à". as we have learned in a previous lesson.

This is the most basic way of expressing where you would like to go. Well, actually just saying your desired destination should work, but speaking the local language is one of the most fun things you can do on your travels. So let's go over another option!

You can also say, "I would like to go to (destination)", which in French is "J'aimerais aller à l'arc de triomphe". The first word "j'aimerais" means "I would like". It is followed by "aller", which in French is "to go". So to recap here, we have "j'aimerais aller". Literally this means "I would like to go". The next part "à l'arc de triomphe" means "to the Arc de Triomphe", as we learned already.

So all together we have "J'aimerais aller à l'arc de triomphe". Literally this means "I would like to go to the Arc de Triomphe".

In France, you are not expected to tip the driver, although tip if you are feel like as taxi drivers do not make much money and rely on tips regardless of this rule.

One more helpful phrase when taking a taxi is "Here is fine." This phrase will allow you to get out of the taxi whenever and wherever you want.

In French "Here is fine." is "Là, c'est bon". The first word "Là" means "here". It is followed by "c'est", which in French is "it's". Lastly we have "bon", which in French is "good". All together that makes "Là, c'est bon" Literally, this means "Here, it's good."

PHRASES

French	English
à l'arc de triomphe	To the Arch Of Triumph.
J'aimerais aller à l'arc de triomphe	I would like to go to the Arc Of Triumph.
Là, c'est bon	Here is fine.

QUICK TIP

Now that you know all about talking to a taxi driver. How do you get the taxi? The most obvious option is to go to a busy street and look for one in the traffic. Raise your hand and say the word "taxi". If his light is on, he's available. If its off, he's not. Another option is to go to a taxi queue. These are identified by tall green boxes with a white top that reads Taxi. If there are no Taxi's in the queue, the green boxes have intercoms that talk to an operator who will then send one to you. The last option is to call a taxi using a number from the yellow pages. If you do this, be warned that the driver will start running his meter from the moment he is called and this can make things quite expensive if he is far away. To minimize this, look for numbers that call taxi stations near you.

QUICK TIP 2

As mentioned in the lesson, tipping is not expected, however it is very appreciated. Taxi drivers do not earn very much money and rely tips from tourists regardless of whether the French give them or not. If you feel like being generous, be generous.



Lesson 27: Where Can I Buy This?

Où est-ce que je peux trouver un vélo

LESSON NOTES

Looking for things in a foreign country can be tricky. In France, it took me a while to understand where to look for specific items that back home in the States I could find no problem. For example, hardware. In the states, for hardware, go to a hardware store like Home Depot. In France, it's not so easy. The word for hardware in English means a lot of things that in France are separated into different stores. Hinges and doorknobs are at the door store, while plumbing is at another store. Take a look at these quick tips to learn how to look for your desired items.

In this lesson we'll introduce a phrase that will help you track down that specific something you're looking for. Today's phrase is "Where can I get (something)". First we need something we want to buy, so let's use "un chapeau" which means "a hat".

In French "Where can I get a hat?" is "Où est-ce que je peux trouver un chapeau?". The first word "Où" means "where". It is followed by "est-ce que", which in French is literally "is it that". So to recap here, we have "Où est-ce que ". Literally this means "Where is it that". The next "je" which means "I". It is followed by "peux" which means "can". The next word is "trouver" which means "find". Lastly we have our object "un chapeau"

So all together we have "Où est-ce que je peux trouver un chapeau?". Literally this means "Where is it that I can find a hat?".

Now to ask for a different item, we can just replace the word for hat with any other word, adjust gender and the phrase works just fine. Let's try a bicycle, In French "Where can I get a bicycle?" is "Où est-ce que je peux trouver un vélo". The only thing that changes is the thing you are looking for. In this case it's "vélo".

One can't just substitute one noun for another though. If you are looking for something that is feminine, like a skirt, ("jupe") you should change the 'un' to 'une' to reflect its gender.

PHRASES

French	English
Où est-ce que je peux trouver un vélo	Where can I get a bicycle
Où est-ce que je peux trouver un chapeau	Where can i get a hat?
Bazaar Hotel de Ville	City Hall Bazaar

VOCABULARY

French	English
bricolage	Do-it-yourself
Pages Jaunes	Yellow Pages

QUICK TIP

The easiest and most efficient tool for searching for those odd items is to use the French yellow pages, or "Pages Jaunes". Thankfully, there is a website that is easily navigated and if you click on the British flag, you'll get the English version. However, that won't help with your search once on the street. Get a good English-French dictionary to find the right terms for what you are looking for.

QUICK TIP 2

Unlike in the states, France does not champion one stop shopping department stores like Walmart. Running errands can be a bit tiring as sometimes you have to visit several stores. However, the notion of big chain stores is catching on. For example, the Home Depot of France is called Brico Depot. Brico is short for bricolage which in French means do-it-yourself. There is one store in France, however, that does offer everything, and it does it very well: the BHV. (Bazaar Hotel de Ville or City Hall Bazaar) There is really only one, in Paris. If you get a chance to go, it is quite a sight, because there really is everything: hardware, clothing, food, video games, craft supplies, etc..



Lesson 28: Is There a Store Nearby Here?

Y-a-t-il une banque près d'ici

LESSON NOTES

French culture is not known for its convenience. If you are looking to acquire a particular something, look for it between 8 am and 8pm. There are no 24 hour stores, and only a few open past 8pm. As well, most shops close on Sunday, though some shops close another day of the week to be open for desperate Sunday shoppers. Lastly the notion of the convenient store is not common, except with immigrant populations. Often the local late night "épicerie" or grocer is run by an immigrant, which is why they take the name "arab du coin" which means the local "arab shop". Otherwise, there is no regular late night convenience store.

Today's phrase is "Is there a (place) near here?" First we need a place, so let's use the word "banque" which means bank.

In French "Is there a bank near here?" is "Y-a-t-il une banque près d'ici ?". The first word " Y-a-t-il " means "Is there". It is followed by "une", which in French is "a". So to recap here, we have " Y-a-t-il une ". Literally this means "There has it a" This is followed by "banque" which we just learned. The next word "près" means "near". Lastly, we have "d'ici" which means "to here". "d'i - ci " and "d'ici".

So all together we have "Y-a-t-il une banque près d'ici?". Literally this means "There has it a bank near to here?".

Now to ask for a different place, we can just replace the word for bank with any other word and the phrase works just fine. Let's try "bakery"; In French "Is there a bakery near here?" is "Y-a-t-il une boulangerie près d'ici ?". The only thing that changes is the thing you are looking for, and the word 'une', which will change to 'un' if the place is masculine.

PHRASES

French	English
Y-a-t-il une banque près d'ici	Is there a bank near here?
Y-a-t-il une boulangerie près d'ici ?	Is there a bakery near here?
dans le quartier	In the neighborhood
pas loin d'ici	Not far from here
y-a-t-il	is there?

VOCABULARY

French	English
épicerie	grocer
Arab du coin	local Arab shp (convenience store)

QUICK TIP

You'll notice in the above phrase there is another word for near: "du coin" literally "of the corner". Other terms for this are "dans le quartier," which means "in the neighborhood" and "pas loin d'ici" or "not far from here."

QUICK TIP 2

You'll also notice the funny phrasing that opens today's question "y-a-t-il" or literally "there has it" and translates as "is there?" The word "Y" means "there" in the reflexive form. "a" means "has" and "il" means "it". But what is that "t" for? French grammar requires that no two vowel sounds touch, so in order to separate "a" and "il", there is a "t". It has no use but to make French sound more beautiful.



Lesson 29: Directions I

allez tout droit

LESSON NOTES

In today's lesson we'll introduce you directions that will help you find the place you are looking for. Previously we introduced, "Is there a (place) near here" and "Where is there a (something)". But while we can now ask, we haven't addressed understanding the answer. Today we're going to work on understanding what is said. So today we'll go over basic directions. First we have, "go straight."

In French "go straight" is "allez tout droit". The first word "allez" means "go". It is followed by "tout", which in French is "all". So to recap here, we have "allez tout". Literally this means "go all". The next word "droit" means "straight".

So all together we have "allez tout droit". Literally this means "go all straight".

Now we're going to work on turning. Let's try "turn right"; In French "turn right" is "tournez à droit". The first word "tournez" means "turn". It is followed by "à", which in French is "to". Lastly we have "droit", which in French is "right". This is not to be confused with "tout droit" which we just learned and means "straight ahead".

Now "turn left"; is the same as the previous phrase, only we replace the word for right ("droit") with the word for left ("gauche"). In French "turn left" is "tournez à gauche". That makes "tournez à gauche".

In French "It's on the right." is "c'est à droit". The first word "c'est" means "it's". It is followed by "à droit", which, as we have learned, in French is "on the right".

So all together we have "c'est à droit". Literally this means "it's at right".

Now "It's on the left." is the same as the previous phrase, only we replace the word for right "droit" with the word for left "gauche": In French, "It's on the left." is "c'est à gauche".

Another important phrase is "go until (the place)" with (the place) being a specific landmark the person tells you. So we need a place. Let's use "the bank," which is "la banque" as we learned in a previous lesson. "Go until the bank" in French is "allez jusqu'à la banque". The first word "allez" means "go". as we have learned. This is followed by "jusqu'à", which in French is "until". So to recap here, we have "allez jusqu'à ". Literally this means "go just to". This is followed by "la banque" which we learned means "the bank".

So all together we have "allez jusqu'à la banque". Literally this means "go just to the bank".

These phrases should get you to where you want without much trouble. However, there are some other useful direction phrases that you might come across:

devant: in front of

derrière: behind

à coté de: next to

et puis OR ensuite : and then, or then.

PHRASES

French	English
allez tout droit	go straight
tournez à droit	turn right
tournez à gauche	turn left
c'est à droit	It's on the right
c'est à gauche	It's on the left
allez jusqu'à la banque	Just go to the bank

QUICK TIP

The phrases you learned are in the vous form, meaning in the formal and plural "you". Here are the same phrases in tu form.

phrase in english vous form tu form

go straight allez tout droit va tout droit

turn right tournez à droit tourne à droit

turn left tournez à gauche tourne à gauche

go until the bank allez jusqu'à la banque va jusqu'à la banque

QUICK TIP 2

Another useful trick when taking directions in a foreign language is to ask for the general direction of your destination, and the closer you get, ask more people. That way, you don't need to retain detailed directions in a foreign language all at once. Rather, people can show you where to go using landmarks in the immediate area. Once you find the local landmark, ask another person who will indicate more things you see, sending you a little further along the way, like a treasure hunt. A good question to ask with this technique is "Je cherche _____. C'est dans quelle direction?" which means "I'm looking for _____. Which direction is it?"



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Lesson 30: Can You Take my/our Picture? Pouvez vous nous prendre en photo?

LESSON NOTES

The French are not the most techno-crazed people on earth, but they do understand cameras. If you hand one over, they will generally know how to use it. They may have a somewhat serious demeanor that does not attract strangers with cameras, but they have a fun side. First, remember our magic phrase to get someone's attention : "bonjour, excusez moi de vous déranger" and then ask "pouvez vous nous prendre en photo ?" Show the person how to have a good time and take some wacky poses. Then ask them if they want to be in a photo. "Voulez vous une photo avec nous?" This can also be a great way to meet people. You can promise to email the photo later and, suddenly, you have a new friend and their email.

In French "Can you take our picture?" is "Pouvez vous nous prendre en photo?" The first word "Pouvez" means "can". It is followed by "vous", which, in French is "you" as we have learned. So to recap here, we have "pouvez vous". Literally this means "can you". The next word "nous" means "us". This is followed by "prendre", which, in French is "take". It is followed by "en", which, in French is "in". Lastly we have "photo", which, in French is "photo".

So all together we have "Pouvez vous nous prendre en photo?". Literally this means "Can you take us in photo?".

When travelling alone, say "Can you take my picture?", or " Pouvez vous me prendre en photo?". Here, the phrase is the same as the previous one, but we simply substitute the word for "our" ("nous") with "my" ("me").

In English, before someone takes a picture, the person taking the picture may say, "1, 2, 3. Cheese." In French before a picture is taken, the person taking the picture may say "un, deux, trois, whisky".

So if you're taking the picture, you'll say this. And if you having your picture taken, you'll hear this!

PHRASES

French	English
Pouvez vous nous prendre en photo?	Can you take our photo
Pouvez vous nous prendre my photo?	Can you take my photo?
un, deux, trois, whisky	One, two, three, cheese!

French	English
Puis-je prendre des photos?	May I take photos?
sans flash	no flash
bonjour, excusez moi de vous déranger...	Hello, sorry to bother you...

QUICK TIP

Developing photos in France is much more expensive than in the US. If you don't have a digital camera, I recommend saving development until you return home, if you live in the States of course.

QUICK TIP 2

Photos in museums are sometimes allowed. Ask a docent "puis-je prendre des photos?" If they say yes, they will require no flash. The way to say "no flash" is "sans flash". Once I went to an exhibition at the Musee d'Orsay in Paris with my aunt. She loves impressionist art and ran around the museum taking pictures with her digital camera. However, she forgot to turn off the flash and splashed light all over original Van Goghs. Needless to say, the security made her put her camera away.

Survival Phrases - French (Part 1 end)



LESSON NOTES

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- ★ Visiting the Post office and mailing thing home

- ★ Phone rentals and phone cards, don't travel without one!
- ★ Critical phrases for vegetarians and allergy sufferers!
- ★ Talking to the doctor and explaining symptoms correctly
- ★ Getting the right medicine
- ★ Expressing yourself with adjectives and being understood
- ★ Home visits and proper protocol that will "wow" hosts
- ★ Getting help, this may be the most useful phrase you ever learn

Finally, thank you again!

If you have a story to share about how Survival Phrases - French helped you with your travels, business, or personal relationships, we would love to hear about it!

Please e-mail us contactus@survivalphrases.com