



Absolute Beginner S1

French Lessons 1 to 25

1-25

Introduction

This is Innovative Language Learning.

Go to [InnovativeLanguage.com/audiobooks](https://www.innovativelanguage.com/audiobooks) to get the lesson notes for this course and sign up for your FREE lifetime account.

The course consists of lessons centered on a practical, real-life conversation.

In each lesson, first, we'll introduce the background of the conversation.

Then, you'll hear the conversation two times:

One time at natural native speed and one time with the English translation.

After the conversation, you'll learn carefully selected vocabulary and key grammar concepts.

Next, you'll hear the conversation 1 time at natural native speed at the end of the lesson.

Finally, practice what you have learned with the review track. In the review track, a native speaker will say a word or phrase from the dialogue, wait three seconds, and then give you the English translation. Say the word aloud during the pause. Halfway through the review track, the order will be reversed. The English translation will be provided first, followed by a three-second pause, and then the word or phrase from the dialogue. Repeat the words and phrases you hear in the review track aloud to practice pronunciation and reinforce what you have learned.

Before starting the lessons, go to [InnovativeLanguage.com/audiobooks](https://www.innovativelanguage.com/audiobooks) to get the lesson notes for this course and sign up for your FREE lifetime account.



Absolute Beginner S1

Easy Self-Introductions in French

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Formal French

Rob	Bonjour.
Giulia	Salut !
Rob	Je suis Rob. Tu t'appelles ...?
Giulia	Je m'appelle Giulia.
Rob	Tu es française ?
Giulia	Non, je suis italienne.

English

Rob	Hello.
Giulia	Hi!
Rob	I'm Rob. Your name is...?
Giulia	My name is Giulia.
Rob	Are you French?
Giulia	No, I'm Italian.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
Bonjour	hello	noun	masculine
salut	hi, bye (informal)	noun	masculine
je / j'	I	personal pronoun	
tu	you (informal)	personal pronoun	
s'appeler	to be called	verb	
être	to be	verb	
non	no	adverb	
français(e)	French	adjective	
italienne	Italian	adjective	feminine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Bonjour Monsieur.
Bonjour Madame.

"Hello, sir."
 "Hello, ma'am."

Salut Pierre!

Salut, Estelle.

Je vais bien.

Tu as 20 ans.

Tu vas au travail.

Je m'appelle Nicolas.

Comment tu t'appelles ?

Il vaut mieux être seul que mal accompagné.

Il semble être heureux.

Être ou ne pas être.

Non, je ne suis pas Madame Henri.

Non, je ne suis pas d'accord.

Non, ce n'est pas vrai.

La chanteuse Vanessa Paradis est française.

Elle est italienne.

"Hi, Peter!"

"Bye, Estelle."

"I am well."

"You are twenty years old."

"You go to work."

"My name is Nicolas."

"What is your name?"

"It is worth more to be alone than badly accompanied."

"He seems to be happy."

"To be or not to be."

"No, I'm not Madame Henri."

"No, I don't agree."

"No, it's not true."

"The singer Vanessa Paradis is French."

"She is Italian."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is on How to Ask and Tell Your Name.

Je suis Rob. Tu t'appelles... ?

"I'm Rob. Your name is...?"

Enchanté(e)! "Nice to meet you!" You've surely heard this well-known phrase, which is usually what you hear after you tell someone your name. Sharing your name and getting another person's name are two of the first steps in engaging conversation and a relationship.

So how do you tell someone your name in French? Simply use the specific verb *s'appeler* to indicate your identity!

Telling Your Name With the Verb *s'appeler*

The verb *s'appeler* means literally "to be named." It's part of the first verb group, as its infinitive form (verb not conjugated) ends with the letters *-er*, similar to the verbs *regarder*, which means, "to look," and *rêver*, which means, "to dream."

Another particularity of the verb *s'appeler* is that the first particle is composed of the letter *-s* followed by an apostrophe. This particle has the function of reflecting the information provided to the subject.

Does it seem a bit complicated? Well, let's take a look at an illustration of it with an example.

In the dialogue, Giulia says *Je m'appelle Giulia*. ("My name is Giulia.")

Here, the subject of the verb *s'appeler* is *je*, which refers to the Italian student. The particle *m'* in the phrase *Je m'appelle* tells us that *je* owns the first name Giulia; therefore, our female speaker Giulia is the Italian student.

For each person (first, second, or third of the singular or plural form), the reflexive particle *s'* of the infinitive verb *s'appeler* changes as follows:

Singular Form

French	"English Translation"
<i>Je m'appelle</i>	"My name is"; "I'm + name"
<i>Tu t'appelles</i>	"Your name is"; "You are + name"
<i>Il s'appelle</i>	"His name is"; "He is + name"
<i>Elle s'appelle</i>	"Her name is"; "She is + name"

Plural Form

<i>Nous nous appelons</i>	"Our names are"; "We are + names"
<i>Vous vous appelez</i>	"Your names are"; "You are + names"
<i>Ils s'appellent</i>	"Their names are"; "They are + names"
<i>Elles s'appellent</i>	"Their names are"; "They are + names"

Dialogue Focus:

Other possible solutions to tell someone your name include using a form of the verb *être* meaning, "to be." You'd say:

Je suis followed by your first name or full name, as in *Je suis Antoine*. ("I'm Antoine.")

or

Moi c'est followed by the first name, as in *Moi c'est Marie*, which literally means "Me, it's Mary," or more commonly, "I'm Mary."

To tell someone the name of your interlocutor informally, you'd say *Tu es* followed by the name of the person you are talking to.

For Example:

1. **Informal:**

Tu es Luc.

"You are Luc."

2. **Formal:**

Vous êtes Antoine et Luc.

"You are Antoine and Luc."

3. *Vous êtes Monsieur Cardin.*

"You are M.Cardin."

Asking About Names With *s'appeler*

To ask for a person's name directly, use the verb *s'appeler* rather than the verb *être*. It is simply more specific and cannot be misinterpreted as making some kind of accusation as could be the case if someone asks you "Who are you?"

In the dialogue, the question asks about the speaker's name using *Tu t'appelles ...?* This yes-no question (referred to as a "closed question" or *question fermée* in French) could be completed as *Tu t'appelles comment ?*, meaning "What is your name?" It could also be completed as follow *Tu t'appelles Julie ?* or any other name you had guessed to verify your interlocutor's identity.

To ask for names, use *comment* (literally "how") in conjunction with the verb *s'appeler*, as in:

Informal situation

French	"English Translation"
<i>Comment tu t'appelles ?</i>	"What is your name?"
<i>Tu t'appelles comment ?</i>	"What is your name?"

Formal Situation

French	"English Translation"
<i>Comment vous vous appelez ?</i>	"What is your name?"
<i>Vous vous appelez comment ?</i>	"What is your name?"

Dialogue Focus: Ask and Tell Your Nationality With *être*, "To Be"

If you want to ask or tell about someone's origin, use the verb *être*, which means, "to be." The phrase word order is identical in either case. Observe in the dialogue the two phrases:

1 - *Tu es française ?* (Rob)

"Are you French?"

2 - *Non, je suis italienne.* (Giulia)

"No, I'm Italian."

In both cases, the subject comes first; followed by the conjugated verb *être* and the adjective of nationality (see below for some examples). Therefore, you can hear or read the following:

Function	French	"English Translation"
Tell your origin	<i>Je suis + adjective de nationalité</i>	"I'm + adjective of nationality"
Tell your interlocutor's origin informally	<i>Tu es + adjective de nationalité</i>	"You are + adjective of nationality"
Tell your interlocutor's nationality formally	<i>Vous* êtes + adjective de nationalité</i>	"You are + adjective of nationality"

Orally, the only difference is the intonation. When asking the question, the intonation rises. To tell the origin, the intonation falls.

A Few Nationalities:

Masculine/Feminine Nationalities in French-English

French	"English Translation"
<i>allemand/allemande</i>	"German"
<i>anglais/anglaise</i>	"English"
<i>américain/américaine</i>	"American"
<i>argentin/argentine</i>	"Argentinian"
<i>autrichien/ autrichienne</i>	"Austrian"
<i>belge/belge</i>	"Belgian"
<i>brésilien/brésilienne</i>	"Brazilian"
<i>chinois/chinoise</i>	"Chinese"
<i>espagnol/espagnole</i>	"Spanish"
<i>portugais/portugaise</i>	"Portuguese"
<i>russe/russe</i>	"Russian"
<i>suisse/suisse</i>	"Swiss"

For Example:**Context 1:** Two people meet through a friend:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Tu es belge ?</i>	"Are you Belgian?"
<i>Non, je suis américaine.</i>	"No, I'm American."

Context 2: A father asks his son's girlfriend and future daughter-in-law:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Vous êtes espagnole?</i>	"Are you Spanish?"
<i>Oui, je suis espagnole.</i>	"Yes, I'm Spanish."

Context 3: On the 14th of July on the Champs Elysée:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Je suis anglaise. Tu es allemand?</i>	"I'm English. Are you German?"
<i>Non, je suis hollandais.</i>	"No, I'm Dutch."

***NOTE:** The pronoun *vous* can refer formally to one person or several ones as in *Madame Schwartz, vous êtes allemande*. ("Mrs. Schwartz, you are German.") Or *Anne et Marie, vous êtes suisses*. ("Ann and Mary, you are Swiss.")

Dialogue Expansion: Ask About the Origin

To ask about someone's origin, you can also ask the wh- question ("Where are you from?"), or in French, *une question ouverte*:

Question with the verb *venir*, "to come":**Informal:**

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où viens-tu ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Tu viens d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"

Formal:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Vous venez d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"

Note: You can ask this question either to learn the person's city of birth or the place where a person began a trip.

For Example:

At the customs counter:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je viens de Paris.</i>	"I come from Paris."

On a first date:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je suis de Toulon.</i>	"I'm from Toulon."

Question with être:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où es-tu ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Tu es d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"

For Example:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Tu es d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je suis de la région parisienne.</i>	"I'm from the Parisian region."

Cultural Insight

Don't Let Initial Greetings in French Be Awkward...

Using *vous* or *tu*? Kissing or not kissing? Those are the questions when you meet a French native for the first time.



Fixed rules don't exist in this scenario! You will have to feel out the situation! However, some general guidelines will help you to decide what to do. Obviously, the context of the situation you are in will dictate your behavior and that of others.

In general, if you are among friends or in a relaxed situation, choose to use the informal you, the famous *tu*. If you are shy and timid, observe what is going on around you and imitate others.

Kissing is usually done among people you know or friends of friends. The process is simple: extend your cheek to the other person and make contact while making a kissing noise. Your lips should not be in contact with the other person's cheek. The usual number of kisses is two but may vary up to four, according to the region. No worries there-even the French natives have issues with the number of kisses to give. So simply ask or let the other person guide you. After all, you can always sincerely apologize!

If you want to show respect or you are in a more formal situation as in a business meeting or interacting with the elderly, just shake hands and use the formal you, *vous*. If you are unsure of what to do, wait for the person in front of you to initiate the contact. He or she might be *un bon vivant*, a person who likes to live the good life and set a more relaxed atmosphere by asking you to use *tu* after a few times and giving you a tap on the shoulder.

To be safe in any situation, smile, shake hands, and use *vous* until you are told otherwise. At least that way you won't run into trouble. On this note, I'll send you a kiss on the cheek while making a lip-smacking noise!





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Understanding French Easily

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Formal French

Rob Salut Giulia, ça va ?
 Giulia Ça va et toi ?
 Rob Bof.
 Giulia Ça ne va pas ?
 Rob Je ne comprends pas le français !
 Giulia Tu comprends très bien le français !

English

Rob Hi Giulia, how are you?
 Giulia I'm good, and you?
 Rob Not really.
 Giulia You're not good?
 Rob I don't understand French!
 Giulia You understand French very well!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
Ça va ?	How are you?	phrase	
Ça va.	I'm fine.	phrase	
Je ne parle pas bien le français.	I don't speak French very well.	phrase	
très bien	very well	phrase	
Comprendre	to understand	verb	
et toi	and you	interjection	
ça ne va pas	it's not going well	phrase	
bof	not really (casual)	expression	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

La clinique est très bien et est réputée.

"The clinic is very good and has a good reputation."

Je comprends le français.

Moi, je vais bien. Et toi, ça roule ?

Lui et toi, vous êtes bons amis.

Tu aimes ça ? Bof pas vraiment.

"I understand French."

"Me, I'm fine. And you, what's up?"

"Him and you, you are good friends."

"Do you like this ? Not really."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Informal Greetings and the Verb *comprendre* in the Positive and Negative Forms.

Salut Giulia, ça va ?

"Hi Giulia, how are you?"

First of all, let's be polite and salute others while smiling to make our environment a bit friendlier...

To do so, a hand movement from right to left can be sufficient when passing someone familiar on a regular basis in a neighborhood or passing the receptionist for few days in a row at a hotel lobby. However, if you want to be social, at first you should say the everyday, standard *bonjour*, which means "hello." This is the safest and easiest way to greet someone as the French use it equally in formal and informal situations as well as throughout the day. When the daylight is waning and the evening is starting, *bonsoir*, which means "good evening," is more appropriate.

Informal Greetings and Asking How a Person Is

Once you break the ice and get more acquainted and your interlocutor switches to the informal "you," using *tu* to address you, you can switch to the informal greeting *Salut*, which means "Hi." You will of course, also use this greeting with close friends and family.

Then naturally, you will certainly want to ask how your interlocutor is. To do so, review and observe the tables below.

Greetings

	<i>French</i>	"English"
Informal	<i>Salut</i>	"Hi"
Formal	<i>Bonjour</i>	"Hello"

Asking Informally How a Person Is

French	"English"
<i>Comment ça va ?</i>	"How are you?"
<i>Comment ça va ?</i>	"How are you?"
<i>Ça va ?</i>	"How are you?"

Telling How You Are

French	"English"
<i>Ça va.</i>	"I'm fine."
<i>Ça va bien(, merci).</i>	"I'm fine (thank you)."
<i>Très bien/Bien.</i>	"I'm very well/well."
<i>Ça ne va pas.*</i>	"I'm not well."
<i>Ça va mal.</i>	"I'm not well."

***Note:** Refer to the tables below for the construction of negative statements.

Je ne comprends pas le français !**"I don't understand French!"**

The key to learning French or any other subject matter is to be able to understand! So let's make sure you can tell someone "I don't understand" when you have a hard time grasping what he or she is telling you in French.

To make clear that you understand or don't understand something, use the verb *comprendre* conjugated using the correct form of *l'indicatif présent*, "the indicative present," similar to the simple present (and according to context sometimes translated with the present progressive as in *Je comprend*, or "I am understanding") in English. To check which verb form you need to use, observe the following table:

Verb *comprendre* - "to understand"**Singular form**

	French	"English Translation"
First Person	<i>Je comprends</i>	"I understand"
Second Person	<i>Tu comprends</i>	"You understand"
Third Person Masculine**	<i>Il comprend</i>	"He understands"



Third Person Feminine**	<i>Elle comprend</i>	"She understands"
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Plural form

	<i>French</i>	"English Translation"
First Person	<i>Nous comprenons</i>	"We understand"
Second Person	<i>Vous comprenez</i>	"You understand"
Third Person Masculine**	<i>Ils comprennent</i>	"They understand"
Third Person Feminine**	<i>Elles comprennent</i>	"They understand"

***Note:** The pronoun *Ils*, which means "they," can refer to men only or women and men. However, the feminine pronoun *elles*, which also means "they," only refers to women.

The Negative Form

Use the negative form to tell someone that you don't understand or that you are not well.

Negative statements in French are composed of the two particles *ne* or *n'* and *pas*, as you see in the dialogue with *Je ne comprends pas* and *Ça ne va pas ?* To construct a phrase in the negative form, follow the pattern below:

<i>ne</i>	verb starting with a consonant	<i>pas</i>
<i>n'</i>	verb starting with a vowel	<i>pas</i>

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English Translation"
<i>Je ne comprends pas.</i>	"I don't understand."
<i>Ça ne va pas bien.</i>	"I'm not very well."
<i>Je ne parle pas bien le français.</i>	"I'm not speaking French well."
<i>Je n'ai pas compris.</i>	"I didn't understand."

Dialogue Expansion

If you didn't understand what someone said, you can ask that person to repeat what he or she said or to speak more slowly.

Formality	French	"English Translation"
Formal	<i>Vous pouvez répéter, s'il vous plaît ?</i>	"Can you repeat, please?"
Formal	<i>Lentement, s'il vous plaît ?</i>	"Slowly, please."
Informal	<i>Tu peux répéter, s'il te plaît ?</i>	"Can you repeat, please?"
Informal	<i>Lentement, s'il te plaît ?</i>	"Slowly, please."





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To Know Anything About Anybody in France, You **HAVE** to Start Here!

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Formal French

Giulia Tu viens au Centre Georges Pompidou ?
 Rob Le Centre Georges Pompidou ? Qu'est-ce que c'est ?
 Giulia C'est un musée d'art moderne.
 Rob Et Georges Pompidou, qui c'est ?
 Giulia Oh là là. C'est un président français.

English

Giulia Are you coming to the Georges Pompidou Center?
 Rob The Georges Pompidou Center? What is it?
 Giulia It's a museum of modern art.
 Rob And who is Georges Pompidou?
 Giulia Oh la la, he is a French President.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
Le centre	center	noun	masculine
Un musée	museum	noun	masculine
un art	art	noun	masculine
moderne	modern	adjective	masculine or feminine
Un président	president	noun	masculine
venir	to come	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Le Centre Georges Pompidou est reconnaissable à sa structure particulière. "The Georges Pompidou Center is recognizable because of its particular structure."
Le musée d'Orsay est aménagé dans l'ancienne gare d'Orsay inaugurée pour l'Exposition universelle de 1900. "The Orsay Museum is housed in the former Orsay railway station, which was inaugurated at the 1900 Universal Exhibition."
Ce musée est intéressant. "This museum is interesting."
L'art est important à l'école. "Art is important at school."

Le réseau ferroviaire japonais est très moderne. "The Japanese railway system is very modern."
Je viens bientôt! "I am coming soon!"
L'ambulance est venue tout de suite. "The ambulance came right away."

Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson Is Asking About Identifying People and Objects.

Le Centre George Pompidou ? Qu'est-ce que c'est ?

"The Georges Pompidou Center? What is it?"

Traveling in a French speaking country or being acquainted with French people, you will certainly see and hear about unknown places and people. To overcome the culture gap, you should know some very useful questions so you can ask about famous buildings or French people.

The first very useful question to ask about objects, places, or cultural landmarks is the question *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*, meaning "What is it?"

***Qu'est-ce que c'est?* "What is it/this/that?"**

This question is composed of the question particle *Qu'est-ce que* and the verb *être* at the third person singular form, *est*, preceded by the adjective demonstrative *ce*.

As the verb form *est* starts with a vowel, the adjective demonstrative *ce* is shortened to the letter *c* followed by an apostrophe. Therefore, *Qu'est-ce que* or *Qu'est-ce qu'* when followed by a word starting with a vowel, means "what," and *c'est* is translated as "this" or "that" when physically pointing to something or generally speaking about it.

This question has other forms that are more or less formal, as shown below.

Standard: *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* "What is it?"

Informal: *C'est quoi?* "What is this/that?"

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>Qu'est-ce que c'est ?</i>	"What is it?"
<i>C'est un musée.</i>	"It's a museum."

<i>Ce n'est pas un cinéma.</i>	"It's not a movie theater."
<i>C'est quoi ?</i>	"What is it?"
<i>C'est une pièce de voiture.</i>	"It's a car part."

Et Georges Pompidou, qui c'est?
"And who is Georges Pompidou?"

When encountering a French personality or French full name in a document or during a visit, you may wish to get more information about that person. To ask about people, use the question particle *qui*, meaning "who," as in

Qui c'est? "Who is this/that?"

In this question, you can observe three parts. The first one is *qui* ("who"), followed by the demonstrative adjective *c'*-usually to physically designate people or things around you-and the verb *être* with the verb form *est*.

You can formulate this question in different ways depending on the language register:

Standard: *Qui c'est ?* "Who is this/that?"

Formal: *Qui est-ce ?* "Who is this/that?"

Informal: *C'est qui ?* "Who is this/that?"

According to the circumstances, you can also add the name of the person.

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>Qui c'est Monsieur Sarkozy ?</i>	"Who is Mr. Sarkozy?"
<i>Qui est-ce Monsieur Sarkozy ?</i>	"Who is Mr. Sarkozy?"
<i>C'est qui, Monsieur Sarkozy ?</i>	"Who is Mr. Sarkozy?"

And to answer of any of the above questions, just use *c'est* followed by the appropriate information.

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>Qui c'est ?</i>	"Who is this/that?"
<i>C'est Marc.</i>	"It's Marc."



<i>Ce n'est pas Paul.</i>	"It is not Paul."
<i>Qui est-ce ?</i>	"Who is this/that?"
<i>C'est (ma fille) Julie.</i>	"It's (my daughter) Julie."
<i>C'est qui Carla ?</i>	"Who is Carla?"
<i>C'est la femme du président français.</i>	"It's the French president's wife."

Dialogue Focus:*Tu viens au Centre Georges Pompidou ?***"I'm going to the Georges Pompidou. Are you coming?"**

To make an informal invitation to friends or family members, use the verb *venir* at the present tense, called *l'indicatif présent* in French.

For Example:

	French	"English"
First Person Singular	<i>Je viens</i>	"I come"
Second Person Singular	<i>Tu viens</i>	"you come"
First Person Plural	<i>Nous venons</i>	"We come"
Second Person Plural	<i>Vous venez</i>	"You come"

You can offer to do something as follows:

*Tu viens + au + masculine noun**Tu viens + à la + feminine noun**Tu viens aux + plural noun***For Example:**

French	"English"
<i>Tu viens au cinéma ?</i>	"Are coming to the movie theater?"
<i>Tu viens à la plage?</i>	"Are you coming to the beach?"
<i>Tu viens aux concerts des Eurokéesennes*?</i>	"Are you coming to the Eurokéesennes* concerts?"

***Note:** *Les Eurokéesennes* is a three-day event, usually held in the city of Belfort in France during July. During *Les Eurokéesennes*, many artists offer multiple concerts.

Dialogue Expansion

To express your amazement either in a positive or an incredible way, depending on the situation

you're in and what you are feeling, you can use *Ce n'est pas possible!*, literally "It's not possible!" or more commonly "No, way!," instead of *Oh là ! là !*

Cultural Insight

Center George Pompidou: Your One-Stop Culture Stop!

If roaming the streets of Paris near the Center George Pompidou, you won't miss it just because of its futuristic aspect and its original location.

This cultural center is dedicated to gathering in one place all forms of contemporary and modern art, including theater, music, movies, books, and speeches along with fine art. Designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers and built in the 1970s, this building is a symbol of twentieth-century architecture and offers many ways to enrich your personal interests either through its expositions, lectures, documentaries, and unique library.



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Talking About This in French is Real Work! What Do You Do?

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Formal French

Sarah Vous êtes étudiant ?
 Rob Pardon ? Ah, oui.
 Sarah Vous êtes étudiant à l'université ?
 Rob Oui. Et vous, qu'est-ce que vous faites ?
 Sarah Je suis comédienne.
 Rob De cinéma ?
 Sarah Non, de théâtre.

English

Sarah Are you a student?
 Rob Excuse me? Oh, yes.
 Sarah Are you a student at the university?
 Rob Yes. And you, what do you do?
 Sarah I am an actress.
 Rob A movie actress?
 Sarah No, a theater actress.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
oui	yes	adverb	
pardon	pardon, excuse me		
le théâtre	the theater	noun	masculine
ah, oui	oh, yes	interjection	
un cinéma	a cinema	noun	masculine
faire	to do, to make	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Oui, c'est certain.

"Yes, it's certain."

Pardon, je suis désolé.

"Excuse me; I'm sorry."

Les gradins du théâtre sont en acier et en bois.

"The theater bleachers are made of steel and

Tu m'entends? - Ah, oui.

Il y a dix cinémas dans ma ville.

Je fais un gâteau.

Je peux lui montrer comment le faire.

wood."

"Do you hear me? - Oh, yes.

"There are ten cinemas in my town."

"I am making a cake."

"I can show him how to do it."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is How to Ask About Professions.

Et vous, qu'est-ce que vous faites ?

"And you, what do you do?"

Socializing and meeting people is part of the French culture. Inviting your new neighbor for an *aperitif* ("alcoholic drink") on a sunny Sunday or being part of an association for a cause, sport, or game is common. Another way to meet people is to go to the open-air market, a custom that the French most appreciate. It is a place where social classes mix, and immigrants and local families sell their produce. These families either import the produce from their native countries as exotic fruits or are local farmers who offer regional culinary specialty production ranging from dairy to meat products.

When you meet someone for the first time, after exchanging names and engaging in the usual, well-mannered small-talk questions, often a frequent question about each other's profession follows. To ask about a person's job, use the verb *faire*, as in *Qu'est-ce que vous faites ?* ("What do you do?").

This very common question is part of the standard French register, and you can break it into:

1. the question word *qu'est-ce que*, meaning "what." Use *qu'est-ce que* to ask any question to which the answer will vary depending upon each person or situation. It's also called an open question or "what" question in English.
2. the subject *vous*. Here, it is the pronoun *vous*, the equivalent of the polite "you."
3. the verb form *faites* (from the infinitive *faire*), conjugated at *l'indicatif présent* ("the present tense") formed according to the subject *vous*.

This question can vary in structure depending on the level of formality as follows:

Formality	French	"English"	Explanation
Formal	<i>Que faites-vous?</i>	"What do you do?"	In this question, <i>qu'est-ce que</i> is replaced with its formal

			equivalent <i>que</i> , meaning "what." Note the inversion of the subject and the verb, which is another mark of formality in the French language.
Informal	<i>Vous faites quoi ?</i>	"What do you do?"	In this question, <i>qu'est-ce que</i> is replaced with its informal question word <i>quoi</i> , meaning "what." Note here even though the question word order (subject-verb-question word) and the use of <i>quoi</i> denotes the informality of the question, the pronoun <i>vous</i> shows respect to the speaker.

NOTE:

In order of formality from less to most:

Formality	French	"English"
Informal	<i>Vous faites quoi ?</i>	"What do you do?"
Standard	<i>Qu'est-ce que vous faites ?</i>	"What do you do?"
Formal	<i>Que faites-vous ?</i>	"What do you do?"

Dialogue Focus

Vous êtes étudiant à l'université ?

You can use another question to ask for someone's profession, if you have suspicions about their professional activity. If you are making a guess, you will use a yes-no question, called in French *une question fermée*, meaning "a closed question," as follows:

Subject	Verb être	Profession ?
<i>Vous</i>	<i>êtes</i>	<i>profession ?</i>

For Example:

1. *Vous êtes ingénieur ?*
"Are you an engineer?"
2. *Vous êtes assistant commercial ?*
"Are you a junior salesperson?"

Dialogue Expansion: Ask About Someone's Job Informally

If you are in a more informal setting, simply exchange the formal "you" (*vous*) for the informal "you" (*tu*) as follows:

Formality	French	"English"
Informal	<i>Tu fais quoi ?</i>	"What do you do?"
Standard French	<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais ?</i>	"What do you do?"
Formal	<i>Que fais-tu ?</i>	"What do you do ?"

Je suis comédienne. "I'm an actress."

If you are asked this question, you will have to give an answer. To be able to tell your profession, use the verb *être* in a simple phrase. This "simple phrase," or *une phrase simple*, is structured as follows:

Subject + Verb *être* + complement

Note that in French, no article is necessary in front of the profession as it is in English.

For Example:

French (masculine/ feminine)	"English"	French	"English"
<i>un(e) professeur/une professeure</i>	"a teacher/a professor"	<i>Je suis professeur.</i>	"I'm a teacher."
<i>un boulanger/une boulangère</i>	"a baker"	<i>Je suis boulanger.</i>	"I'm a baker."
<i>un policier/une policière</i>	"a police officer"	<i>Je suis policière.</i>	"I'm a police officer."
<i>un(e) comptable</i>	"an accountant"	<i>Je suis comptable.</i>	"I'm an accountant."
<i>un banquier/une banquière</i>	"a banker"	<i>Je suis banquier.</i>	"I'm a banker."
<i>un informaticien/une informaticienne</i>	"a computer scientist"	<i>Je suis informaticien.</i>	"I'm a computer scientist."
<i>un avocat/une avocate</i>	"a lawyer"	<i>Je suis avocate.</i>	"I'm a lawyer."
<i>un web designer (to</i>	"a web designer"	<i>Je suis web</i>	"I'm a web

<i>show the Anglicism)</i>		<i>designer.</i>	designer."
<i>un(e) journaliste</i>	"a reporter/a journalist"	<i>Je suis journaliste.</i>	"I'm a reporter."
<i>un(e) ingénieur</i>	"an engineer"	<i>Je suis ingénieur.</i>	"I'm an engineer."

Note: These are only generic jobs. If you'd like to know how to say your specific job title, leave us a comment in the lesson on FrenchPod101.com and we'll be glad to assist you.

Cultural Insight

French Efforts to Save Starving Artists

Actors, musicians, and artists have quite a special situation in France, which is quite beneficial for their art. The government allows them to receive an income through the unemployment fund in France. This specific status is called "intermittence," and it provides them with advantageous benefits.

To claim this unemployment financial help, an artist must work a minimum of hours within ten months (it used to be one year, but has recently changed). Once the artist has met this hour threshold, the unemployment fund (ASSEDIC) will pay the artist the following year for the value of the work he or she accomplished. For example, if the artist worked for *La Comédie Française*, he or she will get more money than if he or she had worked for a local theatre. That income is a monthly salary calculated on the number of hours the artist worked and how much the artist's employer paid him or her during those ten months. So in France, an artist's income comes from both the institution or company that employed him or her and the government.

This special status considers that artists' work is quite unstable and this particular profession can undergo irregular periods of work. This status is meant to maintain creation, support art, and allow artists to be freed from trivial circumstances. By living in this secure status, the artist can freely create and be more productive.



Absolute Beginner S1

The Most Intuitive French Verb - You Cannot Live Without it!!

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Formal French

Sarah Tu habites à Paris ?
 Rob Oui, j'habite à Belleville*. Et toi ?
 Sarah Non, je n'habite pas à Paris.
 Rob Tu habites où ?
 Sarah À Toulouse.

*Belleville est un quartier de Paris. Toulouse est une ville au sud de la France.

English

Sarah Do you live in Paris?
 Rob Yes, I live in Belleville*. What about you?
 Sarah No, I don't live in Paris.
 Rob Where do you live?
 Sarah In Toulouse*.

*Belleville is a neighborhood in Paris. Toulouse is a Southwestern city in France.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
je / j'	I	personal pronoun	
tu	you (informal)	personal pronoun	
et toi	and you	interjection	
habiter	to reside, to live	verb	
oui	yes	adverb	
non	no	adverb	
à	at, to, in	preposition	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Je vais bien.

"I am well."

Tu as 20 ans.

"You are twenty years old."

Tu vas au travail.

"You go to work."

Moi, je vais bien. Et toi, ça roule ?

"Me, I'm fine. And you, what's up?"

<i>Lui et toi, vous êtes bons amis.</i>	"Him and you, you are good friends."
<i>En 2000, Alice habitait dans un appartement.</i>	"In 2000, Alice lived in an apartment."
<i>Oui, c'est certain.</i>	"Yes, it's certain."
<i>Non, je ne suis pas Madame Henri.</i>	"No, I'm not Madame Henri."
<i>Non, je ne suis pas d'accord.</i>	"No, I don't agree."
<i>Non, ce n'est pas vrai.</i>	"No, it's not true."
<i>Je suis à la maison.</i>	"I am at home."
<i>J'habite à Sidney.</i>	"I live in Sydney."
<i>Je vais à la campagne.</i>	"I go to the countryside."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Conjugation of the Verb Form the First Verb Group

Oui, j'habite à Belleville.

"Yes, I live in Belleville."

Most of us build friendships from contact and through shared experiences. However, the French people consider and act upon building and maintaining friendships a bit differently, according to where they live.

Two major tendencies exist among the French people who live in the northern and the southern part of France. People living in the northern regions with colder weather tend to be more reserved and more resistant to newcomers. However, they maintain contact with their friends even though life may put distance between them.

On the other hand, in the warmer, more southern part of France, French people are much inclined to initiate a first contact, but they most likely will break any ties if distance becomes an obstacle. But even though these are common tendencies, don't believe they are true for everyone!

So be sure to be able to conjugate the verb *habiter* ("to live") first, and then ask where people live in France so you will know how your new acquaintances may treat you as a friend. But be ready to be positively surprised! Even if being "forewarned is forearmed," in this case, prejudgment may be your enemy!

Conjugating the Verb *Habiter*, Meaning "to Live"

Most of the time in France, older generations may still live around the same area where they were born and raised. However, the younger generation is more mobile and may have lived in more cities than

their elders.

To tell or ask where people or your residency is located, use the verb *habiter* ("to live") in *le présent de l'indicatif* ("the present tense").

This verb is part of the first verb group among the three existing in the French conjugation. The first verb group includes only verbs whose infinitive forms end in *-er*, and they are all regular verbs.

To conjugate any verb that is part of the first verb group, follow these steps:

Step 1:

To find the "verb stem" or *le radical* in French, eliminate the *-er* infinitive ending of the verb as follows:

The verb stem of *habiter* is *habiter*.

Step 2:

Determine the subject of your sentence and then its person to be able to conjugate the verb at the correct form.

Step 3:

Add the appropriate ending to the verb stem:

Person	Ending	Stem	Conjugation
First person singular	<i>-e</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>j'*habite</i>
Second person singular	<i>-es</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>tu habites</i>
Third person singular masculine	<i>-e</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>il habite</i>
Third person singular feminine	<i>-e</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>elle habite</i>

NOTE: We shorten the first person singular pronoun *je* to the letter *j* and we add an apostrophe, *j'*, when the following verb starts with a vowel or a silent *h*.

Person	Ending	Stem	Conjugation
First person plural	<i>-ons</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>nous habitons</i>
Second person plural	<i>-ez</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>vous habitez</i>
Third person plural masculine	<i>-ent</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>ils habitent</i>
Third person plural feminine	<i>-ent</i>	<i>habit-</i>	<i>elles habitent</i>

feminine			
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For Example:

You'd like to say, "My parents live in Chicago." First, find the subject, which is "my parents" in this phrase. Then determine its person; here, it's the third person plural masculine (even if you are talking about a man and a woman, grammatically the masculine takes over).

Knowing that "parents" is the subject of "My parents live in Chicago," and knowing that the subject is third person plural, you'll end up with:

Mes parents habitent à Chicago.

"My parents live in Chicago."

Tu habites à Paris ?

"Do you live in Paris?"

Formulating the Question With the Verb *habiter* ("to live")

To ask where your interlocutor lives, you have a few options.

The first one we use in the dialogue, *Tu habites à Paris ?* ("Do you live in Paris?"), implies that you suspect where the person lives and are simply asking for confirmation. This type of question that you can answer with a positive ("yes") or a negative ("no"), whether implied or said, is called *une question fermée* (equivalent to a "yes-no question" in English).

Option 1: Yes-no questions or *question fermée* with the verb *habiter* ("to live").

In this case, when speaking to someone familiar, use:

Tu + habites + à + city ?

You may also hear or use the more formal version:

Habites-tu + à + city ?

If you want to show respect or are in a formal situation, use:

Vous + habitez + à + city ?

Or use this word order, which creates the most formal of all possible questions:

Habitez-vous + à + city ?

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>Tu habites à New York ?</i>	"Do you live in New York?"
<i>Habites-tu à Nice ?</i>	"Do you live in Nice?"
<i>Vous habitez à Milan ?</i>	"Do you live in Milan?"
<i>Habitez-vous à Madrid ?</i>	"Do you live in Madrid?"

Tu habites où ?

"Where do you live?"

Option 2: Wh- question or *question ouverte* with the verb *habiter*

You should use the other way to ask where a person lives when you have no clue or assumption about where the person lives and will need to ask a direct question with the question word *où*, meaning "where."

Various structures for this question exist:

Subject + conjugated form of *habiter* + *où* ?

***Où* + Subject + conjugated form of *habiter* ?**

***Où* + *est-ce que* + Subject + conjugated form of *habiter* ?**

Subject + conjugated form of *habiter* + *où* ?

***Où* + conjugated form of *habiter* + Subject ?**

Note: We commonly use all these word order structures in everyday French. However, the last one, with the verb placed before the subject, is the most formal of all. This verb/subject order is only possible in questions and is called "the subject inversion," or in French, *l'inversion du sujet*.

Therefore, if you use it with the pronoun *vous*, you'll end up with the highest form of formality when asking a question.

An informal situation:

French	"English"
<i>Tu habites où ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où tu habites ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où est-ce que tu habites ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où habites-tu ?</i>	"Where do you live?"

A formal situation:

French	"English"
<i>Vous habitez où ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où vous habitez ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où est-ce que vous habitez ?</i>	"Where do you live?"
<i>Où habitez-vous ?</i>	"Where do you live?"

Dialogue Expansion**"Tell me in which country you live."**

If you wish to tell someone in which country you or someone else lives, be aware of the gender of the country. This is of importance, as the phrase will change slightly.

Use the subject followed by the correct verb form of the verb *habiter* and one of the following prepositions:

Formation	Example	French	"English"
<i>au</i> + masculine country	<i>Le Maroc</i>	<i>J'habite au Maroc.</i>	"I live in Morocco."
<i>en</i> + feminine country	<i>La Belgique</i>	<i>J'habite en Belgique.</i>	"I live in Belgium."
<i>aux</i> + plural country	<i>Les Émirats Arabes Unis</i>	<i>J'habite aux Émirats Arabes Unis.</i>	"I live in the United Arab Emirates."



Absolute Beginner S1

How to Mind Your Manners in French Cinemas

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Formal French

Giulia Tu aimes Jean-Pierre Jeunet ?
 Rob C'est qui ?
 Giulia C'est un réalisateur français. C'est le réalisateur d'Amélie.
 Rob Ah, oui ! C'est un bon film.
 Giulia J'aime bien Amélie.

English

Giulia Do you like Jean-Pierre Jeunet?
 Rob Who is this?
 Giulia He is a movie director. He's the movie director of "Amélie."
 Rob Oh, yes! It's a good movie.
 Giulia I like Amélie.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
aimer	to love	verb	
un réalisateur	a movie director	noun	masculine
Ah, oui !	Oh, okay!	expression	
le	the (singular)	definite article	masculine
un	a, an	indefinite article	masculine
J'aime bien	I like	phrase	
bon	good	adjective or adverb	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

J'aime le film "Amélie".
On aime l'apéritif.

Luc Besson est le réalisateur de "Nikita".
C'est qui ? Ah oui ! Le réalisateur d'Amélie !

"I like the movie *Amélie*"
 "We love the drink." (See Cultural Insight Newbie Lesson #2.)
 "Luc Besson is the movie director of *Nikita*."
 "Who is it? Oh, okay! The movie director of *Amélie*."

Le supermarché est au centre commercial.

"The supermarket is at the mall."

Un peu d'eau.

"a little water"

J'aime bien le théâtre.

"I like theater."

C'est un bon livre.

"It is a good book."

Le chocolat, c'est bon.

"Chocolate is good."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Masculine Articles.

C'est un réalisateur français. C'est le réalisateur d'Amélie.

"He is a movie director. He's the movie director of Amélie."

The world is split in half. The northern hemisphere and the southern one. The ones who are for and the ones who are against anything. The advantages and disadvantages. You can even see things in black or white!

The same is true when naming things around you in French. You are split between various concepts.

Referring to things, concepts, or people in French requires knowing a word's gender and context. Is it masculine or feminine? Is it in a general or specific context?

Today, we will concentrate on the context when referring to something masculine.

Masculine Articles: *le* ("the") and *un* ("a")

Once you determine the noun's gender, you'll need to use an article. If the object, concept, or person is masculine, you'll use either *un* or *le*, but which one?

The Article *un* ("a")

The word *un* ("a") is an indefinite article and refers to a singular masculine person or thing.

We call these articles "indefinite" simply to express that we use them in front of nouns, things, or persons when they aren't identified or when they are in a general context.

We also use it when mentioning something or someone for the first time, as in the dialogue: *C'est un réalisateur. C'est le réalisateur d'Amélie.* ("He is a movie director. He's the movie director of Amélie.")

However, the sentence *C'est un bon film* ("It is a good movie.") implies that the movie is a good one among other good ones. We use the article *un* because the movie is mentioned in a general context. If we used *le* instead of *un*, *C'est le bon film*, as in *C'est le bon film de l'année* ("It is the best movie of the year."), the sentence would change meaning, implying that the movie *Amélie* is the best of all.

For Example:

1. *C'est un chien de la voisine.*
"It is a dog of the neighbor."
Here, we don't know which dog we are referring to among others.
2. *C'est le chien de la voisine.*
"It is the dog of the neighbor."
Here, we imply that there is only one dog.

The Article *le* ("the")

We classify the article *le* ("the") among the definite articles.

We use *le* in front of masculine singular nouns. We can use *le* when referring to:

- a category

For Example:

1. *le cinéma* ("the movie industry"), as opposed to *un cinéma*, referring to "a movie theater."
2. *le sport* ("sports"), as opposed to *un sport*, referring to "a sport among others."

- specific things or persons

For Example:

1. *le cinéma du quartier*
"the neighborhood movie theater"
2. *le sport de glisse*
"board sports"

- something or someone already mentioned

For Example:

1. *C'est un cinéma. Dans le cinéma, il y a trois salle.*
"It is a movie theater. In the movie theater, there are three show rooms."
2. *C'est un sport. C'est le sport de glisse en vogue.*
"It is a sport. It is the board sport in trend."

Dialogue Focus:

J'aime bien Amélie.

"I like Amélie."

When reading French, don't be surprised to see the personal pronoun *je* ("I") contracted to the letter *j* followed by an apostrophe.

This spelling rule is due to the difficulty of pronouncing two vowel sounds together in French, which sounds weird to the French native ear.

Therefore, make sure to eliminate the *-e* and replace it with an apostrophe when the pronoun *je* is followed by a verb starting with a vowel or an *h*.

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>J'adore</i>	"I adore"
<i>J'ouvre</i>	"I open"
<i>J'offre</i>	"I offer"
<i>J'héberge</i>	"I lodge/give shelter"
<i>J'hésite</i>	"I hesitate"
<i>J'habille</i>	"I dress"

Cultural Insight

"Silent" Theaters in France

France is among the countries that have the largest art-house movie theaters. They usually focus on noncommercial movies or new and talented movie directors. In most if not all of these theaters, food or drink is not allowed!

Good or bad? It's for you to judge. However, not drinking or eating allows for these small institutions to respect their philosophy of protecting the seventh art and the ones who enjoy it. By not sitting through a movie while hearing popcorn or snacks crunching or slurping and other drinking noises, the feature presentation is more enjoyable.

Moreover, as this small theaters are not concerned with making huge profits but rather just covering their costs, selling food and drinks is not a priority. One can also imagine that avoiding food and beverage consumption in movie theaters permits their managers to save on cleaning expenses.

But if you are a well-mannered spectator, you can bring your own chewable noise-free snack so you won't get caught!



Absolute Beginner S1

Phrases You Don't Want on Your French License Plate

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Formal French

Rob Tu viens d'où, déjà ?
 Sarah Je viens de Toulouse, Midi-Pyrénées.
 Rob Midi-Pyrénées, c'est une région ?
 Sarah Oui c'est la région du cassoulet !
 Rob J'adore le cassoulet !
 Sarah Beurk !

English

Rob Where are you from again?
 Sarah I am from Toulouse, Midi-Pyrénées!
 Rob Midi-Pyrénées, is that a region?
 Sarah Yes, it's the region of the cassoulet!
 Rob I love cassoulet!
 Sarah Eww!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
venir de	to come from, to have just	verb	
une région	area (region)	noun	feminine
le cassoulet	duck and bean dish	noun	masculine
déjà	already	adverb	
une	a	indefinite article	feminine
la	the (singular)	definite article	feminine
Adorer	to be fond of, to love	verb	
Berk	phew, yuck	interjection	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Je viens de France.

"I come from France."

Je viens de finir mes devoirs.

"I just finished my homework."

Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur est une région de France.

Cette région est belle.

Je n'aime pas le cassoulet, c'est gras.

Tu habites où, déjà ? J'habite à Paris.

Il a déjà pris une décision.

Pour une quiche, j'ai besoin de trois oeufs.

La boisson est excellente.

J'adore le français.

Il adore sa femme.

Berk, je n'aime pas cette boisson.

"Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur is a region of France."

"This region is beautiful."

"I don't like cassoulet, it's greasy."

"Where do you live, again? I live in Paris."

"He already made a decision."

"For a quiche, I need three eggs."

"The drink is excellent."

"I love French."

"He's fond of his wife."

"Phew, I don't like this drink."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Feminine Articles

Midi-Pyrénées, c'est une région ?

"Midi-Pyrénées, is that a region?"

Imagine all things neutral, equal, inert, and impersonal.... How boring that would be!

Articles in French add color and gender to the language and give words and what they represent, either an object, a concept, or a person, a form and a mental image.

In French, "a car" (*une voiture*) is feminine and "a truck" (*un camion*) is masculine. Why? It is a consequence of the evolution of the French language. The languages from which French descends had two different genders, animate and inanimate. Later, these genders evolved into neuter and feminine, and then into masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. Today's French reduces these genders to the masculine and feminine.

But even as bizarre as it may sound, word gender has its charms, especially the feminine one (or masculine according to your taste)!

To refer to feminine nouns, you'll have to use feminine articles.

Feminine Indefinite Article: *Une* ("a")

When referring to an object, person, or concept among others or without any specification in your speech, use the indefinite article *une*, the feminine "a", as shown in the dialogue with *Midi-Pyrénées*,

c'est une région ? ("Midi-Pyrénées, is that a region?").

In this context, as the speaker doesn't know what the *Midi-Pyrénées* is and attempts to identify it among other regions, he uses the indefinite article *une* in accordance with the gender of the French noun *région* ("region").

We also use *une* when we mention something feminine for the first time.

For Example:

1. *C'est une belle église. L'église Saint-Aubin de Toulouse est de 1843.*

"It is a beautiful church. The church Saint-Aubin is from 1843."

In the first phrase, we use the article *une* when we mention "the church" for the first time.

2. *Une femme est venue.*

"A woman came."

Here, we don't know which woman came, so we use the feminine indefinite article *une*.

Language Tip: Determining Feminine Nouns

Even though you should learn all new words with their indefinite articles, your task will be easier if you remember this tip:

Nouns are usually feminine if they end in:

1. *-son, -ion, -té, -eur, -ise, -ance, -ence, -ense, -ière, -oire, -ude, -ure, -ade, -ace*
2. *-e*, if the noun is a country or a region
3. *-e* preceded by a vowel
4. *-e* preceded by a double consonant

In addition, the arts and sciences are usually feminine.

Keep in mind that you will encounter some exceptions to these guidelines.

The Feminine Definite Article *la* ("the")

We use the definite article *la* ("the") in front of feminine singular nouns. We can also use it when referring to a category, a domain, or a concept in a general sense or something or someone already mentioned in a dialogue, as in *Oui, c'est la région du cassoulet !* ("Yes, it's the region of the stew!").

For Example:

1. *La fête du cinéma dure 7 jours cette année.*

"The movie theater celebration lasts seven days this year."

As this event is one-of-a-kind all over France, the definite article *la* precedes the feminine noun *fête*.

2. *La chance est avec vous.*

"Luck is with you."

In this sentence, we use the definite article *la* in front of the feminine noun *chance* ("luck"), as it is associated with a generic concept.

Dialogue Focus: How to Ask and Tell About Origins

Asking About a Person's Origin

To ask informally about someone's origin, ask:

Tu viens d'où ?

"Where are you from?"

The formulation of this question can differ as follows:

French	"English"	Formality
<i>D'où tu viens ?</i>	"Where are you from?"	Informal
<i>Vous venez d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"	Formal
<i>D'où vous venez ?</i>	"Where are you from?"	Formal

Telling About Your Origin

Je viens de + city or feminine countries

For Example:

1. *Je viens de Lyon.*
"I come from Lyon."
2. *Je viens de Belgique.*
"I come from Belgium."

Je viens du + masculine countries

For Example:

1. *Je viens du Gabon.*
"I come from Gabon."
2. *Je viens du Portugal.*
"I come from Portugal."

Je viens des + plural countries

For Example:

1. *Je viens des Etats-Unis.*
"I come from the United States."
2. *Je viens des Pays-Bas.*
"I come from The Netherlands."

Cultural Insight

Which Region Should You Tour in France? Your Options Are Limitless!

France has twenty-two regions, each one rich in its own history and culinary specialties. The most visited are *Ile-de-France* ("Paris"), the French Riviera, the *Cote d'Azur* (including the cities Nice, Cannes, Marseille, Toulon, and world-rekknowned little villages such as Saint-Tropez, Cassis, Gordes, and Avignon), and the Loire Valley.

Since ancient times in France, even as early as the Vikings, the French have never centralized their political power in one place. Throughout France's history, a series of centralization and decentralization of political power has occurred. The aim of power decentralization is to allow local and regional elected individuals more maneuverability in decision making.

Today, we can still notice the French tendency toward decentralization with the way the French have organized their offices of tourism, which consist of national offices present overseas to regional ones launching campaigns nationally and internationally, as well as city ones offering local tours and information to anyone coming in.

To learn more about a region, find its Tourism Regional Committee (in French, *Comité Régional du Tourisme*), a non-profit institution the Regional Council finances, online at www.franceguide.com. This is the official website of the French Government Tourist Office. Search for the region you are looking for by clicking the link named CRT, or *Comité Régional du Tourisme*, followed by the name of the French region.



Absolute Beginner S1

How You Bring Home the Bacon in French

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Formal French

Rob	Il habite où, Jules ?
Sarah	Il habite à Montparnasse.
Rob	Et qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?
Sarah	Il est interprète.
Rob	Il parle anglais ?
Sarah	Oui, il parle anglais et...russe !

English

Rob	Where does Jules live?
Sarah	He lives in Montparnasse.
Rob	And what does he do?
Sarah	He is an interpreter.
Rob	Does he speak English?
Sarah	Yes he speaks English and...Russian!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
où	where	adverb of place	
Il	he	personal pronoun	masculine
elle	she	personal pronoun	
un interprète	an interpreter	noun	masculine or feminine
Russe	Russian	adjective	masculine or feminine
anglais(e)	English	noun	masculine/feminine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Tu habites où, déjà ? J'habite à Paris.

"Where do you live, again? I live in Paris."

Où tu es ?

"Where are you?"

Il marche.

"He walks."

Elle est belle.

"She is beautiful."

C'est un interprète pour les Nations Unies.

"He is an interpreter for the United Nations."

*Mon ami russe vient de Moscou.
 Mon ami anglais vient de Londres.
 L'anglais est la langue des affaires.*

"My Russian friend comes from Moscow."
 "My English friend comes from London."
 "English is the language of business."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Talking About a Third Person.

Et qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?

"And what does he do?"

The expression *se faire une bouffe*, literally "to make food," comes often from the mouths of close friends in France. This colloquial expression means "to get together for a bite." The gathering can be as informal as sitting at a coffee table with appetizers and beverages to a more formal seated meal at a set table.

Food remains an important part of French culture, and going to a party always involves some food and wine or other drinks to enjoy the pleasure of the table. Before arriving to the festivities, make sure you always have something in your hands to offer to the host, such as a bottle of wine or some flowers.

If you are invited through a friend to a party and you do not know the host, you may be curious whom he or she is. To learn more about a third party, you'll have to master some conjugation. To ask or talk about a third person, you will need to use the third person singular to conjugate any verb. The appropriate pronoun if you're not referring to the person by his or her name is *il*, meaning "he," if you're referring to a man, or *elle*, meaning "she," if you're referring to a woman.

Asking About a Third Person's Occupation

Rob is invited to Jules' party. Jules is Sarah's friend. As Rob doesn't know much about Jules, he asks her about him. Among his inquiries, he asks where Jules lives with *Il habite où, Jules ?* meaning "Where does he live?" He also asks about his occupation with *Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?* meaning "What does he do?" Observe in French that the question *Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?* has only three elements: the question word *qu'est-ce que*, meaning "what," the subject *il*, meaning "he," and the verb form *fait* (from the infinitive form of the verb *faire*), meaning "to do" or "to make" depending on the context.

To ask about a third person's occupation, you will need to use:

Construction	Question Word	Subject: Third Person Singular	Verb Form of faire
For a man	<i>Qu'est-ce qu'</i>	<i>il</i>	<i>fait ?</i>
For a woman	<i>Qu'est-ce qu'</i>	<i>elle</i>	<i>fait ?</i>

Note

Qu'est-ce que, meaning "what," is spelled without the last letter *-e* and with an apostrophe when the following word starts with a vowel.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Qu'est-ce que Mathieu fait ?</i>	"What does Mathieu do?"
<i>Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?</i>	"What does he do?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que Virginie fait ?</i>	"What does Virginie do?"
<i>Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait ?</i>	"What does she do?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que Monsieur Lenvin fait ?</i>	"What does Mr. Lenvin do?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que Madame Blanc fait ?</i>	"What does Mrs. Blanc do?"

Understanding a Person's Occupation Statement

Sarah replies to Rob's question about Jules' occupation with *Il est interprète*, meaning "He is an interpreter." When stating someone's job in French, we use the verb *être*.

To ask about a third person's occupation, use:

Construction	Subject	Verb Form of être	Occupation
For a man	<i>Il</i>	<i>est</i>	<i>interprète.</i>
For a woman	<i>Elle</i>	<i>est</i>	<i>interprète.</i>

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Sarah est étudiante.</i>	"Sarah is a student."
<i>Elle est étudiante.</i>	"She is a student."
<i>Vincent est mécanicien.</i>	"Vincent is a mechanic."
<i>Il est mécanicien.</i>	"He is a mechanic."

Language Focus: Telling About Someone's Job

Notice in French when we state someone's job, as in *Il est interprète*, meaning "He is an interpreter," we don't use an article in front of the job as we would in English.

Therefore, when formulating such statements in French, make sure not to add an article in front of the occupation, as this is a common error.

Cultural Insight

Dinner Is More Than Just Dining in France!

France has an excellent reputation worldwide for its cuisine. Not only are French people proud of their cuisine (and therefore, they can be quite critical about foreign cuisine), but they also love to gather around a meal to enjoy each other's company.

The importance of eating is not only the pleasure of digesting traditional or trendy new dishes, but also socializing and enjoying above all else the convivial aspect of a dinner among friends or family.

French history can explain these eating habits. During the reign of Louis XIV (1661-1715), the nobility (upper-class citizens) would have twelve-hour feasts during which they served more than ten different dishes. The presentation of the food was just as important as the taste and quality of the ingredients.

Today, even though habits are changing to accommodate only a short lunch lasting from thirty minutes to an hour during the workday, dinners at home or in restaurants last much longer, up to several hours. Adults and children alike expect to sit for several hours in a restaurant. They raise their glasses, make jokes, and discuss gossip; all these things are inherent parts of a meal. So the next time you're a guest to a dinner party, make sure to enjoy the atmosphere as much as the meal prepared for you.



Absolute Beginner S1

Can You Fit Me Into Your Busy Schedule in France?

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Formal French

Cathy Tu aimes le vin, Rob ?
 Rob Oui !!!
 Cathy Qu'est-ce que tu fais lundi ?
 Rob Lundi soir ?
 Cathy Oui. Je vais à une dégustation de vin chez Marcel.
 Rob Marcel, c'est qui ?
 Cathy C'est un restaurant ! Chez Marcel.
 Rob Ah ! Lundi, je vais au cinéma.
 Cathy Et mardi ?
 Rob Mardi, d'accord !

English

Cathy Do you like wine, Rob?
 Rob Yes, I do!
 Cathy What are you doing on Monday?
 Rob Monday night?
 Cathy Yes. I am going to a wine tasting at Marcel's.
 Rob Who's Marcel?
 Cathy It's a restaurant! Marcel's.
 Rob Oh! Monday, I'm going to the movies.
 Cathy And Tuesday?
 Rob Tuesday, Okay!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
le vin	wine	noun	masculine
le soir	evening	noun	masculine
une dégustation	a tasting	noun	feminine
chez	at (someone's home)		
un restaurant	a restaurant	noun	masculine
d'accord	okay	expression	
lundi	Monday	noun	masculine
mardi	Tuesday	noun	masculine

mercredi	Wednesday	noun	masculine
jeudi	Thursday	noun	masculine
vendredi	Friday	noun	masculine
samedi	Saturday	noun	masculine
dimanche	Sunday	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

J'aime le vin de Bordeaux.

Ce soir, je vais au cinéma.

La dégustation de fromage est excellente.

Je suis chez Cécile aujourd'hui.

Chez elle, c'est joli.

Le restaurant est très bien.

On y va ? D'accord !

Je suis d'accord.

Lundi, je vais à Paris.

Le lundi de pâques est toujours un lundi.

Tu travailles mardi ?

On est occupé le mardi.

Je vais à la piscine le mercredi.

Le marché aux fruits est le jeudi.

Ce vendredi est chargé.

Vendredi treize est considéré néfaste.

Samedi, c'est le premier jour du week-end.

Il adore lire le journal le dimanche matin.

"I like Bordeaux wine."

"This evening, I am going to the movies."

"The cheese tasting is excellent."

"I'm at Cécile's place today."

"It's pretty at her place."

"The restaurant is very good."

"Let's go? Okay!"

"I agree."

"I'm going to Paris on Monday."

"Easter Monday is always on a Monday."

"Are you working on Tuesday?"

"We are busy on Tuesday."

"I am going to the pool on Wednesdays."

"The fruit market is on Thursday."

"This Friday is busy."

"Friday the 13th is considered dangerous."

"Saturday is the first day of the weekend."

"He loves to read the newspaper on Sunday morning."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Talking About Your Schedule.

Qu'est-ce que tu fais lundi ?

"What are you doing on Monday?"

La fête bat son plein. **"The party is going on!"**

People are talking, the music is playing, and glasses are raised. That is certainly why the guests,

including Rob, are enjoying Jules' party. Rob recently moved to France, and he has the chance to live the French way of life and mingle with the locals! At the party, he meets Cathy, who invites him to a wine tasting in a restaurant.

To ask informally about someone's schedule, use the same question as for asking someone's job:

1. *Qu'est-ce que tu fais ?*
"What do you do?"

Usually, the conversation topic will make it clear whether your conversation partner is asking for your schedule or occupation. However, if you'd like to make it clear, you can ask for:

1. **A person's occupation**

Qu'est-ce que tu fais dans la vie ?
"What do you do for a living?"

2. **A person's schedule**

Qu'est-ce que tu fais + date/week day/ expression of time?
"What do you do for a living?"

For Example:

Qu'est-ce que tu fais + day of the week ?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Day of the Week</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>mardi ?</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>dimanche ?</i>

Qu'est-ce que tu fais + date ?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Day of the Week</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>mardi 13 juillet ?</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>le 10 septembre ?</i>

Qu'est-ce que tu fais + expression of time ?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Day of the Week</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>cet après-midi ?</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>plus tard ?</i>
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>la semaine prochaine ?</i>

<i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais +</i>	<i>demain ?</i>
--------------------------------	-----------------

Language Expansion

To ask formally about a person's occupation or schedule, replace *tu fais* with *vous faites*:

1. Asking about a person's job: *Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ?*
2. Asking about a person's schedule:

French	"English"
<i>Qu'est-ce que vous faites mercredi ?</i>	"What do you do on Wednesday?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que vous faites le 10 février ?</i>	"What do you do February tenth?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que vous faites tout à l'heure ?</i>	"What do you do in a moment?"

Je vais à une dégustation de vin chez Marcel.
"I am going to a wine tasting at Marcel's."

Going out usually involves getting out of the house and going somewhere!

Bon vivant or *bonne vivante* would be a correct description of Cathy's social and joyful personality as she seems to have a busy schedule during her free time. In fact, her spontaneous personality shows as Cathy plans to go to a wine tasting on Monday; she says *Je vais à une dégustation de vin chez Marcel* ("I am going to a wine tasting at Marcel's."). She offers to Rob to go back to the same restaurant on Tuesday, as he is busy on Monday going to the movie theater, by announcing *Ah ! Lundi, je vais au cinéma.* ("Oh! Monday, I'm going to the movies.")

To describe your busy schedule and where you go, use the verb *aller* ("to go") in conjunction with the preposition *à* and its variants.

Subject + Verb	Preposition + Complement
<i>Je vais +</i>	<i>au + masculine noun</i>
<i>Je vais +</i>	<i>à la + feminine noun</i>
<i>Je vais +</i>	<i>à l'+ noun starting with a vowel (no matter the gender)</i>
<i>Je vais +</i>	<i>aux + plural noun (no matter the gender)</i>

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je vais au concert.</i>	"I go to the concert."
<i>Je vais à la bibliothèque.</i>	"I go to the library."
<i>Je vais aux courses PMU*.</i>	"I go to the horse races."
<i>Je vais à l'atelier peinture.</i>	"I go to the paint workshop."

*PMU, stands for *pari mutuel urbain*, which means literally in English "urban mutual bet." PMU is the French company promoting, marketing, and processing bets on horse races in France.

To tell where your interlocutor goes, use *tu vas*, meaning "you go," instead of *je vais*. When describing where a third person goes, use *il va* ("he goes") for a man or *elle va* ("she goes") for a woman.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Tu vas au théâtre.</i>	"You go to the theater."
<i>Tu vas aux expositions d'arts visuels .</i>	"You go to visual art expositions."
<i>Tu vas à la fête des pompiers.</i>	"You go to the firefighters' celebration."
<i>Il va à l'ouverture du zoo.</i>	"He goes to the zoo opening."
<i>Elle va au tournoi de tennis.</i>	"She goes to the tennis tournament."
<i>Il va aux jardins aquatiques.</i>	"He goes to the aquatic garden."

Language Expansion: Describing People's Itineraries and Destinations

To speak about your trip or someone else's itinerary and/or destination, use the verb *aller* ("to go") followed by the preposition *à* or one of its variants.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Il va à Bordeaux.</i>	"He goes to Bordeaux."
<i>Je vais au quartier latin à Paris.</i>	"I go to the Latin quarter in Paris."
<i>Tu vas à Saint Malo* et à Brest**.</i>	"I go to Paris and Brest."
<i>Tu vas au futuroscope*** à Poitiers.</i>	"You go to the Futuroscope park in Poitiers."
<i>Elle va au festival de théâtre.</i>	"She goes the the theater festival."

*Saint Malo is a small town in Bretagne, (in English, "Britany") which is famous for its historic

remains and old towns dating back to the seventh century.

**Brest is one of the main cities of Bretagne ("Britany").

***Futuroscope is a theme park about multimedia, cinematography, and robotic attractions from the future.

Cultural Insight

Daily Life in France: Wednesday Is Children's Day

Don't be surprised to see kids playing in the streets on Wednesdays in France. It is the day when kids from all over France do not go to school. Students are usually taught from eight o'clock in the morning to noon and from two o'clock to four o'clock in the afternoon on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as on Saturday mornings. However, since the school year 2008-2009, the French issued a directive changing this rhythm, now imposing a four-day week by eliminating the Saturday morning.

Logically, Wednesday has had and still has an impact on the French economy and the French way of life. Due to this break for children, many marketing campaigns and events take place on this day. Television programs are scheduled on Wednesdays. Movie theater tickets are cheaper on that day, and movies are released on Wednesdays. The government regulates sales dates to start on Wednesdays and last for five to six weeks. The French also offer activities in museums, parks, or public areas for children on Wednesdays.

So when visiting France, make sure to keep your eyes open to observe the French children's way of life on the third day of the week!



Absolute Beginner S1

Making Your French Birthday List by Using the Negative to State What
You Don't Have!

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Formal French

Rob Tu habites loin ?
 Cathy Oui, à Versailles.
 Rob Tu as une voiture ?
 Cathy Non, je n'ai pas de voiture.
 Rob Tu as un abonnement de métro ?
 Cathy Oui, bien sûr.

English

Rob Do you live far?
 Cathy Yes, in Versailles.
 Rob Do you have a car?
 Cathy No, I don't have a car.
 Rob Do you have a monthly subway pass?
 Cathy Yes, of course.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
loin	far	adverb	
une voiture	a car	noun	feminine
un abonnement	a subscription, a pass	noun	masculine
métro	subway	noun	masculine
bien sûr	of course	adverb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Le Japon est loin de la France. "Japan is far from France."
Cent kilomètres, c'est loin pour aller à une soirée. "One hundred kilometers is far to go for a party."
La voiture de Frank est une Peugeot. "Frank's car is a Peugeot."
La voiture est au garagiste. "The car is at the shop."
J'ai un abonnement au New York Times. "I have a subscription to the New York Times."
Le métro fonctionne jusqu'à deux heures du matin "The subway runs until 2:00 AM on the weekend."

en fin de semaine.

Le métro est en retard.

J'aime Paris, bien sûr!

"The subway is late."

"I like Paris, of course!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Negation in Statements.

Non, je n'ai pas de voiture.

"No, I don't have a car."

Being a student, as Rob is, usually involves taking public transportation, especially when studying in main French cities.

The French public transportation system is reliable and reasonably priced, since public institutions finance it at the regional level. The system serves not only the cities but also suburbs and small villages. Subways, tramways, buses, and local train systems are available to the commuters and offer alternative transportation to the already jammed roads and freeways to reach work, schools, or universities during hours with heavy traffic.

So if you ask French students or active, single young adults living in a big city or the capital for a ride, don't be surprised if they do not own a car.

In the dialogue, Rob and Cathy are leaving the restaurant, and Rob asks whether Cathy has a car with *Tu as une voiture?* ("Do you have a car?") As he is not referring to a particular car, and speaks of a car in a general context, note that Rob uses an indefinite article in front of the possessed object.

Stating That You Do Not Have Something

When asked whether you own an object that you don't have in a general context, you'll respond with the negative form *ne/n' pas de*, just as Cathy does with the negative statement *Je n'ai pas de voiture.* ("I don't have a car.")

To formulate a negative statement with the negative form *ne/n'pas de*, use:

Je + n' + ai + pas de/d' + Noun

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Tu as un portable ? Non, je n'ai pas de portable.</i>	"Do you have a cell phone? No, I don't have a cell phone."
<i>Tu as une cigarette ? Non, je n'ai pas de cigarettes.</i>	"Do you have a cigarette? No, I don't have cigarettes."
<i>Tu as un ordinateur ? Non, je n'ai pas d'ordinateur.</i>	"Do you have a computer? No, I don't have a computer."
<i>Tu as une assiette ? Non, je n'ai pas d'assiette.</i>	"Do you have a plate? No, I don't have a plate."

Language Note

When the noun starts with a vowel in the sequence *Je n' ai pas de* + noun, we shorten the word *de* to the letter *d* followed by an apostrophe.

For Example:

1. *Tu as un abonnement de métro ? Non, je n'ai pas d'abonnement de métro.*

Language Expansion

When talking about a brand with the negation form, keep the indefinite article:

For Example:

*Tu as une Peugeot ? Non, je n'ai pas **une** Peugeot, j'ai **une** Renault.*
"Do you have a Peugeot? No, I don't have a Peugeot, I have a Renault."

Cultural Insight

One Legacy of the French Sun King

Versailles is well-known for its castle! If you have already visited the castle or intend to do so, do not forget to go and see its garden and its impressive canal. The canal was built with various ponds to create the optical illusion that the canal is the same size in the distance when you view it from the castle. It is shaped like a cross and measures twenty-three hectares (fifty-seven acres), and spans five and a half kilometers (nearly three and a half miles) in periphery.

You can walk for about an hour all around it, or choose to rent a small boat for an hour and row as the nobility did on the smelly marsh during the Louis XIV era. If you happen to be on the premises on the fifth of September, make sure to admire the sunset lining up with the canal on Louis XIV's birthday.



Absolute Beginner S1

Is Everything You Own in That French Purse?!

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Formal French

Rob Giulia, tu as un téléphone portable ?
 Giulia Oui.
 (Giulia looks for it in her purse but has a hard time finding it)
 Giulia Non...non...
 Rob (rires) Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ton sac ?
 Giulia J'ai...un portefeuille, un stylo, un paquet de Kleenex...
 Rob (rires) Et un téléphone portable ?
 Giulia Ah! Voilà !

English

Rob Giulia, do you have a cell phone?
 Giulia Yes.
 (Giulia looks for it in her purse but has a hard time finding it)
 Giulia No...no...
 Rob What do you have in your bag?
 Giulia I have...a wallet, a pen, a pack of Kleenex...
 Rob (laughs) What about a cell phone?
 Giulia Ah! there it is!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
avoir	to have	verb	
un portable	cell phone	noun	masculine
qu'est-ce que / qu'est-ce qu'	what	question word	
ton	your (informal)	possessive adjective	masculine or feminine
sac	bag	noun	masculine
un portefeuille	a wallet	noun	masculine
un stylo	a pen	noun	masculine
un paquet de Kleenex	a pack of Kleenex	noun	masculine
voilà	here you are, here it is, here is	preposition	



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Il a une voiture.

J'ai trente-trois ans.

Excusez-moi avez-vous du pain ?

Le portable est neuf.

Qu'est-ce que c'est le Louvre ?

Qu'est-ce que tu prépares pour ce soir ?

Alors, qu'est-ce que tu fais ?

C'est ton stylo ?

J'ai un sac à main Louis Vuitton.

Mes sacs sont lourds.

Mon portefeuille est rouge.

J'ai un stylo rouge.

Mon paquet de Kleenex est vide.

Voilà mon collègue préféré.

A - Tu as un euro ? B - Voilà!

Voilà la clef de la voiture ! Elle était sur la table.

"He has a car."

"I am thirty-three years old."

"Excuse me, do you have some bread?"

"The cell phone is new."

"What is the Louvre?"

"What are you preparing for this evening?"

"So, what are you doing?"

"Is this your pen?"

"I have a Louis Vuitton handbag."

"My bags are heavy."

"My wallet is red."

"I have a red pen."

"My pack of Kleenex is empty."

"Here is my favorite co-worker."

"A - Do you have a euro? B - There you go!"

"Here is the car key! It was on the table."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking and Telling About Possessions.

J'ai...un portefeuille, un stylo, un paquet de Kleenex...

"What about a cell phone?"

Aaaah les femmes et leurs sacs à mains. ("Ahhh, women and their purses.") You've surely said this or heard it! It seems that some women carry their world in their purses. Do you?

What do you carry with you at all times when you are not in your home?

Giulia is no exception to this universal rule. Her purse is filled with personal and practical items. Rob, who needs a cell phone, asks her whether she has one with *Giulia, tu as un téléphone portable ?* ("Giulia do you have a cell phone?").

To ask whether your interlocutor has an object you may need, use:

***Tu as* + indefinite article + noun ?**

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Tu as un mouchoir ?</i>	"Do you have a tissue?"
<i>Tu as un stylo?</i>	"Do you have a pen?"
<i>Tu as une pièce d'un euro?</i>	"Do you have one euro coin?"
<i>Tu as une serviette en papier ?</i>	"Do you have a paper napkin?"
<i>Tu as des tickets de métro ?</i>	"Do you have some subway tickets?"

Language Expansion

If you are asking whether your interlocutor has something uncountable, use:

Tu as + partitive article + noun ?

Construction	French	"English"
<i>Tu as du + masculine noun</i>	<i>Tu as du papier ?</i>	"Do you have some paper?"
<i>Tu as de la + feminine noun</i>	<i>Tu as de la crème solaire ?</i>	"Do you have sunscreen?"
<i>Tu as de l' + noun starting with a vowel</i>	<i>Tu as de l'argent?</i>	"Do you have money?"

Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ton sac ?

"What do you have in your bag?"

Rob, definitely being a bit sarcastic and astonished of Giulia's filled purse, asks her what she has in it, as she finds everything except her cell phone, with the question *Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ton sac ?* ("What do you have in your bag?")

To ask a general question on what your interlocutor has, use a question with *qu'est-ce que* ("what") and the verb *avoir* ("to have").

Qu'est-ce que + subject + conjugated verb avoir?

For Example:

1. *Qu'est-ce que tu as ?* (informal)
"What do you have?"
2. *Qu'est-ce que vous avez ?* (formal)
"What do you have?"

If you need the precise location of the possessions, add the word *dans* and the place, as in:

***Qu'est-ce que* + subject + conjugated verb *avoir* + possessive adjective + place?**

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ta poche?</i>	"What do you have in your pocket?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ton dossier ?</i>	"What do you have in your file?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ton armoire ?</i>	"What do you have in your wardrobe?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu as dans ta mallette ?</i>	"What do you have in your briefcase?"

Language Focus

When using a possessive adjective, make sure to use *ta* with feminine nouns and *ton* for masculine nouns and also for feminine nouns starting with a vowel. This is to facilitate pronunciation.

For Example:

Noun	Noun With Possessive Adjective
<i>une voiture</i>	<i>ta voiture</i>
<i>un dossier</i>	<i>ton dossier</i>
<i>une armoire</i>	<i>ton armoire</i>

J'ai...un portefeuille, un stylo, un paquet de Kleenex...

"I have...a wallet, a pen, a pack of Kleenex..."

Giulia responds to Rob, describing what she finds in her purse, with the phrase *J'ai...un portefeuille, un*

stylo, un paquet de Kleenex... ("I have...a wallet, a pen, a pack of Kleenex...").

To state what you possess, use:

***J'ai* + indefinite article + noun.**

For Example:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>J'ai un collier.</i>	"I have a necklace."
<i>J'ai une montre.</i>	"I have a watch."
<i>J'ai des cartes de visite.</i>	"I have business cards."
<i>J'ai un trousseau de clés.</i>	"I have a bunch of keys."



Cultural Insight

An Insider's Look at the Lives of French Women

French women have some traits just like any other women do, no matter where they are from. Some universal habits are carrying their purses, enjoying taking care of themselves, and acting charming. But who are French women?

Most of them are educated and hold a job. They also try to balance their professional careers and their personal lives, even though their incomes are lower than men holding identical jobs. But this trend is changing in French companies.

French women usually marry around age thirty and have kids a year or so after. Balancing a job and a family is possible, as the French government implemented laws to help working women who are raising children so that they do not have to choose between a career or being a mother. France also

offers working mothers many solutions that help them manage their children's school schedule. France's free education system starts at age three, and businesses allow women to work thirty-five hours a week. The government offers financial help and assistance for childcare. Employers also offer couples a paid vacation for recent parents to encourage couples to marry and start a family.

French women are independent, but they still have difficulty juggling their two identities. Expectations that women will be ideal mothers while advancing their careers cause them to wish for more equal opportunities where gender is neither an obstacle nor a springboard for a career and opportunities that blend their responsibilities equally.



Absolute Beginner S1

Using Descriptions to Play "I Spy" in French

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Formal French

Cathy Donc, tu viens d'où, Rob ?
 Rob Je viens de Chicago.
 Cathy Qu'est-ce qu'il y a à Chicago ?
 Rob Il y a ... des immeubles !!!
 Cathy Il y a aussi les fameux hot dogs !
 Rob Oui ! Les fameux hot dogs et les fameux bandits !
 Cathy Al Capone...Ah, l'Amérique...

English

Cathy So, where do you come from, Rob?
 Rob I come from Chicago.
 Cathy What's in Chicago?
 Rob There are... buildings!
 Cathy There are the much talked about hot dogs too!
 Rob Yes! The much talked about hot dogs and the much talked about
 gangsters too!
 Cathy Al Capone...Oh, America!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
qu'est-ce que / qu'est-ce qu'	what	question word	
Il y a	ago, there is, there are	expression	
à + city	at, in	preposition	
un immeuble	building	noun	masculine
fameux(-euse)	illustrious (well-known), much talked about	adjective	fameuse (feminine)
un hot-dog	a hot dog	noun	masculine
un bandit	a gangster	noun	
L'Amérique	America	proper noun	feminine



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Qu'est-ce que c'est le Louvre ?</i>	"What is the Louvre?"
<i>Qu'est-ce que tu prépares pour ce soir ?</i>	"What are you preparing for this evening?"
<i>Alors, qu'est-ce que tu fais ?</i>	"So, what are you doing?"
<i>Il va y a avoir du monde chez moi demain.</i>	"There will be a lot of people at my place tomorrow."
<i>Il y a une banque rue Martel.</i>	"There is a bank on Martel Street."
<i>Il y a un concert au Stade de France.</i>	"There is a concert at the France Stadium."
<i>J'habite à Sidney.</i>	"I live in Sydney."
<i>Cet immeuble est ancien.</i>	"This building is old."
<i>Ce fromage est fameux.</i>	"This cheese is famous."
<i>Les fameuses histoires de Céline me manquent.</i>	"I miss Celine's famous stories."
<i>J'aime les hot-dogs de New York.</i>	"I love hot dogs from New York."
<i>Jesse James est un bandit.</i>	"Jesse James is a gangster."
<i>Je vais en Amérique !</i>	"I go to America!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Describing Things Around You

Il y a ... des immeubles !!!

"There are...buildings!"

Each city and each country has its own landmarks. Not only do they identify a place, but they can also become its symbols.

France has a few such landmarks; among the most famous ones are the Eiffel Tower, the Riviera, and the Mont Saint-Michel. Many others that people do not mention as often are the Reims Cathedral, the Fontainebleau forest near Paris, the flea market of Saint Ouen in the suburbs of Paris, the Basilica Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire in Lourdes, and the Rouen Armada, which takes place every five years, regrouping famous private and military sailboats.

All these sites represent part of the French heritage and culture, and people use them as landmarks to get situated geographically. When describing things around you, landmarks are a practical way to provide points of reference.

To describe a monument or something around you, use *il y a* ("there is/there are") as follows:

Il y a* + Article + Noun*For Example:**

French	"English"
<i>Il y a une église.</i>	"There is a church."
<i>Il y a la Cathédrale Notre Dame.</i>	"There is the Notre Dame Cathedral."
<i>Il y a un château.</i>	"There is a castle."
<i>Il y a le pont du Gard.</i>	"There is the Gard bridge."

Language Review:

Use *un* ("a") for masculine singular things and *une* ("a") for feminine, singular things you are talking about in general.

Use *le* ("the") for masculine, singular things and *la* ("the") for feminine, singular things that a speaker specifically describes or specifically implies.

In the dialogue, Rob describes Chicago as having many buildings by saying *Il y a des immeubles* ("There are buildings."). He is describing his impression of Chicago as a whole.

If you are describing various landmarks or things around you without detailing or identifying them, use *il y a* ("there is"/"there are") with the indefinite plural article *des* ("the").

Describing Unidentified Things

The article *des*, translated as "the," is an indefinite article referring to things or individuals in a general sense. The speaker doesn't give details about which ones.

Il y a des* + Noun*For Example:**

French	"English"
<i>Il y a des jardins.</i>	"There are gardens."
<i>Il y a des maisons en pierre.</i>	"There are stone houses."
<i>Il y a des plantes.</i>	"There are plants."
<i>Il y a des restaurants.</i>	"There are restaurants."

Describing Identified and Specific Things

After Rob describes Chicago, Cathy remembers about the all-beef hot dogs, a specialty and symbol of the city, when she says *Il y a aussi les fameux hot dogs !* ("There are also the famous hot dogs!")

Culinary specialties are also symbolic of a specific area, and therefore, they often have an association with a geographical area. France possesses as many or more specialties as its twenty-two regions, such as:

1. *la pissaladière*, from southern France, which is a flat bread with an anchovy sauce, cooked onions, and black olives
2. *la saucisse de Morteau*, which is a smoked pork sausage, from the Franche-Comté region
3. *la fondue bourguignonne* from Burgundy, which is pieces of meat cooked in oil accompanied by various sauces.

To mention specialties or specific things or landmarks, use the plural article *les* ("the"). This article is part of the group of French definite articles we use to define specific or identified things. We can form a sentence using *les* as follows:

Il y a les + Noun

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Il y a les Jardins Botaniques Borély de Marseille.</i>	"There are the botanical gardens of Marseille."
<i>Il y a les maisons en pierre du centre historique de Lyon.</i>	"There are the stone houses of Lyon historic center."
<i>Il y a les plantes du parc du château de Versailles.</i>	"There are plants of the Versailles Castle."
<i>Il y a les restaurants de l'île de la cité à Paris.</i>	"There are the restaurants of the Cité island in Paris."

Cultural Insight

Who Is Public Enemy Number One in France?

France also has its Public Enemy Number 1.

Jacques Mesrine, who was born near Paris, received a religious education, but he was expelled for aggressive behavior. After many years of criminal activity, he was arrested for the first time in 1962 just before a bank robbery and was released from prison eighteen months later. After he was released, he took a job in an architectural design company; but he was fired a year later due to downsizing.

It is at that time that he returned to a life of crime. He accomplished his unlawful activities internationally in Spanish territory first, then in Canada; he was finally arrested in the United States and then extradited to Canada. After escaping from jail, he robbed multiple banks, and later, he returned to France.

Mesrine committed various crimes, including burglaries, jewelry shop and bank robberies, kidnappings, and arms smuggling. He also killed many people throughout his criminal career, murdering approximately thirty-nine people. He excelled in disguising himself, earning his nickname of "The Man of a Hundred Faces." On June 21, 1979, Mesrine kidnapped millionaire Henri Lelièvre and received a ransom of six million francs. It was at that time that the government called Mesrine "French Public Enemy Number One."

As part of the French culture, Jacques Mesrine became the inspiration for several artists. The hard rock-punk band Trust dedicated two songs to him on its 1980 album *Repression*. A movie that André Génovès directed about Mesrine was released in 1984. Recently, in 2008, director Jean-François Richet produced two movies, *L'instinct de mort* ("Death Instinct") and *L'ennemi public No. 1* ("Public Enemy No. 1"), which related to Mesrine's life. Vincent Cassel played Mesrine.



Absolute Beginner S1

Where Are You in France?

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Formal French

Rob Allô ?
 Giulia Rob ? C'est Giulia. Vous êtes où ?
 Rob Nous sommes à la grotte.
 Giulia D'accord. Jules et Sarah, ils sont là ?
 Rob Oui, ils sont là.
 Giulia J'arrive !

English

Rob Hello?
 Giulia Rob, it's Giulia. Where are you guys?
 Rob We are at the cave.
 Giulia Okay. Are Jules and Sarah there?
 Rob Yes, they are here.
 Giulia I'll be right there!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
Allô	hello (on the phone)	interjection	
à	at, to, in	preposition	
une grotte	a cave	noun	feminine
là	there, here	adverb of place	
arriver	to arrive	verb	
où	where	adverb of place	
d'accord	okay	expression	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Allô, c'est Paul!

Allô qui est à l'appareil ?

Je suis à la maison.

J'habite à Sidney.

"Hello, it's Paul!"

"Hello, who is on the phone?"

"I am at home."

"I live in Sydney."

Je vais à la campagne.

Les grottes de Lascaux sont connues.

Il est là.

J'arrive bientôt!

Il arrive à toute allure.

Tu habites où, déjà ? J'habite à Paris.

Où tu es ?

On y va ? D'accord !

Je suis d'accord.

"I go to the countryside."

"Lascaux caves are famous."

"He is there."

"I'll be there soon!" (literally, "I arrive soon!")

"He arrives at top speed."

"Where do you live, again? I live in Paris."

"Where are you?"

"Let's go? Okay!"

"I agree."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Telling Where You Are Located With Your Friends Using the Verb *être* ("to be").

Vous êtes où ?

"Where are you?"

Meeting friends in the Park Buttes Chaumont can only be a good time! This park is one of the steepest green spaces among the 426 gardens of Paris, and it is the largest one. It offers exotic vegetation featuring an Anglo-Chinese garden and unusual places, such as the rock hill in the middle of its lake on which a small temple is mounted, a waterfall, and a cave accessible by two bridges.

In the dialogue, Rob, Sarah, and Jules are already at the premises and are waiting for Giulia to arrive in the Park Buttes Chaumont. Giulia, who is on her way there, wants to make sure exactly where they are by calling Jules and asking *Vous êtes où ?* ("Where are you?")

Greeting a Caller on the Phone

Jules picks up the phone and greets the yet unknown caller with the word *Allô*. We only use this vocabulary term when we answer a telephone. The call initiator will then present himself or herself by using *c'est*, meaning "it's," and saying:

C'est + Last Name and/or First Name**For Example:**

French	"English"
<i>C'est Marie.</i>	"It's Marie."
<i>C'est Monsieur Dupont.</i>	"It's Mr. Dupont."
<i>C'est Richard Marlin. "</i>	"It's Richard Marlin."

Note: If you add *à l'appareil*, meaning literally "on the device" (or more commonly, "on the phone") to the phrase presented above, your presentation over the phone will sound slightly more formal, as in *C'est Madame Dupont à l'appareil* ("It is Mrs. Dupont on the phone.").

To ask where your interlocutor and friends are, use an open question with the question word *où* ("where") along with the verb *être* ("to be") conjugated with the pronoun *vous* ("you") referring to several persons, as it is the second person plural form. You can formulate the question in various ways, placing the question word *où* ("where") in front or at the end of the question.

For Example:

1. *Vous êtes où ?*
"Where are you?"
2. *Où vous êtes ?*
"Where are you?"

Language Note

We can also use the pronoun *vous* ("you") to refer to one interlocutor only in formal situations until the person requests that you use *tu* when addressing him or her.

Telling Someone Your Location

Rob answers his cell phone and tells the caller where he and his friends are.

To tell your location and include one or more persons and yourself in a sentence, use the pronoun *nous* ("we") with the appropriate conjugated verb form from the infinitive verb *être* ("to be"), followed by the preposition *à* or its derivative and the location as follows:

Pronoun + Verb	+	Preposition	+	Location
<i>Nous sommes</i>	+	<i>à la</i>	+	feminine place.
<i>Nous sommes</i>	+	<i>au</i>	+	masculine place.
<i>Nous sommes</i>	+	<i>à l'</i>	+	place starting with a vowel.
<i>Nous sommes</i>	+	<i>aux</i>	+	plural place.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Nous sommes à la piscine.</i>	"We are at the swimming pool."
<i>Nous sommes au parc floral de Paris.</i>	"We are at the Paris floral park."
<i>Nous sommes à l'épicerie.</i>	"We are at the grocery store."
<i>Nous sommes aux jardins des Serres d'Auteuil.</i>	"We are at the Auteuil greenhouse gardens."

Speaking About Others

After Giulia makes sure she knows her friends' location, she checks whether the other people she will meet are already at the scheduled get together. In the dialogue, Rob and Giulia refer to them with the pronoun *ils* ("they") in the question and statement: *Jules et Sarah, ils sont là ? Oui, il sont là.* ("Are Jules and Sarah there? Yes they are here.")

To speak of other people to your interlocutor, choose among the two third person plural pronouns, either:

1. *ils* ("they") for a group of men or men and women
2. *elles* ("they") to designate a group of women only.

Add to one of the pronouns the conjugated form *sont* ("are") of the *être* verb, meaning "to be," and the adverb of location *là* to state that the persons talked about are next to or near the person stating the phrase: *ils sont là* or *elles sont là*.

Ils/elles + sont là.

For Example:

1. *Les invités ? Ils sont là.*
"The guests? They are here."
2. *Les chanteuses, elles sont là.*
"The singers, they are here."

Language Note: The Various Meanings of *là*

In the dialogue, we translate the adverb *là* as "here" and "there." The adverb *là* refers to the location where the person speaking is or a location more or less further away than the speaker.

Language Sum Up: Verb *être* ("to be") Conjugation and Usage

Conjugation of the Indicative Present of the Verb *être* ("to be")

Construction	French	"English"
First person plural	<i>nous sommes</i>	"we are"
Second person plural	<i>vous êtes</i>	"you are"
Third person plural: men or men and women	<i>ils sont</i>	"they are"
Third person plural: women only	<i>elles sont</i>	"they are"

Usage of the Verb *être* ("to be")

The verb *être* has many uses. Among the most common uses are stating someone's job, identity, location, quality, or state.

French	"English"
<i>Elles sont étudiantes.</i>	"They are students."
<i>C'est Gilles.</i>	"It is Gilles."
<i>Nous sommes ici.</i>	"We are here."
<i>Je suis tolérante.</i>	"I'm tolerant."
<i>Vous êtes amis.</i>	"You are friends."

Cultural Insight

What to Pack in Your Picnic Basket in France!

A typical French picnic!

Going outdoors for a picnic is something French people usually do in the summer. A tablecloth on the grass, resting on a bench in a public park, or on a promenade facing the beach, are some perfect places to enjoy the sunny and warm weather of summer and have a picnic. Families or couples gather to

enjoy the blue sky and take with them an ice chest or woven basket garnished with sandwiches, soda, juices, fruits, and vegetables.

A typical French picnic usually includes sandwiches made of fresh *baguette*. The classic one is *le sandwich jambon beurre*, ("ham and butter sandwich") dressed with butter on one bread slice and Dijon mustard on the other, lettuce, sliced tomatoes, a thin layer of cheese (usually Swiss or sliced brie) if you choose to, several slices of ham, and gherkins small pickles cut extra fine lengthwise. Some may choose to have sliced onions as well.

Another sandwich is *l'américain* ("the American"), which includes two lengthwise cut pieces of French baguette, cooked ground meat, French fries along with ketchup and mayonnaise. Other versions exist. So don't be surprised to see *un sandwich américain* with sliced ham and melted cheese or another version that is more successful for kids with two slices of American bread, mayonnaise, and crushed potato chips!



Absolute Beginner S1

Having Nightmares About a French Spelling Bee

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Formal French

Giulia	Nom et prénom ?
Rob	Danford D-A-N-F-O-R-D, Robert
Giulia	Nationalité ?
Rob	Tu sais bien !
Giulia	Américaine, bien sûr! ...Situation familiale ?
Rob	Célibataire.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

English

Giulia	Last name and first name?
Rob	Danford, D-A-N-F-O-R-D, Robert
Giulia	Nationality?
Rob	You know!
Giulia	American, of course! ...Marital status?
Rob	Single.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un nom de famille	last name	noun	masculine
un prénom	first name	noun	masculine
une nationalité	a nationality	noun	feminine
savoir	to know	verb	
une situation familiale	a marital status	noun	feminine
célibataire	single	adjective	masculine or feminine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Mon nom de famille est Durand.

"My last name is Durand."

Tu sais, je suis américain !

"You know, I'm American!"

Mon prénom est Céline.

"My first name is Céline."

Je suis de nationalité française.

Tu sais, je suis américain !

Tu sais ce qu'il a fait ?

Ma situation familiale est "marié".

Il n'est pas célibataire, il est marié.

C'est le célibataire de l'équipe.

"I am of French nationality."

"You know, I'm American!"

"Do you know what he did?"

"My marital status is married."

"He's not single, he's married."

"It's the single one of the team."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Spelling.

Danford D-A-N-F-O-R-D, Robert

"Danford D-A-N-F-O-R-D, Robert"

Being able to spell French words is very useful. Whether it allows you to write the language correctly or to identify French words, knowing the French alphabet and how to spell is essential to surviving in a French-speaking environment.

Knowing the alphabet and spelling of French words will allow you to take note of names, streets, and directions, to recognize proper nouns naming places on signs, and to get information from leaflets and flyers. You will, for example, be able to buy a specific item you need by recognizing the spelling of words on storefronts. Identifying the spelling of words on signs will allow you to orient yourself and reach your destination. Scanning flyers will provide you with activities to do and places of interest to discover, and it will enrich your general culture.

Finally, being able to spell aloud has many practical uses, such as providing information that will make a communication issue clearer, such as your name, as the dialogue illustrates.

The French Alphabet

The French writing system uses the Latin (or Roman) alphabet of the Roman Empire and adds five accents: four on vowels and one on a consonant (the circumflex accent, acute accent, grave accent, trema accent, and cedilla, respectively) in its writing system. These marks mainly require us to use a specific pronunciation of letters that are accented in a word.

The current French alphabet consists of five vowels and twenty-one consonants. Ideally, each letter represents one speech sound, which, practically, is not always the case in French. We form words by combining letters into syllables and syllables into words.

L'alphabet français ("The French Alphabet")					
A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f
[ha]	[bey]	[sey]	[dey]	[oe]	[ef]
G g	H h	I i	J j	K k	L l
[Ge]	[asch]	[ee]	[jee]	[ka]	[ell]
M m	N n	O o	P p	Q q	R r
[em]	[en]	[o]	[pe]	[ku]	[rgh]
S s	T t	U u	V v	W w	X x
[es]	[te]	[u]	[ve]	[dubluh-ve]	[eeks]
Y y	Z z				
[ee-greyk]	[zeyd]				

Note: We pronounce most consonants with a "hey" sound, as in the letters *-d* [dey] or *-p* [pey].

Spelling a Name or a Word

While communicating in a noisy environment or during an unclear phone call, it is convenient to spell while adding words starting with the letter previously given for clarity.

To do so, tell the letter and add the word *comme*, meaning "as," followed by a word starting with the provided letter. The words people use are often first names, domestic animals, fruits, or vegetables.

For example, you can spell the alphabet using the words provided below. Of course, you can modify this list with words you are familiar with.

French	"English"
<i>a comme Anne</i>	"a as in Ann"
<i>b comme Béa</i>	"b as in Béa"
<i>c comme chat</i>	"c as in cat"
<i>d comme date</i>	"d as in date"
<i>e comme elle</i>	"e as in she"
<i>f comme fer</i>	"f as in iron"
<i>g comme garçon</i>	"g as in boy"
<i>h comme hibou</i>	"h as in owl"
<i>i comme île</i>	"i as in island"
<i>j comme journée</i>	"j as in day"
<i>k comme képi</i>	"k as in cap"
<i>l comme Lyon</i>	"l as in Lyon"
<i>m comme maman</i>	"m as in mom"
<i>n comme non</i>	"n as in no"

<i>o comme orange</i>	"o as in orange"
<i>p comme pomme</i>	"p as in apple"
<i>q comme quatre</i>	"q as in four"
<i>r comme Raphaël</i>	"r as in Raphael"
<i>s comme Sophie</i>	"s as in Sophie"
<i>t comme Thomas</i>	"t as in Thomas"
<i>u comme Ursule</i>	"u as in Ursule"
<i>v comme vache</i>	"v as in cow"
<i>w comme wagon</i>	"w as in railcar"
<i>x comme xylophone</i>	"x as in xylophone"
<i>z comme zoo</i>	"z as in zoo"

French Accents

The French language uses five accents. We use them mostly for phonetic reasons and also to distinguish words, such as between the two words *ou* ("or") and *où* ("where").

Cédille accent (¸): We place this accent under the letter *-c*, appearing as the symbol ç. We pronounce it as if an *-s* were in front of the vowels *-a*, *-u*, and *-o*; otherwise, we pronounce it as a *-k*.

Aigu accent (´): You will find this accent only over the letter *-e* to change its pronunciation to [hey].

Grave accent (`): We use this accent on the letters *-a*, *-e*, and *-u*. For the *-a* and *-u*, the accent distinguishes between words that would otherwise have the same spelling, such as *à* ("at") and *a* ("has").

Circonflexe accent (^): We can use this accent on *-a*, *-e*, *-i*, *-o*, or *-u*. It is the consequence of the language's evolution, as we place it where an *-s* used to precede a vowel, as in *forêt* ("forest"). We also use it to distinguish words such as *du* (contraction of *de + le*) and *dû* (past participle of *devoir*).

Tréma accent (¨): This accent appears on the letters *-e*, *-i*, and *-u*. We use it when two vowels are next to each other and we must pronounce the letter *-i* separately from the previous vowel. For example, we would pronounce the word *naïve* without the *tréma* accent as [nay-v].

Spelling Accents in Words

To spell accents in a word, the custom is just to say the letter followed by its accent, as they are clearly understandable. For example, to spell the word *ça* ("it") say, *c cédille, a comme Anne*.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>été: e accent aigu, t comme Thomas, e accent aigu</i>	"summer: e aigu accent, t as in Thomas, e aigu accent"
<i>râlé: r comme Raphaël, a accent circonflexe, l comme Lyon, e accent aigu</i>	"complained: r as in Raphael, a circumflex accent, l as in Lyon, e aigu accent"

Dialogue Focus

In the dialogue, Rob expresses his astonishment about an evident fact related to what Giulia knows with *Tu sais bien !* ("You know!") This standard phrase is informal and demonstrates Rob's surprise that Giulia doesn't remember his nationality. You can also use it to show reproach, depending on the intonation you use.

To express informally what your interlocutor knows, use the irregular verb *savoir* ("to know") with the second person singular at the present indicative (equivalent of the simple present) as follows:

""Second person singular: *tu sais* ("you know").





Absolute Beginner S1

How Many Times Do I Have to Ask You This Question in French?

15

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Formal French

Rob Est-ce que tu as le billet de train ?
 Sarah Comment ?
 Rob Tu as le billet de train ?
 Sarah Quoi ?
 Rob As-tu le billet de train ?
 (Sarah sort de la salle de bain.)
 Sarah Ahh ! Oui.
 Rob Tu es en retard, vite !

English

Rob Do you have your train ticket?
 Sarah What was that?
 Rob Do you have your train ticket?
 Sarah What?
 Rob Do you have your train ticket?
 Sarah Oh! Yes, I do.
 Rob You are late, quick!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un billet de train	a train ticket	noun	
Comment ?	What? What was that?	question	
Quoi?	What?	pronoun	
en retard	late	expression	
vite	quickly, fast	adverb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Le billet de train Tours-Paris est cher.
Comment ? Je n'entends pas !
Quoi ? Je n'entends pas !

"The Tours-Paris train ticket is expensive."
 "What? I can't hear!"
 "What? I can't hear!"

Je suis en retard aujourd'hui.
Il parle très vite.

"I'm late today."
 "He speaks very quickly."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Three Forms of the Yes-No Question in French.

Est-ce que tu as le billet de train ?

"Do you have your train ticket?"

Among the available public transportation options for travel in France, the train provides several advantages.

The French railway network, administrated by the *Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer* ("National Society of the Train Network"), which we shorten to SNCF, can take you almost anywhere in France, from main cities (with the TGV or Corail trains) to small villages (with the TER regional trains), while allowing you to admire the French landscape. TER trains offer travel over short distances to destinations within a region. During the high tourism season, TER trains temporarily offer special itineraries for tourists to go visit sites of interest.

The other advantage to French train travel is it allows you to avoid wasting time. Taking a night train to cross France, for example, will allow you to not lose any time visiting your destination. The same is also true as trains arrive in the city center, avoiding extra transportation time you'd otherwise spend traveling from an airport to your hotel, for example.

In the dialogue, Sarah is getting ready to leave to take the TGV train to return to her home city, Toulouse. Rob assists her in preparing for her departure by checking whether she has her train ticket ready. However, he needs to repeat his question three times as she is in the bathroom and cannot hear him. To verify the information, Rob uses first the question *Est-ce que tu as le billet de train?* ("Do you have the train ticket?")

Asking a Yes-No Question in French

In case of doubt, if you want to check information, or if you want to ask a yes-no question in French, you will use *une question fermée*, meaning "a closed question," also referred to as "the total interrogation," as the speaker asks a question about the whole sentence versus only part of it or the situation (for example, a question with *qui* ("who") only asks about the subject of the verb).

We call it *une question fermée* because the response is limited to either an affirmative or negative response with *oui* ("yes") or *bien sûr* ("of course"), for example.

To form a yes-no question in French, three word order sequences are available: the yes-no question with *Est-ce que*, the rising intonation yes-no question, and the yes-no question with the inversion of the subject pronoun.

1. Yes-No Question With *Est-ce que*

To form a yes-no question using *est-ce que*, use the following structure:

***Est-ce que* + subject + verb + complement ?**

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Est-ce que tu as le billet de train ?</i>	"Do you have the train ticket?"
<i>Est-ce que Rob pose une question ?</i>	"Does Rob ask a question?"
<i>Est-ce que Sarah est dans la salle de bain ?</i>	"Is she in the bathroom?"
<i>Est-ce que les trains arrivent à l'heure ?</i>	"Do the trains arrive on time?"
<i>Est-ce que le TGV dessert la ville de Toulouse ?</i>	"Does the TGV offer service to the city of Toulouse?"

2. Yes-No Question with the Rising Intonation

As Sarah didn't hear Rob, he repeats the question a second time with *Tu as le billet de train ?* ("Do you have your train ticket?")

This question formulation is also a yes-no question (*question fermée*), which is part of the total interrogation in the French language.

To form this question, use the following structure:

subject + verb + complement ?

Note

As you can observe, the sequence of words in the yes-no question with the rising intonation is identical to an affirmative statement. To differentiate between the two when speaking, make sure to raise your intonation when pronouncing the question.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Tu as le billet de train ?</i>	"Do you have the train ticket?"
<i>Rob pose une question ?</i>	"Does Rob ask a question?"
<i>Sarah est dans la salle de bain ?</i>	"Is she in the bathroom?"
<i>Les trains arrivent à l'heure ?</i>	"Do the trains arrive on time?"
<i>Le TGV dessert la ville de Toulouse ?</i>	"Does the TGV offer service to the city of Toulouse?"

3. Yes-No Question With the Subject Pronoun Inversion

In the dialogue, Sarah is still not responding. Therefore, Rob asks her a third and final time the same question with *As-tu le billet de train ?* ("Do you have your train ticket?")

This yes-no question is called the subject pronoun inversion yes-no question, or in French, *la question avec l'inversion du pronom sujet*.

To form this question, use the following structure:

verb + dash + personal pronoun + complement ?

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>As-tu le billet de train ?</i>	"Do you have the train ticket?"
<i>Pose-t-il une question ?</i>	"Does he ask a question?"
<i>Est-elle dans la salle de bain ?</i>	"Is she in the bathroom?"
<i>Arrivent-ils à l'heure ?</i>	"Do they arrive on time?"
<i>Dessert-il la ville de Toulouse ?</i>	"Does it offer service to the city of Toulouse?"



Language Focus: Particularities of the Yes-No Question With the Subject Pronoun Inversion Mandatory Use of the Personal Pronoun

In the yes-no question with the subject pronoun inversion, the subject has to be a personal pronoun. The noun or the first name it refers to have to be added before the verb:

For Example:

1. **INCORRECT:** *Est Sarah dans la salle de bain ?*
"Is Sarah in the bathroom?"
2. **CORRECT:** *Sarah est-elle dans la salle de bain?*
"Is Sarah in the bathroom?"

Use of the Phonetic *-t*

When using the subject-pronoun inversion question with a pronoun of the third person singular, and the verb ends in a vowel, we must place the letter *-t* followed by a hyphen directly after the hyphen already contained in the word order presented above. We do this to facilitate the pronunciation and avoid two consecutive vowel sounds.

To form this question, use the following structure:

verb ending with a vowel+ hyphen + t + hyphen + third person singular pronoun + complement ?

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Achète-t-elle un billet de train ?</i>	"Does she buy a train ticket?"
<i>Regarde-t-il le paysage ?</i>	"Does he watch the landscape?"
<i>Arrive-t-elle à l'heure ?</i>	"Does she arrive on time?"

Cultural Insight

Taking the Train in France

The train may very well be the most relaxing means of transport in France. Long-distance trains offer freedom from the chore of driving and paying for gas and freeways. Taking the train is also quieter, less tiring, and more comfortable than going by car or airplane, especially if you take the TGV.

The TGV travels at speeds as high as three hundred kilometers per hour and shortens travel times within France. TGV reservations are required, but you can make them at the last minute. On board, you will experience exceptional service, including meals served at your seat, bar service, nursery service, family spaces, and more.

SNCF offers a variety of services, including hotel ticket delivery, hotel pickup and delivery of baggage, luggage assistance at stations, baggage checking, and reserved meals on the TGV.

Train fares vary according to comfort level, trip dates, and age. There are two classes of travel: first and second. Travel by TGV is not always more expensive than by regular trains, depending on departure date and time and fare options. There are many advantageous fare options for foreigners, including cheap fares for regional tourist trains or passes to travel in Europe with the Europass, Inter-Rail, and Eurodomino. From Paris, you can take a Eurostar train through the channel tunnel to London or the Thalys train to Brussels.

Before boarding a train in France, you must punch your own ticket using a ticket punching machine (*composteur*), located near the entrance to the platform area. You must punch and use your tickets on the same day. If you do not use them on the same day or if you fail to punch them, you may receive a fine.



Absolute Beginner S1

How Much Are You Spending in France?

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Formal French

Rob	Excusez-moi, c'est combien le livre ?
Vendeur	Cinq euros.
Rob	Merci. Et ça, c'est combien ?
Vendeur	Dix euros
Rob	Oh, c'est cher. Et le marque-page ?
Vendeur	Un euro.
Rob	D'accord. Voilà six euros.

English

Rob	Excuse me, how much is this book?
Salesperson	Five euros.
Rob	Thank you. (talking about a notebook.) And this, how much is it?
Salesperson	Ten euros.
Rob	It's expensive. And the bookmark?
Salesperson	One euro.
Rob	Okay. Here are six euros.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
cinq	five	adjective	
six	six	adjective	
combien	how much, how many	adverb	
un euro	one euro	phrase	
l'euro	the euro	noun	masculine
ça	it, this, that	demonstrative adjective	
c'est	this is, that is, it's		
cher	expensive	adjective	masculine
un marque-page	a bookmark	noun	
voilà	here you are, here it is, here is	preposition	
livre	book	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

J'ai cinq voitures !

Je voudrais six croissants.

Il y a six dés dans le jeu du Yahtzee.

Combien tu peux dépenser ?

C'est combien ?

Combien coûte cette voiture ?

Ce jouet coûte un euro.

A - Tu as un euro ? B - Voilà!

Deux euros.

Cette bouteille coûte vingt-cinq euros.

C'est quoi, ça?

Ça, c'est de l'art.

C'est un vieux livre.

C'est mon collègue préféré.

C'est mon porte-feuille.

Dix euros le stylo, c'est cher.

Le voyage en Europe est cher.

Le marque -page est en papier.

Voilà mon collègue préféré.

A - Tu as un euro ? B - Voilà!

Voilà la clef de la voiture ! Elle était sur la table.

J'aime les livres d'Histoire.

J'ai lu tous les livres d'Agatha Christie.

L'auteur de ce livre est très populaire.

"I have five cars!"

"I'd like six croissants."

"There are six dice in the Yahtzee game."

"How much can you spend?"

"How much is it?"

"How much does this car cost?"

"This toy costs one euro."

"A - Do you have a euro? B - There you go!"

"two euros"

"This bottle costs twenty-five euros."

"What is this?"

"This is art."

"It's an old book."

"It's my preferred coworker."

"This is my wallet."

"Ten euros for a pen, it's expensive."

"This trip to Europe is expensive."

"The bookmark is in paper."

"Here is my favorite co-worker."

"A - Do you have a euro? B - There you go!"

"Here is the car key! It was on the table."

"I like history books."

"I've read all the books by Agatha Christie."

"The author of this book is very popular."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking the Price of an Item.

Excusez-moi, c'est combien le livre?

"Excuse me, how much is this book?"

Being in a foreign country means that you'll need to spend money and make purchases.

While in France, the occasions you'll need to spend money vary, such as having meals in restaurants or buying articles for souvenirs.

Prices are in euros, and in restaurants, prices include all taxes and services. It is, however, a custom to

leave a tip for the waiters. All over France, stores list the prices of items with all taxes included. The valued-added tax (VAT) is currently 19.6 percent for most items. Food items and produce have a reduced VAT of 5.5 percent.

Cultural Tip: How to Obtain a Refund on French VAT

As a tourist, you can apply to get the VAT refunded on certain items you purchase in France if you spend more than 175 euros in one store. Make sure that the cashier gives you the form Cerfa n° 10 096*03 *bordereau de vente à l'exportation* ("slip of sale for exportation") and then show up at the airport in advance to present the form to the French customs officer before you check your baggage.

In the dialogue, Rob is in a bookstore asking for the price of book with *Excusez-moi, c'est combien le livre ?* ("Excuse me, how much is this book?")

Asking the Price of an Object You Can Name in French

You can ask many different questions to request the price of an item or service. In the dialogue, Rob uses two phrases to ask for a price. The first one is *C'est combien le livre ?* ("how much is this book?"). It includes *c'est* ("it is"), the question word *combien* meaning "how much," and the noun with its article *le livre* ("the/this book").

To ask for an item's price, use:

For a masculine noun:

1. *C'est + combien + le + noun*

For a feminine noun:

1. *C'est + combien + la + noun*

For a noun starting with a vowel:

1. *C'est + combien + l' + noun*

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>C'est combien le roman ?</i>	"How much is this novel?"
<i>C'est combien l'article ?</i>	"How much is this article?"
<i>C'est combien la bande dessinée Obélix et Astérix ?</i>	"How much is this comic book of Obélix and Astérix?"
<i>C'est combien la revue ?</i>	"How much is this magazine?"

Plural:

1. *C'est combien les romans ?*
"How much are these novels?"
2. *C'est combien les revues ?*
"How much are these magazines?"

Asking the Price of an Object You Can't Name in French

Rob uses a second phrase to ask for the price of another item with *Et ça, c'est combien ?* ("And this, how much is it?") This question, just like all the possible questions about prices in French, uses the question word *combien* ("how much").

To ask for a price about something you cannot name in French, use the word *ça* while showing or pointing out the object you want to buy, and either say:

1. *C'est combien, ça ?*
"How much is it?"
- OR**
2. *Ça, c'est combien ?*
"How much is it?"

You can ask a third question using the verb *coûter*, meaning "to cost."

Combien ça coûte ?

"How much it costs?"/"How much is it?"

- *Ça coûte combien ?* "How much it costs?"/"How much is it?"

Dialogue Expansion: Counting from One to Ten

French	Phonetic Pronunciation	"English"
<i>un</i>	[huh]	"one"
<i>deux</i>	[doe]	"two"
<i>trois</i>	[tro-ah]	"three"
<i>quatre</i>	[ka-tr]	"four"
<i>cing</i>	[sin-k]	"five"
<i>six</i>	[sis]	"six"
<i>sept</i>	[set]	"seven"
<i>huit</i>	[u-it]	"eight"
<i>neuf</i>	[n-oef]	"nine"
<i>dix</i>	[dis]	"ten"

6

Cultural Insight

Learn About a Worldly Belgian-French Writer

Amélie Nothomb (born Fabienne in 1967) is a Belgian writer who writes in French.

Born in Kobe, Japan to Belgian diplomats, she lived there until age five and describes this life change with the excerpt *Quitter le Japon fut pour moi un arrachement* ("Leaving Japan was a wrenching separation for me") in her novel *Fear and Trembling*.

Moving from one country to another, including China, the United States, Bangladesh, Burma, and Laos, shaped her personality. She ends up in Belgium at age seventeen where she feels even more inadequate and foreign.

From a distinguished Belgian political family and the grand-niece of Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb, a Belgian foreign minister, and the great-granddaughter of writer and politician Pierre Nothomb, she is educated and has inherited a talent for writing. Her work and writing ability have been recognized with numerous prizes, including the 1999 *Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française*; the *Prix René-Fallet*; and the 1993 *Prix Alain-Fournier*.

Her written works include *Les Catilinaires* (1995), *Fear and Trembling* (1999), and *Métaphysique des tubes* (published in English as *The Character of Rain*) (2000).



Absolute Beginner S1

How to Describe Your Significant Other in French

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Formal French

Rob Danilo, il est comment ?
 Giulia C'est un grand homme.
 Rob C'est un bel homme ?
 Giulia Bien sûr ! C'est aussi un bon cuisinier.
 Rob Miam. C'est un jeune homme ?
 Giulia Oui !
 Rob Et il est loin.
 Giulia (soupir)

English

Rob What is Danilo like?
 Giulia He's a tall man.
 Rob Is he a handsome man?
 Giulia Of course! He's also a good cook.
 Rob Yummy. Is he a young man?
 Giulia Yes!
 Rob And he's far away.
 Giulia (sigh)

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un homme	a man	noun	masculine
grand(e)	big, large, tall	adjective	
beau, bel (before vowel)	beautiful, handsome	adjective	masculine
bon(ne)	good	adjective	
jeune	young		
aussi	too, also	adverb	
un cuisinier, une cuisinière	a cook	noun	masculine, feminine



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

George Clooney est un bel homme.

Cet homme est mignon !

Il est grand.

J'ai une grande maison.

J'ai des grands pieds.

Julien est un beau garçon.

Il habite dans un bel immeuble.

Du vin? C'est une bonne idée!

"A bout de souffle" est un bon film.

Le Pape n'est pas jeune.

Audrey Tautou est une jeune actrice.

Elle apprend aussi le français.

Elle apprend aussi le français.

C'est un horrible cuisinier.

"George Clooney is a handsome man."

"This man is cute!"

"He's tall."

"I have a big house."

"I have big feet."

"Julien is a handsome boy."

"He lives in a beautiful building."

"Wine? It's a good idea!"

"*Breathless* is a good movie."

"The Pope is not young."

"Audrey Tautou is a young actress."

"She also learns French."

"She learns French too."

"He's an awful cook."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Adjectives Placed Before Nouns.

C'est un grand homme.

"He is a tall man."

French people are usually quite thin, tall, and well dressed. These days, French people believe their appearance is important because they look at others and like to be looked at while people watching over a cup of coffee on a patio on a busy street. They like fashion and good cuisine.

Most of the time, French people are very courteous, but they are direct too. They are used to telling it like it is and are direct and to the point, and they can be critical. If this sometimes annoys you, you will later realize that French people are friendly and polite if you spend more time with them and get to know them better.

In the dialogue, Joe asks Giulia about her Italian boyfriend. She tells him what he looks like by describing his appearance using adjectives.

To be precise when we describe something or someone, we use adjectives. In the dialogue, Giulia describes her boyfriend physically with the adjective *grand* ("tall") in *C'est un grand homme* ("He is a tall man."). In this sentence, we place the adjective *grand* before the noun *homme* ("man") referring to the man's height in standard French.

Language Focus: Formality of Language Change of Meaning of Adjective *Grand*

Depending on the placement of the adjective, its meaning may change. For example, placing the adjective *grand* before the noun *homme* ("man") means "a great man" in the figurative sense, whereas in the literal sense *grand* means "tall" or "big." This specific meaning of "greatness" for the word *grand* refers to the person's accomplishments as a political figure, for example. However, in everyday French, the distinction is disappearing and is rather more differentiated in formal speech.

Adjectives Before Nouns

In French, we sometimes place adjectives before the noun and sometimes after. Today, we'll focus on the adjectives we place before the noun.

We add the most common adjectives before the nouns, such as the ones describing beauty, age, and size as well as the adjectives *bon* ("good"), *mauvais* ("bad"), and *grand* "tall."

Generally, the adjectives we place before the nouns fall into two groups.

Group 1 of Adjectives We Place Before the Noun: Common Adjectives

The first adjectives, those we place before the noun, are some short adjectives that are very common, such as in the dialogue with the adjective *bon* ("good") in *un bon cuisinier* ("a good cook"). Some other common ones include the following:



French Feminine	French Masculine	"English"
<i>bonne</i>	<i>bon</i>	"good"
<i>belle</i>	<i>beau, bel*</i>	"beautiful"
<i>jeune</i>	<i>jeune</i>	"young"
<i>vieille</i>	<i>vieux/ vieil**</i>	"old"
<i>petite</i>	<i>petit</i>	"small"
<i>grande</i>	<i>grand</i>	"tall"
<i>grosse</i>	<i>gros</i>	"big"/"fat"

* The masculine adjective *bel* ("beautiful") is irregular, and we use it in front of a masculine noun starting with a vowel or a silent *h* as in *un bel homme* ("a beautiful man").

** The adjective *vieil* ("old") is masculine and irregular, and we use it in front of a masculine noun starting with a vowel.

Language Note: Spelling Adjectives

When using adjectives qualifying nouns, make sure to spell them correctly by agreeing the adjective in gender and number with the noun it describes. For example, to say "a good cook" referring to a woman, you'd say *une bonne cuisinière* ("a good female cook"), spelling the adjective *bon* at the feminine form by adding the letters *-ne* to the masculine adjective *bon* ("good") because the noun *cuisinière* is feminine.

Group 2 of Adjectives We Place Before the Noun: Ordinal Adjectives

We also place the ordinal adjectives, such as *premier/première* ("first"), *deuxième* ("second"), and so forth before the noun.

For Example:

French	"English"

<i>une bonne taille</i>	"a good size"
<i>une belle barbe</i>	"a beautiful beard"
<i>un jeune homme</i>	"a young man"
<i>une vieille dame</i>	"an old lady"
<i>un joli foulard</i>	"a pretty scarf"
<i>une grande natte</i>	"a long braid"
<i>une grosse valise</i>	"a big suitcase"
<i>un premier vélo</i>	"a first bike"
<i>le troisième étage</i>	"the fourth floor"

Cultural Insight

Opening Europe's Educational Doors

6 Building the European Union has created many advantages for its members, including France. Now that the borders are open, people can freely travel back and forth between the countries that are members of the European Union and work in any of them as a European citizen.

Students also have the advantage to take part in exchange programs in any nation that is part of Europe through the famous programs Socrates and Erasmus established in the late 1990s. These two programs provide for many students a first experience living and studying abroad, and they are very popular among European students. Studying abroad has become a cultural phenomenon, as the French film *L'Auberge espagnole* ("The Spanish Inn") portrays.

This experience is considered both a time for learning as well as a chance to socialize. Erasmus parties are known in university cities across Europe for being fun, exciting, and multilingual events.



Absolute Beginner S1

Without These Words, You Can't Play Twenty Questions in French

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Formal French

Rob C'est une belle ville.
 Sarah Oui, c'est une ville agréable.
 Rob Oh, il y a une église gigantesque ici.
 Sarah Oui, c'est Saint-Sernin.
 Rob J'aime bien les briques rouges.
 Sarah Et le ciel bleu.
 Rob Ah...le Sud.

English

Rob It's a beautiful city.
 Sarah Yes, it's a pleasant city.
 Rob Oh! There is a gigantic church here!
 Sarah Yes, it is Saint-Sernin.
 Rob I like the red bricks.
 Sarah And the blue sky!
 Rob Ah...the South!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
une ville	a city, a town	noun	feminine
belle	beautiful	adjective	feminine
agréable	pleasant, nice	adjective	both
une église	a church	noun	feminine
gigantesque	gigantic	adjective	both
une brique	a brick	noun	feminine
rouge	red	adjective	
le sud	south	noun	masculine
le ciel	the sky	noun	masculine
bleu/bleue	blue	adjective	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Paris est une grande ville.

Cette région est belle.

Ce jardin est agréable.

Un baiser est agréable.

J'aime les églises gothiques.

La tour Eiffel est gigantesque!

Les briques de l'immeuble sont rouges.

Elle a une jupe rouge.

Marseille est dans le sud de la France.

Le ciel est bleu.

Le ciel est bleu.

"Paris is a big city."

"This region is beautiful."

"This garden is pleasant."

"A kiss is nice."

"I like Gothic churches."

"The Eiffel tower is gigantic!"

"The building's bricks are red."

"She has a red skirt."

"Marseille is in the south of France."

"The sky is blue."

"The sky is blue."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Adjectives We Place After the Noun.

Oui, c'est une ville agréable.

"Yes, it's a pleasant city."

Visiting French cities is an interesting experience. France's history dates back to the ancient Romans and even before, and most French cities have monuments that have witnessed the country's long history. French people are proud of their country's deep cultural and historical roots and background. You may see two thousand-year-old artifacts from the Gaulish people or a cathedral that is a couple of hundred years old. Old stones are present most everywhere all over France.

In the dialogue, an astonished Joe admires the city he is in. He comments on it by saying *Oui c'est une ville agréable* ("Yes, it's a nice city."). He uses the adjective *agréable* to portray the "nice" atmosphere and feeling of the city, which he refers to with the noun *ville* ("city"). Note that he places the noun after the adjective.

To describe things and people, we use adjectives.

Describing Things with Adjectives Placed after the Noun

Generally, in French, adjectives follow the noun, as we see in the dialogue with the adjectives referring to colors in the phrases *les briques rouges* ("red bricks") and *le ciel bleu* ("the blue sky"). These adjectives are descriptive adjectives.

We place most descriptive adjectives, which have analytical meanings, after the noun. In other words, these are adjectives we use for their literal meaning; therefore, they classify nouns into a certain category.

These types of adjectives include shape, color, political (such as nationality, religion, and social class), others that describe things like personality and mood, as well as adjectives we build from the present or past participle of verbs.

Category of Adjective	French	"English"
Color adjectives	<i>rouge, noir, rose</i>	"red," "black," "pink"
Adjectives of shape	<i>rectangulaire, rond, circulaire, carré</i>	"rectangular," "round," "circular," "square"
Taste	<i>sucré, acide, aigre, tendre</i>	"sweet," "acidic," "sour," "tender"
Personality	<i>sportif, drôle, gentil</i>	"athletic," "funny," "nice"
Adjectives of mood	<i>excité, stressé, triste</i>	"excited," "stressed," "sad"
Political adjectives (nationality, sexuality, political persuasion, religion...)	<i>catholique, belge, bisexuel</i>	"Catholic," "Belgian," "bisexual"
Participles (derived from verbs, ending in -ant or -anté)	<i>fatigant, fatigué, âgé, contaminé</i>	"tiring," "tired," "aged," "contaminated"

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>une fenêtre ronde</i>	"round window"
<i>un pantalon noir</i>	"black pants"
<i>du café sucré</i>	"sweet coffee"
<i>une femme italienne</i>	"Italian woman"
<i>une église catholique</i>	"Catholic church"
<i>une famille bourgeoise</i>	"high middle-class family"
<i>une anecdote intéressante</i>	"interesting anecdote"
<i>une conversation passionnée</i>	"lively conversation"

Dialogue Focus

In the dialogue, you probably noticed we placed the adjective *belle* ("beautiful") before the noun in *une belle ville* ("a beautiful city"). We did so because it is among the short list of adjectives we place before the noun.

We place very common adjectives, which you can memorize with the acronym "BAGS," before the noun:

Adjectives Referring to:

Beauty

1. *joli*
"pretty"
2. *beau*
"beautiful"

Age

1. *jeune*
"young"
2. *vieux*
"old"

Good and bad

1. *bon*
"good"
2. *mauvais*
"bad"

Size

1. *petit*
"small"
2. *grand*
"tall"

For example, you can hear *une jolie fille* ("a pretty girl") or *un bon enfant* ("a good child").



Cultural Insight

Germanic Influences in France: Strasbourg

Strasbourg, an old city in France, is located in the northeastern region of Alsace and shares its border with Germany. Its geographical location, centered in continental Europe, has shaped the city's culture, history, and heritage.

In existence for more than two thousand years, Strasbourg was a main crossroad for people migrating as early as the Stone Age, and it became a main location of settlement due to the presence of the Rhine river. It is there that the French built Strasbourg's historic center, the *Grande Île* ("Grand Island").

Visiting *La petite France*, part of the historic center, is a must as UNESCO classified it as a World Heritage site in 1988: this was the first time the organization bestowed this honor on an entire city center. This city is a unique place where the Franco-German culture co-exists. You can see this blend in the city's old architecture of half-timber housing. Although violently disputed throughout history, Strasbourg has been a bridge of unity between France and Germany for centuries due to the Germanic culture's influence. This is especially true of its University, which is currently the largest in France.



Absolute Beginner S1

Where Shall We Go to Dinner in France?

19

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Formal French

Rob Tu vas bientôt à Paris ?
 Sarah Non, je vais bientôt à Avignon*.
 Rob Quand ?
 Sarah En juin.
 Rob Oh, d'accord.
 Sarah Bon. Où on va ce soir ?
 Rob On va au restaurant indien ?
 Sarah Resto indien, d'accord !
 *Avignon is a town in South Western France.

English

Rob Are you going to Paris soon?
 Sarah No, I am going to Avignon soon.
 Rob When?
 Sarah In June.
 Rob Oh, okay.
 Sarah Well. Where do we go tonight?
 Rob Shall we go to the Indian restaurant?
 Sarah Good idea!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
aller	to go	verb	
bientôt	soon	adverb	
quand	when	adverb	
en	in, to	preposition	
juin	June	noun	masculine
bon	okay	adjective	
on	we	personal pronoun	
ce soir	tonight	noun	masculine
indien(ne)	Indian	adjective	
un restaurant/un resto (short)	a restaurant	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Je vais chez Nicole.</i>	"I go to Nicole's house."
<i>Au revoir, et à bientôt.</i>	"Bye, and see you soon."
<i>Bientôt, je vais au travail.</i>	"Soon, I'm going to work."
<i>Quand je suis à Paris, je fume.</i>	"When I am in Paris, I smoke."
<i>Quand est-ce que tu viens ?</i>	"When do you come?"
<i>Je vais à Monaco en juin.</i>	"I am going to Monaco in June."
<i>On va en classe ensemble.</i>	"We go to class together."
<i>Juin est un mois agréable.</i>	"June is a pleasant month."
<i>Bon. On est prêts.</i>	"Okay. We're ready."
<i>On est contents.</i>	"We are happy."
<i>On est seuls.</i>	"We are alone."
<i>Ce soir je vais chez Julie.</i>	"Tonight, I'm going to Julie's."
<i>Il est de Mumbai. Il est indien.</i>	"He is from Mumbai. He is Indian."
<i>Je vais au restaurant le week-end.</i>	"I go to the restaurant on weekends."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Verb *Aller* ("to go")

Je vais bientôt à Avignon.

"I am going to Avignon soon."

During the last ten years, French people have chosen to go for a mini-vacation lasting one to three days more and more frequently.

Traveling for a couple of days several times a year to visit family or friends is becoming a trend for French people that allows them to escape stress and everyday worries. More than half of these short stays take place on the French territory, just like the trip Sarah mentions in the dialogue.

Sarah demonstrates that she is taking part in this recent tendency as she tells Rob in the dialogue that she is going away. Sarah's destination is Avignon, which is nicknamed the city of the Popes since it was the residence of seven Popes during the fourteenth century. Avignon is located in the southeastern part of France in the region of *Provence Alpes Côte D'Azur*. Sarah tells Rob about where she is going with the phrase *Je vais bientôt à Avignon* ("I am going to Avignon soon.") using the verb *aller* ("to go") at the indicative present and the preposition *à*.

Indicating a Destination

To indicate or ask about a destination, use the correct verb form of *aller* ("to go") with the preposition *à* and its derivatives. For example, to indicate a city, we use the preposition *à*, such as when Rob asks Sarah whether she is going to Paris with *Tu vas à bientôt à Paris ?* ("Are you going to Paris soon?")

To formulate a phrase indicating a destination, choose the appropriate conjugation of *aller* ("to go") and the correct preposition according to the destination type (city or place), its gender (feminine or masculine), and number (singular or plural).

Subject + Conjugated Verb *aller* + *à/au/à la/à l'/aux* + Destination

Verb *Aller* ("to go") at the Indicative Present:

Construction	French	"English"
First person singular	<i>je vais</i>	"I go"
Second person singular	<i>tu vas</i>	"you go"
Third person singular - masculine	<i>il va</i>	"he goes"
Third person singular - feminine	<i>elle va</i>	"she goes"
Third person plural	<i>on va</i>	"we go"

Choose the Correct Preposition: *à/au/à la/à l'/aux*

According to your destination, choose the appropriate preposition:

Preposition	+	Destination
<i>À</i>	+	city
<i>à l'</i>	+	destination starting with a vowel
<i>au</i>	+	masculine destination
<i>à la</i>	+	feminine destination
<i>aux</i>	+	plural destination

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Il va à l'avenue Foch.</i>	"He goes to the Foch avenue."

<i>On va à la visite guidée du musée.</i>	"We go to the museum-guided visit."
<i>Tu vas au spectacle.</i>	"You go to the show."
<i>Je vais à Montpellier.</i>	"I go to Montpellier."
<i>Elle va aux spectacles de rue.</i>	"She goes to the street shows."

Language Focus: The Personal Pronoun *On*

In the dialogue, Rob offers Sarah the opportunity to eat out. He asks her *On va au restaurant indien ?* ("Are we going to an Indian restaurant?") using the pronoun *on*.

This personal pronoun *on* means "we" and refers to the person speaking and its interlocutor(s): in the dialogue, *on* refers to Rob and Sarah. When conjugating a verb with the personal pronoun *on*, conjugate the verb at the third person singular, as in *On est à Avignon* ("We are in Avignon.").

Cultural Insight

Avignon: One of the Many Artistic Hubs of France

Avignon, which is famous for *le Palais des Papes* ("Popes' Palace") where several popes lived, is the official place where the renowned Avignon theater festival takes place every July. This art festival, which was launched in 1947, is the oldest festival in its genre and allows artists to demonstrate their skill in contemporary drama, dance creations, and stage performances in general for the pleasure of an ever-growing audience (around one hundred thousand people).

The festival consists of two parts: the "in" and "off" festival. The "in" festival is administered by a board of trustees composed of the French public institutions at the regional, departmental, and communal (city) levels. The official place for the performances is the *Cour d'Honneur* (the "Courtyard of Honors") of the *Palais des Papes* ("Popes' Palace").

The "off" festival is organized mostly by theater companies and is performed in theatres schools, streets, and all public places suitable for performing.

In 2008, the overall event included about nine hundred and fifty shows over a three-week period.





Absolute Beginner S1

Let's Celebrate Your Birthday in France!

20

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Formal French

Rob Alors, c'est ton anniversaire aujourd'hui !
 Caroline Oui, j'ai dix ans !
 Rob Dix ans ! Tu es une grande fille !
 Caroline Et toi tu as quel âge ?
 Rob J'ai vingt-et-un ans.
 Caroline Tu es vieux.
 Rob (rires) Oui, je suis un grand-père !

English

Rob So, it's your birthday today!
 Caroline Yes, I am ten!
 Rob Ten! You're a big girl!
 Caroline And you how old are you?
 Rob I am twenty-one.
 Caroline You are old.
 Rob (laughs) Yes, I am a grandpa!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
alors	then, so	adverb	
ton	your (informal)	possessive adjective	masculine or feminine
un anniversaire	a birthday, an anniversary	noun	masculine
dix	ten	adjective	
un an	a year	noun	masculine
grand(e)	big, large, tall	adjective	
une fille	a girl, a daughter	noun	feminine
quel(le)	which, what	interrogative adjective	feminine
l'âge	age	noun	masculine
vingt-et-un	(21) twenty-one	number	
vieux, vieille	old	adjective	masculine, feminine
un grand-père	a grandfather	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Alors, qu'est-ce que tu fais ?</i>	"So, what are you doing?"
<i>C'est ton stylo ?</i>	"Is this your pen?"
<i>C'est bientôt mon anniversaire.</i>	"Soon, it's my birthday!"
<i>Notre anniversaire de mariage, c'est le 25 mai.</i>	"Our wedding anniversary is on May 25th."
<i>J'ai dix ans.</i>	"I am ten years old."
<i>Ça fait dix euros. C'est notre offre de la semaine !</i>	"It costs ten euros. It is our offer of the week!"
<i>Je vais à Paris une fois par an.</i>	"I go to Paris once a year."
<i>Tu as trois ans.</i>	"You are three years old."
<i>Il est grand.</i>	"He's tall."
<i>J'ai une grande maison.</i>	"I have a big house."
<i>J'ai des grands pieds.</i>	"I have big feet."
<i>J'ai un fils et une fille.</i>	"I have a son and a daughter."
<i>C'est une fille formidable.</i>	"She is a great girl."
<i>Quel âge as-tu?</i>	"How old are you?"
<i>Quelle ville tu visites?</i>	"Which city are you visiting?"
<i>J'ai le même âge que lui.</i>	"I am the same age as him."
<i>Tu as quel âge?</i>	"How old are you?"
<i>L'immeuble a vingt-et-un étages.</i>	"The building has twenty-one stories."
<i>C'est une vieille église.</i>	"It's an old church."
<i>C'est un vieux livre.</i>	"It's an old book."
<i>Mon grand-père habite en Floride.</i>	"My grandfather lives in Florida."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Telling Your Age.

Oui j'ai dix ans !

"Yes, I'm ten years old."

Joyeux Anniversaire ! and the more colloquial phrase, *Bon Anniversaire*, are common phrases the French use to wish someone a "Happy Birthday!" If you forgot, you can always use *Joyeux Anniversaire en retard !* ("Happy belated birthday!")

Celebrating your birthday in France or helping someone else celebrate is not much different from how many other countries celebrate birthdays. The French celebrate birthdays by blowing out the candles on a cake and giving gifts to the birthday person. Parents usually invite their kids' classmates on the weekend afternoon for a couple of hours and offer activities and games for the kids to play. Adults

often gather in restaurants or at home and share a meal ending with a birthday cake.

In today's conversation, Rob wishes a happy birthday to ten-year-old Caroline and learns her age with *Oui j'ai dix ans !* ("Yes, I'm ten years old!") with the verb *avoir* ("to have") followed by her age. In turn, Caroline asks Rob how old he is with *Et toi tu as quel âge ?* ("And you, how old are you?")

Asking a Person's Age

To ask a person's age, you can either ask in a direct manner with a question with the interrogative adjective *quel* placed either at the beginning or in the middle of the question.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Quel âge as-tu ?</i>	"How old are you?"
<i>Quel âge tu as ?</i>	"How old are you?"
<i>Tu as quel âge ?</i>	"How old are you?"

Telling Your Age

To tell your age in French, use the verb *avoir* ("to have") at the indicative present (equivalent to the simple present in English) at the first person singular followed by the age and the word *ans*, meaning "years," as in *j'ai + ans*.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>J'ai 20 ans.</i>	"I'm twenty years old."
<i>J'ai 32 ans.</i>	"I'm thirty-two years old."
<i>J'ai 14 ans.</i>	"I'm fourteen years old."
<i>J'ai 62 ans.</i>	"I'm sixty-two years old."

Language Expansion: Comments on Age

In the dialogue, Caroline comments on Rob's age by saying *Tu es vieux* ("You are old."). However, if she made the same comment to a woman, she would change the adjective *vieux* ("old") to *vieille* ("old") at the feminine form, as in *Tu es vieille* ("You are old.") or *Elle est vieille* ("She is old.")

Note that the adjective *vieux* ("old") has an irregular masculine form in front of nouns starting with a vowel or a silent *h*, which is *vieil* ("old"). You can see it in the phrases *un vieil homme* ("an old man")



and *un vieil arbre* ("an old tree").

On the other hand, if you think Rob is not that old, use the adjective *jeune*, meaning "young," for either a woman or a man as the spelling is identical in the masculine and the feminine forms.

Numbers from Ten to Twenty

In the dialogue, Rob and Caroline tell their own age with *J'ai dix ans* ("I'm ten years old.") and *J'ai 21 ans* ("I'm twenty-one years old.").

To be able to tell your exact age in French, you'll need to know the numbers. French numbers have a pattern; however, numbers from ten to twenty have their own denomination:

Number	French	Pronunciation
10	<i>dix</i>	[dis]
11	<i>onze</i>	[onz]
12	<i>douze</i>	[duz]
13	<i>treize</i>	[trez]
14	<i>quatorze</i>	[katorz]
15	<i>quinze</i>	[kunz]
16	<i>seize</i>	[sehz]
17	<i>dix-sept</i>	[dis set]
18	<i>dix-huit</i>	[dis uhit]
19	<i>dix-neuf</i>	[dis nof]

All the other numbers by sets of ten from twenty to sixty have a similar pronunciation pattern. To be able to say a number ranging from twenty to sixty, you'll need to first know how to count by ten.

Numbers by Ten From Twenty to Ninety

Number	French	Pronunciation
20	<i>vingt</i>	[vuhnt] or [vuhn]
30	<i>trente</i>	[troant]
40	<i>quarante</i>	[karhoant]
50	<i>cinquante</i>	[suhnk-hoant]
60	<i>soixante</i>	[soa-zhoant-soant]
70	<i>soixante-dix</i>	[soa-zhoant dis]
80	<i>quatre-vingt</i>	[katr vuhn]
90	<i>quatre-vingt-dix</i>	[katr vuhn dis]

Once you know these numbers, by deduction you can find all the other numbers from twenty to one hundred.

Numbers by Ten from Twenty to Sixty-Nine

For all the numbers from twenty to sixty, say the first digit representing the number by ten and then pronounce the second digit.

For example, for the numbers from twenty-one to twenty-nine, use the word *vingt* ("twenty") followed by the second digit as in *vingt-cinq* [vunt sunk] ("twenty-five"). For the numbers from thirty-one to thirty-nine, use the word *trente* ("thirty") followed by the second digit as in *trente-six* [troant sis] ("thirty-six"). Do the same for each set of numbers by ten so forth until the number sixty-nine.

Number	French	Pronunciation
21	<i>vingt-et-un</i>	[vuhnt eh huh]
22	<i>vingt-deux</i>	[vuhnt duh]
23	<i>vingt-trois</i>	[vuhnt troah]
24	<i>vingt-quatre</i>	[vuhnt katr]
29	<i>vingt-neuf</i>	[vuhnt nof]
30	<i>trente</i>	[troant]
31	<i>trente-et-un</i>	[troant hey huh]
32	<i>trente-deux</i>	[troant duh]
39	<i>trente-neuf</i>	[troant nof]
40	<i>quarante</i>	[karhoant]
41	<i>quarante-et-un</i>	[karhoant hey huh]
49	<i>quarante-neuf</i>	[karhoant nof]
50	<i>cinquante</i>	[suhnk-hoant]
51	<i>cinquante-et-un</i>	[suhnk-hoant hey huh]
52	<i>cinquante-deux</i>	[suhnk-hoant duh]
59	<i>cinquante-neuf</i>	[suhnk-hoantnof]
60	<i>soixante</i>	[soa-zhoant-soant]
61	<i>soixante-et-un</i>	[soa-zhoant hey huh]
62	<i>soixante-deux</i>	[soa-zhoant duh]
69	<i>soixante-neuf</i>	[soha-soant nof]

Numbers from Seventy to One Hundred

These numbers are quite specific to the French language and are inherited from the Gaulish language and their calculation system. Each set of numbers by ten from seventy to ninety-nine has its own

denomination.

For example, we say the number seventy in French by saying *soixante* ("sixty") and then *dix* ("ten"), which we pronounce *soixante-dix* ("seventy"), as sixty added to ten is seventy.

Therefore, we form all the following numbers through seventy-nine with the word *soixante* ("sixty") and the number marking the difference between sixty and the number you want to say.

For Example:

If you want to say seventy-two, say the number *soixante* ("sixty") first and then the number resulting from seventy-two minus sixty, which is *douze* ("twelve"). You'll end up with *soixante-treize* (60 + 12 = 72)

Number	French	Pronunciation
70	<i>soixante-dix</i>	[soa-zhoant dis]
71	<i>soixante-et-onze</i>	[soa-zhoanthey onz]
72	<i>soixante-douze</i>	[soa-zhoant duz]
79	<i>soixante-dix-neuf</i>	[soa-zhoantdeeznof]
80	<i>quatre-vingt</i>	[katr vuhn]
81	<i>quatre-vingt-un</i>	[katr vuhn huh]
82	<i>quatre-vingt-deux</i>	[katr vuhn duh]
89	<i>quatre-vingt-neuf</i>	[katr vuhn nof]
90	<i>quatre-vingt-dix</i>	[katr vuhn dis]
91	<i>quatre-vingt-onze</i>	[katr vuhn onz]
92	<i>quatre-vingt-douze</i>	[katr vuhn duz]
99	<i>quatre-vingt-dix-neuf</i>	[katr vuhn diz nof]
100	<i>cent</i>	[soan]

Cultural Insight

Do The French Put an Expiration Date on a Woman's Single Status?

Les Catherinettes is the nickname for single women who reach twenty-five years of age.

Today, it also refers to a rare tradition that takes place on Saint Catherine's Day, November 25, or a fun way to commemorate a woman's twenty-fifth birthday to wish her the end of her single status.

Historically, on that day, single twenty-five-year-old women would wear a hat made especially for the occasion. This custom originated in the Middle Ages, when girls were under the protection of Saint Catherine and groups of them had the privilege to make a dress for Saint Catherine's statue. When marrying, these girls left the group and didn't participate in this ritual, which became synonymous with being single at or after the age of twenty-five.

With societal changes, the old ritual has disappeared all over France as couples today marry in their late twenties to mid-thirties. Still, you may hear people wishing a "Happy Saint Catherine's Day" on November 25, or see women wearing a green hats (symbolizing youth for some and knowledge for others) or yellow hats (symbolizing faith) on their twenty-fifth birthdays.



Absolute Beginner S1

Who Let the Dogs Out in France?

21

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Formal French

Rob On va chez Jules et Clara ce soir?
 Giulia D'accord. Mais... il a un chien, Jules, non ?
 Rob Oui, il a un caniche.
 Giulia Je suis allergique.
 Rob Mince.
 Giulia Ils ont une terrasse, Jules et Clara ?
 Rob Oui.
 Giulia Alors ça va, je viens.

English

Rob Are we going to Jules and Clara's tonight?
 Giulia Okay. But...he has a dog, no?
 Rob Yes, he has a French poodle.
 Giulia I am allergic.
 Rob Bummer.
 Giulia Do Jules and Clara have a terrace?
 Rob Yes, they do.
 Giulia Then I'm coming.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
avoir	to have	verb	
mais	but	coordinating conjunction	
un chien	a dog	noun	masculine
un caniche	a French poodle	noun	masculine
allergique	allergic	adjective	feminine or masculine
mince	shucks, shoot	interjection	
une terrasse	a terrace	noun	feminine
alors	then, so	adverb	
Ça va	It's okay	phrase	



Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Il a une voiture.

J'ai trente-trois ans.

Excusez-moi avez-vous du pain ?

Je suis français, mais je ne suis pas sexiste.

Il boit, mais il a encore soif.

Mon chien s'appelle Alfred.

J'ai aussi un chien.

Mon caniche est idiot.

Je suis allergique aux chiens.

Il est allergique aux fruits de mer.

Où est mon sac? Mince! Il est à la maison!

Mince ! J'ai oublié mon portable à la maison.

La terrasse de mon appartement est gigantesque!

Alors d'accord, je viens.

Alors, tu viens ?

Oh là là, ça va, j'arrive!

"He has a car."

"I am thirty-three years old."

"Excuse me; do you have some bread?"

"I am French, but I am not chauvinistic."

"He drinks, but he's still thirsty."

"My dog's name is Alfred."

"I have a dog, too."

"My French poodle is stupid."

"I am allergic to dogs."

"He is allergic to seafood."

"Where is my bag? Shoot! It's at home!"

"Shucks! I forgot my cell phone at home."

"My apartment's terrace is gigantic!"

"Okay then, I am coming."

"So, are you coming?"

"Oh, it's okay, I'm coming!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Talking about Possessions with the Verb *Avoir* ("to have").

Il a un chien, Jules, non ?

"He has a dog, no?"

Counting all the fish, cats, and dogs the sixty million people living in France own, pets outnumber humans in France! One French person out of two possesses a pet, and dogs and cats are estimated to have a population of about nineteen million on the Hexagon, which is the nickname for the French territory.

So if you visit a French home, be aware that half the time you might also get to know *Toutou*, the dog, or *Minou*, the cat, (both are kids' nicknames the French use to refer to unfamiliar pets in France).

In the dialogue, Rob and Giulia are planning to visit their friends Jules and Clara, who own a French poodle. Giulia, who is allergic to dogs, mentions her concern with the question *Il a un chien, Jules, non ?* ("He has a dog, no?"). She talks about Jules's possession using the verb *avoir* ("to have").

Mentioning a Person's Possession With *Avoir* ("to have")

To speak of a person's or people's possession, use the verb *avoir* ("to have"). When stating or asking about another person's or other people's possessions, conjugate the verb *avoir* ("to have") at the indicative present at the third person singular for a third person. For example, Rob mentions in the dialogue that Jules possesses a dog with *Oui, il a un caniche* ("Yes, he has a poodle").

If you speak of several people's possessions, conjugate the verb *avoir* ("to have") at the third person plural, as when Giulia asks Rob whether Jules and Clara have a balcony with *Ils ont une terrasse, Jules et Clara ?* ("Do Jules and Clara have a terrace?")

Formation

Avoir ("to have") at the indicative present

Third person singular:

French	"English"
<i>il a</i>	"he has"
<i>elle a</i>	"she has"
<i>on a</i>	"we have"

Third person singular:

French	"English"
<i>ils ont</i>	"they have"
<i>elles ont</i>	"they have"

Language Expansion:

"we have," "you have"

Use the pronoun *on* when referring informally to the person speaking and the other interlocutor(s). For example, if you say *On a un chien*, the pronoun *on* includes yourself and whomever you are speaking to or the people you mentioned or included in the conversation. The sentence means "We have a dog."

When using the pronoun *on*, meaning "we," conjugate the verb at the third person singular.

To speak of the possessions you and someone else possess, you can use *on* informally or *nous* ("we") in standard and formal French. On the other hand, if you speak of the possession your interlocutor possesses, use *vous* ("you").

The conjugation of *avoir* ("to have") for these pronouns is:

Construction	French	"English"
First person plural	<i>nous avons</i>	"we have"
Second person plural	<i>vous avez</i>	"you have"

Cultural Insight

French Smoking Culture

Ever since France passed a law forbidding smoking in public locations in January 2008, smokers have been crowding restaurants and bars' patios all year long.

To avoid a drop in business, restaurants even provide heaters in winter to accommodate smokers outdoors. Another immediate consequence of the anti-tobacco measures is the number of cigarette butts in front of restaurant entrances. Customers complain about the regulations as well as the issues with neighbors smelling the cigarette smoke. However, restaurant owners appreciate that it is easier to maintain the cleanliness of their establishments and enjoy the improvement in odor for other patrons since the law passed.

Even though the French government has launched a series of campaigns against smoking targeted especially to young people, has passed the law prohibiting smoking in public areas, and has raised the price of a pack of cigarettes to five euros, French people are still smoking. The number of smokers has slightly dropped, but let's keep in mind that the results of these measures are yet to be confirmed.



Absolute Beginner S1

Want to Collect Seashells by the Seashore in France?

22

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Formal French

Pauline	Je rentre tôt ce soir.
Rob	Qu'est-ce que tu fais demain ?
Pauline	Je vais à la piscine.
Rob	Avec Jules et Clara ?
Pauline	Non, ils vont à la mer.
Rob	Oh ! Giulia va à la mer aussi, à La Baule.
Pauline	Et toi, qu'est-ce que tu fais demain ?
Rob	Je vais à la campagne chez un ami.

English

Pauline	I'm going home early tonight.
Rob	What are you doing tomorrow?
Pauline	I'm going to the swimming pool.
Rob	With Jules and Sarah?
Pauline	No, they're going to the seaside.
Rob	Oh! Giulia is going to the sea too, to La Baule.
Pauline	What about you? What are you doing?
Rob	I'm going to my friend's house in the country.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
aller	to go	verb	
tôt	early	adverb	
demain	tomorrow	adverb	
une piscine	a swimming pool	noun	feminine
avec	with	preposition	
la mer	the sea	noun	feminine
la campagne	the country	noun	feminine
un(e) ami(e)	a friend	noun	masculine/feminine
rentrer	to go, to return home	verb	
ils	they (masculine)	personal pronoun	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Marie va en Egypte.</i>	"Mary goes to Egypt."
<i>Je me lève tôt, je me couche tard, je suis fatiguée.</i>	"I get up early, I go to bed late, I am tired."
<i>7 heures du matin, c'est tôt.</i>	"Seven in the morning, it's early."
<i>Il est trop tôt pour vous donner une réponse.</i>	"It's too early to give you an answer."
<i>Demain je vais à la piscine.</i>	"Tomorrow, I'm going to the swimming pool."
<i>À quelle heure tu viens demain ?</i>	"What time are you coming tomorrow?"
<i>Je nage dans la piscine.</i>	"I swim in the swimming pool."
<i>C'est avec intérêt que je vous écoute.</i>	"I listen to you with interest."
<i>Je suis avec Frédéric.</i>	"I am with Frederic."
<i>La mer Méditerranée est agréable.</i>	"The Mediterranean sea is pleasant."
<i>Je préfère la mer à l'océan.</i>	"I prefer the sea over the ocean."
<i>J'ai besoin d'aller à la campagne pour me reposer.</i>	"I need to go to the country to rest."
<i>Jean, c'est mon ami.</i>	"Jean is my friend."
<i>Marie est mon amie.</i>	"Mary is my friend."
<i>Zacharie rentre en Espagne.</i>	"Zachary returns to Spain."
<i>Ils voyagent en bateau.</i>	"They travel by boat."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Stating a Destination with the Verb *Aller* ("to go").

Oh ! Giulia va à la mer aussi, à La Baule.

"Oh! Giulia is going to the sea too, to La Baule."

Once the winter passes and beautiful days are here, Parisians escape from the urban environment on the weekends to rejuvenate themselves in the countryside or at the beach a few hours away.

More than three-quarters of Parisians go away on the weekend about five to six times a year. Some popular destinations are their secondary houses in rural areas of the region of Ile de France or other tourist places in Normandy such as St. Malo, Deauville, Le Havre, Rouen, or the region of Pays de la Loire in La Baule, for example.

In the dialogue, Rob and Pauline talk about their upcoming weekend and what they and their friends are doing. Pauline lets Rob know that she's going to the swimming pool the next day with the sentence *Je vais à la piscine*. ("I'm going to the swimming pool.") She also states that Jules and Clara are going to the beach with *Non, ils vont à la mer*. ("No, they go to the seaside.")

Rob replies that Giulia is going to the seaside at La Baule as well with the phrase *Oh ! Giulia va à la mer aussi, à La Baule.* ("Oh! Giulia is going to the sea too, to La Baule.")

All these phrases include the verb *aller* ("to go") to state a destination.

Stating a Destination

To tell where you or another person is going, use the verb *aller* ("to go") in the indicative present.

When stating a destination you plan to reach within the next few days, we use the indicative present with the value and meaning of the near future, as Pauline implies in the dialogue when she says *Demain je vais à la piscine.* ("Tomorrow, I'm going to the swimming pool.")

To state your destination, use the following structure:

Subject + *aller* (indicative present) + *à/à la/à l'/au/aux + destination**

***Review** (Absolute Beginner #19): Use *à* followed by a city, *à la* with a feminine noun, *à l'* with a destination starting with a vowel, *au* with a masculine noun, and *aux* with a plural noun.

Conjugation of *Aller* at the Indicative Present

Construction	French	"English"
First person singular	<i>je vais</i>	"I go"
Second person singular	<i>tu vas</i>	"you go"
Third person singular	<i>il va</i>	"he goes"
Third person singular	<i>elle va</i>	"she goes"
Third person singular	<i>on va</i>	"we go"
Third person plural	<i>ils vont</i>	"they go"
Third person plural	<i>elles vont</i>	"they go"

When stating that you and someone else or other people are going to a certain place, use the first and second person plural:

Construction	French	"English"
First person plural	<i>nous allons</i>	"we go"
Second person plural	<i>vous allez</i>	"you go"

Dialogue Focus: The Verb *Rentrer* ("to go home")

On the other hand, if you want to describe your way back home, use the verb *rentrer* as Pauline does with *Je rentre tôt ce soir*. ("I'm going home early tonight.") Using the verb *rentrer* ("to go home") implies that you'll return home from wherever you are at the moment of speaking.

Cultural Insight

Where You Can Find a Hidden France

La Baule is a city on the Atlantic Ocean in the Pays de la Loire region that is well-known for its seven-kilometer stretch of beach, called the most beautiful beach in Europe. It is a popular destination for weekenders and longer vacation enthusiasts. A tourist destination for years, the architecture of the villas in the city is varied and inspired by other French regions according to past trends and owners' tastes. From southern to mountain French styles as well as a more modern French architecture, you will be able to discover a mix of different building designs.

La Baule's natural environment will also allow you to be closer to nature. For example, you can visit the flowery vegetation present all over the city (which the flowery village and city national competition recognizes), the nearby forests such as *le Parc Naturel de Brière* ("the Natural Park of Brière"), or the manmade salty swamps under the warm sun to collect sea salt.

La Baule is a place to visit to discover another France you may not know.



Absolute Beginner S1

May I Have This Dance in France?

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Formal French

Marc Alors...tu fais du tennis, Rob ?
 Rob Non je ne fais pas de tennis.
 Marc OK. On fait du vélo alors demain ?
 Rob D'accord. Giulia et moi nous faisons souvent du vélo dans Paris.
 Marc Vraiment ? Donc tu aimes le vélo.
 Rob Oui. Je fais de l'aviron aussi.
 Marc Ah oui ? Avec Giulia et Sarah ?
 Rob Non, elles, elles font de la danse.
 Marc OK. Demain, vélo au bord de la Marne !

English

Marc So...do you play tennis, Rob?
 Rob No, I don't play tennis.
 Marc Okay. Then should we bike tomorrow?
 Rob Okay. Giulia and I often bike in Paris.
 Marc Really? So you like biking.
 Rob Yes. I also row.
 Marc Oh yes? With Giulia and Sarah?
 Rob No, they'd rather dance.
 Marc Okay. Tomorrow, biking along the Marne!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
faire	to do, to make	verb	
le tennis	tennis	noun	masculine
vélo	bike, biking	noun	masculine
souvent	often	adverb	
dans	in	preposition	
l'aviron	rowing	noun	masculine
Ah oui ?	Oh yes?	interjection	
elles	they (feminine)	personal pronoun	feminine
la danse	dance, dancing	noun	feminine
au bord de	along	nominal group	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Je fais du surf.</i>	"I surf."
<i>Alors, qu'est-ce que tu fais ?</i>	"So, what are you doing?"
<i>Je fais du tennis, mais pas comme Federer.</i>	"I play tennis, but not like Federer."
<i>Mon vélo est vieux.</i>	"My bicycle is old."
<i>Ce vélo est un vélo tout terrain.</i>	"This bike is a mountain bike."
<i>Il triche souvent quand il joue aux cartes.</i>	"He often cheats when he plays cards."
<i>Il a souvent raison.</i>	"He is often right."
<i>Je suis souvent en retard.</i>	"I'm often late."
<i>Nous sommes dans la ville de Mexico.</i>	"We are in Mexico city."
<i>Je suis dans le jardin.</i>	"I am in the yard."
<i>L'aviron est un sport olympique.</i>	"Rowing is an olympic sport."
<i>C'est qui ? Ah oui ! Le réalisateur d'Amélie !</i>	"Who is it? Oh, okay! The movie director of Amélie."
<i>Elles vont à la campagne.</i>	"They are going to the country."
<i>Elles se préparent pour la soirée.</i>	"They get ready for the evening."
<i>Le flamenco est une danse intense.</i>	"Flamenco is an intense dance."
<i>Elles aiment la danse, surtout le tango argentin.</i>	"They like dancing, especially Argentinian Tango."
<i>Je marche au bord de la Seine.</i>	"I am walking along the Seine."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Talking about Sports with the Verb *Faire* ("to Do").

On fait du vélo alors demain ?

"Then should we bike tomorrow?"

The most popular physical activity in France is hiking. However, if you're living in the city, another popular sport for convenience and health is biking. Many big cities have a biking program to facilitate people using either their bikes or bikes the city has available to rent to the public to dissuade people from using their cars. Not only does this reduce the emissions from gas, but this program's other aim is to lighten traffic in cities' downtown areas. In France, most historic areas have small, narrow streets that are inconvenient for vehicles; in addition, these areas want to promote pedestrian zones for the enjoyment of both inhabitants and tourists. The French cities of Paris, Strasbourg, Lyon, Rennes, La Rochelle, Marseilles, Orléans, Rouen, and Aix-en-Provence are among the ones that have adopted this concept.

While talking about participating in sports in the dialogue, we learn that Marc is a fan of biking in the city. He asks Rob to go for a ride with the question *OK. On fait du vélo alors demain ?* ("Okay. Then should we bike tomorrow?")

Rob accepts the invitation and adds he also rows with the phrase *Je fais de l'aviron* aussi* ("I also row."). However, the girls, Giulia and Sarah, prefer to dance, as Rob states in the sentence *Non, elles, elles font de la danse.* "No, they rather dance."

To state what sport a person practices, use the verb *faire* ("to do") followed by a contracted article and the sport.

Stating that You Play a Specific Sport

To say what sport is your passion or someone else's passion, follow the steps below and formulate a sentence including:

Subject + *faire* (indicative present) + contracted article + sport

Step 1: Conjugating the verb *faire* ("to do").

Conjugation of *faire* ("to do") at the indicative present

Construction	French	"English"
First person singular	<i>je fais</i>	"I do"
Second person singular	<i>tu fais</i>	"you do"
Third person singular	<i>il fait</i>	"he does"
Third person singular	<i>elle fait</i>	"she does"
Third person singular	<i>on fait</i>	"we do"
First person plural	<i>nous faisons</i>	"we do"
Second person plural	<i>vous faites</i>	"you do" (formal "you" and plural "you")
Third person plural	<i>ils font</i>	"they do"
Third person plural	<i>elles font</i>	"they do"

Step 2: Choosing the correct contracted article:

To choose the correct contracted article, observe first the noun that refers to the sport. Choose the contracted article as follows:

du + masculine noun

de la + feminine noun

de l' + noun starting with a vowel

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je fais de la natation.</i>	"I go swimming."
<i>Il fait du karaté.</i>	"He does karate."
<i>Elle fait de l'athlétisme.</i>	"She does athletics."
<i>Nous faisons du tir à l'arc.</i>	"We do archery."
<i>Ils font du football.</i>	"They do soccer."

Cultural Word: La Marne is a river near Paris. (for Lesson notes)

Stating that You Do Not Play a Specific Sport

In the dialogue, Rob tells Marc that he doesn't play tennis with *Non, je ne fais pas de tennis* ("No I don't play tennis.").

When stating that you or another person doesn't participate in a certain sport, use the negative form with the preposition *de*.

To say that you or another person does not play a sport, use the following structure and word order:

Subject + *ne* + *faire* (indicative present) + *pas* + *de/d' + sport.**

*Use *d'* in front of a sport that starts with a vowel.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Elles ne font pas de gym.</i>	"They don't do the gym."
<i>Je ne fais pas de basket.</i>	"I don't play basketball."
<i>Tu ne fais pas d'escalade.</i>	"You don't climb."
<i>Il ne fait pas de voile.</i>	"He doesn't sail."
<i>Nous ne faisons pas de marathon.</i>	"We don't do the marathon."

Language Focus: Expressing Preferences

When expressing your preference about practicing a sport, you can use the word order with a stressed pronoun first followed by a comma and a personal pronoun, as in the dialogue phrase *Elles, elles font de la danse* ("They'd rather dance.").

Stressed pronoun + personal pronoun + *faire* + contracted article + sport

This word order, a stressed pronoun and a personal pronoun, expresses the emphasis on the person or people performing the action. In other words, the intention of the speaker is to put emphasis on the girls, Giulia and Sarah, implying that they would rather participate in that particular sport, dancing. We see this in the dialogue phrase *Elles, elles font de la danse* ("They'd rather dance."). Some other examples are *Lui, il fait du jogging* ("He'd rather go jogging.") and *Moi, je fais de la boxe* ("I'd rather box.")

Cultural Insight

La Marne River in France

La Marne, an inspiring river for sports fans and painters, offers a great setting with bike routes along its banks and admired scenery. It is also a privileged place for kayaking as well as being an inspiring location for artists to express themselves through their art.

Situated east of the French capital, it is the longest river of France with 525 km (about 326 miles) of distance from its spring near Reims (located about an hour and thirty minutes from Paris) to its ending point in the Seine river south of Paris.

La Marne River offers a landscape appreciated by famous acclaimed painters. Their art is celebrated outside of Paris near Fontainebleau in the *Seine et Marne* department with five circuits. These different itineraries of a total distance of approximately 12 km give anyone the occasion to discover around one hundred paintings crafted on the Marne river done by about forty or so artists, among them are Cezanne and Van Gogh.

For more information contact the tourism office, *Maison du Tourisme du Pays Créçois* (Tourism bureau of the Créçois area) or make a mandatory reservation at tourisme@payscrecois.net.





Absolute Beginner S1

How to Pick Your Poison in French!

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Formal French

Rob Un coca ?
 Marc Non merci. Je n'aime pas le coca.
 Rob Un café alors ?
 Marc Je n'aime pas beaucoup le café.
 Rob Tu aimes l'ice tea ?
 Marc Je n'aime pas du tout l'ice tea !
 Rob Oh là là ! Tu es difficile !
 Marc Je voudrais un verre d'eau.

English

Rob A Coke?
 Marc No thanks.
 Rob A coffee then?
 Marc I don't like coffee very much.
 Rob Do you like iced tea?
 Marc I don't like it at all!
 Rob Oh la la, you are picky!
 Marc I would like a glass of water.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un coca	a Coke	noun	masculine
un café	a coffee	noun	masculine
l'ice tea	iced tea	noun	masculine
beaucoup	a lot, very much	adverb	
pas du tout	not at all	phrase	
ne/n'...pas	negative form		
difficile (taste)	picky	adjective	both
un verre d'eau	a glass of water	nominal group	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Tu veux un pepsi ou un coca?

A - Tu ne bois pas un café ? B - Si, avec du sucre.

Il aime l'ice tea mais il préfère le thé chaud.

Je n'aime pas beaucoup le vin.

Je révise beaucoup le soir.

Je n'aime pas du tout ta réaction !

Je ne vais pas au cinéma.

Je n'ai pas de voiture.

Tu n'aimes pas le vin, tu n'aimes pas le café et tu n'aimes pas le coca : tu es difficile!

Je prends toujours un verre d'eau avec mon café.

"Do you want a Pepsi or a Coke?"

"A - You aren't drinking a coffee, are you? B - Yes, with some sugar."

"He likes iced tea but he prefers hot tea."

"I don't like wine very much."

"I study a lot in the evening."

"I don't like your reaction at all!"

"I am not going to the movies."

"I do not have a car."

"You don't like wine, you don't like coffee, and you don't like coke; you are picky!"

"I always take a glass of water with my coffee."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Likes and Dislikes with the Verb *Aimer* ("to Love").

Je n'aime pas le coca.

"I don't like Coke."

Overall, French people prefer to consume water more than other drinks. Whether from the tap or a huge selection of bottled water in markets, French people have the choice of flat water, flavored water, and sparkling water with more or less refined bubbles. Then come warm drinks, with a cup of coffee being the most popular one, and then alcoholic beverages with the prominence of beer and wine consumption.

In the dialogue, Marc refuses a sweet soda, a coffee, and an iced tea and instead orders some water. He expresses his dislikes by either saying *Je n'aime pas* ("I don't like"), *je n'aime pas beaucoup* ("I don't like very much"), or *Je n'aime pas du tout* ("I don't like at all") using the verb *aimer* ("to love") and different negative forms.

Usage of the Verb *Aimer* ("to love")

Even though we use the verb *aimer*, meaning "to love," to share our feelings with someone that we have a romantic relationship with, we also employ it to talk about likes or dislikes in French.

When we use the verb *aimer* to talk about our taste, we commonly translate it with the verb "to like" in

English, as in *J'aime l'eau minérale* ("I like mineral water.").

Expressing Likes

To say that you like something in a general sense, use ***J'aime*** + **definite article** + **noun**.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>J'aime les fleurs.</i>	"I like flowers."
<i>J'aime le café.</i>	"I like coffee."
<i>J'aime le jus d'orange.</i>	"I like orange juice."
<i>J'aime les jus de fruits pressés.</i>	"I like handmade fruit juice."

Expressing Dislikes

However, to express dislikes, we use the verb *aimer* ("to love") with one of the negative forms as illustrated in the dialogue.

To form a sentence stating your dislikes, use one of the negative forms presented below from least to most intense, according to how you feel:

1. *Je n'aime pas* ("I don't like") + definite article + noun.
2. *Je n'aime pas beaucoup* ("I don't like very much") + definite article + noun
3. *Je n'aime pas du tout* ("I don't like at all") + definite article + noun

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je n'aime pas les épinards.</i>	"I don't like spinach."
<i>Je n'aime pas beaucoup le soda.</i>	"I don't like soda very much."
<i>Je n'aime pas du tout le café sucré.</i>	"I don't like sweet coffee at all."
<i>Je n'aime pas le thé.</i>	"I don't like tea."

Language Review: Politely Asking for Something

To ask for something or order a drink or a dish, use the polite request *Je voudrais*, meaning "I'd like," followed by an indefinite article and a noun, as in the dialogue phrase *je voudrais un verre d'eau* ("I'd like a glass of water.").

Note that you can also commonly say *Je voudrais une eau* ("I'd like water") implying that you'd like *une bouteille d'eau* ("a bottle of water") or *un carafe d'eau* ("a pitcher of water") or even *un verre d'eau* ("a glass of water").

The indefinite article here designates the number of items you may want in this phrase, such as one glass of water. If using a definite article, you are stating the generic term, meaning you are referring to the liquid of water itself.

Cultural Insight

What Are the French Drinks of Choice?

The French not only drink water as their beverage of choice, but they also tend to drink fine alcohol. Contrary to preconceived ideas, wine is not their first choice. In fact, the French drink less wine than they used to...

Since 2003, French people consume about 8% less wine than previously. Sparkling and pink wines are the exception to this statistic, because their consumption has been rising for the past few years.

Another alcohol the French appreciate is spirits: the French have yet to stop their consumption of whiskies, Armagnac, or other Cognac. Consumption of this type of alcohol should evolve positively in the years to come.

Finally, the most preferred spirit of all is scotch, proven by the fact that France was the first country of the world to consume it.





Absolute Beginner S1

Are You Ready to Rock in France?

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Formal French

Giulia Je vais au concert de Daft Punk. Tu viens ?
 Rob Mmm, peut-être. C'est où ?
 Giulia À la Boule Noire.
 Rob D'accord je viens.
 Giulia Jules et Clara viennent aussi.
 Rob Super ! Et Marc ?
 Giulia Ah, oui ! Il vient aussi.
 Rob Nous venons tous !

English

Giulia I am going to the Daft Punk show. Are you coming?
 Rob I don't know. Where is it?
 Giulia At the Boule Noire.
 Rob Okay, I'm coming.
 Giulia Jules and Clara are coming too.
 Rob Great! And Mark?
 Giulia Oh, yes! He's coming too!
 Rob We're all coming!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
venir	to come	verb	
aller	to go	verb	
un concert	a music show, a concert	noun	masculine
peut-être	maybe	adverb	
tous	all, every	adjective, pronoun	plural

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Je viens bientôt!

"I am coming soon!"

L'ambulance est venue tout de suite.

"The ambulance came right away."



Je vais chez Cécile ce soir.

On va dans le sud pour Noël.

Il y a un concert de rock demain.

Peut-être que le film est intéressant.

Ils sont tous sympas.

Je fais les courses tous les samedis.

"I am going to Cécile's tonight."

"We're going south for Christmas."

"There is a rock concert tomorrow."

"Maybe the movie is interesting."

"They are all nice."

"I go grocery shopping every Saturday."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Describing Where You Are Going with the Verb *Venir* ("to Come").

Je vais au concert de Daft Punk. Tu viens ?

"I am going to the Daft Punk show. Are you coming?"

Small concert venues in France greet promising singers and bands on the verge of being discovered by the public at large. *La Boule Noire* ("The Black Ball") in Paris is one of these smaller venues. *La Laiterie* ("The Dairy Factory") is another venue in Strasbourg. *La Cartonnerie* ("The Cardboard Factory") in Reims is well-known for its artistic features, especially its technical sound equipment and artists' lodging.

La Boule Noire ("The Black Ball") is a privileged location, organizing all kinds of rock concerts in its cozy and intimate atmosphere where famous singers and bands demonstrated their talent. Recent bands that have performed there include Metallica, Supergrass, Queens of the Stone Age, and many others.

In the dialogue, Rob and Giulia talk about going to *La Boule Noire* for a house-style Daft Punk electronic music concert. Giulia asks Rob whether he wants to come with the question *Tu viens ?* ("Are you coming?") using the verb *venir*, meaning "to come," to express an itinerary and its destination.

Stating to Go from Where You Are (or Another Person Is) Toward a Specific Place.

The verb *venir* means "to come from" where you are or another person is to another place. However, in everyday conversation, we often use it as the verb *aller* ("to go") when stating where we are going (see language focus below for the two verbs' usages).

To state the itinerary from where you are (or another person is) toward a certain place or where your interlocutor or someone else is, you will use the verb *venir* ("to come") conjugated at the indicative

present, as in the dialogue phrase *Tu viens ?* ("Are you coming?") In this question, Giulia is asking Rob whether he is coming to Daft Punk's concert.

Here is the conjugation of the verb *venir* ("to come") in the indicative present:

French	"English"
<i>je viens</i>	"I go"
<i>tu viens</i>	"you go"
<i>il vient</i>	"he goes"
<i>elle vient</i>	"she goes"
<i>nous venons</i>	"we go"
<i>ils viennent</i>	"they go"
<i>elles viennent</i>	"they go"

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je viens chez toi.</i>	"I come to your house."
<i>Elle vient ici maintenant.</i>	"She is coming here now."
<i>Elles viennent visiter l'endroit.</i>	"They are coming to visit the place."
<i>Tu viens dans une heure?</i>	"Are you coming in an hour?"
<i>Nous venons à Paris.</i>	"We are coming to Paris."

Language Focus: The Difference between *Aller* ("to Go") and *Venir* ("to Come")

We use *aller* to state where you or another person goes, indicating the destination. However, we use the verb *venir* ("to come") to state from where you or another person is going toward a precise location, indicating both origin and destination. Keep in mind that people often mix up the two verbs.

For example, *Je vais chez toi* means "I go to your house." But in this phrase, we don't know whether you are going from where you are or if you are going to other places first. However, in *Je viens chez toi*, you are saying that you coming from where you are toward your interlocutor's place.

Cultural Insight

Where You Can Go to Rock in Paris

La Boule Noire, created in 1822, was first an illegal venue commonly referred as *La Goguette*.

These types of illegal venues, which were popular all over France in the beginning of the nineteenth century, were locations where artists would take a famous melody and add their own lyrics. This was an illegal practice at the time.

At its present location, a frame (now at the entrance of *La Cigale*, which is another venue hosting comedians and concerts a few doors down from *La Boule Noire*) was installed at the entrance mounted with a lighted glass ball to brighten the dark area. At first white, the glass ball became black over time, giving rise to the establishment's name.

As time passed, Parisians used *La Boule Noire* as a dance venue, a cabaret, a movie theater, and, since the 1990s, a concert hall for all kinds of rock bands.

If you are appreciative of this music genre and happen to be in Paris, stop by the eighteenth Parisian district to enjoy one of the evening programs at the Boulevard Rochechouart # 118.

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