



Absolute Beginner S1

French Lessons 1 to 25

1-25

Introduction

This is Innovative Language Learning.

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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.

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Intermediate Lesson S1

If You Don't Leave France, Is It Still a Vacation?

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Formal French

Elle	Alors, mon amour, on fait quoi pendant les vacances ?
Lui	Écoute, tu sais bien qu'on n'a pas un radis.
Elle (N'écoute pas)	Voyons ... moi j'irais bien à Tahiti.
Lui	Hein ?! Tahiti ! Tu rêves !
Elle	Ah... si on avait de l'argent, je voyagerais un peu ...
Lui	Oui, mais on n'a pas d'argent.
Elle	Si tu travaillais, on aurait de l'argent. On n'irait pas encore à la campagne.
Lui	Allez... c'est parti... jamais contente. Et puis tu aimes bien la campagne, non ?
Elle (sarcastique)	Oui, c'est vrai, ce serait dommage de rater Trifouillis-Les-Oies !
Lui	Voilà, tout de suite, les sarcasmes. À chaque fois c'est la même chose. Si ça continue, je te paie un aller simple pour Papeete.

*Papeete est la capitale de Tahiti.

English

Her	So, my love, what are we doing for our vacation?
Him	Look, you know well that we are broke.
Her (not listening)	Let's see...I'd love to go to Tahiti.
Him	What? Tahiti! You're dreaming!
Her	Ah...if we had money, we could travel a little...
Him	Yes, but we don't have money.
Her	If you worked, we would have money. We would not go to the country again.
Him	There we go again...never happy. Besides, you like the country, don't you?
Her	(sarcastic) Yes, that's true, it would be a shame to miss Trifouillis-Les-Oies!
Him	There we go, sarcasm right away. Each time it's the same. If it goes on like this, I'll buy you a one-way ticket to Papeete*.

*Papeete is the capital of Tahiti.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
voyons	let's see	phrase/imperative form of	
les sarcasmes	sarcasm	noun	masculine/plural
c'est dommage	it's a shame	phrase	
rater	to miss, to mess up	verb	
un aller simple	a one-way ticket	noun	masculine
allez	come on	interjection	
tout de suite	right away, right now	adverb	
ne pas avoir un radis	to be broke	phrase (casual)	
prendre du bon temps	to have a good time	phrase	
c'est parti	here we go again, let's go	phrase	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Si je suis libre demain ? Voyons...non, désolé !

"If I am free tomorrow? Let's see...no, sorry!"

Tu m'énerves avec tes sarcasmes !

"You annoy me with your sarcasm!"

J'adore les fraises mais je suis allergique: c'est dommage.

"I love strawberries but I'm allergic; it's a shame."

Il rate régulièrement l'anniversaire de sa femme.

"He regularly misses his wife's birthday."

Pourquoi tu as acheté un aller simple ? Tu ne reviens pas ?

"Why did you buy a one-way ticket? Are you not coming back?"

Allez, dépêche-toi, on est en retard !

"Come on, hurry up! We're late!"

Je veux manger, tout de suite !

"I want to eat right now!"

Je voudrais bien te payer le restaurant, mais je n'ai pas un radis.

"I would like to pay for the restaurant, but I'm broke."

Pendant que vous prenez du bon temps en vacances, moi je travaille. Pff.

"While you're having a good time on vacation, I am working. Pff."

C'est parti, il se plaint encore !

"Here we go again, he's complaining!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Forming an Unlikely Hypothesis.

Ah...si on avait de l'argent, on pourrait voyager un peu...

"Ah...if we had money, we could travel a little..."

Everything has a cost!

Even though French people have less disposable income than other developed nations, they don't need to worry about how to pay for health insurance. Public social security partially reimburses the French for their health costs, and complementary insurance the individual chooses or obtains from his or her employer usually covers the difference.

The couple here refers to their financial situation while arguing about vacation. The man reminds the woman that they don't have any money with the informal expression *ne pas avoir un rond*, meaning "to not have any money." The woman dreams about exotic destinations even though their budget doesn't permit it. She argues with the hypothesis that if the man worked, they could travel by saying, *Ah...si on avait de l'argent, on pourrait voyager un peu...* ("Ah...if we had money, we could travel a little...").

Forming an Unlikely Hypothesis in French

We use structures with the word *si*, meaning "if" in French, to form hypotheses. We form them as follows:

***Si* + subject + verb at *l'imparfait* + complement , + subject + verb at *le conditionnel présent* + complement.**

The speakers use this construction in several statements in the dialogue.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Si on avait de l'argent, on pourrait voyager...</i>	"Ah...if we had money, we could travel a little..."
<i>Si tu travaillais, on aurait de l'argent.</i>	"If you worked, we would have money."
<i>Si tu travaillais, on n'irait pas encore à la campagne.</i>	"If you worked, we would not go again to the country." (implied phrase)

Subject + verb at *le conditionnel présent* + complement + *si* + subject + verb at *l'imparfait* + complement.

Note: In this structure with *si*, observe the punctuation. There isn't any comma. However, when the

phrase starts with *si*, we add the comma between the two clauses.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>On pourrait voyager si on avait de l'argent.</i>	"We could travel a little if we had money."
<i>On aurait de l'argent si tu travaillais.</i>	"We would have money if you worked."
<i>Tu apprendrais si tu étudiais.</i>	"You would learn if you studied."

Language Tip: Avoid Common Conjugation Errors

Never build clauses with *si* ("if") with the indicative future or the conditional (a common error). Make sure to conjugate the verb in the *si* ("if") clause in French at *l'imparfait* when forming a hypothesis.

Conjugating at *l'imparfait*

To conjugate a verb at the past tense of *l'imparfait*, take the indicative present conjugation of the verb form at the first person plural, drop the *-ons* ending, and add the ending of *l'imparfait*.

Ending of the *imparfait*:

Person	Ending
First person singular	<i>-ais</i>
Second person singular	<i>-ais</i>
Third person singular	<i>-ait</i>
First person plural	<i>-iez</i>
Second person plural	<i>-ions</i>
Third person plural	<i>-aient</i>

For example, to say "I traveled" at *l'imparfait*, take the verb *voyager* ("to travel") conjugated at the first person plural of the indicative present tense. You will have *voyageons*. Then drop the *-ons* ending and add the first person singular ending of *l'imparfait*, and you'll end up with *Je voyageais* ("I traveled.").

Conjugating at *le présent du conditionnel*

To conjugate a regular verb at *le présent du conditionnel*, take the verb and its indicative future stem

and add the ending of *l'imparfait*.

For example, to say "I would travel," take the verb *voyager* ("to travel") and its indicative future stem, the infinitive form being *voyager* ("to travel"), and add the ending of *l'imparfait* at the first person singular, *-ais*. You will have *Je voyagerais*.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Peut-être je rencontrerais Jean ce matin.</i>	"Maybe I'll meet Jean this morning."
<i>Il rentrerait vers 18 heures.</i>	"He should come around six o'clock p.m."
<i>Tu regarderais ce film avec moi ?</i>	"Would you watch this movie with me?"

Language Focus: Express an Almost Certain Hypothesis

In the dialogue, the man says sarcastically that he will send the woman to Tahiti with no return ticket after their disagreement with the hypothesis *Si ça continue, je te paie un aller simple pour Papeete* ("If it goes on like this, I'll buy you a one way ticket to Papeete.").

In this hypothesis, we conjugate the two verbs at the indicative present, indicating that this statement is an almost certain hypothesis. However, as it is an unlikely event, we can conclude the man is being sarcastic and makes a joke out of it.

In straightforward speech, making an hypothesis with verbs at the indicative present in both clauses expresses that the statement is probable and almost certain, as in *Si je fais les courses, j'achète une surprise* ("If I'd go grocery shopping, I'd buy a surprise."), making both events likely to happen.

Cultural Insight

Satisfying Your Need for Travel without Leaving Your French House

Traveling is part of French culture, and taking a vacation is without a doubt part of the French lifestyle.

Even though the global economy reduces the distance French people are willing to travel to their destination, they nevertheless travel and are curious about what is happening around them and interested in other cultures, customs, and life trends in other regions of France and in other countries.

A popular radio show demonstrates this fact. It is called *Là bas si j'y suis*, meaning "Over there, if I am there," broadcast on the national radio station France Inter. The radio host, Daniel Mermet, cleverly presents topics that people usually do not talk about by interviewing people in the streets of France and all over the world. He lets people talk about their exploits and topics that interest them to give them a voice and let other people hear about how the world runs and is run. His goal is to denounce what doesn't work and to insist on what is good, beautiful, and right, in Mermet's signature style.





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Why Else Would You Have Traveled to the French Beach?

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Formal French

- Irène Pff...Si on avait déjeuné plus tôt, on serait allé à la plage.
 Pierre Oh, ça va. On est à Tahiti, non ? C'est ce que tu voulais, non ? On ira à la plage plus tard.
- Irène Oui, mais être à Tahiti et ne pas aller à la plage, merci bien.
 Pierre Tu aurais pu te préparer plus vite, ce matin. Comme ça, on aurait déjeuné tôt.
- Irène C'est de ma faute alors ?
 Pierre On aurait dû aller à la campagne comme d'habitude.
 Irène Oui, mais si on était allé à la campagne, on n'aurait pas eu ces délicieux cocktails.
- Pierre C'est vrai que mon daiquiri est excellent.
 Irène On ira se baigner plus tard. Un autre mai tai, s'il vous plait !

English

- Irène Pff...if we had eaten earlier, we could have gone to the beach.
 Pierre Oh, come on. We are in Tahiti, no? That's what you wanted, no? We'll go to the beach later.
- Irène Yes, but be in Tahiti and not go to the beach, thank you.
 Pierre You could have gotten ready faster this morning so that we could have taken lunch earlier.
- Irène It's my fault then?
 Pierre We should have gone to the country as usual.
 Irène Yes, but if we had gone to the country, we wouldn't have gotten these delicious cocktails.
- Pierre It's true that my daiquiri is excellent.
 Irène We will swim later. Another mai tai, please!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
la plage	beach	noun	feminine
se préparer	to get ready	verb	
vite	quickly, fast	adverb	
tôt	early	adverb	

une faute	a mistake	noun	feminine
comme d'habitude	as usual	phrase	
un cocktail	a cocktail	noun	masculine
se baigner	to swim	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ils ont trouvé un requin sur la plage.

"They found a shark on the beach."

Le nageur se prépare pour les Jeux Olympiques.

"The swimmer gets ready for the Olympic Games."

Il parle très vite.

"He speaks very quickly."

Je me lève tôt, je me couche tard, je suis fatiguée.

"I get up early, I go to bed late, I am tired."

7 heures du matin, c'est tôt.

"Seven in the morning, it's early."

Il est trop tôt pour vous donner une réponse.

"It's too early to give you an answer."

Ce document est plein de fautes, c'est une catastrophe !

"This document is full of mistakes, it is a catastrophe!"

Comme d'habitude, il part au travail à 8 heures.

"As usual, he goes to work at eight AM."

Je ne bois que des cocktails à base de vodka.

"I only drink vodka-based cocktails."

Je me baigne quand il n'y a pas de méduses.

"I swim when there are no jellyfish."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Forming Hypotheses in the Past and Expressing Reproach and Regrets in the Past.

Si on avait déjeuné plus tôt, on serait allé à la plage.

"If we had eaten earlier, we could have gone to the beach."

Tahiti, an exotic destination, is the biggest island of French Polynesia, which is located in the southern Pacific Ocean. Even though French is the official language, the Tahitian language is in use today. People traveling and visiting Tahiti land in its capital, Papeete, and most of them stay on the islands of Bora Bora and Moorea.

An important attraction is the Heiva festival that takes place in July, celebrating Polynesian culture along with the storming of the Bastille.

In the dialogue, we learn that the couple finally decided to travel to Tahiti and is enjoying a drink

somewhere on the French island. The woman starts the dialogue by regretting to have eaten lunch so late and wasting part of the day with the sentence *Si on avait déjeuné plus tôt, on serait allé à la plage* ("If we would have eaten earlier, we could have gone to the beach.").

In this phrase, she expresses a regret by stating an unrealized event in the past using the compound tense *plus-que-parfait*, literally meaning "more than perfect" (unfortunately, it is far from it), but we translate it in English as the pluperfect. This tense is equivalent to the verbal phrase we would have in English.

Expressing an Unrealized Hypothesis in the Past with *Si* ("If") and the *Plus-que-parfait* ("Pluperfect")

When stating what could have happened in the past but didn't occur, we use the conjunction *si*, meaning "if," followed by a verb conjugated at *le plus-que-parfait*. This compound tense equivalent in English is the verb form "had" followed by the past participle of the conjugated verb, as in the dialogue phrase element *Si on avait déjeuné plus tôt* ("If we had eaten earlier.") in which we conjugate the verb *déjeuner* at *le plus-que-parfait*.

Once we express the imagined past hypothesis, we state a consequence. When the imagined consequence takes place in the past, we use *le conditional passé* (the most frequently used, but also known as *le conditionnel passé première forme* or *le conditionnel antérieur*), a French compound tense. Its equivalent in English is "would have" with the past participle of the main verb.

Finally, when you combine what could have happened including the verb at *le plus-que-parfait* and the imagined past hypothesis with *le conditional passé*, you will have a complete phrase expressing a regret.

To sum up, we form the unrealized past hypothesis with *si* ("if") and the imagined consequence expressing a regret as follows:

Si + subject + verb at the *plus-que-parfait*, subject + verb at *le conditionnel passé*.

For Example:

1. *Si elle n'avait rien dit, il ne lui aurait pas fait de reproches.*
"If she had not said anything, he would not have made reproaches."
2. *Si j'avais pris en compte tes conseils, je ne serais pas dans cette situation.*
"If I had taken your advice into consideration, I wouldn't be in this situation."

Si ils m'avaient écouté, ils auraient été à l'heure.

"If they had listened to you, they would have been on time."

- *Si vous étiez venus plus tôt, vous auriez vu Marie.*

"If you had come earlier, you would have seen Mary."

Conjugating a Verb at *le plus-que-parfait*

To conjugate a verb at this tense, we form the auxiliary verb *être* ("to be") or *avoir* ("to have") in *l'imparfait* followed by the past participle of the verb. To choose either auxiliary, follow the same process as you would with *le passé composé*.

***Plus-que-parfait*: Subject + auxiliary in *l'imparfait* + past participle of verb**

The use of *le plus-que-parfait* in a simple sentence is to express the anteriority of the action before another one or a moment.

For Example:

1. *J'étais tombé dans la rue avant de te voir hier.*

"I had fallen in the street before seeing you yesterday."

2. *Elle a lu dans le train le magazine qu'elle avait acheté dans la gare.*

"She read in the train the magazine she bought in the train station."

3. *Jean avait déjà appris à lire à 5 ans.*

"Jean had already learned to read at five years old."

Conjugating a Verb at *Le conditionnel passé*

To form a verb at *le conditionnel passé*, we use the auxiliary *être* ("to be") or *avoir* ("to have") with the present conditional of the auxiliary (either *avoir* or *être*) and the past participle of the main verb.

***Conditionnel passé*: Subject + auxiliary in *le conditionnel* + past participle of verb**

We use it to describe events and actions that did not happen, which explains why we often use it to express regrets or reproaches about events that did not occur.

For Example:

J'aurais aimé être avec toi.

"I would have liked to be with you."

- *Elle serait venu en Italie, mais elle a eut un accident avant de venir.*

"She would have come to Italy, but she had an accident before coming."

- *Mes parents auraient déjà regardé ce film.*

"My parents would have already seen this movie."

Language Focus: Expressing Regrets and Reproaches

Some sentences from the dialogue express regrets and reproaches.

For Example:

1. *Tu aurais pu te préparer plus vite, ce matin.*

"You could have gotten ready faster this morning."

2. *On aurait dû aller à la campagne comme d'habitude.*

"We should have gone to the country as usual."

You can use either the verb *pouvoir* ("can") or *devoir* ("must"). However, you can also use the verb *pouvoir* to express reproaches. To be able to choose the right verb and correct conjugation, look at the examples below.

Regrets

- *Pouvoir* ("can" or "could") at the past conditional-use with the pronouns *je* ("I"), *on* ("we"), and *nous* ("we")

For Example:

1. *J'aurais pu réussir si j'avais mieux étudié.*

"I could have succeeded, if I had studied more."

- *devoir* ("must," "have to") at the past conditional-use with the pronouns *je* ("I"), *on* ("we"), and

nous ("we")

For Example:

1. *J'aurais dû mieux étudier pour réussir.*
"I should have studied to succeed."

Reproach

- *pouvoir* ("can" or "could") at the past conditional-use with the pronouns *tu* ("you"), *vous* ("you"), *il* ("he"), *elle* ("she"), *ils* ("they"), and *elles* ("they")

For Example:

1. *Il aurait pu me remercier.*
"He could have thanked me."
2. *Vous auriez pu attendre avant de parler.*
"You could have waited before talking."

Cultural Insight

Are the French Good Guests?

The French are well known for their lack of ability in speaking foreign languages. TNS Infraset, a research company that did a study on how French tourists are perceived abroad, recently presented data that supports this belief. The result is not very promising and shows that some preconceived ideas about French people may be valid.

Among all nationalities, French visitors are the least liked in the hotel industry. They are the ones who don't speak foreign languages, are somewhat narrow-minded, especially when it comes to food, and give the lowest tips. This last fact is explained by the fact that in France services and tips are included in the price of drinks and meals, and people are not used to tipping. However, this is not an excuse to not care for hotel staff who supplement a low income in some foreign countries by receiving larger tips.



On the bright side, hotel owners and employees appreciate the elegance, discretion, and cleanliness of French people.

So when inviting French people to your house, you can be sure you'll find your guest bedroom in order and clean when they leave!





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By Coming to France, Did You Think You'd Leave Your Problems Behind?

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Formal French

Cher Jean-Luc,

Je suis désespérée. Je suis en pleine traversée du désert.
 Je n'y vais pas par quatre chemins; j'ai besoin de travail.
 Je sais que j'ai abandonné ton dernier tournage il y a deux ans.
 Mais... Patrick me traitait d'hystérique tous les jours. Et Elsa ratait mon maquillage systématiquement.
 Cette année-là j'étais fatiguée. J'étais stressée. Alors j'ai mis les voiles.
 Je sais que tu tournes un nouveau film avec Cécile.
 Je prends le train en marche... mais je suis parfaite pour ce rôle !

Anna

English

Dear Jean-Luc,

I'm desperate. I have nothing coming up career-wise.
 I won't beat around the bush; I need work.
 I know that I gave up your last movie production two years ago.
 But...Patrick would call me hysterical every day. And Elsa messed up my makeup consistently.
 That year, I was tired. I was stressed. So I took off. I know you are shooting a new movie with Cécile.
 I'm jumping on the bandwagon...but I'm perfect for this role.

Anna

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un tournage	a movie shoot, a film set	noun	masculine
traiter de	to call someone a name	phrase	
rater	to mess up, to miss	verb	
tourner (un film)	to shoot (a movie)	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Les acteurs attendent que le tournage commence.</i>	"The actors are waiting for the shooting to start."
<i>Le général De Gaulle a traité les français de "veaux".</i>	"The general De Gaulle called French people "boors."
<i>Si tu rates encore tes examens, tu peux dire adieu à ton argent de poche.</i>	"If you mess up your exams again, you can say good-bye to your allowance."
<i>Spielberg a tourné beaucoup de films.</i>	"Spielberg shot a lot of movies."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Using Both Past Tenses in a Story.

J'étais stressée. Alors j'ai mis les voiles.

"I was stressed. So I took off."

In the dialogue, Anna writes a note to her friend Jean-Luc, a movie director and her ex-employer. She expresses her feelings toward her search for a potential job and explains that her career is stagnating, what she needs, and her regrets about abandoning Jean-Luc's movie production using both past tenses, *le passé composé* ("present perfect") and *l'imparfait* ("imperfect").

Using *le passé composé* ("Present Perfect") in Conjunction with *L'imparfait* ("Imperfect").

We use both tenses in everyday French to tell a story or experience from the past. However, when we use them to relate a story, each tense has his own usages and functions.

Using *Le Passé Composé* ("Present Perfect")

J'ai abandonné ton dernier tournage. ("I gave up your last movie production.")

We use this tense to state events that are completed in the past at a certain time either expressed or implied in context in comparison to other events.

For example, in the monologue, Anna says that she took off with the phrase *J'ai mis les voiles* while working on one of Jean-Luc's movies. The fact of leaving is completed at an unclear time. However, even though there is no indication of an exact day or time, she refers to another time in the note with the information stating that she left sometime in the past during the movie production.

Using *L'imparfait* ("Imperfect")

Patrick me traitait de garce hystérique tous les jours. ("Patrick was treating me as an hysterical, bad chick every day.")

We use the imperfect tense, on the other hand, to mention events that are not linked to a specific time frame and can describe either feelings, states as in the dialogue phrase *J'étais stressée* ("I was stressed."), or information corresponding to the background, frame, or environment of the main event of the story.

For Example:

If you are talking about a family event, the background might include:

- A vague time reference, such as *c'était en juin* ("It was in June.")
- The climate, such as *il faisait beau* ("It was sunny.")
- The feel of the event, such as *Le mariage était merveilleux.* ("The wedding was marvelous.")

Using *Le Passé Composé* ("Present Perfect") with *L'imparfait* ("Imperfect") in a Story

When telling someone about a past experience in French, we will always use *le passé composé* ("present perfect") in conjunction with *l'imparfait* ("imperfect").

We will use *le passé composé* as described above to tell about the main event of your past experience, such as in the monologue statement *J'ai abandonné ton dernier tournage* ("I gave up your last movie production").

On the other hand, we will only use *l'imparfait* to describe the details of the settings surrounding the main event, such as with the phrases *J'étais fatiguée* ("I was tired") or *Elsa râtaït mon maquillage systématiquement* ("Elsa blew my makeup consistently.")

For Example:

1. *Je suis allée à l'ANPE.*

"I went to the unemployment agency."

Main event: *passé composé*

2. *C'était long.*

"It was long."

Perception of event; background of main event: *imparfait*

3. *Je n'ai pas appris grand chose.*

"I didn't learn much."

Completed action in the past: *passé composé*

4. *La conseillère m'a demandée de faire une liste de mes compétences professionnelles.* "The counselor asked me to make a list of my professional abilities."

Completed action in the past: *passé composé*

5. *Elle était plutôt préoccupée à remplir des formulaires.*

"She was rather worried about filling in forms."

Impression of event relating to background of main event - *imparfait*.

Using *Le Passé Composé* ("Present Perfect") with *L'imparfait* ("Imperfect") in a Sentence

Once you know how to use the *le passé composé* ("present perfect") and *l'imparfait* ("imperfect") in a story, you may challenge yourself to learn how to use both tenses in a phrase stating two events.

For example, in her note, Anna could have written *Je travaillais sur ton tournage, lorsque j'ai décidé de partir* ("I was working on your movie production when I decided to leave."). In this statement, Anna's decision to abandon the project interrupted the first event of working on the movie production.

She describes the first event, which happened for a while, with *l'imparfait*; it is disrupted by the sudden decision that she made, which she mentions using *le passé composé*. In this case, *le passé composé* usually describes a shorter, more unpredictable event in time than *l'imparfait*.

For Example:

1. *Lorsque nous parlions, le téléphone n'a pas arrêté de sonner.*
"When we were talking, the phone didn't stop ringing."
2. *Je terminais l'analyse de mes compétences, lorsque la conseillère m'a posé plusieurs questions.*
"I was finishing my analysis of my abilities when the counselor asked me several questions."
3. *Elle parlait, lorsque j'ai interrompue soudainement.*
"She was talking when I interrupted her suddenly."

Language Expansion: Past Time Expressions

In the monologue, Anna makes reference to the past in several ways.

The first time reference is when Anna mentions that two years before she began writing the note, she gave up Jean-Luc's movie. The time expression she uses is *il y a deux ans*, meaning "two years ago."

When using *Il y a* to refer to time, the starting point is now toward the past by adding a duration, as in *Il y a + duration*.

For Example:

1. *Je te l'ai déjà dit il y deux minutes.*
"I already told you two minutes ago."
2. *Il y a six mois, il était chomeur.*
"Six months ago, he was unemployed."

The second past time reference occurs when Anna tells us that this year she was stressed and tired with



the expression *cette année-là*, meaning "this year."

Using this expression implies that in the story context prior to the expression *Cette année-là* ("that/this year"), she has provided a time frame. This reference can be an indication of time, as in *en 2008* ("in 2008"), *l'année de la naissance de mon fils* ("the year my son was born"), or anything referring to past time.

For Example:

1. *C'était en 2008. Cette année-là, je suis arrivée en France.*
"It was in 2008. In that year, I arrived in France."
2. *J'avais vingt-trois ans. Cette année-là, j'ai commencé à travailler.*
"I was twenty-three years old. In that year, I started to work."

Cultural Insight

Finding a job in France

7 Searching for a job can be hectic. However, French people have the benefit of being able to take advantage of the help *l'ANPE*, which stands for *Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi* ("National Agency for Employment"), provides. This governmental institution offers people assistance when going through the steps to become employed again. *L'ANPE* offers consultation to analyze the unemployed candidates' abilities, help them find alternative search strategies, build an adequate resume, and select the correct job ads matching their professional profile.

Do the Ever-So-Proper French Enjoy Gossip Magazines?

Anna, our fictitious character of the feature dialogue, resembles a more or less well-known actress who is often the subject of articles in sensational magazines.

French people, like many citizens of other countries, are curious about celebrity gossip. When people

ask the question "Do you read sensational magazines?" in a social gathering, the usual answer is close to this one: "I only read them in the doctor's or dentist's waiting room and buy them occasionally on vacation to read while sun tanning." To protect their personal image and reputation of being culturally savvy, French people are embarrassed to admit they are reading sensational magazines a little more often than they confess.

Even though curiosity brings them to read sensational news, French people have respect for the privacy of public figures, including stars from the entertainment business, politicians, TV celebrities, and other famous people. Some proof is the respect of privacy from the French media. Some French artists, like Jean-Jacques Goldman, keep their private lives to themselves and share little of it, while the respectable French media won't comment on it.

Another example is the hidden daughter, Mazarine, deceased French President François Mitterrand had with Anne Pingeot, curator of the Parisian Orsay Museum. This young woman, now thirty-five years of age, was born during François Mitterrand's first presidency from an extra-conjugal relationship. This illegitimate child was only revealed to the public in 1994, even though journalists previously knew of her existence. After the news was published, journalists would ask French people in the street about their feelings and thoughts about François Mitterrand's hidden secret. The general response was something to the effect that "People have the right to their privacy. If a famous person chose to keep their illegitimate child protected from the media, it's his or her choice and it should be respected. Such a decision is personal and has no effect on his or her career, no matter whether it is political, social, or in the entertainment industry."

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Nowadays, French people still commonly think that privacy should be respected. However, after the election of Nicolas Sarkozy, this principle may be shifting. In fact, since he has been in the media spotlight before and after his election, he has used sensational media for his own publicity and has become a source of gossip, especially with his marriage to ex-top model and folk singer Carla Bruni. After a few months of his presidency, his popularity fell and he was advised to be more discreet, less provocative, and retreat from the sensational media scene. In other words, French people don't intrude on people's privacy (famous or not) unless they are invited to do so, which may make them appear cold and uninviting.



Intermediate Lesson S1

We Have So Much to Do before We Go to France

4

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Formal French

La Citation

“On croit qu’on fait un voyage, en fait, c’est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait.”

Extrait de "L'usage du monde" de Nicolas Bouvier, 1963.

English

The Quote

"One thinks that one is going to make a journey, yet soon it is the journey that makes or unmakes you."

Excerpt from "L'usage du monde" by Nicolas Bouvier, 1963

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un récit de voyage	travel narrative	noun	masculine
être axé sur	to focus on	verb	
à travers	throughout	adverb	
être tiré de	to be taken from	phrase	
laisser	to leave	verb	
se rendre à	to go to	verb	
tomber malade	to get sick	phrase	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Marco Polo a écrit ses récits de voyages en prison. "Marco Polo wrote his travel narratives in prison."

Son programme est axé sur la lutte contre le chômage.

"His program focuses on the fight against unemployment."

Le TGV fonctionne à travers la France.

"The TGV runs throughout France."

Cet extrait tiré de "Raising Arizona" me donne envie de voir le film.

"This excerpt taken from *Raising Arizona* makes me want to see the movie."

Je suis trempée parce que j'ai laissé mon

"I am drenched because I left my umbrella at

parapluie à la maison.

home."

Les athlètes se rendent au Marathon de New York. "The athletes are going to the New York Marathon."

Il est encore tombé malade pendant ses vacances. "He got sick during his vacation again."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Different Usages of *Faire* ("to Do"), and the Pronoun *On* ("We")

The Verb *Faire* ("to do" or "to make")

On fait un voyage

"One is going to make a journey."

The verb *faire* ("to do," "to make") has many uses. In the dictionary *Le Petit Robert*, there are thirty-three definitions without taking into consideration its use in expressions or grammatical structures. Some of these definitions are listed below.

Construction	French	"English"
Manufacture	<i>faire une peinture</i>	"to make a painting"
Produce	<i>tomates font du jus en cuisant</i>	"tomatoes make juice while cooking"
Produce	<i>Produire par l'organisme ou corps : faire ses dents</i>	"to do his/her teeth"
Creation	<i>Dieu a fait la terre et le ciel.</i>	"God made the earth and the sky."
Give birth	<i>faire des enfants</i>	"have kids"
Playing sports	<i>faire du tennis</i>	"play tennis"
Doing handcrafts	<i>faire de la poterie</i>	"make pottery"
To ask someone to do something	<i>faire réparer</i>	"to make someone fix something"
To be the cause of or obtain something	<i>faire rire</i>	"make someone laugh"
To be the cause of or obtain something	<i>faire tomber qlq chose</i>	"make something fall"

The Usage of *Faire* ("to Do") Appearing in the Quote

In the quote, Nicolas Bouvier uses *faire* ("to do," "to make") followed by an article and a noun with the

phrase element *on fait un voyage*. This quote literally means "one makes a journey," but it better matches the phrase "one is going to make a journey" considering the idea of the quote overall.

In this context, the verb *faire* means "accomplishing a trip." We can use it to inform someone that you are going on a trip, such as in *Je vais faire un voyage en Inde* ("I'm going to take a trip in India") or simply describing you're traveling in India with *Je fais un voyage en Inde* ("I'm traveling in India.").

***Faire* Followed by a Noun**

When using the verb *faire* in phrases followed by an article and noun as shown below,

Subject + conjugated verb *faire* + article + noun,

we portray the idea of accomplishment. It can relate to doing and performing something voluntarily or not, performing an act or gesture, and occupying oneself with an activity.

For Example:

1. Doing something: *faire une bêtise* ("do a foolish thing")
Les enfants font des bêtises.
"Children do foolish things."
2. Performing something involuntarily: *faire une erreur* ("make an error")
Elle a fait une erreur en calculant.
"She made a mistake while calculating."
3. Performing: *faire de l'humour* ("do comedy")
Jean-Marie Bigard fait de l'humour sur scène.
"Jean-Marie Bigard is comical on stage."
4. Performing an act: *faire de la cuisine* ("do some cooking"), *faire la grève* ("be on strike")
Sophie fait de la cuisine chinoise.
"Sophie does Chinese cooking."
Les camionneurs font la grève sur l'autoroute.
"Truckers are on strike on the freeway."
5. Performing a gesture: *faire des grimaces* ("make funny faces")
Nous faisons des grimaces aux enfants.
"We make funny faces to children."
6. Occupying oneself: *faire un dessin* ("doing/accomplishing an activity," such as drawing or something like drawing)
La petite fille fait un dessin.

"The little girl is drawing."

Verb *Se Faire* ("to Shape Oneself")

We use the verb *se faire* ("to shape oneself") to your advantage or at your expense in many contexts and also has numerous meanings. The general meaning though is "to shape oneself."

In the feature quote, the author states that *c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait* ("It is the journey that makes you or unmakes you.")

The application of the verb *se faire* ("to shape oneself") in this phrase is in a passive* sense in which the subject is a thing. When we use this verb as such in a unique achievement, the verb *se faire* means "to be produced or accomplished." In other words, it is the journey that renders you being made or unmade.

In fact, the experience of traveling and realizing that a trip changed your view on how you perceive the world around you is a unique self-discovering adventure.

At the same time, the verb *se faire* has many other slight different meanings. Among them are:

Se faire un(e)/du/de la + noun

For Example:

1. *se faire une idée/des idées**
"to imagine things"
2. *se faire des illusions*
"to believe untrue things"
3. *se faire du souci, du mauvais sang, de la bile* (colloquial French), *du mouron* (colloquial French), *du tintoin* (popular)
"to worry"

***Se faire* ("to manage," "to create")**

For Example:



1. *se faire des amis*
"to win friends"
2. *se faire des relations*
"to build relationships"
3. *se faire un nom*
"to make oneself a name"
4. *se faire une situation*
"to make oneself a situation"

Se faire + article + noun (designating a body part)

For Example:

1. *se faire la main.*
"to train oneself to do something"
2. *se faire les griffes*
"to sharpen claws"
3. *se faire les ongles*
"to file and/or clean or polish nails"

* Remember the passive voice uses a subject designating a thing, as in *La citation a été écrite par Nicolas Bouvier* ("The quote was written by Nicolas Bouvier."). The book is the subject that receives the action and does not perform as it would in the active voice, as in *Nicolas Bouvier a écrit la citation* ("Nicolas Bouvier wrote the quote.").

Language Focus: Forecast a Statement

In the sentence *c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait* ("It is the journey that makes you or unmakes you."), you can observe a specific writing style represented by grammatical structure *c'est [...] qui [...] meaning "it is [...] that [...]."*

We could have simplified this phrase with *Le voyage vous fait ou vous défait.* ("The journey makes you or unmakes you.") However, the author chose to use the structure *c'est [...] qui [...]* ("it is [...] that [...]"), whose purpose is to forecast that the journey or trip has the effect of making or unmaking you.

On the other hand, if the author would have just used the simple phrase *Le voyage vous fait ou vous*

défait ("The journey makes you or unmakes you"), he would have just announced a thought without putting the idea forward.

Language Focus: The Expression *En Fait* ("Actually," "in Reality," "as a Matter of Fact")

We use the phrase *en fait*, meaning "in reality," to clarify a fact with an explanation or a reason to make sure the person won't have the wrong idea. It usually introduces an opposite idea to the thought or idea preceding *en fait* and serves as a liaison.

An example would be the quote *On croit qu'on fait un voyage, en fait, c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait*. ("One thinks that one is going to make a journey, yet soon it is the journey that makes or unmakes you.") In the first idea, the author expresses that people believe they do a trip by planning, organizing, and experiencing it. However, the second idea, introduced with *en fait* and linking the first one, is opposite to the first one as it indicates that the journey makes the person.

Language Focus: Speaking of an Undetermined Person in a General Context with the Pronoun *On* or *Vous*

The pronoun *on*, which we usually translate as "we," can also refer to an undetermined person in a general context as it is in the quote. We translate the pronoun *on* in *On croit qu'on fait un voyage* ("One thinks that one is going to make a journey") as "one," referring to someone or in other words an undefined individual.

The pronoun *vous*, meaning "you" (formal singular form) or "you all" (plural form), can also refer to a person in a general sense like the pronoun *on*. In the quote *c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait* ("It is the journey that makes or unmakes you"), we use the pronoun *vous* in a broad, general context to refer to people in general and no one with specificity. In that kind of context, we could translate the pronoun *vous* as people. We could also translate *c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait* as "It is the journey that makes or unmakes people."

Cultural Insight

Nicolas Bouver's Quote: *On croit qu'on fait un voyage.*

"We believe that we do."

I. *L'Auteur : Nicolas Bouver*

Nicolas Bouver, écrivain et photographe est né en Suisse en 1929. Son père était bibliothécaire. Il fait

son premier voyage en Norvège à dix-sept ans.

Père du récit de voyage moderne, ses récits de voyage imagés sont axés sur ses impressions et basés sur la sensation. Ils proposent aussi une réflexion sur la nature de l'homme. Sa motivation quant au voyage est la rencontre avec l'autre.

Nicolas Bouvier a voyagé à travers le monde, au Japon, en Afghanistan, en Inde, au Pakistan, en Yougoslavie, en Irlande et bien d'autres pays. Il est mort en 1998.

II. Le Contexte de la Citation :

*La citation est tirée de son récit de voyage *L'usage du monde*. Ce livre décrit ses nombreuses expériences, de la Yougoslavie à Ceylan dans les années cinquante. Il part pour la Yougoslavie avec son ami Thierry Vernet en 1953. Ils voyagent dans une petite voiture de la marque Fiat. Le voyage dure jusqu'en 1954 et les deux hommes vont en Turquie, en Iran et au Pakistan. Thierry Vernet laisse son ami à Kaboul en Afghanistan et Nicolas Bouvier continue seul. Il se rend alors à Ceylan, où il tombe très malade et traverse six mois de dépression.*

Autre Citation de Nicolas Bouvier :

"Si on ne laisse pas au voyage le droit de nous détruire un peu, autant rester chez soi." (Le Poisson Scorpion, 1982)

English Translation

I. The Author, Nicolas Bouvier:

Nicolas Bouvier, a writer, iconographer, and photographer, was born in Switzerland. His father was a librarian. He traveled to Norway for the first time when he was seventeen years old.

Known as the father of modern travel books, his colorful stories focus on his impressions and his emotions. They also offer a reflection on human nature. His motivation to travel was to meet others.

Nicolas Bouvier traveled constantly, visiting countries all over the world, including Japan, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Ireland, and many others. He died in 1998.

II. The Quote's Context:

We took this quote from Bouvier's travel book, *L'usage du Monde* ("The Usage of the World"). This book describes numerous experiences in which Bouvier goes from Yugoslavia to Ceylon in the 1950s, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied. He left for Yugoslavia with his friend Thierry Vernet in



1953. They traveled in a small Fiat car. The trip lasted until 1954, when the two men went to Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. Vernet left Bouvier in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Bouvier continued his travels by himself. He then went to Ceylon, where he became very sick and endured six months of depression.

Another quote by Nicolas Bouvier:

"If one does not accord the journey the right to destroy us a little bit, one might as well stay at home." (*Le Poisson Scorpion*, 1982)

Origin of Nicolas Bouvier's Quote

Traveling and living in a foreign place or even country can be a challenge not everyone is up to taking on. Even though French people travel a lot during their vacations, they usually live and stay where they were born, especially when their main residence is located in a village. Some French families can be traced back as far as the Middle Ages in the 1500s and 1600s. In 1539, *François Ier de France* ("François the first of France") organized a national census *l'ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* ("the Villers-Cotterêts Ordinance"), a law requesting the registrations of baptisms and burials. The law took its name from the city where it was created, Villers-Cotterêts in the northern region of Picardie.

The feature quote, *On croit qu'on fait un voyage, en fait, c'est le voyage qui vous fait ou vous défait* ("One thinks that one is going to make a journey, yet soon it is the journey that makes or unmakes you.") is Nicolas Bouvier's thought about traveling and residing for a long period of time on foreign soil.

It is a part of the book *L'usage du monde* ("The World's Usage") written using the verb *faire*, meaning "to do" or "to make," and illustrating some of its various uses through its different definitions in specific contexts and in the expression *en fait*, meaning "in reality."

Understanding Is Power, According to Another French Author

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne or simply Michel de Montaigne (February 28, 1533-September 13, 1592) was a politician and one of the most influential writers of the French Renaissance, which took place after his death. Born to a rich family and a father with some very progressive views on education, Montaigne was educated in a stimulating alternative environment in which only Latin was spoken.

Even though at his time he was more famous as a statesman, Montaigne is nowadays known for his massive volume *Essais* (translated literally as "Attempts"). This new kind of writing, which was seen

at the time as detrimental and self-absorbed, portrays intellectual speculation with casual anecdotes taken from his own experience. This work still influences today's writers and is widely used in the French education system.

Some of his famous quotes include:

Mieux vaut tête bien faite que tête bien pleine ("Better have the head well done than a head well filled."). This quote means that it is better to have a well-organized and structured knowledge than learn a lot without mastering or understanding any taught knowledge. Montaigne was criticizing the teachers of the time who taught students through learning by memorization without giving them the ability to think on their own.

Il faut voyager pour froter et limer sa cervelle contre celle d'autrui ("One must travel to rub and file their brain with the ones of others."). This quote means that traveling challenges what you know and how you think by allowing you to discover and experience other cultures and people's ways of thinking and viewing the world. If you don't travel, you will remain in the same thinking pattern by not confronting different views.

La vraie liberté est de pouvoir toute chose sur soi ("The true liberty is to be able to master all things upon you."). This phrase means you can tame any difficulty you may encounter in life by understanding it. To understand it, you need to get to know it, which in turn signifies that knowledge and understanding how things work is power.



Intermediate Lesson S1

I'm Counting the Moments Until You Can Be with Me in France!

5

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Formal French

Vincent	J'aimerais que tu sois avec moi.
Maelys	Moi aussi j'aimerais être avec toi.
Vincent	Qu'est-ce que tu es en train de faire ?
Maelys	Rien. Je m'ennuie. J'ai envie de te rejoindre. Et toi ?
Vincent	Je suis à Buenos Aires, je voudrais que tu viennes.
Maelys	Je voudrais venir aussi ! Il me tarde que tu rentres !
Vincent	J'ai envie que tu voyages avec moi la prochaine fois.
Maelys	Moi aussi, j'ai vraiment envie de voyager avec toi !

English

Him	I'd like you to be with me.
Her	Me too, I'd like to be with you.
Him	What are you doing?
Her	Nothing. I'm bored. I'd like to join you. And you?
Him	I'm in Buenos Aires. I'd like you to come.
Her	I would like to come too! I'm waiting for you to come home!
Him	I'd like you to travel with me next time.
Her	Me too, I'd really like to travel with you!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
en train de	equivalent of the continuous present in English		
rejoindre	to join, to meet	verb	
il me tarde	I can't wait	phrase	
avoir envie	to feel like	phrase	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Il est en train de faire la vaisselle, donc il ne

"He is doing the dishes, so he's not listening to

m'écoute pas.

On va au cinéma ce soir, et Pascal nous rejoint après.

Il me tarde de voir ma grand-mère!

J'ai envie d'un gâteau aux carottes.

me."

"Tonight we're going to the movies, and Pascal is meeting us afterward."

"I can't wait to see my grandmother!"

"I feel like carrot cake."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Feelings and Desires in French.

J'aimerais que tu sois avec moi.

"I'd like you to be with me."

Whether you're from the southern or the northern hemisphere, all of us share feelings for each other. Good or bad, French people do too! Even though we may seem cold, arrogant, and proud of our heritage, take the time to know us better and you should find what you are looking for in a friend, colleague, or anyone you may just want to be acquainted with.

Here are a few tips about how the French express their feelings. First of all, don't expect a French person to use the verb *aimer* ("to love") when expressing feelings toward a friend. Rather, the French use the verb *aimer* ("to love") in conjunction with the adverb *bien*, meaning "well," to say "I like you." The French reserve the verb *aimer* only for someone they have a romantic relationship with or someone they are falling in love with. So use *Je t'aime* ("I love you") to declare your flame or tell your love partner how you feel. Use *Je t'aime bien* ("I like you") to tell a new friend you appreciate her/him. You can even add *comme ami(e)* to avoid any misinterpretation and end up with the phrase *Je t'aime bien comme ami(e)*. ("I like you as a friend.")

In today's conversation, a man and a woman who are involved with each other for a while are apart. He is traveling and is presently in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She, on the other hand, is in France. They are on the phone talking about how they miss each other.

They express their immediate desires using the present conditional of the verbs of feeling followed by the subjunctive, as in *J'aimerais que tu sois avec moi*. ("I'd like you to be with me.") They also express their wishes, as in *J'ai envie que tu voyages avec moi la prochaine fois*. ("I'd like you to travel with me next time.")

Expressing Wishes and Desires Using the Subjunctive

To talk about wishes, we commonly use verbs about feelings, such as *aimer* ("to love"), *souhaiter* ("to wish"), or *vouloir* ("to want"). We use these verbs in the present conditional, as in *J'aimerais que tu*

sois avec moi. ("I'd like you to be with me.") You can also substitute the verb *aimer* ("to love") with *souhaiter* to form the phrase *Je souhaiterais que tu sois avec moi.* ("I'd like you to be with me.") Another phrase from the dialogue uses a verb about feelings conjugated at the conditional present, *vouloir* ("to want"), with the phrase *je voudrais que tu viennes.* ("I'd like you to come.")

To express wishes and desires using verbs such as *aimer* ("to love"), *souhaiter* ("to wish"), or *vouloir* ("to want"), we can use two grammatical forms. We use the first one with the subjunctive. The second uses the infinitive form.

The phrase *J'aimerais que tu sois avec moi* ("I'd like you to be with me") uses the subjunctive present. The verb form *sois* is the verb *être* ("to be") conjugated at the second person singular at the subjunctive present. The reason why we do this is because the verb *aimer* in this phrase speaks of a wish and relates to subjectivity, as this wish may be different later, rather than objectivity through a fact, as in *J'aime que tu sois avec moi.* ("I like you to be with me.")

To formulate a wish, use a verb of feeling followed by *que* and a second verb at the subjunctive present as follows:

Subject + verb of feeling at the conditional present + *que* + subject + verb at the subjunctive present.

For Example:

1. *J'aimerais que tu m'aides.*
"I'd like you to help me."
2. *Je souhaiterais qu'il fasse ce que je lui ai demandé.*
"I'd like that he do what I asked him to do."
3. *Je voudrais que nous nous réunissions bientôt.*
"I'd like that we would meet soon."
4. *Il voudrait que vous veniez marcher.*
"He'd like you to come walk."
5. *Tu aimerais que je connaisse mieux cette chanson.*
"You'd like that I know this song better."
6. *Voudrais-tu qu'il t'ammène un verre?*
"Would you like him to bring you a glass?"
7. *Qu'est-ce que vous voudriez que l'on fasse?*
"What would you like to do?"

Language Focus: Make Sure the Subjunctive Is Required for the Second Verb in a Phrase

To make sure that the subjunctive is necessary in the phrase, check that we use the verb of feeling expressing a wish or a desire at the conditional present in conjunction with the word *que* meaning "that." In this case, the subjunctive is required for the second verb.

Another tip is to check that each subject of both verbs indicates a different person, as in the dialogue.

For Example:

1. *Il me tarde que tu rentres !*
"I'm impatient that you come home."
2. *J'aimerais que tu sois avec moi.*
"I'd like you to be with me."
3. *Je voudrais que tu viennes.*
"I'd like you to come."
4. *J'ai envie que tu voyages avec moi.*
"I'd like you to travel with me."

Expressing Wishes and Desires Using the Infinitive

The second grammatical form possible after verbs of feeling expressing desire or wish is the infinitive form, as with the use of *être* ("to be") as in *Moi aussi j'aimerais être avec toi.* ("Me too, I'd like to be with you.") We can also find this structure in the dialogue.

For Example:

1. *rejoindre* ("to meet")
J'ai envie de te rejoindre.
"I'd like to meet you."
2. *venir* ("to come")
Je voudrais venir aussi !
"I would like you to come too!"
3. *voyager* ("to travel")
Moi aussi, j'ai vraiment envie de voyager avec toi !
"Me too, I'd really like to travel with you!"

To use the infinitive form after a verb of feeling to tell about wishes and desires, use the following sequence:

Subject + verb of feeling at the conditional present + verb at the infinitive.

For Example:

1. *J'aimerais prendre des vacances.*
"I'd like to take a vacation."
2. *Je souhaiterais faire u beau jardin.*
"I'd like to do a beautiful yard."
3. *Je voudrais voir les montagnes en été.*
"I'd like to see the mountains in summer."
4. *Il voudrait faire une randonnée.*
"He'd like to do some trekking."
5. *Tu aimerais chanter ?*
"Would you like to sing?"
6. *Vous avez envie de* boire une boisson chaude ?*
"Would you care for a hot drink?"
7. *J'aimerais manger quelques chose de sucré.*
"I'd like to eat something sweet."

* The complete verb here is *avoir envie de* ("to have the desire of"). Therefore, the verbs *avoir envie de* ("to have the desire of") and *boire* ("to drink") are not separated by the word *de*.

Language Focus: Make Sure the Infinitive Is Required for the Second Verb in a Phrase

To make sure that the infinitive is necessary in the phrase, check that we used the verb of feeling expressing a wish or a desire at the conditional present without the word *que*, meaning "that." In this case, the indicative is required for the second verb.

Also check that each subject of both verbs indicates the same person as in the dialogue.

For Example:

1. *J'ai envie de te rejoindre.*
"I'd like to meet you."
2. *Je voudrais venir aussi !*
"I'd like you to come also."
3. *Moi aussi, j'ai vraiment envie de voyager avec toi !*
"Me too, I'd really like to travel with you!"

Language Review: Describing What Is Happening at the Time of Speaking

In the dialogue, the speaker asks the question *Qu'est-ce que tu es en train de faire ?* ("What are you doing?") This phrase uses the expression *être en train de*, meaning "be in the process of," to describe what is done at the time of speaking. We use this expression after the subject and it is followed by a verb at the infinitive, as in *Je suis en train de poser une question.* ("I'm in the process of asking a question.") We can also translate it simply with the present continuous (also known as present progressive) as "I'm asking a question."

Here are some other examples.

For Example:

1. *Ils sont en train de parler au téléphone.*
"They are talking on the phone."
2. *Lui, il est en train de voyager au Brésil.*
"Him, he is traveling in Brazil."
3. *Elle est en train de lui dire qu'elle s'ennuie.*
"She is telling him that she is bored."

Cultural Insight

Row, Row, Row Your French Boat

France, with two-thirds of its border being coastline, has spawned a few adventurers at sea. One famous traveler besides the man in Brazil featured in our dialogue is Gérard D'aboville.

Born in 1945, D'aboville is a French citizen, sailor, and politician. He started crossing the ocean solo by rowing. Not only an adventurer, he is also not your average French person; rather, he is the direct descendant of General Augustin Gabriel d'Aboville (who served during the first Empire under Napoleon in 1804), and his son, Auguste Ernest d'Aboville (a politician of the second Empire under Napoléon III from 1852 to 1870).

In 1980, he left Cape Cod in the United States on July tenth and arrived in Brest on September twenty-first after rowing five thousand, two hundred kilometers on his 5.6 meter rowing boat. He was the first to cross the Atlantic in these conditions.

In 1991, he rowed across the Pacific Ocean, leaving from Japan on July tenth and landing on the American coast on November twenty-first. The following year, the famous French singer Guy Béart wrote him a song called *Entre-temps ramait d'Aboville*. ("Meanwhile Aboville Was Rowing.")



Intermediate Lesson S1

The Fine French Line Between Playing Hard to Get and Getting Away

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Formal French

Lui	Vous avez l'air triste.
Elle	Peut-être.
Lui	Vous êtes d'ici ?
Elle	Ce n'est pas impossible.
Lui	Vous êtes bien mystérieuse. Je crois que vous me plaisez.
Elle	Je dois partir.
Lui	Déjà ? Nous avons à peine fait connaissance. C'est dommage.
Elle	Je ne sais pas.
Lui	Tu... je peux vous dire "tu" ?
Elle	Pourquoi pas.
Lui	Tu te promènes déjà dans mes rêves...
Elle	Vous exagérez.
Lui	Je suis sûr que nous allons nous croiser à nouveau...
Elle	Ça m'étonnerait. Au revoir.

English

Him	You look sad.
Her	Perhaps.
Him	Are you from here?
Her	It is not impossible.
Him	You are mysterious. I think I like you.
Her	I must leave.
Him	Already? We just met. It's a shame.
Her	I don't know.
Him	You...can I call you "tu?"
Her	Why not?
Him	You are already walking in my dreams...
Her	You're exaggerating.
Him	I'm sure we will meet again.
Her	It would surprise me. Bye.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
--------	---------	-------	--------

vous me plaisez	I like you	phrase	
faire connaissance	to get to know each other	phrase	
se promener	to take a walk	verb	
se croiser	to run into each other, to see each other	verb	
exagérer	to exaggerate, to abuse	verb	
avoir l'air	to seem, to look, to sound	verb	
mystérieux, mystérieuse	mysterious	adjective	
à peine	barely, hardly	expression	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Vous me plaisez, Justine, épousez-moi.

"I like you, Justine. Marry me."

Nous avons fait connaissance à une table de craps.

"We met at a craps table."

Beaucoup de gens se promènent au bord de la Seine le dimanche.

"Many people walk along the river Seine on Sundays."

Ils se sont croisés par hasard dans le métro.

"They ran into each other randomly on the subway."

Guillaume a encore pris ma voiture, il exagère !

"Guillaume took my car again; he exaggerates!"

Les élèves de cette classe ont l'air de s'ennuyer à mourir.

"The students of this class seem to be bored to death."

Le comte de Monte Cristo est un personnage mystérieux.

"The count of Monte Cristo is a mysterious character."

Il a à peine 18 ans.

"He is barely eighteen years old."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is How to Add Nuance in Your Speech.

Vous avez l'air triste. Peut-être.

"You seem sad. Maybe."

The French culture values the art of argumentation.

The French people consider reading between the lines and making and defending a point with irrefutable arguments esteemed abilities that will impress family, friends, and colleagues in France. While debating, the French tolerate and even expect one speaker to cut off the other speaker.

Sometimes in extreme cases, people ignore or respond to someone with one-word answers when the person doesn't consider the other interlocutor's argument valid. We see this in the dialogue when the woman rejects the man's attempt to forcefully seduce her using the word *peut-être* ("maybe").

However, before reaching the art of clever argumentation in French, you'll first need to learn the nuanced speech, as the speakers feature in the dialogue.

Nuancing Your Speech: Expressing an Eventuality

In the dialogue, a man and a woman are on the bus. The woman doesn't respond well to the man's seduction tactics. She coldly replies to his concern about her sad mood with one word, *peut-être*, meaning "maybe."

To express eventuality when you are not sure whether something will happen, use the word *peut-être* as well as the common phrases *Ce n'est pas impossible* ("It's not impossible") or *Pourquoi pas ?* ("Why not?")

In the dialogue, the woman purposely keeps giving vague and unclear responses as a form of rejection. She doesn't want to give personal information, such as where she is from, when she replies to the man's question *Vous êtes d'ici ?* ("Are you from here?") with *Ce n'est pas impossible* ("It's not impossible.") With this answer, she doesn't confirm or deny the man's implied statement assuming she is from here.

Moreover, the woman expresses eventuality again toward the end of the exchange when she replies with *Pourquoi pas ?* ("Why not?") to the man who asks whether he can use the informal "you" when referring to her. This short answer gives the man authorization to use the informal *tu*, but with a hint of carelessness and/or hesitation according to the interpretation.

The following three phrases are versatile and interchangeable, and you can use them in a variety of contexts to express eventuality.

French	"English"
<i>Peut-être.</i>	"Maybe."
<i>Ce n'est pas impossible.</i>	"It's not impossible."
<i>Pourquoi pas ?</i>	"Why not?"

For Example:

1. Art critique:

Statement:

French	"English"
<i>Je pense que c'est une oeuvre d'art superbe suggestant la douleur.</i>	"I think that it is a superb art piece suggesting pain."

Possible reply to express eventuality:

French	"English"
<i>Peut-être.</i>	"Maybe."
<i>Ce n'est pas impossible.</i>	"It's not impossible."
<i>Pourquoi pas ?</i>	"Why not?"

2. Invitation:

Statement:

French	"English"
<i>Allons à l'exposition.</i>	"Let's go to the exhibit."

Possible reply to express eventuality:

French	"English"
<i>Peut-être.</i>	"Maybe."
<i>(Pour moi,) ce n'est pas impossible.</i>	"(For me,) it's not impossible."
<i>Pourquoi pas ?</i>	"Why not?"

3. An unverified fact:

Statement:

French	"English"
<i>Il partirait en vacances trois mois.</i>	"He'd go on vacation for three months."

Possible reply to express eventuality:

French	"English"
<i>Peut-être.</i>	"Maybe."
<i>Ce n'est pas impossible.</i>	"For me, it's not impossible."
<i>Pourquoi pas ?</i>	"Why not?"

Expressing a Belief or Knowledge

In the dialogue, the speakers express belief and knowledge.

The man states his high confidence and belief in the fact that he will see the woman again when stating *Je suis sûr que nous allons nous croiser à nouveau...* ("I'm sure we will meet again.") He firmly thinks it will happen as he uses the phrase *Je suis sûr*, meaning "I'm sure that.". On the other hand, the woman's belief of seeing the man again is opposite to that of the man, as she expresses her doubts sarcastically with *Ça m'étonnerait* ("It would surprise me.").

To portray knowledge of something, use the verb *je sais que* ("I know that"). To show the absence of knowledge, use *Je ne sais pas* ("I don't know") as you see in the dialogue when the woman tells the man she doesn't know whether it is a shame that she wants to leave even though they just met.

Use the two following phrases to express beliefs: *Je suis sûr que** ("I'm sure that"), implying I certainly think that; and *Ça m'étonnerait* ("It would surprise me."), implying I think it isn't that...

Use phrases with the verb *savoir* ("to know") to express knowledge:

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je sais que.*</i>	"I know that."
<i>Je ne sais pas que.*</i>	"I don't know that."
<i>Je ne sais pas.</i>	"I don't know."

* Complete these phrases with a verb conjugated at a tense from the indicative mood (present, future, *passé composé*, etc...)

For Example:

1. Expressing beliefs:

French	"English"
<i>Je suis sûr que c'est une oeuvre d'art de Frida Kahlo.</i>	"I'm sure it is an art piece from Frida Kahlo." (implying "I certainly think it is an art piece from Frida Kahlo.")
<i>Ça m'étonnerait. C'est une oeuvre de Diego Rivera.</i>	"It would surprise me. It is an art piece from Diego Rivera." (implying "I think it isn't an art piece from Frida Kahlo; it is from Diego Rivera.")

2. Expressing knowledge:

French	"English"
<i>Je sais que c'est en 1993 que le mur de Berlin a été détruit.</i>	"I know that it was in 1993 the Berlin wall was destroyed."
<i>Je ne sais pas que tu étais en France le mois dernier.</i>	"I didn't know that you were in France last month."

Expressing an Obligation

In the dialogue, the woman wishes to get out of the conversation and the situation she is in. The man insisting on seducing her seems to annoy her, and she finds the opportunity to resolve the situation as she arrives at her destination. She lets him know she needs to get off the bus and leave with *Je dois partir*, meaning "I must leave."

To express an obligation, use the verb *devoir* followed by an infinitive verb.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Je dois travailler.</i>	"I must work."
<i>Il doit payer ses factures.</i>	"He must pay his bills."
<i>Elles doivent remplir ces formulaires.</i>	"They need to fill in these forms."

Dialogue Focus: Reflexive Verbs

To speak of what you do upon yourself, such as shave or brush your hair, or reciprocal action between you and another person, such as to look at each other or to hold each other, you use reflexive verbs in French called *les verbes pronominaux*.

There are two kinds of "reflexive verbs" or *verbes pronominaux* characterized according to whom the verb performs the action upon.

Les verbes pronominaux réfléchis or "reflected reflexive verbs" refer to verbs where we perform the actions on the subject itself, such as in the dialogue phrase *Tu te promènes déjà dans mes rêves...* ("You walk already in my dreams...") with the verb *se promener* referring to a person walking on her own two feet. Another example is *Je m'appelle* ("I'm called") or *Je me regarde dans le miroir* ("I look at myself in the mirror.").

The second kind of *verbes pronominaux* are "reciprocal reflexive verbs" called *les verbes pronominaux réfléchis*. One of these verbs appears in the dialogue phrase *Je suis sûr que nous allons nous croiser à nouveau...* ("I'm sure we will meet again...") with the verb *se croiser* meaning "to meet each other informally." Some other examples are *Nous nous tenons la main* ("We hold each other's hand.") and *Elles se moquent gentillemeⁿt les unes des autres* ("They kindly joke about each other.").

Cultural Insight

Three Ways to Declare Your Flame in French!

1. You can use a question as a subtle way to tell you care for him or her with:

Qu'est ce que je ferais sans toi? ("What would I do without you?")

Pronounced: [kess kuh zhuh fur ay sohn twah]

2. This is an opening to tell someone that you have some strong feelings:

Est-ce que tu es aussi doux que tes yeux? ("Are you as gentle as your eyes are?")

Pronounced: [ess kuh too o see doo ku tayz yuh]

3. A classical, however nice way to give a compliment when you mean it:

Tu as de très beaux yeux (bleus, verts, noisettes) ! ("You have beautiful (blue, green, brown) eyes.")

Pronounced: [too ah du tray bo zyeh]



Intermediate Lesson S1

The Things You'll Do for Your French Love

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Formal French

Elle	Vous me suivez ?
Lui	Je vous suis parce que je suis perdu.
Elle	Pourquoi vous n'achetez pas un plan ?
Lui	Mais je suis perdu à cause de vous !
Elle	C'est étrange, puisque vous ne me connaissez pas.
Lui	Non, ce n'est pas étrange, puisque vous êtes si belle !!!
Elle	Bon. Comme vous êtes désespéré, je veux bien vous parler.
Lui	Oh merci ! Grâce à vous, je connais le bonheur.
Elle	Eh bien, vous n'êtes pas exigeant, vous !

English

Her	Are you following me?
Him	I'm following because I'm lost.
Her	Why don't you buy a map?
Him	But I'm lost because of you!
Her	That's strange, since you don't know me.
Him	No, it's not strange, because you look so beautiful!!!
Her	Well. As you are desperate, I agree to speak to you.
Him	Oh thank you! Because of you, I can feel happiness.
Her	Well, you're not demanding, you!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
suivre	to follow	verb	
à cause de	because of	conjunction	
étrange	strange	adjective	
puisque	since	conjunction	
si	so	adverb	
comme	as, like	conjunction	
désespéré(e)	desperate	adjective	
grâce à	thanks to	conjunction	
exigeant(e)	demanding	adjective	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Le détective privé suit la femme du Président.</i>	"The private detective is following the President's wife."
<i>Beaucoup de glaciers fondent à cause du réchauffement climatique.</i>	"Many glaciers are melting because of global warming."
<i>Mon voisin est étrange, il ne sort jamais de chez lui.</i>	"My neighbor is strange; he never goes out of his house."
<i>Je ne suis pas là-bas, puisque je suis ici.</i>	"I am not there, since I'm here."
<i>New York, c'est si grand!</i>	"New York is so big!"
<i>C'est si facile.</i>	"It's so easy."
<i>Comme il travaille bien, Rob est l'employé du mois.</i>	"As he works well, Rob is the employee of the month."
<i>Les médias sont désespérés par le manque de nouvelles juteuses.</i>	"The media is desperate from the lack of juicy news."
<i>Le prisonnier s'est enfui grâce à deux complices.</i>	"The prisoner escaped thanks to two accomplices."
<i>Pilote est un métier exigeant.</i>	"Being a pilot is a demanding job."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Causes and Reasons.

Je vous suis parce que je suis perdu.

"I'm following because I'm lost."

Do not be afraid to ask people in the street in France for help. No matter what you may have heard about French natives, ask for help when you're in need of assistance. French people are as inclined to help as any other natives of other countries. To improve your chances of receiving a favorable response, be sure to choose your target wisely and do not engage in conversation with someone who is in a hurry or who seems to be in a bad mood. Speak French as much as possible. Take advantage of the situation to practice your French!

In the dialogue, the man takes advantage of the situation to flirt with the woman and asks her his way as he claims to be lost. The woman starts the conversation by accusing him of following her. He explains himself giving the reason that he doesn't know where he is using the connecting word *parce que* in the phrase *Je vous suis parce que je suis perdu* ("I'm following you because I'm lost.").

Expressing a Cause or a Reason

When referring to a cause, some people confuse it with a consequence. A cause is an event that has an effect or a result. The effect itself or the result would be in turn the consequence of the prior event. For example, the cause of the man telling the woman why he is following her is the woman asking why he is doing so. However, the consequence of the woman's question is the man replying he is following her because he is lost.

When expressing a cause or a reason in French, we use connecting words we also refer to as *les connecteurs* or *les mots de liaisons* in French. They are words connecting two ideas together in a phrase. There are a multitude of connectors; we can use many of them to express a cause or a reason. Each of these connecting words relating to cause has its own specific meaning and use. Here is a list of the most common ones.

Parce Que ("Because")

We can also start a sentence with *parce que* (though it is a less common form). In that case, we separate the propositions with a comma.

For Example:

1. *Je vous suis parce que je suis perdu.*
"I'm following you because I'm lost."
2. *Parce que je suis perdu, je vous suis.*
"I'm following you because I'm lost."

Pourquoi ("Why")

We can place *pourquoi* at the end of phrase in informal French for emphasis on the reason and to express disbelief.

For Example:

1. *Pourquoi vous n'achetez pas un plan ?*
"Why don't you buy a map?"
2. *Vous n'achetez pas un plan, pourquoi?*
"Why don't you buy a map?"

À Cause de ("Because of")

À *cause de* + stressed pronoun

À *cause du/de l'/de la/des* + noun

For Example:

1. *Mais je suis perdu à cause de vous !*
"But I'm lost because of you!"
2. *Mais je suis perdu à cause de la mauvaise signalisation.*
"But I'm lost because of the bad directions!"
3. *Mais je suis perdu à cause de mon mauvais sens de l'orientation.*
"But I'm lost because of my bad sense of orientation."
4. *Mais je suis perdu à cause des panneaux.*
"But I'm lost because of the signs."

Puisque ("As," "Because")

When we use *puisque*, the reason or cause is evident and we know it.

For Example:

1. *C'est étrange, puisque vous ne me connaissez pas.*
"That's strange as you don't know me."
2. *Non, ce n'est pas étrange, puisque vous êtes si belle !!!*
"No, it's not strange because you look so beautiful!!!"

Comme ("As," "Because")

We announce the cause before the consequence and place *comme* at the beginning of the phrase.

For Example:

1. *Bon. Comme vous êtes désespéré, je veux bien vous parler.*

"Well. As you are desperate, I agree to speak to you. "

Grâce à ("Because of")

Grâce à/au/à la/à l' + stressed pronoun

Grâce à/au/à la/à l' + noun

For Example:

1. *Grâce à vous, je connais le bonheur.*
"Because of you, I can feel happiness."
2. *Grâce à la présence de Marc, je connais le bonheur.*
"Because of Marc's presence, I can feel happiness."

Language Expansion

Other connecting words exist to express a reason or a cause. Observe the examples and phrases to identify where we can place the connector in a phrase. Pay also attention to the punctuation and in particular, the placement of the comma.

Car ("Because")

For Example:

1. *Je vous suis car je suis perdu.*
"I'm following you because I'm lost."

En Effet ("In Fact")

For Example:

1. *Je ne conduirai plus. J'ai, en effet, eu un sérieux accident.*
"I won't drive anymore. I, in fact, had a serious accident."
2. *Je ne conduirai plus. En effet, j'ai, eu un sérieux accident.*
"I won't drive anymore. I, in fact, had a serious accident."

Étant Donn  Que ("As")

For Example:

1. * tant donn  qu'il n'a pas appel , je suis parti.*
"As he didn't call, I left."
2. *Je suis parti  tant donn  qu'il n a pas appel .*
"I left as he didn't call."

Sous Pr texte Que/Qu' ("Under the Pretext of")

For Example:

1. *Sous pr texte qu'il est malade, il ne t l phone pas.*
"Under the pretext of being sick, he doesn't call."
2. *Il ne t l phone pas sous pr texte qu'il est malade.*
"He doesn't call under the pretext of being sick."

Cultural Insight

A Parisian Romance: Les chansons d'amour ("Love Songs"), by Christophe Honor 

Les chansons d'amour (2007) is a French movie that young film director Christophe Honor  wrote and directed. This very Parisian musical stars Ludivine Sagnier, Louis Garrel, and Chlo lde Helme who portray the relationships between three young adults, Julie, Isma l, and Alice. What do we mean by "very Parisian?" Well, it is set in Paris in a neighborhood not very well known by tourists: the tenth *arrondissement*. The movie focuses on an elaborate and poetic showing of the streets, lights, and atmosphere of this area. But there is a plot, too!

Now, giving out the plot would be like a spoiler alert, so we'll just tell you the general storyline: Julie and Isma l are in a ten-year long relationship. Isma l works with Alice. The three spend their time walking the streets of Paris, reading together, and making love. There you have it: the much talked about *M nage   Trois!* Everything seems to go well until something terrible happens and changes our

characters' lives and their perspective on love.

Whatever they can't tell each other, they sing. The songs are about love, death, and how the characters position themselves in that bizarre romance. This makes this musical a deep portrayal of relationships.

Les chansons d'amour is one of many movies by Christophe Honoré depicting love in Parisian surroundings. Although critics generally acclaim his movies, others also see them as Parisian yuppie-centered pieces that are oblivious to other aspects of France.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Will Time Apart Allow Your French Feelings to Fade?

8

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Formal French

Mon Coeur, Pourquoi, pourquoi, pourquoi ?
 Ma vie n'a plus de sens depuis que tu m'a quitté.
 Alors, je vais t'écrire une lettre par jour jusqu'à ton retour.
 J'ai le coeur gros.
 Il y a deux jours, je suis allé dans notre parc.
 Tous les soirs, j'écoute notre chanson.
 Je te promets que désormais, je ne jouerai plus le bourreau des coeurs.
 A partir d'aujourd'hui, je ferai tout pour te récupérer.
 J'apprendrai les paroles d'ABBA par coeur.
 Oh, mon lapin!

English

Sweetheart,
 Why, why, why?
 My life doesn't make sense anymore since you left me.
 So, I will write you a letter a day until your return.
 I am sad. Two days ago, I went to our park.
 Every night, I listen to our song.
 I promise that from now on, I won't play the womanizer anymore. I will learn the lyrics of
 ABBA songs by heart.
 Oh, my sweetie! (Voice fades)

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un coeur	a heart	noun	masculine
depuis	since	adverb	
le retour	return	noun	masculine
promettre	to promise	verb	
désormais	from now on	adverb	
récupérer	to get (something or someone) back	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Il a un grand coeur.

"He has a big heart."

Depuis que je travaille ici, je déprime.

"I have been depressed ever since I started working here."

J'appréhende son retour.

"I am apprehensive of his return."

Tu es gonflé, tu avais promis d'être à l'heure et tu as 2 heures de retard!

"You have some nerve: you had promised you would be on time and you are two hours late!"

Désormais, les femmes ont le droit de vote.

"From now on, women have the right to vote."

Il va récupérer son manteau. Il l'avait oublié chez moi.

"He is going to get his coat back. He had left it at my place."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressions of Time and Time Markers.

Ma vie n'a plus de sens depuis que tu m'a quitté.

"My life doesn't make sense anymore since you left me."

For some, time flies. For others, time is money. The concept of time may differ according to age and culture. French people respect time and consider it important, but it isn't a strict reference to go by. In business, the French accept a fifteen-minute tolerance for appointments and meetings. In leisurely situations, time matters much less: the French mostly enjoy an experience with the pleasures of rewarding feelings by being with family and friends, pleasures of the mind through animated conversation and debates, and pleasures of the five senses through food.

In the letter, the author is a man feeling blue and sorrow over the loss of his partner. He experiences time with languish and regrets. The author mentions points of time in the past with *Il y a deux jours*, meaning "two days ago," and he also references the future with *jusqu'à ton retour*, meaning "until your return." The author also uses marks of time with frequencies, such as *par jour*, meaning "every day," and points of departure in time with *désormais*, meaning "from now on."

Referring to the Past

In the message, the author is referring to the past in reference to the time he is composing the message with *depuis que*, meaning "since that." In the phrase *Ma vie n'a plus de sens depuis que tu m'a quitté* ("My life doesn't make sense anymore since you left me."), he indicates the time with *depuis que*, meaning "since that," followed by a reference to the past with a completed event in the past being the

moment when the partner left the author. In fact, *depuis que* ("since that") describes two events starting at the same time.

Other time expressions portraying simultaneity of events in the past are:

French	"English"	Construction
<i>Quand</i> (informal)	"when"	<i>quand</i> + verb conjugated at a past tense
<i>Lorsque</i> (formal)	"when"	<i>lorsque</i> + verb conjugated at a past tense
<i>Dès que</i>	"as soon as"	<i>Dès que</i> + verb conjugated at a past tense
<i>Aussitôt que</i>	"as soon as"	<i>Aussitôt que</i> + verb conjugated at a past tense

For Example:

1. *Depuis que tu es parti, je suis morose.*
"Since you left, I'm gloomy."
2. *Quand elle m'a téléphoné, je n'ai pu rien dire.*
"When she called me, I could not say anything."
3. *Dès que j'ai décidé de ne plus me lamenter, j'ai essayé de me divertir.*
"As soon as I decided to not complain anymore, I tried to entertain myself."
4. *Aussitôt qu'il m'a répondu, je l'ai remercié.*
"As soon as he responded, I thanked him."

The featured text also makes another reference to the past with *Il y a*, which we translate as "ago." *Il y a* ("ago") refers to a period of time from the time of speaking into the past, as with the phrase *Il y a deux jours, je suis allé dans notre parc* ("Two days ago, I went to our park.").

Il y a is always followed by a period of time, as in *Il y a dix ans* ("ten years ago"), *il y a trois mois* ("three months ago"), *il y a deux minutes* ("two minutes ago"), and *il y a trois semaines* ("three weeks ago").

For Example:

1. *Il y a dix ans, j'avais vingt ans.*
"Ten years ago, I was twenty years old."
2. *Il y a trois mois, j'étais en vacances.*
"Three months ago, I was on vacation."
3. *Il y a deux minutes, le téléphone a sonné.*
"Two minutes ago, the phone rang."
4. *Il y a trois semaines, il m'a demandé de l'aider.*
"Three weeks ago, he asked me to help him."

Expressing Frequency

In the letter, the author does not only reference a moment in time, but he also describes repeated action through frequency. Both sentences *Alors, je vais t'écrire une lettre par jour jusqu'à ton retour* ("So, I will write you a letter a day until your return.") and *Tous les soirs, j'écoute notre chanson* ("Every evening I listen to our song.") use a reference of frequency in time.

The first one describes composing a letter every day. The second relates the habit of listening to a song every evening.

We express frequency through adverbs of frequency. We usually place them after the verb and can add them at the beginning or end of a phrase (see adverbs marked with a *).

French adverbs of frequency, classified from least to most frequent, are as follows:

French	"English"
<i>jamais</i>	"never"
<i>presque jamais</i>	"almost never"
<i>rarement</i>	"rarely"
<i>de temps en temps*</i>	"from time to time"
<i>quelques fois*</i>	"a few times"
<i>parfois*</i>	"sometimes"
<i>souvent*</i>	"often"
<i>habituellement*</i>	"usually"
<i>la plupart du temps*</i>	"most of the time"
<i>presque toujours</i>	"almost always"
<i>tout le temps*, toujours</i>	"all the time," "always"
<i>encore</i>	"still"

<i>une/deux/trois fois*</i>	"once/twice/three times"
<i>tous les mois/ans/jours, toutes les semaines/heures/minutes</i>	"each month/year/day," "each week/hour/minute"

For Example:

1. *Il parle toujours d'elle.*
"He always speaks of her."
2. *Parfois je le vois au parc.*
"Sometimes I can see him at the park."
3. *Julie fais parfois des promenades.*
"Julie sometimes goes for a walk."
4. *Je mange chez moi la plupart du temps.*
"I eat at my house most of the time."
5. *Il écoute souvent de la musique.*
"He often listens to music."
6. *Toutes les semaines je fais du sport.*
"Each week I play sports."

Marks of Time with *Jusqu'à* ("Until")

We can also give references of time according to an event, as with the time expression *jusqu'à*, meaning "until," found in the phrase *Alors, je vais t'écrire une lettre par jour jusqu'à ton retour* ("So, I will write you a letter a day until your return.").

The time we express in this phrase is an action that we will do during a period of time until something happens indicated with *jusqu'à* ("until") followed by an event sometime in the future. However, note that we indicate the future time with a verb conjugated at the near future: *Je vais t'écrire* ("I'm going to write to you.").

Therefore, keep in mind *jusqu'à* ("until") does not indicate a time frame in the future or past but rather a moment in time. A conjugated verb and occasionally another time expression, in conjunction with *jusqu'à* ("until"), will tell you until when in the future or past the action is performed.

The preposition *jusqu'à* ("until") has different forms according to the noun that follows it. Use one of the following structures:

***jusqu'à* + determiner + noun**

For Example:

1. *Je vais travailler jusqu'à ce soir.*
"I'm going to work until tonight."
2. *Je vais travailler jusqu'à son appel.*
"I'm going to work until he calls me."

***jusqu'au* + masculine noun**

For Example:

1. *Je vais travailler jusqu'au dernier moment.*
"I'm going to work until the last moment."

***jusqu'aux* + plural nouns**

For Example:

1. *Je vais travailler jusqu'aux fermetures des caisses et des bureaux.*
"I'm going to work until the closure of the cashiers and offices."

***jusqu'à la* + feminine noun**

For Example:

1. *Je vais travailler jusqu'à la fin de la matinée.*
"I'm going to work until the end of the morning."

jusqu'à l' + noun starting with a vowel**For Example:**

1. *Je vais traaiiller jusqu'à l'aurore.*
"I'm going to work until dawn."

Express a Starting Point in Time with *Désormais* and *à partir de*.

We can express another mark or reference of time with a starting point.

In the sentences *Je te promets que désormais, je ne jouerai plus le bourreau des coeurs* ("I promise that from now on, I won't play the womanizer anymore"), and *A partir d'aujourd'hui, je ferai tout pour te récupérer* ("From today, I will do everything to win you back."), the words *désormais* ("from now on") and *à partir de* ("from") indicate a starting point.

In fact, in the first phrase the author tells us that from now on at the time of writing he won't be a womanizer anymore. The word *désormais** ("from now on") indicates a starting point in time from the time of speaking into the future. We can place it at the beginning of the phrase followed by a comma or between two clauses separated by a comma before the adverb *désormais*. (See the examples below.)

However, in the second phrase, the words *à partir de* ("from") indicate a starting point in time that can take place either in the past or future depending on the following time expression. In the phrase, the reference of time is from today, as indicated with *à partir d'aujourd'hui*.

Note also that we should use *à partir de* ("from") when the following word starts with a consonant and

à *partir de*' when the word starts with a vowel. Don't forget to add a comma after *à partir de/d'* ("from") when we place it at the beginning of the sentence. (See the example below.)

*When we use it in a phrase at the past tense, use the word *désormais*, meaning "slightly change to from then on," as in *Je jouais le bourreau des cœurs, mais j'ai changé. Désormais j'ai appris ma leçon* ("I was a womanizer, but I've changed. From then on I've learned my lesson.").

For Example:

1. *Désormais, j'ai le cœur gros.*
"From now on, I'm sad."
2. *Elle est partie, désormais je suis seul.*
"She left; from now on I'm alone."
3. *À partir de demain, il sera là.*
"From tomorrow, he'll be there."
4. *Il se ressaisira à partir de maintenant.*
"He'll take a hold of himself again from now."
5. *À partir d'octobre, ce sera passé.*
"From October, it will be gone."



Cultural Insight

Equal French Rights for Unmarried Couples

Being a couple living under the same roof requires some organization in regards to common aspects of each person's life and the administration of possessions from an administrative and judicial point of view.

In 1999, the French government voted to institute a new status, *le PACS*, short for *le Pacte Civil de Solidarité* ("Civil Pact of Solidarity") to fill in the judicial gap concerning unmarried couples, including people of the same sex. Two persons of at least eighteen years of age can sign such a pact to determine the modalities of mutual assistance and common possessions. They are responsible for each other, both in what they possess and what they owe, including debts and housing expenses.

This status also offers rights in regards to taxes, donations, inheritances, and social security, as well as

familial benefits, such as financial help concerning housing, Minimum Income of Insertion (French government assistance program), and complementary income for handicapped adults.



Intermediate Lesson S1

What Can These French Films Teach You about Love?

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Formal French

"À quoi reconnaît-on que l'on est amoureux ? C'est très simple. On est amoureux quand on commence à agir contre son intérêt."

English

"How does one know that he's in love? It's very simple. One is in love when one starts to act against his own benefit."

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
reconnaître	to recognize, to know	verb	
agir	to act	verb	
un réalisateur, une réalisatrice	a movie director	noun	
un(e) scénariste	a screenwriter	noun	
un monteur, une monteuse	a film editor	noun	
les effets spéciaux	special effects	noun	masculine plural
un tournage	a movie shoot, a film set	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

On reconnaît les peintures de Dali aux montres molles.

"One identifies Dali's paintings by the melted watches."

Arrête de penser, agis!

"Stop thinking and act!"

Sofia Coppola est la réalisatrice de Virgin Suicide.

"Sofia Coppola is the director of *Virgin Suicides*."

En général les scénaristes de films ne sont pas très connus.

"Movie screenwriters are generally not very well known."

Le monteur a donné au film un rythme intéressant.

"The movie editor gave this movie an interesting rhythm."

Les effets spéciaux du film "Titanic" sont bien faits.

"Special effects in the movie *Titanic* are well done."

Les acteurs attendent que le tournage commence. "The actors are waiting for the shooting to start."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Using Prepositions after Verbs.

À quoi reconnaît-on que l'on est amoureux ? C'est très simple. On est amoureux quand on commence à agir contre son intérêt.

"How does one know that he's in love? It's very simple. One is in love when one starts to act against his own benefit."

Avid reader François Truffaut adapted many novels into films, including American police novels such as *La mariée était en noir* ("The Bride Was in Black") and *la Sirène du Mississippi* ("The Mississippi Siren") by William Irish, and his most deep and dramatic movie with the adaptation of *La Chambre verte* ("The Green Room") by Henry James.

Even though his numerous literary references were also based on the French authors, including Balzac, a classical French novelist from the 1800s, he is well known for frequently weaving his own experiences into his imaginary characters' stories and including his own anecdotes and thoughts, one of which is surely the featured quote.

The quote *À quoi reconnaît-on que l'on est amoureux ? C'est très simple. On est amoureux quand on commence à agir contre son intérêt* ("How does one know that he's in love? It's very simple. One is in love when one starts to act against his own benefit.") illustrates the usage of prepositions after verbs.

It focuses more particularly on the preposition *à*, both with the verb *reconnaître* ("to recognize") in *À quoi reconnaît-on* matching ("At what does one recognize...") and after the verb *commencer* in *on commence à agir*, meaning "one starts to act."

Prepositions after Verbs

One difficulty when improving your ability to use French is mastering the prepositions. Many learners have a hard time to differentiate and use the correct preposition after verbs.

A verb can either require or not require a preposition. When the verb doesn't require a preposition, we call them direct transitive verbs. This means that the verb is followed by an object without a preposition, as in *On commence le film* ("We start the movie.") or *On espère commencer le film* ("We hope to start the movie.").

However, when a verb requires a preposition, we call these verbs indirect transitive verbs. They are followed by an object with a preposition, as in *On commence à agir* ("We start to act.").

Preposition à or de after a Verb?

The prepositions after verbs are either *à* or *de*. To know which to use, get an indication by looking at their meaning while using it in a full statement to help you, but then make sure to check the list of common verbs below.

Verbs using the preposition *à*:

French	"English"
<i>arriver à (faire quelque chose)</i>	"to be able to do something"
<i>assister à (quelque chose)</i>	"to assist in something"
<i>s'attendre à (quelque chose)</i>	"to expect"
<i>échapper à (quelque chose/quelqu'un)</i>	"to get away from something/someone"
<i>parler à (quelqu'un)</i>	"to speak to someone"

For Example:

1. *Il est arrivé à reconnaître la raison de ses sentiments.*
"He recognized the reason for his feelings."
2. *Il assiste à son changement de comportement.*
"He assists in his attitude change."
3. *Je m'attends que tu me l'avoue.*
"I expect that you admit it."
4. *Tu as échappé à son jugement sévère.*
"You got away from his harsh judgment."
5. *Nous avons parlé à l'assemblée.*
"We spoke to the assembly."

Verbs using the preposition *de*:

French	"English"
<i>accepter de (faire quelque chose)</i>	"to accept doing something"
<i>être accompagné de (quelqu'un)</i>	"to be accompanied by someone"
<i>avoir tort de (faire quelque chose)</i>	"to be wrong of doing something"

<i>être capable de (quelque chose)</i>	"to be capable of something"
<i>parler de (quelque chose)</i>	"to speak of something"

For Example:

1. *Elle a accepté de travailler le samedi matin.*
"She agreed to work on Saturday morning."
2. *Vous serez accompagné d'un collègue.*
"You will be accompanied by a colleague."
3. *J'ai eu tort de te dire ça.*
"I was wrong to tell you that."
4. *Nous sommes capable de le faire en quelques heures.*
"We are capable of doing it in a couple of hours."
5. *Nous avons parlé de l'urgence à maintenir les campagnes publicitaires.*
"We spoke of the emergency of maintaining the advertising campaign."

Language Expansion: Use of the Preposition à

The preposition à has many uses. It can refer to

- location

For Example:

1. *Je part à Paris.*
"I go to Paris."

- distance

For Example:

1. *Il est à 10 kilomètres d'ici.*
"He is at ten kilometers from here."

- style

For Example:

1. *Elle s'habille à la française.*
"She dresses French style."

However, in the quote, the author uses the preposition *à* after the verbs *commencer* ("to start") and *reconnaître* ("to recognize") to introduce a cause, as with the question asking the cause of how we can recognize that someone is in love: *À quoi reconnaît-on que l'on est amoureux ?*

Note that in *on commence à agir* ("one starts to act"), the preposition *à* with the verb *commencer* appears in the quote only as a grammatical form and has no expressive value. In this case it is followed by an action represented by an infinitive verb, as in *s'engager à faire quelque chose* ("to commit to do something") or *être prêt à faire quelque chose* ("to be ready to do something").

Cultural Insight

More About François Truffaut, His Quote, and His Influence on Martin Scorsese

L'auteur François Truffaut

François Truffaut est un réalisateur français né à Paris en 1932 et mort à l'âge de 52 ans.

Il devient dans les années 50 l'un des principaux cinéastes engagés dans un nouveau mouvement du cinéma français appelé la Nouvelle Vague. Ce mouvement défend ce qu'on appelle le film d'auteur - l'auteur du film est à la fois le scénariste, le réalisateur et le monteur; il est donc le seul créateur du film. L'une des caractéristiques de ce mouvement est la volonté de réalité. Le film est tourné sur des sites réels, la lumière du film est naturelle, le film n'est pas tourné en studio et n'utilise pas d'effets spéciaux.

François Truffaut a écrit beaucoup de films sur la relation homme / femme dont "Jules et Jim" et "La femme d'à côté" avec Gérard Depardieu. Il est probablement l'un des cinéastes les plus connus et reconnus dans l'histoire du cinéma français. Il a inspiré de nombreux réalisateurs comme Francis Ford Coppola ou Martin Scorsese.

Le contexte de la citation

La citation est tirée du film "L'amour en fuite" (1978) ("Love on the Run"), le dernier film de la trilogie racontant la vie du personnage d'Antoine Doinel joué par l'acteur Jean-Pierre Léaud. L'histoire ne suit pas une chronologie linéaire, mais se concentre plutôt sur un aspect de la relation entre Christine et Antoine. Dans le premier film "Baisers volés" ("Stolen Kisses"), l'histoire commence comme si les spectateurs connaissent déjà Antoine, Christine et sa famille. Le film décrit plutôt la relation d'Antoine et de Christine et son évolution.

Dans le deuxième film "Domicile conjugal" ("Bed & Board"), les personnages principaux sont mariés et l'histoire est axée sur leur relation qui ne fonctionne plus, leur séparation et leur réconciliation. Finalement, dans "L'Amour en fuite" ("Love on the Run"), Antoine et Christine divorcent et Antoine continue ses relations tumultueuses avec d'autres femmes.

The Author, François Truffaut

François Truffaut is a famous French film director born in Paris in 1932 who died at age fifty-two. In the 1950s, he became one of the main movie directors engaged in a new French movie movement called the "New Wave." This movement defends what is called "author's films"-the author of the movie is the screenwriter, the director, and the editor altogether. Therefore, he is the only creator of the film. One of the characteristics of this movement is the will to depict reality. The movie is shot on real sites rather than in a studio, the light is natural, and the movie doesn't use special effects.

François Truffaut wrote many movies about relationships between men and women. Among them are *Jules et Jim* ("Jules and Jim") and *La femme d'à côté* ("The Woman next Door") with Gérard Depardieu. He is probably one of the most famous and highly regarded directors in French cinematic history. He inspired famous directors such as Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese.

The Context of the Quote

We took the quote from the movie *L'amour en fuite* (1978), the final movie of the trilogy telling the story of Antoine Doinel, who the actor Jean-Pierre Léaud plays. The story doesn't follow a linear chronology; rather, it focuses on one aspect of the relationship between Antoine and Christine, his love interest.

In the first movie, *Baisers volés* ("Stolen Kisses"), the story starts as if the spectators already know Antoine and Christine's family. It focuses on Antoine and Christine getting to know each other and developing their romance.

In the second movie, *Domicile conjugal* ("Bed & Board"), the main characters are married but the story emphasizes their broken relationship, their separation, and their reconciliation. Finally, in *L'Amour en fuite* ("Love on the Run"), Antoine and Christine divorce and Antoine continues his tumultuous relationships with other women.

The Influence of François Truffaut's Passion for the Art of Movie Making on Martin Scorsese

Martin Scorsese described the people who influenced him in an article in *Time* magazine. He said his influences in the art of directing movies are many artists. Among them are Jean-Luc Godard, Ingmar Bergman, Bernardo Bertolucci, Claude Chabrol, and François Truffaut. The latter meant for Scorsese "something very special in the way that he transmitted a sense of history into his movie making."

In his movies, Truffaut made references to old movies that were significant in the history of film. Some of these references were obvious, and others less so. Some of the most noticeable references were taken from Alfred Hitchcock's movies and added into "The Soft Skin" (Martin Scorsese's favorite) or "The Bride Wore Black."

Truffaut never added anything unrelated or superficial to the story he wanted to tell. Some of what Truffaut did Martin Scorsese reproduced, such as the camera moving in close, then closer, and then closest on a character in imminent danger in a series of shots from "Fahrenheit 451."

"Truffaut had a great gift for giving form to the sensation of time," said Scorsese, "and the desire to slow it down coupled with the harsh reality of time passing." In the article, Scorsese mentioned a great example of it in "Two English Girls." He informs us that it is in that movie "where Jean-Pierre Léaud's character suddenly glances at himself in the mirror and murmurs the words 'My God, I look old.'" Then he adds, "Then that moment is over. That's life. And that's Truffaut." That is surely what Scorsese found special in Truffaut's work.



Intermediate Lesson S1

I Am SO in Love with This French Woman!

10

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Formal French

Carine Alors, tu l'as rencontrée ?
 Fred Oui, ça y est. Hier soir. On s'est vu dans la soirée.
 Carine Alors, elle est comme sur la photo ?
 Fred Oui. Elle était si belle que j'avais presque peur !
 Carine Et elle était aussi intéressante qu'en ligne ?
 Fred Oui, tellement intéressante que c'était presque louche.
 Carine Louche ? Alors pour toi une femme belle et intelligente c'est louche ?
 Bravo !
 Fred Oh, tu sais...les rencontres sur internet, c'est aléatoire.
 Carine Vous êtes allés au restaurant après ?
 L'ami Oui, et j'ai tant dépensé d'argent que je ne sors pas pendant deux semaines !

English

Carine So, did you meet her?
 Fred Yes, it's done. Last night. We saw each other in the evening.
 Carine So, is she as in the picture?
 Fred Yes. She was so beautiful that I was almost afraid!
 Carine And was she as interesting as online?
 Fred Yes, she was so interesting that it was almost like a scam.
 Carine A scam? So for you a beautiful and smart woman is a scam? Bravo!
 Fred Oh, you know...meeting on the Internet, it's unpredictable.
 Carine You went to a restaurant after?
 Fred Yes and I spent so much money that I won't go out for two weeks!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
se voir	to meet	reciprocal reflexive verb	
en ligne	online	adjective	
presque	almost	adverb	
louche	shady, suspicious	adjective	
aléatoire	unpredictable, random	adjective	
dépenser	to spend	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Diane et Robert se sont vus hier pour la première fois et sont tombés amoureux tout de suite.</i>	"Diane and Robert met yesterday for the first time and fell in love right away."
<i>J'ai acheté cette jupe en ligne. Elle te plaît?</i>	"I bought this skirt online. Do you like it?"
<i>J'étais en retard et j'ai presque raté mon train.</i>	"I was late and I almost missed my train."
<i>Le quartier de la gare est louche.</i>	"The train station's neighborhood is shady."
<i>Ce type est louche.</i>	"This guy is shady."
<i>Gagner à la loterie, c'est évidemment très aléatoire.</i>	"Winning the lottery is obviously very random."
<i>Il n'aime pas dépenser son argent, il est vraiment radin.</i>	"He doesn't want to spend his money: he is really cheap."

Vocabulary Phrase Usage

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Intensifiers.

Elle était si belle que j'avais presque peur !

"She was so beautiful that I was almost afraid!"

Finding the perfect partner is not an easy task. Just like everyone else, French people are looking for the perfect partners. Unfortunately, no one is perfect. French people date, get married, and divorce just like others in many nations. In 2007, 267,000 weddings were recorded in France, but more people are getting married at a later age than ever before. In France, the average age for a single woman who gets married is thirty and for a man it's thirty-two. However, if they were already married once, the wedding takes place later: at thirty-five for men and thirty-three for women. Seventy-one percent of weddings are between single people, but their amount is decreasing in favor of remarriages.

In the dialogue, the man is dating and telling his friend how the date went. He describes how much he was impressed with her at their first face-to-face meeting after they met on the Internet. He says *Elle était si belle que j'avais presque peur !* ("She was so beautiful that I was almost afraid!") He expresses here with the word *si* ("such," "so") followed by the adjective *belle* ("beautiful"), explaining that he

holds his appreciation of her beauty at such a high degree that there is a consequence, which is feeling fearful.

Another example in the dialogue of intensity is in the phrase *Oui, tellement intéressante que c'était presque louche* ("Yes, she was so interesting that it was almost like a scam."). In this context, the speaker omits the subject and verb to avoid repetition as it the same as the previous phrase, which was the question *Et elle était aussi intéressante qu'en ligne ?* ("And she was as interesting as online?")

In the phrase *Oui, tellement intéressante que c'était presque louche* ("Yes, she was so interesting that it was almost like a scam."), the word *tellement* ("such," "so") describes the high degree of intensity of the adjective *intéressant*, meaning "interesting" in such a way that it seems to the speaker it wasn't normal that the woman he dated is interesting.

To express a high degree of a quality, we can use the word *si* ("such," "so") or *tellement* ("such," "so") as follows:

Subject + verb + *si/tellement* + adjective/adverb + *que* + subject + verb

Note: Depending on the context, we may be able to omit stating the consequence expressed from the word *que*, meaning "that."

Examples with an Adjective after *Tellement* or *Si*

1. *Je suis tellement amoureux que je ne pense qu'à elle.*
"I'm so in love that I only think of her."
2. *Elle est si jolie qu'il n'en croit pas ses yeux.*
"She is so pretty that he can't believe his eyes."
3. *Il est tellement fauché* qu'il ne dépensera rien de superflu.*
"He is so broke that he won't spend anything on unnecessary items."
4. *Elle est si gentille qu'il lui téléphone souvent.*
"She is so nice that he calls her often."

**fauché(e)* meaning "being broken" is an adjective that is part of the popular French; it is also considered slang even though it is not an offensive word.

Examples with an Adverb after *Tellement* or *Si*

1. *Elle va tellement bien qu'elle lui fait des compliments tous les jours.*
"He feels so good that he gives her compliments every day."
2. *Il lui parle si souvent qu'elle ne sait plus quoi lui dire.*
"He speaks to her so often that she doesn't know what to tell him."
3. *Elle murmure si doucement qu'il n'entend pas.*
"She whispers so softly that he can't hear."
4. *Tu t'amuses tellement bien que je te laisse à tes occupations.*
"You enjoy it so much that I will leave you to your occupations."

Language Review

To speak of equality while making a comparison, use *aussi* ("too") followed by an adjective or adverb and the word *que*, meaning "that," as in *Et elle était aussi intéressante qu'en ligne ?* ("She was as interesting as online?") or *Tu as parlé aussi longtemps qu'elle* ("You spoke as long as she did.").

Expressing Intensity Another Way

In the dialogue, the speakers use another way to express intensity with nouns, as in *Oui, et j'ai tant dépensé d'argent que je ne sors pas pendant deux semaines !* ("Yes and I spent so much money that I won't go out for two weeks!") In this phrase, the speaker is expressing the intensity with the word *tant de*, meaning "so much of," in relation to the amount of money he spent with the noun *argent*, meaning "money."

To express a large amount of something having an implicit or explicit consequence expressed with the word *que* ("that"), use *tant de/d'* or *tellement de/d'*, both meaning "so much of," followed by a noun:

With a simple verb (composed of one element):

Subject + verb + *tant* + *tellement* + *de/d'* + noun + *que* + sujet + verbe

Note: The speaker can omit the consequence.

With a composed verb (verb with two elements):

Subject + auxiliary + *tant* + *tellement* + pp + *de/d'* + noun + *que* + *sujet* + *verbe*

Note: The speaker can omit the consequence.

For Example:

1. *Je fais tellement d'appels que mon coût de communication par mois est élevé.*
"I make so many calls that the cost of my communication is high."
2. *Nous nous parlons tant de fois que nous avons fait au moins un appel par jour.*
"We are speaking so many times that we made at least one call a day."
3. *Tu fais tant de voyages que tu as pris beaucoup l'avion.*
"You make so many trips that you took the plane many times."
4. *Vous avez tellement envoyé d'emails qu'elle ne sait plus lequel elle a écrit en dernier.*
"You send so many e-mails that she doesn't know which one she wrote last anymore."
5. *Il a tellement mangé de pain qu'il n'avait plus faim pour le plat principal.*
"He ate so much that he wasn't hungry for the main dish."
6. *Elle a tant commandé de boissons qu'elle n'est pas arrivée à tout finir.*
"She ordered so many drinks that she could not finish them all."



Intermediate Lesson S1

Do You Find French Jokes about Blondes Funny?

11

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Formal French

- Brice Valérie, il faut que tu viennes avec moi à l'Olympia* demain.
 Valerie Qu'est-ce qu'il y a à l'Olympia ?
 Brice Il y a le nouveau spectacle de Frank Dubosc**.
 Valerie Ah non merci ! Il n'est pas drôle du tout ce type.
 Brice T'es pas marrante, vraiment. Il est hilarant Dubosc.
 Valerie Il est lourdingue !
 Brice Je ne crois pas que tu connaisses très bien ses sketches.
 Valerie Écoute, je comprends que tu veuilles y aller. Bon, je t'accompagne, mais alors tu me paies la place et tu m'invites au resto après.
 Brice Tu es gonflée. Dans ce cas je préfère que tu ne viennes pas.
 Valerie Parfait ! Demain je reste chez moi, et je regarde une video de Pierre Desproge. Voilà un vrai humoriste !

*L'Olympia est une salle de spectacle connue à Paris pour des concerts et des spectacles comiques.

**C'est un comédien/humoriste français célèbre.

English

- Brice Valerie, you have to come with me to the Olympia tomorrow.
 Valerie What's happening at the Olympia?
 Brice Frank Dubosc's new show is playing.
 Valerie No thanks! That guy is not funny at all.
 Brice You're no fun, really. Dubosc is hilarious.
 Valerie He's heavy-handed!
 Brice I don't think you know his sketches very well.
 Valerie Listen, I understand that you want to go. Okay, I'm coming with you, but on the condition you pay for my ticket and you invite me to the restaurant after.
 Brice That's a bit much! In that case, I prefer you don't come.
 Valerie Perfect! Tomorrow I stay at home and I watch a video of Pierre Desproges**. He's an actual stand-up!

*L'Olympia is a very famous venue in Paris for music and comedy shows.

**French stand-up comedian

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un spectacle	a show	noun	masculine
un type	a guy	noun	masculine
lourdingue	heavy-handed (casual)	adjective	
un sketche	a skit	noun	masculine
une place	a seat, a ticket	noun	feminine
être gonflé(e)	to have nerve	verbal group	
parfait(e)	perfect	adjective	masculine/feminine
dans ce cas	in that case	phrase	
un(e) humoriste	a stand-up comedian	noun	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Le dernier spectacle du Théâtre du Soleil est excellent.

"The latest *Théâtre du Soleil* show is excellent."

Ce type est louche.

"This guy is shady."

Tes blagues sur les blondes sont vraiment lourdingues.

"Your jokes about blondes are really heavy-handed."

Je ne me lasse pas des sketches de Jerry Seinfeld.

"I don't get tired of Jerry Seinfeld's skits."

J'ai trouvé une bonne place pour le concert de Madonna.

"I found a great seat for Madonna's concert."

Tu m'insultes et tu me demandes des excuses? Tu es gonflé!

"You insult me and then you ask for excuses? You have nerve!"

Mon mari est parfait.

"My husband is perfect."

Tu veux des vacances? Dans ce cas tu dois travailler ce week-end.

"Do you want a vacation? In that case, you must work next weekend."

Si je n'étais pas comptable, je serais humoriste.

"If I wasn't an accountant, I would be a stand-up comedian."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Uses of the Subjunctive.

Valérie, il faut que tu viennes avec moi à l'Olympia demain.*

"Valerie, you have to come with me to the Olympia tomorrow."

Franck Dubosc is one of the recent success stories in French comedy and representative of French

humor. His career as a French humorist was jump-started in the 1990s in collaboration with Ellie Seymon, an already established stand-up comedian. Dubosc's success has been confirmed from then on with different stand-up shows. Among the most recent ones featured in Paris in September 2009 was "Authorized Permission" with Stephane Rousseau, with whom he co-hosted the Quebec Humor festival, "Just for Laughing," which is broadcast on the French national TV channel France 2 each summer. Not only a humorist, he also acts and shows his talents as an actor in the soon-to-be-released movie *Incognito* in April 2010 as well as in the comedy movies *Disco*, which was released in April 2008; *Asterix at the Olympic Games*, which was released in January 2008; and *Camping*, which was released in April 2006.

In the dialogue, Brice and Valerie refer to some comedians as they talk. Brice asks Valerie to go to a stand-up comedy show at the famous Parisian venue *L'Olympia*.

He tells Valerie that she needs to go with him with the expression *Il faut que*, meaning "it's necessary to." This is followed by the verb *venir* conjugated at *le présent du subjonctif* ("the subjunctive present") in the first dialogue line: *Valérie, il faut que tu viennes avec moi à l'Olympia demain*, meaning "Valerie, you have to come with me to the Olympia tomorrow."

The Subjunctive vs. The Indicative

The subjunctive is in fact a mood like the indicative and not a tense. Moods indicate the intention of the speaker. Tenses, on the other hand, indicate a time frame when the action takes place.

We use the indicative to relate facts as they are. However, we use the subjunctive to relate facts interpreted according to the speaker's view, mood, and appreciation of events through his senses (feelings, mood, will, etc.). Therefore, it has a wide range of uses that are not always easy to identify.

The subjunctive has two tenses: the present and the past. In this Grammar Point, we will present the main usages of the subjunctive mood, list the introductory verbs and expressions requiring* it, and tell you how to conjugate regular verbs at the subjunctive present, which we call *le subjonctif présent* in French.

* The list of verbs and expressions we present can't possibly include all of them: we share only a few for your comprehension.

Expressing Obligation and Necessity

To express obligation, we always follow the expression *il faut que*, literally meaning "it is mandatory to," with the subjunctive mood, as illustrated in the dialogue with *Valérie*, *il faut que tu viennes avec moi à l'Olympia demain* ("Valerie, you have to come with me to the Olympia tomorrow."). Other introductory expressions also require the subjunctive.

For Example:

Impersonal expressions of obligation:

1. *il est essentiel que*
2. *il est nécessaire que*
3. *il est obligatoire que*
4. *il est important que*
5. *Il est inévitable que...*
6. *Il est nécessaire que...*
7. *Il est indispensable que...*
8. *Il est impératif que...*
9. *Il est temps que...*

Note: The expressions *Il est évident* ("It is clear") and *Il est certain* ("It is certain") introduce a fact and not an obligation. Therefore, use a tense of the indicative mood.

Expressing Doubts and Hypotheses

Another use of the subjunctive is to express doubts and hypotheses, or in other words, uncertainties. In the dialogue, in the statement *Je ne crois pas que tu connaissez très bien ses sketches* ("I don't think you know his sketches very well."), Brice explains that he is unsure whether Valerie knows Franck Dubosc's comedy well, as she expresses her dislike for it.

The verb *croire* ("to believe") may be a bit tricky in regard to whether we should choose the indicative or subjunctive when forming a phrase, as either one can follow it. In fact, when using logical reflection, everything becomes clear.

Use the subjunctive when the verb *croire* ("to believe") is at the negative or interrogative form because it expresses an uncertainty, as in *Crois-tu qu'il ait menti ?* ("Do you believe/think he lied?") or in *Je ne crois pas qu'il ait menti* ("I don't think that he lied."). However, when stating *Je crois qu'il ment* ("I believe he's lying."), the doubt becomes a belief, so any uncertainty is much less important.

Use the subjunctive after verbs and expressions of doubts:

Here is a list of common verbs and expressions of doubts.

French	"English"
<i>douter</i>	"to doubt"
<i>nier</i>	"to deny"
<i>il est douteux que</i>	"it is doubtful that"
<i>il est peu probable</i>	"it is not really probable"
<i>il semble/il ne semble pas</i>	"it seems"/"it doesn't seem"
<i>il se peut que</i>	"it is possible that"
<i>il y a des chances/il y a peu de chances</i>	"there are chances"/"there are few chances"
<i>il ne paraît* pas que</i>	"it doesn't seem"
<i>il possible que</i>	"it is possible that"
<i>il est impossible</i>	"it is impossible"
<i>il arrive que</i>	"it happens that"
<i>il suffit que</i>	"it is enough that"

* *Il paraît* ("it seems that") is followed by the indicative tense.

For Example:

1. *Il est douteux qu'il dise cela.*
"It is doubtful he said that."
2. *Il est possible que ce soit vrai.*
"It is possible it is true."
3. *Il semble que le spectacle commence à 6 heures.*
"It seems that the show will start at six o'clock p.m."
4. *Il arrive que je sois en retard.*
"It happens that I will be late."
5. *Je doute que tu puisses prendre le train à temps.*
"I doubt you can take the train on time."
6. *Il ne paraît pas que je sois sur la liste.*

"It doesn't seem that I am on the list."

Expressing Appreciation

In the phrase *Écoute, je comprends que tu veuilles y aller* ("Listen, I understand that you want to go.") using the verb *comprendre* ("to understand") in the main clause, we conjugate the verb *vouloir* ("want") at the subjunctive present in the dependent clause. That clause starts with the relative pronoun *que*, meaning "that."

The verb *comprendre* ("to understand") is a verb of appreciation referring to the personal interpretation of a fact in this phrase with the sense of understanding it. We use the subjunctive after verbs and expressions of appreciation, which can refer to feeling, desirability, insistence, commands, permissions, opinion, and the like.

For Example:

Use the subjunctive after verbs of appreciation relating to:

Opinion

French	"English"
<i>accepter</i>	"to accept"
<i>apprécier</i>	"to appreciate"
<i>conseiller</i>	"to advice"
<i>suggérer</i>	"to suggest"
<i>comprendre</i>	"to understand"
<i>entendre</i>	"to hear"
<i>expliquer</i>	"to explain"
<i>mériter</i>	"to deserve"
<i>prétendre</i>	"to pretend"
<i>proposer</i>	"to offer"
<i>recommander</i>	"to recommend"
<i>trouver normal/juste</i>	"to find normal/right"
<i>il est utile/urgent</i>	"it is useful/urgent"
<i>il est (grand) temps/juste</i>	"it is time/right"
<i>peu importe que</i>	"no matter that"

<i>il vaut mieux</i>	"it is better to"
----------------------	-------------------

Desirability, Expectation

French	"English"
<i>attendre</i>	"to wait"
<i>s'attendre</i>	"to expect"
<i>avoir envie</i>	"to have the envy of"
<i>vouloir</i>	"want"
<i>souhaiter</i>	"to wish"
<i>désirer</i>	"to desire"
<i>aimer mieux</i>	"to like better"
<i>préférer</i>	"to prefer"
<i>supporter</i>	"to bear"
<i>tolérer</i>	"to tolerate"
<i>admettre</i>	"to admit"

Command, Permission, Will

French	"English"
<i>accorder</i>	"to grant"
<i>demander</i>	"to ask"
<i>exiger</i>	"to require"
<i>défendre</i>	"to defend"
<i>interdire</i>	"to forbid"
<i>empêcher</i>	"to prevent"
<i>ordonner</i>	"to order"
<i>éviter</i>	"to avoid"
<i>permettre</i>	"to allow"
<i>refuser</i>	"to refuse"
<i>il faut</i>	"it has to/it's necessary"
<i>avoir besoin</i>	"need"
<i>il est nécessaire/essentiel</i>	"it is necessary/essential"
<i>il conviendrait</i>	"it would be suitable"

For Example:

1. *Je vous conseille que vous fassiez une déclaration de vol.*
"I advise you to do a declaration of theft."
2. *J'évite que tu partes seul.*
"I avoid that you leave alone."
3. *J'attends qu'elle parte.*
"I wait for her to leave."
4. *Tu as envie que j'aïlle avec toi ?*
"Do you want me to come with you?"
5. *Les parents interdisent que leurs enfants courent.*
"Parents forbid their kids to run."
6. *Il voudrait que nous allions l'aider.*
"He'd want us to come help."
7. *Nous avons besoin que vous preniez une autre voiture.*
"We need you to take another car."

Expressing Feelings

We also use the subjunctive after verbs of preference and feelings, as shown with the dialogue phrase *Dans ce cas je préfère que tu ne viennes pas.* ("In that case I prefer that you don't come.")

Here is a list of verbs of feelings that we use with the subjunctive.

French	"English"
<i>aimer</i>	"to love"
<i>craindre</i>	"to fear"
<i>redouter</i>	"to dread"
<i>s'étonner</i>	"to be surprised"
<i>détester</i>	"to hate"
<i>regretter</i>	"to regret"
<i>se plaindre</i>	"to complain"
<i>avoir peur/honte</i>	"to have fear/shame"
<i>être content/heureux</i>	"to be happy"
<i>il est dommage/triste</i>	"it is a pity/sad"
<i>trouver bizarre</i>	"to find weird"
<i>ça me plaît/m'ennuie</i>	"it pleases me/bore me"

For Example:

1. *Il est triste que son frère ne vienne pas.*
"It is sad that her brother is not coming."
2. *Il est dommage que tu ne puisses pas venir.*
"It is a pity that you cannot come."
3. *J'aime que tu me prenne dans tes bras.*
"I like that you take me in your arms."
4. *Ça m'ennuie que tu parles toujours de la même chose.*
"It bores me that you always talk about the same thing."
5. *Il est heureux que nous soyons ensemble.*
"He is happy that we are together."

Conjunctions that Require the Subjunctive

In the dialogue, we also use the subjunctive to express a condition with the conjunction *à condition que* to express a stipulation.

For Example:

1. *Bon, je t'accompagne, mais à condition que tu me paies la place et que tu m'invites au resto après.*
"Okay, I'm coming with you, but on the condition you pay for my ticket and you invite me to the restaurant after."

Other conjunctions requiring the subjunctive are:

French	"English"
<i>à condition que*</i>	"provided that"
<i>afin que*</i>	"so that"
<i>à moins que*</i>	"unless that"
<i>avant que*</i>	"before"
<i>jusqu'à ce que</i>	"until"
<i>pour que</i>	"so that"; "in order that"
<i>sans que</i>	"without"
<i>pourvu que</i>	"provided that"
<i>quoique</i>	"although"

* **Note:** When using the starred conjunction with the subjunctive, if there is no change of subject between the two parts of the sentence, an infinitive construction is preferred.

In that case, use *de* ("of") instead of *que* ("that"), in which case certain conjunctions become a preposition (i.e., *afin de*, *à condition de*, *de peur de*); a few conjunctions (i.e., *quoique*, *pourvu que*) have no prepositional form, and their form remains the same when we use them with a repeated subject. The conjunction *pour que* becomes *pour* ("for") and *sans que* becomes *sans* ("without").

For Example:

1. *Je vais leur téléphoner afin de commander une pizza.*
"I'm going to call them to order a pizza."
2. *Tu pourras venir à condition de faire tous les préparatifs nécessaires.*
"You can come as long as you do all the necessary preparation."
but:
3. *Tu pourras réussir à cet examen pourvu que tu étudies!*
"You can pass this test as long as you study!"

Sample Sentences

1. *Nous ne partirons pas avant que mon père (ne) sache où nous allons.*
"We will not leave before my father knows where we will go."
2. *Tu ne peux pas recevoir ton diplôme jusqu'à ce que tu finisses tes cours.*
"You cannot receive your diploma until you finish your courses."
3. *La ville a établi des limites de vitesse pour que les conducteurs ne conduisent pas trop vite.*
"The city established speed limits so that the drivers will not drive too quickly."
4. *Pourvu que j'entende ta voix!*
"Provided that I (can) hear your voice!"
5. *J'ai bien aimé ce film, quoiqu'il soit un peu long.*
"I really liked this film, although it was a bit long."
6. *Il a fini le travail sans que son voisin (ne) s'en rende compte.*
"He finished the work without his neighbor realizing it."
7. *Téléphone à tes parents, afin qu'ils sachent où nous sommes.*
"Call your parents so they know where we are."
8. *Je t'accompagnerai à condition que tu me paies le voyage.*

"I'll go with you provided that you pay for my trip."

Conjugation Focus: Forming Verbs at the Subjunctive Present

To conjugate a regular verb at the subjunctive present, take the verb stem from the third person plural at the indicative present for all the persons except the first and second person and add the subjunctive present endings. For the first and second person plural, take the first-person plural verb stem of the indicative present and add the appropriate subjunctive present endings.

Subjunctive Present Endings:

Person	Ending
First person singular	-e
Second person singular	-es
Third person singular	-e
First person plural	-ions
Second person plural	-ez
Third person plural	-ent

For example, if you wanted to say "You need to finish this work," use the expression *Il faut que* ("It's necessary") followed by the conjugated verb *finir* ("to end") at the second person singular in the subjunctive present.

Forming the subjunctive present of regular verbs

Step 1: Determine the verb stem.

Knowing that we need to conjugate *finir* ("end") at the second person singular, we take the verb stem from the indicative present at the second person plural: *Nous finissons* ("We end").

Step 2: Eliminate the indicative present ending: *Nous finissons* becomes *finiss-*.

Step 3: Add the subjunctive present ending: *Tu finiss-* becomes *Tu finisses*.

Conjugation Tip: Relative Pronoun *Que* and the Subjunctive

We always use the relative pronoun *que* ("that") with the subjunctive. Take advantage of it and identify the subjunctive by making sure you use it in a phrase along with what the phrase expresses (doubt, feeling, command, etc.).

For Example:

1. *Je suis heureuse que tu sois venu hier.*
"I'm happy that you came yesterday."
2. *Malgrès que tu sois malade, bois beaucoup de l'eau.*
"Even though you're sick, drink a lot of water."
3. *J'aime que tu viennes me voir.*
"I like that you come to see me."

Conjugation Tip: No Worries with the Double *-i*

Verbs like *oublier* ("to forget"), *rire* ("to laugh"), and *étudier* ("to study") may look strange when conjugating them in the subjunctive because at the *nous* and *vous* forms, the verb will have a double *-i*:

French	"English"
<i>Nous oublions</i>	"We forget"
<i>Vous oubliez</i>	"You forget"
<i>Nous riions</i>	"We laugh"
<i>Vous riez</i>	"You laugh"
<i>Nous étudions</i>	"We study"
<i>Vous étudiez</i>	"You study"

Cultural Insight

Popular Types of French Humor

We can characterize French humor in different ways. Some of the most successful comedians played with words in the French language, and one artist well known for this trait is Raymond Devos, who has a poetic touch. Pierre Desproges also possesses this ability with excellence in a slightly different style.

Others aim their art to caricaturing and observing French customs, as with the middle-class French individual depicted by Franck Dubosc going each year to the same camping site and meeting with the same people.

Irony, provoking, and protesting are also among many other characteristics of the French humor many comedians use. Another popular form of humor is duos, when two comedians get together to create two characters. For example, in the 1970s, Guy Bedos and Sophie Daumier played a couple, *Les Vamps*, involving two aged middle-class ladies gossiping. Jean Poiret and de Michel Serrault portrayed two stupid individuals ending up in caricature-type situations where quid pro quo and incomprehension makes you laugh. Finally, Eric et Ramzy use inventive and absurd humor.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Is a Good Sense of Humor a French Sign of Intelligence?

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Formal French

Patrick	Alors, tu as aimé ?
Elsa	Franchement, ce n'était pas terrible.
Patrick	Moi j'ai trouvé ça génial !
Elsa	Ah bon ? J'ai horreur de son sketch sur les femmes.
Patrick	Ahhhhh, nous y voilà ! Tu trouves qu'il est sexiste !
Elsa	Non, je pense simplement qu'il est nul.
Patrick	Nul ? Tu n'as pas d'humour.
Elsa	Peut-être, mais j'ai bon goût.
Patrick	Et qu'est-ce qui te plaît, alors ?
Elsa	Djamel Debbouze*, par exemple. J'adore son humour.
Patrick	C'est vrai qu'il est marrant.

*C'est un humoriste français célèbre.

English

Him	So, did you like it?
Her	Frankly, it was not great.
Him	I found it great!
Her	Really? I loathe his skit about women.
Him	There we go! You think he's sexist!
Her	No, I simply think he's worthless.
Him	Worthless? You have no sense of humor.
Her	Maybe, but I have taste.
Him	And what do you like then?
Her	Jamel Debbouze*, for example. I love his sense of humor.
Him	It's true that he's funny.

*He's a famous French stand-up comedian.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
franchement	frankly, sincerely	adverb	
pas terrible	not great	adjective	
trouver	to find, to think	verb	

génial(e)	great	adjective	
ah bon?	really?	interjection	
avoir horreur de	to loathe	phrase	
nul(le)	worthless	adjective	
ça te plaît	you like it	phrase	
avoir bon goût	to have good taste	phrase	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Franchement, tu es un imbécile.

Ce steak tartare n'est pas terrible.

Je trouve que les français sont trop fiers.

JP a toujours des idées géniales.

Tu vas en Italie? C'est génial!

-J'adore les tripes! - Ah bon?

Ce dandy a horreur de la vulgarité.

Quand je vois un film nul, je déprime.

Les massages relaxants, ça te plaît?

Comme il a bon goût, il va choisir la peinture du salon.

"Frankly, you are an idiot."

"This steak tartare is not great."

"I think that French people are too proud."

"JP always has great ideas."

"Are you going to Italy? That's great!"

"I love tripe! -Really?"

"This dandy loathes tackiness."

"When I see a worthless movie, I get depressed."

"Do you like relaxing massages?"

"Since he has good taste, he will choose the living room paint."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Your Opinion and Taste.

Franchement, ce n'était pas terrible.

"Frankly, it was not great."

Almost everything can be a laughing matter in France! Religion, politics, friendship, marriage, Belgians, Europeans, people of color, and animals are among the common themes portrayed in jokes told in France. Very few barriers are raised when humor is in the mix. Of course, not everyone can be happy about what is said at all times, but besides a wave of protestations, claims, or ink printed on newspaper, the consequences don't go much further. A touch of tact, a disconnected attitude, a bit of satire, and you have all the elements you encounter in French humor.

In the dialogue, a man and a woman are leaving a one-man show by Franck Dubosc, a French comic. They are exchanging their opinions about the show and the comedian's performance. The woman is not fond of the artist, as she states in the dialogue phrase *Franchement, ce n'était pas terrible*

("Frankly, it was not great."). She introduces her opinion with the adverb *franchement* ("frankly") and says what she thinks of the comedian with the negative form and adjective *terrible* ("terrific").

Expressing an Opinion

You can share your opinion about something in various ways. The most common way is to use adjectives to describe what you think of something.

In the dialogue, the speakers use adjectives in different phrase structures. For example, in *Franchement, ce n'était pas terrible* ("Frankly, it was not great."), the word group *ce n'était pas* precedes the adjective to describe an impression or an overall opinion.

To state what your first impression or opinion is about something, you can comment with:

The verb *être* ("to be")

C'est ("It's")/*Ce n'est pas* ("It wasn't") + adjective.
C'était ("It was")/*Ce n'était pas* ("It wasn't")

For Example:

1. *C'est bien.*
"It's good."
2. *C'est amusant.*
"It's fun."
3. *Ce n'est pas enrichissant.*
"It's not rewarding."
4. *C'était divertissant.*
"It was entertaining."
5. *Ce n'était pas le meilleur de ses spectacles.*
"It wasn't the best of his shows."

Language Focus: State a General Opinion

Another way to give a general opinion or impression about something is to use *Je trouve ça* ("I find this") or *J'ai trouvé ça* ("I found this") followed by an adjective, as in the dialogue phrase *Moi j'ai trouvé ça génial !*, which literally means "Me, I found this great!"

For Example:

1. *Je trouve ça innocent.*
"I find this innocent."
2. *J'ai trouvé ça inintéressant.*
"I found this uninteresting."

Une Proposition Subordonnée Complétive ("Completive Clause")

To introduce a statement about an opinion, you can use an introductory verb followed by *que* ("that") to form a completive clause that we call in French *une proposition subordonnée complétive*, a clause that is essential to the whole sentence.

In the dialogue, the man says *Tu trouves qu'il est sexiste !* ("You think he's sexist!") The verb introducing the assumed opinion of the woman is *trouver* ("to find") followed by the completive clause starting with the word *que*, meaning "that."

To give your opinion using an introductory verb and a completive clause with *que*, use the sequence below:

Subject + verb of opinion + *que/qu'* + subject + verb + complement

Some verbs of opinion are:

<i>French</i>	"English"
<i>trouver</i>	"to find"
<i>croire</i>	"to believe"
<i>penser</i>	"to think"
<i>estimer</i>	"to assess"

For Example:

1. *Je trouve ça innocent.*
"I find this innocent."
2. *J'ai trouvé ça inintéressant.*
"I found this uninteresting."
3. *Il pense que le théâtre est un excellent moyen d'expression.*
"He thinks that the theater is an excellent way of expression."
4. *Tu crois que l'avenir peut être prédit.*
"You think that the future can be predicted."
5. *Nous estimons que ce service n'est pas adéquate.*
"We estimate that this service is not appropriate."
6. *Je trouve que cette phrase est trop compliquée.*
"I find this phrase too complicated."

Language Focus: Stating a General Opinion

To give more precision to your opinion, use adverbs to give a characteristic to the introductory verbs, as with the dialogue phrase *Non, je pense simplement qu'il est nul* ("No, I simply think he's worthless."), where the adverb *simplement* ("simply") characterizes the way the person thinks or states her/his opinion.

Some additional sample sentences using adverbs appear below.

For Example:

1. *Je crois véritablement que cette solution n'est pas la bonne.*
"I really think that this solution is not the good one."
2. *Elle estime fermement qu'ils ont besoin d'aide.*
"She estimates firmly that they need help."

Language Expansion: Stating a General Opinion

To introduce your opinion, you can use one of the following expressions:

French	"English"
<i>En ce qui me concerne...</i>	"In my opinion..."
De mon côté...	"In my opinion" (literally, "on my side")
<i>Personnellement...</i>	"Personally..."
<i>D'après moi.../ Selon moi...</i>	"According to me"
<i>À mon avis...</i>	"In my opinion" (<i>avis</i> is a synonym of "opinion")
<i>À mes yeux...</i>	"Through my eyes"

Cultural Insight

Don't Let a French Comedian's Height Fool You: He's Short in Inches but Long on Humor

Jamel Debbouze is small in height but great in his sense of humor: he is a confirmed comedian, actor, and producer. He was born in Paris in 1975 to Moroccan parents. Part of the North African migration to France after the first World War, his parents returned to Morocco for a short stay of a few years before returning to the suburbs of the capital with Jamel and his five brothers.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jamel started his career as a comedian when the director of an improvisational theater noticed him. Jamel then participated in the final of a French improvisation contest and was soon noticed and hired to create his own radio show.

He then converted his chronic appearances on Jamel Cinema into a comic television show, where he worked with two recognized humorists.

In recent years, he has acted in several movies and opened his own theater for talent discovery.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Will Your Comedy Routine Bomb on the French Stage?

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Formal French

(Un humoriste amateur arrive sur scène et a le trac.)

Mesdames, Messieurs, bonsoir !

Euh...tout d'abord...bonsoir...euh...alors...bien.

Pour commencer hmmm (hésitant , ne se souvenant pas) , je voudrais vous raconter ce qui m'est arrivé.

Hmmm ah oui ! (se souvenant)...euh...j'étais dans... (hesitating) dans la rue.Oui c'est ça... dans la rue.

Et heu ..., Lionel Jospin...heu non...un type...pardon...haahaha! (gêné).

Alors heu hmm, j'étais dans la rue et un type m'a accostée et m'a demandé " Quel est le point commun entre l'équipe de France et Lionel Jospin ? »

Je me suis dit « Il a mangé un clown ce matin? »...

Mais polie , j'ai répondu « Ben heu, je Hmmm...je ne sais pas. » .

Puis, il m'a donné « C'est de se voir en finale avant de disputer le premier tour.»

la réponse

Et j'ai dit « Ah bon ? Ce n'est pas drôle. Fallait faire l'école du rire mon vieux !».

Finalement, il me « Et toi, tu rigoles quand tu te brûles ? »

réplique

Vraiment quel bouffon !

English

(An amateur stand-up comedian arrives on stage and is nervous.)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!

Well...first of all...good evening...well...so...okay.

To start with, hmmm (not remembering), I would like to tell you what happened to me.

Well...right! (remembering)

So, I was in...in the street, and some dude came up to me and asked me..."What do the French soccer team and Lionel Jospin have in common?"

I thought, "Did he eat a clown (idiom 1) this morning?"

But I am polite and I answered, "Well, I...hmmm...I don't know."

Then he gave me the answer..."They both see themselves in the finals before competing in the first round."

And I said "Really? This is not funny. You should have attended comedy school (idiom 2), dude!"

Finally he replies... "And you, do you only laugh when you get burned (idiom 3)?"
Really, what a buffoon (idiom 4)!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un bouffon	a jester	noun	masculine
une blague	a joke	noun	feminine
un type	a guy	noun	masculine
rigoler	to laugh (casual)	verb	
se brûler	to burn oneself	verb	
mon vieux, ma vieille	dude	interjection	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Les politiciens se font souvent traiter de bouffons par les jeunes.</i>	"Politicians are often called jesters by young people."
<i>On a rit à ses blagues toute la soirée.</i>	"We laughed at his jokes all night."
<i>Il ne m'inspire pas confiance, ce type.</i>	"I don't trust that guy."
<i>Quand on boit l'apéritif avec Jean-Claude, on rigole bien!</i>	"When we drink the apéritif with Jean-Claude, we laugh a lot!"
<i>Elle s'est brûlée en touchant le fer à repasser.</i>	"She burned herself by touching the iron."
<i>Mon vieux, tu devrais aller chez le coiffeur.</i>	"Dude, you should go to the hairdresser's."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Building an Argument with Connecting Words.

Euh...tout d'abord...bonsoir...

"Well...first of all...good evening..."

French humor and comedians don't hesitate to voice their opinion or make comments on the French lifestyle or current affairs. The joke told in the feature monologue is inspired by the political scene of 2002. The joke mentions the politician Lionel Jospin, who was Prime Minister from 1996 to 2002 during the presidency of Jacques Chirac, and he announced his candidacy in the following presidential campaign. He took third place behind Jacques Chirac and Jean-Marie Le Pen and therefore didn't enter the second voting round. This defeat became the object of the joke emphasizing the fact that both the

French soccer team and the politician Lionel Jospin pictured themselves victorious even though the battle didn't start yet.

In the monologue, a comedian explains what he has experienced through a sequence of events. He uses connecting words, giving hints to either indicate in what order the facts take place, as with *tout d'abord* ("first of all") or *puis* ("then"), or how the ideas or facts are related to each other, as with *alors* to mark a liaison or *mais* ("but") to mark an opposition.

To be able to organize events chronologically as done here or to organize ideas, we use connecting words.

Using Connecting Words to Introduce an Idea or Fact

When relating an anecdote, an event, or a story, a sequence of events takes place. To introduce a story, the speaker must describe a first event or main idea. In the monologue, the comedian starts his performance by greeting the public with the phrase *Tout d'abord*, meaning "first of all."

We can use many other connecting words for enumeration to introduce a fact, as by saying the greeting *Bonsoir* ("Good evening"), or a main idea, as by enunciating what the comedian will say, which he introduces with *Pour commencer* ("to start").

Here are some examples of connecting words we use for enumeration.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>d'abord</i>	"first"
<i>tout d'abord</i>	"first of all"
<i>en premier lieu</i>	"first"
<i>premièrement</i>	"first"
<i>en deuxième lieu</i>	"secondly"
<i>deuxièmement</i>	"secondly"
<i>après</i>	"after"
<i>ensuite</i>	"then"
<i>de plus</i>	"moreover"
<i>en troisième lieu</i>	"third"
<i>puis</i>	"then"
<i>en dernier lieu</i>	"lastly"

<i>pour conclure</i>	"to finalize"
<i>enfin</i>	"finally"

Linking Ideas and Facts

To make a link between one idea or one fact and another, we can use *alors* ("then," "so") as with the phrase *Alors heu hmm, j'étais dans la rue* ("So, I was in...in the street") recapitulating the previous idea stating that the comedian was in the street. We also often use *alors* ("then," "so") to express a consequence (see the Language Expansion).

We can also use many other words to link ideas or facts. Here are some examples of the connecting words we can use for this purpose.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>Ainsi</i>	"therefore"
<i>d'ailleurs</i>	"by the way"
<i>en fait</i>	"in fact"
<i>en effet</i>	"indeed"
<i>de surcroît, de plus*</i>	"moreover"
<i>de même</i>	"likewise"
<i>également</i>	"also"
<i>puis*</i>	"then"
<i>ensuite</i>	"then"

Note: Be aware that we can find each of these connecting words in other classifications, as in *puis* ("then") and *de plus* ("moreover"), which we use to add an idea. The usage depends on the context and the analysis of how the events are sequenced and how the ideas are organized together.

Introducing an Opposing Idea

To introduce an idea that is opposite, the term *mais* ("but") is a common connecting word to use. In the monologue, the comedian thinks negatively of the man in the street. However, the comedian doesn't express his thought; rather, he introduces the opposite idea of being polite and just saying that he doesn't know the answer with *Mais poli, j'ai répondu "Ben heu, je...Hmmm...je ne sais pas"* ("But I am polite and I answered, 'Well, I...hmmm...I don't know.'").

To introduce an opposite idea to the previous one, use one of the following words or phrases.

For Example:

French	"English"
<i>au contraire par contre</i>	"on the contrary"
<i>pourtant</i>	"yet," "even though"
<i>quoique</i>	"although," "while"
<i>toutefois</i>	"however"
<i>en revanche</i>	"on the contrary"
<i>néanmoins</i>	"nevertheless"
<i>d'un autre côté</i>	"on the other hand"
<i>malgré</i>	"even though"
<i>tandis que</i>	"whereas," "while"

Adding Ideas in Sequence

To add ideas or events or enumerate them one after another, the comedian uses *puis*, meaning "in addition," in the monologue. The comedian enumerates what happens after the man addressed him with a greeting. First, he tells him a joke, and then he tells the answer of the question in *Puis, il m'a donné la réponse* ("Then he gave me the answer.").

He adds another idea after stating that the comedian declared a certain quote with *Et j'ai affirmé* ("And I stated").

To add facts or ideas to your story, use:

French	"English"
<i>aussi</i>	"too"
<i>de même</i>	"likewise"
<i>d'autre part, en outre</i>	"besides"
<i>de plus</i>	"moreover"
<i>de surcroît</i>	"furthermore"
<i>ensuite</i>	"and then"

Concluding Your Story

To complete your story and conclude the event sequence or add a reflection about the main idea portrayed, use *finalement*, meaning "finally," as the comedian does when he tells what the man in the street said with *Finalement, il me réplique: "Et toi, tu rigoles quand tu te brûles ?"* ("Finally he answers..." "And you, do you only laugh when you get burned?")

To make your conclusion or conclude with an idea, thought, or last event, use:

French	"English"
<i>ainsi</i>	"therefore"
<i> finalement</i>	"finally"
<i>étant donné</i>	"taking into consideration"
<i>en dernier lieu</i>	"lastly"
<i>puisque</i>	"as"
<i>en fin de compte</i>	"ultimately"

Language Expansion

We widely use *alors* ("so," "then") in oral speech in informal or formal situations. We can use it as a filler to give time for the person speaking to think and formulate his or her phrase or to introduce a consequence.

For Example:

1. *Tu n'étais pas là. Alors j'ai laissé un mot.*
"You weren't there. So I left a note."
2. *Alors heu, je ne sias pas quoi te dire.*
"So, huh, I don't know what to tell you."

Cultural Insight

Satirical Viewpoints on the French News

Some of the French media has a long tradition of giving the news with a satirical style. Two newspapers still providing current affairs through humor are *Le canard enchaîné* ("The Crazy Duck") and *Charlie Hebdo* ("Weekly Charlie").



This style is the result of two trends: the French writing style of Rabelais, Chamfort, Voltaire, and Diderot, characterized by their highly critical points of view of political affairs, combined with the eloquence of the revolutionary amid the *sans culotte* ("without underwear"), who were the people of lower social classes.

This particular tone became a custom and evolved with journalism, thanks to the French Revolution and the 1830 Revolution that re-launched this type of media. Previously under the censure and media surveillance during Napoleon's reign, journalists were tied to a more traditional writing style.





Intermediate Lesson S1

Leave No Stone Unturned in France

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Formal French

“Plus les galets ont roulé, plus ils sont polis. Pour les cochers, c'est le contraire.”

English

"The more pebbles have rolled, the more polished they get. For cab drivers, it's the opposite."
–Alphonse Allais

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un galet	a pebble	noun	masculine
rouler	to roll, to drive	verb	
poli(e)	polished, well-mannered	adjective	
un cocher	a carriage driver (old)	noun	masculine
la fantaisie	whim	noun	feminine
farfelu(e)	eccentric	adjective	
n'avoir rien à voir avec	to have nothing to do with	phrase	
humoristique	humorous	adjective	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Les plages de galets ne sont pas très confortables.</i>	"Pebble beaches are not very comfortable."
<i>Ce chauffeur de camion a roulé trop longtemps et s'est endormi au volant.</i>	"This truck driver drove for too long and fell asleep behind the wheel."
<i>Les enfants aiment faire rouler des cailloux le long de la colline.</i>	"Kids enjoy having pebbles roll down the hill."
<i>Ce coquillage a été poli par la mer.</i>	"This shell has been polished by the sea."
<i>Quand on est poli, on dit merci.</i>	"When you are polite, you say 'thank you.'"
<i>Les cochers sont devenus des chauffeurs de taxi.</i>	"Carriage drivers turned into cab drivers."
<i>Sans fantaisie, la vie peut être bien triste.</i>	"Without any whim, life can be sad."
<i>Au carnaval, tout le monde porte des costumes farfelus.</i>	"During Carnival, everyone wears eccentric costumes."

Non, le chômage n'a rien à voir avec l'immigration.

Ce que je préfère quand je lis le journal, ce sont les dessins humoristiques.

"No, unemployment has nothing to do with immigration."

"What I prefer when I read the newspaper is the humorous cartoons."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Learning to Spell Past Participles at *Le Passé Composé* ("The Compound Past").

Plus les galets ont roulé, plus ils sont polis. Pour les cochers, c'est le contraire.

"The more pebbles have rolled, the more polished they get. For cab drivers, it's the opposite."

In this nineteenth century quote, Alphonse Allais makes references to the rather badly spoken carriage driver who won't improve his speech while time goes by and keeps on with his job. Rather, he becomes worse by throwing insults at anyone obstructing the way for his horses and carriage to go by. This quote also gives us an insight of how little the carriage drivers were educated, and we can easily conclude that they were certainly coming from a poor social class, which was representative of most of the French population at the time.

In the quote, Alphonse Allais uses the compound past, which we call *le passé composé* in French. He employs the verb *rouler* ("to roll") in the phrase *les galets ont roulé*, meaning "the pebbles have rolled."

In this phrase, we form the verb *rouler* ("to roll") at the third person plural with the auxiliary *ont* being the infinitive verb *avoir* ("to have") and the past participle *roulé* ("rolled") of the infinitive verb *rouler* ("to roll").

When writing a letter or note referring to the past and using the compound past or *le passé composé* or any other composed tense (see Language Expansion), the writer must pay particular attention to the spelling of the past participle, as it may differ according to the phrase.

If you observe the quote element *les galets ont roulé* ("the pebbles have rolled"), you can notice in the verb form *ont roulé* that the past participle is singular even though the subject *les galets* ("the pebbles") is plural. This is due to the use of the auxiliary *avoir* ("to have"), which rules the past participle of verb spelling to be invariable, meaning that it doesn't agree in gender or number with the subject. However, there are exceptions to this rule: that is why we must carefully think about the spelling of the past participle to avoid spelling mistakes.

Spelling the Past Participle: Past Participle Agreement When We Use It with the Auxiliary *Être* ("to be")

When spelling the past participle of any composed tense, such as *le passé composé* ("the compound past"), the first step is to check which auxiliary we should use. If we use the auxiliary *être* ("to be"), the past participle spelling rule is simple and easy, as it must always agree in gender and number with the subject.

For Example:

1. *Les cochets se sont comportés avec impolitesse depuis longtemps.*
"The coach drivers have been acting impolitely for a long time."

Here, we conjugate the verb *se comporter* ("to act") at *le passé composé* ("the compound past"). We form it with the auxiliary *être* ("to be") and the past participle *comporté* ("acted") taking a final *-s*, the mark of the plural, as it refers to the plural noun *cochets* ("carriage drivers"), which is the subject of the verb *se comporter* ("to act").

For Example:

1. *Les parents d'Alphonse Allais sont nés au 19^e siècle.*
"Alphonse Allais' parents were born in the nineteenth century."
2. *Les cochets sont devenus moins polis avec le temps d'après Alphonse Allais.*
"Carriage drivers became less polite with time according to Alphonse Allais."

Language Review

The most common fourteen verbs used with the auxiliary *être* ("to be") are **Dr. & Mrs. Vandertramp** (apart from the pronominal verbs such as *se comporter* ("to act") or *se marier* ("to get married")):

Devenir
Revenir
&
Monter
Rester
Sortir

*Venir**Aller**Naître**Descendre**Entrer**Rentrer**Tomber**Retourner**Arriver**Mourir**Partir*

Past Participle Agreement When We Use It with the Auxiliary *Avoir* ("to have")

When we conjugate the verb at a composed tense, such as *le passé composé*, with the auxiliary *avoir* ("to have"), the past participle doesn't agree with the subject. Rather, it is invariable as the quote illustrates with *les galets ont roulé* ("The pebbles have rolled"), in which the past participle is at the singular form even though the subject *les galets* ("the pebbles") is at the plural form.

However, the past participle agrees in gender and number in one exception: it takes the gender and number of the direct object if we place it before the verb, as in the following example.

For Example:

1. *Les roues des diligences les ont polis.*
"The carriage wheels have polished them."

This phrase describes the carriage wheels that have polished the pebbles. The direct object in the phrase is the word *les* ("the") referring to the pebbles and we place it before the verb form *ont polis* ("have polished"). The past participle of the verb *polir*, which is *poli* ("polished"), will therefore agree in gender and number with the direct object being *les* ("the") referring to *les galets* ("the pebbles"). In consequence, the past participle *poli* ("polished") takes the masculine and plural form of the noun *les galets* ("the pebbles") with an addition of a final *-s*. You will end up with the past participle at the plural form, which is *polis*.

So remember, when we conjugate a verb at a composed tense with the verb *avoir*, it only agrees in gender and number when the direct object is placed before the verb.

For Example:

1. *Alphonse Allais l'a écrite au 19e siècle.*
"Alphonse Allais wrote it in the nineteenth century." (referring to *la citation* ("the quote") being feminine and singular)
2. *Les cochets les ont guidés avec fermeté.*
"The carriage drivers lead them with authority." (referring to *les chevaux* ("the horses") being masculine and plural)
3. *Les cochets les ont conduites avec rapidité.*
"The carriage drivers drove them with speed." (referring to *les diligences* ("the carriages") being feminine and plural)

Language Expansion

The process of agreeing the past participle with the subject or direct object as we describe above is identical for any other composed tense.

The composed tenses in French are:

<i>Tense in French</i>	"Tense in English"	<i>French Example</i>	"English Example"
<i>Le passé composé</i>	compound past	<i>j'ai parlé</i>	"I talked"
<i>Le plus-que-parfait</i>	pluperfect	<i>j'avais parlé</i>	"I have talked"
<i>Le passé antérieur</i>	past perfect	<i>j'eus parlé</i>	"I had talked" (not used in everyday French)
<i>Le futur antérieur</i>	"past future"	<i>j'aurai parlé</i>	"I will have talked"
<i>Le conditionnel passé</i>	"conditional past"	<i>j'aurais parlé</i>	"I would have talked"
<i>Le subjonctif passé</i>	"subjunctive past"	<i>j'aie parlé</i>	(no equivalency in English)
<i>L'infinitif passé</i>	"past infinitive"	<i>avoir parlé</i>	"to have talked"

Cultural Insight

Alphonse Allais: A Humorous French Poet Who Played with Words

L'Auteur Alphonse Allais

Alphonse Allais est un écrivain français du XIXe siècle. Il a été à la fois journaliste, poète, et humoriste. Dans ses nouvelles et dans ses poèmes, il cultivait l'incohérence, l'absurde, la fantaisie, et la surprise.

Il est surtout connu pour ses poèmes holorimes. Ce sont des poèmes dont la totalité du vers constitue la rime. Par conséquent les deux vers paraissent identiques mais ont une signification bien différente. par exemple,

Par les bois du djinn où s'entasse de l'effroi,

Parle et bois du gin ou cent tasses de lait froid.

Destiné à être pharmacien comme son père, Alphonse Allais a choisi la voie de l'écriture. On pourrait qualifier son humour de 'farfelu', car il surprend son lecteur par des chutes qui n'ont rien à voir avec l'histoire qu'il raconte, et il use du jeu de mot. Nous avons trouvé la préface qu'il a écrite pour son ouvrage "Pour cause de fin de bail", recueil de textes humoristiques publié début 1900. Cette préface montre bien le style unique de son auteur.

"Beaucoup de personnes [qui] feraient bien mieux de se mêler de leurs propres affaires, m'ont souvent objecté - "Monsieur, vous donnez à vos ouvrages des titres qui n'ont aucun rapport avec la matière qui constitue le livre (...) Cette façon d'agir n'est point l'indice d'une mentalité bien sérieuse." (...) Il y a du progrès, jugez plutôt - J'ai intitulé ce livre "Pour cause de fin de bail", non pas qu'il y soit question de rien qui effleure ce sujet, mais simplement parce que je vais déménager au terme d'avril prochain (...) Nous sommes quittes."

Le contexte de la citation :

Cette citation a été formulée pendant le XIXe siècle lorsque le moyen de transport le plus courant était

le coche, une voiture tirée par des chevaux. C'est pourquoi Alphonse Allais fait référence aux cochers, qui conduisaient les coches. Bien sûr par la suite les coches et leurs chevaux ont été remplacés par des moyens de transport plus modernes.

En France en 1830, la première ligne de chemin de fer faisait 23 km de long. A cette époque la machine était tirée par des chevaux et servait à transporter les marchandises. C'est en 1832 que la locomotive remplacera les chevaux et avec son succès grandissant les voyageurs délaisseront les coches pour ce moyen plus rapide.

Alors qu'il fallait cinq jours pour relier Paris et Lyon en 1789, il ne faut que 10 heures en 1855.

English Translation

The Author, Alphonse Allais

Alphonse Allais is a French writer from the nineteenth century. He was a journalist, poet, and humorist. In his short stories as well as in his poems, Alphonse Allais cultivated incoherence, absurdity, imagination, and surprise.

He is most famous for his holorhyme poems. They are composed of entire verses constituting the rhyme. Therefore, two verses sound identical but have a completely different meaning. For example:

par les bois du djinn où s'entasse de l'effroi
("By the Djinn woods where fear is accumulated")

parle et bois du gin ou cent tasses de lait froid.
("Speak of and drink gin or a hundred cups of cold milk.")

Though seemingly destined to be a pharmacist like his father, Alphonse Allais chose the writing path. His humor could be defined as eccentric because he surprises his reader with punch lines that have nothing to do with the story he is initially telling while playing on words.

In his book "Because of End of Lease," a collection of humorous texts, we can find the foreword he published in the beginning of 1900. This composition, presented below, shows well the unique style of its author.

"A lot of people, who, by the way, would better mind their own business, often objected to me - 'Sir, you give your works titles that have nothing to do with the material constituting the book... This way

of acting is not a sign of a serious mind...' There has been improvement, as you can judge - I called this book 'Because of End of Lease' not because it would have anything to do with this topic, but simply because I am moving out at the end of next April... We are now even."

The Quote's Context

This quote was formulated during the nineteenth century when the most popular way of transportation was a horse-drawn coach. That's why Alphonse Allais refers to the drivers, the coachmen. Of course, more modern means of transportation replaced coaches and their horses.

In France, in 1830, the first railroad was twenty-three kilometers long.

At this time, the railway vehicle was pulled by horses and was used to transport merchandise. In 1832, the locomotive replaced horses. With its increasing success, travelers abandoned carriages for this faster way of transportation. Though in 1789, it took five days to link Paris to Lyon, by 1855, it took only ten hours.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Have You Heard the One about All French People?

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Formal French

Enquêteur	Première question, selon vous tous les français sont-ils grivois ?
Piéton	Non ! Certains sont grivois.
Enquêteur	Pensez-vous que la plupart des français ont le sens de l'humour ?
Piéton	Oh non ! La plupart ne comprennent pas l'ironie par exemple.
Enquêteur	Et vos amis ?
Piéton	Ah ça ! Tous aiment l'impertinence.
Enquêteur	Aimez-vous les blagues sur les Belges ?
Piéton	Pas du tout.
Enquêteur	Et les blagues sur les blondes ?
Piéton	Non plus. Et toutes mes amies détestent les blagues sur les blondes !
Enquêteur	Sont-elles toutes blondes ?
Piéton	Non, mais elles n'aiment pas les clichés.

English

Pollster	First question. According to you, are all French people bawdy?
Pedestrian	No! Some are.
Pollster	Do you think that most French have a sense of humor?
Pedestrian	Oh no! Most of them don't understand irony, for example.
Pollster	And your friends?
Pedestrian	Well! All of them like backtalk.
Pollster	Do you like jokes about Belgian people?
Pedestrian	Not at all.
Pollster	And blonde jokes?
Pedestrian	No. And all my girlfriends hate blonde jokes!
Pollster	Are they all blondes?
Pedestrian	No, but they don't like clichés.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
grivois(e)	bawdy	adjective	
la plupart (de)	most	indefinite adjective	
certain(e)s	some	indefinite adjective	
une blague	a joke	noun	feminine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Elle ne supporte pas que son mari soit grivois quand il est avec ses amis.</i>	"She can't stand when her husband is being bawdy around his friends."
<i>La plupart de mes amis sont mariés.</i>	"Most of my friends are married."
<i>Certains jours, je n'aime pas travailler.</i>	"Some days, I don't like working."
<i>Solange raconte toujours des blagues hilarantes.</i>	"Solange always tells hilarious jokes."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Referring to an Undefined Number of People.

Tous les français sont-ils grivois ?

"Are all French bawdy?"

We can define humor by its type. Some humor is better appreciated by certain nationalities. French people favor playing with the language and its words as well as sarcasm.

Among very famous French comedians are Pierre Desproges, with his one-minute long TV show *La minute nécessaire de Monsieur Cyclopède* ("The Necessary Minute of Sir Cyclopede"), a perfect illustration of French sarcasm and absurd humor. Raymond Devos, however, is the king of absurd humor through French word games. Both are worth discovering and enjoying!

In today's dialogue, a pollster in a street of France asks a pedestrian about French people's humor. The interviewer and the pedestrian are referring to groups of people without defining them, as in the first question *Tous les français sont grivois ?* ("Are all French bawdy?")

In this question, the adjective *tout* ("all") refers to an imprecise quantity expressing an overall amount: in this phrase, it describes the number of French people. Another example of an indefinite adjective is illustrated in the statement *Certains le sont* ("Some are."), where the adjective *certain*s refer to a certain amount of French people and not all of them.

There are many possible indefinite references possible in French either with indefinite adjectives or indefinite pronouns.

Referring to Things and People in an Indefinite Amount

Indefinite adjectives and pronouns can express a quantity of zero, an overall amount, or a partial quantity. They can also express singularity, plurality, or the difference, just to mention some of their usages.

The Indefinite Adjective *Tout* ("All," "Whole")

At its masculine, feminine, singular, or plural form, the adjective *tout*, *tous* (masculine form) or *toute*, *toutes* (feminine form), meaning "all," illustrates elements as a whole in their entirety or in an overall manner.

When we use it with the sense of an overall quantity, the adjective *tout* is followed by a determiner that is an article, as in the dialogue with *tous les français* ("all the French people"), or a demonstrative adjective, as in *tout ce bruit* ("all this noise.") Other determiners can be an indefinite article, as in *toute une journée* ("a whole day"), or a possessive adjective, as in *tout son temps* ("all her/his time"), just to name a few.

Note: We can also use the adjective *tout* ("all") in the sense of "each," even though it is less common, as in *Toute peine mérite salaire* ("Each effort deserves pay.") or *Tous les cent kilomètres en vélos je m'arrête* ("Each one hundred kilometers, I stop.").

For Example:

1. *Tout le monde est là ?*
"All of us are here?"
2. *Toute la famille est partie.*
"The whole family is gone."
3. *Tous ceux qui veulent venir doivent s'inscrire.*
"All of you who want to come must enroll."
4. *Toutes les filles vont de ce côté.*
"All the girls go on that side."

The Indefinite Adjective *La Plupart* ("Most of")

The indefinite adjective *la plupart* ("most of") refers to a undetermined quantity being almost the totality, as in the dialogue phrase *Pensez-vous que la plupart des français ont le sens de l'humour ?* ("Do you think that most French have a sense of humor?")



It is followed by *de*, *de la*, *du*, *d'*, or *des* and a noun.

For Example:

1. *La plupart des apprenants se trouvent face à des difficultés.*
"Most of the learners find themselves in front of difficulties."
2. *Je me permets de faire à la plupart d'entre vous des compliments.*
"I permit myself to make compliments to most of you."
3. *La plupart du temps c'est bien.*
"Most of the time it's nice."
4. *La plupart de la matinée je n'ai rien fait.*
"Most of the morning, I didn't do anything."
5. *La plupart de mes décisions sont bien réfléchies.*
"Most of my decisions are well thought out."

The Adjective *Certain* ("Some," "Certain")

The adjective *certain*, meaning "some" or "certain," refers to a partial undetermined quantity, as in the dialogue phrase *Certains le sont* ("some are"), referring to the French people being bawdy.

We use the pronoun *certain* ("certain") to replace nouns while referring to an undetermined partial quantity.

Note: We can also use *certain* ("certain") as a pronoun but only at its plural form.

For Example:

1. *Certains admirent les fleurs.*
"Some admire flowers."
2. *Certaines de tes amies sont très serviables.*
"Some of your friends are very helpful."

Be sure to add the preposition *de* between the pronoun *certain(e)s* and a determiner and a noun, as in *certains de tes frères* ("certain of your brothers") or *certaines de tes opinions* ("certain of your opinions").

We also use *certain* as an adjective.

For Example:

1. *Certaines personnes sont insupportables.*
"Certain people are unbearable."
2. *Un certain nombre de scientifique affirment que le climat change.*
"A certain number of scientists confirm that the climate is changing."
3. *Elle est d'un certain age.*
"She is of a certain age."

We can also use *certain* as a pronoun.

For Example:

1. *Certains vont partir tard.*
"Some will leave late."
2. *Certaines d'entre ells iront au cinéma.*
"Some of them will go to the movies."

The Indefinite Pronoun *D'autres* ("Others")

The indefinite pronoun *d'autres*, meaning "others," marks the difference. It is illustrated in the context of the second dialogue line, *Non ! Certains le sont. D'autres sont plus fins.* ("No! Some are. Others are more subtle."), in which the pedestrian expresses that some French are bawdy but others are different by being subtle rather than bawdy.

For Example:

1. *Cette veste est petite en avez-vous d'autres ?*
"This vest is too small; do you have others?"
2. *Ces gens sont sympathiques alors que d'autres peuvent être moins chaleureux.* "These people are nice; however, others can be less welcoming."

Language Expansion



Other indefinite pronouns and adjectives are:

A. *Aucun, aucune* ("not one," "not any")

We use it to express the quantity zero.

For Example:

1. *Je n'ai aucun commentaires.*

"I don't have any commentary."

B. *Quelque* ("some" at the singular form)

We use it on its own, and it has a meaning of "one" or "an undetermined quantity."

For Example:

1. *J'ai quelque envie pour remodeler la maison.*

"I have some envy to remodel the house."

C. *Quelques* ("some" at the plural form)

We employ it with an article or another adjective with a restrictive definition meaning "a small number of" or "a certain number of."

For Example:

1. *J'ai quelques clients qui attendent l'ouverture.*

"I have some customers waiting for the opening."

Cultural Insight

The French Styles of Humor: Satirical, Bawdy, and Situational

French humor can be qualified as *grivois* or *gaulois*. The term *gaulois* ("gaulish") is taken from its ancestors called the Gauls, who are depicted as being bawdy and rough people. *Grivois* describes the quality of being free and not intimidated to use humor as a critic without being obscene. Guy Bedos is an example of this style. Judge for yourself some of his quotes, which go right to the point and are rough and tough concerning politics and ethnicity, respectively.

For Example:

1. *C'est dans le regard des gens de droite qu'on s'aperçoit qu'on est de gauche.*
"It is in the glance of a man from the right party that one realizes he is for the left party."
2. *Qu'il soit noir, juif ou arabe, un type bien est un type bien et un enfoiré sera toujours un enfoiré.*
"No matter whether one is black, a Jew, or an Arab, a good guy is good guy and an asshole will always be a asshole."

Today's French humor has the tendency to play more with words than portray opinions and ideas. The humor of a situation takes a more important place than political humor pointing out issues of French society or its customs. Except for the *les guignols de l'info* ("the puppets of the news") portraying the news with a sarcastic point of view, there are hundreds more comedians using situational humor to look into the everyday tasks the French do. Muriel Robin, with her famous sketch about recording your first message on a new answering machine, illustrates well the humor of situation.



Intermediate Lesson S1

You Aren't Wearing that to the French Costume Party, Are You?

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Formal French

- Boris Tu as a vu ma fausse barbe quelque part ?
 Coralie Ta fausse barbe ?
 Boris Oui, je ne la trouve nulle part. Je vais la porter à une soirée costumée.
 Coralie Et quel est ton costume ?
 Boris Henri de Toulouse–Lautrec*. Le thème de la soirée, c’est “Le Moulin Rouge”**
 Coralie Super! Tu as des bretelles ? Une canne ?
 Boris Non je n’ai aucun accessoires ! Ni bretelles, ni canne ! ...Ah! Ça y est !
 J’ai trouvé ma fausse barbe. Regarde.
 (il met sa fausse barbe)
 Coralie Génial ! Je viens avec toi ! J’ai envie de danser le French Can-can.
 (chante la mélodie du French Can-can)
 Boris Tu as des porte-jarretelles ??
 Coralie Évidemment! Mais...oh, non, je n’ai plus de rouge à lèvres !

English

- Boris Did you see my fake beard anywhere?
 Coralie Your fake beard?
 Boris Yes, and I can't find it anywhere. I'm going to wear it at a costume party.
 Coralie And what's your costume?
 Boris Henri de Toulouse–Lautrec. The theme of the party is "The Moulin Rouge."
 Coralie Great! Do you have suspenders? A cane?
 Boris No, I don't have any accessories! Neither suspenders nor a cane!...Oh!
 This is it! I found my fake beard. Look.
 (He puts on his fake beard.)
 Coralie Awesome! I'm coming with you! I feel like dancing the French cancan.
 (He sings the French cancan melody.)
 Boris Do you have garter belts?
 Coralie Of course! But...oh, no, I ran out of lipstick!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
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faux, fausse	fake	adjective	
nulle part	nowhere, not...anywhere	adverb	
une soirée costumée	a costume party	nominal group	feminine
un costume	a costume, a suit	noun	masculine
des bretelles	suspenders	noun	feminine/plural
un accessoire	a prop, an accessory	noun	masculine
des porte-jarretelles	garter belt	noun	masculine/plural
évidemment	obviously, of course	adverb	
le rouge à lèvres	lipstick	noun	masculine
Ça y est!	Here we go! That's it!	expression	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Ceci est un faux bijou!

"This is a fake jewel!"

Cet été, je ne pars nulle part, c'est triste.

"This summer, I'm not going anywhere; it's sad."

Il y avait quatre Darth Vader à la soirée costumée.

"There were four Darth Vaders at the costume party."

Ce pauvre enfant n'a pas de costume pour Halloween.

"This poor child has no costume for Halloween."

Son pantalon est tombé: il avait oublié ses bretelles.

"His pants fell down; he had forgotten his suspenders."

Les chapeaux sont mes accessoires de mode préférés.

"Hats are my favorite clothing accessories."

Elle a emprunté les porte-jarretelles et les talons hauts de sa mère pour impressionner ses amies.

"She borrowed her mother's garter belt and high heels to impress her friends."

Nadal a évidemment gagné le match.

"Nadal obviously won the game."

Elle se demande pourquoi il a du rouge à lèvres sur la joue.

"She wonders why he has lipstick on his cheek."

Ça y est. J'ai fini mon livre.

"Here we go! I finished my book!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Negative Forms in Specific Contexts.

Oui, et je ne la trouve nulle part.

"Yes, and I can't find it anywhere."

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who was born in 1864 in southern France, was the last in the line of an

aristocratic family that dated back a thousand years. As a child, Henri was weak and often sick. By the time he was ten years old, he had begun to draw and paint.

At age twelve, Toulouse-Lautrec broke his left leg, and at fourteen, he broke his right leg. The bones did not heal properly and his legs ceased to grow, giving his body a trunk of normal size but with abnormally short legs. As a result, he stood only four and a half feet (one and a half meters) in height.

Deprived of a normally proportioned body, Toulouse-Lautrec lived completely for his art and found refuge in the Montmartre, a section of Paris, at the end of the nineteenth century. This neighborhood was the center of cabaret entertainment and the bohemian life he depicted in his work. Dance halls, nightclubs, racetracks, and prostitutes—he memorialized all these things in his paintings.

In order to join in the Montmartre life, as well as to overcome the crowd's ridicule of his appearance, Toulouse-Lautrec began to drink heavily. By the 1890s, the drinking was affecting his health. He died in 1901 at thirty-five years of age at the family chateau of Malrome.

In 1922, his mother, the countess Adèle of Céleyran, gave the city of Albi (which is located one hour from Toulouse in southwestern France) the most important collection of Toulouse-Lautrec's work. Today his work is housed in the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec in the former bishop's palace, which was built in the thirteenth century.

In the dialogue, Coralie and Boris mention a costume party with the Moulin Rouge as its theme. Boris is getting ready and is getting his Toulouse-Lautrec costume together. To complete his Toulouse-Lautrec garment, he asks Coralie where his fake beard is that he cannot find anymore. He says *Oui, et je ne la trouve nulle part* ("Yes, and I can't find it anywhere.").

To express that something is nowhere to be found, use the negative form *ne/nulle part*, meaning "nowhere," as shown in the previous sentence from the dialogue.

Ne/Nulle Part: Expressing that You Don't Have Something or Don't Do Something Anymore

To describe something that you cannot find anywhere but that you used to have, or to tell someone you can't find something anywhere, use the negative form *ne/nulle part* as follows:

Simple verb form: Subject + *ne/n'*+ verb + *nulle part*.

Composed verb form: Subject + *ne/n'*+ auxiliary + verb + *nulle part*.

For Example:



1. *Il ne trouve nulle part ma montre.*
"He can't find my watch anywhere."
2. *Les gens n'ont courru nulle part, mais plutot droit au but.*
"People didn't walk just anywhere, but rather straight to the goal."
3. *Ça ne peut-être nulle part. Je l'ai vu il y a cinq minutes.*
"It can't be anywhere. I saw it five minutes ago."
4. *Mais ma place n'est nulle part; je suis de trop.*
"My place isn't anywhere; I'm one of too many."

Explaining that You Don't Have Any Countable Things

Later in the dialogue, Boris states that he doesn't have any accessories except the beard for his costume with *Non je n'ai aucun accessoires !* ("No, I don't have any accessories!") with the word *aucun* meaning "none" or "not one."

To say you don't any of some countable thing, use *aucun*, which is the masculine indefinite adjective in conjunction with a masculine noun, or *aucune*, which is the feminine equivalent for feminine nouns, as in:

Simple verb form: Subject + *ne/n'* + verb + *aucun/aucune* + noun.

Composed verb form: Subject + *ne/n'* + auxiliary + verb + *aucun/aucune* + noun.

For Example:

1. *Il n'a aucun sens de la réalité.*
"He doesn't have any sense of reality."
2. *Je n'ai aucune pièce de ce type.*
"I don't have any part of this type."
3. *Les gens n'ont pris aucunes de ces brochures.*
"People didn't take any of these brochures."
4. *Elle ne m'a laissé aucun conseil.*
"She didn't leave any advice."

Language Tip

When using the indefinite adjective, make sure it agrees in gender and number with the noun it

qualifies.

For Example:

1. *Je n'ai aucune chance.*
"I don't have a chance."
2. *Nous n'avons aucunes robes rouges.*
"We don't have any red dresses."

The Negative Coordination Conjunction Ni

After explaining that he doesn't have any accessories, Boris adds that he doesn't have suspenders or a cane in the dialogue with the phrase *Ni bretelles, ni canne !* ("Neither suspenders nor a cane!"), which implies the complete phrase *e n'ai ni bretelles ni canne* ("I don't have either suspenders a cane."), by using *ne/ni/ni* ("neither"/"nor").

To say that you don't do or don't have something, use the negative coordination conjunction *ni* as follows:

Subject + *ne/n'* + verb + *ni* + noun + *ni* + noun.

For Example:

1. *Je ne mange ni oeufs ni viande.*
"I don't eat either eggs or meat."
2. *Les français n'approuvent ni l'insécurité ni le capitalisme.*
"French people don't approve either insecurity or capitalism."
3. *Je n'ai ni maillot ni serviette.*
"I don't have either a swimming suit or a towel."

Ne/Plus: Expressing that You Don't Have or Don't Do Something Anymore

To say you don't do or don't have something anymore, you can also use the negative form *ne...plus* as shown in the dialogue: *Mais...oh, non, je n'ai plus de rouge à lèvres !* ("But...oh, no, I ran out of lipstick!")

To describe something you are not doing but used to do or to say that you don't have something anymore, use the negative form:

Simple verb form: Subject + *ne/n'* + verb + *pas*.

Composed verb form: Subject + *ne/n'* + auxiliary + *pas* + verb.

For Example:

1. *Il n'a plus parlé à Marie après leur dispute.*
"He didn't speak to Mary anymore after their fight."
2. *Les gens ne chantent plus dans les rues.*
"People don't sing anymore in the streets."

Language Expansion: Other Particular Negation Forms

There are other negative forms to express specific ideas. They are:

ne/jamais ("never")

For Example:

1. *Je ne prends jamais de sucre dans mon café.*
"I never take sugar in my coffee."
2. *Je n'ai jamais parlé de politique avec Jean.*
"I never talk politics with Jean."

ne/rien ("nothing," "anything")

For Example:

1. *Il ne fait rien.*
"He doesn't do anything."
2. *Je n'ai rien de manière consistante.*
"He never does anything consistently."

ne/pas encore ("not yet")

For Example:

1. *Je n'ai pas encore décidé.*
"I didn't decide yet.
2. *Elle ne parle pas encore.*
"She doesn't speak yet."

ne/personne ("nobody")

For Example:

1. *Je ne rencontre personne.*
"I don't meet anyone."
2. *Je n'ai vu personne.*
"I didn't see anyone."

Language Focus: Negation in Formal and Informal Speech

Both formal and informal French often alter grammatical structure in standard French.

In the everyday French language, you may hear the common negation with *ne/pas* omitting the element *ne*. This process is very common and you will encounter it when speaking to native French people. Instead of *Je n'ai jamais dit ça* ("I never said that."), you will hear *J'ai jamais dit ça* ("I never said that.").

However, if you are in an extremely formal situation and people are using formal French, you may hear the negation *ne* without adding the *pas* even though we rarely use this.

If done, you'll hear, for example, *Si je ne me trompe, nous sommes arrivés* ("If I don't make a mistake, we just arrived.") instead of *Si je ne me trompe pas, nous sommes arrivés* ("If I don't make a mistake, we just arrived.").

Cultural Insight

Learning about Toulouse-Lautrec's Background and Cabaret at *Le Moulin Rouge*

Le Moulin Rouge ("The Red Windmill") was built in 1889 close to Montmartre, the bohemian lifestyle-oriented neighborhood of Paris, in the red-light district of Pigalle on Boulevard de Clichy in the eighteenth *arrondissement* ("district"). It was the birthplace of the seductive French dance we call the cancan, which was performed by the courtesans who were expected to provide charming companionship for extended periods. *La Goulue*, the stage name of Louise Weber, was one of the first dancers and the star dancer at the opening of the Moulin Rouge who performed the early form of the French cancan, which at the time was called *le chalut*. Later on, this new dance style that sexually aroused the public eventually spread this form of cabaret entertainment all over Europe.

The term *Joie de Vivre* ("carefree life") can sum up this period between two wars: a period of transition between two centuries during which the social barriers collapsed and the industrial revolution gave hope of a better life for all. The middle class mixed with the popular culture enhanced in a contented disorder full of joy and vitality. It is in that atmosphere that Toulouse-Lautrec lived and painted scenes from the Moulin Rouge.

Some famous artists performed in this famous venue a few decades later, including Mistinguett, Josephine Baker, and more recently Ella Fitzgerald, Liza Minnelli, La Toya Jackson, Elton John, Frank Sinatra, Yvette Guilbert, Jane Avril, and Édith Piaf.

Today, the Moulin Rouge is a tourist attraction, offering musical dance entertainment for adults along with a dinner.



Intermediate Lesson S1

I Am a Better French Karaoke Singer than You!

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Formal French

Coralie	Tu es déguisé en qui ?
Jérémie	En Aristide Bruant*.
Coralie	Je ne connais pas...
Jérémie	Il est moins connu que Toulouse –Lautrec.
Coralie	C'est peut-être vrai, mais ton costume est plus élaboré que le costume de Boris.
Jérémie	Tu vas à la soirée karaoké après ?
Coralie	Alors là, non merci ! Je chante comme une casserole !
Jérémie	Mais non ! Tu es aussi bonne que moi.
Coralie	Justement, tu chantes très mal, Jérémie.
Jérémie	Ça fait plaisir. Je me débrouille mieux que Boris, non ?
Coralie	C'est Julie qui chante le plus joliment.
Jérémie	Mais c'est moi qui chante le plus fort !
Coralie	Allez, je viens. On fera un duo "Looser et Looseuse".

*French cabaret singer, club owner.

English

Coralie	Who are you dressed up as?
Jérémie	As Aristide Bruant.
Coralie	I don't know him...
Jérémie	He is less famous than Toulouse-Lautrec.
Coralie	This might be true, but your costume is more elaborate than Boris's.
Jérémie	Are you going to the karaoke party afterward?
Coralie	No thanks! I sing poorly!
Jérémie	Of course not! You are as good as I am.
Coralie	Precisely, you sing very poorly, Jérémie.
Jérémie	That's nice. I manage it better than Boris, don't I?
Coralie	Julie is the one who sings the most beautifully.
Jérémie	But I'm the one who sings the loudest!
Coralie	Okay, I'm coming. We'll have a "Loser and Loser" duet.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
être déguisé	to be dressed up (with a costume)	verbal group	
connu(e)	famous	adjective	
une casserole	a pan	noun	feminine
justement	precisely	adverb	
ça fait plaisir	that's nice	phrase	
se débrouiller	to manage	verb	
élaboré(e)	elaborate	adjective	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Il est déguisé en gorille et c'est ridicule.

"He is dressed up as a gorilla and it looks ridiculous."

Il participe à une émission de télé-réalité pour devenir connu.

"He participates in a reality show to become famous."

Elle a frappé le cambrioleur avec une casserole. C'est justement pour ça que je ne voulais pas te voir.

"She hit the burglar with a pan."

"It's precisely why I didn't want to see you."

Un peu de reconnaissance, ça fait plaisir.

"A little recognition is nice."

Le stagiaire se débrouille sans problème.

"The intern manages without a problem."

James Bond a toujours des plans élaborés.

"James Bond always has elaborate plans."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Comparison.

Il est moins connu que Toulouse-Lautrec.

"He is less famous than Toulouse-Lautrec."

Aristide Bruant, who was born in the mid-1800s, was a writer, song composer, and owner of the cabaret *le mirliton* in Montmartre, the bohemian neighborhood of Paris in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

His presence on the scene, his low and powerful voice, as well as his popular songs made him a monumental artist in French music. He is considered one of the most important slang poets since the end of the nineteenth century. He was one of the initiators of the French movement of the realistic song, which lasted until the mid-twentieth century, with *Edit Piaf* being one of the last interpretations.

In the dialogue, Jérémie and Coralie are talking about what Jérémie will wear for the Moulin Rouge party. Jérémie states he will dress up as Aristide Bruant, who during his career changed his image from a ceremonious suit to a game warden suit with a black velvet pea jacket, black pants, and boots along with a scarlet red shirt, scarf, and a large-brimmed, black felt hat. Jérémie also adds that Aristide Bruant is less well-known than Toulouse Lautrec with *Il est moins connu que Toulouse-Lautrec* ("He is less famous than Toulouse-Lautrec."), making a comparison using the adjective *connu* and the comparative word *moins*, meaning "less."

Comparing Qualities with an Adjective

When comparing qualities, we can use an adjective, as the dialogue phrases demonstrate.

For Example:

1. *...ton costume est plus élaboré que le costume de Boris.*
"...your costume is more elaborate than Boris's."
2. *Tu es aussi bonne que moi.*
"You are as good as I am."

The first example uses the adjective *élaboré* ("elaborate") to describe the quality of Jérémie's costume and *bonne* to describe Coralie's ability to sing with the word of intensity *plus*, meaning "more," and *aussi*, meaning "as."

When making a comparison, there are three degrees of comparison:

- the degree of superiority characterized with the word *plus* ("more"),
- the degree of equality characterized with the word *aussi* ("as"), and
- the degree of inferiority characterized with the word *moins* ("less") arranged as follows:

moins/aussi/plus + adjective + que/qu'

For Example:

1. *Jérémie est plus inventif que Boris.*
"Jeremy is more inventive than Boris."
2. *Le costume de Jérémie est plus beau que celui de Boris.*
"Jeremy's costume is more beautiful than Boris's one."
3. *L'idée de Boris est moins originale que celle de Jérémie.*
"Boris's idea is less original than Jeremy's."
4. *Coralie est plus attentive aux détails que Boris.*
"Coralie is more attentive to details than Boris."
5. *La fête semble être aussi élaborée que la dernière fois.*
"The party seems to be as elaborate as the last time."

Language Focus: *Bon vs. Bien* and *Meilleur vs. Mieux*

When comparing things using the adjectives *bon* ("good") and *bien* ("well"), be aware that their degree of superiority is not *plus bon* or *plus bien*, but *meilleur* for the adjective *bon* and *mieux* for the adjective *bien*.

For Example:

1. *Ce costume est mieux fait que l'autre.*
"This costume is better made than the other."
2. *C'est un meilleur costume que celui de Boris.*
"It is a better costume than Boris's one."

The usage of *bon* and *bien* can be confusing. *Bien* ("well") is an adverb qualifying verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. For example, you can say *Il fait bien le costume* ("The costume is doing well."). On the other hand, *bon* ("good") is an adjective characterizing a noun, as in *Cette bonne idée est la conception d'un bon costume* ("This good idea is the conception of a good costume.").

Comparing How to Do Things Using Adverbs

When comparing how one person does things versus another, we make the comparison with an adverb. For example, in the dialogue, Jérémie says *Je me débrouille mieux que Boris, non ?* ("I manage it better than Boris, don't I?"), comparing how much better he manages to sing than Boris. The word *mieux* ("better"), referring to the degree of superiority, modifies the verb *se débrouiller*, which means

"to manage" portraying an action.

To compare actions, the process is identical to comparing qualities except that we use an adverb as we show below.

moins/aussi/plus + adverb + *que*

For Example:

1. *Boris se déguise moins bien.*
"Boris is dressing up less well."
2. *Jérémy se prépare aussi longtemps à l'avance que Boris.*
"Jeremy gets prepared much more in advance than Boris."
3. *Jérémy se prépare plus soigneusement que Boris.*
"Jeremy gets prepared more meticulously than Boris."
4. *Coralie discute plus longtemps avec Jérémy.*
"Coralie talks longer with Jeremie."
5. *Boris et Jérémy se réjouissent autant pour aller à la fête.*
"Boris and Jeremy are excited to go to the party."

6 Comparing the Best and the Worst

Another situation may occur when making comparisons, which is saying who is best or worst at doing something or who has the best or worst qualities. In the dialogue, Coralie states "Julie sings in the most beautiful way" with *C'est Julie qui chante le plus joliment* with the use of *le plus*, meaning "the most," and the adverb *joliment*, meaning "in a beautiful way." In French, we call this kind of comparison in French *le superlatif* ("the superlative").

To compare and state that something is the best or worst, use the comparing words *le/la plus* ("the most") or *le/la moins* ("the least") followed by either an adverb or adjective:

le/la plus + adjective/adverb

le/la moins + adjective/adverb

For Example:

1. *Boris chante le plus gracieusement.*
"Boris sings the most gracefully."
2. *Coralie parle le plus calmement.*
"Coralie speaks the most calmly."
3. *Le Moulin Rouge est le theme qui est le plus populaire.*
"The Moulin Rouge is the theme that is the most popular."
4. *Jéréemie s'habille le moins rapidement.*
"Jeremy dresses up less rapidly."
5. *Boris est le moins malheureux!*
"Boris is the least sad."

Cultural Insight

The Realistic Song Movement in France

La Chanson realiste or "realistic song" is a musical movement in France that was part of the realistic movement in all other artistic disciplines at the time. It took place from 1880 to 1950 and became popular between World War I and World War II.

Most of the interpreters were women. The realistic song movement is mainly characterized by its lyrics, which portray dramatic themes inspired by the hardship and experience of the poor lower class in Paris and other big cities of France in the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the next.

This dramatization of everyday life can appear gross and shocking through its frank description and slang. However, at the time, its usage expressed the pain of hardship and exalted the tension lived by the public, who enjoyed this music and sang along with passion.

La chanson réaliste est un genre musical apparu en France au début du XXe siècle, et popularisé pendant l'entre-deux guerres par des chanteuses comme Fréhel, Damia ou Edith Piaf. Ses interprètes sont principalement des femmes. Il est caractérisé par des chansons à texte traitant de sujets dramatiques et emprunts d'une noirceur certaine, souvent inspirés par le quotidien des quartiers populaires de Paris.



Intermediate Lesson S1

If You Stay Out Too Late, You'll Pay the Price in France!

18

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Formal French

- Mère Alors, moi j'attends que tu rentres toute la nuit, je m'inquiète, et tu t'attends à ce que je sois sympa ? La prochaine fois, Antoine, je n'ouvre pas, tu dors à la belle étoile. Tu as raté l'école ce matin, qu'est-ce que je vais dire à tes profs ? Tu veux que je mente, que je dise que tu es malade ? Moi je préfère que tu sois puni comme tu le mérites. Je tolère que tu sortes, mais pas que tu fasses des nuits blanches. J'appelle Mr. Magnard.
- Antoine Oh non, pas ce mauvais coucheur ! Il va me renvoyer du lycée.
- Mère Ça, monsieur l'oiseau de nuit, il fallait y penser avant.

English

- Mother So, I wait for you to come home all night, and you expect me to be nice? Next time, Antoine, I don't open the door, and you sleep outside. You missed school this morning; what am I going to tell your teachers? You want me to lie, to say you were sick? I'd rather have you punished as you deserve. I tolerate that you go out, but not that you spend all night out. I'm calling Mr. Magnard.
- Antoine Oh no, not the grumpy one! He will expel me from school.
- Mother You should have thought about it before, Mr. Night Bird.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
passer une nuit à la belle étoile	to sleep outside	phrase	
passer une nuit blanche	to spend the night out, to have a sleepless night	phrase	
un mauvais coucheur	a grumpy person	nominal group	masculine
un oiseau de nuit	a night bird (someone who stays up at night)	nominal group	masculine
s'attendre à	to expect	verb	
mentir	to lie	verb	
mériter	to deserve	verb	
tolérer	to tolerate	verb	

il fallait	one should have	impersonal verb	
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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Il faisait beau, alors on a passé la nuit à la belle étoile.</i>	"The weather was nice; therefore, we slept outside."
<i>Quand il fait une insomnie, il passe une nuit blanche.</i>	"When he has insomnia, he has a sleepless night."
<i>Elle est allée danser et a passé une nuit blanche.</i>	"She went dancing and spent the night out."
<i>Jean-Pierre est un mauvais coucheur, il est toujours de mauvaise humeur.</i>	"Jean-Pierre is a grumpy person; he is always in a bad mood."
<i>Je peux appeler mon ami toute la nuit, c'est un véritable oiseau de nuit.</i>	"I can call my friend anytime at night; he's a real night bird."
<i>Le gouvernement s'attend à des grèves importantes.</i>	"The government is expecting big strikes."
<i>Le vendeur a menti en disant que cette voiture pouvait voler.</i>	"The sales person lied by saying that this car could fly."
<i>Je ne mérite pas tous ces compliments.</i>	"I don't deserve all these compliments."
<i>Mes voisins en tolèrent pas les fêtes tardives.</i>	"My neighbors don't tolerate late-night parties."
<i>Il fallait prendre un parapluie, il fait un temps affreux.</i>	"We should have brought an umbrella; the weather is awful."



Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Wishes, Expectations, and Preferences with Verbs Requiring the Subjunctive.

Moi je préfère que tu sois puni comme tu le mérites.

"I prefer that you get punished as you deserve it."

Parents in the French school system didn't always have a voice. This is due to particular historical settings that for a long time didn't allow parents to be involved in the institution of education. It was only in the sixties that parents obtained an official recognition through associations of parents in junior high and high schools. Today, the school system recognizes parents as active participants in their children's education and now considers them partners.

In the dialogue, a mother reproaches her son for having spent all night long out. She tells him she will let the school know about the reason for his absence. Anthony replies by expressing his fear of being

expelled from school. The speakers describe having all these emotions by using verbs to express their feelings, as with *je préfère que*, meaning "I'd prefer that."

Usage of the Subjunctive Mood

When using verbs portraying emotions followed by the word *que* meaning "that," we use the subjunctive.

For Example:

1. *Je préfère que tu sois puni.*
"I'd prefer that you get punished."

Expressing Wishes and Emotions (or Expressing Subjectivity)

The subjunctive is a mood rather than a tense. We use it to express subjectivity rather than objectivity as we do with the indicative mood. At the same time, the subjunctive doesn't necessarily portray a time frame as tenses do (for example, the present time with the indicative present), but it does show how the speaker may feel or interpret events, such as with preferences.

For Example:

1. *Je préfère que tu sois puni.*
"I'd prefer that you get punished."

We use the subjunctive to express subjectivity, and it is always accompanied by the word *que*, meaning "that."



Here are some ways we can express subjectivity using the subjunctive mood:

1. Uncertainty: expressions or verbs of doubt (e.g., *il semble*, meaning "it seems") and denial (e.g., *nier*, meaning "negate")
2. Personal will: expressions or verbs of commands, necessity (e.g., *il faut que*, meaning "it is needed to"), permission (e.g., *permettre*, meaning "to permit"), needing (*vouloir*, meaning "to want"), wishing (*désirer*, meaning "to desire")
3. Personal interpretation: expressions or verbs of feelings and opinions

To express uncertainty, personal will, and interpretation, use and conjugate verbs in the subjunctive as follows:

Subject + verb* + *que* + subject + verb at the subjunctive.**

* The verb either expresses emotions, interpretation, or will.

** The second subject must be different person than the first.

Here is a list of verbs and expressions involving wishes or emotions that require the subjunctive tense.

Wishes: *aimer, souhaiter, désirer, ça me plaît, vouloir (au conditionel je voudrais)*

Emotions: *avoir peur, avoir honte, avoir envie, supporter, tolérer, craindre, redouter, s'étonner, regretter, être content/ravi/faché/en colère, détester, il est dommage/surprenant/triste*

For Example:

1. *Je voudrais que la prochaine fois tu viennes plus tôt.*
"I'd like that next time you come earlier."
2. *Ca me plairait que tu sois plus prudent.*
"It would please me if you'd be more careful."
3. *J'aimerais que tu n'ailles pas dehors toute la nuit.*
"I'd like you to not go out all night."

Expressing Will

In the dialogue, the mom expresses will at different degrees from strong to moderate will, then to barely accepting something, portraying a very low degree of will. She expresses the strongest determination with the verb *vouloir* in *Tu veux que je mente?* meaning "Do you want me to lie?"

Then appears the moderate resolution with the verb *préférer* ("to prefer") in the phrase *Moi je préfère que tu sois puni comme tu le mérites* ("I prefer that you get punished as you deserve it.").

Finally, she expresses the weakest will with *tolérer*, meaning "to tolerate," in the statement *Je tolère que tu sortes, mais pas que tu fasses des nuits blanches* ("I tolerate that you go out, but not spending all night out.").

Here is a list of verbs and expressions involving a person's will that require the subjunctive tense:

French	"English"
<i>vouloir</i>	"to want"
<i>souhaiter</i>	"to desire"
<i>désirer</i>	"to desire"
<i>aimer mieux</i>	"to like better"
<i>préférer</i>	"to prefer"
<i>exiger</i>	"to require"
<i>interdire</i>	"to forbid"
<i>refuser</i>	"to refuse"

For Example:

1. *Il veut que je vienne ce soir.*
"He wants me to come tonight."
2. *Tu exiges qu'elle te donne un réponse immédiatement.*
"You require that she gives you a response immediately."
3. *J'aimerais mieux que tu partes.*
"I'd like it better if you leave."

Expressing Waiting and Expectations

Another use of the subjunctive is to express waiting, as it is in the phrase *Alors, moi j'attends que tu rentres toute la nuit* ("So I waited for you to come back all night.") and expectation with *tu t'attends à ce que je sois sympa ?* ("Do you expect that I'll be nice?")

Here are some verbs and expressions expressing waiting or expectations that require the subjunctive tense: *attendre* ("to wait") and *s'attendre* ("to expect").

For Example:

1. *Il attend que sa mère se décide.*
"He waits for his mother to make a decision."
2. *Il s'attend à ce que sa mère se fâche.*
"He expects that his mother will be angry."
3. *Je m'attends à ce que ça se finisse vite.*
"I'm expecting that it will end fast."

Conjugation Focus: The Subjunctive Mood

To form a regular verb at the subjunctive present, form the stem from the first person plural of the indicative present by replacing the indicative present endings with subjunctive present endings.

Subjunctive present endings:

<i>Person</i>	<i>Ending</i>
<i>Je</i>	<i>-e</i>
<i>Tu</i>	<i>-es</i>
<i>Il, elle, on</i>	<i>-e</i>
<i>Nous</i>	<i>-ions</i>
<i>Vous</i>	<i>-iez</i>
<i>Ils, elles</i>	<i>-ent</i>

For example, to say "He'd like that his mother thinks of her decision," conjugate the verb *réfléchir* ("to think") at the subjunctive present. First, find the verb form at the first person plural at the indicative present, which is *nous réfléchissons* ("we think").

Eliminate the indicative present ending and add the subjunctive ending. You'll have *réfléchisse*, and you'll end up with the complete phrase *Il aimerait que sa mère réfléchisse à sa décision* ("He'd like that his mother thinks of her decision.").

Language Focus: Choosing from the Present or the Past Subjunctive

To conjugate a verb at the subjunctive, you can choose either the subjunctive present or past. Choose the past subjunctive when the action represented by the second verb (which we will conjugate at the subjunctive mood) happens before the action of the first verb.

For Example:

1. *Je crains qu'il ne sois pas venu hier.*
"I fear that he didn't come yesterday."

Use the past subjunctive also when the first verb is conjugated at a past tense.

For Example:

1. *J'étais heureuse qu'elle m'ait annoncé son succès.*
"I was happy she announced her success to me."



Intermediate Lesson S1

You Can't Possibly Be Bored in France

19

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Formal French

“Ne rentrez jamais chez vous à l'improviste - si votre femme n'est pas seule, vous l'ennuiez ; si elle est seule, vous vous ennuyez.”

English

"Never come home unexpectedly - if your wife isn't alone, you will disrupt her; if she's alone, you will be bored."

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
à l'improviste	unexpectedly	adverb	
retiré(e)	withdrawn	adjective	
la répugnance	revulsion	noun	feminine
les affaires humaines	human business	phrase	feminine/plural
l'ordre établi	establishment	nominal group	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Comme il est arrivé à l'improviste, elle l'a accueilli en sous-vêtements. "Since he arrived unexpectedly, she welcomed him in her underwear."

Retiré à la campagne, il ne communiquait qu'avec ses chats. "Withdrawn in the countryside, he would only communicate with his cats."

J'éprouve une grande répugnance pour les araignées. "I have a big revulsion toward spiders."

Ah, si j'étais un animal, au moins je serais à l'abri des affaires humaines! "Ah, if I was an animal, at least I would be protected against human business!"

Les révolutions tentent de renverser l'ordre établi. "Revolutions try to overcome the establishment."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Meaning of Verbs When Not in Their Reflexive Form.

Ne rentrez jamais chez vous à l'improviste : si votre femme n'est pas seule, vous l'ennuiez ; si elle est seule, vous vous ennuyez.

"Never come home unexpectedly. If your wife isn't alone, you will disrupt her; if she's alone, you will be bored."

Even though this quote is quite cynical, it may happen at times! When told to French people, it will ring a bell for the ones who can identify with it. This is partly because the lesson learned is portrayed in an indirect manner.

You may encounter yourself finding French people criticizing others and their actions a lot. It is a trait found often in French behavior as well as in their insinuations while they converse.

Don't be taken aback by it; rather, be aware of it and take it in a constructive manner. It may help you and others to improve your own actions, attitude, and work. However, if you find this too challenging, you can also criticize them back. Be witty and use their own strategy by doing it in an indirect manner as a suggestion rather than directly criticizing people and their actions. That way your French colleagues and friends will be tolerate and accept it!

Simple and Pronominal Verbs

In today's quote, Paul Léautaud portrays quite a sour thought by playing with the verbs *ennuyer* ("to bore" or "to annoy") and its pronominal counterpart, the verb *s'ennuyer* ("to be/get bored").

The author uses the first one in the quote element *vous l'ennuiez*, meaning "you will bore/annoy her." The second verb appears in the quote element *vous vous ennuyez*, and we translate it best as "you will be bored" or "you will get bored."

Note that in the phrase *vous vous ennuyez* ("you will be bored"), the second *vous* represents the

reflexive part of the verb *s'ennuyer* ("to be bored"), as the first *vous* is the second person plural pronoun that is the subject of the verb *s'ennuyer* ("to be bored").

As you can observe here, both infinitive verbs *ennuyer* ("to bore," "to annoy") and *s'ennuyer* ("to be bored") are almost identical, but they have a rather different meaning. We can only observe this difference in definitions in the infinitive verb *s'ennuyer* ("to be bored") by the presence of the reflexive part represented by the letter -s and the following apostrophe.

Therefore, it is important to dissociate the meanings of the verbs at their pronominal form and their simple form.

Examples of the Contrast Between Simple and Pronominal Verbs' Meanings

ennuyer ("to bore")

For Example:

1. *Mon frère ennue son voisin avec sa chaîne stéréo.*
"My brother annoys his neighbor with his stereo system."

s'ennuyer ("to be bored")

For Example:

1. *Je m'ennue à mourir à ne rien faire.*
"I'm bored to death by not doing anything."

demander ("to ask")

For Example:

Je demande à mon frère de baisser sa chaîne stéréo.

"I'm asking my brother to turn down his stereo system."

se demander ("to ask oneself")

For Example:

1. *Je me demande si on frère va m'écouter.*

"I'm asking myself whether my brother will listen to me."

tromper ("to be unfaithful," "to be mislead")

For Example:

1. *Elle a trompé son petit-ami.*

"She was unfaithful to her boyfriend."

se tromper ("to make a mistake")

For Example:

1. *Elle s'est trompé de route.*

"She makes a mistake by taking the wrong road."

arrêter ("to stop")

For Example:

1. *L'officier arrête le trafic.*

"The officer stops the traffic."

s'arrêter ("to stop (oneself)")



For Example:

1. *Je me suis arrêté chez le Boulanger.*
"I stopped at the baker."
2. *Je me suis arrêté de fumer.*
"I stopped (myself) from smoking."

regarder ("to look")**For Example:**

1. *Nous regardons le coucher de soleil sur la mer.*
"We are looking at the sunset on the sea."

se regarder ("to look at oneself")**For Example:**

1. *Je me regarde dans le reflet de l'eau.*
"I look at myself in the water reflection."

casser ("to break")**For Example:**

1. *Tu as cassé le vase ?*
"Did you break the vase?"

se casser ("to break itself"/oneself")

For Example:

1. *Le vase s'est cassé en tombant.*
"The vase broke itself falling."

lever* ("to lift")*For Example:**

1. *Je lève la table pour la déplacer.*
"I lift the table to move it."

se lever* ("to wake up")*For Example:**

1. *Nous nous sommes levés tôt.*
"We woke up early."

promener* ("to walk something/someone")*For Example:**

1. *Elle promène son chien le soir.*
"She walks her dog in the evening."

se promener* ("to go for a walk")*For Example:**

1. *Je me promène tous les jours.*
"I go for a walk every day."

s'appeler ("to be called")

For Example:

1. *Il s'appelle Paul Léautaud.*
"He is Paul Léautaud."

appeler ("to call")

For Example:

1. *Il appelle son ami par son surnom.*
"He calls him by his nickname."
2. *Elle appelle son fils de vive voix par la fenêtre.*
"She calls her son by voice through the window."

inquieter ("to worry")

For Example:

1. *La femme inquiète les medecins de son état physique.*
"The woman worries doctors with her physical state."

s'inquieter ("to worry oneself")

For Example:

1. *Les docteurs s'inquiètent de leurs patients.*
"Doctors are worried for their patients."

entendre ("to hear")

For Example:

1. *Ils entendent les oiseaux chanter.*
"They hear the birds singing."

s'entendre ("to get along," "to agree")

For Example:

1. *Tous les collègues s'entendent pour cette stratégie.*
"All the colleagues get along for this strategy."

Language Expansion

To shout an interdiction to someone who you don't want to do a certain action, use the imperative tense at the negative form as in the featured quote *Ne rentrez jamais chez vous à l'improviste* ("Never come home unexpectedly.").

To do so, use the negative particle *ne* or *n'* followed by the verb conjugated at the imperative form and the second negative particle, which can either be *pas*, *jamais*, *plus*, *rien*, or *personne*, to only mention some of them.

For Example:

1. *Ne mangez rien !*
"Don't eat anything!"
2. *Ne bouge plus !*
"Don't move anymore!"
3. *N'arrivons pas en retard !*
"Don't arrive late!"

Ne parlez à personne !
 "Don't talk to anyone!"
 - *Ne faites jamais ça !*
 "Never do that!"

Cultural Insight

About French Author Paul Léautaud and the Context of the Quote (French Translation)

Paul Léautaud est un écrivain et poète français né en 1872 et mort en 1956. Célèbre pour sa légendaire misanthropie et sa détestation des affaires humaines, c'était un solitaire blessé par une enfance pas comme les autres. De père non connu, né dans un milieu de comédiens il est abandonné par sa mère. Pour survivre, il a gagné sa vie de « petits boulots ». Plus tard il a vécu de la littérature et de travaux dans le domaine de la justice. Toujours solitaire, il vivait retiré à la campagne et ses dernières paroles avant de mourir "Maintenant, foutez-moi la paix." viennent confirmer sa répugnance pour ses confrères les êtres humains.

Très longtemps inconnu du public, son travail a commencé à être apprécié du public dans les années 50 1950 après avoir été embauché de 1908 à 1941 comme critique littéraire pour la revue Le Mercure de France.

Sa correspondance montre comme Léautaud était un homme au raisonnement implacable, et sans compromis. Son écriture est caustique, ses opinions tranchées, son point de vue incisif.

2 - Le contexte de la citation -

Pour mieux comprendre Léautaud et la composition de la citation présentée, allons voir dans quel esprit ses œuvres ont été créées. Dans Le Petit Ami (1903), Léautaud écrit à propos de ses jeunes années, dans le monde du music-hall.

Dans In Memoriam (1905), il évoque la « créature délicieuse » (sa mère). Il composera toujours des œuvres à caractère autobiographique.

Effrayé de manquer d'inspiration, il a besoin des contraintes du travail acharné et utilise la digression. Critique dramatique, il s'invente un être « vieux bourgeois célibataire et maniaque ». Croque-notes de la vie douce-amère, il publie dans Passe-Temps (1929) ses pensées et opinions sur tout ce qui l'entoure.

A défaut d'exprimer ses sentiments dans ses oeuvres, Léautaud préfère la distance, le trait vif, l'expression qui étonne, surprend et choque tout en pratiquant le sarcasme et l'ironie. Il critique vivement la morale, la religion, à la société, l'ordre établi aussi bien que le patriotisme et la famille. Pour Léautaud, rien n'est tabou, ni la sexualité, ni la mort d'où la citation présentée qui est écrite sur un ton cynique et se veut être choquante et dérangeante.

About French Author Paul Léautaud and the Context of the Quote

Paul Léautaud is a French poet and writer who was born in 1872 and died in 1956. Known for his legendary misanthropy and his hate for human affairs, he was a solitary man hurt by a childhood like no other. Born into the world of comedy due to his father's occupation as a comedian, his mother abandoned him five days after his birth.

As a young adult, to survive, he made a living doing small jobs. Later, he made a living from writing literature and jobs in the public domain. Always solitary, he lived withdrawn in the country and his last words, "Now, leave me in peace," only reconfirm his revulsion for his fellow members of the human race.

After being unknown to the public for a very long time, people started to appreciate his work in the 1950s after he was employed from 1908 until 1941 as a literature critic for the magazine *Le Mercure de France* ("The Mercury of France").

His correspondence shows how Léautaud was a man with impeccable reasoning and without any romantic commitment. His writing was caustic, his opinions defined, and his point of view incisive.

To better understand Léautaud and the composition of the featured quote, let's learn about the state of mind in which he wrote his work.

In *Le Petit Ami* ("The Small Friend") (1903), Léautaud wrote about his early years in the world of

music halls.

In *In Memoriam* (1905), he mentions the "delicious creature," referring to his mother. He always wrote in an autobiographical manner.

Afraid he might run out of inspiration, he felt he needed to be strained by a fierce work environment. In his work, he used digression. A dramatic critic, he invented himself as an "old single and maniac bourgeois." Sketching a picture of the sweet and sour life, he published in *Passe-Temps* (1929) his thoughts and opinions on everything that surrounded him.

Instead of expressing his feelings in his work, Léautaud preferred distance and vivacity. He used expressions that astonished and shocked his readers while using sarcasm and irony. His work strongly criticized morality, religion, society, and the established order, as well as patriotism and family. For Léautaud, no subject was taboo, including sexuality and death. He wrote the featured quote in a cynical tone, and it is supposed to portray shock and disturbance.



Intermediate Lesson S1

As Long As We're Having Fun in France, I Don't Care What We Do!

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Formal French

Sylvain On commence avec quel jeu ?
 Juliette Oh, n'importe lequel. Mais j'aime bien le craps.
 Sylvain D'accord pour un craps !
 (Ils arrivent à la table de craps)
 Juliette Combien tu veux jouer ? Dix euros sur le huit ?
 Sylvain Ça m'est égal du moment qu'on gagne !
 (Ils mettent leur jeton sur le tapis)
 Juliette J'adore les jeux de hasard ! Mais je perds tout le temps.
 Sylvain Voilà. On a perdu !
 Juliette Ça ne fait rien. Il y a toujours la roulette....

English

Sylvain We start with which game?
 Juliette Oh, whichever. But I like craps.
 Sylvain Okay for craps!
 (They arrive at the craps table.)
 Juliette How much do you want to play? Ten euros on the eight?
 Sylvain It doesn't matter to me as long as we win!
 (They lay down their chips on the mat.)
 Juliette I love games of chance! But I lose all the time.
 Sylvain Here you go. We lost!
 Juliette It doesn't matter. There is still roulette...

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
du moment que	as long as	phrase	
un jeton	a token	noun	masculine
un tapis (de jeu)	a mat	noun	masculine
un jeu de hasard	a game of chance	nominal group	masculine
tout le temps	all the time	phrase	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Du moment que tu es content, je suis content.</i>	"As long as you're happy, I'm happy."
<i>Nous jouons au poker avec des jetons, pas avec de l'argent.</i>	"We play poker with tokens, not with money."
<i>Il a mis tout son argent sur le tapis.</i>	"He put all his money on the mat."
<i>Les jeux de hasard comme la roulette ont longtemps été prohibés.</i>	"Games of chance like roulette were prohibited for a long time."
<i>Le matin, l'après-midi, le soir, la nuit: j'ai tout le temps faim!</i>	"In the morning, in the afternoon, at night: I am hungry all the time!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Indifference.

Oh, n'importe lequel.

"Oh, whichever."

Leisure, entertainment, and playing are a huge part of the French lifestyle. If employed, with only thirty-five working hours a week, time is available to do whatever. French society has become the society of leisure, with people going on vacation at least twice a year in summer and in winter. Visiting the beach in Southern France and skiing in the Alps or Pyrénées mountains are popular ways and places to spend a vacation.

However, working the official thirty-five hours a week also gives people the opportunity to spend time at their homes or nearby cities or regions for long weekends. It could be, for example, a stay in a seaside or thermal resort, where casino patrons are only allowed to bet on cards or hazard games.

Enghien-les-Bains is the only casino less than one hundred kilometers away (eleven to be exact) from Paris. It is located near a lake and is also the casino generating the most revenue. Another famous French casino is the one in Cannes in the renowned luxury hotel *le Carlton*, which is located on the famous promenade facing the sea.

In the dialogue, the two interlocutors are in a casino. Sylvain asks Juliette what she wants to play, and Juliette answers with indifference, but expresses her preference for the dice game craps. To express indifference, many expressions exist in French. The first one used in the dialogue is *n'importe lequel*, meaning "whichever," to designate something among others.

The word *importe* to express indifference best matches the English word "matter." We use it to designate an object, concept, or idea among others with an idea of indifference, and we use it as follows:

Using *importe* ("matter") to designate whichever object, animal, or person:

French	"English"	Use
<i>N'importe lequel</i>	"whichever"	to designate something masculine and singular
<i>N'importe laquelle</i>	"whichever"	to designate something feminine and singular
<i>N'importe lesquels</i>	"whichever"	to designate something masculine and plural
<i>N'importe lesquelles</i>	"whichever"	to designate something feminine and plural
<i>N'importe qui</i>	"whoever"	to designate whichever person

Note: The words *lequel*, *laquelle*, *lesquels*, and *lesquelles* all mean "which."

Using *importe* ("matter") to designate whichever concept or idea:

French	"English"	Use
<i>N'importe quoi</i>	"whatever"	to designate something undefined
<i>N'importe quand</i>	"whenever"	to designate whichever time
<i>N'importe où</i>	"wherever"	to designate whichever place

For Example:

1. *Quelle est ta mise 10, 50 ou 100 euros ? N'importe laquelle.*
"Which bet: ten, fifty, or one hundred euros? Whichever."
2. *J'ai des jetons, lesquelles tu aimerais ?*
"I have some tokens; which one would you like?"
3. *Quand cette table est libre ? N'importe quand.*
"When this table is free? Whenever."
4. *Tu perds tout ton argent. Tu veux un café noir, au lait ? Oui n'importe lequel.*
"You're losing all your money. Do you want a black coffee with milk? Yes, whichever."

Commenting about Indifference or Lack of Preference

Another way to express indifference is by making comments. In the dialogue, Sylvain says *Ça m'est égal du moment qu'on gagne !* ("It doesn't matter to me as long as we win!") With this very common phrase, *Ça m'est égal*, meaning "it doesn't matter," you will convey your indifference to your interlocutor. He or she will understand that you do not have any preference. However, if you say this phrase in a nonchalant tone, the listener can interpret it as insolence.

For Example:

1. *Ça m'est égal.*
"It doesn't matter."
2. *Ça ne fait rien.*
"It doesn't matter."
3. *Ce n'est pas grave.**
"It doesn't matter."
4. *Ça n'a pas d'importance.*
"It doesn't have any importance."
5. *Peu importe.*
"Whatever."

*You may also hear *C'est pas grave*, where we drop the *n'* of the negation in informal French.

Language Expansion: Commenting on Your Indifference from Least to Worst French Slang

Singular Expressions

1. *Je n'en ai rien à faire.*
"I don't care."
2. *Je m'en moque.*
"I don't care."
3. *Je m'en fiche.*
"I don't care."
4. *Je m'en fous.*
"I don't care."
5. *Je n'en ai rien à faire.*
"I don't care."

Plural Expressions

1. *On n'en a rien à faire.*
"We don't care."
2. *On s'en moque.*
"We don't care."
3. *On s'en fiche.*
"We don't care."
4. *On s'en fout.*
"We don't care."
5. *On n'en a rien foutre.*
"We don't care."



Intermediate Lesson S1

What Is There to Look Forward to in the French Countryside?

21

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Formal French

- Julien J'en ai marre de Paris ! Sortez-moi de là !
 Pauline Je vais dans l'Yonne chez ma grand-mère ce week-end. Je t'emmène ?
 Julien Oh oui ! Il paraît que c'est magnifique, l'Yonne.
 Pauline Oui, c'est très vert. Et en plus il va faire beau ce week-end !
 Julien La campagne, les vaches, les champs, le rêve ! On part en train ou en voiture ?
 Pauline Il vaut mieux prendre le train, il y a trop de monde sur les routes.
 Julien Il me tarde de lézarder.
 Pauline Oh, au fait. Il est possible que ma grand-mère soit là.
 Julien Elle fait des tartes, ta grand-mère ?
 Pauline Ahah... Allez, dis adieu à la pollution, aux pots d'échappement et aux klaxons.

English

- Julien I'm tired of Paris! Get me out of here!
 Pauline I'm going to the Yonne region at my grandma's this weekend. Can I take you?
 Julien Oh yes! I heard the Yonne region is gorgeous.
 Pauline Yes, it's very green. Besides, it will be sunny this weekend!
 Julien The country, the cows, the fields, the dream! Are we going by car or by train?
 Pauline It's best to take the train; there will be a lot of people on the road.
 Julien I can't wait to relax.
 Pauline Oh, by the way. My grandma might be there.
 Julien Does she make pies, your grandma?
 Pauline Haha...okay, say goodbye to pollution, exhaust pipes, and honks!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
en avoir marre	to be fed up with, to be tired of	phrase	
emmener	to bring, to take with	verb	
la campagne	the country	noun	feminine

un rêve	a dream	noun	masculine
il vaut mieux	it's best to, would better	phrase	
lézarder	to do nothing, to enjoy free time	verb	
la pollution	pollution	noun	feminine
un pot d'échappement	an exhaust pipe	noun	masculine
un klaxon	a honk	noun	masculine

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

J'en ai marre de travailler le week-end.

"I am fed up with working on weekends."

Certaines personnes emmènent leur télé au camping.

"Some people bring their TV to the campsite."

J'ai besoin d'aller à la campagne pour me reposer.

"I need to go to the country to rest."

Restaurer une ferme est un de mes vieux rêves.

"Restoring a farm is one of my old dreams."

Il vaut mieux que tu restes à la maison, il fait froid dehors.

"It's best if you stay home; it is cold out."

Les touristes lézardent sur la plage.

"Tourists are enjoying their free time on the beach."

La pollution me donne de l'asthme.

"Pollution gives me asthma."

Son pot d'échappement est tombé sur l'autoroute.

"His exhaust pipe fell on the highway."

Je n'ai pas dormi cette nuit à cause des klaxons.

"I didn't sleep last night because of the honks."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Impersonal Form in French.

Il paraît que c'est magnifique, l'Yonne.

"I heard the Yonne region is gorgeous."

Living in an urban area can be stressful. To relax, many French people have a secondary home in the country or visit family and friends to change environments and be in a more restful setting. Many of them escape the city on the weekend or during festive holidays: there are eleven holidays during the year, with three during the month of May. This month is a period when there are the most days off, including the French Labor Day on the first day of May, the celebration of the end of World War II on the eighth day of May, and the Assumption, which takes place on the Thursday thirty-nine days after Easter.

In the dialogue, Julien and Pauline talk about escaping the French capital for the weekend. Julien is fed up with the inconveniences of the urban lifestyle, and Pauline asks him to join her in visiting her grandmother in the department of Yonne, which is part of the Burgundy region located in southwest France. Julien seems never to have been there, as he says *Il paraît que c'est une belle région, l'Yonne*, meaning "I heard the Yonne region is gorgeous."

In this sentence, the phrase *Il paraît que* means "it seems." The pronoun *il* is neuter and doesn't refer to a person. We call this type of expression, including the neuter pronoun *il*, an impersonal expression using impersonal verbs. In this lesson, we will look at the most common impersonal verbs and expressions in French.

Impersonal Verbs and Expressions

The impersonal expressions and verbs always include the pronoun *il* ("it"). We use it in French when an action has no person or being to achieve it. The conjugated verb is always in the third person singular, no matter what tense the impersonal verb takes, as in *Il paraît que* ("it seems that") seen in the dialogue. The action of the verb *paraît* ("seem") is referring to a concept and therefore impersonal. In fact, the impersonal pronoun *il* doesn't have any real meaning.

Impersonal verbs and expressions have a wide range of usages. We are going to see the most common ones.

Impersonal Expressions Referring to a Concept

This usage category is the broader range of impersonal expressions. Among them, we will discuss the most common ones:

***Il paraît que* ("It seems that")**

Il paraît que ("It seems that") refers to unconfirmed information as we find in the dialogue. This expression requires the use of a verb conjugated at the indicative as follows:

***Il paraît que/qu'* + subject + verb.**

For Example:



1. *Il paraît que tu vas partir ?*
"It seems that you will leave?"
2. *Il paraît qu'une loi sur des permis de fumer dans les bars va être voté.*
"It seems that a law on the permits allowing smoking in bars will be voted upon."
3. *Il paraît qu'elle gagne beaucoup.*
"It seems that she earns a lot."

Il vaut mieux ("It is best to")

Il vaut mieux ("it is best to") refers to an opinion, as in the dialogue phrase *Il vaut mieux prendre le train* ("It's best to take the train."). The expression *Il vaut mieux* is followed by an infinitive verb, as in the dialogue phrase, or a noun, as in *Il vaut mieux un sourire qu'un salut* ("It is best a smile than a greeting.").

Il vaut mieux + infinitive verb

Il vaut mieux + déterminer + noun (referring to an explicit* or implied comparison**).

For Example:

1. *Il vaut mieux se taire que mentir.*
"It is best to keep silent than lie."
2. *Il vaut mieux respecter les autres pour être respecté.*
"It is best to respect others to be respected."
3. **Il vaut mieux de l'argent de côté que des dépenses inutiles.*
"It is best to have money saved than do useless spending."
4. ***Il vaut mieux une bonne santé.*
"It is best to have good health."

Il me tarde de ("I can't wait to")

Il me tarde de ("I can't wait to") referring to the impatience of doing something followed by an infinitive verb, as illustrated in the dialogue with *Il me tarde de lézarder* ("I can't wait to relax.").



Il me tarde de/d + infinitive verb**For Example:**

1. *Il me tarde de commencer mon voyage.*
"I can't wait to start my trip."
2. *Il me tarde d'aller rencontrer ton ami.*
"I can't wait to meet your friend."
3. *Il me tarde de revoir ma famille.*
"I can't wait to see my family again."

Impersonal Verbs Referring to the Climate: *Il fait/Il va faire* ("It is"/"It will be")

Il fait/Il va faire ("It is"/"It will be") states a condition relating to the weather with an adjective, as in the dialogue phrase *Et en plus il va faire beau ce week-end !* ("Besides, it will be sunny this weekend!")

Il fait/va faire/fera + adjective describing the weather**For Example:**

1. *Il fait beau.*
"It is beautiful."
2. *Il fait chaud.*
"It is hot."
3. *Il fait gris.*
"It is grey."

Impersonal Verbs Used to Enumerate Things: *Il y a* ("There Is/Are")

We use *il y a* ("there is/are") to enumerate things or to refer to the existence of things as in the dialogue



with ...*il y a trop de monde sur les routes*. ("...there are too many people on the road."). *Il y a* ("there is/are") is always followed by a determiner and a noun when referring to objects or beings.

For Example:

1. *Il y a des arbres fruitiers.*
"There are fruit trees."
2. *Il y a une conférence.*
"There is a lecture."
3. *Il y a des gens partout.*
"There are people everywhere."

Impersonal Verbs Referring to Possibility: *Il est possible que* ("it is possible that")

Il est possible que ("it is possible that") refers to an uncertainty and is therefore followed by a subject and a verb at the subjunctive. For example, in the phrase *Il est possible que ma grand-mère soit là* ("My grandma might be there."), the verb *être* is at the subjunctive present.

***Il est possible que* + subject + subjunctive.**

For Example:

1. *Il est possible que je ne vienne pas.*
"I might not come."
2. *Il est possible qu'ils restent là.*
"They might stay here."
3. *Il est possible qu'à 16 heures je sortes de la maison.*
"At four o'clock p.m., I might get out of the house."

Language Expansion: Other Impersonal Expressions

Other common impersonal expressions exist: we formulate them with *être* ("to be") when telling the

time or making a description. The verb *falloir* ("it must") expresses necessities, *suffire* ("to be enough") expresses a restriction, and *s'agir* ("to be about") tells what something is about.

Impersonal expressions with *être* ("to be") referring to:

time: *Il est* + **time.**

description: *Il est* + [adjective] + *de* + [infinitive]

For Example:

1. *Il est quatre heures de l'après-midi.*
"It is four o'clock p.m."
2. *Il est difficile d'apprendre le chinois.*
"It is hard to learn Chinese."

Impersonal verbs referring to:

Obligation: *Il faut que* + subject + verb at the *subjonctif*.

Restrictions: *Il suffit que* + subject + verb at the *subjonctif*.

Il suffit de + infinitive verb.

Describe what something is about: *Il s'agit de/d'* + infinitive verb.

For Example:

1. *Il faut que je parte vers 13 heures.*
"I must leave around one o'clock p.m."
2. *Il suffit qu'il pleuve pour que le jardin soit vert.*
"It's enough to rain so that the yard is green."
3. *Il suffit d'être consistant pour créer des habitudes.*
"It's enough to be consistent to create habits."
4. *Il s'agit d'un livre sur l'historique de la politique de diplomatie entre la France et les États-Unis.*
"It is about a book on the political diplomatic history between France and the United States."

Il s'agit de ("to be about," "to be a matter of," "to be a question of")

Describing the weather when it's happening:



1. *Il grêle*
"It's sleeting"
2. *Il pleut*
"It's raining"
3. *Il neige*
"It's snowing"
4. *Il gèle*
"It's freezing"

Cultural Insight

See France through This Form of Alternative Transportation

While visiting France, if you are an adept cyclist and looking for a green alternative for transportation, use the bike routes. Wherever you are, ask the tourism office or the local inhabitants where the bike routes are to enjoy for a day or a few hours, or even make it an itinerary over several days.

Many villages, towns, and larger cities in France have converted old railways, small roads along shore lakes, canals, and rivers, and roads through forests or other geographical places of interest into bike roads. There are about 2,600 kilometers of safe, marked routes for family bike excursions covering twenty to fifty kilometers at a gentle pace. Pedaling through different landscapes, you will discover the countryside from a different point of view! Along the way you can find typical bistros serving tasty snacks and superb sites in the middle of the countryside.

Green routes around Burgundy, Lake Annecy in Savoie, from Bordeaux to Arcachon in Aquitaine, and between Saumur and Tours in Val de Loire have been built over the last fifteen years. So don't hesitate to find a bike rental place and ask which bike route is the best for you.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Are there Haunted Forests in France?

22

Formal French	2
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Formal French

- Julien Bon, on est perdu.
- Pauline Mais non ! Regarde, c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé hier.
- Julien Ok. Mais je ne suis pas très rassuré, moi.
- Pauline Tu regardes trop de films.
- Julien Peut-être...et ça ? C'est la forêt où tu fais du jogging ?
- Pauline Oui, et c'est la forêt où ils ont tourné le Pacte des Loups !
- Julien Qu'est-ce que c'est, le Pacte des Loups ?
- Pauline C'est un film qui parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle.
- Julien Ah bon ?
- Pauline Oui, et beaucoup de gens meurent à la fin.
- Julien Je vais rentrer à Paris, moi.
- Pauline Je plaisantais ! Et puis, c'est une forêt que je connais bien. Pas de danger.

English

- Julien Okay, we're lost.
- Pauline No we're not! Look, this is the river I told you about yesterday.
- Julien Okay. But I'm not reassured.
- Pauline You watch too many movies.
- Julien Maybe...what about this? Is this the forest you jog in?
- Pauline Yes, and it's the forest where they shot "The Blair Witch Project!"
- Julien What is "The Blair Witch Project?"
- Pauline It's a movie that talks about young people who get lost in a forest.
- Julien Really?
- Pauline Yes, and they die at the end.
- Julien I'm going back to Paris.
- Pauline I was kidding! Besides, it's a forest I know well. No danger.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
être perdu(e)(s)	to be lost	verbal group	
rassuré(e)	reassured	adjective	

une forêt	a forest	noun	feminine
faire du jogging	to jog, to run	phrase	
tourner (un film)	to shoot (a movie)	verb	
rentrer	to go, to return home	verb	
plaisanter	to joke	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Je suis perdu dans le désert et j'ai soif.</i>	"I am lost in the desert and I am thirsty."
<i>Dans le noir, il n'est pas rassuré.</i>	"He's not reassured in the dark."
<i>Mais non, il n'y a pas de fées qui vivent dans la forêt !</i>	"No, there are no fairies living in the forest!"
<i>Sylvain fait du jogging dans Central Park tous les dimanches.</i>	"Sylvain jogs in Central Park every Sunday."
<i>Spielberg a tourné beaucoup de films.</i>	"Spielberg shot a lot of movies."
<i>Zacharie rentre en Espagne.</i>	"Zachary returns to Spain."
<i>Fais pas la gueule, je plaisantais!</i>	"Don't get mad, I was joking!"

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Characterizing with Relative Pronouns.

Regarde, c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé hier.

"Look, this is the river I told you about yesterday."

Walking and trekking are two popular hobbies in France. Many trails are marked all over France for people to follow on a sunny Sunday afternoon for a few hours or over several days while staying in cottages that we call *gîtes d'étape* in French. The trails are named on maps with the abbreviation *GR*, which stands for *Grande Randonnée* and means "long hikes." This network of long-distance trails covers about sixty thousand kilometers in France and is marked with a symbol of two horizontal stripes, with one white stripe placed over a red one. Many *GR* trails are part of the wider European walking-route network that crosses several countries.

In the dialogue, the two characters are in the region of Bourgogne Burgundy to visit Pauline's grandmother. Out of the city, they are taking the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment by taking a walk in the nearby forest. Julien, who is a little insecure, thinks they are lost. Pauline, who is familiar with the area from her childhood, is aware of the surroundings and reassures him by pointing to him the river she mentioned earlier with the phrase *Regarde, c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé hier*

("Look, this is the river I told you about yesterday.").

In this sentence, Pauline links two ideas: the strong suggestion of looking at the nearby river and the qualification or additional information about the river that she talked about the day before. She links both ideas together with the relative pronoun *dont*, which best matches the English word "that." In French, we use many other relative pronouns to characterize something and give additional information.

Characterizing with the Relative Pronoun *Dont* ("That")

We use all relative pronouns to link two phrases or two ideas together.

In the sentence *Regarde, c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé hier* ("Look, this is the river I told you about yesterday."), the pronoun *dont* ("that") links what could be the two phrases *Regarde, c'est la rivière* ("Look, it's the river!") and *Je t'ai parlé de la rivière hier*. ("I told you about this river yesterday.")

The relative pronoun *dont* ("that") replaces the indirect object *la rivière* from the phrase *Je t'ai parlé de la rivière hier* ("I talked to you about this river yesterday.") in the original dialogue phrase *Regarde, c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé hier*. ("Look, this is the river I told you about yesterday.")

Linking Two Phrases with *Dont* ("That")

First, find the indirect object of the verb in either phrase you want to link together. To do so, follow these steps:

Step 1: Ask of whom or of what the action is about.

The only possible question is "of what did I speak about yesterday?" *De quoi je t'ai parlé hier?* The answer is "I spoke about the river" (*J'ai parlé de la rivière*).

Step 2: Take the other phrase:

Regarde, c'est la rivière

Step 3: Add *dont* ("that") = *Regarde, c'est la rivière dont*

Step 4: Complete the phrase with the one containing the indirect object without including it: *Regarde c'est la rivière dont je t'ai parlé.*

Asking this question will help you determine the indirect object. The object in this phrase is indirect because of the use of the preposition *de* ("of") with the verb *parler de* ("to speak of").

Linking Two Phrases with *Où* ("Where")

In the sentence *Oui, et c'est la forêt où ils ont tourné le Pacte des loups !* ("Yes, and it's the forest where they shot 'Brotherhood of the Wolf!'",), the speaker uses the relative pronoun *où* ("where") to replace the complement of place, which is "the forest." The speaker employs *où* to link the two phrases *Oui, c'est la forêt du Pacte des Loups* ("Yes it is the forest of 'Brotherhood of the Wolf.'") and *Ils ont tourné le pacte des loups dans la forêt* ("They shot 'Brotherhood of the Wolf'") both referring to the same place, the forest, in the dialogue, even though in fact one forest seems like the other and is not the same location.

To link two phrases with the pronoun *où*, find the complement of place in either of the two sentences you want to link by asking the question "Where does the thing in question happen?"

Step 1: Ask where the action takes place:

The only possible question asking where something happens when observing the two phrases is *Où ils ont tourné le Pacte des Loups ?* ("Where did they shoot 'Brotherhood of the Wolf?'"), to which the answer is *la forêt* ("the forest").

Step 2: Take the other phrase:

Oui, et c'est la forêt (du Pacte des loups.) ("Yes, and it's the forest (of the 'Brotherhood of the Wolf').")

Step 3: Add the relative pronoun *où* ("where"):

Oui, et c'est la forêt où

Step 4: Complete the phrase with the phrase containing the complement of place without including it:

Oui, et c'est la forêt où ils ont tourné le Pacte des loups ! ("Yes, and it's the forest where they shot 'Brotherhood of the Wolf!'")

Linking Two Phrases with *Qui* ("Who," "What")

In the sentence *C'est un film qui parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle* ("It's a movie that talks about a beast devouring the inhabitants of a village of France in the eighteenth century."), the speaker uses the relative pronoun *qui*, meaning "who" or "what," to replace a person.



The speaker employs the pronoun *qui* to replace a person who is the subject of one of the sentences and who is linked to the other. In *C'est un film qui parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle* ("It's a movie that talks about a beast devouring the inhabitants of a village of France in the eighteenth century."), the pronoun *qui* replaces the subject *film* ("movie") of the verb *parler de* ("to speak of"). Therefore, the two phrases would be *C'est un film* ("It is a movie.") and *Le film parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle* ("The movie speaks of a beast devouring the inhabitants of a village of France in the eighteenth century.").

To link two phrases with the pronoun *qui*, find the subject in either of the two sentences you want to link by asking the question "Who or what is performing the action?"

Step 1: Ask who or what performs the action:

The only possible question asking who or what performs the action when observing the two phrases *C'est un film* ("It is a movie") and *Le film parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle* ("The movie speaks of a beast devouring the inhabitants of a village of France in the eighteenth century.") is "what speaks of the beast devouring people in a village of France in the eighteenth century?" The answer to this question is *le film* ("the movie").

Step 2: Take the other phrase:

C'est un film ("It is a movie.").

Step 3: Add the relative pronoun *qui* ("who," "what"):

Oui, et c'est comme la forêt qui

Step 4: Complete the phrase with the phrase containing the subject without it:

C'est un film qui parle d'une bête qui dévore les habitants d'un village de France au XVIIIe siècle ("It's a movie that talks about a beast devouring the inhabitants of a village of France in the eighteenth century.").

Linking Two Phrases with *Que* ("That")

In this phrase, we use the relative pronoun *que*, meaning "that," to replace the direct object of the verb.

When making two simple phrases out of *Et puis, c'est une forêt que je connais bien* ("Besides, it's a forest I know well."), you'll get:

1. *C'est une forêt.*
"It's a forest."
2. *Je connais bien cette forêt.*
"I know this forest well."

In both phrases, the noun *forêt*, meaning "forest," is the direct object of the verb. When this is the case, we use the relative pronoun *que* to replace the direct object of the phrase *Je connais bien cette forêt* ("I know this forest well.*").

To link two phrases with the pronoun *que*, find the direct object of the verb you want to eliminate by asking the question what.

Step 1: Find the object of the verb by asking a question with what:

With the phrase *C'est une forêt* ("It's a forest."), ask the question *C'est quoi?* or *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?* ("What is it?")

With the phrase *Je connais bien cette forêt* ("I know this forest well."), ask the question *Je connais quoi?* ("What do I know?")

In both cases, you use the interrogative word *quoi* preceded by the subject and verb: Subject + verb + *quoi?*

Step 2: Take the phrase with *c'est* ("it's"*):

C'est une forêt. ("It's a forest.")

*When using a phrase starting with *C'est* ("it's"), you have to use it as the starting element when linking the two simple phrases into one. When *c'est* ("it's") is not used, we can use both simple phrases at first, as shown in the example below.

Step 3: Add the relative pronoun *que* ("that"):

C'est une forêt que. ("It's a forest that.")

Step 4: Complete the other phrase containing the subject without it:

C'est une forêt que je connais bien. ("It's a forest that I know well.")

Examples:**The following sentences...**

1. *J'aime ce jardin.*
"I like this garden."
2. *J'entretien ce jardin.*
"I maintain this garden."

...can be linked either way:

1. *J'aime cette forêt que j'entretien.*
"I like this garden that I maintain."
2. *J'entretien cette forêt que j'aime.*
"I maintain this garden that I like."

But when you use *C'est* ("it's"), start your sentence with *C'est* as in:

1. *C'est mon jardin.*
"It's my garden."
2. *J'arrose le jardin tous les deux jours.*
"I water my garden every two days."

You can link them only as follow:

1. *C'est mon jardin que j'arrose tous les deux jours.*
"It's my garden that I water every two days."

Language Note

Be aware! In front of a vowel, you shorten *que* by eliminating the last -e and adding an apostrophe as

in:

1. *Tu portes le collier que ton fiancé t'a offert.*
"You wear the necklace that your fiancé offered you."
2. *Tu portes le collier qu'il t'a offert.*
"You wear the necklace that he offered you."

Language Memo

	Subject	Object	Indirect Object	Complement of Place
Person	<i>qui La dame qui est venue hier m'a demandé de tes nouvelles.</i> "The woman who came yesterday asked me for news from you."	<i>que Le médecin que je vois régulièrement est excellent.</i> "The doctor that I see regularly is excellent."	<i>dont Marc dont je te parlais tout à l'heure est arrivé.</i> "Mark, whom I spoke of a moment ago, arrived."	
Object	<i>qui C'est une histoire qui m'a ému.</i> "It is a story that moved me."	<i>que Le film que je suis allé voir la semaine dernière était bizarre.</i> "The movie that I saw last week was weird."	<i>dont L'équipe de football dont il raffole passe à la télé.</i> "The soccer team that he is fond of is on TV."	<i>où La ville où je suis né est petite.</i> "The town where I was born is small." <i>Le jour où je suis partie c'était un jour de pluie.</i> "The day I left was a rainy day."



Intermediate Lesson S1

I Refuse to Admit Anything in French!

23

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Formal French

Melle Gitrus (email)	Cher Monsieur Laporte, je viens d'apprendre mon licenciement. Je ne comprends pas la raison de cette décision.
M. Laporte (replying)	Mademoiselle Gitrus, Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour et vous avez besoin de plus d'expérience pour travailler avec nous. Voilà la raison de ma décision.
Melle Gitrus (replying)	Monsieur Laporte, cette réponse ne me convient pas et vous tournez autour du pot. J'exige un vrai motif sur-le-champ.
M. Laporte (replying)	Mademoiselle Gitrus, vous montez sur vos grands chevaux. Vous connaissez notre respect pour votre créativité. Cependant, vous êtes allée trop loin lors de notre campagne sur les caleçons en cachemire. Utiliser le président de la République pour vendre des sous-vêtements est de très mauvais goût. C'est pour cela que nous avons décidé de vous licencier.

English

Miss Gitrus (e-mail)	Dear Mister Laporte, I just heard about my layoff. I do not understand the reason for this decision.
M. Laporte (replying)	Miss Gitrus, Rome was not built in a day and you need more experience to work with us. This is the reason for my decision.
Miss Gitrus (replying)	Mr. Laporte, this answer does not suit me and you are not getting to the point. I demand a real motive immediately.
M. Laporte (replying)	Miss Gitrus, you are losing your temper. You know our respect for your creativity. However, you went too far in our campaign for cashmere boxer shorts. Using the President of the Republic to sell underwear is quite tasteless. This is why we decided to let you go.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
monter sur ses grands chevaux	to lose one's temper	idiom	
tourner autour du pot	to beat around the bush	idiom	
Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour	Rome was not built in a day.	proverb	

sur-le-champ	right away, immediately	phrase	
un licenciement	a lay off	noun	masculine
convenir à (quelqu'un)	to suit somebody, to satisfy	verb	
exiger	to demand	verb	
un caleçon	boxer shorts	noun	masculine
les sous-vêtements	underwear	noun	masculine, plural
licencier	to lay off	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>Ne t'énerve pas, tu montes toujours sur tes grands chevaux !</i>	"Don't get mad; you always lose your temper!"
<i>Ne tourne pas autour du pot: tu as besoin d'argent?</i>	"Don't beat around the bush: do you need money?"
<i>Sois patient, Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour.</i>	"Be patient: Rome was not built in a day."
<i>Sors d'ici, sur-le-champ !</i>	"Get out of here right away!"
<i>Il y a beaucoup de licenciements à cause de la crise.</i>	"There are many lay offs due to the crisis."
<i>Ce contrat ne me convient pas du tout !</i>	"This agreement does not satisfy me at all!"
<i>Le suspect a exigé un avocat.</i>	"The suspect demanded a lawyer."
<i>Les caleçons sont plus confortables que les slips.</i>	"Boxer shorts are more comfortable than Speedos."
<i>Je ne porte que des sous-vêtements en coton.</i>	"I only wear cotton underwear."
<i>La direction licencie tous les employés de ce service.</i>	"Management lays off all the employees from that service."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Expressing Concessions, Goals, and Causes with Prepositions.

Cependant, vous êtes allée trop loin lors de notre campagne sur les caleçons en cachemire.

"However, you went too far in our campaign for cashmere boxer shorts."

Being laid off is not the nicest feeling. In France, the unemployment rate rose to ten percent in the 1990s. However, since 2000, it has stabilized around eight percent, dropping to 7.4 percent in October 2009.

Even though the French people benefit from a government-assisted job research program through *Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi* ("National Agency for Employment"), which is abbreviated as *L'ANPE*, which also gives financial assistance to former employees, people generally experience it as a social failure. Ex-employees often criticize unemployment in casual conversation with friends rather than with a supervisor, as shown in the dialogue. To avoid putting the responsibility on the company or employer, and since the former employee cannot change the events, another strategy is to take *le chômage*, or to view being unemployed as a time to reevaluate yourself and get your career on a new path.

In the e-mail correspondence, Miss Gitrus has a hard time accepting her release. She expresses her discontent and requests a valid reason for it. Her employer responds by praising her creativity first and then expressing a concession with the conjunction *cependant*, meaning "however," by admitting the reason for the employment discharge in the argument.

Expressing a Concession

Making a concession or conceding is the act of admitting a point or accepting it reluctantly. To do so, in French, we can use many words to introduce or mark a concession. In the dialogue, the conjunction *bien que*, meaning "although" or "even though," links words or ideas together. It introduces the concession or admission that Miss Gitrus doesn't understand the reason for her employment layoff with the phrase *Je ne comprends pas la raison de cette décision* ("I don't understand the reason of this decision.").

Some of the conjunctions require a specific grammatical structure, such as *bien que* ("although," "in spite of") though this is not the case for many of them. *Bien que* ("although") needs to be followed by a verb conjugated at the subjunctive, as in:

***Bien que* + subject + verb at the subjunctive**

For Example:

1. *Bien que Mademoiselle Gitrus a été renvoyé, elle réclame auprès de son employeur une raison.*
"In spite of Miss Gitrus's layoff, she requires from her employer a reason."
2. *L'employeur lui envoie un e mail bien qu'il soit occupé.*
"The employer sent her an e-mail although he is busy."
3. *Bien que tu prennes cette décision avec colère, calme-toi avant de réagir.*
"Even though you take this decision with anger, calm yourself before reacting."

Other Conjunctions Expressing Concessions

French	"English"
<i>malgré + noun</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>malgré que + subject + verb at the subjunctive</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>en dépit de + nom</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>en dépit du fait que*</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>quoique</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>mais</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>pourtant</i>	"although," "even though"
<i>même si</i>	"although," "even though"

* This conjunction takes either the indicative or subjunctive according to the context. If a fact is stated, use the indicative. On the contrary, if it is a subjective information (such as doubt, uncertainty, etc.), use the subjunctive.

Expressing a Goal

To express a goal, the most common preposition is *pour*, meaning "to," in order to express an objective.

In the dialogue, the employer explains what Miss Gitrus lacks to reach her goal of being able to work for him with the phrase *vous avez besoin de plus d'expérience pour travailler avec nous* ("You need more experience to work with us."). He describes the goal in this sentence with the preposition *pour* ("to"). We can choose many other terms to express an objective. Make sure to use the correct grammatical form required as shown below:

Locution* using the subjunctive mood:

Afin que + subject + verb at the subjunctive

Pour que + subject + verb at the subjunctive

De façon à ce que + subject + verb at the subjunctive

Locution* using an infinitive verb:

1. *Afin de* + infinitive verb
2. *En vue de* + infinitive verb
3. *En vue de* + infinitive verb

Other locutions:

French	"English"
<i>Dans ce but</i>	"in this objective"
<i>Dans cette optique</i>	"in this view"
<i>Dans cette perspective</i>	"in this perspective"
<i>Pour atteindre ce résultat</i>	"to reach this result"
<i>Pour cela</i>	"so as to" (the objective is mentioned previously)

*Fixed group of words

For Example:

1. *De toute façon à ce que je sois indépendante, il faut que je travaille à mon compte.* "To be independent in any way, I need to open my own business."
2. *Afin de ne plus être licenciée, Mademoiselle Gitrus s'est mis à son compte.*
"To not be laid off, Miss Gitrus opened her own business."
3. *Pour cela, elle a fait un prêt.*
"To do so, she applied for a loan."

Expressing a Reason or Cause

To express a reason or a cause for an event, one possibility is to use *c'est pour cela*, meaning literally "because of this," as in the dialogue with *C'est pour cela que nous avons décidé de vous licencier* ("This is why we decided to let you go").

To state the reason why an event occurs (not to be confused with a consequence that is the result of an event) in a different manner, use any of the locutions below:

French	"English"
<i>Parce que</i>	"because"

<i>Car</i>	"because"
<i>Puisque</i>	"because"
<i>Compte tenu</i>	"taking in consideration"
<i>D'autant plus que</i>	"moreover"
<i>De ce fait</i>	"from this fact"
<i>Vu que</i>	"taking in consideration"
<i>A cause de</i> + noun	"because of..."
<i>En raison de</i> + noun	"because of..."
<i>Du fait de</i> + noun	"from the fact that..."
<i>Le fait que</i> + subject + verb at the subjunctive	"the fact that..."
<i>Du fait que</i> + subject + verb at the subjunctive	"that..."
<i>Sous prétexte que</i> + subject + verb at the subjunctive	"under the pretext of"

For Example:

1. *Vu qu'il l'a renvoyé, elle s'est mise à son compte.*
"Because he laid her off, she opened her own business."
2. *Puisqu'elle ne travaille pas, elle a décidé de prendre son temps.*
"Because she is not working, she decided to take her time."
3. *En raison de l'absence d'expérience, elle a été renvoyée.*
"Because of her absence of experience, she was laid off."

Cultural Insight

French Employers Have to Abide by These Employment Laws

In France, by law two reasons are valid for firing an employee: for economic reasons or personal reasons. The one portrayed in the dialogue is for personal reasons, in which the employee was not capable of performing her mission. The employer must make such a decision based on real facts that are verifiable and that are of importance.

The employer must conduct an interview with the employee to let him or her know the exact reason for the layoff. Then the employer sends a certified letter to make the decision official and break any obligation between the employee and employer.

To respond to an unjustified reason, the employee can appeal to the court called *les Prud'Hommes* under the condition that he or she was working for a company of more than eleven employees and for more than two years.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Should the City Be Rebuilt by the French in the Country?

24

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Formal French

“Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne - l'air y est tellement plus pur.”

English

"Cities should be built in the country - the air is so much purer there."

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
la grandeur	greatness	noun	feminine
intitulé(e)	entitled	adjective	
un caricaturiste	a caricaturist	noun	masculine
un illustrateur, une illustratrice	an illustrator	noun	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

2

<i>Tu trouves vraiment que notre président a de la grandeur ?</i>	"Do you really think that our president has greatness?"
<i>Mes mémoires vont être intitulées: "La baguette et le hamburger".</i>	"My memoirs will be entitled 'The Baguette and the Hamburger.'"
<i>Le caricaturiste de ce journal fait des dessins controversés.</i>	"This newspaper's caricaturist makes controversial drawings."
<i>C'est un artiste mais il est aussi illustrateur pour des livres pour enfants.</i>	"He is an artist, but he is also an illustrator for children's books."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is on the Passive Voice at the Present Tense.

Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne

"Cities should be built in the country."

The problem of pollution is present all over the globe, especially in developed countries. France is no exception. For few decades, France has started to look into solutions to improve the quality of the air and decrease pollution at the consumer and industrial levels.

Several measures were recently put into place, such as the carbon dioxide tax on petrol, gas, and other energies consumers pay to finance additional research on renewable energy. The good news is even though consumers pay this tax out of their pockets, they will be compensated by a reduction in their yearly income taxes. Moreover, a reduction in income tax is also granted with the purchase of devices using renewable energy, such as solar panels, for example. Home owners can also benefit from a zero-interest loan to remodel their house to become more energy efficient, with the goal to reduce pollution through energy consumption.

At the industrial level, laws promote industrial investment in less-polluting sources of energy to reduce their production of carbon dioxide and reduce the overall pollution industries produce. The government also encourages businesses to use electric vehicles.

The quote, *Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne : l'air y est tellement plus pur.* ("Cities should be built in the country: the air is so much purer."), mentions pollution in an absurd style. Although it may seem meaningless, it is the reason of its popularity, as the statement made is contradictory in its own terms and therefore surely sarcastic.

When the quote was written in the mid-1800s, Henri Meunier already had made reference to pollution. We can imagine that the pollution was of a different type and scale, but nevertheless present at that time. The author refers to it by mentioning that houses should be built where the air is purer using the passive form with the quote element *Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne* ("Cities should be built in the countryside."). By using the passive form, the author intends to emphasize the action.

The Passive Form

In French, we usually avoid the passive form except in literature or in formal speech. We use it either to:

1. emphasize the action (as Henri Meunier certainly intended to) or
2. emphasize the person who undergoes the action.

We also use it when we don't know who performed the action, as in the featured quote where the

author doesn't tell who built the cities.

In the active voice, the subject of the verb performs the action, as with the phrase *Ils bâtissent les villes à la champagne* ("They built cities in the countryside."). Here, the subject is active and carries out the action. On the contrary, in the passive form, the subject undergoes the action, as in the quote where the subject *les villes* ("cities") undergoes the action of being built.

To transform a phrase from the active voice to the passive voice at the present tense, we place the subject of the active-voice phrase at the end of the passive-formed phrase.

For example, if Henri Meunier wrote the quote at the present tense (and to give a clear illustration of how we form the passive voice), we would need to assume that urban architects built the cities. We would end up with:

A - The active voice phrase:

1. *Les architectes urbains bâtissent les villes à la champagne.*
"The urban architects built cities in the countryside."

It is composed of the subject *les architectes urbains* ("the urban architects") and the direct object *les villes* ("the cities").

B - The passive voice phrase:

1. *Les villes sont bâties à la campagne par les architectes urbains.*
"Cities are built by urban architects."

This phrase is composed of the subject *les villes* ("the cities") and *les architectes urbains* ("urban architects") introduced with *par* ("by"), which we call in French *un complément d'agent*.

Above, we formed the passive form by moving the object of the active form phrase to where the subject was, using a form of *être* ("to be"), followed by a past participle.

Step 1: Take the object of the active phrase: *les villes* ("the cities")



Les villes

Step 2: Use it as a subject by adding to it the verb *construire* at the passive form by using the auxiliary *être* followed by the verb's past participle form.

Les villes sont bâties

Step 3: If we know who performed the action, add the preposition *par* and who performed it.

Les villes sont bâties par les architectes urbains.

Step 4: Add any other information such as place, time, etc.

Les villes sont bâties à la campagne par les architectes urbains.

For Example:

1. *Il dessine des peintures originales.*
"He paints original paintings."
2. *Des œuvres originales sont dessinées par lui.*
"Original paintings are painted by him."

Language Note

In the quote, Henri Meunier uses the passive voice at the conditional present with the verb *devraient être bâties* in *Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne : l'air y est tellement plus pur* ("Cities should be built in the country: the air is so much purer.").

The active phrase should be *Ils devraient bâtir les villes à la campagne*, using the verb *devoir* at the conditional present.

As you can observe here, we form the passive voice at the conditional present simply by adding between the verb *devoir* ("must") and the past participle of *construire*, which is the infinitive verb *être*.



For Example:

1. *L'auteur devait écrire un commentaire.*
"The author should write a commentary."
2. *Un commentaire devait être écrit par l'auteur.*
"A commentary should be written by the author."

Cultural Insight

L'auteur

Henri Monnier, 1799-1877, écrivain et lithographe, faisait des dessins gravés sur de la pierre et écrivait des pièces de théâtre. Ses œuvres artistiques sont devenues populaires vers 1825 avec ses illustrations des "Fables de la Fontaine" («La Fontaine's Fables») dessinées au stylo.

Il a également écrit une série de trois livres, "Scènes populaires" («popular scenes»), des sketches de dessins satiriques représentant les gens de son époque. C'est dans cette œuvre que ses célèbres personnages imaginaires Mme Gibou et M. Joseph Prudhomme apparaissent pour la première fois en 1830.

Plus tard, ces personnages sont mis en scène dans la pièce de théâtre "Grandeur et décadence de Monsieur Joseph Prudhomme" (1852) («Greatness and decadence of Sir Joseph Prudhomme»).

Monsieur Joseph Prudhomme devient plus célèbre lorsque Balzac le caractérise comme illustration du parisien de la classe moyenne de cette époque. Il inspire aussi Verlaine dans son recueil intitulé "Poèmes saturniens" («Saturnian poems») publié en 1866.

Au XXI^{ème} siècle Sacha Guitry monte également une pièce de théâtre intitulée "Monsieur Prudhomme a-t-il vécu?" ("Did Monsieur Prudhomme exist?") inspiré de la vie de l'écrivain Henri Meunier.

Le contexte de la citation:

La citation "Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne - l'air y est tellement plus pur." est sujet de controverse puisque les uns l'attribuent à Alphonse Allais, et d'autres à Henri Monnier. En effet la citation est supposée apparaître dans la pièce de théâtre "Grandeur et décadence de M. Joseph Prudhomme".*

**Voir Intermediate Series S1L14*

The Author and the Context of the Quote (English Translation)

Henri Monnier, 1799–1877, writer and lithographer, made carved drawings on limestone as well as wrote plays. His artistic works became popular around 1825 when he illustrated "La Fontaine's Fables" with pen drawings.

He also wrote a series of three books entitled "Popular Scenes," which are sketches of satirical drawings representing people of his era. It is in this work that his famous imaginary characters Mrs. Gibou and Mr. Joseph Prudhomme appeared for the first time in 1830.

Later on, he staged these characters in the play "Greatness and Decadence of Sir Joseph Prudhomme" (1852).

Sir Joseph Prudhomme gained popularity when Balzac characterized him as the illustration of the middle class of that time. Prudhomme also inspired Verlaine in his

poems, called "Saturnian Poems," which he published in 1866. In the twentieth century, Sacha Guitry staged him in the play "Did Monsieur Prudhomme Exist?" portraying the life of the writer Henri Monnier.

Much controversy exists about who authored the quote *Les villes devraient être bâties à la campagne: l'air y est tellement plus pur* ("Cities should be built in the country: the air is so much purer."). Some state it is from Alphonse Allais*, and others claim it is from Henri Monnier. In fact, the quote is said to appear in the play "Greatness and Decadence of Sir Joseph Prudhomme."

*See Intermediate Series S1L14 for more information on Alphonse Allais.



Intermediate Lesson S1

Playing Telephone in French

25

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Formal French

Justine Allô Chloé c'est Justine ! Je t'appelle pour la rando de demain. Tu peux toujours venir ?

Chloé (voix lointaine)

Justine (à
Guillaume) Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.

Guillaume Ah bon ? Mais c'est loin, on va rentrer tard.

Chloé (voix lointaine)

Justine Elle dit qu'elle est désolée, qu'elle a un dîner avec son père.

Guillaume Elle peut le reporter, non ?

Justine (à Chloé) Guillaume demande si tu peux reporter ton dîner ?

Chloé (voix lointaine)

Justine (à
Guillaume) Elle dit qu'elle va essayer. Elle dit de la rappeler plus tard.

English

Justine Hi Chloé, it's Justine! I'm calling you for the hike tomorrow. Can you still come?

(Voice of Chloé on the phone)

Justine (to
Guillaume) She says that she must come home early.

Guillaume Ah yes? But it's far; we will come back late.

(Voice of Chloé on the phone)

Justine She says that she is sorry, she has a dinner with her father.

Guillaume She can postpone it, no?

Justine (to Chloé) Guillaume asks whether you can postpone your dinner?

(Voice of Chloé on the phone)

Justine (to
Guillaume) She's going to try. She says to call her back later.

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
une randonnée/une rando	a hike	noun	feminine
rentrer	to go, to return home	verb	

reporter	to postpone	verb	
essayer	to try	verb	
rappeler	to call back	verb	

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

<i>J'ai beaucoup d'admiration pour les gens qui font de la randonnée en haute-montagne.</i>	"I admire people who go hiking in high mountains."
<i>Zacharie rentre en Espagne.</i>	"Zachary returns to Spain."
<i>La réunion a été reportée pour la cinquième fois.</i>	"The meeting has been postponed for the fifth time."
<i>Il essaie de parler mais il n'y arrive pas: il a la bouche pleine.</i>	"He's trying to talk but he is not able to: his mouth is full."
<i>Le bel homme que j'ai rencontré ce week-end ne m'a toujours pas rappelée.</i>	"The handsome man I met this weekend still has not called me back."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Reporting What Someone Says.

Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.

"She says that she must come home early."

Not only can people hike on marked paths all over the French countryside, but people can also take walks through urban areas of France, which is another option for an alternative experience of France. Many tourist offices offer guided walks through the historical center of towns to present historical remains of the city and its history. In big cities, a certified professor is usually in charge of the tours. In smaller town and villages, the tour leader may be a regional guide, a student in an internship, or, in the smallest villages, simply a map with instructions and an itinerary.

In the dialogue, Justine is calling her friends Chloé and Guillaume to make the final arrangements for a planned hike. Chloe answers the phone and lets Guillaume know what the conversation is about while talking to Justine over the phone receiver. Chloe becomes an intermediary between the two and reports what Justine says to Guillaume. To do so, she uses an introductory verb reporting what Justine has said with the verb *dire* ("to say") in the dialogue phrase *Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt* ("She says that she must come home early.").

When reporting someone says, we use an introductory verb to give the interlocutor or reader a hint regarding what sort of speech the person said. For example, the verb *dire* ("to say"), used in *Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt* ("She says that she must come home early."), indicates that Justin stated information: here, it was the fact that Chloe must go back home early. However, people may not only state a fact or information, but also confirm, ask, reply, give an opinion, advice, order, or suggest something. To add precision to the reported speech and express the intent of the interlocutor, use the verbs below as indicated.

Introductory verbs in indirect speech:

To introduce a reply, a fact, or an opinion:

French	"English"
<i>reconnaître</i>	"acknowledge"
<i>ajouter</i>	"add"
<i>admettre</i>	"admit"
<i>répondre</i>	"answer"
<i>déclarer</i>	"declare"
<i>s'exclamer</i>	"exclaim"
<i>expliquer</i>	"explain"
<i>insister</i>	"insist"
<i>mentionner</i>	"mention"
<i>signaler</i>	"point out"
<i>promettre</i>	"promise"
<i>proposer</i>	"propose"
<i>remarquer</i>	"remark"
<i>répondre</i>	"reply"
<i>rapporter</i>	"report"
<i>dire</i>	"say"
<i>affirmer</i>	"state"
<i>suggérer</i>	"suggest"
<i>dire à quelqu'un</i>	"tell someone"

To ask a question:

French	"English"
<i>demander</i>	"ask"
<i>demander, se renseigner</i>	"inquire"
<i>vouloir savoir</i>	"want to know"
<i>se demander</i>	"wonder"

To introduce an advice, an order, a suggestion:

French	"English"
<i>conseiller</i>	"advise"
<i>prier, supplier</i>	"beg"
<i>donner l'ordre de</i>	"command"
<i>encourager</i>	"encourage"
<i>interdire</i>	"forbid"
<i>Inviter</i>	"invite"
<i>ordonner</i>	"order"
<i>inciter à</i>	"urge"
<i>avertir</i>	"warn"

Other verbs:

French	"English"
<i>s'excuser</i>	"apologize"
<i>espérer</i>	"hope"
<i>penser</i>	"think"
<i>souhaiter</i>	"wish"

Once you choose the verb, you need to decide in which tense you will conjugate the introductory verb. According to its tense, present or past, the following verb will require a specific tense.

For Example:

1. *Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.*
"She says that she must come home early."

The introductory verb *dire* ("to say") is at the indicative present. When we use the present, we conjugate the following verb at the same tense.

In the direct speech, Justine uses *Je dois rentrer tôt* ("I must come home early."). Here, the verb *devoir* is at the indicative present. It is at the same tense in the indirect speech that Chloe reports with *Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt* ("She says that she must come home early.").

However, as you can notice, we must perform some transformations to change speech from direct to indirect speech when the introductory verb is at the indicative present. There are four of these changes.

Grammatical Transformation from Direct to Indirect Speech Reported in the Present."

1 . Use of *que/qu'* ("that") after the introductory verb.

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Je dois rentrer tôt.</i>	"I must come home early."
Indirect speech	<i>Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.</i>	"She says that she must come home early."

2. Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives change to take the form of the person they are referring to.

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Je dois rentrer tôt.</i>	"I must come home early."
Indirect speech	<i>Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.</i>	"She says that must come home early."

3. In consequence, we need to conjugate the verb in the subordinate clause* (or in colloquial English, the phrase element) starting with *que* ("that") according to the personal pronoun subject change we made previously.

*In French, we refer to this as *la proposition subordonnée*.

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Je dois rentrer tôt.</i>	"I must come home early."
Indirect speech	<i>Elle dit qu'elle doit rentrer tôt.</i>	"She says that must come home early."

For Example:

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>J'appelle Chloé et Guillaume.</i>	"I am calling Chloe and Guillaume."
Indirect speech	<i>Elle declare qu'elle appelle Chloé et Guillaume.</i>	"She declares that she calls Chloé et Guillaume."

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Nous ne savons rien.</i>	"We don't know"

		anything."
Indirect speech	<i>Ils disent qu'ils ne savent rien.</i>	"They say that they don't know anything."

4 . Simple questions are introduced with the preposition *si*.

When reporting a yes or no question with *est-ce que* or a question that can only be answered in the positive or negative, use an introductory verb portraying interrogation and the preposition *si*, meaning "if," as in the dialogue with *Guillaume demande si tu peux reporter ton dîner ?* ("Guillaume asks whether you can postpone it."). This brings us to the fourth transformation: we introduce simple questions with the preposition *si*.

Note: However, interrogative pronouns such as *où* ("where"), *quand* ("when"), or *comment* ("how") from the direct speech are kept in the indirect speech.

For Example:

Type of Speech	French	English
Direct speech	<i>Elle peut le reporter?</i>	"Can she postpone it?"
Indirect speech	<i>Guillaume demande si tu peux reporter ton dîner ?</i>	"Guillaume asks whether you can postpone it."

Type of Speech	French	English
Direct speech	<i>Est-ce qu'elle vient avec nous ?</i>	"Is she coming with us?"
Indirect speech	<i>Il/Elle/Je* demande si elle vient avec nous.</i>	"He asks whether she can come with us."

Type of Speech	French	English
Direct speech	<i>Vous faites la randonnée ?</i>	"Are you doing the hike?"
Indirect speech	<i>Tu* demandes si ils font la randonnée.</i>	"You ask whether they are doing the hike."

Type of Speech	French	English
Direct speech	<i>La rando est difficile ?</i>	"Is the hike hard?"

Indirect speech	<i>Nous* demandons si la rando est difficile.</i>	"I ask whether the hike is hard."
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Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Je vous attends ?</i>	"Do I wait for you?"
Indirect speech	<i>Elle demande si elle nous attend.</i>	"She asked whether she waits for us."

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Tu participes ?</i>	"Do you participate?"
Indirect speech	<i>Ils/Elles* demandent si je participe.</i>	"They are asking whether I participate."

Note: The pronoun use with the introductory verb can differ upon the context of the situation.

Language Note: Reporting an Order in Indirect Speech with *De* ("to") or *Que/Qu'* ("That")

When reporting an order, as in *Rappelle-moi plus tard* ("Call me later."), into indirect speech, as in the phrase *Elle dit de la rappeler plus tard* ("She says to call her back later."), we use the preposition *de*, meaning "to."

You can either choose to use *que/qu'* ("that") or *de* ("to") as both are equally common in everyday French.

The only difference is that with the use of *de* ("to"), the verb of the subordinate clause that *de* introduces is at the infinitive form. When we use *que/qu'* ("that"), we conjugate the verb of the subordinate clause introduced by *de* at the same tense as in the direct speech phrase.

For Example:

Type of Speech	French	"English"
Direct speech	<i>Rappelle-moi plus tard.</i>	"Call me later."
Indirect speech with <i>de</i> ("to")	<i>Elle me demande de la rappeler plus tard.</i>	"She asks me to call her later."
Indirect speech with	<i>Elle me demande que je</i>	"She asks me that I call

<i>que</i> ("that")	<i>la rappelle plus tard.</i>	her later."
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