

Lesson 69

Notes

Je voudrais louer une voiture

Hiring a car in a French-speaking area

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.

This week we are continuing the theme of transport and trying to use the language we've been learning in previous lessons in a practical way. In Lesson 69 we look at hiring a car.

Firstly Mark talks us through some useful vocabulary used to talk about cars and hiring cars.

une voiture	a car
conduire	to drive
conduire une voiture	to drive a car

Conduire is a slightly irregular *-re* verb and is conjugated as follows:

conduire (to drive) - present tense	
je conduis	nous conduisons
tu conduis	vous conduisez
il/elle conduit	ils/elles conduisent

Regular *-re* verbs do not have an ending in the *il/elle* part. For example, "he sells" is *il vend* (from the verb *vendre*). However, with *conduire*, the *il/elle* part ends in a *-t* (*il/elle conduit*). In some ways, this is similar to a verb we have already looked at: *finir* ("to finish").

finir (to finish) - present tense	
je finis	nous finissons
tu finis	vous finissez
il/elle finit	ils/elles finissent

louer	to hire
louer une voiture	to hire a car
l'assurance	insurance
le permis de conduire	driving license
un pneu	a tyre
un pneu crevé	a flat tyre / a puncture
je suis crevé(e)	I'm exhausted

Notice that *crevé(e)* literally means “exhausted” so it can be used to describe a tyre when it’s flat or indeed a person who is exhausted.

Now that we know some specific vocabulary for hiring a car, we can start to build some phrases using the language we already know.

je voudrais louer une voiture	I would like to hire a car
je dois louer une voiture	I must hire a car

Remember that in certain situations, the adjective would come before the noun but in most cases, it comes after. We can therefore work out how to say “an automatic car”:

une voiture automatique
an automatic car

There are two ways of saying “a day” in French: *un jour* and *une journée*. If you wanted to hire a car for a day you would use *une journée* because we are referring to the duration of a day.

je voudrais louer une voiture pour la journée
I would like to hire a car for the day

je voudrais louer une voiture pour la semaine
I would like to hire a car for the week

You may want to ask how much it will cost:

ça coûte combien pour la journée? / c'est combien pour la journée?	how much does it cost for the day?
c'est combien pour la semaine?	how much does it cost for the week?

A word we can use in certain situations is *par*. It is very similar to its English equivalent, “per”. We can use this to change the meaning slightly when asking about the price of hiring a car:

ça coûte combien par semaine?	how much does it cost per week?
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You may want to ask if insurance is included in the price. The word for “included” is *compris*, which is actually the past participle of the verb *comprendre* (“to understand”). This is similar to the past participle of *prendre* (“to take”) which is *pris*.

In this case, *compris* is being used as an adjective. To say “is insurance included?” is almost like saying “is insurance understood?” or “is it understood that I am insured to drive this car?” Since *l’assurance* (“insurance”) is a feminine noun, the adjective has to agree so we add an *-e* to *compris* to give *comprise*. Note that the *-s* is not pronounced in *compris* but it is pronounced in *comprise*.

There are various ways to ask if insurance is included:

l’assurance est comprise?	is insurance included?
est-ce que l’assurance est comprise?	
l’assurance est-elle comprise?	

We use *est-elle* because *l’assurance* is feminine. If we were referring to a masculine noun, we would use *est-il*.

You may also want to ask if the number of kilometres travelled is included in the price. The equivalent to “mileage” in French is *le kilométrage*.

le kilométrage est compris?	is mileage included?
est-ce que le kilométrage est compris?	
le kilométrage est-il compris?	

When you are dealing with hiring cars, the kind of responses the person you are talking to will give are very similar to those given when you are buying food or carrying out other transactions. Therefore we can use what we have learned so far to help us in this situation.

However you may be asked more specific questions such as:

je peux avoir votre permis de conduire?	can I have your driving license?
mon ami(e) veut conduire	my friend wants to drive
mon ami(e) voudrait conduire aussi	my friend would also like to drive

Let's now move onto talk about any problems we may have with the car:

il y a un problème avec la voiture	there is a problem with the car
la voiture ne marche pas	the car doesn't work
en panne	broken
la voiture est en panne	the car has broken down
Excusez-moi, s'il vous plaît. Il y a un problème avec la voiture. Elle est en panne.	Excuse me, please. There is a problem with the car. It has broken down.
l'essence	petrol
je suis en panne d'essence	I have run out of petrol
la voiture est en panne d'essence	the car has run out of petrol
j'ai un pneu crevé	I have a flat tyre / puncture
je ne sais pas ce qui se passe	I don't know what's wrong (lit. that which happens)
je ne sais pas ce qui ne marche pas	I don't know what's not working



CoffeeBreak
French

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