

French, Grammar, Glossary & Rationale Modern Languages 5 – 14

The accompanying documents are provided as a framework within which teachers can more effectively offer French to all pupils in the later stages of the primary school, and, eventually, to all pupils in the first two years of the secondary school.

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The underlying rationale behind the materials is that pupils need to have a clearly defined progression in French, not simply a progression in terms of topic areas covered, but a progression in grammar. In addition, experience from the MLPS development and from HMI activities in primary schools suggests that pupils at an early stage of their language learning are capable of much more than has been expected. Expectations have been too low, particularly in the area of reading, where pupils appear to be much more capable of tackling longer reading passages than many teachers expect. Similarly in writing, which many teachers have avoided totally, some pupils have shown a facility and an ability which need to be consolidated. Therefore, reading and writing have both been prioritised in the later stages of the programme.

It is to be stressed from the outset that these materials in themselves are not a course, nor were they ever intended as a course. They are a road map through the MLPS training materials and an attempt to assist teachers in their provision. They are an essential base, beyond which teachers can, and should, go. They do not represent materials which should be used to the exclusion of others, and teachers are encouraged to make as much use of supplementary MLPS materials, such as songs, games and classroom activities, as they can. The programme is based solidly on the MLPS training materials. Teachers whose knowledge of French is basically that of the MLPS training days should have no anxieties in using the programme, and reference to the programme is included throughout.

The programme should be seen as basic provision in French, to which all pupils should be exposed. If teachers stick to the basic programme, their pupils will have done enough French to enable them to adapt to the demands of the secondary school. However, it is a basic programme, and teachers should not hesitate from development as they see fit.

Background

Background to language learning can take many forms. At the basic level, pupils generally show an interest in the differences between societies at the everyday level – what might be called the *boules et croissants* background element. There is nothing wrong with highlighting those differences, but there is scope to do more. One element which is often overlooked is the extent of French usage throughout the world. Our teaching of French is very 'France centred', and pupils can leave school after six years exposure to French unaware that French is widely spoken in countries other than metropolitan France. Accordingly, an effort has been made formally to show pupils where French is used through identification of the Francophone countries, and if teachers wish to adapt this to a mini-project, that would be entirely appropriate. A deliberate decision has been taken to include in the reading passages areas of France

other than Paris. The reason is simple: in the United Kingdom we would not like foreign learners of English to learn only about London or the south of England. So our pupils need to be aware of areas and cities other than Paris, and accordingly one of the reading passages is set in the small town of Gravelines in the north of France, another in Marseille, and another in rural Quebec.

Grammar

As suggested in the *Language into Languages Teaching* series, grammar is the way that words make sense. To attempt to learn a foreign language without some understanding of how the language works leaves the learner without a sense of pattern and order, and can reduce the experience to one of learning disconnected words which do not appear to fit together.

The swing of the pendulum back towards greater emphasis on grammatical competence as an essential element in communicative competence, and towards a more central role for the skill of writing, has been discernible in recent years. There is a sense that a functional approach stressing communicative competence in social situations tends not to produce sufficient repetitive structural patterns, at least not within the limits of (*school*) exposure a week. *

Within the programme, from the very beginning, there is an emphasis on the careful explanation of what is being taught in grammatical terms. Sometimes the word ‘grammar’ is used in a very broad sense, but what is considered important is that pupils receive an explanation of what it is that they are learning, about why certain structures are needed, about how the structures work, and about the linguistic patterns. There is nothing to be gained from leaving pupils unaware of grammar rules or terminology, and appropriate explanations should be given in accordance with pupils’ needs. In addition, it is very important for teachers to illustrate the links between French and English, and, where they feel confident, to make wider links with other languages and to try to show pupils the interconnections between the families of European languages and their development – albeit in a very basic way. Guidance and suggestions are included in the notes for teachers. It should be stressed from the outset that this ‘language awareness’ element is at the heart of the programme, and teachers should not think of it as an optional extra or a luxury to be added if there is time. There is enough in the teachers’ notes to allow class discussion to take place. If teachers wish to develop each topic more, they should do so.

Listening

The skill of listening, while clearly vital in second language acquisition, receives less prominence than might be expected in the programme, for the following reasons.

- Research conducted recently by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (Scottish CILT) shows that pupils find listening one of the most difficult and stressful exercises which they undertake in their language learning experience. Pupils indicated particular difficulties with listening to

passages on tape. Some have stated that it is the stress of listening exercises which adversely affects their attitudes towards modern language learning.

- Teachers with little previous experience of French who have undergone the MLPS training programme understandably feel less than secure about their own speaking skills. To ask them to undertake extensive ad lib communication in class would be unreasonable and possibly counterproductive.

The secondary specialist, however, has a facility and fluency in French which make classroom use of the language much easier, and the programme has been constructed so that the secondary specialist's initial task will be to extend pupils' listening skills through extensive use of French in the classroom – something which, unfortunately, does not happen at the moment with any degree of consistency.

In primary classes, the teacher is asked to use French as much as possible in daily classroom situations, relying on the programme as a base line. If more can be done, so much the better. In secondary classes, the teacher will be asked to increase pupils' exposure to French as the normal vehicle for classroom interchange in most situations. It is felt that this gradual incremental approach will help to lessen pupils' concerns and anxieties about listening, so that when formal taped exercises are used, later in the secondary school, pupils will be reasonably secure through everyday exposure in earlier years.

Speaking

From the very beginning, pupils are expected to use French even in very basic situations. This, after all, is a prime feature of communicative competence – the ability to use the foreign language in speech. The programme has been constructed to allow progression in vocabulary acquisition, but it is to be emphasised again that it is merely a programme, and teachers will need to ensure that there is constant recycling of previously learned material in order to ensure consolidation. For example, it is not good practice to assume that, once colours have been taught, there is no need to return to them again. As pupils progress through the programme, the teacher's role becomes more complex, because he or she has to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for recycling of language so that previously learned material does not become redundant. Teachers will have their own strategies for ensuring this, and it does not really matter if recycling is a formal rehearsal of previously learned material through brisk question and answer sessions, or whether the teacher can integrate previously learned material into the new. Ideally the latter would be preferable, so that pupils come to be aware that language learning is not compartmentalised, but the former is better than no recycling at all.

It is important that teachers should try, from the beginning, to encourage and develop the art of building up utterances, so that every pupil becomes aware that it is relatively easy to construct longer passages of speech. For an easy example, pupils should be encouraged, and indeed taught, to say things like:

Je m'appelle Michel. J'habite en Écosse. J'ai deux sœurs. J'ai un petit chien. Il est mignon.

This 'stringing together' of single utterances is very important in developing confidence and in learning to be adventurous with language, and also in using language other than in the question/answer situation. In the above example, the utterances taken individually are basic. Strung together, they create a different impression on the listener. It is hoped that all pupils will, to a greater or lesser extent, become adept at 'stringing together' the single utterances, because single utterance language is very limiting.

Another speaking skill which needs to be encouraged is that of asking questions. Teachers should try to ensure that pupils, in their classroom activities, are given sufficient practice so that they become confident in asking one another the essential questions which arise in the programme.

Reading

As has been suggested, pupils' ability to handle reading may have been underestimated. One of the innovations of the programme is the inclusion of reading passages for formal exploitation in class. Suggestions for use are included in advice for teachers in the text, and no apologies are made for the traditional approach to reading texts.

The passages build on what has been taught. Occasionally there are words which have not been previously met, but teachers should take the opportunity to lead pupils to deduce meanings from comparison with English, where possible. It is better if pupils are taught to be self-reliant and to use previous knowledge and analogy than to rely on a dictionary. (In fact, use of the dictionary is not really necessary in the programme.) Teachers might wish to note that the passages are probably at the level of Standard Grade, upper Foundation or lower General. If pupils can tackle them with success in primary school, then the key aim of MLPS, that of raising pupil achievement, will have been realised in one language learning skill, and that will be significant for the future.

In the forthcoming year, additional passages will be produced, and the additional passages will be available either for extension work or for use in the small school in an attempt to meet the challenge of a language learning cycle longer than two years – that is, pupils will not need to repeat exactly the same work in different years.

Writing

Some teachers who have undertaken the MLPS training days may have felt that pupils should not be asked to do any writing tasks. Language learning theory varies in its opinion on writing in the early years. Some writers advocate that learners eschew writing altogether until adequate progress in the other skills has been established, arguing that the natural development of first language acquisition is listening and talking, followed in formal education by reading and writing. However, pupils come to their second language learning with the four skills well developed in the first language, and second language acquisition does not exactly mirror first language acquisition. Whatever can be used to strengthen the second language learning should be used, and so, from the beginning, teachers are encouraged to ask pupils to copy-

write and to transcribe. Later in the programme, there are greater opportunities for writing, in both formal and imaginative contexts.

At the early stages of writing the foreign language, pupils need to be encouraged. A degree of tolerance of pupil error will be more helpful than assiduous correction of every mistake. Correctness of form can be developed at later stages. This does not mean that there should be no correction, but teachers should use their judgement to correct what is impeding comprehension rather than look for every minor error.

Assessment

It is more important to teach pupils what is in the programme, to develop their confidence in using French, their self-confidence and their self-esteem, to give them a liking for foreign language learning, an awareness of language links and basic cultural understanding than it is to have a programme dominated by frequent assessments. On-going observational assessment is perfectly appropriate in the early years. If pupils can do in class what the programme asks them to do, then formal assessment opportunities are superfluous. The teacher will be well aware of what pupils can and cannot do in this programme, and will be able to report with confidence. Once the reading and writing elements are introduced, the teacher can use them for confirmation of progress, but at the moment there does not seem to be a great need for the development of assessment packs.

The pupils should be led to an enjoyment of language learning, and formal assessment may well impede that enjoyment.

The role of the teacher

Most pupils do not acquire languages by a process of internalisation. They need to be **taught**. The teacher's role in the early stages is not just that of presenter of materials or of classroom organiser. It is those plus that of **teacher**, and it is a presumption in this programme that there will be much active teaching throughout, much explanation of how the language works, much comparison with English and a great deal of activity in class. Even reading does not have to be passive.

Progress and transition

The expectation is that, by the end of P7, pupils will have completed Unit 11, a unit which logically precedes the summer holidays. Experience in schools which have piloted the materials suggests that this is a reasonable goal.

However, instead of starting immediately on the perfect tense in S1, which had been the plan, a period of consolidation will probably be necessary, as the class composition will be new and the secondary teacher will need time to get to know the class. Accordingly, three transition units have been added to try to make the resumption of French in the secondary school more accessible.

Transition One is a recap on personal details, talking about themselves and introductions. It should be quite natural to use this unit, as pupils will be unlikely to be acquainted with their new classmates. The unit can also be used as an introduction

to more time spent on listening activities, which have been mentioned on page 3 above. Transition Two extends and develops these themes, and encourages pupils to find out about and talk about other people. There are six reading passages in this unit, and they are designed to introduce a degree of differentiation. Some of the questions and activities are at level E only, and the differentiation arises from the lack of supported questioning, leaving the pupil to find out much about the text without the 'scaffolding' which is provided by questions. Even so, it would be unwise to ask pupils to tackle the passages without some degree of preparation or introduction by the teacher. We want pupils to experience success, not failure. Two of the reading texts with questions at level D could certainly be used with pupils who are not yet attaining that level, but with a great deal of teacher help and guidance. There is nothing wrong with that. It's called teaching! Transition Three provides an introduction to the subjects and routines of the secondary school, and should be supplemented by the usual activities such as writing out timetables, making comparisons with French schools and so on.

It is suggested that the programme should lead on to a published course such as Métro pour l'Écosse or Avantage. Once pupils have completed Units 1-11 and Transition Units 1-3, the logical entry point for Métro pour l'Écosse would appear to be the start of either Métro Rouge or Métro Vert. As Métro pour l'Écosse claims to be 'a two year course providing complete preparation for Standard Grade and Intermediate level 1 and 2 examinations', it would follow that by the end of S2 pupils should have completed a Standard Grade or Intermediate ½ course. This would mean that all pupils would be prepared after two years of French in primary school and two years continuation in secondary school for certification at national levels.

With Avantage it is suggested that the start be made with Book Two after the October break in S1, leaving the teacher to recap on holiday plans from Unit 11 as a logical precursor to Unit 1: Jour J of Avantage 2.

However, as teachers will be well aware, the approach to reading which is used in the Highland Council materials is radically different from that used in Métro and Avantage. Piloting gave very clear indications that it was successful. Reading materials may well have to be adapted to new formats.

It will be extremely important for secondary teachers to familiarise themselves with the materials which will be used in primary schools, and with the basic pedagogical tenets underpinning them. They will also need to be well acquainted with the MLPS materials. The transition to secondary school should not represent an abrupt break with the methods, materials and expectations with which pupils have become accustomed in the primary school. Secondary teachers would be well advised to adopt into their classrooms the methods and activities used in primary schools for teaching French.

Reference:

** Language into Languages Teaching: University of Glasgow and the Scottish Executive: 2001*

Special thanks are due to:

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Introduction to Grammar

Grammar is the way that words make sense. It is a code or set of rules accepted by any community who share a language. (Language into Languages Teaching, SEED, University of Glasgow, 2001)

What follows is an attempt to set out the rules of grammar for the structures which are recommended in the accompanying outline of work for the teaching of French for P6 and P7.

This grandly styled grammar reference booklet is strictly that: it is a **reference for teachers**. It is not intended for use by pupils under any circumstances, unless perhaps as a spell-check for the months of the year, for example.

It is appreciated that a number of teachers who have completed their MLPS training may feel a little insecure in their knowledge of basic French grammar. This is understandable, and this booklet attempts to be a resource to help. It is by definition very restricted, but closely tied to the requirements of teachers offering French in the primary school.

The fact that it has been produced does not mean that primary school teachers will now be expected to teach grammar formally as it is laid out in this booklet. There is no expectation that pupils should work through this grammar booklet. As noted above, it is a reference resource for **teachers**, to try to make them more comfortable with the rules behind the communicative language which they are offering in class.

It is felt that a degree of security about the rules of grammar will make teachers more comfortable in their use of French.

As will be seen in the course notes, we do not shy away from explaining simple rules of grammar to the pupils. However, such explanations should be done in a sensitive way. There is nothing to be gained in foreign language teaching from leaving pupils unsure and insecure when a simple explanation, where possible drawing analogies with English, would remove doubts and make the picture clearer. Once again, any explanation of grammar given to pupils should not be taken directly from this booklet and written on the board, for example. The teacher will be expected to use this booklet to inform himself or herself about the correctness of form before going on to explain, in his or her words, the basic rules of grammar, according to the needs of the pupils, some of whom will benefit from a sharper exposure to grammar than has been the case heretofore.

The verb

Verbs are used to assert or state what is happening, or what is the case. They are sometimes called 'doing words' or 'action words', but they do not always show action: if we say 'he is bone idle' or 'he has stopped' there is not much action going on.

*Verbs also show the time when things are happening: this is called the **tense** of the verb. (Language into Languages Teaching: SEED: University of Glasgow: 2001)*

Subject pronouns

The subject pronouns are:

je - I

nous - we

tu - you

vous - you

il/elle – he/she

ils/elles - they

on – one

Je, tu and **il, elle, on** are first, second and third persons singular respectively.

Nous, vous and **ils, elles** are first, second and third persons plural respectively.

- **Tu** is traditionally used to address close friends, members of the immediate family, close relatives, children and animals and pets. Otherwise its use can be considered condescending.
- **Vous**, although strictly speaking second person plural, is the polite form of address to another person when the speakers are not closely acquainted. It is the formal mode of address to a single person. It is also the plural mode of address used when speaking to more than one close friend, member of the immediate family etc. and to more than one person who is not closely acquainted.

In school, teachers would address individual pupils by **tu**, and groups of pupils by **vous**.

Pupils should address the teacher by **vous**.

- **On**, which is translated here as **one**, is used much more frequently in French than in English, and does not carry the hint of a certain social stratum as it does in English. It is used to express **we**, or **you** when that **you** is being used in a very general sense. It can also be used to express **I**. However, young children should be encouraged to use it in its restricted meaning of **we**.

The present tense of verbs

Some English tenses have various forms to represent the single French tense. One of the most striking is the **present tense**, which can have three different forms in English, but always **only one form in French**.

Affirmative

Je regarde la télévision I watch the television
I am watching the television

Oui, je regarde la télévision Yes, I **do** watch television every evening.
tous les soirs.

Negative

Je ne regarde pas la télévision. I'm not watching television.

I don't watch television

Interrogative

Est-ce que tu regardes Are you watching television?
la télévision?

Do you watch television?

Form of the present tense

The present tense form of verbs whose infinitive ends in **-er** is given below. (The infinitive form of a verb is that which appears in a dictionary, and which is indicated in English by the use of the word **to** in front. Thus, *to look* is an infinitive in English. The French form is **regarder**. Infinitives in French end in **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**.)

Structurally and analytically, to form the present tense of an **-er** verb:

- take the infinitive;
- remove the ending **-er**;
- add the first, second and third person endings, singular and plural.

These endings are:

je	e	nous	ons
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tu	es	vous	ez
----	----	------	-----------

il/elle/on	e	ils/elles	ent
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So, the full present tense of the verb **regarder** is:

je regarde	nous regardons
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tu regardes	vous regardez
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il/elle/on regarde	ils/elles regardent
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This is called the **paradigm** of the present tense.

- **Note:** the endings **–e**, **-es**, **-e** and **–ent** are **silent**. The only endings in the present tense of **–er** verbs which can be heard are the first and second persons plural.

Irregular verbs

Unfortunately, a number of verbs are irregular, and, equally unfortunately, they tend to be ones which are commonly used. This is not a case of French being awkward, it's the same in all languages – think of the present tense of the verb *to be* in English, for example.

This section gives the full present tense of the irregular verbs which appear in the course outline. In all cases, teachers will not actually be using the full present tense, but they are included for reference – and for security!

aller: to go

je vais	nous allons
tu vas	vous allez
il/elle/on va	ils/elles vont

.....

appeler: to call

j'appelle	nous appelons
tu appelles	vous appelez
il/elle/on appelle	ils/elles appellent

.....

avoir: to have

j'ai	nous avons
tu as	vous avez
il/elle/on a	ils/elles ont

.....

commencer: to begin, to start, to commence

je commence	nous commençons
tu commences	vous commencez
il/elle/on commence	ils/elles commencent

.....

The interrogative (question form)

There are three ways to construct a question:

- use **est-ce que** before the affirmative form;
- invert the subject and the verb, ie turn subject and verb around so that the verb comes first;
- use a raised intonation at the end of the statement, thus turning it into a question.

Est-ce que

Literally, this expression means ‘is it that?’ This formula can be used in English, though it is a bit clumsy. *Is it that the sun is a vast cloud of hydrogen?* is a perfectly understandable question, though one not likely to be encountered often!

In French, the simplest and very frequently used way of formulating a question is to put **est-ce que** in front of the verb form. For example, **est-ce que tu regardes le livre, Michel?**: *are you looking at the book, Michael?*

- ***Remember:** in front of a vowel, the expression will be abbreviated: **est-ce qu’il pleut?**: *is it raining?*

Inversion

This can also be done in English.

*Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?*

Inversion in French can only be used when the subject is a pronoun. When that is the case, simply invert the verb – put the subject pronoun after the verb.

Regardes-tu le livre, Michel?: *are you looking at the book, Michael?*

Regardez-vous les livres, les enfants?: *are you looking at your books, children?*

- ***However,** you cannot invert the first person singular form. You must always use **est-ce que** with **je**.

For example, **est-ce que je signe ici?**: *do I sign here?*

- **Note also,** with **il, elle** and **on** you must insert the letter **t** for ease of pronunciation. It also stays in the written form.

- **Regarde-t-il?**
- **Regarde-t-elle?**
- **Regarde-t-on?**

Intonation

Only applicable in spoken form, though it will appear in dialogue in novels, this formula for asking a question is also very frequently used. It simply means that a normal statement is turned into a question by raising the voice at the end. Note that raising the voice does not mean increasing the volume; it is an upturn in the stress pattern of the sentence which turns the statement into a question.

The negative

To make a verb **negative**, the particles **ne** and **pas** are placed **around the verb**. For example,

Je **ne** vais **pas** en ville: *I'm not going into town*

Nothing can come between the verb and **pas** except a subject pronoun when the verb is in the interrogative form. For example,

Ne regardez-vous **pas** le match de football?: *Aren't you watching the football match?*

- In speech the **ne** is often elided or omitted completely, particularly by younger people and children. It is never omitted in writing.

The immediate future

This tense is so called because it implies that something is going to be done or is going to happen in the near future, rather than will be done or will happen at some indeterminate point sometime in the future.

I'm going to wash the dishes is more immediate than *I will wash the dishes*.

In English, and in French, the immediate future is formed by using the present tense of the verb *to go*, **aller**, followed immediately by an infinitive.

Je vais regarder la télévision – *I'm going to watch television*

Nous allons aller en France – *we're going to go to France*

In this construction, the infinitive never changes.

- ***Note:** the use of the immediate future at the later stages of the scheme of work opens up the opportunity for greater flexibility in speech and in pupils' conceptual awareness when using French, and is a very important part of the scheme.
- ***Note** that the present tense can be used to express futurity if it is accompanied by an appropriate adverb or adverbial expression.

If, for example, you are travelling by train, it is five pm, and you say **on arrive à six heures**, you are expressing futurity though strictly speaking you are using the present tense.

The imperative mood – commands

The imperative exists basically in three forms, second person singular and plural, and first person plural, though the latter might be considered an exhortation rather than a command.

To form the imperative, take the **second person singular and plural forms** of the present tense and omit the **tu** and the **vous**. Do likewise with the first person plural form, omitting the **nous**.

vous allez: *you are going* **allez!:** *go!*

vous regardez: *you are looking at* **regardez!:** *look at!*

- ***Note:** in addition, in the written form, omit the final **s** of the second person singular of **–er** verbs, or verbs which are conjugated like **–er** verbs. Thus: the present tense form is **tu regardes:** *you are looking at*; the imperative is **regarde!:** *look at!*

nous regardons: *we are looking at* **regardons!:** *let's look at!*

The imperative forms suggested in the course outline are:

Singular form

Plural form

colorie : *colour (in)*

coloriez: *colour (in)*

dessine: *draw*

dessinez: *draw*

écoute : *listen*

écoutez: *listen*

écris: *write*

écrivez: *write*

enlève: *take off*

enlevez: *take off*

ferme: *close, shut*

fermez: *close, shut*

mets: *put*

mettez: *put*

montre: *show*

montrez: *show*

montre-moi: *show me*

montrez-moi: *show me*

ouvre: *open*

ouvrez: *open*

pose: *put, place*

posez: *put, place*

regarde: *look (at)*

regardez: *look (at)*

The noun

*Nouns are the types of words which give the names of things, people, places, happenings and ideas...Nouns can be **singular** (referring to one thing) or **plural** (referring to many). (LILT 2001)*

All nouns in French are either **masculine** or **feminine**. In some other languages, including English, nouns can also be neuter.

In English the situation has more or less resolved itself into the use of the masculine for male humans or animals, feminine for female humans or animals, and neuter for objects or things. But things are not quite as simple as they seem. For example, in English we readily say:

Look at that child. It's going to run across the road.

The ship is on time. She will arrive at noon.

In French, nouns which refer to objects or things are either **masculine** or **feminine**.

Nouns which refer to male humans or animals are, as in English, masculine; nouns which refer to female humans or animals are feminine.

- ***But** there can be exceptions. Even though a teacher may be a woman, the correct term is **le professeur**. There is some debate about whether or not a female doctor should be referred to as **Madame le médecin**. If a woman is elected mayor (mayoress?), the traditional form of address is **Madame le Maire**. Many nouns denoting occupations or characteristics originally associated with men are still masculine even when applied to women, though, as you might expect, some sections of modern French society are not happy with that situation.
- ***Note:** when referring to the gender of nouns, the correct grammatical terms must be used. They are **masculine** and **feminine**. It is **not correct** to refer to nouns as male and female, which are terms from biology, botany and zoology, not grammar.

Plurals

The general rule is to add an **s**, as in English. There are, however, exceptions. The words which are listed in the glossary and which have exceptional plurals are:

animal	animaux
armoire de pharmacie	armoires de pharmacie
armoire de toilette	armoires de toilette
bureau	bureaux

cheval	chevaux
gâteau	gâteaux
genou	genoux
grand-mère	grands-mères (<i>recommended thus by the Académie</i>)
grand-père	grands-pères
hôpital	hôpitaux
lave-vaisselle	lave-vaisselle (invariable)
Madame	Mesdames
Mademoiselle	Mesdemoiselles
Monsieur	Messieurs
nez	nez (invariable)
nom de famille	noms de famille
rendezvous	rendezvous (invariable)
rez de chaussée	rez de chaussée (invariable)
salle à manger	salles à manger
salle de bains	salles de bains
salle de séjour	salles de séjour
table de nuit	tables de nuit
taille-crayon	taille-crayons
taureau	taureaux
terrain de football	terrains de football
terrain de golf	terrains de golf
veau	veaux

It can be observed that there are certain rules, but it is not necessary to develop the rules fully at this stage.

Some, simply stated, are:

- nouns ending in **-s**, **-x** or **-z** in the singular do not change in the plural;
- nouns ending in **-al** in the singular change to **-aux** in the plural;
- nouns ending in **-au**, **-eau** or **-eu** in the singular take an **x** in the plural.

The article

*'The' and 'a' are ...called the **definite article** (the) and the **indefinite article** (a, an). In modern grammar, both are called **determiners**. (LILT 2001)*

There are two types of article, the **definite** and the **indefinite**.

The **definite article** is the word *the* in English.

In French, the **definite article** is **le** if the noun is masculine and **la** if the noun is feminine.

Both of these are shortened to **l'** if the noun begins with a vowel, to make pronunciation easier.

Le, la and **l'** all become **les** if the noun is plural.

The **indefinite article** in English is *a, an* or *some*.

In French, the **indefinite article** is **un** if the noun is masculine and **une** if the noun is feminine.

Un and **une** become **des** if the noun is plural.

- **However**, if the plural noun is preceded by an adjective, **des** is shortened to **de**. For example, **un jardin** becomes **des jardins** in the plural.

If there is an adjective, **un beau jardin** becomes **de beaux jardins** in the plural.

The article can be omitted in English. For example, we can say *I love cakes*. In French, **the article cannot normally be omitted**. Therefore, if we wish to express in French the sentence *I love cakes*, we have to decide whether the speaker means *I love (all) cakes* or *I love (some) cakes*. If we agree that the statement is a general statement referring to *all cakes*, then in French we would use the definite article and the sentence becomes:

j'adore les gâteaux.

If we were to say:

j'adore des gâteaux.

it would mean that the speaker loves some, but not all, cakes.

- **Note** that after expressions like **beaucoup de** the **de** is invariable, and an article is not used. Therefore, we say **beaucoup de crayons**.

The contracted forms

In French, you cannot use **à** together with the definite article **le** or **les**. Instead, the two words contract to form **au** (**à** + **le**) and **aux** (**à** + **les**), both meaning *to the*.

Similarly, you cannot use **de** together with the definite article **le** or **les**. Instead, the two words contract to form **du** (**de** + **le**) and **des** (**de** + **les**), both meaning *of the*.

The adjective

Adjectives qualify nouns, that is give us more detail about them. A noun such as 'man' is nondescript, but if we add words (to) the noun, a transformation occurs. (LILT 2001)

Adjectives are used to describe, or in grammatical terms to **qualify**, nouns and other expressions.

In English, adjectives precede the noun unless for special effects.

In French, the general rule is that most adjectives **follow the noun**.

- **However**, the commonly used and generally short adjectives precede. Adjectives which precede the noun are:

• **beau/belle**

bon/bonne

ce/cette/ces

grand

gros/grosse

joli

mauvais

petit

quel/quelle

vieux/vieille

- In addition, all of the possessive adjectives like **mon/ma/mes** naturally precede the noun.

Adjectives **agree with** the noun which they qualify. That is, if a noun is feminine singular, the adjective which qualifies it must be made feminine singular. If a noun is masculine plural, any adjective in agreement must also be masculine plural.

The form of the adjective which appears in the glossary or in a dictionary is the masculine singular form. If an adjective has an irregularly formed feminine, that is usually given too – hence, **beau/belle** above.

To make the adjective feminine, add **e** to the masculine singular. If the masculine singular already ends in **e**, do not add anything. **Adorable** is both the masculine singular and the feminine singular form.

To make the adjective masculine plural, add **s** to the masculine singular. (But note the comments on forming plurals earlier!)

To make the adjective feminine plural, add **es** to the masculine singular.

Adjectives which have irregular feminines, and which appear in the glossary:

masculine singular	feminine singular
--------------------	-------------------

actif	active
--------------	---------------

beau	belle
-------------	--------------

blanc	blanche
--------------	----------------

bon	bonne
------------	--------------

ce	cette
-----------	--------------

gros	grosse
-------------	---------------

mignon	mignonne
---------------	-----------------

paresseux	paresseuse
------------------	-------------------

quel	quelle
-------------	---------------

vieux	vieille
--------------	----------------

Possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives are the words *my, your, his/her* etc in English. In French they too have to agree with the noun. They are arranged here as first, second and third person, singular and plural.

- **Note** that the plural forms are both masculine and feminine.

Masc sing	Fem sing	Pl	
mon	ma	mes	<i>my</i>
ton	ta	tes	<i>your</i>
son	sa	ses	<i>his, her, one's</i>

notre	notre	nos	<i>our</i>
votre	votre	vos	<i>your</i>
leur	leur	leurs	<i>their</i>

The days of the week

The days of the week are all masculine.

They are:

dimanche	<i>Sunday</i>
lundi	<i>Monday</i>
mardi	<i>Tuesday</i>
mercredi	<i>Wednesday</i>
jeudi	<i>Thursday</i>
vendredi	<i>Friday</i>
samedi	<i>Saturday</i>

- **Note** that they are written **without capital letters** and printed without upper case letters unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

To say *on Sunday* you do not use a preposition in French. *On Sunday* is **dimanche**.

Every Sunday is **tous les dimanches**.

The months of the year

The months of the year are all masculine.

They are:

janvier	<i>January</i>
février	<i>February</i>
mars	<i>March</i>
avril	<i>April</i>
mai	<i>May</i>
juin	<i>June</i>
juillet	<i>July</i>
août	<i>August</i>
septembre	<i>September</i>
octobre	<i>October</i>
novembre	<i>November</i>
décembre	<i>December</i>

- **Note** that they are written **without capital letters** and printed without upper case letters unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

To say *in* with a month, you use the expression **au mois de**, literally *in the month of*. Therefore, *in January* is **au mois de janvier**. You can also use **en**, and so you can say **en janvier**.

The date

Apart from *the first*, which is **le premier**, cardinal numbers instead of ordinals are used with dates. There is no word for *of* when giving the date in French. Thus:

le premier mars

le deux mars

le dix-sept mars

le trente mars etc

To say *on* with a date, simply use the forms given above. French does not use a word for *on* in expressions which give the date. Thus, **le premier avril** can also mean *on the first of April*.

The numerals

Numerals are of two kinds, cardinal, giving the number of articles in question and ordinal, giving the place of each article in numerical order.

The cardinal numbers are given below.

zéro	0	dix	10
-------------	---	------------	----

un/une	1	onze	11
---------------	---	-------------	----

deux	2	douze	12
-------------	---	--------------	----

trois	3	treize	13
--------------	---	---------------	----

quatre	4	quatorze	14
---------------	---	-----------------	----

cinq	5	quinze	15
-------------	---	---------------	----

six	6	seize	16
------------	---	--------------	----

sept	7	dix-sept	17
-------------	---	-----------------	----

huit	8	dix-huit	18
-------------	---	-----------------	----

neuf	9	dix-neuf	19
-------------	---	-----------------	----

vingt	20
--------------	----

vingt et un	21
--------------------	----

vingt-deux	22
-------------------	----

vingt-trois	23
--------------------	----

vingt-quatre	24
---------------------	----

vingt-cinq	25
-------------------	----

vingt-six	26
------------------	----

vingt-sept	27
-------------------	----

vingt-huit	28
-------------------	----

vingt-neuf	29
-------------------	----

trente	30
trente et un	31
trente-deux	32 etc
quarante	etc 40 etc
cinquante	etc 50 etc
soixante	etc 60 etc
soixante-neuf	69
soixante-dix	70
soixante et onze	71
soixante-douze	72
soixante-treize	73
soixante-quatorze	74
soixante-quinze	75
soixante-seize	76
soixante-dix-sept	77
soixante-dix-huit	78
soixante-dix-neuf	79
quatre-vingts	80
quatre-vingt-un	81
quatre-vingt-deux	82
quatre-vingt-trois	83
quatre-vingt-quatre	84
quatre-vingt-cinq	85
quatre-vingt-six	86
quatre-vingt-sept	87

quatre-vingt-huit	88
quatre-vingt-neuf	89
quatre-vingt-dix	90
quatre-vingt-onze	91
quatre-vingt-douze	92
quatre-vingt-treize	93
quatre-vingt-quatorze	94
quatre-vingt-quinze	95
quatre-vingt-seize	96
quatre-vingt-dix-sept	97
quatre-vingt-dix-huit	98
quatre-vingt-dix-neuf	99
cent	100
cent un	101
cent deux etc	102 etc
mille	1000
mille un	1001
mille cinq cents	1500
mille cinq cent dix-neuf	1519
deux mille	2000
un million	1 000 000

Notes

- A hyphen is used between the numbers when they are used to build up in the teens, twenties etc, **but not for 21, 31, 41, 51, 61 and 71.**

- In these numbers the word **et** without hyphens joins the two numbers; thus: **vingt et un, trente et un, quarante et un, cinquante et un, soixante et un** and **soixante et onze**.
- From 60, the numbers 1 to 19 are used to build up from 61 to 79, and from 80 they are used to build up from 81 to 99.
- **Quatre-vingts** is 80, and has a final **s** - just like four twenties.
- From then on, when **quatre-vingt** is followed by another number in the building up process, there is no **s**, nor is there an **et** at 81 or 91. Thus, **quatre-vingt-un, quatre-vingt-cing, quatre-vingt-dix, quatre-vingt-onze, quatre-vingt-douze**.
- From 100, there is no hyphen or **et** between the word **cent** and the next number, but the previous rules still hold with the numbers used to build up from the hundred. Thus, **cent, cent un, cent deux, cent dix-huit, cent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf**.
- 200, 300, 400 etc have an **s** on the **cent**, thus **deux cents, trois cents** etc, but there is no **s** if another number follows. Thus, **deux cents**, but **deux cent un**.
- **Mille** meaning *thousand* never has an **s**. Thus, **deux mille**. If you add an **s** and write **deux milles**, it means *two miles*.
- Relax: how often do you ever need to write the numbers out in full?

The ordinal number most likely to be needed is *first*, which is **premier/première**. It is used in dates

The weather

The verb used with general weather statements is **faire** in the third person singular.

Il fait beau It's fine weather, it's lovely weather

Il fait mauvais It's bad weather

Il fait chaud It's warm

Il fait très chaud It's hot

Il fait froid It's cold

Il fait frais It's cool

Il fait du soleil It's sunny

Il fait du brouillard It's foggy

Il fait du vent It's windy

Il fait de la tempête It's blowing a gale

Il fait de l'orage It's a thunderstorm

Some verbs are used in their own right:

Il gèle It's freezing

Il neige It's snowing

Il pleut It's raining

Glossary

A

à: to, at
à bientôt: see you soon
à demain: see you tomorrow
à peu près: almost
absent: absent
accent(*m*): accent
accueillant: welcoming
acheter: to buy
actif/active: active
adorable: adorable, lovely
âge(*m*): age
âgé: old(*adjective*)
agrafeuse(*f*): stapler
agriculteur(*m*): farmer, farm worker
aider: to help
aimable: pleasant, kind, nice
aimer: to like
allemand: German
aller: to go
ami(*m*): friend
an(*m*): year
anglais: English
Angleterre(*f*): England
animal/animaux(*msing/pl*): animal
année(*f*): year
anniversaire(*m*): birthday
août(*m*): August
appartement(*m*): flat, apartment
appeler: to call
s'appeler: to be called
après: after
après-midi(*m*): afternoon
armoire(*f*): cupboard
armoire de pharmacie(*f*): medicine cabinet
armoire de toilette(*f*): bathroom cabinet
arriver: to arrive
art(*m*): art
assez: enough, quite (*when used with an adjective*)
assistante(*f*): assistant
athlétique: athletic, fit
aujourd'hui: today
au: to the (*contraction of à and le*)
au revoir: goodbye
aussi: also
automne(*m*): autumn
autre: other

aux: to the (*contraction of à and les*)
avant: before(*with expressions of time*)
avec: with
avoir: to have
avril(*m*): April

B

badminton(*m*): badminton
baignoire(*f*): bath
banlieue(*f*): suburbs, outskirts
banque(*f*): bank
bâtiment(*m*): building
beau/belle: beautiful, handsome
beaucoup: a lot, much
beaucoup de: a lot of, many
beauté(*f*): beauty
belge: Belgian
Belgique(*f*): Belgium
berger(*m*): shepherd
bêtise(*f*): silly, stupid thing
bidet(*m*): bidet
bien: well, very
bien sûr: of course
bientôt: soon
biochimie(*f*): biochemistry
blague(*f*): joke
blanc/blanche: white
bleu: blue
blond: fair, blond
bon/bonne: good
bonjour: hello, good day, good afternoon
bord(*m*): edge, side
bouche(*f*): mouth
boutique(*f*): shop
bras(*m*): arm
breton: Breton (*language*)
brouillard(*m*): fog
buffet(*m*): sideboard
bureau(*m*): office
bus(*m*): bus(*in town*)

C

ça: that (*shortened form of cela, a demonstrative pronoun, not an adjective*)
ça va: OK (*as a question*) how are things?
ça va bien: (things are) fine, OK
ça va mal: (things are) not so good, going badly
café(*m*): café; coffee
cahier(*m*): exercise book, jotter
calculatrice(*f*): calculator
campagne(*f*): country, countryside

Canada(*m*): Canada
 canapé(*m*): sofa, settee
 capitale(*f*): capital
 car: for, because
 cartable(*m*): schoolbag
 cathédrale(*f*): cathedral
 ce/cette/ces: this, that, these, those (*demonstrative adjective*)
 célèbre: famous
 celui/celle/ceux/celles: this, that, these, those (*demonstrative pronoun*)
 celtique: Celtic
 cent: a hundred
 centrale nucléaire(*f*): nuclear power station
 centre(*m*): centre
 centre commercial(*m*): shopping centre
 c'est: it is
 chaîne hi-fi(*f*): hi-fi set, stereo system
 chaise(*f*): chair
 chambre(*f*): bedroom
 chance(*f*): (good) luck
 chapeau(*m*): hat
 chaque: each
 chat(*m*): cat (*the feminine form is chatte*)
 châtain: (chestnut) brown (*of hair*)
 château(*m*): castle, country house
 chaud: warm
 chauffage centrale(*m*): central heating
 chaussette(*f*): sock
 chaussure(*f*): boot, shoe
 chef-lieu(*m*): chief town, administrative centre
 cheminée(*f*): fireplace
 chercher: to look for, to search
 cheval/chevaux(*msing/pl*): horse, horses
 cheveux(*mpl*): hair
 chèvre(*f*): goat
 chez: to the house of, at the house of (*for example, chez Robert = to, at Robert's house*)
 chien(*m*): dog (*the feminine is chienne*)
 chien de berger(*m*): sheepdog
 chose(*f*): thing
 cinéma(*m*): cinema
 cinq: five
 cinquante: fifty
 ciseaux(*m pl*): scissors
 citadelle(*f*): citadel, stronghold
 classe(*f*): class
 classeur(*m*): filing cabinet
 climat(*m*): climate
 club(*m*): club
 cochon d'Inde(*m*): Guinea pig
 colorier: to colour, to colour in

coiffe(*f*): lace cap, headdress
coiffeuse(*f*): hairdresser
collège(*m*): secondary school
combien de: how much, how many
comme: as, like
comme ci, comme ça: so so
commencer: to begin, to start
comment: how, what (*as in comment t'appelles-tu*)
commerçant(*m*): shop keeper, shop worker
communauté(*f*): community
compagnie(*f*): company
concert(*m*): concert
congélateur(*m*): deep freeze, freezer
content: pleased, happy, content
copain/copine(*m & f*): friend, pal
côte(*f*): coast
cottage(*m*): cottage, bungalow
cou(*m*): neck
couleur(*f*): colour
couloir(*m*): corridor
cour(*f*): yard, courtyard, (school) playground
cours(*m*): lesson, course
court de tennis(*m*): tennis court
cousin/cousine(*m & f*): cousin
couvert: covered
crabe(*f*): crab
crayon(*m*): pencil
croissant(*m*): croissant, crescent
Cuba(*m*): Cuba
cuisine(*f*): kitchen
cuisinière(*f*): cooker
curling(*m*): curling (*the game*)
cyclisme(*m*): cycling

D

dame(*f*): lady
dans: in, inside
danser: to dance
date(*f*): date
de: of, from
décembre(*m*): December
délivrer: to free, to set free
demain: tomorrow
demi/demie: half
dent(*f*): tooth
derrière: behind
dessiner: to draw
détendre, se: to relax
deux: two
deuxième: second

devant: in front (of)
développé: extended, extensive, developed
différent: different
dimanche(*m*): Sunday
disque(*m*): record, disk
diviser: to divide
dix: ten
doigt(*m*): finger
domestique: domestic, household
donc: so, therefore
dos(*m*): back
douche(*f*): shower
douze: twelve
drôle: funny
du: of the (*the contraction of de and le*)
dur: hard
durer: to last

E

école(*f*): school
école primaire(*f*): primary school
écossais: Scottish
Écosse(*f*): Scotland
écrire: to write
écouter: to listen (to)
écurie(*f*): stable
égaler: to equal
église(*f*): church
électricien(*m*): electrician
éléphant(*m*): elephant
élève(*m & f*): pupil
elle/elles: she/they (*f*)
embrasser: to kiss
employé(*m*): employee, worker
en: in
encore: still, yet
endroit(*m*): place
enfant(*m*): child
enlever: to take off
ennuyer, s': to become bored
enrhumé: (*used with être*) to have the cold
entendre, s': to get on with (*relationships*)
entre: between
épaule(*f*): shoulder
équitation(*f*): horse riding
Espagne(*f*): Spain
espagnol: Spanish
est(*m*): east
est-ce que: (*literally*) is it that; *the formula used to turn a statement into a question*
et: and

étage(*m*): floor, storey
États-Unis(*m*): United States
été(*m*): summer
être: to be
étude(*f*): study
étudier: to study
eux: they, them, themselves (*emphatic, strong pronoun*)
évier(*m*): sink

F

facile: easy
facilement: easily
faculté(*f*): faculty, university
faire: to do, to make
famille(*f*): family
fauteuil(*m*): armchair
fenêtre(*f*): window
ferme(*f*): farm
fermer: to close, to shut
festival(*m*): festival
festivité(*f*): festival, festivity
fête(*f*): birthday, festival
février(*m*): February
fille(*f*): girl, daughter
finir: to finish
fois(*f*): time, occasion (*in arithmetic, times*)
football(*m*): football (*can be shortened to le foot*)
forêt(*f*): forest
fort: strong, good (*at something*)
four à micro-ondes(*m*): micro-wave oven
fraîcheur(*f*): coolness
frais: cool
français: French
France(*f*): France
frère(*m*): brother
frigo(*m*): fridge
froid: cold
fromage(*m*): cheese
frontière(*f*): frontier, border

G

garage(*m*): garage
gare(*f*): station
gâteau(*m*): cake
geler: to freeze
genou(*m*): knee
gens(*m pl*): people
gentil: nice, kind
golf(*m*): golf
gomme(*f*): rubber, eraser

grand: big, tall
grand-mère(*f*): grandmother
grand-père(*m*): grandfather
grande école(*f*): specialist establishment of higher education
gratuity: free
grippe(*f*): influenza, flu
gris: grey
gros/grosse: big, fat
guitare(*f*): guitar
gymnase(*m*): gymnasium

H

habitant(*m*): inhabitant
habiter: to live (in), to inhabit
hamster(*m*): hamster
heure(*f*): hour, o'clock
hippopotame(*m*): hippopotamus
historique: historical
hiver(*m*): winter
honneur(*m*): honour
hôpital(*m*): hospital
hôtel(*m*): hotel
huit: eight
humeur(*f*): humour, mood

I

il/ils: he, they (*m*)
il y a: there is, there are (*invariable*)
île(*f*): island
Îles Canaries(*f*): Canary Islands
Îles Orcades(*f*): Orkney Isles
immeuble(*m*): flat, dwelling
important: important
infirmière(*f*): nurse
ingénieur(*m*): engineer
intelligent: intelligent
irlandais: Irish
Irlande(*f*): Ireland
Italie(*f*): Italy

J

jambe(*f*): leg
janvier(*m*): January
jardin(*m*): garden
jazz(*m*): jazz
je: I
jeudi(*m*): Thursday
joli: pretty, nice
jouer: to play
jour(*m*): day

juin(*m*): June
juillet(*m*): July
jumeaux/jumelles(*m&fpl*): twins
jusqu'à: until
juste: right (*as in: juste sur: right onto*)

K

kilomètre(*m*): kilometre

L

lac(*m*): lake
lampe(*f*): lamp
langoustine(*f*): (large) prawn
langue(*f*): language, tongue
lavabo(*m*): washhand basin
lave-vaisselle(*m*): dishwasher
le/la/les(*m/f/pl*): the
le long de: along
léopard(*m*): leopard
lion(*m*): lion
lire: to read
lit(*m*): bed
livre(*m*): book
loisir(*m*): leisure, pastime
lundi(*m*): Monday
lycée(*m*): secondary school (selective, like a grammar school)

M

Madame(*f*): madam, Mrs.
Mademoiselle(*f*): Miss
magasin(*m*): shop
magazine(*m*): magazine
magnétoscope(*m*): video recorder/player
mai(*m*): May
main(*f*): hand
maintenant: now
mais: but
maison(*f*): house
maîtresse d'école(*f*): primary school teacher
mal: bad(*adverb*), badly, (*used with avoir to mean ill or sore*)
maman(*f*): Mother, Mum, Mummy
manger: to eat
marché(*m*): market
mardi(*m*): Tuesday
marié: married
marin(*m*): sailor
Maroc(*m*): Morocco
marron: brown (*of eyes, invariable*)
mars(*m*): March
match(*m*): match, game

mathématiques(*f*): mathematics
matin(*m*): morning
mauvais: bad, naughty
me: me, myself
méchant: naughty
médiéval: mediaeval
même: even, the same
menton(*m*): chin
mer(*f*): sea
mercredi(*m*): Wednesday
mère(*f*): mother
mettre: to put, to place
meubles(*m pl*): furniture
midi(*m*): midday, noon
mignon/mignonne: pretty, nice
mille: thousand
mince: thin
mine(*f*): mine
miner: to mine
minuit(*m*): midnight
mode(*f*): fashion, way
moi: me, I (*emphatic or strong pronoun*)
moins: less, minus, to (*when expressing minutes to the hour*)
mois(*m*): month
mon/ma/mes(*m,f,pl*): my
monde(*m*): world
Monsieur(*m*): Sir, Mr.
monstre(*m*): monster
montagne(*f*): mountain
montrer: to show
monument(*m*): monument, historical building
moquer, se: to make fun of
moyen âge(*m*); middle ages (*historical*)
mouton(*m*): sheep
musée(*m*): museum
musique(*f*): music

N

naître (*past participle né*): to be born
natation(*f*): swimming
nationalité(*f*): nationality
naturel/naturelle: natural
nautique: nautical, sea (*adjectivally*)
ne – pas: not
né: born
néerlandais: Dutch, Flemish
neige(*f*): snow
neiger: to snow
neuf: nine
nez(*m*): nose

nickel(*m*): nickel
Noël(*m*): Christmas
noir: black
nom(*m*): name
nom de famille(*m*): surname
non: no
nord(*m*): north
normalement: normally
nous: we
novembre(*m*): November

O

octobre(*m*): October
official/officielle: official(*adjective*)
on: we, one
oncle(*m*): uncle
onze: eleven
orange: orange(*adjective*)
oreille(*f*): ear
orteil(*m*): toe
où: where
ou: or
ouest(*m*): west
oui: yes
ouvrir: to open

P

Papa(*m*): Father, Dad, Daddy
par: through
parade(*f*): parade
parce que: because
parents(*m pl*): parents
paresseux/paresseuse: lazy
parfois: sometimes
parler: to speak
parleur(*m*): speaker
partie(*f*): part
pas de + *noun*: no(*for example*: pas de montagnes: no mountains)
passer: to pass
passion(*f*): passion
patinoire(*f*): skating rink
patron(*m*): patron saint
pause(*f*): lunch break
pays(*m*): country
paysage(*m*): countryside
Pays de Galles(*m*): Wales
pêche(*f*): fishing
pêcher: to fish (for)
pêcheur(*m*): fisherman
pendant: during

pente(*f*): slope, hill
père(*m*): father
petit: little, small
peu(*m*): little, bit
peut-être: perhaps, maybe
pièce(*f*): room
pied(*m*): foot
piscine(*f*): swimming pool
placard(*m*): cupboard
plage(*f*): beach
plat: flat
plein: full
plein air, en: in the open air
pleuvoir (il pleut): to rain (it's raining)
pluie(*f*): rain
plus: more, plus (*arithmetic*)
plus, en: moreover
poisson(*m*): fish
poitrine(*f*): chest
porte(*f*): door
porter: to bring
porter, se: to bring(to oneself): *ie*: se porter chance: to bring good luck
poser: to place, to put
poster(*m*): poster
pouce(*m*): thumb
pour: for
pouvoir (il peut): to be able, can (he can)
préférer: to prefer
premier: first
près de: near
présent: present
presque: almost
primaire: primary
printemps(*m*): spring
produit(*m*): product, produce
professeur(*m & f*): teacher
professeur d'école(*m & f*): primary school teacher
promenade(*f*): walk
proper: own(*adjective*)
provence(*f*): south of France
province(*f*): province
pupitre(*m*): desk

Q

quand: when
quarante: forty
quart(*m*): quarter
quartier(*m*): district, quarter(*of a town*)
quatorze: fourteen
quatre: four

quatre-vingts: eighty
quatre-vingt-dix: ninety
qu'est-ce que: what (*interrogative*)
qu'est-ce que c'est: what is it
quel/quelle(*m, f*): what, which (*adjective*)
quelquefois: sometimes
qui: who, which
quinze: fifteen
quitter: to leave
quoi: what

R

radiateur(*m*): radiator
radio(*f*): radio
rang(*m*): row
réception(*f*): reception
récréation(*f*): interval, morning break
regarder: to look, to look at, to watch
région(*f*): region
règle(*f*): ruler
restaurant(*m*): restaurant
rendezvous(*m*): meeting place
réseau(*m*): network
ressembler: to resemble
restaurant(*m*): restaurant
rester: to stay, to remain
rêve(*m*): dream
rez de chaussée(*m*): ground floor
rouge: red
roux: red (*of hair*)
Royaume Uni(*m*): United Kingdom
rugby(*m*): rugby

S

sac(*m*): bag
salle à manger(*f*): dining room
salle de bains(*f*): bathroom
salle de séjour(*f*): living room
salon(*m*): sitting room; salon(*as in hairdressing etc*)
salut: hello, hi
samedi(*m*): Saturday
science(*f*): science
se: himself, herself, themselves
secrétaire(*m & f*): secretary
seize: sixteen
selon: according to
semaine(*f*): week
sept: seven
septembre(*m*): September
serpent(*m*): snake

serveuse(f): waitress
shinty(m): shinty
si: if
s'il te plaît: please (*familiar, singular*)
s'il vous plaît: please (*formal, plural*)
simplement: simply
singe(m): monkey
situé: situated
six: six
sœur(f): sister
soir(m): evening
soixante: sixty
soixante-dix: seventy
soleil(m): sun
son/sa/ses(m,f,pl): his, her
sortir: to go out
sous: under
souvent: often
sport(m): sport
sportif/sportive: sporty, athletic
statue(f): statue
stylo(m): pen
sud(m): south
suisse: Swiss
supermarché(m): supermarket
sur: on

T

table(f): table
table de nuit(f): bedside table
tableau(m): board, screen
taille-crayon(m): pencil sharpener
tante(f): aunt
tard: late
tasse(f): cup
taureau(m): bull
te: yourself
téléphone(m): telephone
télévision(f): television
tempête(f): storm
temps(m): weather, time (*but NOT time o'clock*)
tennis(m): tennis
terrain de football(m): football pitch
terrain de golf(m): golf course
tête(f): head
tigre(m): tiger
 tiroir(m): drawer
toilettes(f pl): toilet, lavatory
toujours: always, still
ton/ta/tes(m,f,pl): your

touriste(*m&f*): tourist
tous les deux: both
tôt: soon, early
tout: all
traditionnel/traditionnelle: traditional
travailler: to work
treize: thirteen
trentaine(*f*): about thirty
très: very
trois: three
trop: too
trousse(*f*): pencil case
trouver: to find
tu: you

U

un/une(*m,f*): a, an, one
unique: only (*as in only child*)
université(*f*): university
usine(*f*): factory

V

vacances(*f pl*): holiday, holidays
vache(*f*): cow
veau(*m*): calf
vendredi(*m*): Friday
venir: to come
vent(*m*): wind
vert: green
vie(*f*): life
vieux/vieille(*m,f*): old
village(*m*): village
ville(*f*): town, city
vin(*m*): wine
vingt: twenty
visiter: to visit
voici: here is, here are
voile(*f*): sailing
voir: to see
voisin(*m*): neighbour
vous: you (*plural or polite form*)
voyager: to travel

W

WC(*m pl*): W.C. , toilet
weekend(*m*): weekend

Y

yeux(*m pl*): eyes

French Pronunciation

French pronunciation can be difficult to master.

It differs considerably from English in three major respects:

- sounds have a tight-lipped precision compared with loose, slack-jawed and diphthongised English;
- different stress patterns. In French, equal stress is given to all of the syllables in a word. This can be particularly noticed (and practised) where French and English words are very similar. For example, the English word *television* will normally have a stress on the **first i**. The French word *télévision* is pronounced with the same and equal stress on each syllable, and sounds flatter. The equal stress can give the impression that French is being spoken very rapidly, when in fact it is a question of lack of significant stress within words;
- stress pattern in the sentence. In French, normally, intonation **drops** markedly at the end of a sentence, but **rises** within the sentence at commas, for example. (This is particularly noticeable when someone is reading aloud.) Note that this intonation pattern **does not mean speaking more loudly or more softly**. It is the rise and fall of the voice, not the loudness, which is important. A rising intonation at the end of a sentence turns the statement into a question.

Vowels

a as in **hat**

au as in **over**

e as in **get**

é between **get** and **gate**

è between **get** and **gut**

eu as in **hurt**

i as in **machine**

o as in **hot**

ô as in **over**

ou as in the letter **o**

u is a tight-lipped version of the English **true**

The following are extra tricky nasal sounds:

in/im like **anxious**

an/am and *en/em* like **Don**caster said through your nose

on/om like **Don**caster with a heavy cold

un/um like **un**derstand

Resist the temptation to insert an obtrusive **g** into the nasal sounds.

Consonants

Consonants at the end of words are usually silent. Unfortunately, this is a very general rule and there are many exceptions, quite often in the commonly used words in everyday speech. For example, *pas plus tard* (not later) is pronounced *pa-ploo-tarr*. However, when the following word begins with a vowel, you should run the consonant over (liaison): *pas après* (not after) is *pazapray*.

There are a few differences from English.

c is always pronounced like an English *s* before *i* or *e*

ch is an English *sh*

ç is an English *s*

j is pronounced as in pleasure

h is always silent, everywhere

ll as in bayonet

r is growled rather than trilled

th is like an English *t*: **thé** pronounced like **tay**

w is pronounced as English *v*

(Adapted from *The Rough Guide*)

