

# Coffee Break **French**

## Season 4, Episode 7

### Language Study



CoffeeBreak  
**French**

**SEASON 4**

Mark: Welcome back to Coffee Break French! This long awaited Language Study episode - in our main episode we have promised you quite a lot. We guaranteed that we would go through the **si** clauses...

PB: **Si** clauses, which are very **important** and from **important** I will go on to **importe** which is another word that we will be discussing, Mark.

Mark: Absolutely, so there's quite a lot to get through. Let's begin by listening to our first paragraph from Gabrielle's email.

**si**  
if  
**importe < importer**  
to be important

Comment va monsieur couche-tôt?! A Rennes tout est vieux ! Je me sens coincée ici avec si peu d'ambitions ! Des jours, je t'envie d'être parti à Paris, cela doit être tellement plus passionnant qu'ici. Tu sais on s'ennuie vraiment à Rennes, rien ni personne ne change. Je suis maintenant dans une routine dont il est vraiment dur d'en sortir. Heureusement que j'ai le salon qui marche bien et qui me remplit bien mes journées. Si je ne l'avais pas je pense que j'aurais tout plaqué

et je serais partie voir ailleurs. Enfin j'arrête de me plaindre car je pense qu'il y a plus malheureux que moi !

Mark: Très bien. Alors Gabrielle a commencé avec «salut Matthieu! Comment va monsieur couche-tôt?!» How is Mr Early-to-bed? I guess referring to the fact that he said he is not un couche-tard...

PB: Ouais...

Mark: Je suis pas un couche-tard.

PB: Couche-tôt, couche-tard, très bien.

Mark: And then she says an interesting thing. She says, à Rennes tout est vieux! Now, I'm sure you've understood this: word-for-word; in Rennes, everything is old and in English we'd be more likely to say the opposite of that. We wouldn't say "everything is old", we would say...?

PB: There's nothing new?

Mark: Yeah. Nothing's new. There's nothing new. So, that's a nice expression you can use if someone asks you comment vas-tu ? You could say...

PB: Oh tu sais, tout est vieux.

Mark: Literally, everything is old.

PB: Yeah, usually it is the answer to quoi de neuf ?

Mark: And have you heard the expression quoi de neuf ? Literally, what of new? Quoi de neuf ?

PB: Oui c'est ce qu'un lapin, très, très, très connu,

ouais  
yeah

quoi de neuf?  
what's up? what's new?

très célèbre, dis souvent dans les dessins animés.

**dessins (m.pl) animés**

cartoons

**quoi de neuf, docteur?**

what's up, doc?

Mark: Ah bon ?

PB: Ouais ! Quoi de neuf docteur ?

Mark: What's up doctor, literally? **quoi de neuf docteur ?** I am learning something today. Aujourd'hui j'apprends des choses. Alors, **quoi de neuf ?** Euh...

PB: Rien de nouveau, que du vieux.

**que du vieux**

(lit.) "only old things"

Mark: **Que du vieux, voilà. Que du vieux.**

PB: **Tout est vieux, comme dans le texte.**

Mark: So **que, du, vieux** : Only old things. **Quoi de neuf ?**

PB: **Que du vieux.**

Mark: **Voilà**, ok. She goes on to say **je me sens coincée ici avec si peu d'ambitions!** **Coincé**, another nice word; **coincé**?

PB: Stuck.

Mark: Stuck? Comes from the word **coin, le coin** is of course a corner. So, if someone is in a corner, if she is feeling cornered in...

**coin (m)**

corner

PB: Yeah, if she is feeling there is no way out...

Mark: Yeah. So she's got no ambitions, no oomph.

PB: Yeah, nothing going much for her even. How do you say that in English?

Mark: Nothing to take her out of herself, nothing to take her out of Rennes and so on. And for this reason, that why she says **des jours, je t'envie d'être parti à Paris, cela doit être tellement plus passionnant qu'ici.** So that's why she is

envious of Matthieu who is off to Paris, where everything must be so much more exciting than here. She goes on to give some further information and I'm going to let you listen to this little section again.

Tu sais on s'ennuie vraiment à Rennes, rien ni personne ne change.

Mark: So the first thing there is the verb **s'ennuyer**.

**S'ennuyer** means...?

PB: To get bored.

Mark: And it's a reflexive verb. So, if I say I get bored, how would I say this, Pierre-Benoît ?

PB: **Je m'ennuie**.

Mark: **Je m'ennuie**.

PB: **Mais quand je suis avec toi Marc, et pour nos auditeurs, je ne m'ennuie jamais !**

Mark: So, **je m'ennuie** or **je ne m'ennuie jamais**.

PB: **Et toi, est-ce que tu t'ennuies Marc quelques fois ?**

Mark: **Euh, des fois mais pas pendant que je suis en train d'enregistrer un épisode de Coffee Break French, bien sûr.**

PB: **Bonne réponse.**

Mark: So **s'ennuyer**: to get bored. **Tu sais on s'ennuie vraiment à Rennes**. You know, we really get bored here in Rennes. And the reason for this

**pour nos auditeurs**

for our listeners

**je ne m'ennuie jamais**

I never get bored

**pendant que je suis en train de faire qc.**

while I'm (in the middle of) doing something

**bonne réponse (f)**

good answer

is **rien ni personne ne change**. Let's take that literally: **Rien**.

PB: Nothing.

Mark: **Ni**.

PB: Nor, here.

Mark: **Personne**.

PB: No-One.

Mark: **Ne change**.

PB: Changes

Mark: And that's interesting because we've said changes, but, we've actually got the **ne** in there. And the **ne** of course is linked back to **rien** or to **personne**. So, let's split this up into two separate sentences. Nothing changes.

PB: **Rien ne change**.

Mark: Wait! Let's hear that more slowly so that we can hear the three words in there.

PB: **Rien, ne, change**.

Mark: And, no-one changes.

PB: **Personne ne change**.

Mark: And, again, let's slow that down.

PB: **Personne - ne - change**.

Mark: So, what we need to think about is the fact that if the subject of the sentence is nothing or no-one, then it's immediately followed by the **ne** from the verb, the negative form of the verb and then comes the verb itself: **rien - ne - change**. **Personne - ne - change**.

PB: And for our listeners here, Mark, I think the word **personne** is very interesting. **Je vais te tester, Mark.**

Mark: **Vas-y, je t'en prie.**

PB: If I said in French **il n'y a personne dehors**. Or if I said **il y a une personne dehors**, just outside your house, what would it mean in the first case? I will repeat it: **Il n'y a personne dehors**. **Il n'y a personne dehors**. What does it mean to you?

Mark: **Il n'y a personne dehors** would mean that there is no-one outside.

PB: But if I said, and the **ne** disappears: **il y a une personne dehors**.

Mark: In that case, there **is** a person outside.

PB: Well done! So when in French **personne n'est venu aujourd'hui**.

Mark: Then, no-one came today. I think the really interesting thing here is, when we are speaking, you know what happens with that little **ne**.

PB: It disappears!

Mark: So, when you are listening to someone and they happen to say **y'a personne dehors**. Now, there's no **ne** in there and the crucial thing is that there is no **une**. So **y'a personne dehors ?**

PB: There is nobody outside!

Mark: **Y'a une personne dehors ?**

PB: Is there someone outside? Is there a person outside? You've got to listen very carefully for

that little **une** in there when you are using **personne**. So, if you hear **personne** double question yourself about whether we are talking about **personne** meaning no-one or **une personne** meaning a person.

PB: Well done, Mark. I think it was important to mention this to our listeners.

Mark: Absolutely. It is one of those tricky things about the French language. Ok. Let's move on and we'll hear Pierre-Benoît read the next part of the text.

PB: **Je suis maintenant dans une routine dont il est vraiment dur d'en sortir.**

Mark: I am now in a routine and it's quite difficult to get out of.

PB: **Heureusement que j'ai le salon qui marche bien et qui me remplit bien mes journées.**

Mark: I am sure you are familiar with the word **heureusement**; **heureux** the adjective means happy or content, but there's another meaning also.

PB: Yeah, there is a classic or a poetic meaning which is what we have here: **heureux** means fortunate.

Mark: **Heureusement que j'ai le salon qui marche bien**, fortunately I have the salon, **le salon qui marche bien**, which is going well **et qui me remplit bien mes journées** and which fills my days well. I think, however, there is even a better way of translating it, because I think we

**heureusement**  
fortunately, luckily  
**remplir**  
to fill

would actually use a different expression in English.

PB: Yeah, on a daily basis, you would tend to say, I think, "thank goodness".

Mark: Yeah, thank goodness I've got the salon which is working well. *Heureusement que j'ai le salon qui marche bien*. Thank goodness I have the salon which is working well.

PB: *Si je ne l'avais pas je pense que j'aurais tout plaqué et je serais partie voir ailleurs*.

Mark: If I didn't have it, I think I would have thrown it all in, thrown in the towel and I would have headed off somewhere else to see another part of the world. We've already talked about this particular sentence, but we did promise that we would take you through the *si* clauses. So, there now follows the Radio Lingua guide to *si*. *Si 1, si 2, si 3* and maybe even *si 2 and a half!*

Mark: So with this *si* clause there are two parts. There's the "if something is the case, then something else would be the case". There is always this balance with one tense in the first part and a second tense in the second part.

PB: But our listeners mustn't be afraid of them, Mark. To be honest it is exactly the same construction as in English.

Mark: Ok, let's go through each of the situations. Let's start with the first scenario.



PB: Let's call it **si 1**.

Mark: **Si 1**, let's hear it.

PB: Ok, so: **si je vais à Glasgow ce week-end, j'irai en train**.

Mark: So, translating that straightforwardly into English, if I go to Glasgow this weekend, I will go by train. So, let's think about those tenses there: **si je vais à Glasgow ce week-end**, which tense is that? Pierre-Benoît ?

PB: Present!

Mark: Of course, it is the present **j'irai en train**.

PB: And that's the future.

Mark: I will go by train. Ok, that's as much as we need to say about **si 1**. Let's look at **si 2**.

PB: Well, I'm going to use the same example, Mark, but obviously I'm going to change it to a **si 2: si j'allais à Glasgow, j'irais en train**.

Mark: If I went to Glasgow, **si j'allais à Glasgow**, if I went to Glasgow, **j'irais en train** I would go by train.

PB: **Exactement !**

Mark: **Eh bien, si 3 ?**

PB: **Eh bien, ça change encore : si j'étais allé à Glasgow, je serais allé en train**.

Mark: So, this is taking it back a stage further in the past and then changing it a slight stage further in the second part as well. So **si j'étais allé à Glasgow**, if I had gone to Glasgow, **je serais allé en train**, I would have gone by train. Now, I'm going to ask you to give us another

#### **Si 2: further explanation**

Although we're using "if I went to Glasgow" here, it is also possible to translate Si 2 as "if I were going...".

#### **j'irai / j'irais**

I will go (future) / I would go (conditional)

Note the subtle difference between these two forms: the conditional has an -s on the end.

#### **ça change encore**

that changes again

example here, because what we've got here with **aller** is obviously an **être** verb. So, let's hear that one, the **si 3**, with a verb that would take **avoir** so that we get used to both forms.

PB: **Si je n'avais pas dépensé tout mon argent ce week-end, Mark, je t'aurais acheté un petit cadeau.**

**dépenser**

to spend

**ce week-end**

this weekend

Remember that **week-end** is written with a hyphen in French.

Mark: So, if I hadn't spent all my money this weekend, I would have bought you a present. So, that's good example of the same construction, this time using an **avoir** verb. So, we are using a pluperfect tense and then that's followed by a conditional perfect in the second part of the sentence. So, the pluperfect is formed by the imperfect of the auxiliary verb, being **avoir** or **être** and then the past participle. The conditional perfect is formed by the conditional tense of the auxiliary verb, **avoir ou être**, and the past participle again. Let's just hear those two examples one more time. First of all, the **avoir** one:

PB: **Si je n'avais pas dépensé tout mon argent ce week-end, je t'aurais acheté un petit cadeau.**

Mark: Ok, and the second one was...?

PB: **Si j'étais allé à Glasgow ce week-end, je serais allé en train.**

Mark: Perfect. So, three different possibilities there for **si** clauses: the present followed by the future; the imperfect followed by the

conditional or pluperfect followed by the conditional prefect. And as Pierre-Benoît explained, these work the same way as in English.

PB: So don't be afraid. Use them!

Mark: Just before we leave the **si** clauses, there a couple of things I want to mention. First of all, we can use these the opposite way around. By that, I mean you can have "**si** + present gives you future" as we have seen. But you can also have "future gives you **si** + present". Let's hear an example of what I mean.

PB: **J'irai en train si je vais à Glasgow ce week-end.**

Mark: So, I'll go by train if I'm going to Glasgow this weekend. See what I mean? It makes sense. Let's do another example, this time doing our **si 2**:

PB: **J'irais en train si j'allais à Glasgow ce week-end.**

Mark: I'd go by train, if I went to Glasgow this weekend. And our 3rd **si** clause:

PB: **Je serais allé en train si j'étais allé à Glasgow ce week-end.**

Mark: **Exactement.** So, I would have gone by train if I had gone to Glasgow this weekend. So, that's the first thing I wanted to mention about **si** clauses before we leave them completely. Pierre-Benoît, can you explain what the other thing was that we wanted to mention?

**décontracté**  
relaxed

PB: There are a few, we would say, variations,  
Mark. For the **si 1**, this is going to be my first  
example. You can actually say, **si + the present**  
and the **not** use the **future**, but use the  
**present again**. But then, **si** does not mean "if".  
It is more likely to mean "whenever": **si je vais**  
**à Glasgow le week-end, je vais en train.**

Mark: So, whenever I go to Glasgow at the weekend,  
I go by train.

PB: And you can still say *if* I go to Glasgow at the  
weekend, I go by train, but it's...

Mark: Generic.

PB: Yeah.

Mark: It's something that happens, whenever you to  
Glasgow, you go by train. A sort of general,  
accepted situation.

PB: Yes.

Mark: So, that's the first possible variation. We've  
actually seen another variation in our sentence  
this week: **Si je ne l'avais pas je pense que**  
**j'aurais tout plaqué et je serais partie voir**  
**ailleurs**. So, if I didn't have it, I would have left  
everything.

PB: Yes, it's a kind of hybrid variation between a **si**  
**2** and a **si 3**.

Mark: Exactly, the thing we are saying here is if I  
didn't have the business, then I would have  
thrown in the towel. We're standing a different  
viewpoint. We're looking backwards. Gabrielle  
is saying if she didn't have the business, then

previously, already, she would have thrown in the towel. So, in a sense you could think of it as a **si** 3. If I hadn't bought or set up the business, I would have thrown in the towel. And ultimately, this would really be the same in English. If I didn't have the business, I would have thrown in the towel. She's not saying, if I didn't have the business, I would buy one. She's talking from where she is now and she's describing what she would have done, by that time. Ok. We're getting a little too far into our **si** clauses so I think it's time to join the main lesson again. And Gabrielle finishes this first paragraph by saying:

PB: **Enfin j'arrête de me plaindre car je pense qu'il y a plus malheureux que moi !**

Mark: So, anyway, I'm going to stop complaining because I think there are people who are worse off than me, who are less fortunate than me! **Malheureux**, the opposite of **heureux**. Ok, let's move on to our second paragraph.

**se plaindre**

to complain

**malheureux**

unfortunate

Par contre, je suis fière de t'annoncer que je me tiens à mes cours de body-combat ! J'y vais toutes les semaines et en plus je vais à la piscine une à deux fois par semaine ! Je dois aussi te dire que Thomas m'a contactée en début de semaine pour aller boire un verre. Je ne lui ai pas encore répondu mais je pense

que je vais y aller. Ne m'en veux pas mais  
comprends-moi, je me sens seule!

Mark: Ok, there is not a huge amount in this  
paragraph. so we'll just go through each  
phrase, translating it and, if there's anything  
particularly interesting, we'll go through that in  
more detail.

PB: Par contre, je suis fière de t'annoncer que je  
me tiens à mes cours de body-combat !

Mark: Anyway, I am proud to announce to you, to tell  
you, that I am keeping to my body combat  
classes. And it's interesting that she used je  
me tiens à mes cours de body combat. We  
had tenir quelqu'un au courant last time, and  
here we've got je me tiens à quelque chose.

**se tenir à qc.**

to keep at something, stick in at  
something

PB: Se tenir à.

Mark: Which means to keep at something, to hold  
on doing something, to keep at something.  
So, I am keeping to my body combat classes.

PB: J'y vais toutes les semaines et en plus je vais à  
la piscine une à deux fois par semaine !

Mark: So, I go every week, literally, I go there, j'y vais  
toutes les semaines; I go there every week  
and en plus, what's more, in addition je vais à  
la piscine une à deux fois par semaine! I go to  
the swimming pool once or twice a week.

PB: And Gabrielle continues by saying je dois  
aussi te dire que Thomas m'a contactée en

début de semaine pour aller boire un verre  
[un soir].

Mark: So, I also have to tell you that Thomas m'a  
contactée has contacted me, or contacted me  
just, en début de semaine , at the beginning of  
the week pour aller boire un verre [un soir] to  
go for a drink one evening. Now just think  
about that there. Thomas m'a contactée en  
début de semaine, Thomas m'a contactée.  
Can you think about how you would spell  
contactée? Think particularly about your  
ending. We'll give you five seconds to think  
about this. How would you spell contactée?  
What's the ending on it?

PB: It should have an -é

Mark: Plus?

PB: An -e!

Mark: Yes! There's the extra -e on there because of  
the preceding direct object me as in m'a  
contactée so m'a-contactée. Now, contactée is  
direct. You say contacter quelqu'un, therefore,  
we need to make contacté, the past participle,  
agree with that direct object me. Of course, it's  
me referring to Gabrielle : Thomas contacted  
me: Thomas m'a contactée . Or maybe in  
more natural English, Thomas got in  
touch; Thomas m'a contactée en début de  
semaine. Thomas contacted me at the start of  
the week to see if I wanted to go for a drink.  
But Gabrielle's not quite sure what to do.

**verre (m)**

(lit.) a glass, a drink

PB: Je ne lui ai pas encore répondu mais je pense que je vais y aller. Ne m'en veux pas mais comprends-moi, je me sens seule!

**ne m'en veux pas**

don't hold it against me - don't be mad

**je me sens seule**

I feel alone / lonely

Mark: So, I've not yet replied: Je ne lui ai pas encore répondu. Let's pause for five seconds again. What should be the ending on répondu? So, of course répondu is spelt R-É-P-O-N-D-U.

There's no agreement on there. First of all, we're talking about Thomas, so there wouldn't be an agreement anyway, but, of course, it's répondre à quelqu'un and we know that if it's an indirect object there wouldn't be an agreement anyway.

PB: Excellent !

Mark: Ok, and she finishes the paragraph by saying:

Ne m'en veux pas mais comprends-moi, je me sens seule!

Mark: We've come across ne m'en veux pas : tu m'en veux, je t'en veux, je ne t'en veux pas. I don't hold it against you; I am not angry with you. Don't get mad at me, but understand me. je me sens seule! I'm feeling alone. I'm feeling lonely. Ok. It's time now to move on to our third paragraph.

Bon assez parlé de moi ! A chaque fois que je pense à toi je me dis que tu as de la chance



d'habiter à Paris. La vie parisienne semble tellement plus exaltante que la vie rennaise ! Raconte-moi tout !!! Je me souviens quand j'étais plus jeune, je devais avoir 12 ans, je suis allée passer un week-end à Paris avec ma sœur Claire. J'en garde vraiment un super souvenir. On avait pris le train de Rennes le vendredi après-midi vers 17h, et pas n'importe quel train - le TGV !! Quand tu as douze ans, je peux t'assurer que tu es impressionnée !! On était arrivées gare Montparnasse environ deux heures plus tard. On logeait chez une grand-tante qui nous attendait à la gare.

Mark: So... it's a nice way that she starts this paragraph. She says *bon, assez parlé de moi!* How would we say that in English?

PB: "Enough about me".

Mark: Yeah. Enough about me, but it's a little more developed in French: *bon, assez parlé de moi!* "Enough spoken about me". It's similar to the phrase, have you *heard* about something? In French you have to say, have you heard *spoken* about something? *Tu as entendu parler de la nouvelle série de Coffee Break French saison 4?!*

PB: *Non.*

Mark: *Bah c'est fantastique.*

PB: Ah bah tu me l'apprends !

**tu me l'apprends!**  
you're telling me!

Mark: Donc. Assez parlé de moi ! Enough spoken about me. So Gabrielle goes on:

PB: A chaque fois que je pense à toi je me dis que tu as de la chance d'habiter à Paris.

Mark: Avoir de la chance, another of our avoir expressions: to be lucky, avoir de la chance : il a de la chance d'habiter à Paris . Each time that I think of you, I say to myself that you are lucky to live in Paris.

PB: La vie parisienne semble tellement plus exaltante que la vie rennais(e) !

**rennais(e)**  
from Rennes

Mark: Exaltante. Quite an interesting word.  
Exaltante ?

PB: Exalting?

Mark: So, how would we translate this into good English?

PB: Exciting?

Mark: Yeah! Or thrilling. Parisian life seems so much more thrilling than the life here in Rennes, rennais(e) being the adjective for Rennes.

PB: Oui, les gens qui habitent à Rennes sont des rennais ou, si ce sont des femmes, ce sont des rennaïses !

Mark: Ok, she says, raconte-moi tout, tell me everything and then she starts reminiscing.

PB: Je me souviens [que] quand j'étais plus jeune, je devais avoir 12 ans, je suis allée passer un week-end à Paris avec ma sœur Claire.

Mark: So **se souvenir** is to remember. So, I remember when I was younger. **Je devais avoir 12 ans**, I must have been twelve. Literally, I must have had twelve years and I went to spend a weekend in Paris with my sister Claire.

PB: **J'en garde vraiment un super souvenir.**

Mark: So, that's interesting because **j'en garde**, "I of it keep" a great memory, I've got a great memory of it. **J'en garde vraiment un super souvenir.** We've already heard the next phrase. We talked about it in our main episode.

PB: **On avait pris le train de Rennes le vendredi après-midi vers 17h, et pas n'importe quel train - le TGV !!**

Mark: So, we, literally, had taken the train from Rennes on a Friday afternoon about five o'clock and not just any train, the TGV!! **le TGV** But the interesting thing here is that she uses a pluperfect tense, **on avait pris le train** and she's going to go on to use more pluperfects as she is recounting this memory. However, in English, we are much more likely to use a simple past there. We took *the* train and as we go on we'll see this more. But, here is where we're going to talk a little more about **importe; et pas n'importe quel train - le TGV!!** And not just any train, the TGV. Sp, let's talk a little about this **pas n'importe quel train** .

PB: Here we have Q-U-E-L with train : and you could have pas n'importe quelle ville. What would happen to quelle, Mark?

Mark: In that case we would use Q-U-E-L-L-E, not just any town, pas n'importe quelle ville mais Paris !

PB: Très très bien. Là, n'importe is very, very interesting, Mark.

Mark: There are other phrases with n'importe.

PB: Oui, n'importe où !

Mark: No matter where!

PB: N'importe quand !

Mark: No matter when!

PB: N'importe qui !

Mark: No matter who!

PB: N'importe quoi !

Mark: No matter what!

PB: And n'importe quoi has got an extra meaning! Another meaning!

Mark: Let's imagine you're talking to someone and he's going on and on and he's telling an absolute load of nonsense. I could ask the question, mais qu'est-ce qu'il raconte celui là ?

PB: Pff n'importe quoi Mark ! Il raconte n'importe quoi !

Mark: He's literally telling no matter what. But, in this sense, it means he talking a load of nonsense, a load of rubbish. Il dit n'importe quoi.

PB: N'importe quoi, oui.

**qu'est-ce qu'il raconte?**  
what's he on about?

Mark: There's also the expression *oh, c'est n'importe quoi !*

PB: Yes, that's nonsense!

Mark: So, it's something you will use in particular situations. Sometimes it's a little difficult to know exactly when the situation is that you should use the phrase. But, if you understand what someone means then you are already a step towards using this expression yourself. I am just thinking about situations where you could perhaps use *n'importe quoi*. And for example, if you were perhaps in a restaurant for a meal and you got your bill and there were maybe four bottles of wine on your bill, but you only had one, you could maybe say to the waiter:

PB: *C'est n'importe quoi ça !*

Mark: That's a load of nonsense, that! We only had one bottle of wine! So, have this phrase ready to use when a situation like that appears for you. Let's move on.

PB: *Quand tu as douze ans, je peux t'assurer que tu es impressionnée !!*

Mark: When you are twelve, I can assure you, that you are impressed!

PB: *On était arrivées gare Montparnasse environ deux heures plus tard.*

Mark: So, "we had arrived". We would translate it with a simple past: we arrived in the Gare Montparnasse around two hours later. And

one thing that's quite interesting here, *on était arrivées gare Montparnasse* . You don't need to say we arrived at the Gare Montparnasse. Particularly in this situation you can just say *on est arrivées gare Montparnasse, on arrive gare Montparnasse à 17h*. So, you just arrive [the station name].

PB: Yeah, Mark, it's quite an informal way here and I would tend to say it's used just with stations.

Mark: *On est arrivés gare du Nord à 17h.*

PB: *Très bien. On est arrivés gare de l'Est.*

Mark: And then she finishes by saying:

PB: *On logeait chez une grand-tante qui nous attendait à la gare.*

Mark: So, we were staying with a greta aunt who was waiting for us at the station. And just remember *attendre* is "to wait for", she was waiting for us; *qui nous attendait à la gare*. Ok, *on va continuer avec notre quatrième paragraphe parisien.*

**loger**

to lodge, to stay

Remember that in the imperfect tense you need to keep the **e** so that the **g-** is still soft: **on logeait**.

On avait passé le samedi à se balader dans le centre de Paris. On en avait vu des choses : La Tour Eiffel, l'Arc de Triomphe, les Champs Elysées, l'Obélisque et pour finir la Pyramide du Louvre. A l'époque j'étais vraiment émerveillée et je ne savais pas où regarder tellement il y avait de choses à voir ! Le dimanche, avant de reprendre le train pour

rentrer, nous étions allées visiter le Château de Versailles. Ça aussi était grandiose !!

PB: Oh la la Marc, ce paragraphe me donne vraiment envie de retourner à Paris !

Mark: Oui, absolument. En fait, je pense que nos auditeurs pourront utiliser les expressions dans ce texte pour parler de leur visite à Paris aussi. Ou bien pas seulement Paris, n'importe où en fait. Ah ! N'importe où !

**pourront < pouvoir**  
they will be able to (future)

PB: N'importe quoi !

Mark: So, we spent the Saturday wandering around the centre of Paris. Literally, we had spent, *on avait passé le samedi à se balader dans le centre de Paris*. And she goes on:

PB: *On en avait vu des choses : La Tour Eiffel, l'Arc de Triomphe, les Champs Elysées, l'Obélisque et pour finir la Pyramide du Louvre.*

Mark: Now some good practise there of the famous sights and monuments and so on in Paris, with the correct pronunciation of course. But, let's just go back to *on en avait vu des choses*. We could say literally, *on avait vu des choses*, we had seen lots of things or we saw, as we are using as our translation here. But this *en* is interesting here, because what we are actually saying is a more expressive *oh, we saw lots of things - we really did!*

PB: Yeah, we did!

Mark: And here are some of them. It's just like if you've had a wonderful meal in a fish restaurant for example. What could you say?

PB: Oh, j'en ai mangé du poisson ce soir-là !

Mark: Oh, I really did eat a lot of it, of fish that evening. It's this redundant *of it*, this *en*.

PB: Je suis allé à Glasgow et, regarde, j'en ai acheté des choses !

Mark: J'en ai acheté des choses. I, of it, or, of them, have bought lots of things. Now, we are actually saying j'ai acheté des choses, I bought some things. We don't need the *en* but we are using it here to reinforce the number of things, or the amount of fish eaten, or the number of monuments seen. So, it is this redundant *en* that actually has an extra meaning.

PB: Yeah, it adds a bit of excitement.

Mark: Exactly. Then she goes on to say this:

A l'époque j'étais vraiment émerveillée et je ne savais pas où regarder tellement il y avait de choses à voir !

Mark: So, at the time I was really marvelled, literally. I was in awe. I didn't know where to look. there were so many things to see. *Tellement il y avait de choses à voir !* Could we say here: *il y avait tellement de choses à voir ?*



PB: Of course you could, Mark. But I think here she is so excited, the **tellement** is reinforced.

Mark: Ok, so **tellement il y avait de choses à voir !**  
There were so many things to see! She goes on:

PB: **Le dimanche, avant de reprendre le train pour rentrer, nous étions allées visiter le Château de Versailles. Ça aussi était grandiose !!**

**avant de reprendre**  
before taking (again)

Mark: On the Sunday, before taking the train home, **Le dimanche, avant de reprendre le train pour rentrer, nous étions allées visiter le Château de Versailles.** So, again, literally, we had gone to visit the Chateau de Versailles, but we're translating as "we went to visit the Chateau de Versailles". And notice it's **visiter le château de Versailles.** However, just remember they're visiting their aunt: **elles rendent visite à leur tante, à leur grande tante,** but they're visiting the Castle of Versailles, **elles visitent le château de Versailles; ça aussi était grandiose!!** And that was just quite wonderful.

PB: Awesome!

Mark: Awesome - yeah! Good word. Ok. Let's listen to our final paragraph.

Il faut vraiment que j'arrive à prendre un jour de congés pour venir te voir. Ce serait une super occasion ! Je ferais d'une pierre deux coups ! Bon il est tard, je vais te laisser.  
Promets-moi de me répondre et de me

raconter toute ta nouvelle vie afin que je  
puisse rêver un peu ! Bisous, Gabrielle

Mark: A short paragraph, but there are a few really  
interesting language points in here.

PB: Indeed!

Mark: First of all, **il faut vraiment que j'arrive à  
prendre un jour de congés**. It is truly necessary  
that I arrive to take a day of leave.

PB: Yep! (Sarcastically) That's nice, Mark. Can we  
try it again in English, please?

Mark: Yeah, it's like saying I really must try my best to  
get a day off.

PB: Yes, **arriver à + infinitive**. To try your best to do  
something. To manage to do something. To  
succeed?

Mark: Yes: **arriver à + infinitive**. And then she goes  
on to say: **ce serait une super occasion pour  
venir te voir**. It would be a great opportunity to  
come to see you. And she uses one of my  
favourite expressions here:

PB: **Je ferais d'une pierre deux coups! Faire d'une  
pierre deux coups**.

Mark: Ok. So let's work our way through this one.  
**une pierre** is?

PB: A stone.

Mark: Yes. **Je ferais d'une pierre**, I would do of one  
stone, **deux coups**, two hits?

**pierre (f)**  
stone

PB: Two shots.

Mark: What we are really saying here, is I would kill two birds with one stone.

PB: I would have two shots with one stone, so it's two birds in English.

Mark: And what she's really saying here is she can see Paris again and see her friend Matthieu again. *Bon il est tard, je vais te laisser*. It is late, I'm going to leave you. We should be thinking along the same lines because we're at thirty-five minutes here, though there is still one brilliant phrase to get in here:

PB: *Promets-moi de me répondre et de me raconter toute ta nouvelle vie afin que je puisse rêver un peu !*

**afin que + subjunctive**  
so that ...

Mark: Aw! This is lovely! Promise me to reply to me and tell me all about your new life, *afin que je puisse rêver un peu*; in order that I may dream a little! *Afin que je puisse*: you've spotted a subjunctive in there.

PB: Indeed!

Mark: *Afin que*: in order that.

PB: So that?

Mark: You could equally say *pour que*.

PB: *Pour que je puisse rêver un peu*. So *afin que* or *pour que*, oui !

Mark: And just to throw something else in there, *afin de faire quelque chose*, where you've got the same subject. So she is asking *Matthieu* to reply to her, so that *she* can dream a little. So

there are two different subjects. *He* would reply to her and that would allow *her* to dream a little. But, if I were to say *je suis allé à Paris afin de rendre visite à ma grande tante* - I went to Paris in order to visit my great aunt - we can replace *afin de* with *pour*. They work very similarly with each other.

PB: Yeah - you could swap them over.

Mark: Yes, completely. That is the end of our passage. Let's listen to it one more time.

Comment va monsieur couche-tôt?! A Rennes tout est vieux! Je me sens coincée ici avec si peu d'ambitions ! Des jours, je t'envie d'être parti à Paris, cela doit être tellement plus passionnant qu'ici. Tu sais on s'ennuie vraiment à Rennes, rien ni personne ne change. Je suis maintenant dans une routine dont il est vraiment dur d'en sortir. Heureusement que j'ai le salon qui marche bien et qui me remplit bien mes journées. Si je ne l'avais pas je pense que j'aurais tout plaqué et je serais partie voir ailleurs. Enfin j'arrête de me plaindre car je pense qu'il y a plus malheureux que moi !

Par contre, je suis fière de t'annoncer que je me tiens à mes cours de body-combat ! J'y vais toutes les semaines et en plus je vais à la piscine une à deux fois par semaine ! Je dois

aussi te dire que Thomas m'a contactée en début de semaine pour aller boire un verre. Je ne lui ai pas encore répondu mais je pense que je vais y aller. Ne m'en veux pas mais comprends-moi, je me sens seule!

Bon assez parlé de moi ! A chaque fois que je pense à toi je me dis que tu as de la chance d'habiter à Paris. La vie parisienne semble tellement plus exaltante que la vie rennaise ! Raconte-moi tout !!! Je me souviens quand j'étais plus jeune, je devais avoir 12 ans, je suis allée passer un week-end à Paris avec ma sœur Claire. J'en garde vraiment un super souvenir. On avait pris le train de Rennes le vendredi après-midi vers 17h, et pas n'importe quel train - le TGV !! Quand tu as douze ans, je peux t'assurer que tu es impressionnée !! On était arrivées gare Montparnasse environ deux heures plus tard. On logeait chez une grand-tante qui nous attendait à la gare.

On avait passé le samedi à se balader dans le centre de Paris. On en avait vu des choses : La Tour Eiffel, l'Arc de Triomphe, les Champs Élysées, l'Obélisque et pour finir la Pyramide du Louvre. A l'époque j'étais vraiment émerveillée et je ne savais pas où regarder tellement il y avait de choses à voir ! Le

dimanche, avant de reprendre le train pour rentrer, nous étions allées visiter le Château de Versailles. Ça aussi était grandiose !!

Il faut vraiment que j'arrive à prendre un jour de congés pour venir te voir. Ce serait une super occasion ! Je ferais d'une pierre deux coups ! Bon il est tard, je vais te laisser. Promets-moi de me répondre et de me raconter toute ta nouvelle vie afin que je puisse rêver un peu ! Bisous, Gabrielle

Mark: Très bien. Alors encore une leçon très intéressante.

PB: Oui, moi vraiment je me suis régalé Mark tellement il y avait de bonnes expressions.

Mark: Oh là là très bien! Bon, on sera de retour très bientôt. Nous espérons que vous avez aimé cet épisode.

PB: Et que vous arriverez à réutiliser les expressions.

Mark: Oh il est fort, il est fort aujourd'hui ! Bon, à très bientôt !

PB: Allez, à plus !

**se régaler**

to have a ball, to enjoy oneself

**vous arriverez < arriver**

you will manage (future)

**fort(e)**

good, strong

The word **fort(e)** is commonly used to describe someone who is good at doing something. Here it could be translated as "he's on good form".