

In this edition:
demonstrative
adjectives

Lesson 59

Notes

Est-ce que tu as lu ce livre?

'This', 'these', 'that' and 'those'

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 lesson we move onto look at something we have mentioned in one or two previous lessons but have not covered in any great depth. We take a look at the different ways of saying "this", "these", "that" and "those" in French: *ce*, *cette*, *ces* and *cel*. We will also practice some perfect tenses just to make sure we haven't forgotten them!

Ce, *cette* and *ces* are called "demonstrative adjectives" in French as they "demonstrate" what you are talking about, in a sense. For example "this book", "that song" etc.

Ce is used for masculine, singular nouns, for example:

ce matin
this morning

ce livre
this book

ce mois
this month

Cette is used for feminine, singular nouns, for example:

cette semaine
this week

cette chanson
this song

Ces is used for plural nouns (either masculine or feminine), for example:

ces livres
these books

ces chansons these songs

It is useful to know how to say “this” and “these” when using the perfect tense as very often when talking in the past we say “this morning..”, “this year...” etc. For example, “this morning I brushed my teeth” or “this year I have learned to cook.”

There is another word meaning “this” which is used when a masculine word begins with a vowel. For example, let’s consider the word *étudiant*, meaning “student”. It would sound strange putting *ce* in front of this as the vowel sounds would merge together. So we add a *-t* onto the end of *ce* to give *cet*. “This student” would therefore be *cet étudiant*. Of course, *étudiant* refers to a male student but a female student would be *étudiante*. In this case, “this student” would be *cette étudiante*.

The word *après-midi*, meaning “afternoon”, is an interesting word as it can be either masculine **or** feminine. There are certain French-speaking areas that think it is masculine and certain areas that think it is feminine but it can in fact be either. So *un après-midi* and *une après-midi* are both correct. Therefore to say “this afternoon” you could say *cet après-midi* or *cette après-midi*. Of course, they would both sound the same!

In addition to meaning “this” and “these”, *ce*, *cette*, *ces* and *cet* can also mean “that” and “those”. This makes it slightly more complicated as the same word in French can mean different words in English. So *ce livre* can mean “this book” or “that book” depending on the context.

One way of making the meaning more clear is by adding an extra word to the end of the noun. For example if you wanted to make it clear you were talking about “this book here” and not “that book there” you could say *ce livre-ci*. “That book there” would be *ce livre-là*.

ce	this / that (masculine singular)
ce livre-ci	this book (here)
ce livre-là	that book (there)
cette	this / that (feminine singular)
cette maison-ci	this house (here)
cette maison-là	that house (there)

Mark asked Anna to translate some sentences from English into French to practice using the perfect tense and demonstrative adjectives.

this morning I spoke with my mother	ce matin j’ai parlé avec ma mère
this evening I went to the beach	ce soir je suis allé(e) à la plage
this week I have done lots of things	cette semaine j’ai fait beaucoup de choses
this year I have learned French	cette année j’ai appris le français
this afternoon I went to the swimming pool	cet(te) après-midi je suis allé(e) à la piscine

this afternoon I did some swimming / went for a swim	cet(te) après-midi j'ai fait de la natation
this afternoon I bathed myself / went for a swim	cet(te) après-midi je me suis baigné(e)

Remember that *beaucoup* is always followed by *de*, even if the noun following it is plural, eg. *beaucoup de choses* ("lots of things").

Note that although we have not looked specifically at *apprendre* ("to learn"), it follows the same pattern as *prendre* and *comprendre*, so its past participle is *appris*.

Note also that there are various ways of saying "I went for a swim":

aller à la piscine
to go to the swimming pool

faire de la natation
to do some swimming / to go for a swim

se baigner
to go for a swim / lit. 'to bathe oneself'

UN DÉFIT: Mark set Anna (and you, our listeners) a homework challenge for next week: to come up with a diary entry based on what you have done in the course of a day, using the perfect tense. You should include 10 verbs conjugated with *avoir*, 5 verbs conjugated with *être* and a couple of reflexive verbs too. *Bonne chance!* Post your 'homework' on the blog:

<http://rlnvault.com/rln09/2009/07/lesson-59-coffee-break-french/>



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.

Bonus episode test		
1	Ce matin j'ai lu ce livre.	This morning I read this book.
2	Cet(te) après-midi nous sommes partis à quatre heures.	This afternoon we left at four o'clock.
3	Ils ont écouté cette chanson-là ce soir.	They (have) listened to that song this evening.
4	Les filles sont arrivées à cette ville jeudi.	The girls arrived at this/that town on Thursday.
5	Marie-France s'est couchée à neuf heures ce soir.	Marie-France went to bed at nine o'clock this evening.
6	We watched the tv this afternoon.	Nous avons regardé la télé cet(te) après-midi.
7	This time we swam in the sea.	Cette fois nous nous sommes baignés dans la mer.
8	I've already seen this boy / I've seen this boy before.	J'ai déjà vu ce garçon.
9	Did you go to the concert with that student or this student?	Tu es allé(e) au concert avec cet étudiant-là ou cet étudiant-ci?
10	We have bought this house.	Nous avons acheté cette maison.



CoffeeBreak
French

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