

The Football Coach's French Phrasebook

500+ Essential Phrases for Coaching in French

Free guide for English-speaking coaches working with French-speaking players or relocating to France, Belgium, or Francophone Africa.

What's Inside

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Tactical instructions	Staff & parent communication
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Training Session Commands

Starting & Stopping

English	French	Pronunciation
Go! / Start!	Allez! / Commencez!	ah-LAY / koh-mahn-SAY
Stop! / Freeze!	Stop! / Arrêtez!	stop / ah-reh-TAY
Again!	Encore!	ahn-KOR
Reset!	Revenez!	ruh-vuh-NAY
Take a break	Faites une pause	fet oon pohz
Water break	Pause eau	pohz oh
Gather round	Rassemblez-vous	rah-sahm-blay-VOO
Listen up	Écoutez	ay-koo-TAY

Tempo & Intensity

English	French	Pronunciation
Faster!	Plus vite!	ploo veet
Slower!	Plus lentement!	ploo lahnt-MAHN
Game speed!	Rythme de match!	reetm duh match
High intensity!	Haute intensité!	oht an-tahn-see-TAY
Keep the tempo	Gardez le rythme	gar-DAY luu reetm
Push yourselves	Poussez-vous	poo-say-VOO
Don't walk	Ne marchez pas	nuh mar-shay PAH
Sprint!	Sprintez!	spran-TAY

Movement Commands

English	French	Pronunciation
Move!	Bougez!	boo-ZHAY
Stay there	Restez là	res-TAY lah
Swap positions	Changez de position	shahn-ZHAY duh poh-zee-SYON
Rotate!	Tournez!	toor-NAY
Join the other group	Rejoignez l'autre groupe	ruh-zhwan-YAY lotr groop
You're in	Tu entres	too AHNTR
You're out	Tu sors	too sor
Next group	Groupe suivant	groop swee-VAHN

Technical Corrections

English	French	Pronunciation
Use your left foot	Utilise ton pied gauche	oo-tee-LEEZ tohn pyay gohsh
Use your right foot	Utilise ton pied droit	oo-tee-LEEZ tohn pyay drwah
Head up!	Tête haute!	tet oht
First touch	Première touche	pruh-MYEHR toosh
Body position	Position du corps	poh-zee-SYON doo kor
Open your body	Ouvre ton corps	ovvr tohn kor
Check your shoulder	Regarde par-dessus ton épaule	ruh-GARD par-duh-SOO tohn ay-POHL
Bend your knees	Plie tes genoux	plee tay zhuh-NOO

Tactical Instructions

Formations & Positions

English	French	Pronunciation
Formation	Formation / Système	for-mah-SYON / sees-TEM
We play 4-3-3	On joue en quatre-trois-trois	ohn zhoo ahn katr-trwah-trwah
Goalkeeper	Gardien de but	gar-DYAN duh boo
Centre-back	Défenseur central	day-fahn-SUR sahn-TRAL
Full-back	Latéral / Arrière latéral	lah-tay-RAL
Right-back	Arrière droit	ah-RYEHR drwah
Left-back	Arrière gauche	ah-RYEHR gohsh
Defensive midfielder	Milieu défensif / Sentinelle	mee-LYUH day-fahn-SEEF
Central midfielder	Milieu de terrain	mee-LYUH duh teh-RAN
Attacking midfielder	Milieu offensif / Meneur de jeu	mee-LYUH oh-fahn-SEEF
Winger	Ailier	ay-LYAY
Striker	Attaquant / Avant-centre	ah-tah-KAHN / ah-vahn-SAHNTR

Attacking Principles

English	French	Pronunciation
Width!	Largeur!	lar-ZHUR
Stretch them	Étirez-les	ay-tee-RAY lay
Find the space	Trouve l'espace	troov les-PAHS
Between the lines	Entre les lignes	ahntr lay LEEN-yuh
Third man run	Troisième homme	trwah-ZYEM om
Overlap	Appel en profondeur	ah-PEL ahn proh-fohn-DUR
Underlap	Appel intérieur	ah-PEL an-tay-RYUR
Switch the play	Change de côté	shahnzh duh koh-TAY
Play forward	Joue vers l'avant	zhoov vehr lah-VAHN
Turn!	Tourne!	toorn
Shoot!	Tire! / Frappe!	teer / frap
Cross it!	Centre!	sahntr
One-two	Une-deux	oon-duh
Give and go	Passe et va	pahs ay vah
Support the ball	Soutiens le ballon	soo-TYAN luh bah-LOHN

Defensive Principles

English	French	Pronunciation
Press!	Presse!	pres
High press	Pressing haut	preh-SING oh
Drop!	Recule!	ruh-KOOL
Hold the line	Tiens la ligne	tyan lah LEEN-yuh
Squeeze!	Resserre!	ruh-SEHR
Compact!	Compact!	kohm-PAKT
Cover!	Couvre!	koovr
Mark him!	Marque-le!	mark-LUH
Man on!	Homme!	om
Behind you!	Derrière!	deh-RYEHR
Clear it!	Dégage!	day-GAZH

Win the ball	Gagne le ballon	gahn-yuh luh bah-LOHN
Block the shot	Bloque le tir	blok luh teer
No foul!	Pas de faute!	pah duh foht
Stay goalseide	Reste entre lui et le but	rest ahntr lwee ay luh boo

Transitions

English	French	Pronunciation
Transition!	Transition!	trahn-zee-SYON
Counter-attack!	Contre-attaque!	kontr-ah-TAK
Fast break!	Vite!	veet
Get back!	Revenez!	ruh-vuh-NAY
Recover!	Récupérez!	ray-koo-pay-RAY
Second ball	Deuxième ballon	duh-ZYEM bah-LOHN
Win the second ball	Gagne le deuxième ballon	gahn-yuh luh duh-ZYEM bah-LOHN
Counter-press	Contre-pressing	kontr-preh-SING
6 seconds!	Six secondes!	sees suh-GOHND

Set Pieces

English	French	Pronunciation
Corner kick	Corner / Coup de coin	kor-NEHR / koo duh kwan
Free kick	Coup franc	koo frahn
Throw-in	Touche	toosh
Penalty	Pénalty	pay-nal-TEE
Near post	Premier poteau	pruh-MYAY poh-TOH
Far post	Deuxième poteau	duh-ZYEM poh-TOH
Attack the ball	Attaque le ballon	ah-TAK luh bah-LOHN
Zonal marking	Marquage de zone	mar-KAZH duh zohn
Man marking	Marquage individuel	mar-KAZH an-dee-vee-DWEL
Wall	Mur	moor
You're in the wall	Tu es dans le mur	too ay dahn luh moor

Match Day Communication

Pre-Match Talk

English	French	Pronunciation
Today we play against...	Aujourd'hui on joue contre...	oh-zhoor-DWEE ohn zhoo kontr
Their strengths are...	Leurs points forts sont...	lur pwan for sohn
Their weaknesses are...	Leurs faiblesses sont...	lur feh-BLES sohn
Focus on...	Concentrez-vous sur...	kohn-sahn-tray-VOO soor
Remember what we trained	Rappelez-vous ce qu'on a travaillé	rah-play-VOO suh kohn ah trah-vah-YAY
Play with confidence	Jouez avec confiance	zhoo-AY ah-VEK kohn-FYAHNS
Trust each other	Faites-vous confiance	fet-VOO kohn-FYAHNS
Leave everything on the pitch	Donnez tout sur le terrain	doh-NAY too soor luh teh-RAN
Enjoy it	Prenez du plaisir	pruh-NAY doo pleh-ZEER
Let's go!	Allez!	ah-LAY

Halftime Adjustments

English	French	Pronunciation
Good first half	Bonne première mi-temps	bon pruh-MYEHR mee-TAHN
We need to improve...	On doit améliorer...	ohn dwah ah-may-lyo-RAY
Push higher	Montez plus haut	mohn-TAY ploo oh
Drop deeper	Reculez plus	ruh-koo-LAY ploo
Change of formation	Changement de système	shahnzh-MAHN duh sees-TEM
You're coming off	Tu sors	too sor
You're going on	Tu entres	too AHNTR
Stay calm	Restez calmes	res-TAY kalm
Keep doing what we're doing	Continuez comme ça	kohn-tee-noo-AY kom sah

Touchline Instructions

English	French	Pronunciation
Time!	Temps!	tahn
Slow it down	Calme avec le ballon	kalm ah-VEK luh bah-LOHN
Speed it up	Vite!	veet
Wide!	Écartez!	ay-kar-TAY
Tighter!	Plus serrés!	ploo seh-RAY
Push up!	Montez!	mohn-TAY
Get back!	Reculez!	ruh-koo-LAY
Wake up!	Réveillez-vous!	ray-vay-YAY-voo
Concentrate!	Concentrez-vous!	kohn-sahn-tray-VOO
Well done!	Bien joué!	byan zhoo-AY
That's it!	C'est ça!	say sah
Keep going!	Continuez!	kohn-tee-noo-AY

Individual Player Feedback

Positive Reinforcement

English	French	Pronunciation
Great work!	Bon travail!	bohn trah-VYE
Excellent!	Excellent!	ek-seh-LAHN
That's exactly what I want	C'est exactement ce que je veux	say eg-zakt-MAHN suh kuh zhuh vuuh
You've improved a lot	Tu as beaucoup progressé	too ah boh-KOO proh-greh-SAY
Keep it up	Continue comme ça	kohn-TEE-noo kom sah
I'm proud of you	Je suis fier de toi	zhuh swee fyay duh twah
You're working hard	Tu travailles bien	too trah-VYE byan
That was brave	C'était courageux	say-TAY koo-rah-ZHUUH
Great decision	Bonne décision	bon day-see-ZYON
You're a leader	Tu es un leader	too ay uhn lee-DUR

Constructive Correction

English	French	Pronunciation
Next time, try to...	La prochaine fois, essaie de...	lah proh-SHEN fwah, eh-SAY duh
Think about...	Pense à...	pahns ah
You can do better	Tu peux faire mieux	too puh fehr myuh
What could you do differently?	Qu'est-ce que tu pourrais faire différemment?	kes-kuh too poo-RAY fehr dee-fay-rah-MAHN
Let's work on this	On va travailler ça	ohn vah trah-vah-YAY sah
I know you can do this	Je sais que tu peux le faire	zhuh say kuh too puh luh fehr
Don't give up	N'abandonne pas	nah-bahn-DUN pah
Trust the process	Fais confiance au processus	fay kohn-FYAHNS oh proh-seh-SOOS

Motivational Phrases

English	French	Pronunciation
I believe in you	Je crois en toi	zhuh krwah ahn twah
You have talent	Tu as du talent	too ah doo tah-LAHN
Keep working	Continue à travailler	kohn-TEE-noo ah trah-vah-YAY
Your moment will come	Ton moment viendra	tohn moh-MAHN vyan-DRAH
Show me what you can do	Montre-moi ce que tu sais faire	montr-MWAH suh kuh too say fehr
Fight for your place	Bats-toi pour ta place	bah-TWAH poor tah plahs
Be patient	Sois patient	swah pah-SYAHN
Hard work pays off	Le travail paie	luh trah-VYE pay

Goalkeeper-Specific Language

Shot-Stopping

English	French	Pronunciation
Set position	Position de base	poh-zee-SYON duh bahz
Get set!	Place-toi!	plahs-TWAH
Stay big	Reste grand	rest grahn
Attack the ball	Attaque le ballon	ah-TAK luh bah-LOHN
Dive!	Plonge!	plohnzh
Catch it!	Attrape!	ah-TRAP
Punch it!	Boxe!	boks
Hold it!	Garde-la!	gard-LAH

Distribution

English	French	Pronunciation
Play short	Joue court	zhoo koor
Play long	Joue long	zhoo lohn
Roll it	Fais-la rouler	fay-lah roo-LAY
Throw it	Lance	lahns
Kick it	Dégage	day-GAZH
Goal kick	Six mètres / Coup de pied de but	see metr
Find the full-back	Trouve le latéral	troov luh lah-tay-RAL
Take your time	Prends ton temps	prahn tohn tahn

Organizing the Defense

English	French	Pronunciation
Keeper's ball!	Gardien!	gar-DYAN
Away!	Dehors!	duh-OR
Leave it!	Laisse!	les
I've got it!	Je l'ai!	zhuh lay
Push out!	Sortez!	sor-TAY
Watch the runner!	Attention au joueur qui arrive!	ah-tahn-SYON oh zhoo-UR kee ah-REEV
Near post!	Premier poteau!	pruh-MYAY poh-TOH
Far post!	Deuxième poteau!	duh-ZYEM poh-TOH

Staff & Club Communication

Assistant Coach

English	French	Pronunciation
Set up the drill	Prépare l'exercice	pray-PAR lek-sehr-SEES
You take this group	Tu prends ce groupe	too prahn suh groop
What did you see?	Qu'est-ce que tu as vu?	kes-kuh too ah voo
Warm them up	Échauffe-les	ay-SHOHF-lay
Get the bibs	Prends les chasubles	prahn lay shah-ZOOBL
Set up the cones	Installe les plots	an-STAL lay ploh

Medical Staff

English	French	Pronunciation
He's injured	Il est blessé	eel ay bleh-SAY
Come check on him	Viens le voir	vyan luh vwahr
How serious is it?	C'est grave?	say grahv
Can he continue?	Il peut continuer?	eel puh kohn-tee-noo-AY
He needs ice	Il a besoin de glace	eel ah buh-ZWAN duh glahs
When will he be back?	Quand est-ce qu'il revient?	kahn es-keel ruh-VYAN

Parent Communication

English	French	Pronunciation
Hello, I'm the coach	Bonjour, je suis l'entraîneur	bohn-ZHOOR, zhuh swee lahn-treh-NUR
Your son/daughter is doing well	Votre fils/fille se débrouille bien	votr fees/fee suh day-BROO-yuh byan
Training is at...	L'entraînement est à...	lahn-trehn-MAHN ay ah
Please arrive on time	Arrivez à l'heure s'il vous plaît	ah-ree-VAY ah lur seel voo play
Any concerns?	Des questions?	day kes-TYON

Common Mistakes & False Friends

Warning: These words look similar but have very different meanings!

English Word	French Trap	Actual Meaning	Correct French
Assist	Assister	To attend/witness	Passe décisive (noun)
Attend	Attendre	To wait	Assister à
Actually	Actuellement	Currently	En fait
Sensible	Sensible	Sensitive	Raisonnable
Demand	Demander	To ask	Exiger
Library	Librairie	Bookshop	Bibliothèque

Cultural Notes:

Formal vs Informal: Use "vous" (formal you) with parents, officials, and players you don't know well. Use "tu" (informal) with players once rapport is established.

Greetings: The "bise" (cheek kiss) is common in France, typically 2 kisses but varies by region. A handshake is always safe.

Francophone Africa: French is widely spoken in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Morocco, Algeria. Respect for elders and hierarchy is important.

Quick Reference: Training Commands

English	French	Pronunciation
Go!	Allez!	ah-LAY
Stop!	Stop!	stop
Again!	Encore!	ahn-KOR
Faster!	Plus vite!	ploo veet
Slower!	Plus lentement!	ploo lahnt-MAHN
Move!	Bougez!	boo-ZHAY
Good!	Bien!	byan
Come here	Viens ici	vyan ee-SEE
Listen	Écoute	ay-KOOT
Watch	Regarde	ruh-GARD

Quick Reference: Match Day Commands

English	French	Pronunciation
Press!	Pressez!	pres
Drop!	Recule!	ruh-KOOL
Wide!	Écartez!	ay-kar-TAY
Shoot!	Tire!	teer
Pass!	Passez!	pahs
Hold it!	Garde!	gard
Time!	Temps!	tahn
Man on!	Homme!	om
Switch!	Change!	shahnzh
Well done!	Bien joué!	byan zhoo-AY

Quick Reference: Numbers for Formations

Number	French	Pronunciation
1	Un	uhn
2	Deux	duh
3	Trois	trwah
4	Quatre	katr
5	Cinq	sank
6	Six	sees
7	Sept	set
8	Huit	weet
9	Neuf	nuhf
10	Dix	dees
11	Onze	ohnz

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By Kevin Middleton / Football Coaching Academy
Part of the 360TFT ecosystem

