

# Coffee Break **French**

## Season 4, Episode 30

Language Study



CoffeeBreak  
**French**

**SEASON 4**

Mark: Alors, on est de retour avec votre podcast supplémentaire. Comment ça va aujourd'hui Pierre-Benoît ?

PBH: Je suis en pleine forme, et toi Mark ?

Mark: Très bien, très bien, très bien ! Alors nous allons attaquer notre texte immédiatement avec le premier paragraphe.

Salut maman. Merci pour tout ce que tu as fait pour nous ce week-end. J'ai passé un super moment en votre compagnie. Cela fait toujours du bien de retourner aux sources! J'ai refait le plein d'énergie ! C'était aussi super de revoir Guillaume. Il me manque aussi beaucoup. Je te promets que je vais faire un effort et prendre de ses nouvelles plus régulièrement. Cela ne veut pas dire que je ne pense pas à lui mais quand je rentre du boulot, j'oublie tout, même d'écrire à mon frère ! Dorénavant je vais faire attention !

Mark: Alors, un paragraphe intéressant avec un mot super !

PBH: Oui, dorénavant.

Mark: On a déjà parlé de ça bien sûr dans l'autre épisode, mais on va en reparler un petit peu ici.

PBH: D'accord.

Mark: Par contre, elle commence:

PBH: Merci pour tout ce que tu as fait pour nous ce week-end.

Mark: So, thanks for everything that you've done for us this weekend. Maybe not this weekend, but last weekend, because she's looking back on the weekend. She could have said *ce week-end-là*.

PBH: Yes, she could Mark, but that would have meant one specific weekend amongst others.

Mark: Exactly. So, she's referring to one specific weekend out of a choice of weekends. *Ce week-end-là*.

PBH: Exactly! Whereas here, *ce week-end* obviously refers to last weekend.

Mark: It's a funny one, because in English we would be more likely to say "next weekend" or "last weekend", because when we use the word "this weekend" there's a little bit of doubt involved.

PBH: When you say "this weekend" it definitely means this coming weekend.

Mark: Yes, I would say it would normally mean this coming weekend.

PBH: In French, *ce week-end* would either mean last weekend or this coming weekend, so you need to listen carefully to the tense that is being used afterwards.

Mark: Exactly.

PBH: So, I'll give you a wee example. Ready, Mark?

Mark: *Je t'en prie.*

PBH: *Ce week-end, je suis allé à Paris.*

Mark: This weekend I went to Paris, meaning last weekend of course!

PBH: And now we have *ce week-end, je vais aller à Paris.*

Mark: So, this weekend, meaning next weekend coming, I am going to go to Paris. *Ok donc elle continue.*

PBH: *J'ai passé un super moment en votre compagnie.*

Mark: I like the word *moment*. I like it because it means the same as in English. We can use the word "a moment" in English, but we wouldn't use it. We would be more likely to say "time", I had a great time in your company, but she's using *un super moment, passer un bon moment* or *passer un super moment*.

PBH: *Un bon moment* is even more French I would say, *on a passé un bon moment*.

Mark: *Oui*. Just watch here because she's saying *j'ai passé un super moment en votre compagnie*.

She's talking to her mother here and obviously also referring to her father and here brother, Guillaume as well.

PBH: Cela fait toujours du bien de retourner aux sources !

Mark: It's always good to return to one's roots; aux sources. Literally, to one's source. Let's listen to this once again and we'll hear the next bit also:

Cela fait toujours du bien de retourner aux sources ! J'ai refait le plein d'énergie !

Mark: What a wonderful expression! J'ai refait le plein d'énergie! Can you explain a little bit about this expression?

PBH: Faire le plein d'énergie or here, refaire le plein d'énergie means that you fill up yourself with energy, recharge your batteries.

Mark: You're recharging your batteries. You are indeed. So, refaire le plein d'énergie. But we can also use faire le plein in other situations.

PBH: Yes, for example, when you're driving and you're stopping at une station service and you fais le plein de ta voiture, it means that you fill up the tank.

Mark: Exactly. You fill up the tank. Literally, you "do the full", faire le plein. So you could say to an attendant, if it were a service station with

people attending you, it would be: **faîtes le plein s'il vous plaît.**

PBH: **Exactement.**

Mark: Ok. So **j'ai refait le plein d'énergie**, an idiomatic way of saying "I recharged my batteries" in English, though I suppose saying I recharged my batteries is fairly idiomatic.

PBH: **Oui**, Mark, but just before we move on, let's not forget the word **plein**. You use it with the phrase **je suis plein** or **je suis pleine**.

Mark: You can't really do that!

PBH: You can't really do that. If you want to say to someone that you're full, you've eaten enough, the natural translation would be **je suis plein** or **je suis pleine**, but you cannot use that.

Mark: So, what do you have to say in French?

PBH: **Je suis repu** from **repaître**.

Mark: What a wonderful word!

PBH: So, R-E-P-U and if you're a girl, an extra -E.

Mark: So, that's the past participle of the verb **repaître**?

PBH: That's correct.

Mark: **R-E-P-A-Î-T-R-E.**

PBH: **Exactement, bravo Mark!**

Mark: Now, **repaître**, if you think about that circumflex in there, the circumflex always suggests in the past there was an -s in there. So let's think about this: R-E-P-A-I-S-T-R-E. Take out the RE- at the front, we're now thinking about pastures. So...

PBH: Repast.

Mark: There's the word "repast" meaning a meal in old English, perhaps not old English, but dated English.

PBH: To say I'm full, *je suis repu(e)*.

Mark: Or could we use my favourite word for describing this kind of thing? *Rassasié*.

PBH: *Je suis rassasié*.

Mark: "I am satiated". Ok, so *je suis rassasié*, I am full, or *je suis repu*. A new one for me. Ok, let's get on with our text.

PBH: *Oui, maintenant que nous avons refait le plein d'énergie*.

Mark: *Exactement*.

PBH: *C'était aussi super de revoir Guillaume*.

Mark: It was also great to see Guillaume again.

PBH: *Il me manque aussi beaucoup*.

Mark: I miss him lots too. *Il me manque aussi beaucoup*. Remember we swap that around; he is missing to me lots too.

PBH: *Je te promets que je vais faire un effort et prendre de ses nouvelles plus régulièrement*.

Mark: Now this is interesting here, because we say here *prendre de ses nouvelles*. We've already heard *avoir des nouvelles de quelqu'un*, to have news of someone. But here she is being pro-active, she is "taking his news", to hear from him more often.

PBH: It think **prendre des nouvelles** would be like when you say to someone tell him I was asking for him.

Mark: Yes, nice!

PBH: Because it's this idea of **prendre des nouvelles de quelqu'un** an idea of moving forward.

Mark: So, you're going out of your way to ask about them. So, I promise that I'll make an effort to ask about him regularly or to hear about him or to ask about him more regularly.

PBH: Quite interesting to see the **je te promets que** is not followed by a...

Mark: Subjunctive! **Je te promets que je vais faire.**  
Good!

PBH: **Cela ne veut pas dire que je ne pense pas à lui mais quand je rentre du boulot, j'oublie tout, même d'écrire à mon frère !**

Mark: So, that doesn't mean that I'm not thinking about him, **je ne pense pas à lui mais quand je rentre du boulot**, but when I get back from work, **j'oublie tout**, I forget everything! I forget about everything, perhaps. **Même d'écrire à mon frère**, even writing to my brother. And then she uses that wonderful word:

PBH: **Dorénavant je vais faire attention !**

Mark: So, from now on I'm going to be careful.

PBH: I think **faire attention** is a difficult expression.

Mark: It is, particularly in this situation. It's a little more than just being careful here.

PBH: Yes, I think if you take it in a general sense, if I said to you **fais attention!**

Mark: You could mean watch out or something like that.

PBH: It could mean watch out or be careful, there's something on the road or something, but here obviously she doesn't want to upset her brother. There's obviously been a lack of communication. She's not bothered or she's been too busy to get in touch with him. And now I think there's the idea of not just careful attitude, but caring attitude that comes into the equation here. **Dorénavant je vais faire attention** could be like I'm going to try and be more tactful, more considerate in making a point.

Mark: Yes, making a point of looking out for him and keeping in touch.

PBH: **Exactement.** It's tricky.

Mark: Another example of this situation where simple words can need much more in terms of translation when we go from one language to another.

PBH: And that's when you realise translation is difficult because it is the context...

Mark: Absolutely.

PBH: ...that leads to the correct translation. You can't just say **faire attention** means something and that's it. I really like that. **Ça c'est intéressant.**



Mark: Ok d'accord.

PBH: On passe au deuxième paragraphe?

Mark: Tout à fait.

Par contre, je dois avouer que je n'ai pas été impressionnée par Patrick. Il porte toujours trop d'après-rasage à mon goût ! Malgré le temps qui passe, il y a certaines choses qui ne changent pas ! Pour le numéro de téléphone, ben je ne sais pas trop car je sens qu'il va être pot de colle et je n'ai pas besoin de ça en ce moment. De plus, il faut bien qu'il comprenne que je ne suis pas attirée par lui. Alors peux-tu attendre un petit peu que j'y réfléchisse ?

Mark: Ok. Le pauvre Patrick!

PBH: Ah oui, je ne voudrais pas être à sa place.

Mark: So, she starts here by saying:

PBH: Par contre, je dois avouer que je n'ai pas été impressionnée par Patrick.

Mark: On the other hand, I must admit that I was not at all impressed by Patrick.

PBH: Il porte toujours trop d'après-rasage à mon goût !

Mark: He still wears too much aftershave for my taste.

PBH: Malgré le temps qui passe, il y a certaines choses qui ne changent pas !

Mark: **Malgré le temps qui passe**, in spite of the passage of time.

PBH: **C'est beau!**

Mark: **Il y a certaines choses qui ne changent pas !**  
Obviously she's thinking back to the time in her life, earlier in her life when she did know Patrick, obviously an issue for her then was wearing too much aftershave.

PBH: **Peut-être que c'était le même après-rasage. Il s'était évaporé et il ne sentait pas bon.**

Mark: **Ah oui peut-être.**

PBH: **On continue? Pour le numéro de téléphone, ben je ne sais pas trop car je sens qu'il va être pot de colle.**

Mark: Yes, we've already spoken about this expression. As far as the telephone number is concerned, you might remember that Monique asked Sylvie if it would be ok for her to give her telephone number to Patrick as he wants to see her when he's in Paris. So as far as the telephone number goes, I'm not so sure as I think he's going to be a bit clingy and I really don't need that at the moment.

PBH: **Je n'ai pas besoin de ça en ce moment.**

Mark: **Avoir besoin de quelque chose, bien sûr.**

PBH: **De plus, il faut bien qu'il comprenne que je ne suis pas attirée par lui.**

Mark: A nice **il faut que** + subjunctive here, **comprenne** from **comprendre**. And what's

**s'évaporer**

to evaporate

**il s'était évaporé**

it had evaporated

**il ne sentait pas bon**

he didn't smell nice

more he has to understand that I'm not attracted to him and notice this *attirée par lui*.

PBH: *Oui, attirer par. Alors peux-tu attendre un petit peu que j'y réfléchisse ?*

Mark: Again. We've seen this one before, this expression in our other episode. Can you wait a little so that I can think about it, *peux-tu attendre un petit peu*, can you wait for a little while, for me to think about it? That translation *attendre que quelque chose...*

PBH: *...se passe.*

Mark: *Se passe*, subjunctive of course.

PBH: It's quite straightforward this second paragraph Mark, but lovely wee subjunctives there.

Mark: Absolutely!

PBH: And *l'expression: être pot de colle*. You could say that about a child with the parents.

Mark: So, the child could be a little too clingy.

PBH: Or the mother could say, *dis donc, toi tu es un peu pot de colle ce soir*.

Mark: You're a bit clingy tonight! Give me peace!

PBH: Or you could say *tu es toujours dans mes jambes. Être dans les jambes de quelqu'un. Tu es toujours dans mes jambes*.

Mark: So, you are always, literally, in my legs.

PBH: Around me, around my legs. You can say that about a pet as well. *Oh j'ai failli tomber!* Oh, I nearly fell, *ce chien est toujours dans mes jambes*.

**faillir + infinitive**

almost to do something

**j'ai failli tomber**

I almost fell

Mark: So, the dog is always around my legs, but I'm just thinking about "to get in someone's hair". If someone's annoying you, they get in your hair. It's a bit different.

PBH: Of course, with this digression we can also have *être casse-pieds*.

Mark: To be "break feet".

PBH: And then obviously in English to be a pain in the neck. So, obviously, you seem to aim much higher.

Mark: I'll say nothing. I'll say nothing.

PBH: *C'est super. Ok on passe au troisième paragraphe ?*

Mark: *Tout à fait.*

D'ailleurs, dois-je te rappeler que j'ai un rendez-vous avec Matthieu, l'homme du RER ce week-end ? Rappelle -toi, je t'en ai bien parlé ! On se retrouve samedi à 11h devant la station de métro ! Tu me surprends de ne pas t'en souvenir ! Pas de panique, je te dirai comment ça s'est passé. En fait, plutôt que de te faire poireauter devant ton ordinateur, je t'appellerai. Ce sera beaucoup plus simple ! En plus, j'aurai ta réaction en direct ! Il me tarde d'être à samedi !

Mark: Alors elle a parlé de Patrick mais il y a aussi ce jeune Matthieu.

PBH: Oh oui, alors nous n'allons pas poireauter plus longtemps et nous allons voir ce qui se passe.

Mark: Ok, so, she begins here:

PBH: D'ailleurs, dois-je te rappeler que j'ai un rendez-vous avec Matthieu, l'homme du RER ce week-end ?

Mark: She starts this really nicely. I really like this: d'ailleurs, dois-je te rappeler. Besides, need I remind you, need I remind you dois-je te rappeler que j'ai rendez-vous that I've got a date with Matthieu, the, well we know who he is, l'homme du RER. And she says I have spoken to you about this.

PBH: Rappelle -toi, je t'en ai bien parlé !

Mark: And she says when they're meeting.

PBH: On se retrouve samedi à 11h devant la station de métro !

Mark: And then she says a nice expression:

Tu me surprends de ne pas t'en souvenir !

Mark: It's straightforward enough in terms of how we would translate this into English.

PBH: It's tricky to use.

Mark: If we were going from English into French, much more complicated. So, I would be

surprised that you don't remember it, or if you don't remember. I would be surprised if you didn't remember. Think about the construction of the French sentence here.

PBH: **Tu me surprends** is quite straightforward, but it's **surprendre quelqu'un de quelque chose**.

Mark: So, **surprendre quelqu'un de quelque chose**, to surprise someone about something. So, you surprise me of not remembering of it.

PBH: **Et voilà!**

Mark: We've got that **en** in there: **tu me surprends de ne pas t'en souvenir !** Let's do some practice of this particular expression.

PBH: Yes, let's go back to the basic construction. It's **tu me surprends...**

Mark: **Oui.**

PBH: **De + infinitive.**

Mark: Ok.

PBH: So, let's have a positive infinitive. **Tu me surprends de manger autant.**

Mark: So, I'm surprised that you're eating so much, ok.

PBH: Now let's put the negative infinitive. **Tu me surprends de ne pas manger beaucoup.**

Mark: I'm surprised that you're not eating lots.

PBH: Now let's use a reflexive infinitive in a positive way: **tu me surprends de te réveiller si tôt.**

Mark: I'm surprised that you're getting up so early.

PBH: That's nice isn't it?

Mark: It is and it's also quite possibly the kind of thing that I could say to my son.

PBH: And then obviously in the negative way: *tu me surprends de ne pas te réveiller très tôt*, let's say.

Mark: I'm surprised that you're not getting up early.

PBH: That's it.

Mark: Ok.

PBH: It's nice and here we have obviously, *tu me surprends...*

Mark: *...de ne pas t'en souvenir*. So we've got the negative, the *pas*, the negative which is a reflexive infinitive, *te souvenir de quelque chose*, but we've also got that pronoun *en* in there, to complicate things further.

PBH: Well, maybe I could set up a wee challenge for you? Having this wee pronoun - Mark, I'm surprised that you're not getting this, you're not getting it.

Mark: To get something. Well, I think if you are thinking of a particular pronoun, you are looking at *y arriver, peut-être?*

PBH: *Voilà, excellent! Alors, vas-y!*

Mark: *Tu me surprends de ne pas y arriver.*

PBH: *Excellent.*

Mark: Ok, now she continues here by using a lovely expression:

PBH: *Pas de panique, je te dirai comment ça s'est passé.*

Mark: So, no panic! Don't worry, don't panic. I'll tell you how it goes. Or how it went, after the fact.

PBH: *En fait, plutôt que de te faire poireauter devant ton ordinateur, je t'appellerai.*

Mark: Of course, we've already spoken about this one. Rather than making you hang around in front of your computer, I'll give you a call.

PBH: *Ce sera beaucoup plus simple !*

Mark: It'll be much easier.

PBH: *En plus, j'aurai ta réaction en direct ! Il me tarde d'être à samedi !*

Mark: And what's more, I'll have your live reaction. *En direct*, something that's live. I'll be able to get your reaction on the spot. And of course she finishes by saying *il me tarde d'être à samedi !* I can't wait for Saturday! Ok.

PBH: *Ça me surprend d'avoir passé autant de temps sur ce paragraphe, Mark.*

Mark: *Oui.*

PBH: *Ok, on continue ? Allez !*

Mark: *On continue !*

En ce qui concerne le sport, tu as entièrement raison. Je dois me motiver pour retourner courir. C'est un sport qui me permet de tout oublier et surtout qui me permet de rester en forme. Tu sais c'est toujours dur de se motiver quand tu es seule ! Il me faut juste un peu de volonté ! Pour la piscine, je sais qu'il y en a une



pas trop loin de chez moi mais ce qui me  
manque c'est le temps !

Mark: Je connais ça: ce qui me manque c'est le  
temps ! C'est toujours mon excuse.

PBH: Oui, et le temps c'est de l'argent.

Mark: Allez, on continue avec une traduction et une  
explication de ce paragraphe.

PBH: En ce qui concerne le sport, tu as entièrement  
raison.

Mark: As far as sport and fitness are concerned you  
are completely right. Monique was talking  
about the fact that she thinks Sylvie should do  
a little more sport.

PBH: Je dois me motiver pour retourner courir.

Mark: Se motiver, to motivate oneself in order to get  
back to running. I need to get myself  
motivated.

PBH: Se remettre à courir aussi, on pourrait dire.

Mark: Se remettre à courir.

PBH: C'est un sport qui me permet de tout oublier  
et surtout qui me permet de rester en forme.

Mark: It's a sport, talking about running, which allows  
me to forget everything, and, above all, which  
allows me to keep fit, rester en forme.

PBH: Tu sais c'est toujours dur de se motiver quand  
tu es seule !

Mark: You know, it's always difficult motivating  
yourself when you're on your own.

PBH: Il me faut juste un peu de volonté !

Mark: All I need is a little bit of willpower. Volonté is literally the desire to do something, but I think here, willpower.

PBH: Pour la piscine, je sais qu'il y en a une pas trop loin de chez moi mais ce qui me manque c'est le temps !

Mark: Here she says pour la piscine. Now, la piscine is literally the swimming pool.

PBH: Yes, it's the place, but here it refers to the actual activity.

Mark: So we could really be translating this as, as far as swimming is concerned I know that there's a swimming pool nearby, but, you'll notice there I've said a swimming pool because if we're talking first about la piscine referring to the swimming as the activity and then she says je sais qu'il y en a une, then she's there referring to the fact that it is a swimming pool.

PBH: Yes, she uses the place there. Quite tricky.

Mark: Tricky to translate. Of course, we know what it means. We understand it, but it's just getting those right words in English.

PBH: Again it's all about the context and getting the right translation.

Mark: Indeed! Let's listen to our final paragraph.

Concernant le cinéma, j'ai entendu parler de ce film. J'ai même lu le livre en Terminale en

cours de Lettres. Il paraît que Leonardo joue très bien dans ce film. Je vais attendre un peu avant d'aller le voir car peut-être que Matthieu aime le cinéma. Si c'est le cas, peut-être que cela pourrait être une bonne excuse pour un deuxième rendez-vous ! Je devrais garder les pieds sur terre, je ne le connais même pas encore ! Bon je te laisse mais je te donnerai des nouvelles très rapidement. Bises, Sylvie

Mark: So, you'll remember here that Monique had suggested a new Leonardo DiCaprio film and I believe that Sylvie thinks this could possibly be a good idea.

PBH: [Est-ce qu'elle se fait un film?](#)

Mark: [Tout à fait!](#) So she begins: [concernant le cinéma](#), as far as the cinema is concerned...

PBH: [J'ai entendu parler de ce film.](#)

Mark: I have heard about this film. Remember we say I have heard about this film, not I have heard talk about this film. Remember in French you've got to do it the other way around.

PBH: [J'ai même lu le livre en Terminale en cours de Lettres.](#)

Mark: So, she's actually already read the book. She's read the book of the film in her literature class at school. She could potentially be talking about The Great Gatsby. I have no idea.

PBH: Il paraît que Leonardo joue très bien dans ce film.

Mark: So, it seems Leonardo; she's on first name terms with Leonardo DiCaprio; he acts very well in this film, a very good actor in this film, he plays a very good part perhaps.

PBH: Je vais attendre un peu avant d'aller le voir car peut-être que Matthieu aime le cinéma.

Mark: Nonetheless, she is a going to wait a little before going to see it because she realises perhaps Matthieu likes cinema.

PBH: Si c'est le cas, peut-être que cela pourrait être une bonne excuse pour un deuxième rendez-vous !

Mark: If that is indeed the case, then perhaps it could be a good reason, a good excuse for a second date. Now she uses a nice expression in this next part.

Je devrais garder les pieds sur terre, je ne le connais même pas encore !

PBH: Oh, that's a lovely expression, Mark.

Mark: Indeed!

PBH: Garder les pieds sur terre.

Mark: To keep your feet. I think in English we would say firmly on the ground, not just to keep your

feet on the ground. Garder les pieds sur terre,  
en français.

PBH: We've seen as well avoir la tête sur les  
épaules.

Mark: Yes, to keep your head on your shoulders.

PBH: Even, to have your head screwed on. That's  
really nice.

Mark: So, I ought to keep my feet on the ground, or I  
should keep my feet firmly on the ground. Je  
ne le connais même pas encore ! I don't even  
know him yet!

PBH: Bon je te laisse mais je te donnerai des  
nouvelles très rapidement. Bises, Sylvie.

Mark: And she finishes her email by saying she will  
keep her mother posted about any news as  
soon as possible. Alors, c'est presque fini pour  
aujourd'hui. Ça t'a plu ?

PBH: Oui, c'était un super épisode Mark. Je ne sais  
pas si j'ai refait le plein d'énergie car je  
déborde d'énergie, mais j'espère que nos  
auditeurs, eux, ont refait le plein de  
vocabulaire !

**déborder**  
to overflow

Mark: Très bien ! Merci beaucoup à tous et à toutes  
et à bientôt.

PBH: Allez, au revoir !