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FRENCH LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 • Chapter 7 • Days, Dates & Time

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

summer

l'été (m.)

lay-TAY

en été

SEASON	FRENCH	SAY IT	"IN ..."
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? tü ah duh lah SHĀS:

say-tē 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 PÔ") 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
00:00	Il est minuit.	eel-ay mee-NWEE

"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	zhuh VAY	je commence	zhuh ko- MÃS	je finis	zhuh fee- NEE
tu	tu vas	tü VAH	tu commences	tü ko- MÃS	tu finis	tü fee- NEE
il / elle / on	il va	eel VAH	il commence	eel ko- MÃS	il finit	eel fee- NEE
nous	nous allons	noo- zah-LÕ	nous commençons	noo ko- mã-SÕ	nous finissons	noo fee- nee-SÕ
vous	vous allez	voo- zah-LAY	vous commencez	voo ko- mã-SAY	vous finissez	voo fee- nee-SAY
ils / elles	ils vont	eel VÕ	ils commencent	eel ko- MÃS	ils finissent	eel fee- NEES

④ What Time Is It? — Tu as l'heure ?

A:

⑤ An Appointment (formal) — Un rendez-vous

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.

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. rã-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>rā-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-mā-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 — Exercises

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.