

In this edition:
two
expressions:
avant de and
venir de

Lesson 66

Notes

Je viens de faire mes devoirs

'Avant de' and 'venir de'

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.

Mark starts with a quick reminder of when to use *qui* and *que* which we learned in last week's lesson. He gave Anna two sentences in English and she had to work out whether *qui* or *que* would be used.

The grammar, which we studied last week, was difficult.	que
Lesson 65, which has been downloaded tens of thousands of times, has helped people understand <i>qui</i> and <i>que</i> .	qui

Remember that *qui* is always directly followed by a verb whereas *que* is followed by a pronoun or noun.

This week we are going to be looking at two constructions which will help to increase your range of expression in French. Both of these use *de* plus the infinitive of a verb.

1) The first of these expressions is:

avant de + infinitive

avant de (faire quelque chose)

before (doing something)

avant de partir, je veux finir mes devoirs	before leaving, I want to finish my homework
avant de commencer, nous allons parler de la situation	before starting, we are going to speak about the situation
avant de tourner à gauche, allez tout droit	before turning left, go straight ahead
avant de partir, j'ai appelé ton frère*	before leaving, I phoned your brother
avant de commencer, il voulait voir le professeur*	before starting, he wanted to see the teacher

*Note that *avant de + inf* can also be used when referring to a narrative in the past.

An important point about *avant de + inf* is that the subjects have to be the same in both parts of the sentence. Let's look at the following example to illustrate this point:

avant de partir, j'ai appelé ton frère

In this situation, the person leaving is the same as the person who phoned your brother. This could be said in another way: "before I left, I phoned your brother." So for now, just remember that this construction can only be used if the same person is "doing" all the verbs.

Mark gives Anna some phrases to translate into French to practice the use of *avant de + inf*.

before singing the song	avant de chanter la chanson
before learning French	avant d'apprendre le français*
before eating the cheese	avant de manger le fromage
before eating the cheese which is very good here	avant de manger le fromage qui est très bon ici
before eating the cheese which I have bought	avant de manger le fromage que j'ai acheté**
before eating the ice cream which I have bought	avant de manger la glace que j'ai achetée**

*Note that *de* is shortened to *d'* when it is followed by a vowel.

**Remember that the past participle has to agree with the object when we use *que*. So we don't need to add anything to *acheté* to make it agree with *le fromage*, but we have to add an *-e* to *acheté* in the last example to make it agree with *la glace*.

2) The other construction we are going to look at is:

venir de + infinitive

venir de (faire quelque chose)

to have just done something

To use this construction, we put *venir* into the present tense and follow it with *de* plus an infinitive. It literally means "to come from doing something." It can be confusing as we are referring to the past but the construction is in the present. This is because if you have literally just finished doing something, it could be regarded as the present.

The present tense of *venir* is as follows:

venir (to come) - present tense	
je viens	nous venons
tu viens	vous venez
il/elle vient	ils/elles viennent

j'ai fait mes devoirs	I have done my homework
je viens de faire mes devoirs	I have just done my homework
il a fait ses devoirs	he has done his homework
il vient de faire ses devoirs	he has just done his homework
je suis parti(e)	I have left
je viens de partir	I have just left
nous avons acheté la maison	we have bought the house
nous venons d'acheter la maison	we have just bought the house
c'est la maison que je viens d'acheter	it's the house which I have just bought
j'ai fini le livre	I have finished the book
je viens de finir le livre	I have just finished the book
c'est le livre que je viens de finir	it's the book which I have just finished



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French

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