

In this edition:  
talking about  
your daily  
routine using  
reflexive verbs  
in the present  
tense

# Lesson 43

## Notes

### Je me lève à sept heures

### Using reflexive verbs in the present tense

#### 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. In this week's notes we'll look at examples of reflexive verbs within the context of what you do on a daily basis.

Mark began by reviewing the regular *-er* verb *rigoler* in its full conjugation. *Rigoler* means “to have a laugh”, “to have fun”, “to laugh” or “to joke.” Note that *je rigole* can mean “I’m joking.” For example if you insult someone as a joke, you could use *je rigole* to convey the meaning, “I’m only joking” or “I’m only having a laugh.” As *rigoler* is a regular *-er* verb, it is conjugated using the regular *-er* verb endings. Remember to do the actions as you practice!

rigoler (to have a laugh / to joke) - present tense	
je rigole	nous rigolons
tu rigoles	vous rigolez
il / elle rigole	ils / elles rigolent

In Lesson 42, we looked at ways to describe your daily routine. Mark tested Anna on a few of the phrases we covered.

#### je quitte la maison à sept heures

I leave the house at seven o'clock

#### j'arrive à l'école à neuf heures

I arrive at school at nine o'clock

#### je rentre à six heures

I return home at six o'clock

Note that the *-f* at the end of *neuf* is pronounced as a “v” sound (as in English “van”) when it is followed by a vowel sound as in *heures*.

Although it is perfectly acceptable to say *à six heures* when talking about 6 o'clock in the evening, it is much more natural in French to use the 24 hour clock when talking about time. The table overleaf shows French times using the 24 hour clock. All times in the right-hand column would be pm.

time using the 24 hour clock	
à treize heures	at one o'clock
à quatorze heures	at two o'clock
à quinze heures	at three o'clock
à seize heures	at four o'clock
à dix-sept heures	at five o'clock
à dix-huit heures	at six o'clock
à dix-neuf heures	at seven o'clock
à vingt heures	at eight o'clock
à vingt et un heures	at nine o'clock
à vingt-deux heures	at ten o'clock
à vingt-trois heures	at eleven o'clock

Below is an example sentence, using the 24 hour clock.

**je dîne avec ma famille à vingt heures**  
I have dinner with my family at eight o'clock (in the evening)

Mark then talked about a particular group of verbs called **Reflexive Verbs**. These are specific verbs that you essentially “do to yourself.” For example, in English we would say “I wake up” but in French this is considered as “I wake myself up.” Similarly, “I get up” becomes “I get myself up” and “I wash” becomes “I wash myself.” It can become complicated to try to translate reflexive verbs literally but we just need to accept that some verbs are reflexive verbs, even if they do not necessarily imply the idea of “oneself” in English.

Let's look at an example of a French reflexive verb: *se réveiller* - “to wake up / to wake oneself up.” To say “I wake up,” the *se* becomes *me*: eg. *je me réveille*. The table below shows some regular reflexive verbs that can be used to describe your daily routine and how to conjugate these verbs in the first person of the present tense.

Note that *se lever* can also mean “to stand up.”

To translate *je me brosse les dents* literally, it would become “I to myself brush the teeth.” Although this doesn't make sense in English, it is sometimes useful to think of reflexive verbs in this way to help to understand the grammar behind the phrase. In this case, you say *les dents* instead of *mes dents* because the “my” part is already contained in the *me* of *je me brosse les dents*.

For the reflexive verb *s'habiller* the *se* becomes *s'* and the *me* becomes *m'* because they are followed by a vowel sound as the *h* of *habiller* is silent.

<b>se réveiller</b> (to wake up)	je me réveille
<b>se lever</b> (to get up)	je me lève
<b>se laver</b> (to wash)	je me lave
<b>se raser</b> (to shave)	je me rase
<b>se maquiller</b> (to put on make-up)	je me maquille

<b>se brosser les dents</b> (to brush your teeth)	je me brosse les dents
<b>se doucher</b> (to shower)	je me douche
<b>s'habiller</b> (to get dressed)	je m'habille
<b>se coucher</b> (to go to bed)	je me couche

When talking about time, we can be more specific by using *et quart* (“quarter past”) and *moins le quart* (“quarter to.”) Below are some examples.

**à sept heures et quart**  
at quarter past seven

**à huit heures et quart**  
at quarter past eight

**à huit heures moins le quart**  
at quarter to eight

**à six heures moins le quart**  
at quarter to six

Below is a transcript of the conversation between Mark and Anna in Lesson 43. Mark is asking Anna about her daily routine.

Note that the last question and answer do not contain a reflexive verb, i.e. *je quitte la maison*.

When talking about “you,” the reflexive pronoun, *me*, becomes *te*. So *je me lave* becomes *tu te laves*.

Conversation	
<b>Mark</b>	À quelle heure est-ce que tu te réveilles?
<b>Anna</b>	Je me réveille à sept heures.
<b>Mark</b>	À quelle heure est-ce que tu te lèves?
<b>Anna</b>	Je me lève à sept heures et quart.
<b>Mark</b>	À quelle heure est-ce que tu te douches?
<b>Anna</b>	Je me douche à sept heures et demie.
<b>Mark</b>	À quelle heure est-ce que tu t'habilles?
<b>Anna</b>	Je m'habille à huit heures.
<b>Mark</b>	À quelle heure est-ce que tu quittes la maison?
<b>Anna</b>	Je quitte la maison à huit heures et demie.

The phrase *je m'habille* may remind you of another phrase we covered near the beginning of Coffee Break French: *je m'appelle*. Both phrases start with *je m'*. Using what we now know about reflexive verbs, we understand that *je m'appelle* literally means “I call myself,” and it comes from the reflexive verb *s'appeler*.

Note that when talking about “he,” “she” or “they,” we use the same reflexive pronoun as the infinitive: *se*. When it comes to the *nous* and *vous* parts of the verb, the reflexive pronouns are exactly the same as the subject pronouns. So “we wash ourselves” is *nous nous lavons* and “you (plural) wash yourselves” is *vous vous lavez*. Let’s now conjugate the reflexive verb *se laver* in all the persons.

<b>se laver (to wash (oneself)) - present tense</b>	
je <b>me</b> lave	nous <b>nous</b> lavons
tu <b>te</b> laves	vous <b>vous</b> lavez
il / elle <b>se</b> lave	ils / elles <b>se</b> lavent

Below is the full conjugation of the verb *s’habiller*, meaning “to get dressed.” When the reflexive pronoun is followed by a vowel sound, including a silent *h*- as in *habiller*, the pronouns *me*, *te* and *se* are shortened. However, *nous* and *vous* are not shortened as they end in a consonant, *-s*, which is pronounced when followed by a vowel sound.

<b>s’habiller (to get dressed) - present tense</b>	
je <b>m’</b> habille	nous <b>nous</b> habillons
tu <b>t’</b> habilles	vous <b>vous</b> habillez
il / elle <b>s’</b> habille	ils / elles <b>s’</b> habillent

Note that the information listed below is part of the test in the bonus podcast. We would advise you to listen to the podcast before you read the content below.

<b>Bonus episode test</b>		
1	<b>Je me réveille à six heures.</b>	I wake up at six o’clock.
2	<b>Je me lave et je m’habille à sept heures.</b>	I wash and get dressed at seven o’clock.
3	<b>À quelle heure est-ce que tu te lèves?</b>	At what time do you get up?
4	<b>Est-ce que vous rentrez avant dix-neuf heures?</b>	Do you get home before seven o’clock?
5	<b>Nous nous maquillons ensemble.</b>	We put on our make-up together.
6	<b>Je me lève à sept heures et quart.</b>	I get up at quarter past seven.
7	<b>Ils arrivent à l’école à neuf heures moins le quart.</b>	They arrive at school at quarter to nine.
8	<b>À quelle heure est-ce qu’il s’habille?</b>	At what time does he get dressed?
9	<b>Je rentre à vingt heures.</b>	I get home at eight o’clock in the evening.
10	<b>Elle se couche à onze heures et quart.</b>	She goes to bed at quarter past eleven.