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FRENCH LANGUAGE COURSE

French Basic Conversation 1

Twelve chapters for the complete beginner: greetings, introductions, numbers, countries, family, jobs, days and times, the café, shopping, directions, hotels and getting around, with pronunciation help for every line and the key grammar of everyday French explained as you go.

12 Chapters

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French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

Greetings & Goodbyes — Salutations et au revoir

Your very first French conversations: saying hello and goodbye, asking how someone is, being polite, and choosing between the formal and the informal way to speak. No French needed: everything is spelled out for you, including how to say it.

How French Sounds — La prononciation

French spelling doesn't look like its sound, and that is the first thing to know. The good news: the system is consistent, and a handful of ideas will let you say almost any word. Read this section once now, and come back to it whenever you like.

Three big ideas

1. **Many final letters are silent.** Most consonants at the end of a word aren't pronounced: *Paris* = "pah-REE", *très* = "tray", *vous* = "voo". The exceptions are usually **c, r, f, l** (think of the word "CaReFuL"): *bonjour* ends with a spoken r, *salut* doesn't end with a spoken t. A final **-e** is silent too: *madame* = "mah-DAHm".
2. **Nasal vowels.** When a vowel is followed by *n* or *m* (at the end of a syllable), you don't pronounce the *n*: you let the vowel resonate through your nose. This guide writes them with a tilde: **ã** (an, en), **õ** (on), **ẽ** (in, ain, un). So *bon* = "bõ", *bien* = "byẽ", *comment* = "ko-mã".
3. **Even rhythm.** French has almost no word stress: every syllable gets about the same weight, and the last syllable of a phrase is just a little longer. In the pronunciation lines, **CAPITALS mark the last syllable of each word**, which is the part that carries the gentle emphasis, and hyphens separate syllables.

ou = "oo" (vous) **u** = "ü": say "ee" with rounded lips (salut = sah-LÜ)

eu = "uh" with rounded lips (monsieur) **oi** = "wah" (moi = mwah)

é, er, ez at the end = "ay" (allez = ah-LAY) **è, ê, ai** = "eh" (très = tray) **au, eau** = "oh" (au revoir)

an, en = ã, nasal (comment) **on** = õ, nasal (bon) **in, ain, un** = ẽ, nasal (bien, demain)

j, and **g** before e/i = "zh" (bonjour) **ch** = "sh" (chez) **c** before e/i, and **ç** = "s" (ça, merci)

qu = "k" (qui) **h** = silent (hôtel)

r = a soft sound from the back of the throat, like a gentle gargle (bonjour)

Accents (é è ê à ù ç) mostly show a spelling difference; only é ("ay") and è / ê ("eh") change the sound. And ù in the pronunciation lines is the French u: practise it by saying "ee" and then pushing your lips into a small circle.

Six Short Conversations — Conversations

Read each one aloud, using the pronunciation line. Speaking out loud, even alone, is the fastest way to make these phrases feel natural.

① Good Morning (formal) — Bonjour

A:

Bonjour, Madame Dubois !

bõ-ZHOOR, mah-DAHM dü-BWAH

Good morning, Mrs Dubois!

B:

Bonjour, Monsieur Martin !

Comment allez-vous ?

bõ-ZHOOR, muh-SYUH mar-TÊ! ko-mã-tah-lay-VOO

Good morning, Mr Martin! How are you?

A:

Très bien, merci. Et vous ?

tray BYÊ, mair-SEE. ay VOO

Very well, thank you. And you?

B:

Bien, merci.

BYÊ, mair-SEE

Fine, thank you.

② Meeting a Friend (informal) — Salut !

A:

Salut, Léa ! Ça va ?

sah-LÛ, lay-AH! sah VAH

Hi, Léa! How's it going?

B:

Salut, Hugo ! Ça va bien, merci. Et toi ?

sah-LÛ, ü-GOH! sah vah BYÊ, mair-SEE. ay TWAH

Hi, Hugo! Fine, thanks. And you?

A:

Comme ci, comme ça. Pas terrible.

kom SEE, kom SAH. pah tay-REE-bluh

So-so. Not great.

③ Day & Evening — Bonjour, Bonsoir

A:

Bonjour, Monsieur Petit.

bō-ZHOOR, muh-SYUH puh-TEE

Good day, Mr Petit.

B:

Bonjour, Madame Roux.

bō-ZHOOR, mah-DAHM ROO

Good day, Mrs Roux.

A:

Bonsoir, Madame Roux ! Bonne soirée !

bō-SWAHR, mah-DAHM ROO! bon swah-RAY

Good evening, Mrs Roux! Have a nice evening!
(later that day)

B:

Bonsoir ! Merci, vous aussi !

bō-SWAHR! mair-SEE, voo-zoh-SEE

Good evening! Thanks, you too!

④ Please, Thanks & Sorry — S'il vous plaît, Merci, Pardon

A:

Oh, pardon !

oh, par-DÕ

Oh, sorry! / Excuse me!

B:

Pas de problème !

pah duh pro-BLEM

No problem!

A:

Voilà, s'il vous plaît. — Merci beaucoup !

vwah-LAH, seel voo PLAY — mair-SEE boh-KOO

Here you are, please. — Thank you very much!

B:

De rien.

duh RYÊ

You're welcome. (literally "of nothing")

⑤ Formal Goodbye — Au revoir

A:

Au revoir, Monsieur Girard !

oh ruh-VWAHR, muh-SYUH zhee-RAHR

Goodbye, Mr Girard!

B:

Au revoir, Madame ! Bonne journée !

oh ruh-VWAHR, mah-DAHM! bon zhoor-NAY

Goodbye! Have a good day!

A:

⑥ Casual Goodbye & Good Night — Salut, Bonne nuit

A:

Salut, Hugo ! À demain !

sah-LÛ, ü-GOH! ah duh-MÊ

Bye, Hugo! See you tomorrow!

B:

Salut ! À bientôt !

sah-LÛ! ah byê-TOH

Bye! See you soon!

A:

Merci, vous aussi !

mair-SEE, voo-zoh-SEE

Thanks, you too!

Bonne nuit, Chloé ! Dors bien !

bon NWEE, klo-AY! dor BYĚ

Good night, Chloé! Sleep well!

B:

Merci, toi aussi !

mair-SEE, twah oh-SEE

Thanks, you too!

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

The formal way (with vous) is for strangers, shops, hotels, work and anyone older; the informal way (with tu) is for friends, family, children and people your own age in relaxed settings. Ça va ? works with both.

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
Hello (daytime)	Bonjour	Salut / Bonjour
Hello (evening)	Bonsoir	Salut / Bonsoir
How are you?	Comment allez-vous ?	Ça va ? / Comment vas-tu ?
Fine, thanks. And you?	Très bien, merci. Et vous ?	Ça va bien, merci. Et toi ?
Goodbye	Au revoir	Salut / À bientôt / À demain

ANSWERING "HOW ARE YOU?"	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Super !	<i>sü-PAIR</i>	Great!
Très bien.	<i>tray BYĚ</i>	Very well.
Bien, merci.	<i>BYĚ, mair-SEE</i>	Fine, thanks.
Comme ci, comme ça.	<i>kom SEE, kom SAH</i>	So-so.
Pas terrible.	<i>pah tay-REE-bluh</i>	Not great.

ANSWERING "HOW ARE YOU?"	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Mal.	<i>mahl</i>	Bad.

Tu or vous? — The Formal / Informal Split

French has two words for "you". *Vous* is polite and formal (it also means "you" for more than one person); *tu* is friendly and informal. English has just "you", so this is new, but the rule of thumb is simple: **when in doubt, use vous**. Nobody is offended by being addressed too politely, and if a French speaker wants you to switch, they'll suggest it: *On peut se tutoyer ?* ("Can we say *tu* to each other?"). Notice that *Ça va ?* is neutral and works for everyone.

Survival Phrases — Si vous ne comprenez pas

Four phrases every beginner needs. You'll use them in every chapter of this course.

FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION	ENGLISH
Je ne comprends pas.	<i>zhuh nuh kō-PRĀ pah</i>	I don't understand.
Répétez, s'il vous plaît.	<i>ray-pay-TAY, seel voo PLAY</i>	Please repeat that.
Plus lentement, s'il vous plaît.	<i>plü lāt-MĀ, seel voo PLAY</i>	Slower, please.
Parlez-vous anglais ?	<i>par-lay-voo-zā-GLAY</i>	Do you speak English?

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. French nouns have a gender, masculine or feminine, which shows in the little word before them: le / un (masculine) and la / une (feminine). Learn the little word together with the noun. The only nouns in this chapter are the titles monsieur and madame.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	bonjour	<i>bō-ZHOOR</i>	hello, good day	phrase	until early evening; bon + jour
2	bonsoir	<i>bō-SWAHR</i>	good evening	phrase	a greeting, not a goodbye

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
3	salut	sah-LÜ	hi / bye	phrase	informal, hello and goodbye
4	bonne nuit	bon NWEE	good night	phrase	only when going to bed
5	au revoir	oh ruh-VWAHR	goodbye	phrase	literally "until the seeing again"
6	à bientôt	ah byě-TOH	see you soon	phrase	à = until, to
7	à demain	ah duh-MĚ	see you tomorrow	phrase	
8	merci	mair-SEE	thank you	phrase	merci beaucoup = thank you very much
9	s'il vous plaît	seel voo PLAY	please (formal)	phrase	informal: s'il te plaît
10	de rien	duh RYĚ	you're welcome	phrase	also: je vous en prie (formal)
11	pardon	par-DŎ	sorry / excuse me	phrase	for bumping into someone
12	excusez-moi	ek-skü-zay-MWAH	excuse me	phrase	to get attention or ask for something
13	oui	wee	yes	phrase	
14	non	nŏ	no	phrase	nasal: don't say the n
15	bien	byě	well, fine	adv	Ça va bien.
16	mal	mahl	badly	adv	Ça va mal.
17	très	tray	very	adv	très bien = very well
18	et	ay	and	word	the t is silent: "Et vous ?"
19	monsieur	muh-SYUH	Mr / sir / gentleman	noun, m.	abbreviated M. · un monsieur
20	madame	mah-DAHM	Mrs / madam / lady	noun, f.	abbreviated Mme · une dame

Real French Tip — Always Say Bonjour

In France, greeting people when you walk into a shop, a café, a bakery, a doctor's waiting room or a lift is expected: say *Bonjour* (or *Bonsoir*) before you ask for anything. Starting straight in with "Un café, s'il vous plaît" can feel abrupt, and the same goes for saying *Au revoir* and *Merci* as you leave. You'll often add *Madame* or *Monsieur* without a surname: *Bonjour, Madame*. Between friends and family, people often kiss on the cheeks (*faire la bise*), and in a formal or work setting a handshake is usual. *Mademoiselle* is now rarely used, and *Madame* is the safe choice for any adult woman.

Quick Grammar Note — Bonjour but Bonne nuit

Notice the two forms: *bon jour* / *bon appétit*, but *bonne nuit* / *bonne soirée* / *bonne journée*. The adjective *bon* ("good") changes its ending to agree with the gender of the noun: *jour* is masculine, *nuit*, *soirée* and *journée* are feminine. You don't need to understand this yet: just learn the phrases as they are. The system behind it arrives in later chapters.

A First Look at the Verb Behind "Ça va ?"

"How are you?" uses the verb *aller* ("to go", literally "how do you go?"). You'll meet it fully later, but here are its forms so that *Comment allez-vous ?*, *Comment vas-tu ?* and *Ça va ?* make sense:

WHO	ALLER	SAY IT
je (I)	je vais	zhuh VAY
tu (you, informal)	tu vas	tü VAH
il / elle / on (he / she / one)	il va · ça va	eel VAH · sah VAH
vous (you, formal or plural)	vous allez	voo-zah-LAY



Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. It's 8 a.m. and you meet your neighbour, Madame Dubois. What do you say?

▼ Show answer

Bonjour, Madame Dubois ! (You'd use *vous* with a neighbour you don't know well.)

2. You bump into a friend. Say hello and ask how they are.

▼ Show answer

Salut ! Ça va ? (or: Salut ! Comment vas-tu ?)

3. Your boss asks "Comment allez-vous ?" Reply that you're very well and ask the same back.

▼ Show answer

Très bien, merci. Et vous ?

4. It's 8 p.m. and you arrive at a restaurant. How do you greet the staff?

▼ Show answer

Bonsoir, Madame / Monsieur ! (*Bonsoir*, not *bonjour*, in the evening.)

5. A friend is leaving and you'll see them tomorrow. What do you say?

▼ Show answer

Salut ! À demain !

6. A shop assistant speaks quickly and you don't follow. Ask them to slow down and repeat.

▼ Show answer

Répétez, s'il vous plaît. Plus lentement, s'il vous plaît. (You can add: Je ne comprends pas.)

Coming Up in Chapter 2

You can now greet people and say goodbye. Next you'll **introduce yourself**: your name, how to say "nice to meet you", and how to ask someone else's name.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 2 · Introducing Yourself



Introducing Yourself — Se présenter

Say who you are, ask someone's name, say "nice to meet you", introduce a friend or colleague, and spell a name out loud. You'll also meet the two most important French verbs, être ("to be") and s'appeler ("to be called"), and the little words for I, you, he, she and we.



Six Short Conversations — Conversations

Read each one aloud, using the pronunciation line. Remember: a spoken French sentence flows together, so don't pause between words, and let the last syllable of each word be the gentle emphasis (the capitals).

① A Formal Introduction — Je m'appelle ...

A:

Bonjour, je m'appelle Sophie
Lambert.

bō-ZHOOR, zhuh mah-PEL soh-FEE lā-BAIR

Hello, my name is Sophie Lambert.

B:

Bonjour, Madame. Je m'appelle
Paul Moreau. Enchanté.

*bō-ZHOOR, mah-DAHM. zhuh mah-PEL pohl
moh-ROH. ā-shā-TAY*

Hello, madam. My name is Paul Moreau.
Pleased to meet you.

A:

Enchantée, Monsieur Moreau.

ā-shā-TAY, muh-SYUH moh-ROH

Pleased to meet you, Mr Moreau.

B:

Appelez-moi Paul, s'il vous plaît.

② Among Friends — Tu t'appelles comment ?

A:

Salut ! Tu t'appelles comment ?

sah-LÜ! tû tah-PEL ko-MÃ

Hi! What's your name?

B:

Moi, c'est Camille. Et toi ?

mwah, say kah-MEE. ay TWAH

I'm Camille. And you?

A:

Moi, c'est Julien. Enchanté !

mwah, say zhü-LYÊ. ā-shā-TAY

I'm Julien. Nice to meet you!

B:

Enchantée !

ā-shā-TAY

Nice to meet you!

ah-play-MWAH pohl, seel voo PLAY

Please call me Paul.

③ Asking a Stranger — Comment vous appelez-vous ?

A:

Excusez-moi, Monsieur. Comment vous appelez-vous ?

ek-skü-zay-MWAH, muh-SYUH. ko-mã voo-zah-play-VOO

Excuse me, sir. What is your name?

B:

Je m'appelle Thomas Girard. Et vous ?

zhuh mah-PEL toh-MAH zhee-RAHR. ay VOO
My name is Thomas Girard. And you?

A:

Nathalie Roux. Enchantée.

nah-tah-LEE ROO. ã-shã-TAY

Nathalie Roux. Pleased to meet you.

④ Introducing a Friend — Voici mon ami

A:

Camille, voici mon ami, Julien.

kah-MEE, vwah-SEE mō-nah-MEE, zhü-LYË

Camille, this is my friend, Julien.

B:

Salut, Julien ! Moi, c'est Camille.

sah-LÛ, zhü-LYË! mwah, say kah-MEE

Hi, Julien! I'm Camille.

C:

Salut, Camille ! Enchanté.

sah-LÛ, kah-MEE! ã-shã-TAY

Hi, Camille! Nice to meet you.

⑤ First Name & Surname — Comment ça s'écrit ?

A:

Comment ça s'écrit, votre nom ?

ko-mã sah say-KREE, VOH-truh NÕ

How is your surname spelled?

B:

Dubois : D-U-B-O-I-S.

dü-BWAH: day – ü – bay – oh – ee – ess

Dubois: D-U-B-O-I-S.

A:

⑥ Introducing a Colleague (formal) — Je vous présente ...

A:

Madame Roux, je vous présente Monsieur Girard.

mah-DAHM ROO, zhuh voo pray-ZÃT muh-SYUH zhee-RAHR

Mrs Roux, let me introduce Mr Girard.

B:

Enchantée, Monsieur Girard.

Bienvenue !

Merci. Et votre prénom ?

mair-SEE. ay VOH-truh pray-NÕ

Thank you. And your first name?

B:

Léa : L-É-A.

lay-AH: ell – ay – ah

Léa: L-É-A.

ã-shã-TAY, muh-SYUH zhee-RAHR. byê-vuh-NÜ

Pleased to meet you, Mr Girard. Welcome!

C:

Enchanté, Madame Roux. Merci.

ã-shã-TAY, mah-DAHM ROO. mair-SEE

Pleased to meet you, Mrs Roux. Thank you.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
My name is...	Je m'appelle ... / Je suis ...	Je m'appelle ... / Moi, c'est ...
What's your name?	Comment vous appelez-vous ?	Tu t'appelles comment ? / Comment tu t'appelles ?
Nice to meet you	Enchanté(e)	Enchanté(e)
This is...	Je vous présente ... / Voici ...	Voici ... / C'est ...
How is it spelled?	Comment ça s'écrit ?	Comment ça s'écrit ?
FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION	ENGLISH
Je m'appelle Anna.	<i>zhuh mah-PEL ah-NAH</i>	My name is Anna.
Je suis Anna.	<i>zhuh SWEE ah-NAH</i>	I am Anna.
Moi, c'est Anna.	<i>mwah, say ah-NAH</i>	I'm Anna. (informal)
Voici mon ami Paul.	<i>vwah-SEE mō-nah-MEE pohl</i>	This is my friend Paul.
Voici mon amie Léa.	<i>vwah-SEE mō-nah-MEE lay-AH</i>	This is my (female) friend Léa.

"Enchanté" or "Enchantée"?

The word for "pleased to meet you" is spelled differently depending on who is speaking: a man writes *enchanté*, a woman writes *enchantée*. They sound exactly the same ("ã-shã-TAY"), so you only need to remember the spelling when you write. The same happens with *ami* / *amie* (male / female friend): the extra *e* is silent.



The French Alphabet — L'alphabet

You need the letter names to spell your name, an email address or a street. Practise saying your own name letter by letter.

LETTER	SAY IT	LETTER	SAY IT	LETTER	SAY IT	LETTER	SAY IT
A	<i>ah</i>	H	<i>ahsh</i>	O	<i>oh</i>	V	<i>vay</i>
B	<i>bay</i>	I	<i>ee</i>	P	<i>pay</i>	W	<i>doo-bluh-VAY</i>
C	<i>say</i>	J	<i>zhee</i>	Q	<i>kü</i>	X	<i>eeks</i>
D	<i>day</i>	K	<i>kah</i>	R	<i>air</i>	Y	<i>ee-GREK</i>
E	<i>uh</i>	L	<i>ell</i>	S	<i>ess</i>	Z	<i>zed</i>
F	<i>eff</i>	M	<i>emm</i>	T	<i>tay</i>		
G	<i>zhay</i>	N	<i>enn</i>	U	<i>ü</i>		

WHEN SPELLING, YOU MAY ALSO HEAR	SAY IT	MEANING
é · è · ê	<i>ay a-ksã-tay-GÜ · ay a-ksã-GRAHV · ay a-ksã sir-kõ-FLEKS</i>	e with an acute · grave · circumflex accent
ç	<i>say say-DEE-yuh</i>	c with a cedilla
un tiret	<i>ẽ tee-RAY</i>	a hyphen (e.g. Jean-Pierre)
deux « m »	<i>duh EMM</i>	double m



Two Little Words for "You" and "I" — Les pronoms sujets

Before the two key verbs, here are the words that say who is doing the action. You'll see them in every chapter.

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
je (j')	zhuh	I	not capitalised, except at the start of a sentence; j' before a vowel
tu	tü	you (one person, informal)	friends, family, children
il / elle	eel / el	he / she	also "it", for masculine / feminine things
on	õ	one, we, people	very common in speech for "we"
nous	noo	we	a little more formal than <i>on</i>
vous	voo	you (formal, or more than one person)	strangers, respect, groups
ils / elles	eel / el	they (masculine or mixed / feminine)	a mixed group is always <i>ils</i>



Two Verbs You Just Used — Deux verbes

Verbs change their form for each person. These two are irregular, so learn the shapes as they are. Être ("to be") is the most important verb in French. S'appeler ("to be called", literally "to call oneself") is a reflexive verb: the little word *me / te / se* goes in front of the verb.

WHO	ÊTRE (TO BE)	SAY IT	S'APPELER (TO BE CALLED)	SAY IT
je	je suis	zhuh SWEE	je m'appelle	zhuh mah-PEL

WHO	ÊTRE (TO BE)	SAY IT	S'APPELER (TO BE CALLED)	SAY IT
tu	tu es	tü AY	tu t'appelles	tü tah-PEL
il / elle / on	il / elle / on est	eel / el / õ-NAY	il / elle / on s'appelle	eel sah-PEL
nous	nous sommes	noo SOM	nous nous appelons	noo noo-zah-play-LÕ
vous	vous êtes	voo-ZET	vous vous appelez	voo voo-zah-play-LAY
ils / elles	ils / elles sont	eel SÕ	ils / elles s'appellent	eel sah-PEL

"Je m'appelle", "Je suis" or "Moi, c'est"?

All three are natural. *Je m'appelle Anna* is the standard way to give your name (literally "I call myself Anna"). *Je suis Anna* ("I am Anna") is equally correct and a little shorter. *Moi, c'est Anna* ("As for me, it's Anna") is a relaxed, informal way, perfect among friends. Notice the doubled **ll** in *je m'appelle*, *tu t'appelles*, *il s'appelle*, and the single **l** in *nous appelons*, *vous appelez*: it's a spelling quirk of this verb.

Joining Words Together — Elision and Liaison

French likes words to flow into each other, and that explains two things you've already seen.

Elision: a short word ending in *e* (or *a*) drops it before a vowel sound and joins on with an apostrophe: *je + appelle* → *j'appelle* (and *me + appelle* → *m'appelle*), *ce + est* → *c'est*, *le + ami* → *l'ami*. **Liaison:** a silent final consonant is sometimes pronounced when the next word starts with a vowel: *mon ami* is "mõ-nah-MEE", *vous êtes* is "voo-ZET", *vous appelez* is "voo-zah-play-LAY". You'll notice both better with every chapter, so just follow the pronunciation lines for now.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are shown with their gender (m. masculine, f. feminine) and the little word before them, which you should learn together with the noun.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	je m'appelle	zhuh mah-PEL	my name is	phrase	from s'appeler
2	s'appeler	sah-play-LAY	to be called	verb	reflexive; ll in je / tu / il forms
3	être	AY-truh	to be	verb	je suis, tu es, il est
4	présenter	pray-zã-TAY	to introduce	verb	je vous présente
5	épeler	ay-puh-LAY	to spell	verb	Pouvez-vous épeler ?
6	enchanté / enchantée	ã-shã-TAY	pleased to meet you	adj	m. / f.; same sound
7	comment	ko-MÃ	how	word	Comment ça s'écrit ?
8	c'est	say	it is, this is	phrase	ce + est; "Moi, c'est ..."
9	voici	vwah-SEE	here is, this is	word	for pointing out a person or thing
10	moi	mwah	me, I (emphatic)	word	"Moi, c'est Léa."
11	toi	twah	you (emphatic, informal)	word	"Et toi ?"
12	aussi	oh-SEE	also, too	adv	"Moi aussi."
13	le nom	nõ	name; surname	noun, m.	le nom de famille = surname
14	le prénom	pray-NÕ	first name	noun, m.	"Votre prénom ?"
15	un ami / une amie	ẽ-nah-MEE / ün-ah-MEE	friend (m. / f.)	noun	mon ami / mon amie
16	un collègue / une collègue	ẽ ko-LEG / ün ko-LEG	colleague (m. / f.)	noun	same word; only the article changes
17	la lettre	LET-truh	letter (of the alphabet)	noun, f.	also means a letter you post

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
18	mon / ma	mõ / mah	my (m. / f.)	word	<i>mon ami, ma collègue</i>
19	bienvenue	byě-vuh-NÜ	welcome	phrase	<i>to greet a newcomer</i>
20	Comment ça s'écrit ?	ko-mã sah say-KREE	How is that spelled?	phrase	<i>s'écrire = to be written</i>

Real French Tip — Names, First Names and "Mon Copain"

In France you'll often be on first-name terms quickly at work, especially in younger or more casual companies, but *vous* and *Monsieur / Madame* stay the default until someone invites you to use first names and *tu*. Be careful with two words: *un ami* is simply a friend, but *mon copain / ma copine* and *mon petit ami / ma petite amie* often mean "my boyfriend / my girlfriend". If you mean a friend, *ami(e)* is the safe word.

Quick Grammar Note — Why "Madame" and "Monsieur" Come First

When you address someone by title and surname, the order is simply *Madame Dubois, Monsieur Moreau*, as in English. On its own, *Madame / Monsieur* without a name is a polite way to speak to a stranger (*Excusez-moi, Madame*). Both are capitalised when you write them as a form of address.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. You meet a business contact for the first time. Greet them, give your name, and say you're pleased to meet them.

▼ Show answer

Bonjour, Madame / Monsieur. Je m'appelle ... Enchanté(e). (A man writes *enchanté*, a woman *enchantée*.)

2. You meet a new friend at a party. Ask their name informally.

▼ Show answer

Tu t'appelles comment ? (or: Comment tu t'appelles ?) And you can add: Moi, c'est ...

3. Politely ask an older stranger for their name.

▼ Show answer

Excusez-moi, Monsieur / Madame. Comment vous appelez-vous ? (Use *vous*.)

4. Introduce your friend Julien to your colleague Madame Roux.

▼ Show answer

Madame Roux, voici mon ami, Julien. (Or formally: Je vous présente mon ami Julien.)

5. Spell the surname "Lambert" in French letter names.

▼ Show answer

L-A-M-B-E-R-T: ell – ah – emm – bay – uh – air – tay.

6. Say "I am Anna" in two different ways.

▼ Show answer

Je m'appelle Anna. / Je suis Anna. (Informally also: Moi, c'est Anna.)

Coming Up in Chapter 3

You can now introduce yourself and others. Next up: **numbers, age and contact details:** counting, saying how old you are, and giving your phone number and email address.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 3 · Numbers, Age & Contact Details

123 Numbers, Age & Contact Details — Les nombres, l'âge et les coordonnées

This chapter has three short parts so the numbers stay manageable: **Part 1** counts from 0 to 20; **Part 2** builds the tens (including French's famous "four-twenties") and lets you say your age; **Part 3** covers phone numbers and email addresses. Read the French aloud with the pronunciation line each time.

Part 1 · Numbers 0–20 — Les nombres de zéro à vingt

0 zéro
zay-ROH

1 un / une
ẽ / ün

2 deux
duh

3 trois
trwah

4 quatre
KAH-truh

5 cinq
sẽk

6 six
sees

7 sept
set

8 huit
weet

9 neuf
nuf

10 dix
dees

11 onze
õz

12 douze
dooz

13 treize
trez

14 quatorze
kah-TORZ

15 quinze
kẽz

16 seize
sez

17 dix-sept
dee-SET

18 dix-huit
dee-ZWEET

19 dix-neuf
deez-NUF

20 vingt
vẽ

Number Patterns to Notice

From 17 to 19 French simply says "ten-seven, ten-eight, ten-nine" (*dix-sept, dix-huit, dix-neuf*); 11 to 16 are separate words, each ending in *-ze*. *Un* is "one" for masculine things (*un ami*) and *une* for feminine ones (*une amie*). Finally, watch the final consonants of *cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix*: said alone, you hear the last sound (*sees, set, weet, nuf, dees*), but before a word starting with a consonant it often disappears (*six personnes* is "see pair-SON"). Before a vowel sound it links on: *dix ans* is "dee-ZÃ". Follow the pronunciation lines and your ear will pick this up.

① Counting Together — Comptons !

A:

Comptons jusqu'à dix !

kō-TÕ zhüs-kah DEES

Let's count to ten!

B:

Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six,
sept, huit, neuf, dix !

*ẽ, duh, trwah, KAH-truh, sêk, sees, set, weet,
nuf, dees*

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
nine, ten!

A:

Et après dix ?

ay ah-PRAY DEES

And after ten?

B:

Onze, douze, treize, quatorze,
quinze, seize !

õz, dooz, trez, kah-TORZ, kêz, sez

Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen,
sixteen!

② Which Number? — Quel numéro ?

A:

Excusez-moi, quel bus va au centre-
ville ?

*ek-skü-zay-MWAH, kel BÛS vah oh sã-truh-
VEEL*

Excuse me, which bus goes to the town centre?

B:

Le numéro quinze.

luh nü-may-ROH KÊZ

Number fifteen.

A:

Le quinze ou le cinquante ?

luh KÊZ oo luh sê-KÃT

Fifteen or fifty?

B:

Le quinze, Madame. Quinze, un-
cinq.

luh KÊZ, mah-DAHM. kêz, ẽ-SÊK

Fifteen, madam. Fifteen: one-five.

Part 2 • The Tens & Your Age — Les dizaines et l'âge

NUMBER	FRENCH	SAY IT	NOTE
20	vingt	<i>vẽ</i>	<i>the t is silent, except in 21–29</i>
30	trente	<i>trãt</i>	
40	quarante	<i>kah-RÃT</i>	

NUMBER	FRENCH	SAY IT	NOTE
50	cinquante	<i>sě-KĀT</i>	
60	soixante	<i>swah-SĀT</i>	<i>the x says "s"</i>
70	soixante-dix	<i>swah-sāt-DEES</i>	<i>"sixty-ten"</i>
80	quatre-vingts	<i>kah-truh-VĚ</i>	<i>"four-twenties"</i>
90	quatre-vingt-dix	<i>kah-truh-vě-DEES</i>	<i>"four-twenty-ten"</i>
100	cent	<i>sā</i>	
1,000	mille	<i>meel</i>	<i>never takes an -s</i>
Numbers 21–99 — the "building blocks"			
NUMBER	FRENCH	SAY IT	HOW IT'S BUILT
21	vingt et un	<i>vě-tay-ĚN</i>	<i>20 et 1 (the "and" appears with 21, 31, 41, 51, 61 and 71)</i>
22	vingt-deux	<i>vět-DUH</i>	<i>20 + 2, joined by a hyphen</i>
35	trente-cinq	<i>trāt-SĚK</i>	<i>30 + 5</i>
47	quarante-sept	<i>kah-rāt-SET</i>	<i>40 + 7</i>
68	soixante-huit	<i>swah-sāt-WEET</i>	<i>60 + 8</i>
71	soixante et onze	<i>swah-sāt-ay-ŌZ</i>	<i>60 + 11</i>
77	soixante-dix-sept	<i>swah-sāt-dee-SET</i>	<i>60 + 17</i>
81	quatre-vingt-un	<i>kah-truh-vě-ĚN</i>	<i>4 × 20 + 1 (no et here, and vingt loses its -s)</i>
92	quatre-vingt-douze	<i>kah-truh-vě-DOOZ</i>	<i>4 × 20 + 12</i>
99	quatre-vingt-dix-neuf	<i>kah-truh-vě-deez-NUF</i>	<i>4 × 20 + 19</i>

Four-Twenties and Sixty-Tens — It Is Logical, Really

Up to 69 French counts just as English does. From 70 it switches to a base-20 style that survives from older French: 70 is "sixty-ten" (*soixante-dix*), 80 is "four twenties" (*quatre-vingts*), and 90 is "four-twenty-ten". It sounds like a puzzle at first, but once you do the sum it always works, and every French child learns it, so you're in good company. Belgians and many Swiss speakers have a tidier system with *septante* (70) and *nonante* (90), and you'll be understood in France if you use them, though people may smile at the accent.

③ Asking a Friend's Age — Tu as quel âge ?

A:

Tu as quel âge, Léa ?

tü ah kel AHZH, lay-AH

How old are you, Léa?

B:

Devine !

duh-VEEN

Guess!

A:

Vingt-cinq ans ?

vêť-sẽ-KÃ

Twenty-five?

B:

Presque ! J'ai vingt-sept ans. Et toi ?

PRES-kuh! zhay vêť-SET-ã. ay TWAH

Almost! I'm twenty-seven. And you?

A:

J'ai trente et un ans.

zhay trãť-ay-ẽ-NÃ

I'm thirty-one.

④ A Registration Form (formal) — Quel âge avez-vous ?

A:

Votre nom, s'il vous plaît ?

VOH-truh NÕ, seel voo PLAY

Your surname, please?

B:

Moreau. Paul Moreau.

moh-ROH. POHL moh-ROH

Moreau. Paul Moreau.

A:

Quel âge avez-vous, Monsieur

Moreau ?

kel AHZH ah-vay-VOO, muh-SYUH moh-ROH

How old are you, Mr Moreau?

B:

J'ai quarante-six ans.

zhay kah-rãť-see-ZÃ

I'm forty-six.

A:

Merci, c'est noté.

mair-SEE, say noh-TAY

Thank you, noted.

The verb "avoir" (to have) — French people *have* an age

WHO	AVOIR (TO HAVE)	SAY IT	EXAMPLE
je	j'ai	<i>zhay</i>	J'ai vingt ans.
tu	tu as	<i>tü ah</i>	Tu as quel âge ?
il / elle / on	il / elle / on a	<i>eel ah / el ah / õ-NAH</i>	Elle a trente ans.
nous	nous avons	<i>noo-zah-VÕ</i>	Nous avons le même âge.
vous	vous avez	<i>voo-zah-VAY</i>	Vous avez quel âge ?
ils / elles	ils / elles ont	<i>eel-ZÕ</i>	Ils ont dix ans.

Real French Tip — Age Uses "Avoir", Not "Être"

In English you *are* thirty; in French you *have* thirty years: **J'ai trente ans**, never *Je suis trente ans*. Always say *ans* ("years"), even though English drops it. A second tip: with a friend, asking the age is easy, but with an adult you've just met it can feel nosy, especially if you're asking a woman. Wait until you know someone, or let them bring it up. Between young people, *Tu as quel âge ?* is fine.

Linking Numbers to "ans"

The final consonant of a number often appears before *ans*: *deux ans* "duh-ZÃ", *trois ans* "trwah-ZÃ", *six ans* "see-ZÃ", *dix ans* "dee-ZÃ", *vingt ans* "vê-TÃ". It happens automatically if you run the number straight into *ans* without a pause.

Part 3 · Phone Numbers & Email — Le téléphone et l'adresse e-mail

French phone numbers have ten digits, written and spoken in **pairs**. A mobile number starts with **06** or **07**; landlines start with **01** to **05**.

WRITTEN	SPOKEN, PAIR BY PAIR	SAY IT
06 12 34 56 78	zéro six, douze, trente-quatre, cinquante-six, soixante-dix-huit	<i>zay-roh SEES, dooz, trât-KAH-truh, sê-kât-SEES, swah-sât-dee-ZWEET</i>

WRITTEN	SPOKEN, PAIR BY PAIR	SAY IT
01 45 67 89 00	zéro un, quarante-cinq, soixante-sept, quatre-vingt-neuf, zéro zéro	<i>zay-roh-ËN, kah-rât-SËK, swah-sât-SET, kah-truh-vě-NUF, zay-roh-zay-ROH</i>

How the French Read Out a Phone Number

The French say a phone number in five pairs, as above, with a tiny pause between pairs. Reading digit by digit sounds odd. If you need to hear a number again, ask *Pouvez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît ?* or *Encore une fois, s'il vous plaît*. Calling from abroad? France's country code is **+33**, and you drop the first 0: 06 12 34 56 78 becomes +33 6 12 34 56 78.

Saying an email address — l'adresse e-mail

SYMBOL	FRENCH	SAY IT
@	arobase	<i>ah-roh-BAHZ</i>
. (dot)	point	<i>pwě</i>
- (hyphen)	tiret	<i>tee-RAY</i>
_ (underscore)	tiret du bas	<i>tee-ray dü BAH</i>
.com / .fr	point com / point f-r	<i>pwě KOM / pwě eff-AIR</i>

So **sophie.lambert@gmail.com** is read: *sophie point lambert arobase gmail point com* ("so-FEE pwě lâ-BAIR ah-roh-BAHZ gee-MAYL pwě KOM"). If the name isn't a common word, spell it with the letters from Chapter 2.

⑤ Swapping Numbers — Ton numéro de téléphone

A:

Tu as un portable ? C'est quoi, ton numéro ?

tü ah ē por-TAH-bluh? say KWAH, tō nü-may-ROH

Do you have a mobile? What's your number?

⑥ Giving an Email (formal) — Votre adresse e-mail

A:

Quelle est votre adresse e-mail, Madame ?

kel ay VOH-trah-DRES ee-MEL, mah-DAHM
What is your email address, madam?

B:

B:

Zéro six, douze, trente-quatre,
cinquante-six, soixante-dix-huit.

*zay-roh SEES, dooz, trât-KAH-truh, sê-kât-
SEES, swah-sât-dee-ZWEET*

06 12 34 56 78.

A:

Je répète : zéro six, douze, trente-
quatre...

*zhuh ray-PET: zay-roh SEES, dooz, trât-KAH-
truh*

I'll repeat: 06 12 34 ...

B:

C'est ça ! Appelle-moi demain.

say SAH! ah-pel-MWAH duh-MÊ

That's right! Call me tomorrow.

Sophie point Lambert arobase gmail
point com.

*so-FEE pwê lâ-BAIR ah-roh-BAHZ gee-MAYL
pwê KOM*

sophie.lambert@gmail.com

A:

Pouvez-vous épeler « Lambert », s'il
vous plaît ?

*poo-vay-voo ay-puh-LAY lâ-BAIR, seel voo
PLAY*

Could you spell "Lambert", please?

B:

L-A-M-B-E-R-T.

ell - ah - emm - bay - uh - air - tay

L-A-M-B-E-R-T.

A:

Merci beaucoup.

mair-SEE boh-KOO

Thank you very much.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are shown with *le* (masculine) or *la* (feminine); before a vowel both become *l'*, so the gender is marked in the Note column.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le chiffre	<i>SHEE-fruh</i>	digit, figure	noun, m.	0–9
2	le nombre	<i>NŌ-bruh</i>	number (amount)	noun, m.	"a large number of"
3	le numéro	<i>nü-may-ROH</i>	number (identifier)	noun, m.	phone, bus, house
4	compter	<i>kō-TAY</i>	to count	verb	the p is silent
5	avoir	<i>ah-VWAHR</i>	to have	verb	j'ai, tu as, il a

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
6	l'âge	AHZH	age	noun, m.	Quel âge ?
7	un an	ẽ-NÃ	a year	noun, m.	plural: ans, always used for age
8	le téléphone	tay-lay-FON	telephone	noun, m.	le numéro de téléphone
9	le portable	por-TAH-bluh	mobile phone	noun, m.	also an adjective, "portable"
10	l'adresse e-mail	ah-DRES ee-MEL	email address	noun, f.	often just "le mail"
11	l'arobase	ah-roh-BAHZ	the @ sign	noun, f.	"arobase"
12	le point	pwẽ	dot, full stop	noun, m.	in an email address
13	le tiret	tee-RAY	hyphen, dash	noun, m.	Jean-Pierre: "tired"
14	répéter	ray-pay-TAY	to repeat	verb	Pouvez-vous répéter ?
15	appeler	ah-play-LAY	to call, to phone	verb	s'appeler = to be called
16	deviner	duh-vee-NAY	to guess	verb	Devine ! / Devinez !
17	combien	kõ-BYË	how much, how many	word	Combien ça coûte ? (Ch. 9)
18	quel / quelle	kel	which, what	word	m. / f.; same sound
19	presque	PRES-kuh	almost	adv	"Presque !"
20	encore	ã-KOR	again, still, more	adv	encore une fois = once more

Nombre vs. Numéro — Two Words for "Number"

Un nombre is a number as a quantity or in maths (*un grand nombre de personnes*, "a large number of people"). *Un numéro* is a number that identifies something: a phone number, a bus number, a house number. When you want a phone number, always ask for the *numéro de téléphone*.

Quick Grammar Note — "Quel" Changes Its Spelling

Quel ("which, what") agrees with the noun that follows: *quel âge* (m.), *quelle adresse* (f.), *quels numéros* (m. pl.), *quelles lettres* (f. pl.). All four sound the same, "kel", so it only matters when you write.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say how old you are (use your own age, for example 25).

▼ Show answer

J'ai vingt-cinq ans. (Use *avoir*, not *être*.)

2. Say 71 and 94 in French.

▼ Show answer

71 = soixante et onze (60 + 11). 94 = quatre-vingt-quatorze (4 × 20 + 14).

3. Read out this mobile number: 07 45 82 19 60.

▼ Show answer

Zéro sept, quarante-cinq, quatre-vingt-deux, dix-neuf, soixante.

4. Ask a friend how old they are, then ask a colleague you don't know well (formally).

▼ Show answer

Friend: Tu as quel âge ? Formal: Quel âge avez-vous ? (or, more tactfully, don't ask at all unless you need to!)

5. Read aloud the email address *ben.roux@mail.fr*.

▼ Show answer

Ben point roux arobase mail point f-r. (Pronounced: ben pwê ROO ah-roh-BAHZ mayl pwê eff-AIR.)

6. What is wrong with *Je suis trente ans*, and how do you fix it?

▼ Show answer

French uses *avoir* (to have) for age, not *être*. Correct: **J'ai trente ans.**

Coming Up in Chapter 4

You can now count, give your age, and share your phone number and email. Next up: **where you're from**: countries, nationalities, and saying *Je viens de...* and *Je suis...* with the right masculine or feminine form.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 4 · Where You're From: Countries & Nationalities

Where You're From — D'où venez-vous ?

Say where you come from and where you live, name your nationality, and talk about the languages you speak. This is the chapter where French gets its first real grammar puzzle: countries have a **gender**, and that decides whether you say *en*, *au* or *aux*. A short table makes it easy.

① Where Are You From? (formal) — Vous êtes d'où ?

A:

Vous êtes français, Monsieur ?

voo-ZET frã-SAY, muh-SYUH

Are you French, sir?

B:

Non, je suis écossais. Je viens d'Édimbourg.

nõ, zhuh SWEE-zay-ko-SAY. zhuh vyê day-dê-BOOR

No, I'm Scottish. I come from Edinburgh.

A:

Ah, l'Écosse ! C'est un beau pays.

ah, lay-KOS! say-tê BOH pay-EE

Ah, Scotland! It's a beautiful country.

B:

Merci. Et vous, vous êtes d'où ?

mair-SEE. ay VOO, voo-ZET DOO

Thank you. And you, where are you from?

A:

Je suis de Lyon.

zhuh SWEE duh lee-Õ

I'm from Lyon.

② Among Friends — Tu viens d'où ?

A:

Salut ! Tu viens d'où ?

sah-LÛ! tũ vyê DOO

Hi! Where do you come from?

B:

Je viens du Canada, de Montréal.

zhuh vyê dü kah-nah-DAH, duh mō-ray-AHL

I come from Canada, from Montreal.

A:

Tu es canadienne ? Tu parles français ?

tũ ay kah-nah-DYEN? tũ PARL frã-SAY

You're Canadian? Do you speak French?

B:

Oui, bien sûr, et anglais aussi !

WEE, byê SÛR, ay ã-GLAY oh-SEE

Yes, of course, and English too!

③ Where Do You Live? — Où habitez-vous ?

A:

Où habitez-vous, Madame ?

oo ah-bee-tay-VOO, mah-DAHM

Where do you live, madam?

B:

J'habite à Londres, mais je viens d'Irlande.

zhah-BEET ah LÕ-druh, may zhuh vyê deer-LÃD

I live in London, but I come from Ireland.

A:

Vous êtes irlandaise ?

voo-ZET eer-lã-DEZ

You're Irish?

B:

Oui, je suis irlandaise, de Dublin.

WEE, zhuh SWEE-zeer-lã-DEZ, duh dü-BLEË

Yes, I'm Irish, from Dublin.

④ Languages — Vous parlez anglais ?

A:

Excusez-moi, vous parlez anglais ?

ek-skû-zay-MWAH, voo par-lay-ã-GLAY

Excuse me, do you speak English?

B:

Un peu. Et vous, vous parlez français ?

ẽ PUH. ay VOO, voo par-lay frã-SAY

A little. And you, do you speak French?

A:

Je ne parle pas très bien français.

zhuh nuh PARL pah tray byê frã-SAY

I don't speak French very well.

B:

Mais si, vous parlez très bien !

may SEE, voo par-lay tray BYÊ

Oh yes you do, you speak very well!

⑤ Guessing a Nationality — Tu es espagnol ?

A:

Tu es espagnol ?

tũ ay es-pan-YOL

Are you Spanish?

B:

Non, je suis hongrois.

nõ, zhuh SWEE õ-GRWAH

No, I'm Hungarian.

A:

⑥ A Form (formal) — Quelle est votre nationalité ?

A:

Quelle est votre nationalité, Madame ?

kel ay VOH-truh nah-syoh-nah-lee-TAY, mah-DAHM

What is your nationality, madam?

B:

Je suis britannique.

zhuh SWEE bree-tah-NEEK

I'm British.

A:

Ah, la Hongrie ! Tu viens de

Budapest ?

ah, lah ô-GREE! tũ vyẽ duh bü-dah-PEST

Ah, Hungary! Are you from Budapest?

B:

Oui ! Et toi ?

WEE! ay TWAH

Yes! And you?

Et vous habitez où ?

ay voo-zah-bee-tay-OO

And where do you live?

B:

J'habite à Édimbourg, en Écosse.

zhah-BEET ah ay-dẽ-BOOR, ã-nay-KOS

I live in Edinburgh, in Scotland.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
Where are you from?	Vous venez d'où ? / Vous êtes d'où ?	Tu viens d'où ? / Tu es d'où ?
I come from...	Je viens de / du / des ...	Je viens de / du / des ...
Where do you live?	Où habitez-vous ?	Tu habites où ?
I live in...	J'habite à / en / au / aux ...	J'habite à / en / au / aux ...
Do you speak...?	Vous parlez anglais ?	Tu parles anglais ?
A little	Un peu	Un peu

Countries — Les pays

Every country has a gender, and most of the time you can tell it from the ending: a name ending in **-e** is usually feminine (*la France, l'Italie, la Suisse*); most others are masculine (*le Canada, le Japon*). The famous exception: *le Mexique*. Learn each country with its article.

COUNTRY	SAY IT	ENGLISH	I LIVE IN / GO TO...	I COME FROM...
la France	<i>lah FRÃS</i>	France	en France	de France

COUNTRY	SAY IT	ENGLISH	I LIVE IN / GO TO...	I COME FROM...
l'Écosse (f.)	<i>lay-KOS</i>	Scotland	en Écosse	d'Écosse
l'Angleterre (f.)	<i>lā-gluh-TAIR</i>	England	en Angleterre	d'Angleterre
le pays de Galles	<i>luh pay-ee duh GAL</i>	Wales	au pays de Galles	du pays de Galles
l'Irlande (f.)	<i>eer-LĀD</i>	Ireland	en Irlande	d'Irlande
l'Allemagne (f.)	<i>ahl-MAN-yuh</i>	Germany	en Allemagne	d'Allemagne
l'Espagne (f.)	<i>es-PAN-yuh</i>	Spain	en Espagne	d'Espagne
l'Italie (f.)	<i>ee-tah-LEE</i>	Italy	en Italie	d'Italie
la Hongrie	<i>lah õ-GREE</i>	Hungary	en Hongrie	de Hongrie
la Suisse	<i>lah SWEES</i>	Switzerland	en Suisse	de Suisse
la Belgique	<i>lah bel-ZHEEK</i>	Belgium	en Belgique	de Belgique
le Canada	<i>luh kah-nah-DAH</i>	Canada	au Canada	du Canada
le Japon	<i>luh zhah-PÕ</i>	Japan	au Japon	du Japon
le Brésil	<i>luh bray-ZEEL</i>	Brazil	au Brésil	du Brésil
les États-Unis (m. pl.)	<i>lay-zay-tah-zü-NEE</i>	the United States	aux États-Unis	des États-Unis

The Preposition Rule — en / au / aux and de / du / des

The word for "in" or "to" and the word for "from" change with the country's gender and number:

- **Feminine country, or any country starting with a vowel:** *en* (in/to) and *de* or *d'* (from): *en France, de France; en Irlande, d'Irlande.*
- **Masculine country:** *au* (in/to) and *du* (from): *au Canada, du Canada.*
- **Plural country:** *aux* and *des*: *aux États-Unis, des États-Unis.*

- **City:** à (in/to) and *de* or *d'* (from), with no article: à Paris, de Paris; à Édimbourg, d'Édimbourg.

(*Au* is à + *le* squashed together; *du* is *de* + *le*; *aux* is à + *les*; *des* is *de* + *les*.) You'll meet *au* / *du* again in the next chapters, so it's worth getting comfortable with them now.

Nationalities — Les nationalités

Nationalities are adjectives, so they have a masculine and a feminine form: *Il est français. Elle est française.* In writing they are lower case after *être* (*Je suis écossais*), but capitalised when used as nouns for people (*un Écossais, une Française*).

MASCULINE	SAY IT	FEMININE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
français	<i>frã-SAY</i>	française	<i>frã-SEZ</i>	French
écossais	<i>ay-ko-SAY</i>	écossaise	<i>ay-ko-SEZ</i>	Scottish
anglais	<i>ã-GLAY</i>	anglaise	<i>ã-GLEZ</i>	English
gallois	<i>gah-LWAH</i>	galloise	<i>gah-LWAHZ</i>	Welsh
irlandais	<i>eer-lã-DAY</i>	irlandaise	<i>eer-lã-DEZ</i>	Irish
britannique	<i>bree-tah-NEEK</i>	britannique	<i>bree-tah-NEEK</i>	British
allemand	<i>ahl-MÃ</i>	allemande	<i>ahl-MÃD</i>	German
espagnol	<i>es-pan-YOL</i>	espagnole	<i>es-pan-YOL</i>	Spanish
italien	<i>ee-tah-LYË</i>	italienne	<i>ee-tah-LYEN</i>	Italian
hongrois	<i>õ-GRWAH</i>	hongroise	<i>õ-GRWAHZ</i>	Hungarian
suisse	<i>SWEES</i>	suisse	<i>SWEES</i>	Swiss
belge	<i>BELZH</i>	belge	<i>BELZH</i>	Belgian
canadien	<i>kah-nah-DYË</i>	canadienne	<i>kah-nah-DYEN</i>	Canadian
américain	<i>ah-may-ree-KË</i>	américaine	<i>ah-may-ree-KEN</i>	American

MASCULINE	SAY IT	FEMININE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
japonais	<i>zhah-poh-NAY</i>	japonaise	<i>zhah-poh-NEZ</i>	Japanese

How Nationalities Change for a Woman

Normally you add **-e** for the feminine, and the effect on sound is the useful part: a silent final consonant suddenly *appears*. *Allemand* ends "...mã", but *allemande* ends "...mãd". The common patterns are *-ais* → *-aise* ("ay" → "ez"), *-ien* → *-ienne* ("yě" → "yen"), *-ain* → *-aine*. Words already ending in *-e* (*britannique, suisse, belge*) don't change at all, and *espagnol / espagnole* sound exactly the same.

Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Venir ("to come") is irregular. *Habiter* ("to live") and *parler* ("to speak") are regular *-er* verbs, the largest group in French. Learn the *-er* pattern once and hundreds of verbs follow it.

WHO	VENIR (TO COME)	SAY IT	HABITER (TO LIVE)	SAY IT	PARLER (TO SPEAK)	SAY IT
je	je viens	<i>zhuh vyě</i>	j'habite	<i>zhah-BEET</i>	je parle	<i>zhuh PARL</i>
tu	tu viens	<i>tü vyě</i>	tu habites	<i>tü ah-BEET</i>	tu parles	<i>tü PARL</i>
il / elle / on	il vient	<i>eel vyě</i>	il habite	<i>eel ah-BEET</i>	il parle	<i>eel PARL</i>
nous	nous venons	<i>noo vuh-NÕ</i>	nous habitons	<i>noo-zah-bee-TÕ</i>	nous parlons	<i>noo par-LÕ</i>
vous	vous venez	<i>voo vuh-NAY</i>	vous habitez	<i>voo-zah-bee-TAY</i>	vous parlez	<i>voo par-LAY</i>
ils / elles	ils viennent	<i>eel VYEN</i>	ils habitent	<i>eel-zah-BEET</i>	ils parlent	<i>eel PARL</i>

Good News About -er Verbs

For *je, tu, il/elle/on* and *ils/elles* an *-er* verb sounds exactly the same: *je parle, tu parles, il parle, ils parlent* are all "PARL". Only *nous* and *vous* sound different (*-ons* "Õ" and *-ez* "AY"). The extra letters matter when you write, not when you speak. Notice also that *habiter* starts with a silent **h**, so *je* becomes *j'* and the verb sounds as if it began with a vowel.

Saying "Not" — **ne ... pas**

To make a French sentence negative, wrap the verb in **ne ... pas**: *Je parle français* → *Je **ne** parle **pas** français* ("zhuh nuh PARL pah frã-SAY"). Before a vowel, *ne* becomes *n'*: *Je n'habite pas à Paris*. In fast, casual speech many French people drop the *ne* and just say *Je parle pas français*, but include the *ne* while you're learning, because it is always correct. *Mais si !* ("may SEE") is how you contradict a negative: "Oh yes you do!"

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le pays	pay-EE	country	noun, m.	plural is also "pays"
2	la ville	VEEL	town, city	noun, f.	"ill" says "eel" here
3	la capitale	kah-pee-TAL	capital city	noun, f.	<i>Paris est la capitale.</i>
4	la nationalité	nah-syoh-nah-lee-TAY	nationality	noun, f.	<i>Quelle est votre nationalité ?</i>
5	la langue	LÃG	language; tongue	noun, f.	<i>la langue maternelle = mother tongue</i>
6	le français	frã-SAY	French (language)	noun, m.	<i>no article after parler: je parle français</i>
7	l'anglais	ã-GLAY	English (language)	noun, m.	<i>languages are masculine and lower case</i>
8	venir	vuh-NEER	to come	verb	<i>je viens, vous venez</i>
9	habiter	ah-bee-TAY	to live (reside)	verb	<i>silent h; regular -er</i>

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
10	parler	par-LAY	to speak, to talk	verb	regular -er
11	où	OO	where	word	accent distinguishes it from ou = or
12	d'où	DOO	from where	word	Vous êtes d'où ?
13	en	ã	in, to (feminine country)	prep	en France, en Écosse
14	à	ah	in, at, to (a city)	prep	à Paris, à Londres
15	un peu	ẽ PUH	a little	adv	Je parle un peu français.
16	très	TRAY	very	adv	très bien
17	bien	BYË	well, good	adv	Vous parlez bien.
18	ne ... pas	nuh ... pah	not	phrase	wraps the verb
19	mais	MAY	but	word	mais si = oh yes it is
20	ici	ee-SEE	here	adv	Je suis ici.

Real French Tip — Start in French

If your French is shaky, you'll be tempted to open with *Do you speak English?*, but begin with *Bonjour* and a try in French first, then ask *Vous parlez anglais ?* or *Je ne parle pas très bien français, pardon*. The attitude usually changes at once, because people can tell you made an effort. It also helps that English is widely understood in cities and tourist spots, though less in small towns, so a few phrases will carry you a long way.

Try It Yourself — Exercises

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. You're Scottish, from Scotland. Say your nationality and where you come from.

▼ Show answer

Je suis écossais(e). Je viens d'Écosse. (*Écossais* for a man, *écossaise* for a woman.)

2. Fill the gap with *du*, *de*, *d'* or *des*: Je viens ____ Canada. Je viens ____ États-Unis. Je viens ____ Allemagne. Je viens ____ Paris.

▼ Show answer

du Canada (masculine) · des États-Unis (plural) · d'Allemagne (vowel) · de Paris (city).

3. Say "I live in Spain", "I live in Japan" and "I live in Lyon".

▼ Show answer

J'habite en Espagne. · J'habite au Japon. · J'habite à Lyon.

4. Give the feminine form: Il est italien → Elle est _____. Il est allemand → Elle est _____. Il est hongrois → Elle est _____.

▼ Show answer

italienne · allemande · hongroise.

5. Say you don't speak French very well, but you speak a little.

▼ Show answer

Je ne parle pas très bien français, mais je parle un peu.

6. Ask someone where they're from, first formally and then informally.

▼ Show answer

Formal: Vous venez d'où ? (or Vous êtes d'où ?). Informal: Tu viens d'où ? (or Tu es d'où ?)

Coming Up in Chapter 5

You can now say where you're from and what you speak. Next up: **talking about your family**: parents, brothers and sisters, and the possessives *mon*, *ma*, *mes*.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 5 · Talking About Your Family



Talking About Your Family — Parler de sa famille

Name your relatives, say how many brothers, sisters or children you have, and say whose they are with *mon, ma, mes* and friends. Along the way you'll learn the rule that trips up most beginners: in French, "my / your / his / her" agrees with **the thing owned**, not with the owner.

① Brothers and Sisters — Tu as des frères et sœurs ?

A:

Tu as des frères et sœurs ?

tù ah day FRAIR ay SUR

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

B:

Oui, j'ai un frère et une sœur.

WEE, zhay è FRAIR ay ün SUR

Yes, I have one brother and one sister.

A:

Ils ont quel âge ?

eel-zõ kel AHZH

How old are they?

B:

Mon frère a vingt-deux ans et ma sœur a dix-huit ans.

mõ FRAIR ah vêt-DUH-zã ay mah SUR ah dee-zwee-TÃ

My brother is twenty-two and my sister is eighteen.

② Only Child or Big Family — Fils unique

A:

Tu as des frères et sœurs, Camille ?

tù ah day FRAIR ay SUR, kah-MEEY

Do you have brothers and sisters, Camille?

B:

Non, je suis fille unique. Et toi ?

NÕ, zhuh swee FEEY ü-NEEK. ay TWAH

No, I'm an only child. And you?

A:

Moi, j'ai trois frères !

MWAH, zhay trwah FRAIR

I have three brothers!

B:

Trois ! Chez vous, ce n'est jamais calme !

TRWAH! shay VOO, suh nay zhah-may KALM

Three! It's never quiet at your place!

③ A Photo — C'est qui sur la photo ?

A:

④ Children (formal) — Vous avez des enfants ?

C'est qui sur la photo ?

say KEE sūr lah foh-TOH

Who is that in the photo?

B:

C'est ma mère, mon père et ma sœur.

say mah MAIR, mō PAIR ay mah SUR

That's my mother, my father and my sister.

A:

Ta mère est très jeune !

tah MAIR ay tray ZHUN

Your mother looks very young!

B:

Elle a quarante-neuf ans. Mon père a cinquante-deux ans.

el ah kah-rāt-nuh-VÃ. mō PAIR ah sē-kāt-DUH-zã

She's forty-nine. My father is fifty-two.

A:

Vous avez des enfants, Madame ?

voo-zah-vay day-zã-FÃ, mah-DAHM

Do you have children, madam?

B:

Oui, j'ai deux enfants : un fils et une fille.

WEE, zhay duh-zã-FÃ: ē FEES ay ün FEEY

Yes, I have two children: a son and a daughter.

A:

Ils habitent ici ?

eel-zah-BEET ee-SEE

Do they live here?

B:

Mon fils habite à Paris et ma fille habite en Belgique.

mō FEES ah-BEET ah pah-REE ay mah FEEY ah-BEET ã bel-ZHEEK

My son lives in Paris and my daughter lives in Belgium.

⑤ Grandparents — Tes grands-parents

A:

Tes grands-parents habitent où ?

tay grã-pah-rã ah-BEET OO

Where do your grandparents live?

B:

Mes grands-parents habitent en Écosse.

may grã-pah-rã ah-BEET ã-nay-KOS

My grandparents live in Scotland.

A:

Ils ont quel âge ?

eel-zō kel AHZH

⑥ Husband, Wife & Child — Mon mari, ma femme

A:

Vous êtes marié, Monsieur Girard ?

voo-ZET mah-ree-AY, muh-SYUH zhee-RAHR

Are you married, Mr Girard?

B:

Oui. Ma femme s'appelle Claire.

WEE. mah FAHM sah-PEL KLAIR

Yes. My wife's name is Claire.

A:

Vous avez des enfants ?

voo-zah-vay day-zã-FÃ

How old are they?

B:

Ma grand-mère a quatre-vingt-cinq ans et mon grand-père a quatre-vingt-sept ans.

*mah grã-MAIR ah kah-truh-vê-sê-KÃ ay mō
grã-PAIR ah kah-truh-vê-SET-ã*

My grandmother is eighty-five and my grandfather is eighty-seven.

Do you have children?

B:

Nous avons un fils. Il a six ans.

noo-zah-vō ē FEES. eel-ah see-ZÃ

We have a son. He's six.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
Do you have siblings?	Vous avez des frères et sœurs ?	Tu as des frères et sœurs ?
How many?	Combien de frères et sœurs avez-vous ?	Tu as combien de frères et sœurs ?
I have...	J'ai un frère et deux sœurs.	J'ai un frère et deux sœurs.
I'm an only child	Je suis fils unique / fille unique.	Je suis fils unique / fille unique.
Do you have children?	Vous avez des enfants ?	Tu as des enfants ?
I have no children	Je n'ai pas d'enfants.	J'ai pas d'enfants.



The Family — La famille

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
le père	<i>luh PAIR</i>	father	la mère	<i>lah MAIR</i>	mother
le frère	<i>luh FRAIR</i>	brother	la sœur	<i>lah SUR</i>	sister

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
le fils	<i>luh FEES</i>	son	la fille	<i>lah FEEY</i>	daughter; girl
le mari	<i>luh mah-REE</i>	husband	la femme	<i>lah FAHM</i>	wife; woman
le grand-père	<i>luh grã-PAIR</i>	grandfather	la grand-mère	<i>lah grã-MAIR</i>	grandmother
l'oncle	<i>Õ-kluh</i>	uncle	la tante	<i>lah TÃT</i>	aunt
le cousin	<i>luh koo-ZË</i>	cousin (m.)	la cousine	<i>lah koo-ZEEN</i>	cousin (f.)
le neveu	<i>luh nuh-VUH</i>	nephew	la nièce	<i>lah NYES</i>	niece
les parents	<i>lay pah-RÃ</i>	parents	les grands-parents	<i>lay grã-pah-RÃ</i>	grandparents
l'enfant	<i>lã-FÃ</i>	child (m. or f.)	le bébé	<i>luh bay-BAY</i>	baby

False Friend — "Les Parents" Means Mum and Dad

Les parents means **mother and father**, not "relatives". For relatives in general, say *la famille* or *les proches* ("close family and friends"). Also note the sounds: *le fils* (son) is "FEES", with the s pronounced, while *la fille* (daughter) is "FEEY", with a "y" sound at the end. They look alike and sound quite different.

"My, Your, His, Her" — Les possessifs

French has no separate "his" and "her". A possessive agrees with the **noun it goes with** (masculine, feminine or plural), never with the owner. So *sa mère* can mean "his mother" or "her mother", and context tells you which.

OWNER	MASCULINE (LE)	FEMININE (LA)	PLURAL (LES)	SAY IT (M. / F. / PL.)
my	mon père	ma mère	mes parents	<i>mõ / mah / may</i>
your (tu)	ton père	ta mère	tes parents	<i>tõ / tah / tay</i>
his / her	son père	sa mère	ses parents	<i>sõ / sah / say</i>
our	notre père / notre mère		nos parents	<i>NOH-truh / noh</i>
your (vous)	votre père / votre mère		vos parents	<i>VOH-truh / voh</i>
their	leur père / leur mère		leurs parents	<i>LUHR / LUHR</i>

Mon Before a Vowel — Even for Feminine Nouns

A feminine noun that begins with a vowel sound takes *mon / ton / son* instead of *ma / ta / sa*, because "ma amie" would clash: *mon amie* (my friend, f.), *ton école* (your school), *son enfant*. Plural forms are simple: *mes, tes, ses, nos, vos, leurs*, and the s links onto a vowel: *mes amis* is "may-zah-MEE".

Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Avoir ("to have", from Chapter 3) is how you list relatives, *aimer* means "to like / to love", and *travailler* ("to work") gives you a way to talk about what family members do (more in Chapter 6). The last two are regular -er verbs.

WHO	AVOIR (TO HAVE)	SAY IT	AIMER (TO LIKE, LOVE)	SAY IT	TRAVAILLER (TO WORK)	SAY IT
je	j'ai	<i>zhay</i>	j'aime	<i>zhem</i>	je travaille	<i>zhuh trah-VAHY</i>
tu	tu as	<i>tü ah</i>	tu aimes	<i>tü-EM</i>	tu travailles	<i>tü trah-VAHY</i>
il / elle / on	il a	<i>eel ah</i>	il aime	<i>eel-EM</i>	il travaille	<i>eel trah-VAHY</i>

WHO	AVOIR (TO HAVE)	SAY IT	AIMER (TO LIKE, LOVE)	SAY IT	TRAVAILLER (TO WORK)	SAY IT
nous	nous avons	<i>noo-zah-VŌ</i>	nous aimons	<i>noo-zay-MŌ</i>	nous travaillons	<i>noo trah-vah-YŌ</i>
vous	vous avez	<i>voo-zah-VAY</i>	vous aimez	<i>voo-zay-MAY</i>	vous travaillez	<i>voo trah-vah-YAY</i>
ils / elles	ils ont	<i>eel-ZŌ</i>	ils aiment	<i>eel-ZEM</i>	ils travaillent	<i>eel trah-VAHY</i>

"Pas de" — Saying You Don't Have Any

After a negative, *un / une / des* change to **de** (or **d'** before a vowel): *J'ai un frère* → *Je n'ai pas **de** frère*; *J'ai des enfants* → *Je n'ai pas **d'**enfants*. And *combien* ("how many") is followed by *de* as well: *Combien **de** frères as-tu ?* The nice summary is: if you're counting nothing, use *de*.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	la famille	<i>fah-MEEY</i>	family	noun, f.	"ill" says "eey" here
2	les parents	<i>pah-RÃ</i>	parents	noun, m. pl.	not "relatives"
3	le père	<i>PAIR</i>	father	noun, m.	<i>mon père, ton père</i>
4	la mère	<i>MAIR</i>	mother	noun, f.	<i>ma mère, ta mère</i>
5	le frère	<i>FRAIR</i>	brother	noun, m.	plural: <i>frères</i>
6	la sœur	<i>SUR</i>	sister	noun, f.	<i>œ</i> is "uh" (lips rounded)
7	le fils	<i>FEES</i>	son	noun, m.	same spelling singular and plural

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
8	la fille	FEEY	daughter; girl	noun, f.	ma fille = my daughter
9	l'enfant	lã-FÃ	child	noun, m./f.	same word for a boy or a girl
10	le mari	mah-REE	husband	noun, m.	mon mari
11	la femme	FAHM	wife; woman	noun, f.	ma femme = my wife
12	le grand-père	grã-PAIR	grandfather	noun, m.	les grands-parents
13	la grand-mère	grã-MAIR	grandmother	noun, f.	often "mamie" / "papi" at home
14	l'oncle	Õ-kluh	uncle	noun, m.	mon oncle
15	la tante	TÃT	aunt	noun, f.	ma tante
16	le cousin / la cousine	koo-ZË / koo-ZEEN	cousin (m. / f.)	noun	the n shows up in the feminine
17	marié / mariée	mah-ree-AY	married	adj	same sound for m. and f.
18	célibataire	say-lee-bah-TAIR	single	adj	same form for m. and f.
19	unique	ü-NEEK	only, unique	adj	fil unique / fille unique
20	aimer	ay-MAY	to like, to love	verb	j'aime = I like/love

Real French Tip — Mon Copain, Mon Compagnon, Ma Femme

Chapter 2 mentioned that *mon copain* / *ma copine* usually means boyfriend or girlfriend. For a longer-term partner you'll also hear **mon compagnon** / **ma compagne** ("my partner"), which doesn't say whether you're married. Many couples in France are in a *PACS* (*pacsé(e)*, a civil partnership), so *mari* / *femme* is only right if you're actually married. At home, grandparents are often *mamie* and *papi* (or *mémé* and *pépé*), and parents *maman* and *papa*.

Quick Grammar Note — "J'aime" Means Two Things

J'aime is both "I like" and "I love", and the context decides. With things it is the milder one: *J'aime le café* is "I like coffee", while *J'adore le café* is "I love coffee". With people it is stronger: *Je t'aime* means "I love you" and is used for a partner or close family, so use *J'aime bien Paul* ("I like Paul") for a friend. Notice too that *je + aime = j'aime* with the elision from Chapter 2.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say "I have a brother and two sisters."

▼ Show answer

J'ai un frère et deux sœurs.

2. Say "I'm an only child" (as a man, then as a woman).

▼ Show answer

Je suis fils unique. / Je suis fille unique.

3. Fill the gaps with the right possessive: ____ mère (my) · ____ père (your, informal) · ____ parents (their) · ____ amie (my, a female friend).

▼ Show answer

ma mère · ton père · leurs parents · mon amie (a feminine word starting with a vowel takes *mon*).

4. Ask someone if they have brothers and sisters: informally, then formally.

▼ Show answer

Tu as des frères et sœurs ? / Vous avez des frères et sœurs ?

5. Say "I don't have any children."

▼ Show answer

Je n'ai pas d'enfants. (After a negative: *de* / *d'*, not *des*.)

6. Say "My grandmother lives in Wales" and "Her father works in Paris."

▼ Show answer

Ma grand-mère habite au pays de Galles. · Son père travaille à Paris.

Coming Up in Chapter 6

You can now talk about your family. Next up: **talking about your job**: professions, workplaces, *Je travaille comme...*, and the little trick French uses for masculine and feminine job titles.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 6 · Talking About Your Job



Talking About Your Job — Parler de son métier

Say what you do, where you work, and ask others the same. Two things to watch for: French says *Je suis infirmière* with **no** "a / an", and many job titles change their ending for a woman (*serveur* → *serveuse*).

① What Do You Do? (formal) — Qu'est-ce que vous faites ?

A:

Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie,
Madame ?

kes-kuh voo FET dā lah VEE, mah-DAHM
What do you do for a living, madam?

B:

Je suis infirmière.
zhuh swee ê-feer-MYAIR
I'm a nurse.

A:

Où travaillez-vous ?
oo trah-vah-yay-VOO
Where do you work?

B:

Je travaille dans un hôpital à Lyon.
J'aime mon travail.
zhuh trah-VAHY dā-zê-noh-pee-TAL ah lee-Õ.
zhem mō trah-VAHY
I work in a hospital in Lyon. I like my job.

② Among Friends — Tu fais quoi dans la vie ?

A:

Tu fais quoi dans la vie ?
tū fay KWAH dā lah VEE
What do you do?

B:

Moi, je suis étudiant en
informatique. Et toi ?
MWAH, zhuh swee-zay-tū-DYĀ-tā-ê-for-mah-TEEK. ay TWAH
I'm a computer science student. And you?

A:

Je suis serveuse dans un café.
zhuh swee ser-VUZ dā-zê kah-FAY
I'm a waitress in a café.

B:

Et tu aimes ça ? C'est sympa ?
ay tū-EM SAH? say sê-PAH
And do you like it? Is it nice?

③ IT Support — Technicien informatique

④ Looking for Work — Je cherche du travail

A:

Quel est votre métier, Monsieur ?

kel ay VOH-truh may-TYAY, muh-SYUH

What is your job, sir?

B:

Je suis technicien informatique.

zhuh swee tek-nee-SYÊ ê-for-mah-TEEK

I'm an IT technician.

A:

Vous travaillez dans une
entreprise ?

voo trah-vah-yay dâ-zün â-truh-PREEZ

Do you work for a company?

B:

Oui, dans une grande entreprise à
Édimbourg. J'aime aider les gens.

*WEE, dâ-zün grād â-truh-PREEZ ah ay-dê-
BOOR. zhem ay-DAY lay ZHÃ*

Yes, in a big company in Edinburgh. I like
helping people.

A:

Tu travailles en ce moment ?

tü trah-VAHY â suh moh-MÃ

Are you working at the moment?

B:

Non, je cherche du travail.

NÔ, zhuh SHERSH dü trah-VAHY

No, I'm looking for work.

A:

Tu cherches dans quel domaine ?

tü SHERSH dâ kel doh-MEN

In what field are you looking?

B:

Dans un hôtel ou dans un
restaurant.

dâ-zê-noh-TEL oo dâ-zê res-toh-RÃ

In a hotel or in a restaurant.

A:

Bonne chance !

bon SHÃS

Good luck!

⑤ Part-Time and Retired — À temps partiel

A:

Votre mari travaille aussi ?

VOH-truh mah-REE trah-VAHY oh-SEE

Does your husband work too?

B:

Non, il est retraité.

NÔ, eel ay ruh-tray-TAY

No, he's retired.

A:

Et vous ?

⑥ A Factory and a Boss — Je travaille dans une usine

A:

Vous travaillez où, Monsieur
Girard ?

voo trah-vah-yay OO, muh-SYUH zhee-RAHR

Where do you work, Mr Girard?

B:

Je travaille dans une usine à Lyon,
comme ingénieur.

*zhuh trah-VAHY dâ-zün ü-ZEEN ah lee-Ô, kom
ê-zhay-NYUR*

ay VOO

And you?

B:

Moi, je travaille à temps partiel.

MWAH, zhuh trah-VAHY ah tâ par-SYEL

I work part-time.

I work in a factory in Lyon, as an engineer.

A:

Et Madame Roux ? Elle travaille aussi dans l'usine ?

ay mah-DAHM ROO? el trah-VAHY oh-SEE dā lü-ZEEN

And Mrs Roux? Does she also work in the factory?

B:

Oui, elle est directrice. C'est ma chef.

WEE, el ay dee-rek-TREES. say mah SHEF

Yes, she's the director. She's my boss.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
What do you do?	Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ? / Quel est votre métier ?	Tu fais quoi dans la vie ?
I'm a...	Je suis infirmier / infirmière.	Je suis infirmier / infirmière.
Where do you work?	Où travaillez-vous ?	Tu travailles où ?
I work in / at...	Je travaille dans un hôpital / chez ... / comme ...	Je travaille dans un hôpital / chez ... / comme ...
I'm looking for work	Je cherche du travail.	Je cherche du travail.
I'm a student	Je suis étudiant(e).	Je suis étudiant(e).



Jobs — Les métiers

After *être*, a job is treated like an adjective: **no article**. *Je suis infirmière* ("I am nurse"). With *c'est* you do use one: *C'est une infirmière*.

MASCULINE	SAY IT	FEMININE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
étudiant	<i>ay-tü-DYÃ</i>	étudiante	<i>ay-tü-DYÃT</i>	student
enseignant	<i>ã-sen-YÃ</i>	enseignante	<i>ã-sen-YÃT</i>	teacher
infirmier	<i>ẽ-feer-MYAY</i>	infirmière	<i>ẽ-feer-MYAIR</i>	nurse
serveur	<i>ser-VUR</i>	serveuse	<i>ser-VUZ</i>	waiter / waitress
vendeur	<i>vã-DUR</i>	vendeuse	<i>vã-DUZ</i>	shop assistant
cuisinier	<i>kwee-zee-NYAY</i>	cuisinière	<i>kwee-zee-NYAIR</i>	cook, chef
informaticien	<i>ẽ-for-mah-tee-SYË</i>	informaticienne	<i>ẽ-for-mah-tee-SYEN</i>	IT specialist
directeur	<i>dee-rek-TUR</i>	directrice	<i>dee-rek-TREES</i>	director, manager
avocat	<i>ah-voh-KAH</i>	avocate	<i>ah-voh-KAT</i>	lawyer
employé	<i>ã-plwah-YAY</i>	employée	<i>ã-plwah-YAY</i>	employee
retraité	<i>ruh-tray-TAY</i>	retraîtée	<i>ruh-tray-TAY</i>	retired person
comptable	<i>kõ-TAH-bluh</i>	comptable	<i>kõ-TAH-bluh</i>	accountant
médecin	<i>mayd-SË</i>	médecin	<i>mayd-SË</i>	doctor
ingénieur	<i>ẽ-zhay-NYUR</i>	ingénieure	<i>ẽ-zhay-NYUR</i>	engineer

How Job Titles Change for a Woman

The usual patterns: *-eur* → *-euse* (serveur → serveuse), *-teur* → *-trice* (directeur → directrice), *-ier* → *-ière* (infirmier → infirmière), *-ien* → *-ienne* (informaticien → informaticienne), and *-é* → *-ée* (employé → employée, silent change). Words ending in *-e* (*comptable*, *journaliste*, *secrétaire*) stay the same. A few prestige titles such as *médecin*, *ingénieur* and *professeur* have traditionally been used for both sexes with *un / une* chosen by the person's sex (*une médecin*), and feminine spellings like *ingénieure* and *professeure* are now common too. Usage is still settling, so you will hear both.



Where You Work — Les lieux de travail

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
le bureau	bü-ROH	office; desk	l'usine (f.)	ü-ZEEN	factory
l'entreprise (f.)	ã-truh-PREEZ	company	la banque	BÃK	bank
l'hôpital (m.)	oh-pee-TAL	hospital	le magasin	mah-gah-ZË	shop, store
l'école (f.)	ay-KOL	school	le restaurant	res-toh-RÃ	restaurant
l'université (f.)	ü-nee-vair-see-TAY	university	l'hôtel (m.)	oh-TEL	hotel

Dans, Chez, Comme — Three Little Words for Work

- **dans** + a place: *Je travaille **dans** un hôpital* (in a hospital), *dans une banque*.
- **chez** + a person or company: *Je travaille **chez** Renault* ("at Renault's"). *Chez* also means "at someone's home": *chez moi* (at my place), *chez vous*.
- **comme** + a job: *Je travaille **comme** ingénieur* (as an engineer), again with no article.



Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Faire ("to do, to make") is irregular, and it's the key to *Qu'est-ce que vous faites ? Étudier* ("to study") and *chercher* ("to look for") are regular -er verbs like *parler* and *travailler*.

WHO	FAIRE (TO DO)	SAY IT	ÉTUDIER (TO STUDY)	SAY IT	CHERCHER (TO LOOK FOR)	SAY IT
je	je fais	zhuh FAY	j'étudie	zhay-tü- DEE	je cherche	zhuh SHERSH
tu	tu fais	tü FAY	tu étudies	tü-ay-tü- DEE	tu cherches	tü SHERSH
il / elle / on	il fait	eel FAY	il étudie	eel-ay-tü- DEE	il cherche	eel SHERSH

WHO	FAIRE (TO DO)	SAY IT	Étudier (TO STUDY)	SAY IT	Chercher (TO LOOK FOR)	SAY IT
nous	nous faisons	<i>noo fuh-ZÖ</i>	nous étudions	<i>noo-zay-tü-DYÖ</i>	nous cherchons	<i>noo sher-SHÖ</i>
vous	vous faites	<i>voo FET</i>	vous étudiez	<i>voo-zay-tü-DYAY</i>	vous cherchez	<i>voo sher-SHAY</i>
ils / elles	ils font	<i>eel FÖ</i>	ils étudient	<i>eel-zay-tü-DEE</i>	ils cherchent	<i>eel SHERSH</i>

"Faire" — A Verb with Many Jobs

Faire is the French "do" and "make" in one, and it turns up everywhere: *Qu'est-ce que vous faites ?* ("What are you doing / what do you do?"), *Je fais du sport* (I do sport), *Il fait chaud* (it's hot). Notice the odd forms: *vous faites* is "FET" (not "fay-ZAY"), and *nous faisons* is "fuh-ZÖ" (the *ai* sounds like a weak "uh"). Both are worth learning by heart now.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le travail	<i>trah-VAHY</i>	work, job	noun, m.	plural: les travaux
2	le métier	<i>may-TYAY</i>	trade, occupation	noun, m.	<i>Quel est votre métier ?</i>
3	l'entreprise	<i>ă-truh-PREEZ</i>	company	noun, f.	also la société
4	le bureau	<i>bü-ROH</i>	office; desk	noun, m.	plural: bureaux
5	l'hôpital	<i>oh-pee-TAL</i>	hospital	noun, m.	plural: hôpitaux
6	l'école	<i>ay-KOL</i>	school	noun, f.	"é" starts the word

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
7	l'informatique	ẽ-for-mah-TEEK	IT, computing	noun, f.	étudiant en informatique
8	étudiant / étudiante	ay-tü-DYÃ / -DYÃT	student	noun	the t shows up in the feminine
9	infirmier / infirmière	ẽ-feer-MYAY / -MYAIR	nurse	noun	-ier → -ière
10	le médecin	mayd-SÊ	doctor	noun, m.	same for a man or a woman
11	le professeur	proh-feh-SUR	teacher, lecturer	noun, m.	usually for secondary or university
12	serveur / serveuse	ser-VUR / -VUZ	waiter / waitress	noun	-eur → -euse
13	l'ingénieur	ẽ-zhay-NYUR	engineer	noun, m.	ingénieure for a woman is common
14	retraité / retraitée	ruh-tray-TAY	retired (person)	noun / adj	silent change in feminine
15	faire	FAIR	to do, to make	verb	je fais, vous faites
16	étudier	ay-tü-DYAY	to study	verb	regular -er
17	chercher	sher-SHAY	to look for	verb	chercher du travail
18	chez	SHAY	at the home / firm of	prep	chez moi, chez Renault
19	dans	DÃ	in, inside	prep	dans un bureau
20	à temps plein / partiel	ah tã PLÊ / par-SYEL	full-time / part-time	phrase	literally "at full / part time"

Real French Tip — "Le Boulot" and Being Out of Work

In everyday speech French people call their job **le boulot** ("luh boo-LOH"): *Je vais au boulot* (I'm off to work), *J'aime mon boulot*. It's relaxed slang, fine with friends but a little casual at an interview.

If someone is between jobs, the neutral phrase is *Je suis au chômage* ("I'm unemployed"), or the gentler *Je cherche du travail* ("I'm looking for work"), as in dialog ④. Notice *du travail*: "some work", with *du* because you can't count it.

Quick Grammar Note — "Je suis un infirmier" Is Wrong

The most common beginner mistake is to put *un / une* after *je suis*, as English does. In French, say *Je suis infirmier* (no article), or use *c'est*: *C'est un infirmier*. The article comes back if you add an adjective: *Je suis un bon infirmier* ("I'm a good nurse").

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. You are a nurse (a man, then a woman). Say so.

▼ Show answer

Je suis infirmier. / Je suis infirmière. (No *un / une*.)

2. Give the feminine: serveur · directeur · informaticien · comptable.

▼ Show answer

serveuse · directrice · informaticienne · comptable (no change).

3. Ask someone what they do for a living, formally and informally.

▼ Show answer

Qu'est-ce que vous faites dans la vie ? (or Quel est votre métier ?) / Tu fais quoi dans la vie ?

4. Say "I work in a bank in Paris."

▼ Show answer

Je travaille dans une banque à Paris.

5. Say "I'm a student and I study IT."

▼ Show answer

Je suis étudiant(e) et j'étudie l'informatique. (Or: Je suis étudiant en informatique.)

6. What is wrong with *Je suis un ingénieur*?

▼ Show answer

After *être* a job takes no article: **Je suis ingénieur.** (Or *C'est un ingénieur.*)

Coming Up in Chapter 7

You can now talk about work. Next up: **days, dates and telling the time**: the days of the week, the months, and *Il est trois heures*. It's a number-heavy chapter, so it comes in parts again.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 7 · Days, Dates & Telling the Time



Days, Dates & Time — Les jours, les dates et l'heure

This chapter has three short parts: **Part 1** covers the days of the week and "today / tomorrow / yesterday"; **Part 2** covers the months, dates and seasons; **Part 3** teaches you to tell the time and make an appointment. Everything you learned about numbers in Chapter 3 gets used here.

Part 1 · Days of the Week — Les jours de la semaine

Mon lundi
lē-DEE

Tue mardi
mar-DEE

Wed mercredi
mair-kruh-DEE

Thu jeudi
zhuh-DEE

Fri vendredi
vā-druh-DEE

Sat samedi
sam-DEE

Sun dimanche
dee-MĀSH

Days: Lower Case, Monday First, and "Lundi" vs "Le Lundi"

Days of the week are written with a **small letter** in French (*lundi*, not "Lundi"), and a French calendar starts the week on **Monday**. A bare day means *this coming one*: *Je travaille lundi* = "I'm working (this) Monday". Add **le** for "every": *Je travaille le lundi* = "I work on Mondays". Both are very useful, so listen for the little *le*.

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
aujourd'hui	oh-zhoor-DWEE	today
demain	duh-MĚ	tomorrow
après-demain	ah-pray-duh-MĚ	the day after tomorrow
hier	ee-AIR	yesterday
ce matin / ce soir	suh mah-TĚ / suh SWAHR	this morning / this evening
la semaine / le week-end	lah suh-MEN / luh wee-KEND	the week / the weekend

① Which Day Is It? — On est quel jour ?

A:

On est quel jour aujourd'hui ?

õ-nay KEL zhoor oh-zhoor-DWEE

What day is it today?

B:

On est mardi. Demain, c'est mercredi.

õ-nay mar-DEE, duh-MÊ, say mair-kruh-DEE

It's Tuesday. Tomorrow is Wednesday.

A:

Et après-demain, c'est jeudi.

Vivement vendredi !

*ay ah-pray-duh-MÊ, say zhuh-DEE, veev-MÃ
vã-druh-DEE*

And the day after tomorrow is Thursday. Roll on Friday!

② Making Plans — Tu es libre samedi ?

A:

Tu es libre samedi ?

tũ ay LEE-bruh sam-DEE

Are you free on Saturday?

B:

Samedi, oui ! Dimanche, non : je travaille.

*sam-DEE, WEE! dee-MÃSH, NÕ: zhuh trah-
VAHY*

Saturday, yes! Sunday, no: I'm working.

A:

Parfait. Alors, à samedi !

par-FAY, ah-LOR, ah sam-DEE

Perfect. So, see you Saturday!

Part 2 • Months, Dates & Seasons — Les mois, les dates et les saisons

Jan janvier
zhã-vyay

Feb février
fay-vree-AY

Mar mars
MARS

Apr avril
ah-VREEL

May mai
MAY

Jun juin
zhwẽ

Jul juillet
zhwee-YAY

Aug août
OOT

Sep septembre
sep-TÃ-bruh

Oct octobre
ok-TOH-bruh

Nov novembre
noh-VÃ-bruh

Dec décembre
day-SÃ-bruh

SEASON

FRENCH

SAY IT

"IN ..."

spring

le printemps

luh prẽ-TÃ

au printemps

SEASON	FRENCH	SAY IT	"IN ..."
summer	l'été (m.)	<i>lay-TAY</i>	en été
autumn	l'automne (m.)	<i>loh-TON</i>	en automne
winter	l'hiver (m.)	<i>lee-VAIR</i>	en hiver

How to Say a Date

The order is **le + number + month**, with cardinal numbers from Chapter 3: *le douze mars* (12 March), *le vingt-cinq décembre* (25 December). Only the **1st** is an ordinal: *le premier mai* ("luh pruh-MYAY MAY"). To ask the date, say *Quelle est la date ?* or, more casually, *On est le combien ?* ("What's the date?"), answered with *On est le trois octobre*. For a year, French reads the whole number: 2026 is *deux mille vingt-six*. Months, like days, are lower case, and "in March" is *en mars* or *au mois de mars*.

③ Birthdays — Quand est ton anniversaire ?

A:

Quand est ton anniversaire ?

kā-TAY tō-nah-nee-vair-SAIR

When is your birthday?

B:

Mon anniversaire est le douze mars.

Et toi ?

mō-nah-nee-vair-SAIR ay luh dooz MARS. ay

TWAH

My birthday is on 12 March. And you?

A:

Le premier mai.

luh pruh-MYAY MAY

The first of May.

B:

Le premier mai ? Tu as de la chance
: c'est un jour férié !

luh pruh-MYAY MAY? tũ ah duh lah SHĀS: say-
tê ZHOOR fay-ree-AY

The first of May? You're lucky: it's a public
holiday!

Real French Tip — "Jours Fériés" and "Faire le Pont"

France has a good number of public holidays (*jours fériés*), including 1 May, 8 May, 14 July and 25 December. When a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, many people **faire le pont** ("make the bridge", "fair luh PŌ") by taking the Monday or Friday off too, so they get a long weekend. It's a very French habit, and you'll hear the phrase in conversation in the spring.

Part 3 • Telling the Time — L'heure

To ask the time: *Quelle heure est-il ?* ("kel UR ay-TEEL"), or informally *Tu as l'heure ?* ("Do you have the time?"). The answer always starts with **Il est...** and **heure(s)** for "o'clock": *Il est une heure* (one o'clock, singular), *Il est trois heures* (plural, "trwah-ZUR").

TIME	FRENCH	SAY IT
1:00	Il est une heure.	eel-ay ün-UR
3:00	Il est trois heures.	eel-ay trwah-ZUR
7:15	Il est sept heures et quart.	eel-ay set-UR ay KAR
9:30	Il est neuf heures et demie.	eel-ay nuh-VUR ay duh-MEE
10:45	Il est onze heures moins le quart.	eel-ay õz-UR mwě luh KAR
6:10	Il est six heures dix.	eel-ay see-ZUR DEES
5:55	Il est six heures moins cinq.	eel-ay see-ZUR mwě SĚK
12:00	Il est midi.	eel-ay mee-DEE
12:30	Il est midi et demi.	eel-ay mee-DEE ay duh-MEE

TIME	FRENCH	SAY IT
00:00	Il est minuit.	<i>eel-ay mee-NWEE</i>

"Et Quart", "Et Demie", "Moins le Quart", and the 24-Hour Clock

After the hour, add minutes directly (*six heures dix*) or use *et quart* (quarter past) and *et demie* (half past). Before the hour, *moins* ("minus") subtracts: *moins cinq* (five to), *moins le quart* (quarter to). A detail: *et demie* takes a feminine *-e* after *heures*, but after the masculine *midi* or *minuit* it is *demi* (*midi et demi*). For timetables, trains and opening hours, the French use the **24-hour clock**, written *15 h 30* and spoken *quinze heures trente*, so 5 pm is *dix-sept heures*. In conversation, people say *cinq heures* and add *du matin* / *de l'après-midi* / *du soir* only if it could be unclear.

Three useful verbs — aller, commencer, finir

Aller ("to go") is irregular and extremely common. *Commencer* ("to begin") is a regular *-er* verb with a small spelling twist (*nous commençons*, with a cedilla, keeps the soft "s" sound). *Finir* ("to finish") belongs to the second big group, the regular *-ir* verbs, which add *-iss-* in the plural.

WHO	ALLER (TO GO)	SAY IT	COMMENCER (TO BEGIN)	SAY IT	FINIR (TO FINISH)	SAY IT
je	je vais	<i>zhuh VAY</i>	je commence	<i>zhuh ko-MÃS</i>	je finis	<i>zhuh fee-NEE</i>
tu	tu vas	<i>tü VAH</i>	tu commences	<i>tü ko-MÃS</i>	tu finis	<i>tü fee-NEE</i>
il / elle / on	il va	<i>eel VAH</i>	il commence	<i>eel ko-MÃS</i>	il finit	<i>eel fee-NEE</i>
nous	nous allons	<i>noo-zah-LÕ</i>	nous commençons	<i>noo ko-mã-SÕ</i>	nous finissons	<i>noo fee-nee-SÕ</i>
vous	vous allez	<i>voo-zah-LAY</i>	vous commencez	<i>voo ko-mã-SAY</i>	vous finissez	<i>voo fee-nee-SAY</i>
ils / elles	ils vont	<i>eel VÕ</i>	ils commencent	<i>eel ko-MÃS</i>	ils finissent	<i>eel fee-NEES</i>

④ What Time Is It? — Tu as l'heure ?

A:

Excuse-moi, tu as l'heure ?

ek-skü-zuh-MWAH, tü ah LUR

Excuse me, do you have the time?

B:

Oui, il est dix heures et demie.

WEE, eel-ay dee-ZUR ay duh-MEE

Yes, it's half past ten.

A:

Merci !

mair-SEE

Thank you!

B:

De rien.

duh RYÊ

You're welcome.

⑤ An Appointment (formal) — Un rendez-vous

A:

Vous êtes libre mardi, Madame

Roux ?

voo-ZET LEE-bruh mar-DEE, mah-DAHM ROO

Are you free on Tuesday, Mrs Roux?

B:

Mardi matin, oui.

mar-DEE mah-TÊ, WEE

Tuesday morning, yes.

A:

À quelle heure ?

ah kel UR

At what time?

B:

À neuf heures et demie.

ah nuh-VUR ay duh-MEE

At half past nine.

A:

Parfait. Rendez-vous mardi à neuf heures et demie.

par-FAY, râ-day-VOO mar-DEE ah nuh-VUR

ay duh-MEE

Perfect. See you Tuesday at half past nine.

⑥ Working Hours — Tu commences à quelle heure ?

A:

Tu commences à quelle heure, le matin ?

tü ko-MÃS ah kel UR, luh mah-TÊ

What time do you start in the morning?

B:

Je vais au bureau à huit heures et je finis à cinq heures.

zhuh vay-zoh bü-ROH ah weet-UR ay zhuh fee-NEE ah sê-KUR

I go to the office at eight and I finish at five.

A:

Et le week-end ?

ay luh wee-KEND

And at the weekend?

B:

Le week-end, je ne travaille pas !

luh wee-KEND, zhuh nuh trah-VAHY PAH

At the weekend, I don't work!

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le jour	ZHOOR	day	noun, m.	Quel jour est-on ?
2	la semaine	suh-MEN	week	noun, f.	trois jours par semaine
3	le week-end	wee-KEND	weekend	noun, m.	borrowed from English
4	le mois	MWAH	month	noun, m.	same spelling in the plural
5	l'année	lah-NAY	year	noun, f.	for a count, "an" (J'ai vingt ans)
6	aujourd'hui	oh-zhoor-DWEE	today	adv	literally "on the day of today"
7	demain	duh-MĚ	tomorrow	adv	À demain !
8	hier	ee-AIR	yesterday	adv	"ee-air", two syllables

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
9	le matin	<i>mah-TĚ</i>	morning	noun, m.	<i>le matin = in the mornings</i>
10	le soir	<i>SWAHR</i>	evening	noun, m.	<i>Bonsoir ! = good evening</i>
11	l'heure	<i>UR</i>	hour; time (of day)	noun, f.	<i>h is silent</i>
12	midi / minuit	<i>mee-DEE / mee-NWEE</i>	noon / midnight	noun, m.	<i>midi et demi</i>
13	le rendez-vous	<i>rã-day-VOO</i>	appointment; meeting	noun, m.	<i>also used as "see you ..."</i>
14	l'anniversaire	<i>ah-nee-vair-SAIR</i>	birthday; anniversary	noun, m.	<i>Joyeux anniversaire !</i>
15	la date	<i>DAHT</i>	date	noun, f.	<i>Quelle est la date ?</i>
16	libre	<i>LEE-bruh</i>	free, available	adj	<i>Tu es libre samedi ?</i>
17	aller	<i>ah-LAY</i>	to go	verb	<i>je vais, vous allez</i>
18	commencer	<i>ko-mã-SAY</i>	to begin, to start	verb	<i>nous commençons</i>
19	finir	<i>fee-NEER</i>	to finish	verb	<i>first -ir verb: finissons</i>
20	tôt / tard	<i>TOH / TAR</i>	early / late	adv	<i>À plus tard ! = see you later</i>

À + a Day or a Time — Saying Goodbye With Dates

À + a time word makes a very handy goodbye: *À demain* (see you tomorrow), *À samedi* (see you Saturday), *À lundi*, *À ce soir* (see you tonight), *À tout à l'heure* ("ah too tah LUR", see you in a bit). The same *à* introduces a time: *à huit heures* (at eight), *à quelle heure ?* (at what time?).



Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say "Today is Monday and tomorrow is Tuesday."

▼ Show answer

Aujourd'hui, on est lundi, et demain, c'est mardi. (Lower-case day names.)

2. Say the dates: 14 July · 1 May · 25 December.

▼ Show answer

le quatorze juillet · le premier mai · le vingt-cinq décembre. (Only the 1st uses *premier*.)

3. Say these times in French: 9:30 · 7:15 · 12:00 · 10:45.

▼ Show answer

neuf heures et demie · sept heures et quart · midi · onze heures moins le quart. (Start each with *Il est....*)

4. Ask someone the time, informally and formally.

▼ Show answer

Tu as l'heure ? / Quelle heure est-il ? (or: Avez-vous l'heure, s'il vous plaît ?)

5. Say "I start work at eight and I finish at five."

▼ Show answer

Je commence à huit heures et je finis à cinq heures.

6. What's the difference between *Je travaille lundi* and *Je travaille le lundi*?

▼ Show answer

Without *le* it's this coming Monday; with *le* it's every Monday.

Coming Up in Chapter 8

You can now talk about days, dates and the time. Next up: **ordering food and drink at a café**: *Je voudrais....*, *L'addition*, *s'il vous plaît*, and the little words that make you sound polite.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 8 · Ordering Food & Drink at a Café

Ordering at a Café — Commander au café

Order a drink and a snack, ask for the menu and the bill, and explain a dietary need. The key phrase is *Je voudrais...* ("I would like..."). The new grammar is small but important: French uses **du / de la / des** ("some") for things you can't count, such as bread, soup and water.

① A Coffee and a Croissant — Je voudrais un café

A:

Bonjour, Monsieur. Vous désirez ?

bõ-ZHOOR, muh-SYUH. voo day-zee-RAY

Hello, sir. What would you like?

B:

Bonjour. Je voudrais un café, s'il vous plaît.

bõ-ZHOOR. zhuh voo-DRAY ê kah-FAY, seel voo

PLAY

Hello. I'd like a coffee, please.

A:

Un café, voilà. Et avec ceci ?

ê kah-FAY, vwah-LAH. ay ah-VEK suh-SEE

One coffee, here you are. And with that?

B:

Un croissant, s'il vous plaît.

ê krwah-SÃ, seel voo PLAY

A croissant, please.

② A Table for Two — Une table pour deux

A:

Bonjour, une table pour deux, s'il vous plaît.

bõ-ZHOOR, iin TAH-bluh poor DUH, seel voo

PLAY

Hello, a table for two, please.

B:

Bien sûr, par ici. Voici la carte.

byê SÛR, par ee-SEE. vwah-SEE lah KART

Of course, this way. Here is the menu.

A:

Merci.

mair-SEE

Thank you.

B:

Vous désirez boire quelque chose ?

voo day-zee-RAY BWAHR kel-kuh SHOHZ

Would you like something to drink?

A:

Une carafe d'eau et deux cafés, s'il vous plaît.

iin kah-RAF DOH ay duh kah-FAY, seel voo

PLAY

A jug of water and two coffees, please.

③ Lunch — Qu'est-ce que vous prenez ?

A:

Qu'est-ce que vous prenez ?

kes-kuh voo pruh-NAY

What are you having?

B:

Je prends une salade et un verre de vin blanc. Et vous ?

zhuh PRÃ ùn sah-LAD ay è VAIR duh vè BLÃ.

ay VOO

I'm having a salad and a glass of white wine.

And you?

A:

Moi, je prends un croque-monsieur et de l'eau.

MWAH, zhuh PRÃ è krok-muh-SYUH ay duh

LOH

I'll have a croque-monsieur (toasted ham-and-cheese sandwich) and some water.

B:

Très bien. Et du pain, s'il vous plaît.

tray BYË. ay dü PË, seel voo PLAY

Very good. And some bread, please.

④ Dietary Needs — Je suis végétarienne

A:

Excusez-moi, il y a de la viande dans cette soupe ?

ek-skü-zay-MWAH, eel-ee-AH duh lah VYÃD dã

set SOOP

Excuse me, is there meat in this soup?

B:

Non, Madame, c'est une soupe de légumes.

NÕ, mah-DAHM, say-tün SOOP duh lay-GÜM

No, madam, it's a vegetable soup.

A:

Parfait. Je suis végétarienne, et je suis allergique aux noix.

par-FAY, zhuh swee vay-zhay-tah-RYEN, ay

zhuh swee-zah-lair-ZHEEK oh NWAH

Perfect. I'm vegetarian, and I'm allergic to nuts.

B:

Pas de problème, il n'y a pas de noix.

pah duh proh-BLEM, eel nee-ah PAH duh

NWAH

No problem, there are no nuts.

⑤ Friends at a Bar — Tu veux boire quelque chose ?

A:

Tu veux boire quelque chose ?

tü VUH BWAHR kel-kuh SHOHZ

⑥ The Bill — L'addition, s'il vous plaît

A:

L'addition, s'il vous plaît, Madame.

lah-dee-SYÕ, seel voo PLAY, mah-DAHM

The bill, please, madam.

Do you want something to drink?

B:

Oui, je voudrais un demi. Et toi ?

WEE, zhuh voo-DRAY ē duh-MEE. ay TWAH

Yes, I'd like a (small) draught beer. And you?

A:

Moi, je prends un jus d'orange. Je ne bois pas d'alcool.

MWAH, zhuh PRĀ ē ZHÜ doh-RĀZH. zhuh nuh

BWAH pah dal-KOL

I'll have an orange juice. I don't drink alcohol.

B:

Pas de problème. Santé !

pah duh proh-BLEM. sã-TAY

No problem. Cheers!

B:

Tout de suite, Monsieur. Voilà.

too duh SWEET, muh-SYUH. vwah-LAH

Right away, sir. Here you are.

A:

Merci. C'était très bon !

mair-SEE. say-tay tray BŌ

Thank you. It was very good!

B:

Merci beaucoup. Bonne journée !

mair-SEE boh-KOO. bon zhoor-NAY

Thank you very much. Have a good day!

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	POLITE (CAFÉ, RESTAURANT)	INFORMAL (FRIENDS)
Ordering	Je voudrais un café, s'il vous plaît.	Je prends un café.
Asking for something	Est-ce que je peux avoir la carte ?	La carte, s'il te plaît.
The waiter asks	Vous désirez ? / Et avec ceci ?	Tu veux boire quelque chose ?
Asking for the bill	L'addition, s'il vous plaît.	L'addition, s'il vous plaît.
Cheers!	Santé !	Santé ! / À la tienne ! / À la vôtre !
Dietary need	Je suis végétarien(ne). Je suis allergique à ...	Je suis végétarien(ne).



On the Menu — À la carte

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
un café	<i>ẽ kah-FAY</i>	a small black coffee (espresso)	un croissant	<i>ẽ krwah-SÃ</i>	a croissant
un café crème	<i>ẽ kah-fay KREM</i>	coffee with milk	une baguette	<i>ün bah-GET</i>	a baguette
un thé	<i>ẽ TAY</i>	a tea	un sandwich	<i>ẽ sã-DWEECH</i>	a sandwich
un chocolat chaud	<i>ẽ shoh-koh-lah SHOH</i>	a hot chocolate	un croque-monsieur	<i>ẽ krok-muh-SYUH</i>	a toasted ham-and-cheese sandwich
un jus d'orange	<i>ẽ ZHÜ doh-RÃZH</i>	an orange juice	une omelette	<i>ün om-LET</i>	an omelette
une eau minérale	<i>ün OH mee-nay-RAL</i>	a mineral water	une salade	<i>ün sah-LAD</i>	a salad
une carafe d'eau	<i>ün kah-RAF DOH</i>	a jug of tap water (free)	des frites	<i>day FREET</i>	chips, fries
un verre de vin rouge	<i>ẽ VAIR duh vẽ ROOZH</i>	a glass of red wine	une crêpe	<i>ün KREP</i>	a pancake
une bière	<i>ün BYAIR</i>	a beer	une glace	<i>ün GLAS</i>	an ice cream
un demi	<i>ẽ duh-MEE</i>	a draught beer (about 25 cl, a small glass)	un gâteau	<i>ẽ gah-TOH</i>	a cake

"Un Café" Is a Small Black Coffee

If you ask for *un café* in France you get a small, strong espresso. For milk, ask for *un café crème* (a larger coffee with milk) or *un café au lait* (traditionally a breakfast drink, in a large cup). *Un déca* is

decaffeinated. A tap-water jug (*une carafe d'eau*) is free in restaurants, and you can simply ask for it.

"Some" — du, de la, de l', des

English often drops the word "some" (*I'd like bread*), but French needs a small word before nearly every noun. For things you can count you use *un / une*. For things you can't count (*bread, soup, water, wine*) you use the **partitive**: *du, de la, de l', des*, which mean "some".

TYPE OF NOUN	"SOME"	EXAMPLE	SAY IT
masculine singular	du	du pain	dü PĚ
feminine singular	de la	de la soupe	duh lah SOOP
before a vowel sound	de l'	de l'eau	duh LOH
plural	des	des frites	day FREET
after a negative	de / d'	pas de pain, pas d'alcool	pah duh PĚ, pah dal-KOL

Ordering Doesn't Change the Rule

With a measure, use *de* alone: *un verre de vin, une carafe d'eau, un jus d'orange*. And after *pas* the partitive shrinks to *de / d'*, just as in Chapter 5: *Je ne bois pas d'alcool*. If you're unsure at the counter, order countable things with *un / une* (*un café, une bière*), which always works.

Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Vouloir ("to want"), *prendre* ("to take", and "to have" food or drink) and *boire* ("to drink") are all irregular, and all very common, so they are worth learning as they are.

WHO	VOULOIR (TO WANT)	SAY IT	PRENDRE (TO TAKE, HAVE)	SAY IT	BOIRE (TO DRINK)	SAY IT
je	je veux	zhuh VUH	je prends	zhuh PRĀ	je bois	zhuh BWAH

WHO	VOULOIR (TO WANT)	SAY IT	PRENDRE (TO TAKE, HAVE)	SAY IT	BOIRE (TO DRINK)	SAY IT
tu	tu veux	tü VUH	tu prends	tü PRÃ	tu bois	tü BWAH
il / elle / on	il veut	eel VUH	il prend	eel PRÃ	il boit	eel BWAH
nous	nous voulons	noo voo-LÖ	nous prenons	noo pruh-NÖ	nous buvons	noo bü-VÖ
vous	vous voulez	voo voo-LAY	vous prenez	voo pruh-NAY	vous buvez	voo bü-VAY
ils / elles	ils veulent	eel VUL	ils prennent	eel PREN	ils boivent	eel BWAHV

"Je Voudrais" Is the Polite "Je Veux"

Je veux un café ("I want a coffee") is correct but sounds blunt, like a demand. **Je voudrais** ("I would like", "zhuh voo-DRAY") is the standard polite form for ordering, and you can use it for anything. Another polite choice is *Est-ce que je peux avoir...* ("Can I have..."). Between friends, *Je prends...* ("I'll have...") is natural. *Je voudrais* is also what you'll use in hotels and shops in later chapters.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	la carte	KART	menu (list of dishes); card	noun, f.	Voici la carte.
2	le menu	muh-NÜ	set-price meal	noun, m.	false friend: not the list
3	la table	TAH-bluh	table	noun, f.	une table pour deux

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
4	l'addition	<i>ah-dee-SYŌ</i>	bill, check	noun, f.	also "addition" in maths
5	le verre	<i>VAIR</i>	glass	noun, m.	<i>un verre de vin</i>
6	l'eau	<i>OH</i>	water	noun, f.	<i>de l'eau</i>
7	le pain	<i>PĚ</i>	bread	noun, m.	<i>du pain</i>
8	le vin	<i>VĚ</i>	wine	noun, m.	<i>vin rouge / blanc / rosé</i>
9	le petit déjeuner	<i>puh-TEE day-zhuh-NAY</i>	breakfast	noun, m.	"small lunch"
10	le déjeuner	<i>day-zhuh-NAY</i>	lunch	noun, m.	also the verb "to have lunch"
11	le dîner	<i>dee-NAY</i>	dinner, evening meal	noun, m.	<i>Bon dîner !</i>
12	vouloir	<i>voo-LWAHR</i>	to want	verb	<i>je voudrais = I'd like</i>
13	prendre	<i>PRĀ-druh</i>	to take; to have (food, drink)	verb	<i>je prends un café</i>
14	boire	<i>BWAHR</i>	to drink	verb	<i>je bois, nous buvons</i>
15	manger	<i>mā-ZHAY</i>	to eat	verb	<i>nous mangeons</i> (keeps the soft g)
16	avec	<i>ah-VEK</i>	with	prep	<i>avec du lait</i>
17	sans	<i>SĀ</i>	without	prep	<i>sans sucre</i>
18	voilà	<i>vwah-LAH</i>	here you are; there it is	word	<i>when handing something over</i>
19	végétarien / végétarienne	<i>vay-zhay-tah-RYĚ / -RYEN</i>	vegetarian	adj	-ien → -ienne
20	allergique	<i>ah-lair-ZHEEK</i>	allergic	adj	<i>allergique aux noix, à ...</i>

"La Carte" vs. "Le Menu" — A False Friend

In a French restaurant **la carte** is the list of everything you can order, which is what an English speaker calls "the menu". **Le menu** is a set-price meal of two or three courses, usually cheaper than ordering the same dishes separately. When you want to read the dishes, ask for *la carte*. When you want the good-value fixed meal, ask *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a au menu ?* or just *Je prends le menu à vingt euros*.

Real French Tip — Café Manners

Start with *Bonjour* when you walk in, and use *Monsieur* or *Madame* (or *s'il vous plaît*) to get the server's attention. Don't call *Garçon !*, which now sounds old-fashioned. Service is already included in the price by law (*service compris*), so a tip is optional; leaving a euro or two is a friendly gesture. Also know that a French waiter won't bring the bill unprompted, because rushing you would be rude, so a meal can be wonderfully slow. When you're ready, catch their eye and ask *L'addition, s'il vous plaît*.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Politely order a coffee and a croissant.

▼ Show answer

Je voudrais un café et un croissant, s'il vous plaît.

2. Ask for the menu and, later, for the bill.

▼ Show answer

La carte, s'il vous plaît. / L'addition, s'il vous plaît.

3. Choose *du*, *de la*, *de l'* or *des*: ____ pain · ____ soupe · ____ eau · ____ frites.

▼ Show answer

du pain · de la soupe · de l'eau · des frites.

4. Say "I don't drink alcohol."

▼ Show answer

Je ne bois pas d'alcool. (After *pas*: *d'*, not *de l'*.)

5. Say you're vegetarian and allergic to nuts.

▼ Show answer

Je suis végétarien(ne) et je suis allergique aux noix.

6. Why is *Je voudrais un café* better than *Je veux un café* when ordering?

▼ Show answer

Je voudrais ("I would like") is polite. *Je veux* ("I want") is grammatically fine but sounds blunt.

Coming Up in Chapter 9

You can now order in a café. Next up: **shopping and prices**: *C'est combien ?*, euros and cents, clothes and sizes, and paying.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 9 · Shopping & Prices



Shopping & Prices — Faire les courses et les achats

Ask how much something costs, say prices out loud, describe clothes and colours, try something on, and pay. You'll reuse the numbers from Chapter 3, and meet the "this / these" words (*ce, cette, ces*) and colour words that change with the noun.

① At the Market — C'est combien ?

A:

Bonjour, Madame. C'est combien, les pommes ?

bõ-ZHOOR, mah-DAHM. say kõ-BYÊ, lay POM
Hello, madam. How much are the apples?

B:

Trois euros cinquante le kilo.

trwah-zuh-ROH sê-KÃT luh kee-LOH
Three euros fifty a kilo.

A:

Je voudrais un kilo, s'il vous plaît.

zhuh voo-DRAY ê kee-LOH, seel voo PLAY
I'd like a kilo, please.

B:

Voilà. Et avec ceci ?

vwah-LAH. ay ah-VEK suh-SEE
Here you are. Anything else?

A:

C'est tout, merci. Ça fait combien ?

say TOO, mair-SEE. sah FAY kõ-BYÊ
That's all, thanks. How much is that?

② Looking for a Jumper — Je cherche un pull

A:

Bonjour, je cherche un pull.

bõ-ZHOOR, zhuh SHERSH ê PÛL
Hello, I'm looking for a jumper.

B:

Quelle taille, Monsieur ?

kel TAHY, muh-SYUH
What size, sir?

A:

Taille M, en bleu.

TAHY EM, ã BLUH
Size medium, in blue.

B:

Voici. La cabine est là-bas.

vwah-SEE. lah kah-BEEN ay lah-BAH
Here you are. The fitting room is over there.

A:

Je peux l'essayer ?

zhuh PUH lay-say-YAY
Can I try it on?

③ Too Big, a Bit Dear — Trop grand, trop cher

A:

Il est trop grand. Vous avez une taille plus petite ?

eel ay troh GRÃ. voo-zah-vay ün TAHY plü puh-TEET

It's too big. Do you have a smaller size?

B:

Oui, voici un S.

WEE, vwah-SEE ê ES

Yes, here's a small.

A:

Il est parfait ! C'est combien ?

eel ay par-FAY! say kõ-BYÊ

It's perfect! How much is it?

B:

Quarante-cinq euros. Mais il est en solde : trente-cinq euros.

kah-rât-sê-kuh-ROH. may eel-ay-tã SOLD: trât-sê-kuh-ROH

Forty-five euros. But it's in the sale: thirty-five euros.

A:

Alors, je le prends.

ah-LOR, zhuh luh PRÃ

Then I'll take it.

④ Paying — Je paie par carte

A:

Vous acceptez les cartes ?

voo-zak-sep-tay lay KART

Do you accept cards?

B:

Oui, ou en espèces.

WEE, oo ã-nes-PES

Yes, or in cash.

A:

Je paie par carte, s'il vous plaît.

zhuh PAY par KART, seel voo PLAY

I'll pay by card, please.

B:

Voilà. Vous voulez un sac ?

vwah-LAH. voo voo-LAY ê SAHK

There you go. Would you like a bag?

A:

Non, merci. Bonne journée !

NÕ, mair-SEE. bon zhoor-NAY

No, thank you. Have a good day!

⑤ Friends Shopping — Cette robe rouge

A:

Regarde cette robe rouge ! Elle est jolie, non ?

⑥ Just Looking — Je regarde seulement

A:

Bonjour, je peux vous aider ?

bõ-ZHOOR, zhuh PUH voo-zay-DAY

Hello, can I help you?

ruh-GARD set ROHB ROOZH! el-ay zhoh-LEE, NÕ

Look at this red dress! It's pretty, isn't it?

B:

Oui, mais elle est chère. C'est combien ?

WEE, may el-ay SHAIR. say kō-BYĔ

Yes, but it's expensive. How much is it?

A:

Quatre-vingt-neuf euros.

kah-truh-vē-nuh-vuh-ROH

Eighty-nine euros.

B:

Oh là là ! Et cette robe noire ?

Soixante euros. Je la prends !

oh lah LAH! ay set ROHB NWAHR? swah-sāt-uh-ROH. zhuh lah PRĀ

Oh dear! And this black dress? Sixty euros. I'll take it!

B:

Non, merci. Je regarde seulement.

NÕ, mair-SEE. zhuh ruh-GARD suhl-MĀ

No, thanks. I'm just looking.

B:

Excusez-moi, vous êtes ouvert dimanche ?

ek-skū-zay-MWAH, voo-ZET oo-VAIR dee-MĀSH

Excuse me, are you open on Sunday?

A:

Non, nous sommes fermés le dimanche. Nous sommes ouverts de neuf heures à dix-neuf heures.

NÕ, noo som fer-MAY luh dee-MĀSH. noo som oo-VAIR duh nuh-VUR ah dee-znuh-VUR

No, we're closed on Sundays. We're open from nine to seven.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FORMAL / SHOP	INFORMAL
How much is it?	C'est combien ? / Ça coûte combien ?	C'est combien ?
I'm looking for...	Je cherche un pull.	Je cherche un pull.
Do you have...?	Vous avez ça en bleu ?	Tu as ça en bleu ?
Can I try it on?	Je peux l'essayer ?	Je peux l'essayer ?
Too big / too dear	C'est trop grand. / C'est trop cher.	C'est trop grand. / C'est trop cher.
I'll take it	Je le prends. / Je la prends.	Je le prends. / Je la prends.
Paying	Je paie par carte. / en espèces.	Je paie par carte.

SITUATION	FORMAL / SHOP	INFORMAL
Just looking	Je regarde seulement, merci.	Je regarde seulement.

Prices — Les prix

France uses the **euro** and the **centime**. A price is written with a comma: **12,50 €**, and said "twelve euros fifty", with no "and": *douze euros cinquante*.

WRITTEN	FRENCH	SAY IT
1 €	un euro	ẽ-nuh-ROH
2,50 €	deux euros cinquante	duh-zuh-ROH sẽ-KÃT
12,90 €	douze euros quatre-vingt-dix	dooz-uh-ROH kah-truh-vẽ-DEES
45 €	quarante-cinq euros	kah-rãt-sẽ-kuh-ROH
0,80 €	quatre-vingts centimes	kah-truh-vẽ sã-TEEM
100 €	cent euros	sã-tuh-ROH

Saying a Price

Say the euros, then the cents, with no "and" between them: 12,50 € is *douze euros cinquante*. The final consonant of a number links onto *euros* (*deux euros* is "duh-ZUH-roh", *neuf euros* is "nuh-VUH-roh"). To ask for a total, say *Ça fait combien ?* ("How much does that come to?"); the answer starts *Ça fait....* For several items you can also ask *C'est tout ?* or reply *C'est tout, merci*.

Clothes and Colours — Les vêtements et les couleurs

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
un pull	ẽ PÜL	a jumper	une robe	ün ROHB	a dress
un pantalon	ẽ pã-tah-LÕ	trousers	une jupe	ün ZHÜP	a skirt

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
un manteau	<i>ẽ mã-TOH</i>	a coat	une chemise	<i>ün shuh-MEEZ</i>	a shirt
un t-shirt	<i>ẽ tee-SHURT</i>	a T-shirt	des chaussures	<i>day shoh-SÜR</i>	shoes

COLOUR (M.)	SAY IT	COLOUR (F.)	SAY IT	ENGLISH
rouge	<i>ROOZH</i>	rouge	<i>ROOZH</i>	red
bleu	<i>BLUH</i>	bleue	<i>BLUH</i>	blue
vert	<i>VAIR</i>	verte	<i>VAIRT</i>	green
noir	<i>NWAHR</i>	noire	<i>NWAHR</i>	black
blanc	<i>BLÃ</i>	blanche	<i>BLÃSH</i>	white
gris	<i>GREE</i>	grise	<i>GREEZ</i>	grey
jaune	<i>ZHOHN</i>	jaune	<i>ZHOHN</i>	yellow
marron	<i>mah-RÕ</i>	marron	<i>mah-RÕ</i>	brown (never changes)

Colours Come After the Noun and Agree With It

A colour follows the noun and matches its gender and number: *un pull bleu, une robe bleue, des chaussures vertes*. Colours ending in *-e* (*rouge, jaune*) don't change in the feminine, and *marron* (and *orange*) never change at all. Notice the sound shift in the feminine: *vert* "VAIR" → *verte* "VAIRT", *gris* "GREE" → *grise* "GREEZ", *blanc* "BLÃ" → *blanche* "BLÃSH".

👉 "This" and "These" — **ce, cet, cette, ces**

TYPE OF NOUN	THIS / THESE	EXAMPLE	SAY IT
masculine singular	ce	ce pull	<i>suh PÜL</i>
masculine singular, before a vowel	cet	cet article	<i>set ar-TEE-kluh</i>

TYPE OF NOUN	THIS / THESE	EXAMPLE	SAY IT
feminine singular	cette	cette robe	set ROHB
plural	ces	ces chaussures	say shoh-SÜR

"Ce Pull-ci" and "Ce Pull-là"

Ce covers both "this" and "that". To say which one, add **-ci** ("here", near) or **-là** ("there", far): *Je préfère ce pull-ci* (I prefer this one) or *Je prends ce pull-là* (I'll take that one). In everyday speech people often just say *ce pull* and point.

🔑 Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Acheter ("to buy") and *payer* ("to pay") are regular -er verbs with small spelling changes, while *regarder* ("to look at") is completely regular. The spelling changes affect the writing only; the sounds are simple.

WHO	ACHETER (TO BUY)	SAY IT	PAYER (TO PAY)	SAY IT	REGARDER (TO LOOK AT)	SAY IT
je	j'achète	zhah-SHET	je paie	zhuh PAY	je regarde	zhuh ruh-GARD
tu	tu achètes	tü ah-SHET	tu paies	tü PAY	tu regardes	tü ruh-GARD
il / elle / on	il achète	eel ah-SHET	il paie	eel PAY	il regarde	eel ruh-GARD
nous	nous achetons	noo-zahsh-TÖ	nous payons	noo pay-YÖ	nous regardons	noo ruh-gar-DÖ
vous	vous achetez	voo-zahsh-TAY	vous payez	voo pay-YAY	vous regardez	voo ruh-gar-DAY
ils / elles	ils achètent	eel-zah-SHET	ils paient	eel PAY	ils regardent	eel ruh-GARD

Spelling Changes in Boot Verbs

In *acheter* the stem gets an accent in the "boot" forms (je, tu, il, ils): *j'achète*, but *nous achetons*. In *payer* the *y* becomes *i* in the same forms: *je paie*, *nous payons* (*je paye* is also accepted). You don't have to memorise every rule; just learn these two as patterns. Also remember *Je peux...* ("I can / may...", from *pouvoir*) as a ready-made phrase, as in *Je peux l'essayer ?* and *Je peux vous aider ?*

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le prix	PREE	price	noun, m.	same in the plural
2	cher / chère	SHAIR	expensive; dear	adj	sounds the same in m. and f.
3	bon marché	bō mar-SHAY	cheap, good value	adj	never changes
4	l'euro	uh-ROH	euro	noun, m.	written € after the number
5	le centime	sā-TEEM	cent (1/100 euro)	noun, m.	cinquante centimes
6	la taille	TAHY	size (clothes); height	noun, f.	Quelle taille ?
7	la pointure	pwē-TÜR	shoe size	noun, f.	Quelle pointure ?
8	le pull	PÜL	jumper, sweater	noun, m.	short for "pull-over"
9	la robe	ROHB	dress	noun, f.	une robe noire
10	le pantalon	pā-tah-LŌ	trousers	noun, m.	singular in French
11	les chaussures	shoh-SÜR	shoes	noun, f. pl.	une paire de chaussures
12	le sac	SAHK	bag	noun, m.	un sac en plastique

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
13	les espèces	es-PES	cash	noun, f. pl.	en espèces
14	ouvert / fermé	oo-VAIR / fer-MAY	open / closed	adj	ouverte, fermée in the f.
15	trop	TROH	too, too much	adv	trop cher, trop grand
16	coûter	koo-TAY	to cost	verb	Ça coûte combien ?
17	acheter	ahsh-TAY	to buy	verb	j'achète
18	payer	pay-YAY	to pay	verb	je paie
19	essayer	ay-say-YAY	to try, to try on	verb	Je peux l'essayer ?
20	les soldes	SOLD	the sales	noun, m. pl.	en solde = in the sale

Real French Tip — Say "Bonjour" and Watch the Sales

When you enter a French shop, say *Bonjour* to the person behind the counter, even if you're just browsing, and *Merçi, au revoir* on the way out. A silent walk-in feels rude. *Les soldes* (the sales) are national events that take place twice a year, in winter and summer, on dates set by the government, so you'll see *SOLDES* in every window and plenty of people shopping with real purpose. Many shops close on Sundays (and some at lunchtime, especially in small towns), so check the *horaires* (opening hours).

Sizes: "La Taille" and "La Pointure"

Clothing sizes in France are numbers, not S/M/L: roughly a UK size 10 is a French 38, a 12 is a 40, and so on (*Je fais du 40*, "I'm a 40"), though shops also use S, M, L. Shoes have their own word, *la pointure*, with numbers like 38 or 42 that differ from UK sizes, so try shoes on (*Je peux essayer ?*) rather than guess.



Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask the price of a jumper and of the apples.

▼ Show answer

C'est combien, ce pull ? / C'est combien, les pommes ?

2. Say these prices: 2,50 € · 12,90 € · 89 €.

▼ Show answer

deux euros cinquante · douze euros quatre-vingt-dix · quatre-vingt-neuf euros.

3. Make the colour agree: une robe ____ (noir) · un pull ____ (blanc) · des chaussures ____ (vert).

▼ Show answer

une robe noire · un pull blanc · des chaussures vertes.

4. Choose *ce*, *cet*, *cette* or *ces*: ____ pull · ____ robe · ____ chaussures · ____ article.

▼ Show answer

ce pull · cette robe · ces chaussures · cet article.

5. Say "It's too big. Do you have a smaller size?"

▼ Show answer

Il est trop grand. Vous avez une taille plus petite ?

6. Ask if they accept cards, then say you'll pay by card.

▼ Show answer

Vous acceptez les cartes ? / Je paie par carte.

Coming Up in Chapter 10

You can now shop and pay. Next up: **asking for directions**: *Où est... ?*, left, right and straight on, and understanding the answer.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 10 · Asking for Directions



Asking for Directions — Demander son chemin

Ask where something is, understand the answer, and say you're lost or didn't catch it. Directions are given as **commands** (*Allez tout droit, tournez à gauche*), so this chapter introduces the imperative, along with words like *en face de* and *à côté de*.

① Finding the Station — Pour aller à la gare ?

A:

Excusez-moi, Monsieur. Pour aller à la gare, s'il vous plaît ?

ek-skü-zay-MWAH, muh-SYUH. poor ah-LAY ah lah GAR, seel voo PLAY

Excuse me, sir. How do I get to the station, please?

B:

Allez tout droit, puis tournez à gauche au feu rouge.

ah-lay too DRWAH, PWEE toor-nay ah GOHSH oh fuh ROOZH

Go straight on, then turn left at the red light.

A:

C'est loin ?

say LWÊ
Is it far?

B:

Non, c'est à dix minutes à pied.

NÔ, say-tah dee mee-NÛT ah PYAY
No, it's ten minutes on foot.

A:

Merci beaucoup !

② The Post Office — Où est la poste ?

A:

Pardon, où est la poste ?

par-DÔ, oo ay lah POST
Excuse me, where is the post office?

B:

Prenez la deuxième rue à droite. La poste est en face de la banque.

pruh-NAY lah duh-ZYEM RÛ ah DRWAHT. lah POST ay-tã FAHS duh lah BÃK

Take the second street on the right. The post office is opposite the bank.

A:

La deuxième à droite, en face de la banque.

lah duh-ZYEM ah DRWAHT, ã FAHS duh lah BÃK

The second on the right, opposite the bank.

B:

C'est ça !

say SAH
That's it!

mair-SEE boh-KOO

Thank you very much!

B:

Je vous en prie.

zhuh voo-zã-PREE

You're welcome.

③ Among Friends — Il y a une pharmacie près d'ici ?

A:

Salut ! Il y a une pharmacie près d'ici ?

sah-LÜ! eel-ee-AH ün far-mah-SEE pray dee-SEE

Hi! Is there a pharmacy near here?

B:

Oui, tout près. Tu continues tout droit et c'est à côté de la boulangerie.

WEE, too PRAY. tü kô-tee-NÜ too DRWAH ay say-tah koh-TAY duh lah boo-lãzh-REE

Yes, very close. You carry straight on and it's next to the bakery.

A:

Super, merci !

sü-PAIR, mair-SEE

Great, thanks!

④ Lost — Je suis perdue

A:

Excusez-moi, je suis perdue. Je cherche l'office de tourisme.

ek-skü-zay-MWAH, zhuh swee pair-DÜ. zhuh SHERSH loh-FEES duh too-REES-muh

Excuse me, I'm lost. I'm looking for the tourist office.

B:

C'est au centre-ville, derrière la mairie.

say-toh sã-truh-VEEL, dair-YAIR lah may-REE

It's in the town centre, behind the town hall.

A:

Pardon, je ne comprends pas très bien. Vous pouvez parler plus lentement ?

par-DÔ, zhuh nuh kô-PRÃ pah tray BYÊ. voo poo-vay par-LAY plü lã-tuh-MÃ

Sorry, I don't understand very well. Could you speak more slowly?

B:

Bien sûr. Tout droit, puis à droite. C'est derrière la mairie.

byê SÜR. too DRWAH, PWEE ah DRWAHT. say dair-YAIR lah may-REE

Of course. Straight on, then right. It's behind the town hall.

A:

Merci, c'est très gentil.

mair-SEE, say tray zhā-TEE

Thank you, that's very kind.

⑤ The Airport Bus — L'arrêt de bus

A:

Où est l'arrêt de bus pour
l'aéroport ?

oo ay lah-RAY duh BÛS poor lah-ay-roh-POR

Where is the bus stop for the airport?

B:

Il est là-bas, devant l'hôtel, à côté de
la station de métro.

eel-ay lah-BAH, duh-VÃ loh-TEL, ah koh-TAY

duh lah stah-SYÕ duh may-TROH

It's over there, in front of the hotel, next to the
metro station.

A:

C'est loin ?

say LWÊ

Is it far?

B:

Non, c'est à cinquante mètres.

NÕ, say-tah sê-kât-MET-ruh

No, it's fifty metres away.

⑥ The Museum — Au coin de la rue

A:

Le musée, c'est loin d'ici ?

luh mü-ZAY, say LWÊ dee-SEE

Is the museum far from here?

B:

Non, il est au coin de la rue, entre la
banque et le café.

NÕ, eel-ay oh KWÊ duh lah RÛ, ÃN-truh lah

BÃK ay luh kah-FAY

No, it's on the corner of the street, between the
bank and the café.

A:

Je traverse la rue ?

zhuh trah-VAIRS lah RÛ

Do I cross the street?

B:

Oui, traversez la rue et c'est là.

WEE, trah-vair-SAY lah RÛ ay say LAH

Yes, cross the street and it's there.

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION

FORMAL

INFORMAL

Where is...?

Où est la gare ? / Où se trouve la gare ?

Où est la gare ?

SITUATION	FORMAL	INFORMAL
How do I get to...?	Pour aller à la gare, s'il vous plaît ?	Comment on va à la gare ?
Is there... near here?	Y a-t-il une pharmacie près d'ici ?	Il y a une pharmacie près d'ici ?
Is it far?	C'est loin ? / C'est près ?	C'est loin ?
I'm lost	Je suis perdu(e).	Je suis perdu(e).
I don't understand	Je ne comprends pas. Pouvez-vous répéter ?	Je comprends pas. Tu peux répéter ?
More slowly, please	Parlez plus lentement, s'il vous plaît.	Parle plus lentement, s'il te plaît.



Places in Town — Les lieux en ville

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
la gare	<i>lah GAR</i>	train station	la mairie	<i>lah may-REE</i>	town hall
la poste	<i>lah POST</i>	post office	le musée	<i>luh mü-ZAY</i>	museum
la banque	<i>lah BÃK</i>	bank	l'office de tourisme	<i>loh-FEES duh too-REES-muh</i>	tourist office
la pharmacie	<i>lah far-mah-SEE</i>	pharmacy	l'arrêt de bus	<i>lah-RAY duh BÜS</i>	bus stop
la boulangerie	<i>lah boo-lāzh-REE</i>	bakery	la station de métro	<i>lah stah-SYŌ duh may-TROH</i>	metro station
le supermarché	<i>luh sü-pair-mar-SHAY</i>	supermarket	l'aéroport	<i>lah-ay-roh-POR</i>	airport
la rue	<i>lah RÜ</i>	street	les toilettes	<i>lay twah-LET</i>	toilets



Directions and Position — Directions et position

FRENCH		SAY IT	ENGLISH
tout droit		too DRWAH	straight on
à gauche		ah GOHSH	to the left
à droite		ah DRWAHT	to the right
au feu (rouge)		oh FUH (ROOZH)	at the traffic light
au carrefour		oh kar-FOOR	at the crossroads
au rond-point		oh rō-PWĚ	at the roundabout
la première / deuxième / troisième rue		pruh-MYAIR / duh-ZYEM / trwah-ZYEM	the first / second / third street
POSITION	SAY IT	ENGLISH	EXAMPLE
à côté de	ah koh-TAY duh	next to	à côté de la poste
en face de	ã FAHS duh	opposite	en face du musée
devant	duh-VÃ	in front of	devant l'hôtel
derrière	dair-YAIR	behind	derrière la mairie
entre ... et ...	ÃN-truh ... ay	between ... and ...	entre la banque et le café
près de / loin de	PRAY duh / LWĚ duh	near / far from	près de la gare
au coin de	oh KWĚ duh	on the corner of	au coin de la rue

"De" + le / les = du / des

The little word *de* after *à côté*, *en face*, *près*, *loin* joins with the article, just as in Chapter 4: *de + le = du* (*à côté **du** musée*), *de + les = des* (*près **des** toilettes*), but *de la* and *de l'* stay as they are (*à côté **de la** poste*, *en face **de l'**hôtel*). The same squashing happens with *à*: *au* (*au coin*), *aux*, while *à la* and *à l'* stay apart.

Giving Directions — L'impératif

Directions are commands, called the **imperative**. It's easy: take the *tu* or *vous* form of the present tense and drop the pronoun. For *-er* verbs the *tu* command also drops its final *-s*. With strangers you use **vous**: *Tournez à gauche*. With a friend: *Tourne à gauche*.

VERB	TU (FRIEND)	SAY IT	VOUS (POLITE)	SAY IT
tourner (to turn)	tourne	TOORN	tournez	toor-NAY
continuer (to continue)	continue	kõ-tee-NÜ	continuez	kõ-tee-nü-AY
traverser (to cross)	traverse	trah-VAIRS	traversez	trah-vair-SAY
prendre (to take)	prends	PRÃ	prenez	pruh-NAY
aller (to go)	va	VAH	allez	ah-LAY

Commands, Politeness and the Present Tense

A bare command sounds abrupt in English, but in French giving directions with *vous* commands is normal and polite, especially with *s'il vous plaît* on the end. Friends often skip the command altogether and use the plain present with *tu*, as in dialog ③: *Tu continues tout droit et tu tournes à gauche*. This chapter uses commands rather than a full verb table, because that's the form you'll actually hear. *Tourner*, *continuer* and *traverser* follow the regular *-er* pattern from Chapter 4, and you already know *aller* and *prendre*.

First, Second, Third — Ordinals

The ordinals you need are *première* (1st, f.), *deuxième* (2nd) and *troisième* (3rd). After the first, add **-ième** to the number: *quatrième*, *cinquième*, *sixième*. So: *la première rue à gauche*, *la deuxième à droite*. (A road is feminine; for a masculine noun the first is *premier*, as in *le premier mai* in Chapter 7.)

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	la rue	RÜ	street	noun, f.	say "ü" with rounded lips
2	la gare	GAR	train station	noun, f.	la gare routière = bus station
3	la poste	POST	post office	noun, f.	also "mail" (la poste)
4	la pharmacie	far-mah-SEE	pharmacy	noun, f.	marked by a green cross
5	la mairie	may-REE	town hall	noun, f.	from le maire = the mayor
6	le musée	mü-ZAY	museum	noun, m.	au musée
7	l'arrêt	ah-RAY	stop (bus stop)	noun, m.	l'arrêt de bus
8	le métro	may-TROH	metro, underground	noun, m.	en métro = by metro
9	le centre-ville	sã-truh-VEEL	town centre	noun, m.	au centre-ville
10	à gauche	ah GOHSH	to the left	phrase	la main gauche = left hand
11	à droite	ah DRWAHT	to the right	phrase	tout droit = straight (same root)
12	tout droit	too DRWAH	straight on	phrase	the t of droit is silent here
13	loin (de)	LWĚ	far (from)	adv	C'est loin ?
14	près (de)	PRAY	near, close (to)	adv	près d'ici = near here
15	en face (de)	ã FAHS	opposite	phrase	en face de la banque
16	à côté (de)	ah koh-TAY	next to	phrase	à côté du musée
17	perdu / perdue	pair-DÜ	lost	adj	same sound for m. and f.
18	tourner	toor-NAY	to turn	verb	tournez à gauche
19	continuer	kõ-tee-nü- AY	to continue	verb	continuez tout droit

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
20	traverser	<i>trah-vair- SAY</i>	to cross	verb	<i>traversez la rue</i>

Real French Tip — Pardon, Excusez-Moi, and "Je Ne Suis Pas d'Ici"

Begin by catching someone's attention with *Excusez-moi, Monsieur / Madame* (or a quicker *Pardon*), then ask your question and finish with *merci*. If you hear *Je ne suis pas d'ici* ("I'm not from here"), you've asked another visitor, which happens to every traveller and is the local's equivalent of a shrug. In a city, a note of the street name and number is as useful as a map: a French address is written *12, rue Victor Hugo*, with the number first. And if you find you can't follow the reply at all, *Vous pouvez me montrer sur le plan ?* ("Can you show me on the map?") will rescue you.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Politely ask a stranger the way to the station.

▼ Show answer

Excusez-moi, Monsieur / Madame. Pour aller à la gare, s'il vous plaît ?

2. Give directions: "Go straight on, then turn left."

▼ Show answer

Allez tout droit, puis tournez à gauche.

3. Tell a friend: "Take the second street on the right."

▼ Show answer

Prends la deuxième rue à droite. (Tu command: prends, not prenez.)

4. Complete with *de la, du, de l'* or *des*: à côté ____ musée · en face ____ hôtel · près ____ gare · loin ____ toilettes.

▼ Show answer

à côté du musée · en face de l'hôtel · près de la gare · loin des toilettes.

5. Say "I'm lost. I don't understand. Could you speak more slowly?"

▼ Show answer

Je suis perdu(e). Je ne comprends pas. Vous pouvez parler plus lentement ?

6. Say "It's five minutes on foot."

▼ Show answer

C'est à cinq minutes à pied.

Coming Up in Chapter 11

You can now ask your way around town. Next up: **booking a hotel**: *J'ai une réservation*, rooms and nights, and asking about breakfast and checking out.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 11 · Booking a Hotel



Booking a Hotel — Réserver une chambre d'hôtel

Book a room, check in, ask about the price and breakfast, report a small problem, and check out. You'll reuse dates and numbers (Chapters 3 and 7), Je voudrais (Chapter 8) and il y a (Chapter 8), and meet a new verb pattern with partir.

① Checking In — J'ai une réservation

A:

Bonjour, j'ai une réservation au nom de Moreau.

bõ-ZHOOR, zhay ün ray-zair-vah-SYÕ oh NÕ duh moh-ROH

Hello, I have a reservation in the name of Moreau.

B:

Un instant, s'il vous plaît... Oui, une chambre double pour deux nuits.

ẽ-nẽs-TÃ, seel voo PLAY... WEE, ün SHÃ-bruh DOO-bluh poor duh NWEE

One moment, please... Yes, a double room for two nights.

A:

C'est ça.

say SAH

That's right.

B:

Votre passeport, s'il vous plaît. Voici votre clé : chambre douze, au premier étage.

VOH-truh pas-POR, seel voo PLAY. vwah-SEE VOH-truh KLAY: SHÃ-bruh DOOZ, oh pruh-MYAY-ray-TAHZH

② Booking a Room — Vous avez une chambre libre ?

A:

Bonjour, vous avez une chambre libre pour ce soir ?

bõ-ZHOOR, voo-zah-vay ün SHÃ-bruh LEE-bruh poor suh SWAHR

Hello, do you have a free room for tonight?

B:

Pour combien de personnes ?

poor kõ-BYË duh pair-SON

For how many people?

A:

Pour une personne.

poor ün pair-SON

For one person.

B:

Oui, une chambre simple avec douche.

WEE, ün SHÃ-bruh SË-pluh ah-vek DOOSH

Yes, a single room with a shower.

A:

C'est combien par nuit ? Le petit déjeuner est compris ?

Your passport, please. Here is your key: room twelve, on the first floor.

say kô-BYĔ par NWEE? luh puh-TEE day-zhuh-NAY ay kô-PREE

How much is it per night? Is breakfast included?

B:

Soixante-quinze euros. Le petit déjeuner est à neuf euros.

swah-sât-KĔZ uh-ROH. luh puh-TEE day-zhuh-NAY ay-tah nuh-VUH-roh

Seventy-five euros. Breakfast is nine euros.

③ A Full Hotel — L'hôtel est complet

A:

Vous avez une chambre double du douze au quinze octobre ?

voo-zah-vay ün SHĀ-bruh DOO-bluh dü DOOZ oh KĔZ ok-TOH-bruh

Do you have a double room from 12 to 15 October?

B:

Je suis désolé, l'hôtel est complet.

zhuh swee day-zoh-LAY, loh-TEL ay kô-PLAY
I'm sorry, the hotel is full.

A:

Domage ! Il y a un autre hôtel près d'ici ?

doh-MAHZH! eel-ee-AH ě-NOH-truh oh-TEL pray dee-SEE

What a pity! Is there another hotel near here?

B:

Oui, l'hôtel de la Gare, en face de la gare.

WEE, loh-TEL duh lah GAR, ĩ FAHS duh lah GAR

④ Breakfast and Wi-Fi — Le petit déjeuner

A:

À quelle heure est le petit déjeuner ?

ah kel UR ay luh puh-TEE day-zhuh-NAY
What time is breakfast?

B:

De sept heures à dix heures, au rez-de-chaussée.

duh set-UR ah dee-ZUR, oh ray-duh-shoh-SAY
From seven to ten, on the ground floor.

A:

Vous avez le wifi ?

voo-zah-vay luh wee-FEE
Do you have Wi-Fi?

B:

Oui, c'est gratuit. Le mot de passe est sur votre clé.

WEE, say grah-TWEE. luh moh duh PAS ay sür VOH-truh KLAY
Yes, it's free. The password is on your key.

Yes, the Hôtel de la Gare, opposite the station.

⑤ A Problem — Il y a un problème

A:

Excusez-moi, il y a un problème. La douche ne marche pas.

*ek-skü-zay-MWAH, eel-ee-AH ē proh-BLEM.
lah DOOSH nuh MARSH pah*

Excuse me, there's a problem. The shower doesn't work.

B:

Je suis désolé, Madame. Quelle chambre ?

zhuh swee day-zoh-LAY, mah-DAHM. kel SHĀ-bruh

I'm sorry, madam. Which room?

A:

Chambre vingt-trois. Et il n'y a pas de serviettes.

SHĀ-bruh vêt-TRWAH. ay eel nee-ah PAH duh sair-VYET

Room twenty-three. And there are no towels.

B:

Voici la clé de la chambre vingt-cinq. Elle est en face.

vwah-SEE lah KLAY duh lah SHĀ-bruh vêt-SĔK. el-ay-tā FAHS

Here is the key to room twenty-five. It's opposite.

⑥ Checking Out — Je voudrais payer

A:

Bonjour, je voudrais payer, s'il vous plaît. Chambre douze.

bō-ZHOOR, zhuh voo-DRAY pay-YAY, seel voo PLAY. SHĀ-bruh DOOZ

Hello, I'd like to pay, please. Room twelve.

B:

Voilà la note : cent cinquante euros.

vwah-LAH lah NOT: sã sĕ-KĀT-uh-ROH

Here is the bill: one hundred and fifty euros.

A:

Je paie par carte.

zhuh PAY par KART

I'll pay by card.

B:

Très bien. Vous partez aujourd'hui ?

tray BYĔ. voo par-TAY oh-zhoor-DWEE

Very good. Are you leaving today?

A:

Oui, je pars à midi.

WEE, zhuh PAR ah mee-DEE

Yes, I'm leaving at noon.

B:

Merci. Bon voyage !

mair-SEE. bō vwah-YAHZH

Thank you. Have a good trip!



Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FRENCH	ENGLISH
Arriving with a booking	J'ai une réservation au nom de ...	I have a booking in the name of ...
Asking for a room	Vous avez une chambre libre pour ce soir ?	Do you have a room free tonight?
Booking ahead	Je voudrais réserver une chambre double pour deux nuits.	I'd like to book a double room for two nights.
The dates	Du douze au quinze octobre.	From 12 to 15 October.
The price	C'est combien par nuit ?	How much is it per night?
Breakfast	Le petit déjeuner est compris ?	Is breakfast included?
A problem	Il y a un problème. La douche ne marche pas.	There's a problem. The shower doesn't work.
Checking out	Je voudrais payer. Je pars à midi.	I'd like to pay. I'm leaving at noon.



Rooms — Les chambres

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
une chambre simple	<i>ün SHÄ-bruh SĒ-pluh</i>	a single room
une chambre double	<i>ün SHÄ-bruh DOO-bluh</i>	a double room (one large bed)
une chambre avec deux lits	<i>ün SHÄ-bruh ah-VEK duh LEE</i>	a twin room (two beds)
avec douche / avec salle de bains	<i>ah-VEK DOOSH / ah-VEK sal duh BĚ</i>	with a shower / with a bathroom
avec vue sur la mer / la ville	<i>ah-VEK VÜ sür lah MAIR / lah VEEL</i>	with a view of the sea / the city

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
pour une personne / deux personnes	<i>poor ün pair-SON / duh pair-SON</i>	for one person / two people
une nuit / deux nuits / une semaine	<i>ün NWEE / duh NWEE / ün suh-MEN</i>	one night / two nights / a week

Two Little Words: "Pour" and "Du ... au ..."

Pour ("for") introduces the people or the length of stay: *pour deux personnes, pour trois nuits*. To give the dates, use **du ... au ...** ("from ... to ...") with the numbers and months from Chapter 7: *du douze au quinze octobre*. Note that *nuit* and *nuits* sound identical ("NWEE"), so the number before it tells you whether it is singular or plural.

Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Réserver ("to book") and *rester* ("to stay") are regular -er verbs. *Partir* ("to leave") is an irregular -ir verb: in the singular it loses its last consonant before the ending (*je pars, il part*), and the plural stays whole.

WHO	RÉSERVER (TO BOOK)	SAY IT	RESTER (TO STAY)	SAY IT	PARTIR (TO LEAVE)	SAY IT
je	je réserve	<i>zhuh ray-ZAIRV</i>	je reste	<i>zhuh REST</i>	je pars	<i>zhuh PAR</i>
tu	tu réserves	<i>tü ray-ZAIRV</i>	tu restes	<i>tü REST</i>	tu pars	<i>tü PAR</i>
il / elle / on	il réserve	<i>eel ray-ZAIRV</i>	il reste	<i>eel REST</i>	il part	<i>eel PAR</i>
nous	nous réservons	<i>noo ray-zair-VÕ</i>	nous restons	<i>noo res-TÕ</i>	nous partons	<i>noo par-TÕ</i>
vous	vous réservez	<i>voo ray-zair-VAY</i>	vous restez	<i>voo res-TAY</i>	vous partez	<i>voo par-TAY</i>

WHO	RÉSERVER (TO BOOK)	SAY IT	RESTER (TO STAY)	SAY IT	PARTIR (TO LEAVE)	SAY IT
ils / elles	ils réservent	<i>eel ray-ZAIRV</i>	ils restent	<i>eel REST</i>	ils partent	<i>eel PART</i>

"Il n'y a pas de..." and "...ne marche pas"

Two phrases make complaints easy. **Il n'y a pas de** + noun ("there is no...") uses *de* after the negative, as in Chapter 5: *Il n'y a pas de serviettes, il n'y a pas d'eau chaude*. And **...ne marche pas** ("doesn't work") goes after the thing: *La douche ne marche pas, le wifi ne marche pas*. Starting with *Excusez-moi, il y a un problème* and ending with *Merci* keeps you polite, and staff nearly always respond helpfully.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	la chambre	<i>SHĀ-bruh</i>	room (bedroom)	noun, f.	<i>une chambre double</i>
2	la réservation	<i>ray-zair-vah-SYŌ</i>	booking, reservation	noun, f.	<i>au nom de ...</i>
3	la nuit	<i>NWEE</i>	night	noun, f.	<i>par nuit = per night</i>
4	le lit	<i>LEE</i>	bed	noun, m.	<i>deux lits</i>
5	la salle de bains	<i>SAL duh BĚ</i>	bathroom	noun, f.	<i>literally "room of baths"</i>
6	la douche	<i>DOOSH</i>	shower	noun, f.	<i>avec douche</i>
7	la clé	<i>KLAY</i>	key	noun, f.	<i>also spelled "clef"</i>
8	la serviette	<i>sair-VYET</i>	towel; napkin	noun, f.	<i>pas de serviettes</i>
9	le passeport	<i>pas-POR</i>	passport	noun, m.	<i>Votre passeport, s'il vous plaît.</i>

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
10	la réception	ray-sep-SYŌ	reception (desk)	noun, f.	à la réception
11	l'étage	ay-TAHZH	floor, storey	noun, m.	au premier étage
12	le rez-de-chaussée	ray-duh-shoh-SAY	ground floor	noun, m.	often "le RDC"
13	l'ascenseur	ah-sǎ-SUR	lift, elevator	noun, m.	pas d'ascenseur = no lift
14	compris	kō-PREE	included	adj	petit déjeuner compris
15	complet	kō-PLAY	full, no vacancies	adj	complète in the f.
16	gratuit	grah-TWEE	free (no charge)	adj	le wifi est gratuit
17	réserver	ray-zair-VAY	to book	verb	regular -er
18	rester	res-TAY	to stay, to remain	verb	Je reste trois nuits.
19	partir	par-TEER	to leave, to depart	verb	je pars, nous partons
20	le wifi	wee-FEE	Wi-Fi	noun, m.	pronounced like English

Real French Tip — Floors, Tourist Tax and Breakfast

French floors count like British ones: *le rez-de-chaussée* is the ground floor and *le premier étage* is the first floor up. Hotels in France often add a small *taxe de séjour* (tourist tax) per person per night, which may be listed separately from the room price. And a French hotel breakfast is usually bread or croissants, butter and jam, coffee and juice rather than a cooked meal, which is why it is often priced separately, so *Le petit déjeuner est compris ?* is worth asking. For the bill, hotels say *la note* (or *la facture*), reserving *l'addition* for restaurants.



Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say "I have a reservation in the name of Smith."

▼ Show answer

J'ai une réservation au nom de Smith.

2. Ask whether they have a room free tonight for two people.

▼ Show answer

Vous avez une chambre libre pour ce soir, pour deux personnes ?

3. Ask how much it costs per night and whether breakfast is included.

▼ Show answer

C'est combien par nuit ? Le petit déjeuner est compris ?

4. Say "I'm staying three nights, from 12 to 15 October."

▼ Show answer

Je reste trois nuits, du douze au quinze octobre.

5. Report: "The shower doesn't work and there are no towels."

▼ Show answer

La douche ne marche pas. Il n'y a pas de serviettes.

6. Say "I'm leaving at noon."

▼ Show answer

Je pars à midi.

Coming Up in Chapter 12

You can now book a room and stay in a French hotel. Next, the last chapter of the course: **getting around by train and bus**: buying a ticket, platforms and times, and asking if a train is late. After it you'll have a recap of everything in Basic Conversation 1.

French Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 12 · Getting Around: Trains, Buses & Tickets



Getting Around — Se déplacer

Buy a train ticket, find your platform, ask about delays, take a bus or the metro, and say how you travel. You'll use *je voudrais* (Chapter 8), the 24-hour clock (Chapter 7), commands (Chapter 10) and plenty of numbers. A small but important grammar point: French says *en train* but *à pied*.

① Buying a Ticket — Un aller-retour pour Lyon

A:

Bonjour, je voudrais un billet pour Lyon, s'il vous plaît.

bõ-ZHOOR, zhuh voo-DRAY ê bee-YAY poor lee-Õ, seel voo PLAY

Hello, I'd like a ticket to Lyon, please.

B:

Aller simple ou aller-retour ?

ah-lay SÊ-pluh oo ah-lay-ruh-TOOR

Single or return?

A:

Aller-retour, en deuxième classe.

Pour demain matin.

ah-lay-ruh-TOOR, ã duh-ZYEM KLAS. poor duh-MÊ mah-TÊ

Return, second class. For tomorrow morning.

B:

Il y a un train à neuf heures vingt.

eel-ee-AH ê TRÊ ah nuh-VUR VÊ

There's a train at nine twenty.

A:

Parfait. C'est combien ?

par-FAY. say kõ-BYÊ

② Which Platform? — De quelle voie ?

A:

Excusez-moi, de quelle voie part le train pour Lyon ?

ek-skü-zay-MWAH, duh kel VWAH par luh TRÊ poor lee-Õ

Excuse me, which platform does the Lyon train leave from?

B:

Voie quatre.

VWAH KAH-truh

Platform four.

A:

Il part à quelle heure ?

eel PAR ah kel UR

What time does it leave?

B:

À neuf heures vingt. Il est déjà là.

ah nuh-VUR VÊ. eel-ay day-zhah LAH

At nine twenty. It's already here.

Perfect. How much is it?

B:

Quatre-vingt-quatre euros.

kah-truh-vê-KAH-truh uh-ROH

Eighty-four euros.

③ A Delay — Le train a du retard

A:

Pardon, le train pour Paris est en retard ?

par-DÔ, luh TRÊ poor pah-REE ay-tã ruh-TAR

Excuse me, is the Paris train late?

B:

Oui, il a vingt minutes de retard.

WEE, eel-ah vê mee-NÛT duh ruh-TAR

Yes, it's twenty minutes late.

A:

Il arrive à quelle heure ?

eel ah-REEV ah kel UR

What time does it arrive?

B:

À quatorze heures quarante. Je suis désolé.

ah kah-tor-ZUR kah-RÃT. zhuh swee day-zoh-LAY

At 14:40. I'm sorry.

④ The Bus — Le bus numéro douze

A:

Pardon, le bus numéro douze va à la gare ?

par-DÔ, luh BÛS nü-may-ROH DOOZ vah ah

lah GAR

Excuse me, does the number twelve bus go to the station?

B:

Oui. Il y a un bus toutes les dix minutes.

WEE. eel-ee-AH ê BÛS toot lay dee mee-NÛT

Yes. There's a bus every ten minutes.

A:

Je prends le ticket où ?

zhuh PRÃ luh tee-KAY OO

Where do I get the ticket?

B:

Vous achetez le ticket dans le bus.

C'est deux euros.

voo-zahsh-TAY luh tee-KAY dã luh BÛS. say duh-zuh-ROH

You buy the ticket on the bus. It's two euros.

⑤ The Metro — Ligne quatre, direction...

A:

⑥ Meeting a Friend — Tu arrives à quelle heure ?

Pour aller à la gare du Nord, s'il vous plaît ?

poor ah-LAY ah lah GAR dü NOR, seel voo PLAY

How do I get to the Gare du Nord, please?

B:

Prenez la ligne quatre, direction Porte de Clignancourt.

pruh-NAY lah LEEN-yuh KAH-truh, dee-rek-SYŌ PORT duh kleen-yān-KOOR

Take line four, in the direction of Porte de Clignancourt.

A:

C'est direct ?

say dee-REKT

Is it direct?

B:

Oui, c'est direct. Descendez à Gare du Nord.

WEE, say dee-REKT. day-sā-DAY ah GAR dü NOR

Yes, it's direct. Get off at Gare du Nord.

A:

Tu arrives à quelle heure demain ?

tü ah-REEV ah kel UR duh-MÊ

What time do you arrive tomorrow?

B:

Mon train arrive à dix-huit heures dix.

mō TRÊ ah-REEV ah dee-zwee-TUR DEES

My train arrives at 18:10.

A:

Super ! Je viens te chercher à la gare.

sü-PAIR! zhuh VYÊ tuh sher-SHAY ah lah GAR

Great! I'll come and pick you up at the station.

B:

Merci ! À demain !

mair-SEE! ah duh-MÊ

Thanks! See you tomorrow!

Key Phrases at a Glance — Phrases clés

SITUATION	FRENCH	ENGLISH
Buying a ticket	Un billet pour Lyon, s'il vous plaît.	A ticket to Lyon, please.
Type of ticket	Un aller simple / un aller-retour, en deuxième classe.	A single / a return, second class.
Next train	Le prochain train pour Paris part à quelle heure ?	When does the next train to Paris leave?

SITUATION	FRENCH	ENGLISH
Platform	De quelle voie part le train ?	Which platform does the train leave from?
Delay	Le train a vingt minutes de retard.	The train is twenty minutes late.
Direct?	C'est direct ? / On change où ?	Is it direct? / Where do we change?
Getting off	Descendez à ... / Je descends à ...	Get off at ... / I'm getting off at ...



Ways to Travel — Les moyens de transport

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	"BY ..."
le train	<i>luh TRĚ</i>	train	en train
le bus	<i>luh BÛS</i>	bus	en bus
le car	<i>luh KAR</i>	coach (long-distance)	en car
le tramway	<i>luh trah-MWAY</i>	tram	en tramway
le métro	<i>luh may-TROH</i>	metro, underground	en métro
le taxi	<i>luh tak-SEE</i>	taxi	en taxi
la voiture	<i>lah vwah-TÛR</i>	car	en voiture
l'avion (m.)	<i>lah-vyõ</i>	plane	en avion
le vélo	<i>luh vay-LOH</i>	bicycle	à vélo
(on foot)	<i>ah PYAY</i>	on foot	à pied

"En" for Vehicles You Sit In, "À" for Bike and Foot

For most transport you say **en** (*en train, en bus, en voiture, en avion*), but for things you ride or walk on, you say **à**: *à vélo, à pied*. So: *Je vais au travail en train. Il va à l'école à pied. Elle va à la gare à vélo*. For public transport you can also use *le*: *Je prends le train / le bus* ("I take the train").

Tickets and Timetables — Billets et horaires

FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH
un billet	<i>ẽ bee-YAY</i>	a ticket (train, plane)
un aller simple	<i>ẽ-nah-lay SĚ-pluh</i>	a single (one-way) ticket
un aller-retour	<i>ẽ-nah-lay-ruh-TOOR</i>	a return ticket
première / deuxième classe	<i>pruh-MYAIR / duh-ZYEM KLAS</i>	first / second class
la voie / le quai	<i>lah VWAH / luh KAY</i>	track number / platform
l'horaire (m.)	<i>loh-RAIR</i>	timetable, schedule
le prochain / le dernier train	<i>luh pro-SHĚ / luh dair-NYAY TRĚ</i>	the next / the last train
à l'heure / en retard / annulé	<i>ah LUR / ă ruh-TAR / ah-nü-LAY</i>	on time / late / cancelled

Timetables Use the 24-Hour Clock

Station announcements and timetables use the 24-hour clock from Chapter 7: *quatorze heures quarante* (14:40), *dix-huit heures dix* (18:10). For regular services, French uses *toutes les* + number + *minutes* ("every ... minutes"): *toutes les dix minutes*. And *le prochain train* is the next one, *le dernier train* the last, so *Le dernier bus part à minuit* is a useful sentence to know.

Three Verbs You Just Used — Trois verbes

Arriver ("to arrive") and *changer* ("to change") are regular -er verbs (*changer* keeps its soft g with *nous changeons*). *Descendre* ("to get off, to go down") belongs to the third regular group, the **-re verbs**: the endings are -s, -s, —, -ons, -ez, -ent, and the d is pronounced in the plural only.

WHO	ARRIVER (TO ARRIVE)	SAY IT	CHANGER (TO CHANGE)	SAY IT	DESCENDRE (TO GET OFF)	SAY IT
je	j'arrive	<i>zhah-REEV</i>	je change	<i>zhuh SHĀZH</i>	je descends	<i>zhuh day-SĀ</i>

WHO	ARRIVER (TO ARRIVE)	SAY IT	CHANGER (TO CHANGE)	SAY IT	DESCENDRE (TO GET OFF)	SAY IT
tu	tu arrives	tü ah- REEV	tu changes	tü SHÄZH	tu descends	tü day- SÄ
il / elle / on	il arrive	eel ah- REEV	il change	eel SHÄZH	il descend	eel day- SÄ
nous	nous arrivons	noo-zah- ree-VÖ	nous changeons	noo shä- ZHÖ	nous descendons	noo day-sä- DÖ
vous	vous arrivez	voo-zah- ree-VAY	vous changez	voo shä- ZHAY	vous descendez	voo day-sä- DAY
ils / elles	ils arrivent	eel-zah- REEV	ils changent	eel SHÄZH	ils descendent	eel day- SÄD

Three Verb Families — A Summary

You have now met all three regular verb groups in French: **-er** verbs (*parler, habiter, aimer, arriver*), **-ir** verbs (*finir*, with *-iss-* in the plural), and **-re** verbs (*descendre, prendre*). Alongside them sit the irregular verbs you've used all course: *être, avoir, aller, faire, venir, vouloir, boire, partir*. Practise the present tense of each and you can say most everyday things.

Vocabulary — Vocabulaire

20 key words and phrases from this chapter. Nouns are listed with their article.

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
1	le train	TRĚ	train	noun, m.	en train
2	le billet	bee-YAY	ticket	noun, m.	for train and plane; "ticket" for bus/metro

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
3	l'aller simple	<i>ah-lay SĚ-pluh</i>	single ticket	noun, m.	"one-way go"
4	l'aller-retour	<i>ah-lay-ruh-TOOR</i>	return ticket	noun, m.	"go-and-back"
5	la classe	<i>KLAS</i>	class	noun, f.	<i>en deuxième classe</i>
6	la voie	<i>VWAH</i>	track, platform number	noun, f.	<i>voie quatre</i>
7	le quai	<i>KAY</i>	platform, quay	noun, m.	<i>sur le quai</i>
8	l'horaire	<i>oh-RAIR</i>	timetable	noun, m.	<i>les horaires = opening / running times</i>
9	le retard	<i>ruh-TAR</i>	delay	noun, m.	<i>vingt minutes de retard</i>
10	la ligne	<i>LEEN-yuh</i>	line (metro, bus)	noun, f.	<i>la ligne quatre</i>
11	la direction	<i>dee-rek-SYŌ</i>	direction; management	noun, f.	<i>direction + end station</i>
12	le taxi	<i>tak-SEE</i>	taxi	noun, m.	<i>en taxi</i>
13	prochain	<i>pro-SHĚ</i>	next	adj	<i>le prochain train</i>
14	dernier	<i>dair-NYAY</i>	last	adj	<i>le dernier bus</i>
15	direct	<i>dee-REKT</i>	direct, non-stop	adj	<i>un train direct</i>
16	annulé	<i>ah-nü-LAY</i>	cancelled	adj	<i>annulée in the f.</i>
17	arriver	<i>ah-ree-VAY</i>	to arrive	verb	<i>regular -er</i>
18	changer	<i>shā-ZHAY</i>	to change	verb	<i>nous changeons</i>
19	descendre	<i>day-SĀ-druh</i>	to get off; to go down	verb	<i>first -re verb: je descends</i>

#	FRENCH	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTE
20	à l'heure / en retard	ah LUR / ã ruh-TAR	on time / late	phrase	Le train est à l'heure.

Real French Tip — Validate Your Ticket, Check for Strikes

On French trains, some paper tickets (especially for regional trains) have to be validated before you board, using a small machine on the platform. This is called *composter* ("kō-pos-TAY"). Tickets bought online or on an app with a barcode usually don't need it, so read the instructions printed on your ticket, because travelling without a validated ticket can mean a fine. Platform numbers (*la voie*) at big stations are often announced only shortly before the train leaves, so keep an eye on the departure board (*le tableau des départs*). Occasionally there's a *grève* ("GREV", strike) on the railways or metro. It's a fact of life that locals take in their stride, so check the news before an important journey.

Try It Yourself — Exercices

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Ask for a return ticket to Lyon, second class.

▼ Show answer

Je voudrais un aller-retour pour Lyon, en deuxième classe, s'il vous plaît.

2. Ask what time the next train to Paris leaves, and from which platform.

▼ Show answer

Le prochain train pour Paris part à quelle heure ? Il part de quelle voie ?

3. Say "The train is twenty minutes late."

▼ Show answer

Le train a vingt minutes de retard. (Or: Le train est en retard.)

4. Choose *en* or *à*: Je vais au travail ____ train · ____ pied · ____ vélo · ____ bus.

▼ Show answer

en train · à pied · à vélo · en bus.

5. Say "I arrive at 18:10" using the 24-hour clock.

▼ Show answer

J'arrive à dix-huit heures dix.

6. Tell a stranger to get off at Gare du Nord.

▼ Show answer

Descendez à Gare du Nord. (*Vous command, from Chapter 10.*)



Course Complete — Ce que vous savez maintenant

You've finished French Basic Conversation 1. Here's what you can now do:

CHAPTER	YOU CAN NOW...
1 · Greetings & Goodbyes	Say hello and goodbye, ask how someone is, use <i>tu</i> and <i>vous</i> , and read the sounds of French.
2 · Introducing Yourself	Say your name, say "nice to meet you", introduce others, spell a name aloud.
3 · Numbers, Age & Contact Details	Count to 100, say your age with <i>avoir</i> , give a phone number and email address.
4 · Where You're From	Say where you're from and live (<i>en / au / aux</i>), and name nationalities and languages.
5 · Talking About Your Family	Name family members, use <i>mon / ma / mes</i> , and say what you have.
6 · Talking About Your Job	Say and ask what you do, where you work, and use feminine job titles.

CHAPTER**YOU CAN NOW...**

7 · Days, Dates & Telling the Time

Give days, dates and birthdays; tell the time, including the 24-hour clock.

8 · Ordering at a Café

Order politely with *je voudrais*, use *du / de la / des*, and ask for the bill.

9 · Shopping & Prices

Ask prices, say euros, describe colours and sizes, and pay.

10 · Asking for Directions

Ask where things are, follow simple directions, say you're lost.

11 · Booking a Hotel

Book a room, check in and out, and report a problem.

12 · Getting Around

Buy tickets, find platforms, use buses and the metro, and understand delays.

In total that's around 240 vocabulary items, a bank of everyday verbs (*être, avoir, aller, venir, faire, vouloir, prendre, boire, partir, parler, habiter, travailler, arriver* and more), and the confidence to hold short real conversations. Well done: *Bravo !* ("brah-VOH").

What Comes Next — Basic Conversation 2

The natural next step is **French Basic Conversation 2**, which builds on these situations with new ones: your daily routine, hobbies and free time, making plans and invitations, and describing people and things. Many things you've copied as ready-made phrases (*au / du, du / de la, je voudrais, il y a*) will be explained properly later. Keep practising out loud, and revisit the vocabulary tables: *bonne continuation !* ("good luck with what comes next!").