

Coffee Break **French**

Season 4, Episode 23

Language Study



CoffeeBreak
French

SEASON 4

Mark: Re-bonjour tout le monde, on est de retour avec l'épisode supplémentaire pour cette semaine. Alors on va attaquer notre texte immédiatement.

PB: C'est parti !

Mark: Écoutons le premier paragraphe.

attaquer
to attack

Coucou Mat, Je viens juste de lire ton message et je n'en crois toujours pas mes yeux! Tu es allé accoster cette jeune fille, c'est vraiment super courageux de ta part! C'est encore mieux si tu trouves que le courant est bien passé avec elle! Il y a de l'amour dans l'air !! Te rappelles-tu de cette chanson ? Je trouve qu'elle est bien d'actualité ! Au fait tu ne m'as pas dit, comment s'appelle-t-elle ? Tu lui as proposé de sortir un de ces soirs ? Tiens moi au courant dès qu'il y aura quelque chose de neuf !! Et sinon, quand vas-tu la revoir ? Vas-tu la rappeler ?

Mark: Voilà donc on va maintenant regarder les
bonnes expressions dans ce texte.

PB: Oui, le bon vocabulaire.

Mark: Tout à fait.

PB: Alors je commence. Coucou Mat, je viens juste
de lire ton message et je n'en crois toujours
pas mes yeux!

Mark: We of course have heard venir de faire
quelque chose, venir juste de faire quelque
chose and we have also spoken about the fact
that that juste isn't really required.

PB: No, it is a bit redundant.

Mark: Indeed. So I have just read your message and
she goes on to say, je n'en crois toujours pas
mes yeux ! I still don't believe my eyes. I do
not believe it. Je n'en crois toujours pas mes
yeux ! The en there is referring to the letter
that she's read - about it basically. Je n'en crois
toujours pas mes yeux !

PB: Quelques fois on dit: je n'en crois pas mes
oreilles.

Mark: I do not believe my ears.

PB: It is something you just heard. Je n'en crois
pas mes oreilles!

Mark: But here obviously she is reading it. So she is
talking about her yeux as supposed to her
oreilles.

oreille (f)

ear

PB: And then she continues: *Tu es allé accoster cette jeune fille, c'est vraiment super courageux de ta part !*

Mark: So you went to, literally, accost this young girl, she is not young, she is a 20-something. *C'est vraiment super courageux de ta part!* It's really brave of you; *de ta part!* Of your part, I suppose, but *de ta part!* It is brave of you!

PB: So, in this sentence Mark, we have *accoster* and then maybe you know that other word we can use which is *aborder* and both are linked, kind of a nautical vocabulary or sailing vocabulary.

Mark: Absolutely! If we take the origin, or the links in those words, we have *accoster*, we have the word *côte* in there, which is the coast. And we have the *bord*, as in the *bord de la mer*.

PB: *Très bien.*

Mark: And you can use the word *aborder* for about the coming along side; that's docking.

PB: So, just like you are aiming for a place to dock, you are aiming to talk to that person.

Mark: And in Matthieu's case, to talk to Sylvie, of course. Okay, so she goes on to say...?

PB: *C'est encore mieux si tu trouves que le courant est bien passé avec elle!*

Mark: Now it is even better; *C'est encore mieux si tu trouves que le courant est bien passé avec elle!* So, if you find that, *le courant est bien passé avec elle!* Now let us think about this

au bord de la mer
at the seaside

here. We are talking about **un courant** and **un courant** is of course...?

PB: It is a current.

Mark: Current ! But we are not talking about raisins and currants and sultanas.

PB: No, no, no. It's with an E-N-T at the end.

Mark: At least in English whereas in French, **un courant A-N-T**.

PB: It is indeed.

Mark: So the current we're talking about is an electrical current, and so there was a spark perhaps.

PB : Spark and the vibes are right.

Mark : And so there was good feeling between the two. So, it is even better if you think that there was good vibe coming off her and she was quite happy talking to him. Okay, let's hear that expression one more time.

C'est encore mieux si tu trouves que le courant est bien passé avec elle!

Mark: And just to make sure we are all thinking on our feet here, if the current was passing well with a man, this English is not very good. If there was a good vibe coming from a man, for example, if Sylvie we are talking about Matthieu and how she felt he was being with her, how would we say, I am asking our

listeners here, how would we say that the vibe was good with him? Cette fois-ci ce n'est pas avec elle mais...

PB: ...avec lui.

Mark: Avec lui, bien sûr. Donc Gabrielle maintenant est tout emballée, elle pense que c'est vraiment l'amour, donc elle dit :

PB: Il y a de l'amour dans l'air !!

Mark: Oui tout à fait. Il y a de l'amour dans l'air!! Love is in the air or as Pierre Benoit has mentioned not necessarily in the air but dans le RER!

PB: Ah oui c'est vrai, j'ai déjà oublié.

Mark: OK, and she goes on to say, do you remember that song? So she is talking about the song of course.

PB: Te rappelles-tu de cette chanson?

Mark: How would we change that question to be using est-ce que form?

PB: Then there would not be the inversion.

Mark : Exactly !

PB : Est-ce que tu te rappelles de cette chanson?

Mark: Est-ce que tu te rappelles de cette chanson?

So, remember we have those two versions of asking a question. We can ask the est-ce que or we can use the inversion. And of course, perhaps here what complicates things is that reflexive pronoun, te rappelles-tu de cette chanson? OK, she goes on...

PB: Je trouve qu'elle est bien d'actualité!

Mark: It is really the right thing for the moment. It is really quite appropriate, just now that song.

PB: *Au fait tu ne m'as pas dit, comment s'appelle-t-elle?*

Mark: By the way, you did not tell me what is her name?

PB: *Tu lui as proposé de sortir un de ces soirs?*

Mark: We have talked about that. *Tu lui as proposé de sortir un de ces soirs?* We know *un de ces soirs*, we have heard of *un de ces quatre*. But *tu lui as proposé de sortir*: did you suggest going out one of these evenings or some evening, and it is *proposer à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose*. Remember that.

PB: *Tiens-moi au courant dès qu'il y aura quelque chose de neuf!*

Mark: So, keep me posted as soon as there is any news, as soon as there is something new.

PB: *Et sinon, quand vas-tu la revoir ? Vas-tu la rappeler?*

Mark: And if you have not yet asked her to go out one of these evenings, when are you going to see her again? are you going to call her back?

PB: *Oui, rappeler.*

Mark: *Rappeler*. It is interesting because *rappeler* earlier we were using in one sense and this sense is a completely a different meaning.

PB: Yes, the first one is to remember then this time it is *rappeler* which is to call her again. Call her back.

Mark: Call her back, **re-appeler** as opposed to **rappeler** to recall. I suppose in English we say to recall, when we're talking about remembering something. But when we are talking about **rappeler** as in calling back someone, we do not really say, are you going to re call that person?

PB: Yes indeed. Interesting, isn't it?

Mark: OK, let us listen to our second paragraph.

Je suis heureuse que le travail ne soit pas trop prenant, tu auras du temps à lui consacrer comme ça ! De mon côté, je dois dire que j'ai à la fois bien et mal travaillé ces derniers temps avec tous les jours fériés. J'étais fermée le premier, huit et neuf mai, comme la plupart des autres commerces de Rennes mais, les jours où j'étais ouverte, on n'a pas chômé ! Tout le monde voulait une nouvelle coupe ou une nouvelle couleur pour partir en vacances ou en week-end ! Par contre, il y a de plus en plus de commerces qui ouvrent les jours fériés, tout du moins le matin. Je vais y réfléchir pour l'année prochaine car cette année, avec deux jours fériés d'affilée, ce n'est pas la meilleure chose pour les finances. Enfin c'est à voir !

Mark: Now, there's actually quite a lot in that paragraph! So let us go through what she says.

PB: Je suis heureuse que le travail ne soit pas trop prenant.

Mark: A nice little subjunctive in there. Je suis heureuse, I am happy; que le travail ne soit pas trop prenant, that work is not too demanding.

PB: Prenant, I love this word, Mark.

Mark: It is of course from the verb, prendre.

PB: Oui, prendre.

Mark: But here she uses an adjective although it really is the gerund of prendre, taking in a sense because it takes a lot out of you, it is demanding. There is another word that comes to mind for demanding and that would be exigeant.

PB: Ah oui exigeant, is more like, mon père est exigeant.

Mark: So it is more used for talking about a person.

PB: Yes. You can use as well un travail exigeant, but I think slight difference here would be the focus that it requires, whereas for prenant I think it is time consuming.

Mark: OK so here, le travail est trop prenant, it takes up too much time, which of course can be translated as demanding, it's a demanding job, but we are not talking about, for example, her boss demanding too much of her. So she's

happy, or Gabrielle is happy, that Matthieu's job is not too demanding and as a result....

PB: Tu auras du temps à lui consacrer comme ça!

Mark: So he has time to spend with his new girlfriend.

PB: De mon côté, je dois dire que j'ai à la fois bien et mal travaillé ces derniers temps avec tous les jours fériés.

Mark: So, she is writing in the middle of May and at the beginning of May in France there are a number of public holidays as we know. So, from her point of view, de mon côté, she has to say that she is both, or she has been both productive and unproductive work-wise in recent times, as a result of these holidays les jours fériés. Let us listen to this again.

De mon côté, je dois dire que j'ai à la fois bien et mal travaillé ces derniers temps avec tous les jours fériés.

Mark: I think one of the things that is worth considering here is the expression, à la fois. It is translated as **both**, but we would not always use that expression for both in French.

PB: No, if it is two people going together, it would be tous les deux or toutes les deux if these people happen to be female.

Mark: So **tous les deux**. Let us have an example of that. How would we say, we are both going to the cinema this evening, as in you and I are both going to the cinema this evening?

PB: **Ce soir nous allons au cinéma tous les deux.**

Mark: **Très bien, donc qu'est-ce qu'on va voir ?**

PB: **Ce que tu veux.**

ce que tu veux
whatever you want

Mark: OK, so this evening we are both going to the cinema. **Nous allons au cinéma tous les deux.**

However, let's think about the fact if we are going both to the cinema and to the restaurant, how would we say that ?

PB: This time I would not use **tous les deux**, I would use **à la fois**.

Mark: **Vas-y!**

PB: **Ce soir nous allons à la fois au restaurant et au cinéma.**

Mark: So **à la fois** there means both the restaurant and the cinema and the same time, not literally at the same time, but we are going both to the cinema and to the restaurant. Now, how would we say, you know what is coming, how would we say, this evening we are both going both to the cinema and to the restaurant?

PB: **Ce soir nous allons tous les deux à la fois au restaurant et au cinéma.**

Mark: Bravo! OK so you can combine them. In English it is funny to say, both both but in French it is perfectly reasonable to say **à la fois** and **tous les deux**.

PB: J'ai une question pour toi Mark.

Mark: Je t'en prie.

PB: In English we actually take away the second both and just put at the same time. If you use both for the two people already?

Mark: I think in English, well certainly I would keep the first both, talking about the two people because that is important, it is an important piece of information, but I think I would more likely to say that they are both going to the cinema and to the restaurant as well. The other thing to think about here is that we are both going to the cinema and to the restaurant, does not mean we are going together.

PB: No.

Mark: In English, at least, that is it means you are going to the cinema with your friends, I am going to the cinema with my friends, so we are both going to the cinema not necessarily together, but in French, *tous les deux* has the same meaning ?

PB : No, that would mean... no you can say that as well, you are right! You can be going with your friends and the person can be going with their friends.

Mark : Mais on peut toujours utiliser *tous les deux*.

PB: *Tous les deux* because you are both doing it.

Mark: *On va tous les deux au cinéma, il se peut que l'on se voie.*

PB: C'est possible que l'on se voie.

Mark: De bons subjectifs.

PB: Avec de bons subjonctifs, c'est ça.

Mark: OK, I think we spent four minutes talking about à la fois and tous les deux. But that is the wonder of the French language. Ok, let us continue, she goes on to say...?

PB: And not just the French language, the English as well and so both languages.

Mark: À la fois l'anglais et le français, toutes les deux langues.

PB: Allez, on continue.

Mark: She is talking about the salon and she says she is quite close to the 1st, the 8th and the 9th of May.

PB: J'étais fermée le premier, huit et neuf mai, comme la plupart des autres commerces de Rennes.

Mark: So, like the majority of the other shops in Rennes..

PB: Mais, les jours où j'étais ouverte, on n'a pas chômé!

Mark: Yes, so the days that they were open they certainly were busy.

PB: Were very busy or we were kept busy.

Mark: Or were kept busy. We have spoken about that one before. She goes on to say....

PB: Tout le monde voulait une nouvelle coupe ou une nouvelle couleur pour partir en vacances ou en week-end!

Mark: So everyone was wanting a new hairstyle, a new haircut or a new colour, a new tint for going off to holidays or for going away for the weekend.

PB: Par contre, il y a de plus en plus de commerces qui ouvrent les jours fériés, tout du moins le matin.

Mark: But on the other hand, or however, it is important to say il y a de plus en plus de commerces, there are more and more businesses qui ouvrent, which open on bank holidays, or rather public holidays, les jours fériés, tout du moins le matin, at least the morning, at least in the morning. And this has got Gabrielle thinking.

PB: Je vais y réfléchir pour l'année prochaine car cette année, avec deux jours fériés d'affilée, ce n'est pas la meilleure chose pour les finances.

Mark: She is quite right because this year with all these holidays one after the other; avec deux jours fériés d'affilée. That is an interesting expression. So, the fériés is the adjective there, going with jours and therefore has to agree as masculine plural, les jours fériés with an S in the end, but then d'affilée. Affilée is when things come one after another.

PB: I think it is just a set phrase. It doesn't agree with jours fériés: j'ai travaillé trois jours d'affilée. You do not put É-S, you still leave it as d'affilée É-E. It is a set phrase, d'affilée.

Mark: D'accord. So, she is going to think about this for the next year. Je vais y réfléchir pour l'année prochaine car cette année, avec deux jours fériés, she says, ce n'est pas la meilleure chose pour les finances. It's not the best thing for the finances, but she will wait and see.

PB: Enfin c'est à voir!

Mark: It is to be seen is to see, so we will see. C'est à voir. On verra bien.

PB: On verra bien.

Mark: Donc troisième paragraphe.

Sinon, je comprends ton point de vue sur Thomas. Tu sais je reste toujours un peu distante par rapport au passé et pour l'instant je vis au jour le jour et je verrai bien la tournure que cette histoire prendra. Je ne fais aucun plan sur la comète pour le moment.

Mark: A nice short paragraph here. She says otherwise I understand your point of view as far as Thomas is concerned.

PB: Sinon, je comprends ton point de vue sur Thomas.

Mark: And she goes on....

PB: Tu sais je reste toujours un peu distante par rapport au passé et pour l'instant je vis au jour le jour et je verrai bien la tournure que cette histoire prendra.

Mark: This phrase could mean a number of things. It is quite a long one and we have already talked about *vivre au jour le jour*. But let us see what she says. *Tu sais, je reste toujours un peu distante*: I try not to look back so much, obviously. It does not mean that literally means I remain almost a little distant as far as the past is concerned. But there is this idea of she is trying not to focus so much on the past and she is thinking towards the future. Indeed she is really living day by day.

PB: Yes, now the future is the present.

Mark: Absolutely. *Et je verrai bien la tournure que cette histoire prendra*. So she will see what way, what path this story takes.

PB: Yes, what comes up, will come up..

Mark: And then a lovely phrase to finish, let us have a listen.

Je ne fais aucun plan sur la comète pour le moment.

Mark: Now I have to be honest, I had never heard of this expression.

PB: *La comète !*

Mark: *La comète, la comète* is of course, the comet.

PB: And I think it is the idea that the comet is quite far away and maybe you have your wish. It might not be granted, it might not happen, it

might happen. It is the idea of long term, a long kind of a distance. It is too far away so I am not making any long term plans.

Mark: So if they were making any plans, they would be here and now in the present, rather than something distant in the future because she does not know what is going to happen with Thomas. Lovely expression there! *Je ne fais aucun plan sur la comète*. Could we say, *Tu as des plans sur la comète*?

PB: No, you would not say that, you would not say that. It is really the person who speaks would say *pas de plan sur la comète* or *je ne fais aucun plan sur la comète*. I am not looking in the far, kind of a very far away.

Mark: We'll keep things in the present for the time being. Let us listen to our final paragraph.

Pour le huit mai et l'Ascension, nous avons passé pas mal de temps ensemble. Le premier jour, il est venu me chercher tôt le matin et nous sommes allés prendre un brunch en terrasse. Vu qu'il faisait bon et qu'il y avait du soleil, cela était très agréable ! Ensuite nous sommes allés dans la forêt Adrénaline pour faire de l'accrobranche. C'était ma première fois et je dois dire que je n'étais pas rassurée, j'ai eu un petit peu le vertige ! Que de sensations fortes surtout quand tu prends la tyrolienne au-dessus du lac. En bref nous

avons passé un super moment. Je te conseille d'essayer, il doit bien y en avoir dans la banlieue parisienne ! Le soir, nous sommes allés manger dans une crêperie. J'aime toujours autant les crêpes tu sais ! Bon tiens moi au courant de l'évolution de la situation ! Bisous, Gabrielle

Mark: After our short paragraph, we have a long one!

PB: [Oui il y a beaucoup de choses là-dedans!](#)

Mark: And Gabrielle has been very nice and read it very slowly. I think in comparison to the fast version which was really fast, of this particular paragraph. Ok, let's go back and have a look at all of this. She begins..

PB: [Pour le huit mai et l'Ascension, nous avons passé pas mal de temps ensemble.](#)

Mark: Of course she is talking here about Thomas and she says for the 8th of May, the Bank Holiday weekend [et l'Ascension](#), Ascension. We spent quite a bit of time together, and it's that [pas mal de](#) again. We heard that last time.

PB: [Le premier jour, il est venu me chercher tôt le matin et nous sommes allés prendre un brunch en terrasse.](#)

Mark: So the first day, he came to fetch me early in the morning, [il est venu me chercher](#),

remember **venir chercher quelqu'un** or **aller chercher quelqu'un**. To fetch or to pick up.

PB: Pick up, yes.

Mark: Fetching we talked again about that, that is for animals. Ok, so he came to pick me up early in the morning **et nous sommes allés prendre un brunch en terrasse**. And we went out for brunch on a restaurant terrace.

PB: Yes, it is exactly the same where we say brunch, **un brunch**.

Mark: **Un brunch**.

PB: **Un brunch**.

Mark: **Un brunch**.

PB: **Oui avec le N aussi : un brunch**.

Mark: **Un brunch**. Ok, I am still saying that too French.

PB: **Non, non un brunch**.

Mark: **Un brunch, OK. Laisse tomber**. I think that is a good expression, **laisse tomber**.

PB: **Laisse tomber**.

Mark: Let us forget, let us move on. **Laisse tomber** literally, let fall. Let it go.

PB: Drop it.

Mark: Drop it, yes, good, I like that one. I think let it go, **laisse tomber, laisse tomber**. A little bit of Frozen in there. Ok, let us move on..

PB: **Oui avant que tu ne nous chantes toutes les chansons de Disney. Vu qu'il faisait bon et qu'il y avait du soleil, cela était très agréable !**

Mark: Since it was a nice weather, it was sunny, it was

avant que tu ne nous chantes

before you sing us

Remember **avant que** takes the subjunctive and there is an extra **ne** added.

really quite pleasant.

PB: Ensuite nous sommes allés dans la forêt
adrénaline pour faire de l'accrobranche.

Mark: Of course we have spoken about this forêt
adrénaline. It is like an adventure place, in the
trees and the accrobranche. Pierre-Benoît,
c'est quoi l'accrobranche?

PB: L'accrobranche, tout d'abord ce n'est pas pour
moi, parce que c'est trop physique et aussi,
comme la personne va nous l'expliquer après,
j'ai le vertige.

Mark: Ah d'accord. Donc accrobranche is kind of
acrobatics in the trees as it is were.

PB: Yes, you have ropes, you get to go from one
branch to another. You have a harness
sometimes. It's not for me.

Mark: OK, so for Gabrielle, it was her first time.

PB: Oui, première fois.

Mark: Vas-y.

PB: C'était ma première fois et je dois dire que je
n'étais pas rassurée, j'ai eu un petit peu le
vertige !

Mark: So it was her first time and she really wants to
say that she do not really feel reassured. She
was not feeling very safe because she had a
bit of vertigo. She was scared of heights.

PB: Scared of heights.

Mark: And it is interesting, j'ai eu un petit peu le
vertige! Because she is describing what

vertige (m)

vertigo, fear of heights

happened in that situation. She is talking about she got scared of heights.

PB: It is very specific, isn't it ?

Mark: It's not *j'ai le vertige* but *j'ai eu un petit peu le vertige!*

PB: *J'ai eu un petit peu le vertige!* She could have said *j'avais le vertige un petit peu.*

Mark: Describing how she felt through out the whole scenario. But when she got up to the top of the tree, *j'ai eu un petit peu le vertige!*

PB: *Très bien.*

Mark: OK, and she goes on to say:

Que de sensations fortes surtout quand tu prends la tyrolienne au-dessus du lac.

Mark: Now to find a really good translation of this *que de sensations fortes* we will certainly not be translating it literally, like, what strong sensations.

PB: No. I think you hear the *que*. You have to change the whole phrase and I think you end up something like soooooo. If I said to you; *Mark, que tu es intelligent!*

Mark: How intelligent you are, you are sooooo intelligent.

PB: It is just like *le Petit Chaperon Rouge*.

Mark: Absolutely ! She says what big eyes you have.

PB: *Que tu as de grands yeux.*

le Petit Chaperon Rouge
Little Red Riding Hood

Mark: So what amazing feeling when you are flying through the air. What an adrenaline rush!

PB: Rush!

Mark: Rush of adrenaline. *Que de sensations fortes surtout quand tu prends la tyrolienne au-dessus du lac.*

PB: Particularly when you take that, it that must be something very specific, it must be the...

Mark: ...the zip wire or something..

PB: Something like that. And they're really kind of dreading it.

Mark: At the end of the day they had a fantastic time.

PB: *En bref nous avons passé un super moment.*

Mark: We have talked about that before: *passer un bon moment, passer un super moment.* to have a great time and Gabrielle goes on to say something we've already talked about:

PB: *Je te conseille d'essayer, il doit bien y en avoir dans la banlieue parisienne!*

Mark: So I really suggest you try it. There must be something in the Paris area. There must be one of these in the Paris area. Ok, how did they spend their evening?

PB: *Le soir, nous sommes allés manger dans une crêperie. J'aime toujours autant les crêpes tu sais!*

Mark: So she still loves crêpes so they went to eat in a *crêperie*. And she finishes off:

PB: *Bon tiens-moi au courant de l'évolution de la situation! Bisous, Gabrielle*

Mark: So, keep me posted on the developments;
l'évolution de la situation. Literally, the
evolution of the situation. Rather a posh way of
saying the developments? But, that is the way
she says it. Ok, that is where we are going to
leave it for this episode of Coffee Break
French. We hope you enjoyed it as usual. Nous
espérons que cela vous a plu, comme
d'habitude.

PB: J'en suis sûr il y avait tellement de bonnes
expressions.

Mark: Du vocabulaire intéressant.

PB: Oui, très très intéressant. En fait c'était les
deux.

Mark: Oui c'était à la fois...

PB: ...intéressant et compliqué.

Mark: Tout à fait. Allez, bon merci à tous et à toutes
et à très bientôt !

PB: Au revoir.

