

Lesson 71

Notes

Quelle coïncidence!

What a coincidence!

Programme Notes

Welcome to Coffee Break French, the podcast aimed at independent learners of French. Our regular podcasts will introduce you to the French language in easy steps. These programme notes will help you get more out of each episode by explaining how words are written and giving you more information about each phrase along with some bonus vocabulary where appropriate.

Conversation

David	I'm sure we turn right up here.
Christina	No, look at the map. It's definitely left.
David	You're not even holding the map the right way up! I've been to this restaurant before - Le Lion D'Or - I remember where it is.
Christina	Well I'm just going by the town plan the lady at the reception gave us and it makes much more sense if I hold it this way. Let's ask this man. He looks friendly.
David	Ok, but let me do the talking! I've been speaking French since I was 7 years old...
Christina	... since you were 7 years old. Et moi? Je ne parle pas français? Ah, d'accord!
David	Excusez-moi, s'il vous plaît. Vous êtes d'ici?
Jean-Jacques	Oui, Monsieur, tout à fait. Je peux vous aider?
Christina	Nous sommes perdus.
David	Oui, nous sommes perdus, comme ma femme vient de dire.
Jean-Jacques	Alors, qu'est-ce que vous cherchez?
David	Nous cherchons un restaurant qui s'appelle Le Lion D'Or.
Jean-Jacques	Ah oui? Quelle coïncidence! Moi aussi je vais au Lion D'Or. En fait, je vais à ce restaurant-là presque toutes le semaines. Je vais retrouver ma femme là-bas.
David	Ah excellent!
Jean-Jacques	Je vais vous le montrer sur le votre plan, mais on peut y aller ensemble, en fait. C'est beaucoup plus facile comme ça, n'est-ce pas? Il faut prendre la première rue à gauche.
Christina	See - I told you it was on the left!
David	Merci, Monsieur. C'est très gentil de votre part.
Jean-Jacques	Pas de problème. Vous êtes anglais?
Christina	Non, non. En fait nous sommes écossais.
Jean-Jacques	C'est pas vrai! Ma femme est écossaise, elle aussi. Elle est d'Édimbourg.
Christina	Tiens! Nous habitons à côté d'Édimbourg, vers Leith. Vous connaissez?
Jean-Jacques	Oui, je crois qu'elle a des copains qui y habitent.

Conversation

David Qu'est-ce que le monde est petit, hein?

The notes below will help you understand the dialogue.

Language Notes

d'accord	ok	When Christina says <i>ah d'accord</i> , she's showing that she's a bit annoyed at David's assumption that he should do the talking. In English a possible translation in this situation could be "it's like that, then..."
vous êtes d'ici?	are you from here	Because David and Christina don't know the man they talk to in the street, they use the <i>vous</i> form.
tout à fait	absolutely	
nous sommes perdus	we're lost	The verb <i>perdre</i> means "to lose", and it's a regular -re verb, so the past participle/adjective form ends in -u. In this case <i>perdus</i> has to agree with the subject, <i>nous</i> .
comme ma femme vient de dire	as my wife has just said	Remember <i>venir de faire quelque chose</i> ? "To have just done something".
Le Lion D'Or	The Golden Lion	Literally "The Lion of Gold"
or (m)	gold	
coïncidence (f)	coincidence	
quelle coïncidence!	what a coincidence	Note the use of the feminine form <i>quelle</i> (masculine <i>quel</i>) as <i>coïncidence</i> is feminine.
moi aussi je vais au Lion D'Or	I'm going to the <i>Lion D'Or</i> too	Note that the most natural way to express this in French is by starting the sentence with "me too". Note also <i>au Lion D'Or</i> : the name of the restaurant is <i>Le Lion D'Or</i> , but as we know <i>à + le = au</i> , so if you want to say you're going to the Lion D'Or, then it's <i>je vais au Lion D'Or</i> .
ce restaurant-là	that restaurant	Compare <i>ce restaurant-ci</i> which would be "this restaurant".
presque	almost	
toutes les semaines	every week	Note the feminine plural form of <i>toutes</i> . Compare <i>tous les jours</i> .
retrouver	to meet up with	Literally "to find again", but <i>retrouver</i> is used commonly when you're meeting up with someone.
là-bas	down there, over there	

Language Notes

je vais vous le montrer sur votre plan	I'm going to show it to you on your plan/map	Here <i>vous</i> means "to you", and <i>le</i> is referring to the restaurant. <i>Le</i> is the direct object pronoun here. It stands for <i>le restaurant</i> . If Jean-Jacques was going to show David and Christina "the house" (<i>la maison</i>) then he would say <i>je vais vous la montrer sur le plan</i> . The pronoun has to stand for the correct gender of the thing or person. There's more discussion of this in the lesson.
on peut	one can, we can >	The word <i>on</i> is something we've not covered in great detail in Coffee Break French. It's a subject pronoun which literally means "one" as in "one can go to the restaurant". This doesn't sound natural in English, but it's exceptionally common in French. The two most common translations of <i>on</i> are "we" or "you", depending on the context. Note that if "you" is used, it's the "you" in English which refers to an unknown or hypothetical person, eg. "you can see the sea from our hotel room". Here the speaker is not saying referring to the person he is talking to - he is not inviting that person to come to his hotel room to see the sea. In fact, he's really saying "one can see the sea...". Note that <i>on</i> in French uses the third person singular form of the verb, just like <i>il</i> and <i>elle</i> .
on peut y aller ensemble	we can go (there) together	We've come across the pronoun <i>y</i> before. It means "there", and is often not translated. However, it's necessary in French in phrases such as this, eg. <i>on y va?</i> "Are we going?"
c'est beaucoup plus facile comme ça	it's much easier that way / like that	
n'est-ce pas?	isn't that right? no?	The expression <i>n'est-ce pas</i> is very commonly added to the end of a statement for confirmation.
il faut prendre	we must take, it is necessary to take	
la première rue à gauche	the first (street) on the left	
c'est (très) gentil de votre part	it's (very) kind on your part, it's (very) kind of you to do this	
en fait	in fact	

Language Notes

ma femme est écossaise, elle aussi	my wife is Scottish too	Note the <i>elle aussi</i> coming at the end. Jean-Jacques could have said <i>ma femme est écossaise aussi</i> , but by repeating the subject <i>elle</i> he is reinforcing the statement, making it more emphatic.
tiens!	my goodness!	
c'est pas vrai!	it's not true! / No way!	Note that informally it is very common to leave out the <i>ne</i> when forming a negative: <i>ce n'est pas vrai</i> becomes <i>c'est pas vrai</i> , etc.
vous connaissez?	do you know (it)?	From the verb <i>connaître</i> .
elle a des copains qui y habitent	she has some friends who live there	Again, note the use of <i>y</i> , meaning "there". It's quite difficult to hear the <i>y</i> as it's run together with <i>qui</i> .
qu'est-ce que...	>	When used with a statement (here, <i>le monde est petit</i> , "the world is small") the phrase <i>qu'est-ce que</i> reinforces the statement. This sentence could be translated as "isn't the world a small place", or "it really is a small world, isn't it?"



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