Section: bcf-6-0125

Beginning Conversational French

Lesson 2: Conversation Basics

Lesson 2 Introduction

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to :

1. Identify masculine and feminine nouns
2. Demonstrate possession using contractions.
3. Identify formal and informal pronouns.
4. Pronounce common phrases and sentences in French.
5. Pronounce numbers in French.

Introduction

Simple Phrases and Sentences

Welcome back. Have you been practicing? If so, you're on your way to being able to speak French. In this lesson, you finally get to use all that pronunciation in some phrases and sentences. We'll start with some basic information and a few rules. Then we'll move quickly to common words and some easy sentences. Finally, we'll talk about the weather and introduce numbers.

Common Words

Every language has basic words that people use all the time. In English, we use *Hi*, *Bye*, *Please*, *Thanks*, etc. Learning these words first is important because you'll use them in almost every conversation. Just think about how many times a day you tell people, "Hi."

We'll also talk about tips on using common words. For example, in English, we often say *Hi* or *Hey*. However, there are some situations where we say *Hello* because we want to make a certain impression. French has similar usage guidelines. We'll discuss some of these subtleties as you learn words.

Then we'll move on to common sentences and basic conversations. You'll see both sides of conversations in dialogues. By learning both parts, you'll be able to understand and answer more quickly. You'll also know what to expect to hear in different situations. It will help you become fluent quicker by practicing these dialogues. Repeat what you hear and don't forget to copy the intonations of the speakers.

Numbers

Chapter 3 also introduces numbers. Numbers come up all the time when you're traveling. If you're visiting Montmartre and want to buy a painting from a street artist, you'll need to understand the asking price. We'll start off slowly, just learning zero through ten. Get ready to learn more French!

Listen to Audio Files Offline

At the start of each lesson, we'll provide a single link you can click to download all the audio files you'll encounter in the lesson. You'll see the download icon and a button (like the one below) that says ***Click here to download audio files***. Simply click the button to download a ZIP file of all the audio files you'll encounter in the lesson. Some people find it helpful to load the audio files onto a listening device, such as a smartphone or iPod, so they can listen while they commute or even while shopping.

Lesson 2 Audio Files (https://lo-ed2go-cdn.learn.ed2go.com/Resources/bcf-6/audio/L02-audio.zip)

Click on the link to Download Lesson 2 Audio Files

Vocab Review Sheet

Lesson 2 Vocabulary List (https://lo-ed2go-cdn.learn.ed2go.com/Resources/bcf-6/L02_Vocab.zip)

Click on the link to Download Lesson 2 Vocab Review Sheet

Chapter 1: A Few Rules and Some Simple Words

Follow the Rules

Follow the Rules

Before we start learning words, we need to learn a few rules. If you learn a few rules now, the rest of the course will be clearer. Take a deep breath! Here we go!

These rules will teach you a little about how the French language is structured. French has the same types of words as English. Nouns are names for things, verbs show action, adjectives describe nouns, and so on. Common English words such as "I," "you," "of," and "the" all have French counterparts.

Using the word *the* correctly will help you sound more French. In English, we use words without *the* all the time. "I'm going to buy bread tonight." In French, you would say, "I'm going to buy *the* bread tonight." The French keep *the* and nouns together like a unit. When you memorize words, remember *the* as well. When you learn *friend*, don't just remember **ami**. Remember **l'ami** (*the friend*) instead.

Masculine and Feminine

Nouns in French are always *masculine* or *feminine*. Word gender can be hard for English speakers to understand. Don't try to figure out why words are certain genders. You'll make yourself crazy! Just accept it and try to memorize them.

Articles and Possession

Articles

In French, nouns are always preceded by little words called articles. These are broken down into two categories: definite and indefinite articles. We have these articles in English also, but we don't have the concept of word gender, so our "the" is always "the" and "a" is always "a". In French, each article agrees with the noun that it goes with.

Definite Articles (le/la/les) = the

The definite article, which means "the" is always found in front of a noun. Masculine singular nouns use **le**. Feminine singular nouns use **la**. All plural nouns are **les**, no matter what gender they are.

Singular and Plural

Singular	Pronunciation	Translation
le père	luh-pehr. ▶ Play audi	the father
Plural	**Pronunciation**	**Translation**
les pères	lay-pehr ▶ Play audi	the fathers
Singular	**Pronunciation**	**Translation**
la porte	lah-pohrt ▶ Play audi	the door
Plural	**Pronunciation**	**Translation**
les portes	lay-pohrt ▶ Play audi	the doors

Definite Articles

Indefinite Articles (un/une) = a or an

Just like the definite articles, indefinite articles come in front of the noun and vary depending on the noun's gender. The difference is that they mean a or an. Plural nouns also have the indefinite article "des ", but in English, we don't . The easiest way to see what this means is to look at some examples:

Singular and Plural

Singular	Pronunciation	Translation
un père	on-pehr ▶ Play audi	a father

Plural	Pronunciation	Translation
des pères	day-pehr ▶ Play audi	fathers

Indefinite Articles

Singular	Pronunciation	Translation
une porte	oon-pohrt ▶ Play audi	a door

Plural	Pronunciation	Translation
des portes	day-pohrt ▶ Play audi	doors

Indefinite Articles

Important

Important point! If you were paying attention, you noticed that the singular and plural nouns are pronounced the same. So sometimes the only way you know if a word is singular, or plural is from the article.

Élisions

One of the ways that French makes itself such a beautiful language to listen to is with its use of élisions. An elision is a type of contraction that occurs when two words are combined; one or more letters are dropped and replaced with an apostrophe.

When "the" comes before a word that starts with a vowel or a silent h, it becomes **l'**. Both **le** and **la** are contracted.

Text equivalent start.

Topic	Information
le+ami	**l'ami** {lah-mee} = the (male) friend
la + amie	**l'amie** {lah-mee} = the (female) friend

Read the topic in the first column. Then read the second column for the information.

Text equivalent stop.

If you think about it, it makes perfect sense. Trying saying le ami. Now say l'ami. Which one rolls off your tongue more beautifully?

Nouns that start with vowels always use **les** for "the" when they become plural. You will no longer have an elision, but you will need to make a liaison that connects the sound of the two words (as in les **îles**.)

Text equivalent start.

Topic	Information
l'île	{leel} = the island
les îles	{lay-zeel} = the islands

Read the topic in the first column. Then read the second column for the information.

Text equivalent stop.

Possession

In English, we show possession with an apostrophe. For example, if your daughter has a book, the possessive is "your daughter's book." French uses the word "of" (**de**) to show possession. "The book of your daughter."

le livre de votre fille

In French, "of" (**de**) and the masculine singular "the" (**le**) also contract.

de + le contracts to **du**.

de + le père

du père {doo pehr} = the father's

The **de + le** rule only affects masculine singular nouns. Feminine singular nouns and singular nouns that start with vowels don't change after **de**.

de la mère {duh-lah-mehr} = the mother's

de l'ami {duh-lah-mee} = the friend's

Plural nouns, which use **les** for "the," also contract with **de**. When **de** comes right before **les,** they become **des**.

de + les pères

des pères {day-pehr} = the fathers'

de + les mères

des mères {day-mehr} = the mothers'

de + les amis

des amis {day-zah-mee} = the friends'

Don't worry about forgetting a word's gender or mispronouncing a sentence. Chances are you'll be understood. People will appreciate your effort. Relax and have fun!

Common Phrases

Building Your Vocabulary

Now let's learn some easy words and must haves for your vocabulary!

Move through the gallery by clicking either the right or left arrow. You can also navigate to a specific slide by selecting the dropdown menu located at the bottom of the slide.

Slideshow Slide 1 starts here

Word: **Bonjour**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *(bon-zhoor)*

Translation: **Hello**

Slideshow Slide 1 ends here

Slideshow Slide 2 starts here

Word: **Au revoir**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *oh-rvwah*

Translation: **Goodbye**

Slideshow Slide 2 ends here

Slideshow Slide 3 starts here

Phrase: **Je ne sais pas**

▶ **Play audi**

Pronounciation: *zhuhn-say-pah*

Translation: **I don't know**

Slideshow Slide 3 ends here

Slideshow Slide 4 starts here

Word: **Oui**

▶ **Play audi**

Pronounciation: *wee*

Translation: **Yes**

Slideshow Slide 4 ends here

Slideshow Slide 5 starts here

Word: **Non**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *noh*

Translation: **No**

Slideshow Slide 5 ends here

Slideshow Slide 6 starts here

Phrase: **S'il vous plaît**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *seel-voo-play*

Translation: **Please**

Slideshow Slide 6 ends here

Slideshow Slide 7 starts here

Word: **Merci**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *mehr-see*

Translation: **Thank you**

Slideshow Slide 7 ends here

Slideshow Slide 8 starts here

Phrase: **De rien**

▶ **Play audio**

Pronounciation: *duh-rin*

Translation: **You're Welcome**
Slideshow Slide 8 ends here

When people say hello in French, they usually say sir or ma'am as well. Rather than saying just "bonjour," they'll say "bonjour madame," monsieur, or mademoiselle. You won't offend anyone if you say "bonjour" by itself, though. Saying both words will just help you sound a little more native.

Titles

Madame (**Mme**) {mah-dahm} = ma'am, Mrs.

Monsieur (**M.**) {muh-syih} = sir, Mr.

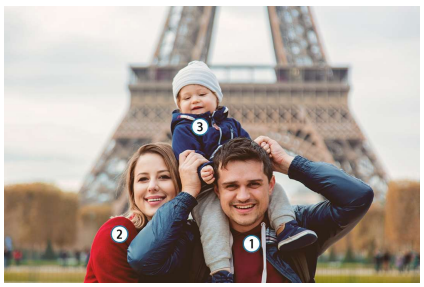
Mademoiselle (**Mlle**) {mah-duh-mwuh-zehl} = young lady, Miss

People Labels

Try matching the French words for lady, man and child in the image below. Even though these are new French vocabulary words, you may be able to figure out their meaning. For example, one word is similar to the English word for infant.

Text equivalent start.

Image and descriptions



Choices

- **l'homme** {lohm}
- **l'enfant** {lan-fan}
- **la femme** {lah-fam}

Answers

1. **l'homme** {lohm}
2. **la femme** {lah-fam}
3. **l'enfant** {lan-fan}

View the image in the first column, then view the choices in the second column. Try to correctly match each item then compare your answers to the correct answers in the third column.

Text equivalent stop.

Formal and Informal Pronouns

The French You

French has two forms of the word "you." **Tu**, the informal you, is only used with family, very close friends, and children. **Vous**, the formal you, is for everyone else.

An English comparison is calling people by their first names or Mr. or Mrs. People used to always be addressed as Mr., Mrs. or Miss and then their last name. It was considered very rude to call someone by a first name until they gave you permission or unless you were family.

Word	Pronunciation	Translation
tu	Too ▶ Play audi	you (informal)
vous	Voo ▶ Play audi	you (formal)

You

Tu and **vous** follow the same rules. People might be offended if you, a stranger, call them **tu**. Play it safe and refer to everyone as **vous**. They'll ask you to call them **tu** if they feel comfortable. You'll never offend anyone if you always use **vous**.

Vous is also used as the plural form of "you." Whenever you're talking to two or more people, use **vous**. Even if you would call each person by themselves **tu**, use **vous** when there are two or more in the group. An English translation for plural **vous** might be "you guys" or "you all."

On (one)

French speakers use the word **on** (*one*) often. **On** means "one" like in the sentence, "One must put one's socks on before one's shoes." Americans rarely use the pronoun form of "one," but English speakers in other parts of the world do. You'll hear **on** quite often in France.

Pronouns

Word	Pronunciation	Translation
je	Zhuh ▶ Play audi	I
il	Eel ▶ Play audi	he

Word	Pronunciation	Translation
on	On ▶ Play audi	one

Pronouns

There are two words for "they" in French. **Ils** { eel} refers to a group of males or mixed group of males and females. **Elles** {ehl} is only used when the group is all female.

Word	Pronunciation	Translation
ils	Eel ▶ Play audi	they (male and mixed)
elles	Ehl ▶ Play audi	they (female only)

They

Family Members

Family is so important to French people. In fact, the French value family above everything else. Adult children remain close with their parents, often live nearby, and dine together weekly

We talk about our families so often; these words are bound to come up.

Family Vocabulary Flashcards

Text equivalent start.

Term	Definition
la mère ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *lah-mehr* Translation: **mother**
le père ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *luh-pehr* Translation: **father**

Term	Definition
la soeur ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *lah sooyr* Translation: **sister**
le frère ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *luh-frehr* Translation: **brother**
le fils ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *luh fees* Translation: **son**
la fille ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *lah-feey* Translation: **daughter**
la grand-mère ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *lah-gran-mehr* Translation: **grandmother**
le grand-père ▶ Play audi	Pronounciation: *luh-grahn-pehr* Translation: **grandfather**

Great Job!

You've reached the end of the flashcards.

Review these as much as you'd like before moving on.

Instructions: Consider each term in the first column and try to recall what it means. Then read the second column to check if you were right!

Text equivalent stop.

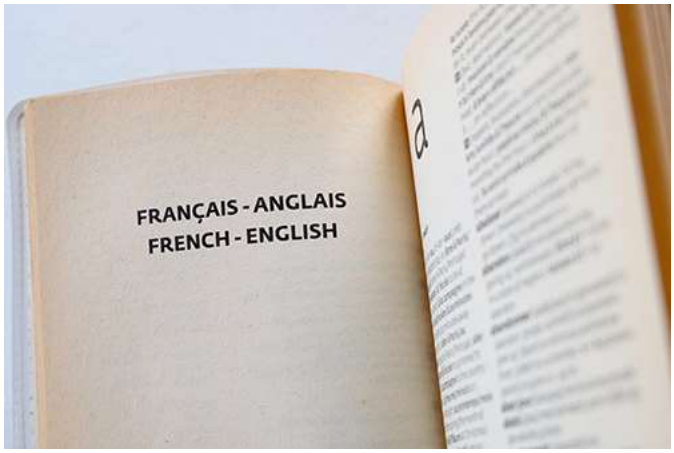
Are you ready to move on to sentences?

Let's go! *Allons-y !*

Chapter 2: Phrases and Sentences

Essential Phrases

Essential Phrases



Now it's time to learn some phrases and sentences. Try to learn each sentence as a unit, rather than word by word. Your words will flow smoothly, and you'll link them together more easily.

Greetings

Perhaps you've been wondering how French people typically greet each other? There are 3 common options:

Shaking Hands

Shaking hands. This is usually what you do with a stranger.

Faire la bise (kiss on the cheeks)

If you've ever watched a French movie or show, you are probably familiar with this. Friends, acquaintances, and family members greet each other this way, by placing a kiss on each cheek.

Bonjour or Bonsoir

This is the most common greeting and is a polite greeting. In fact, when you enter a shop, you will want to greet the seller with bonjour and say au revoir when you leave, or you will be seen as rude.

French people are not big huggers. Hugging is typically reserved for close friends and family. In fact, there is no word for hug in French. The closest word, câlin means cuddle, and it has a romantic meaning.

You will also notice in France that people do not smile or make eye contact with people they do not know. French people enjoy their privacy and usually prefer to be left alone as they eat, shop, and get around.

If you only learn one French word in this whole class, be sure to learn Bonjour, so that you can greet everyone you meet. They will appreciate the effort that you are making to speak their language.

Bonjour {bon-zhoor} = Hello/Good Day.

▶ Play audi

Bon matin {bon-mah-tin} = Good morning.

▶ Play audi

Bonsoir {bon-swahr} = Good evening.

▶ Play audi

Salut {sah-loo} = hi (an informal greeting used with people you know well)

▶ Play audi

Common Phrases

Phrase	Pronunciation	Translation
Comment allez-vous?	koh-moh-tah-lay-voo? ▶ Play audi	How are you?
Ca va?	sah-vah? ▶ Play audi	How's it going?
Bien, merci	byen-mehr-see ▶ Play audi	Fine, thanks
Pas mal	pah-mahl ▶ Play audi	Not bad
Chouette!	sheweht! ▶ Play audi	Great!

Phrase	Pronunciation	Translation
Très bien	tray-byen ▶ Play audi	That's fine

Common Phrases

Phrase	Pronunciation	Translation
Excusez-moi	ehk-skoo-say-mwah ▶ Play audi	Excuse me
Comment vous appelez vous?	koh-moh-voo-zah-puh-lay-voo ▶ Play audi	What's your name?
Bien, merci	byen-mehr-see ▶ Play audi	Fine, thanks
Je m'appelle _____.	juh-mah-pehl_____ ▶ Play audi	My name is_____.
Enchanté.	an-shan-tay ▶ Play audi	Pleased to meet you.
Je ne comprends pas.	zhuhn-kon-pran-pah ▶ Play audi	I don't understand.
Parlez lentement, s'il vous plait.	pahr-lay-lan-tuh-man-seel-voo-play ▶ Play audi	Speak slowly, please.
Je parle un peu de français.	zhuh-pahr-lan-puh-duh-fran-say ▶ Play audi	I only speak a little French.

Phrase	Pronunciation	Translation
Parlez-vous anglais?	pahr-lay-voo-an-glay? Play audi	Do you speak English?
Je suis américain.	zhuh-swee-zah-may-ree-kan Play audi	I'm an American. (male)
Je suis américaine.	zhuh-swee-zah-may-ree-kin Play audi	I'm an American. (female)
Je suis canadien.	zhuh-swee-kah-nah-dyan Play audi	I'm Canadian. (male)
Je suis canadienne	zhuh-swee-kah-nah-dyehn Play audi	I'm Canadian. (female)

Useful Phrases

Enough of these sentences! Let's listen in on some conversations!

Knowing the basic conversations in this chapter will be very useful. People appreciate foreigners' trying to speak the local language. If the visitor just smiles and nods, the person usually decides the visitor doesn't speak English. The person will probably end the interaction. If the visitor says, "Fine, thank you," the person will probably be more likely to pursue a conversation.

Also, many conversations are just a "Hi, how are you" short dialogue. For example, clerks in stores often have these little conversations with customers. "How are you doing today?" "Great, thanks." Then the customer goes on his or her merry way, and starts shopping. If you have one of these short dialogues with somebody, they may not even know you aren't fluent in French. And you can get to your shopping faster!

Meet Monsieur Jacques Legrand and Madame Élise Thibaut

Voici Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Et voici Madame Élise Thibaut.

In the first dialogue, Mr. Legrand and Ms. Thibaut have just met for the first time (you will notice that they use the formal vous, as well as their last names.)

Slideshow Slide 1 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Bonjour, Monsieur Legrand

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *bon-zhoor-muh-syeer-Luh-Gran*

Translate

Hello, Mr. Legrand

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Bonjour, Madame Thibaut!

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *bon-zhoor-muh-dam Tay-Bo*

Translate

Hello, Mrs. Thibaut!

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 1 ends here

Slideshow Slide 2 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Enchantée

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *an-shan-tay*

Translate

Pleased to meet you

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Comment allez-vous?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *koh-moh-tah-lay-voo?*

Translate

How are you?

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 2 ends here

Slideshow Slide 3 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Je vais bien. Et vous?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *zhuh-vay-byen. -Ay-voo?*

Translate

I'm fine, thanks. And you?

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Très bien, merci

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *tray-byen-mehr-see*

Translate

Very well, thank you.

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 3 ends here

Slideshow Slide 4 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

D'où venez-vous?

Play audi

Pronounciation: *doo-vuh-nay-voo?*

Translate

Where are you from?

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Je viens des Etats-Unis. Et vous?

Play audi

Pronounciation: *zhuh-vyen-day-zay-tah-zoo-nee. Ay-voo?*

Translate

I'm from the United States. And you?

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 4 ends here

Slideshow Slide 5 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Je viens du Canada.

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *zhuh-vyen-doo-kah-nah-dah*

Translate

I'm from Canada

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Aimez-vous la France?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *in-may-voo-lah-frahns?*

Translate

Do you like France?

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 5 ends here

Slideshow Slide 6 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Oui. Je l'adore!

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *wee. juh-lah-dohr!*

Translate

Yes. I love it!

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

Est-ce que vous avez visité la tour Eiffel?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *ehs-kuh-voo-zah-vay-vee-zee-tay-lah-too-ray-fehl?*

Translate

Have you seen the Eiffel Tower?

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 6 ends here

Slideshow Slide 7 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Nous allons la visiter demain.

Play audi

Pronounciation: *noo-zah-lon-lah-vee-zee-tay-duh-min*

Translate

We're going to see it tomorrow.

Monsieur Jacques Legrand:

A bientôt!

Play audi

Pronounciation: *ah byehn-toh!*

Translate

See you later!

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 7 ends here

Slideshow Slide 8 starts here

Madame Elise Thibaut:

Au revoir!

▶ Play audio

Pronounciation: *oh-ruh-vwar!*

Translate

Bye!

Dialogue One: Madame Elise Thibaut and Monsieur Jacques Legrand

Slideshow Slide 8 ends here

In the second dialogue, Jacques and Élise have been friends for several years. You will notice that they now use first names as they greet each other, the tu form of you, and their word choice has become more informal.

Slideshow Slide 1 starts here

Élise:

Salut, Jacques!

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *sah-loo-zhahk!*

Translate

Hi, Jacques!

Jacques:

Salut, Élise!

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *sah-loo-ay-lees!*

Translate

Hi, Élise!

Dialogue Two: Jacques and Élise

Slideshow Slide 1 ends here

Slideshow Slide 2 starts here

Élise:

Ca va?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *sah-vah?*

Translate

How's it going?

Jacques:

Chouette! Et toi?

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *shweht! ay-twah?*

Translate

Great! And you?

Dialogue Two: Jacques and Élise

Slideshow Slide 2 ends here

Slideshow Slide 3 starts here

Élise:

Pas mal.

Play audio

Pronounciation: *pah-mahl*

Translate

Not bad.

Jacques:

Est-ce que tu veux prendre un café?

Play audio

Pronounciation: *eh-skuh-too-vuh-pran-dran-kah-fay?*

Translate

Want to get a cup of coffee?

Dialogue Two: Jacques and Élise

Slideshow Slide 3 ends here

Slideshow Slide 4 starts here

Élise:

Bien sûr!

▶ Play audi

Pronounciation: *byen-soor!*

Translate

Of Course!

Dialogue Two: Jacques and Élise

Slideshow Slide 4 ends here

Learning Check-Common Phrases

Learning Check

Text equivalent start.

Item to Match	Matching Choices	Correct Match
Parlez-vous anglais?	• Good evening. • I only speak a little French. • Pleased to meet you. • Do you speak English?	• Do you speak English?
Je parle un peu de français.	• I only speak a little French. • Hi • Pleased to meet you. • Do you speak English?	• I only speak a little French.

Item to Match	Matching Choices	Correct Match
Enchanté.	• Pleased to meet you. • Hi • Good evening. • Do you speak English?	• Pleased to meet you.
Bonsoir	• Pleased to meet you. • Do you speak English? • I only speak a little French. • Good evening.	• Good evening.
Salut	• I only speak a little French. • Good evening. • Hi • Pleased to meet you.	• Hi

Instructions: Read the item in the first column and consider which choice(s) it matches to in the second column. Read the third column to find out if you are correct.

Text equivalent stop.

Practice these conversations! All the future lessons will build on them. Let's move on to a useful topic: numbers!

Chapter 3: Introduction to Numbers

Pronouncing Numbers

Let's Count!

France uses the same numbering system and math that we use. In this lesson, we're introducing the numbers zero through ten. We'll learn more in the next lesson. Be sure to practice these!

Listen to Numbers 0-10

Number	French Word	Pronunciation
0	zéro	zay-roh ▶ Play audi

Number	French Word	Pronunciation
1	un	an Play audi
2	deux	duh Play audi
3	trois	twah Play audi
4	quatre	katr Play audi
5	cinq	sink Play audi
6	six	sees Play audi
7	sept	seht Play audi
8	huit	weet Play audi
9	neuf	nuhf Play audi
10	dix	dees Play audi

Numbers

Using Numbers Everyday

Try practicing your new numbers in your everyday life, around your home and workplace. Can you answer these questions in French?

- What is your phone number?
- What is your zip code?
- How many people are in your immediate family?
- What is your social security number?

French people count on their fingers differently than Americans. Americans count one, two, three, on our forefinger/pointer (figure 2.2), middle (figure 2.3), then ring fingers (figure 2.4).

Fig. 2.2

Fig. 2.3

Fig. 2.4

Here's how they count in France:

One: Tuck the four fingers under, and extend the thumb.

Two: Continue to extend thumb, and also extend pointer. Keep your middle, ring, and pinkie fingers tucked in.

Three: Keep thumb and pointer extended, and also extend middle finger. Keep your ring finger and pinkie tucked in.

Four: Tuck your thumb under, and extend the four fingers.

Five: Extend all five fingers.

Try not to use your pointer finger to show the number one. Pointing your forefinger at someone or something in France is very rude. It's just like Americans using their middle finger. Try very hard not to point with your forefinger. It's very offensive.

To point at something, use your thumb or use your forefinger and middle finger together. Have you ever seen a flight attendant point out the emergency exits on an airplane? He or she uses the forefinger and middle finger, never just a forefinger. They certainly don't want to risk offending passengers!

Using different gestures can be really hard. We gesture without even thinking. Try to make an effort to point carefully when you're in a different country. Don't worry too much if you slip up and point with your forefinger, though. After being initially shocked, the people around you will probably decide you're just a foreigner pointing at something. They'll most likely figure out you're not being intentionally offensive.

Learning Check: Vocabulary Practice

Numbers Vocabulary

Text equivalent start.

Item to Match	Matching Choices	Correct Match
eight	• huit • un • dix • quatre	• huit
one	• un • quatre • huit • deux	• un
two	• deux • un • dix • huit	• deux
four	• quatre • dix • un • huit	• quatre
ten	• dix • quatre • deux • un	• dix

Instructions: Read the item in the first column and consider which choice(s) it matches to in the second column. Read the third column to find out if you are correct.

Text equivalent stop.

Lesson 2 Review

Review

Let's Review!

We learned the basics of the French language. You'll use these words and phrases in most conversations. Practice them often. They come up all the time!

Basic Words

The basic words you learned are deceptively easy. Sure, they're simple, short words that may be easy to remember. When you're speaking a different language, though, the simple words can be the hardest to remember as you'll soon read in the story below.

The first time I went to Europe, when I was first learning French, I needed to buy stamps. I went to the post office with a fellow traveler who didn't know any French. She also wanted to buy stamps for her nine postcards. I forgot how to say nine in French! I became frazzled, trying to think, while my friend is saying over and over, "Tell her nine! I want nine stamps!" My mind was hopelessly blank. Luckily, my friend decided to get 10 stamps instead. I confidently told the postal worker, "Dix, s'il vous plaît."

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Now, I've been drilled in French one through 10 so many times, I could probably recite, "un, deux, trois..." in my sleep. But, when I *needed* to know a number, I drew a blank. The best defense to prevent this kind of situation is practicing. Memorize the numbers and practice the dialogues. That day in Paris I learned the importance of learning French in dialogues, not just word by word!

Numbers

You learned the numbers zero through ten, too. Remember to be careful when you're counting on your fingers. No pointing your forefinger at people!

In the next lesson, you're going to learn the rest of the numbers. Well, maybe not ALL the numbers! That would take a long time! You'll learn at least how to count to a billion, though! In the same chapter, you'll learn more words for the metric system.

You'll also learn the days and months, and how to tell time. The French format their calendars differently than some other cultures. You'll want to make sure you know the correct way to read calendars, since you don't want to plan a trip to a museum on the day it's closed!

Keep up the hard work, and make sure you know zero through ten for the next lesson. See you then!

Lesson 2 Assignment

Assignment

Practice zero through ten (0-10)! Be sure to learn the most important four words: *bonjour*, *au revoir*, *s'il vous plaît*, and *merci*.

Lesson 2 Discussion Area

General Discussion

Please feel free to use the Discussion Area for this lesson to ask any questions that may have come to mind as you reviewed the lesson content or completed your assignment.

Discussion Activity

Take a moment to practice the vocabulary from Lesson 2 and introduce yourself to the class again, this time using French! You can also practice your number skills by sharing how many people are in your family, your age or the numbers in your zip code.

Lesson 2 Quiz

5 correct out of 5 questions

January 27, 2025 9:29 PM

1. How do you say "hello" in French?

A. Ca va?

B. au revoir

✓ C. Bonjour

Correct!

D. je

2. How would you count to 5 in French?

A. un, trois, cinq, sept, neuf

B. un, deux, trois, sept, huit

✓ C. un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq

Correct!

D. cinq, quatre, trois, deux, un

3. Which word is the familiar "you"?

A. huit

✓ B. tu

Correct!

C. vous

D. neuf

4. Which word is masculine, singular?

A. la

B. des

✓ C. le

Correct!

D. les

5. How do you say, "my mother's book"?

✓ A. le livre de ma mère

Correct!

B. la livre de ma mère

C. ma mère livre

D. ma mère du livre

Lesson 2 Resources For Further Learning