

Easy French **STEP-BY-STEP**

Master High-Frequency Grammar
for French Proficiency—**FAST!**

Myrna Bell Rochester



New York Chicago San Francisco Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City
Milan New Delhi San Juan Seoul Singapore Sydney Toronto

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Contents

Preface xi

I First Elements of French

1 Nouns, Articles, and Descriptive Adjectives 3

Gender and Number of Nouns and Articles 3

The Definite Article 3

Masculine Nouns 3

Feminine Nouns 4

Masculine and Feminine Articles Before a Vowel Sound or Mute *h* 4

Singular Nouns and the Definite Article 5

Learning the Gender of Nouns 5

The Indefinite Article 7

Masculine Nouns 8

Feminine Nouns 8

Plural Nouns 8

Pronouncing the Plural 9

Descriptive Adjectives 11

Agreement of Adjectives in Gender and Number 12

Adjectives of Color 14

Adjectives That Precede the Noun 14

Key Vocabulary 16

Les adjectifs descriptifs (Descriptive Adjectives) 16

Les couleurs (Colors) 16

Key Vocabulary 18

Les nationalités (Nationalities) 18

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 2 | The Verbs <i>être</i> and <i>avoir</i>, Subject Pronouns, and Negation | 21 |
| | The Verb | 21 |
| | The Verbs <i>être</i> (to be) and <i>avoir</i> (to have) | 21 |
| | <i>Être</i> and Subject Pronouns | 22 |
| | Subject Pronouns | 22 |
| | Uses of <i>être</i> | 26 |
| | Expressions with <i>être</i> | 29 |
| | Key Vocabulary | 30 |
| | Conjonctions, qualificatifs, et adverbess | |
| | (Conjunctions, Qualifiers, and Adverbs) | 30 |
| | Negation with <i>ne... pas</i> | 31 |
| | The Verb <i>avoir</i> (to have) | 32 |
| | Ne... pas de... with <i>avoir</i> | 33 |
| | Il y a... (There is . . . , There are . . .) | 33 |
| | Expressions with <i>avoir</i> | 35 |
| | Key Vocabulary | 38 |
| | La maison (The House) | 38 |
| | Reading Comprehension: La maison de Jean-Pierre | 40 |
| 3 | Days and Months, Regular -er Verbs in the Present Tense, and Interrogatives | 42 |
| | Days of the Week, Months, and Seasons | 42 |
| | Les jours de la semaine (Days of the Week) | 42 |
| | Les mois de l'année (Months of the Year) | 43 |
| | Les saisons (Seasons) | 43 |
| | Les parties du jour (Parts of the Day) | 44 |
| | Regular Verbs in the Present Tense | 45 |
| | Conjugating Regular -er Verbs | 45 |
| | Uses of the Present Tense | 48 |
| | Interrogatives and Interrogative Words | 52 |
| | Yes/No Questions | 53 |
| | Information Questions | 57 |
| | Key Vocabulary | 62 |
| | Noms masculins (Masculine Nouns) | 62 |
| | Noms féminins (Feminine Nouns) | 63 |
| | Adjectifs (Adjectives) | 63 |
| | Conjonctions (Conjunctions) | 64 |
| | Reading Comprehension: Une petite ville en province | 64 |
| 4 | Numbers, Dates, and Time and Regular -ir Verbs in the Present Tense | 66 |
| | Cardinal Numbers | 66 |
| | Numbers from 0 to 99 | 66 |
| | Numbers from 100 | 69 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Ordinal Numbers | 70 |
| The Date and the Year | 72 |
| Telling Time | 75 |
| Regular -ir Verbs in the Present Tense | 78 |
| Key Vocabulary | 82 |
| Les magasins et les commerces (Stores and Businesses) | 82 |
| Key Vocabulary | 83 |
| Les repas et les provisions (Meals and Groceries) | 83 |
| Reading Comprehension: Au restaurant | 85 |

5 Regular **-re** Verbs in the Present Tense and **-er** Verbs with Spelling Changes 87

| | |
|---|-----|
| Regular -re Verbs in the Present Tense | 87 |
| Key Vocabulary | 90 |
| Expressions de temps (Expressions of Frequency and Time) | 90 |
| Depuis Versus Since | 91 |
| -er Verbs with Spelling Changes | 93 |
| Verbs like commencer (to begin) | 93 |
| Verbs like manger (to eat) | 94 |
| Verbs like acheter (to buy) | 96 |
| Verbs like préférer (to prefer) | 98 |
| Verbs like appeler (to call; to name) and jeter (to throw [away]) | 100 |
| Verbs like envoyer (to send) and essayer (to try) | 101 |
| Key Vocabulary | 104 |
| Les vêtements et les accessoires (Clothing and Accessories) | 104 |
| Articles de toilette (Toiletries) | 105 |
| Reading Comprehension: En ville | 107 |

6 Expressing the Future with **aller**, Prepositions, and the Verb **faire** 109

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Verb aller (to go) | 109 |
| Expressing the Future with aller | 110 |
| Key Vocabulary | 111 |
| Alors, quand vas-tu... ? (So, when are you going to . . . ?) | 111 |
| À, de, and Other Prepositions | 113 |
| The Prepositions à and de | 114 |
| Prepositions of Location | 118 |
| Prepositions of Time and Sequence | 119 |
| Interrogatives with Prepositions | 122 |
| Qui and quoi in a Question After Prepositions | 122 |
| The Interrogative Pronoun lequel | 122 |
| Key Vocabulary | 124 |
| Des pays du monde (Some Nations of the World) | 124 |
| Prepositions with Geographical Names | 125 |
| Gender of Geographical Names | 125 |
| To, in, and from with Geographical Names | 126 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Verb faire (to do; to make) | 129 |
| The Weather, Day, and Night | 129 |
| Idioms with the Verb faire | 130 |
| Key Vocabulary | 135 |
| Le temps et l'environnement (Weather and the Environment) | 135 |
| Reading Comprehension: Des projets de vacances | 136 |

7 Irregular Verbs I and Verb + Verb Constructions 138

| | |
|---|-----|
| Learning Irregular Verbs | 138 |
| Verbs like partir (to leave, depart) | 138 |
| Partir, sortir, and quitter | 139 |
| Verbs like venir (to come; to arrive) | 140 |
| Special Uses of venir and tenir | 141 |
| Dire (to say, tell), lire (to read), and écrire (to write) | 143 |
| Verbs like mettre (to put [on], place) | 145 |
| Pouvoir (to be able to) and vouloir (to want to, wish to) | 147 |
| The Verb devoir (to have to; to owe) | 148 |
| Verbs like recevoir (to receive; to have guests) | 150 |
| Verb + Verb Constructions | 152 |
| Verbs with No Intervening Preposition | 153 |
| Verbs Requiring à Before the Infinitive | 153 |
| Verbs Requiring de/d' Before the Infinitive | 154 |
| Key Vocabulary | 157 |
| Lire et écrire (Reading and Writing) | 157 |
| Reading Comprehension: Mes décisions | 158 |

8 Irregular Verbs II and Relative Pronouns 161

| | |
|---|-----|
| Connaître (to know, be acquainted with) Versus savoir (to know [facts]) | 161 |
| Uses of connaître and savoir | 162 |
| Voir (to see) and croire (to believe) | 165 |
| Courir (to run) and rire (to laugh) | 166 |
| The Group offrir (to offer) | 167 |
| The Group conduire (to drive; to lead) | 169 |
| Suivre (to follow; to take a course) and vivre (to live) | 169 |
| The Group craindre (to be afraid of) | 170 |
| Relative Pronouns: qui, que, où, dont, and lequel | 173 |
| Que, qui, and où | 173 |
| Relative Pronouns with Prepositions; lequel and dont | 177 |
| Indefinite Relative Pronouns: Statements from Questions | 180 |
| Key Vocabulary | 182 |
| Les métiers et les professions (Jobs and Professions) | 182 |
| Reading Comprehension: Une nouvelle carrière | 184 |

9 *Prendre* and *boire*, the Partitive Article, and Object Pronouns 186

- The Group *prendre* and the Verb *boire* 186
- The Partitive Article 189
 - Uses of the Partitive Article 189
- Direct Objects 193
 - Forms and Placement of Direct Object Pronouns 193
- Indirect Objects 196
 - Indirect Object Pronouns 197
- The Pronouns *y* and *en* 199
 - The Pronoun *y* 199
 - The Pronoun *en* 200
- Key Vocabulary 204
 - Les animaux* (Animals) 204
 - Les plantes* (Plants) 204
- Reading Comprehension: *Le jardin zoologique idéal* 205

10 Possessives, Demonstratives, Comparatives, and Adverbs 208

- Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns 208
 - Possessive Adjectives 208
 - Possessive Pronouns 210
- Demonstrative Adjectives and Pronouns 212
 - Demonstrative Adjectives 212
 - Demonstrative Pronouns 213
- Comparatives and Superlatives 216
 - The Comparative with Adjectives 216
 - The Comparative with Nouns 216
 - Comparing Verbs 217
 - The Superlative of Adjectives and Nouns 218
 - Irregular Comparative and Superlative Adjectives 219
- Adverbs 221
 - Common Adverbs and Their Placement 221
 - Formation of Adverbs with *-ment* 222
 - Comparatives and Superlatives of Adverbs 224
- Key Vocabulary 226
 - Adverbes* (Adverbs) 226
- Key Vocabulary 227
 - Les membres de la famille* (Family Members) 227
- Reading Comprehension: *La famille française moderne* 229

II Affirmative and Negative Expressions, Forming the Imperative, and Using Pronominal Verbs

11 Affirmatives Versus Negatives, Stressed Pronouns, and the Imperative 232

More Ways to Say Yes and No 232

Stressed Pronouns 238

Uses of Stressed Pronouns 238

The Imperative and Its Forms 242

The Imperative of **-er** Verbs 242

The Imperative of **-ir** Verbs 243

The Imperative of **-re** Verbs 243

Imperative Forms of Irregular Verbs 244

Negative Commands 245

The Imperative in Sentences 245

The Imperative with an Object Pronoun 246

Key Vocabulary 249

L'entretien de la maison et du jardin (House and Garden Maintenance) 249

Le bricolage (Do-It-Yourself Projects) 250

Reading Comprehension: **Un week-end de bricolage** 251

12 Reflexive Pronouns with Pronominal Verbs and the Present Participle 253

What Is a Pronominal Verb? 253

Reflexive Verbs 254

Key Vocabulary 254

La vie quotidienne (Everyday Routines) 254

Pronominal Verbs in Infinitive Constructions 255

Pronominal Verbs: Negative, Interrogative, and Imperative Forms 257

Negatives of Pronominal Verbs 257

Interrogatives of Pronominal Verbs 258

Imperatives of Pronominal Verbs 258

Reflexive Verbs with Parts of the Body 261

Reciprocal Reflexive Verbs 262

Idiomatic Pronominal Verbs 265

Non-Pronominal Forms of Pronominal Verbs 268

The Present Participle 270

Formation of the Present Participle 270

Uses of the Present Participle 271

Key Vocabulary 273

Les parties du corps (Parts of the Body) 273

Reading Comprehension: **Un accueil chaleureux?** 274

III The Past and Future Tenses, the Conditional, and the Subjunctive Mood

13 Forms and Uses of the *passé composé* 278

- What Is the *passé composé*? 278
- Formation of the *passé composé* with *avoir* 278
- Regular and Irregular Past Participles 279
 - Regular Past Participles 279
 - Irregular Past Participles 281
- Negatives, Interrogatives, and Adverbs with the *passé composé* 284
 - The *passé composé* in the Negative 284
 - The Interrogative of the *passé composé* 284
 - Adverbs with the *passé composé* 284
- Key Vocabulary 285
 - Expressions de transition* (Transition Words) 285
- The *passé composé* with *être* 288
- The *passé composé* with Object Pronouns 291
 - Agreement of Object Pronouns with the Past Participle 291
- The *passé composé* of Pronominal Verbs 292
 - When the Past Participle Does Not Agree 293
- Key Vocabulary 294
 - Le sport* (Sports) 294
 - Les distractions* (Leisure and Entertainment) 295
- Reading Comprehension: *Une soirée mouvementée* 297

14 The *imparfait*, Past Narration, and More About Object Pronouns 299

- Summary of the *passé composé* 299
- The *imparfait* (Imperfect Tense) 301
 - Forms of the *imparfait* 301
 - Meanings and Uses of the *imparfait* 302
- Key Vocabulary 305
 - Expressions de temps au passé* (Expressions of Time in the Past) 305
- Narration: The *passé composé* and the *imparfait* Used Together 306
- More About Object Pronouns 309
 - Double Object Pronouns 309
 - Double Object Pronouns with Affirmative Imperatives 310
- Key Vocabulary 312
 - Les voyages et le logement* (Travel and Lodgings) 312
- Reading Comprehension: *Un voyage mémorable* 314

15 The Future Tense, the Conditional, and Indefinite Adjectives and Pronouns 315

The Future Tense 315

Irregular Forms of the Future Tense 316

Uses of the Future Tense 317

The Conditional 319

Uses of the Conditional 321

The Pluperfect and the Past Conditional 323

The Pluperfect 323

The Past Conditional 324

Tout and Other Indefinite Adjectives and Pronouns 326

Forms and Uses of **tout** 326

Other Indefinite Adjectives and Pronouns 328

Key Vocabulary 330

À la banque (Business and Banking) 330

Reading Comprehension: **Rêves d'avenir** 332

16 The Subjunctive 334

The Subjunctive Mood 334

Forms of the Present Subjunctive 335

Irregular Subjunctives 336

Seven More Irregular Subjunctive Forms 337

Uses of the Subjunctive 339

The Subjunctive with Expressions of Necessity 339

The Subjunctive with Other Impersonal Expressions 340

The Subjunctive with Personal Expressions of Volition, Emotion, and Doubt 343

Key Vocabulary 347

Liens d'amitié (Friendship Ties) 347

Reading Comprehension: **Créer des liens** 349

Answer Key 351

Index 375

Preface

Easy French Step-by-Step will help you learn the basics of French—for speaking, reading, and writing—as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. Prepared for beginners and advanced beginners, this book teaches French grammar and natural, everyday speech in logical order to enable you to develop and build on your language skills.

To take full advantage of the grammatical progression of this book, you'll need to learn each chapter or step—and the sequence within each chapter—one after another. We advise you not to skip around. Each step you take will lead you to the next. Chapters consist of clear grammar explanations, numerous reinforcement activities (with a complete Answer Key), vocabulary study, and short practice readings in French. Try to learn every concept before you undertake the next one.

Chapter 1 teaches the basics of French nouns, their articles, and the descriptive adjectives that modify them. Chapters 2 and 3 present the fundamentals of verb conjugation and verb use in the present tense (to express declarative statements, negation, *yes/no* questions, and information questions). We start with the most common French verbs, **être** (*to be*) and **avoir** (*to have*), and the largest group of verbs (those with infinitives ending in **-er**). Complete model verb conjugations allow you to practice all the forms as you learn their meanings. Chapters 4 through 9 present the rest of the regular and irregular verb system, step-by-step, alongside other topics. Vocabulary was selected based on frequency and thematic usefulness. The vocabulary lists will help expand your communicative skills and allow you to function in various settings.

A variety of exercises and activities follow each grammar step and vocabulary list. You may use them to check your understanding and progress. There is a complete Answer Key in the back of the book, which also includes sample answers to all personalized questions. We suggest that you also keep

a journal or diary, jotting down your own vocabulary lists, questions, and statements so you can practice them aloud. If you take control of your own learning, you'll never be bored!

Original, author-written readings are included in every chapter (starting in Chapter 2). They become more challenging in form and content as the book progresses. Use these Reading Comprehension sections to learn additional vocabulary (a list of new words follows each reading), to practice reading aloud, and to gain confidence in reading other materials. Try to answer the follow-up questions in complete sentences.

Easy French Step-by-Step is divided into three parts. The first part gives you the elements of French, using the present tense. You'll notice that the word order of English and French is essentially the same. This makes learning in the early stages very quick. The second part explains the use of object nouns and pronouns, pronominal (or reflexive) verbs, the present participle (equivalent to the English *-ing*), and the imperative (or command form). You will find some of these structures different from English in syntax (word order). The third part of *Easy French Step-by-Step* expands your competence into the past and future tenses, and the conditional and subjunctive moods, with usage specific to French.

English speakers often say that French is easy enough to read—there are an extraordinary number of cognate (similar) words in the two languages—but that it is difficult to pronounce. French does have several sounds that do not exist in English; you'll need to learn those. Most French sounds, however, both consonants and vowels, are quite similar to English. Be sure to use the upcoming Guide to Pronunciation section for study, review, and reference. Return to it whenever you wish to check something. Practice the sounds and examples out loud. If possible, try to practice with a native or near-native French speaker. Throughout the book, remember to read all the French examples and activities aloud to help develop your pronunciation.

Once you have some experience with the sounds and the letter combinations, you will see that they are limited and consistent, which, believe it or not, will make French easy for you to understand and to spell. If you can spell in English, which is notoriously difficult, you will be able to pronounce and spell in French. Supplement your study by listening to French radio and online broadcasts, CDs, movies, videos, and television programs. With modern media, these opportunities are increasingly easy to come by.

This book was prepared with a logical approach that makes it accessible, whether you are a self-study learner—starting out, reviewing, or brushing

up on your own—or studying in an organized program. With *Easy French Step-by-Step*, you will see your skills fall quickly into place. In just a few weeks, you will be communicating, reading, and writing in French.

If you learn the French in this book, you'll be well on your way to being able to get along in France and Francophone regions such as Belgium, Luxembourg, French Switzerland, countries in North and West Africa, the province of Quebec, Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Polynesia . . . not to mention exploring their rich cultural and artistic heritages. We hope you enjoy learning and using your French wherever you need it.

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>adj.</i> | adjective | <i>m. pl.</i> | masculine plural |
| <i>f. or fem.</i> | feminine | <i>pl.</i> | plural |
| <i>fam.</i> | familiar, colloquial | <i>pol.</i> | polite |
| <i>inf.</i> | infinitive | <i>s. or sing.</i> | singular |
| <i>inv.</i> | invariable | <i>s.o./qqun</i> | someone/ quelqu'un |
| <i>m. or masc.</i> | masculine | <i>s.th./qqch</i> | something/ quelque |
| <i>f. pl.</i> | feminine plural | | chose |

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Guide to Pronunciation

Easy French Step-by-Step occasionally includes guides to help you pronounce certain word combinations. When you read them out loud, pronounce them as you would words and syllables in English.

French has several sounds not found in English. They are what make French sound like French! You will see the symbols that represent these special sounds in the Pronunciation columns below, in brackets. Some are printed in capital letters, which will help you spot them easily.

Vowels

Vowels are shown here both with and without accent marks, an important part of French spelling.

The sounds of French vowels are clear and short, generally placed forward in the mouth. With few exceptions, *final* consonants of French words are *silent*.

| Letters and Combinations | Pronunciation | Examples and Tips |
|---|---------------|--|
| a, à, â | [ah] | sa, là, pâte |
| ai | [ay] | j'ai, mais |
| eau, au, aux | [oh] | eau, auto, jaune, aux, bateaux |
| é, er, ez, es, et (closed e) | [ay] | pré, parler, parlez, mes, et |
| è, ê, e followed by double consonants, and final -et (open e) | [eh] | chèvre, tête, belle, appelle, effet |
| e in one-syllable words, and in eu, œu (cf. œufs) | [uh] | le, que, de, peu, œufs, bleu |
| eur, œu, œur | [ERR] | chanteur, leur, sœur, œuf, œuvre, heure When followed by r or another sounded consonant, this is a more “open” version of the sound [uh]. |
| i, î, and y as a pronoun | [ee] | cri, fil, ils, île, il y a |
| ill (with double l) | [eel] | Pronounced [eel] only in ville, village, mille, million, and tranquille . Otherwise the ill combination contains a <i>semi-vowel</i> (see below). |
| Final o, o before s , and ô (closed o) | [oh] | vélo, zoo, roses, hôtel, même |
| o before consonants (not s) (open o) | [uh] | bonne, monnaie, homme |
| ou, où, ôû | [oo] | sou, où, goûtez, foule |

| | | |
|--|-------|------------------------------------|
| or | [uhR] | port, accord, sorbet, ordre |
| u (single u), û | [U] | tu, rue, jupe, flûte |
| To pronounce [U], hold your tongue as if to make the [ee] sound, and round your lips as if to make the [oh] sound. | | |

Semi-Vowels

Semi-vowels are written vowel combinations that are pronounced in a single syllable.

| Letters and Combinations | Pronunciation | Examples and Tips |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| ill, ail, eil | [eey], [ahy], [ayy] | fil<u>l</u>e, fam<u>i</u>lle, trav<u>a</u>il, M<u>a</u>rse<u>i</u>ll<u>e</u> |
| ie, i, and y (not final) | [y] | bi<u>e</u>n, sci<u>e</u>nce, vo<u>y</u>age, nati<u>o</u>n, cro<u>y</u>ez |
| oi, ua | [wah] | mo<u>i</u>, qu<u>oi</u>, revo<u>i</u>r, fo<u>i</u>s, gua<u>no</u> |
| oui | [wee] | o<u>ui</u> |
| ui, ue, ua | [Uee], [Uay], [Uah] | h<u>ui</u>t, fru<u>i</u>t, mu<u>e</u>t, su<u>a</u>ve This semi-vowel contains the single u sound [U]. (See Vowels section for pronunciation of [U].) |

Nasal Vowels

French has several “nasalized” vowels, spelled with the letter combinations **a, e, i, y, o** plus the letters **n** or **m** (examples: **fin, manteau, mon, symbole**).

The nasalized combinations appear at the end of a syllable or a word, or are followed by a silent or sounded consonant (examples: **flan, montagne, lent**).

Pronounce the nasal vowels as a single sound through your mouth and nose at the same time.

The letters **n** or **m** are *not* pronounced in a nasal combination. But they are pronounced when immediately followed by a vowel (examples: **fine, guano**) or when the **n** or **m** is doubled (examples: **homme, bonne**).

| Letters and Combinations | Pronunciation | Examples and Tips |
|--|-------------------|--|
| an, am, en, em | [A ⁿ] | dans, lampe, trente, exemple |
| en, in, un, ym, im, yn, ain, aim, ein | [I ⁿ] | bien, matin, vingt, un, sympathique, train, faim, plein |
| on, om | [O ⁿ] | bonbon, son, combien, fondation |

Consonants

Many French consonant sounds (for example: **b, c, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, t, v, z**) closely resemble their English counterparts.

Pronounce the consonants forward in your mouth, and always try to avoid making plosive sounds (puffs of air), particularly with **b, p**, and **t**.

Here are several consonant sounds specific to French. Some variants are the same as in English (for example, “hard” **c** [k], “hard” **g** [g], and **qu** [k]. Sounds not listed here are pronounced nearly like English.

| Letters and Combinations | Pronunciation | Examples and Tips |
|---|---------------|--|
| c, cc before a, o, u , or a consonant | [k] | court, chacun, accord, classe |
| c before i, e, y , and the letter ç | [s] | merci, cercle, cyclisme, François |
| ch | [sh] | chose, machine |
| g before a, o, u , or a consonant | [g] | glace, gare |
| g before e, i, y | [zh] | Georges, gigot |
| j | [zh] | bonjour, joli, jardin |
| gn | [ny] | montagne, peigner |
| h | — | The letter h is always silent in French. Some words starting with h don’t elide articles or pronouns (examples: le héros, le hasard). |
| qu, q | [k] | quelquefois, cinq |
| r, rr | [R] | riche, bizarre, original The French r (as in bonjour, Robert) is normally pronounced at the back of the throat, with a slight gargling sound. |

| | | |
|--|--------|---|
| s, initial or double s, t in -tion , final x | [s] | salut, fausse, nation, six, dix |
| s between two vowels or in -sion | [z] | mademoiselle, excursion |
| th | [t] | Thomas, thé The English “lisp” th does not exist in French. |
| x before a consonant | [ehks] | excellent, expression |
| x before a vowel | [ehg] | examen, exemple |

Pronunciation Tips

- When you speak, remember to keep vowel sounds and all syllables short and clear.
- Syllables in French are considered part of an utterance, not part of a word. Syllables start with a consonant: **les_idées** [lay-zee-day], **vous_allez** [voo-zah-lay]. Words in a phrase and successive words in a sentence are usually linked.
- French sounds, except for the “gargled” sound of **r** [R], are farther forward in the mouth than English.
- There is a slight “fall” or descending intonation on the last word of a sentence or syllable of a word.
- In *yes/no* questions, intonation rises slightly (**Tu arrives?**). It tends to fall slightly at the end of information questions (**Comment allez-vous?**).

Greetings

| | |
|---|--|
| Bonjour, Mademoiselle. (Madame/Monsieur) | <i>Hello./Good morning, Miss. (Madam, Ma'am/Sir)</i> |
| Salut, ça va? | <i>Hi!/Hi there! How's it going? (fam.)</i> |
| Ça va bien./Ça va mal. | <i>It's going well./It's going badly.</i> |
| Comment allez-vous? | <i>How are you? (pol.)</i> |
| Comment vas-tu? | <i>How are you? (fam.)</i> |
| Très bien, merci, et vous (et toi)? | <i>Fine, thanks. And you?</i> |
| Pas mal, merci, et vous (et toi)? | <i>Not bad, thanks. And you?</i> |
| Comme ci, comme ça. | <i>So-so.</i> |
| Bonsoir. | <i>Good evening.</i> |
| Bonne nuit. | <i>Good night. (when departing)</i> |

Je m'appelle Suzanne.
Comment vous appelez-vous?
Je m'appelle David.
Enchanté(e).
Merci beaucoup.
De rien.
Au revoir.
À bientôt.

*My name is Suzanne.
What's your name?
My name is David.
Pleased to meet you.
Thank you very much.
You're welcome.
Good-bye.
See you soon.*



First Elements of French

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1

Nouns, Articles, and Descriptive Adjectives

Gender and Number of Nouns and Articles

A noun is a person, place, or thing. In French, all nouns are *masculine* or *feminine* (gender) and *singular* or *plural* (number). The French definite article is used more frequently than *the* is used in English.

The Definite Article

The French *definite article* agrees with the noun in gender and number.

| | Singular | Plural |
|--|----------|--------|
| Masculine | le | les |
| Feminine | la | les |
| Masculine and feminine before a vowel sound or mute h | l' | les |

Masculine Nouns

Masculine singular nouns take the definite article **le**. The genders of French nouns are hard to guess. You will learn them as you go along. Pronounce the following nouns with their article. Refer to the Guide to Pronunciation as needed.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| le chat (<i>the cat</i>) | le frère (<i>the brother</i>) |
| le chien (<i>the dog</i>) | le garçon (<i>the boy</i>) |
| le cinéma (<i>the cinema, film, movies</i>) | le livre (<i>the book</i>) |
| le cours (<i>the course, class</i>) | le téléphone (<i>the telephone</i>) |
| le football (<i>soccer</i>) | le vin (<i>the wine</i>) |

Feminine Nouns

Feminine singular nouns take the definite article **la**.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| la banque (<i>the bank</i>) | la lampe (<i>the lamp</i>) |
| la boutique (<i>the store, shop</i>) | la langue (<i>the language</i>) |
| la chemise (<i>the shirt</i>) | la sœur (<i>the sister</i>) |
| la femme (<i>the woman, wife</i>) | la table (<i>the table</i>) |
| la jeune fille (<i>the girl</i>) | la voiture (<i>the car</i>) |

Many feminine nouns end in **-e**, but please don't consider this a general rule. The nouns in the following list do not end in **-e**; however, they are all feminine.

Most final consonants are silent in French. In the list below, only the final **-r** is sounded.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| la chaleur (<i>heat, warmth</i>) | la forêt (<i>the forest</i>) |
| la croix (<i>the cross</i>) | la fourmi (<i>the ant</i>) |
| la distraction (<i>the amusement</i>) | la main (<i>the hand</i>) |
| la fleur (<i>the flower</i>) | la nuit (<i>the night</i>) |
| la fois (<i>the time [occasion]</i>) | la radio (<i>the radio</i>) |

Masculine and Feminine Articles Before a Vowel Sound or Mute *h*

The definite article **l'** is used before all singular nouns, masculine and feminine, starting with a vowel or a mute (non-aspirate) **h**. The **-e** or **-a** of the definite article is dropped (elided). When the noun starts with **h**, pronounce the vowel that follows the **h**.

Learn the gender (*m.* or *f.*) in parentheses for each noun. When you begin to attach adjectives to nouns, it will be easier to remember their gender.

| | |
|--|--|
| l'ami (<i>m.</i>) <i>the friend (m.)</i> | l'histoire (<i>f.</i>) <i>the story, history</i> |
| l'amie (<i>f.</i>) <i>the friend (f.)</i> | l'homme (<i>m.</i>) <i>the man</i> |
| l'anglais (<i>m.</i>) <i>English (language)</i> | l'hôtel (<i>m.</i>) <i>the hotel</i> |
| l'architecte (<i>m. or f.</i>) <i>the architect</i> | l'île (<i>f.</i>) <i>the island</i> |
| l'emploi (<i>m.</i>) <i>the job</i> | l'orange (<i>f.</i>) <i>the orange (fruit)</i> |
| l'énergie (<i>f.</i>) <i>energy</i> | l'université (<i>f.</i>) <i>the university</i> |
| l'enfant (<i>m. or f.</i>) <i>the child (m. or f.)</i> | l'usine (<i>f.</i>) <i>the factory</i> |

Singular Nouns and the Definite Article

The definite article indicates a specific person, place, thing, or idea. It also precedes nouns that are used in a general sense.

| | |
|--|---|
| C'est l'amie de ma mère. | <i>That's (She's) my mother's friend.</i> |
| Les Français adorent le football | <i>The French love soccer and</i> |
| et le cyclisme . | <i>cycling.</i> |



Le, la, and l'

Remember: **Le** is used with masculine singular nouns beginning with a *consonant*; **la** is used with feminine singular nouns beginning with a *consonant*; and **l'** is used with both masculine and feminine singular nouns beginning with a *vowel* and for most nouns beginning with the letter **h**.

The Initial Letter **h**

The letter **h** is always silent in French. Words starting with the letter **h**—**l'homme**, for example—are pronounced beginning with the first vowel sound. This is called a *mute h*.

However, in front of some French words starting with **h**, for historical reasons, the article does *not* elide the **-e** or **-a**. For example:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| la *harpe | <i>the harp</i> | la *honte | <i>shame</i> |
| le *héros | <i>the hero</i> | le *hors-d'œuvre | <i>the appetizer</i> |

This is called an *aspirate h*. This **h** is also a silent letter; it is not pronounced. French dictionaries show the aspirate **h** with a diacritical mark. In this book, words beginning with an aspirate **h** are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Learning the Gender of Nouns

Gender is linked to the noun *word*, rarely to the physical thing or the person. Always learn the gender of a noun with its article: **le livre** (*the book*), **la fenêtre** (*the window*). Genders of nouns starting with a vowel need to be memorized separately: **l'âge** (*m.*) (*age*), **l'hôtel** (*m.*) (*the hotel*), **l'horloge** (*f.*) (*the clock*).

Several rules can help you guess if a French noun is masculine or feminine:

- Nouns that refer to males are usually masculine; nouns that refer to females are usually feminine: **l'homme** (*m.*) (*the man*); **la femme** (*the woman*).

- The *ending* of a noun can be a clue to its gender. Here are some common masculine and feminine endings. Be aware of *cognate* nouns, which are close to English in spelling and meaning.

Masculine

-eau le bureau, le château
-isme le tourisme, l'idéalisme
-ment le moment, le département

Feminine

-ence la différence, l'existence
-ie la tragédie, la compagnie
-ion la nation, la fonction
-té l'université, la diversité
-ude l'attitude, la solitude
-ure la littérature, l'ouverture

Watch out for exceptions: **l'eau** (f.) (*water*), **la peau** (*skin*), **le silence** (*silence*).

- Nouns adopted from other languages are usually masculine: **le jogging**, **le tennis**, **le jazz**, **le basket-ball**. Exception: **la pizza**.
- Some nouns referring to people indicate gender by their ending. The feminine form often ends in **-e**.

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| l'Allemand | <i>the German (m.)</i> | l'Allemande | <i>the German (f.)</i> |
| l'Américain | <i>the American (m.)</i> | l'Américaine | <i>the American (f.)</i> |
| l'ami | <i>the friend (m.)</i> | l'amie | <i>the friend (f.)</i> |
| l'étudiant | <i>the student (m.)</i> | l'étudiante | <i>the student (f.)</i> |
| le Français | <i>the Frenchman</i> | la Française | <i>the Frenchwoman</i> |

Note that final **d**, **n**, **s**, and **t** are silent in the masculine form, as in the examples above. When followed by **-e** in the feminine form, **d**, **n**, **s**, and **t** are *pronounced*.

- Some nouns that end in **-e** and the names of some professions have only one singular form, used to refer to both males and females. In this case, the article remains the same whether the actual person is male or female.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| l'auteur (m.) | (the author) | la personne | (the person) |
| l'écrivain (m.) | (the writer) | le professeur | (the teacher, professor) |
| l'ingénieur (m.) | (the engineer) | la sentinelle | (the guard, watchman) |
| le médecin | (the physician) | la victime | (the victim) |



Evolving Style

In contemporary Canadian French and among some other French speakers, you may also see or read a feminine form for a few traditional professions (**la professeure, l'écrivaine, l'auteure**).

For learners, however, it's best to continue using the masculine forms of these nouns to refer to both males and females.

- For certain nouns referring to people, the gender of the individual is sometimes indicated by the article alone. Such nouns most often end in **-e**; the spelling of the noun does not change when the gender changes.

le journaliste/**la** journaliste

le secrétaire/**la** secrétaire

le touriste/**la** touriste

***the** journalist*

***the** secretary*

***the** tourist*



Exercise 1.1

Write the appropriate singular definite article for each of the nouns. Pronounce each word in French as you write the answer, making sure you know its meaning.

1. _____ ami

2. _____ homme

3. _____ lampe

4. _____ fenêtre

5. _____ hôtel

6. _____ réalisme

7. _____ ingénieur

8. _____ publicité

9. _____ comédie

10. _____ différence

11. _____ médecin

12. _____ sculpture

13. _____ prononciation

14. _____ gâteau

The Indefinite Article

The singular indefinite article in French, corresponding to *a (an)* in English, is **un** for masculine nouns and **une** for feminine nouns. The plural of both forms is **des**, roughly equivalent to *some* (though it's usually not translated as *some*). Depending on the context, **un/une** can also mean the number *one*.

| | Singular | Plural |
|-----------|----------|--------|
| Masculine | un | des |
| Feminine | une | des |

Masculine Nouns

Pronounce the examples, learning the gender of each noun along with its article. The indefinite article is the same for nouns beginning with a consonant or a vowel.

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| un ami | <i>a friend (m.)</i> | un hôtel | <i>an hotel</i> |
| un autobus | <i>a bus</i> | un jardin | <i>a garden</i> |
| un billet | <i>a ticket</i> | un musée | <i>a museum</i> |
| un dictionnaire | <i>a dictionary</i> | un pianiste | <i>a pianist (m.)</i> |
| un fauteuil | <i>an easy chair</i> | un salon | <i>a living room</i> |

Feminine Nouns

Pronounce the following examples and learn the meaning of words new to you. A practical way to learn the gender of a noun is to link it with **un** or **une**.

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| une amie | <i>a friend (f.)</i> | une librairie | <i>a bookstore</i> |
| une bibliothèque | <i>a library</i> | une mère | <i>a mother</i> |
| une héroïne | <i>a heroine</i> | une page | <i>a (book) page</i> |
| une *Hollandaise | <i>a Dutchwoman</i> | une valise | <i>a suitcase</i> |
| une leçon | <i>a lesson</i> | une ville | <i>a city</i> |

Note that **l'héroïne** (f.) (unlike **le *héros**) is pronounced with a *mute h* and elides its definite article. The **h** of **le *héros** is an *aspirate h* (no elision).

Plural Nouns

The plural definite article of all nouns is **les**; the plural indefinite article is **des**. Most French nouns are made plural by adding an **-s** to the singular. In addition, note the following plural endings:

- Nouns that end in **-s**, **-x**, or **-z** in the singular stay the same in the plural.

| | | |
|----------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| un choix | des choix | <i>a choice, (some) choices</i> |
| le cours | les cours | <i>the course, the courses</i> |
| le nez | les nez | <i>the nose, the noses</i> |

- Some plural noun endings are irregular.

| | | |
|------------|---------------------|---|
| le bureau | les bureaux | <i>the desk (or office), the desks (or offices)</i> |
| un hôpital | des hôpitaux | <i>a hospital, (some) hospitals</i> |
| le lieu | les lieux | <i>the place, the places</i> |
| le travail | les travaux | <i>(the) work, the tasks (or jobs)</i> |

- The masculine form is always used to refer to a group (two or more people) that includes at least one male.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| un étudiant et six étudiantes | des étudiants | <i>students</i> |
| un Français et une Française | des Français | <i>French (people)</i> |

Pronouncing the Plural

The final **-s** is usually not pronounced in French:

les touristes [lay too-Reest]

Spoken French distinguishes most singular and plural nouns by the pronunciation of the definite article:

le touriste [luh too-Reest] versus **les touristes** [lay too-Reest]

When the **-s** of a plural article (**les** or **des**) is followed by a vowel sound, it is pronounced [z] and begins the following syllable; this is called a **liaison**:

les exercices (m.) [lay-zehg-zehR-sees]; **des hommes** (m.) [day-zuhm]

There is no **liaison** with the *aspirate* **h**. Pronounce the nasal vowel **un** [Iⁿ] before **un *héros** [Iⁿ ay-Roh], and do not make the **liaison** with **-s** in **les *héros** [lay ay-Roh]. Pronounce the following out loud:

des_artistes [day-zahr-teest]
les cafés [lay kah-fay]

des_étudiants
[day-zay-tU-dyAⁿ]

les_hommes [lay-zuhm]
des *hors-d'œuvre [day
uhr-dERR-vR]
les restaurants [lay Rehs-toh-RAⁿ]

NOTE: The word **les** (or **des**) ***hors-d'œuvre** is *invariable* in the plural; it has no final **-s**.



Exercise 1.2

Write the plural form of each singular noun. Make sure you know its meaning.

1. une artiste _____
2. un *hors-d'œuvre _____
3. le milieu _____
4. l'étudiante _____
5. un Français _____
6. un café _____
7. le chapeau (*hat*) _____
8. l'eau _____
9. la fenêtre _____
10. un choix _____
11. une préférence _____
12. le travail _____
13. le nez _____
14. un cours _____



Exercise 1.3

Pronounce the nouns with their articles, then write the English equivalent. If the gender is not clear from the spelling, show it by writing m. or f.

1. la fenêtre _____
2. le cyclisme _____
3. les hôpitaux _____
4. une sentinelle _____
5. les écrivains _____
6. les amies _____
7. des chapeaux _____
8. le travail _____
9. des choix _____
10. un cours _____
11. des *hors-d'œuvre _____
12. des hommes _____
13. la peau _____
14. l'Allemande _____
15. les livres _____
16. un lieu _____
17. des histoires _____
18. une horloge _____
19. des gâteaux _____
20. la femme _____

Descriptive Adjectives

Descriptive adjectives are used to describe nouns. In French, descriptive adjectives usually *follow* the nouns they modify. Descriptive adjectives may also follow forms of the verb **être** (*to be*): **il/elle est...** (*he/she/it is . . .*); **ils/elles sont...** (*they are . . .*). See Chapter 2 for the conjugation of the verb **être**.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| un professeur intéressant | <i>an interesting teacher</i> |
| un ami sincère | <i>a sincere friend</i> |
| Il est pratique . | <i>He/It is practical.</i> |
| Elle est sportive . | <i>She is athletic.</i> |

Agreement of Adjectives in Gender and Number

In French, adjectives agree in both gender and number with the nouns they modify. The feminine form of adjectives usually ends in **-e**. The regular plural adds an **s**.

| | Singular | Plural |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Masculine | un ami intelligent | des amis intelligents |
| Feminine | une amie intelligente | des amies intelligentes |

- If the masculine singular form of the adjective ends in an unaccented or silent **-e**, the ending remains the same in the feminine singular.

| | |
|---|---|
| C'est un homme extraordinaire . | <i>He's an extraordinary man.</i> |
| C'est une femme extraordinaire . | <i>She's an extraordinary woman.</i> |
| Paul est optimiste . | <i>Paul is optimistic.</i> |
| Mais Claire est pessimiste . | <i>But Claire is pessimistic.</i> |

- If the singular form of an adjective ends in **-s** or **-x**, the plural ending remains the same.

| | |
|--|--|
| Bradley est anglais ; les amis de Bradley sont aussi anglais . | <i>Bradley is English; Bradley's friends are also English.</i> |
| M. Blin est généreux ; ses (<i>his</i>) enfants sont aussi généreux . | <i>Mr. Blin is generous; his children are also generous.</i> |

- If a plural subject or group contains one or more masculine items or people, the plural adjective is masculine.

| | |
|---|--|
| Suzanne et Georges sont intelligents. | <i>Suzanne and Georges are intelligent.</i> |
| Suzanne et Amélie sont intelligentes. | <i>Suzanne and Amélie are intelligent.</i> |