



# Coffee Break French

## Season 3, Lesson 27

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# Lesson 27 Notes

This week we hear from Katie again in the first of two lessons focusing on her most recent text. She tells us what happened in class this week and a little bit about her plans for the weekend with her boyfriend Jérôme. Over the next two lessons there are lots of subjunctives to discuss as well as many other interesting grammar and vocabulary points.

## TEXT: PARAGRAPH 1

*Salut tout le monde. Comment ça va? Comme vous l'entendez, j'ai un peu mal à la gorge cette semaine. Apparemment on dit qu'on a un chat dans la gorge, pas une grenouille comme en anglais! Il faut dire que j'ai un peu honte! J'ai relu mon journal de la semaine dernière et je n'ai parlé que de Jérôme! Je pense que je fabule un peu sur lui! Ne vous inquiétez pas: ça va toujours très bien avec Jérôme, mais je me suis promise de ne pas parler de lui dans mon journal cette semaine. Désolée, Sandrine! Je sais que vous aimez savoir tout ce qui se passe dans ma vie privée!*

### comme vous l'entendez, j'ai un peu mal à la gorge cette semaine

"As you can hear, I have a bit of a sore throat this week". Note that in French you have to say "as you hear *it*": **comme vous l'entendez**. Note also the expression **avoir mal à la gorge** which means "to have a sore throat".

### avoir un chat dans la gorge

"To have a cat in one's throat". While in English the expression "I have a frog in my throat" is used to mean that one has a croaky or hoarse voice, the French imagine this sound more as a cat!

### il faut dire que j'ai un peu honte!

"I have to say that I'm a bit embarrassed!" **Avoir honte** is a verb phrase which means "to be ashamed" or "to be embarrassed" in English. Remember that the infinitive follows **il faut** while the subjunctive follows **il faut que**.

### je pense que je fabule un peu sur lui!

"I think I'm fantasising a little about him!" **Fabuler sur quelqu'un** can be translated in a number of ways, including "to fantasise", "to imagine things", etc.

Here Katie means that she is possibly inventing a future long-term relationship with him, taking things further than perhaps they actually are in reality.

### je n'ai parlé que de Jérôme!

"I only spoke about Jérôme". Note the use of **ne ... que** around the verb, meaning "only". It's also important to note that in compound tenses (perfect, pluperfect, etc.) the **ne ... que** goes around both the auxiliary verb and the past participle. Compare this to **ne ... pas** which goes around only the auxiliary verb eg. **je n'ai pas parlé de Jérôme**, "I didn't speak about Jérôme".

### ne vous inquiétez pas...

"Don't worry..." Here we see an example of the imperative in action. As we have seen before, the plural of the imperative is formed by the 2nd person plural of the present tense, ie. the **vous** form. This form is of course also used for the formal singular form. The **tu** form of the imperative of regular verbs is formed by taking the normal **tu** form of the present indicative and removing the final **-s**. For example, "speak French!" becomes **parle français!** One interesting aspect of the **tu** form of the imperative is that the **-s** remains if the imperative is followed by the pronoun **y** or **en**. Consider **vas-y**, literally "go there", and **parles-en**, literally "speak about it".

### ...je me suis promise de ne pas parler de lui dans mon journal cette semaine.

"...I promised myself that I wouldn't talk about him in my diary this week." Katie uses the reflexive verb **se promettre** to convey that she has made a promise to herself. As with all reflexive verbs the past participle, in this case **promise**, must agree with the feminine subject of the sentence.

### je sais que vous aimez savoir tout ce qui se passe dans ma vie privée!

"I know that you like to know everything that is going on in my private life!" The relative pronoun **ce qui** is used here rather than **ce que** because **tout**, everything, is the subject of the phrase, and not the object. Following Mark's logic from the audio of this lesson, the relative pronoun is immediately followed by a conjugated verb, in this case **se passe**, so it must be **ce qui**. If the relative pronoun had been followed by a subject pronoun or indeed by a noun/person then it would be **ce que**. Consider **je sais que vous aimez savoir tout ce que je fais**: "I know that you like to know everything (that) I do".

## TEXT: PARAGRAPH 2

*Alors cette semaine en classe nous avons parlé de «ce que» et «ce qui», ce qui était quand même assez difficile! [Ça se dit comme ça, Sandrine?] Nous avons dû faire un exercice de conversation dans lequel nous devons décrire notre vie dans dix ans. C'était bien difficile! Je travaillais avec Veronica - c'est une Australienne vraiment rigolote qui est toujours très vivante en classe. J'ai décidé que dans dix ans je serai mariée, que j'aurai fini mes études à Boston et que je serai retournée en France où j'habiterai avec mon mari français... Bref, j'en dis trop, je pense! Veronica est trop marrante! Elle est directrice d'un site web pour les Australiens qui cherchent l'âme sœur! C'est dommage, parce que Veronica n'a personne. Je pense qu'elle devrait s'inscrire sur son propre site! Elle est super-sympa, et en plus elle est très belle comme femme, mais j'ai l'impression qu'elle travaille trop et qu'elle n'a pas assez de temps pour trouver quelqu'un. C'est dommage qu'elle ne suive pas ses propres conseils!*

### ... ce qui était quand même assez difficile

“... something which was actually quite difficult”. In French if you wish to qualify a statement which you have made you can add a further phrase starting with **ce qui** as in this example. Consider **il arrive demain, ce qui est génial parce qu’il était censé arriver jeudi**: “he’s arriving tomorrow, which is great because he was supposed to arrive on Thursday”. Here the **ce qui** / “which” refers back to the first element, the fact that he is arriving tomorrow.

### un exercice de conversation dans lequel nous devons décrire notre vie dans

“A conversation exercise in which we had to describe our life in ten years’ time”. Note **dans lequel**, meaning literally “in the which”, but translated as “in which”.

### je travaillais avec Veronica - c'est une Australienne vraiment rigolote qui est toujours très vivante en classe.

“I was working with Veronica - a really funny Australian woman who is always very lively in class.” The imperfect tense is employed in the first part of the sentence because Katie is describing who she was working with. **Rigolote** translates as “funny” or “jokey” in English. The feminine form of the adjectives are used because Katie is the subject. This sentence also provides an opportunity for us to consider **c’est** vs **il / elle est**. As you develop in your learning of French you could be under the impression that **c’est** and **il/elle est** are interchangeable. However this is not the case and there are specific situations where **c’est** is

required, and other situations where **il/elle est** is required. Consider **elle est australienne**, meaning “she is Australian”, using the adjective form **australienne**. However, an alternative could be **Veronica, c’est une Australienne**, meaning “Veronica is an Australian”, using the noun **Australienne** (with a capital initial letter). We will cover further examples of **c’est** vs **il/elle est** in future lessons, including the plural **ce sont** vs **ils/elles sont**, but for the time being it is useful to understand that **c’est** is normally used with nouns of nationality, profession or beliefs: **c’est un Écossais** (“he’s a Scot”), **c’est une pharmacienne** (“she’s a pharmacist”), and **ce sont des catholiques** (“they are Catholics”).

### **j’ai décidé que dans dix ans je serai mariée, que j’aurai fini mes études à Boston et que je serai retournée en France où j’habiterai avec mon mari français**

“I (have) decided that in 10 years I will be married, that I will have finished my studies in Boston and that I will have returned to France where I will live (be living) with my French husband.” Here Katie is imagining what life will be like in ten years and is using the future perfect tense - “I will have done something”. She begins by saying “I will be married”, **je serai mariée** - a straightforward future tense. However she then goes on to say “I will have finished my studies”, **j’aurai fini mes études**. Note here that she is using the future tense of the auxiliary verb **avoir** and the past participle. She continues “I will have returned to France”, **je serai retournée en France**: remember that **retourner** is an **être** verb, so the auxiliary verb here is the future tense of **être**. Finally she mentions that she will be living in France with her French husband, using another straightforward future tense.

### **bref, j’en dis trop**

“Well, I’ve said too much” Although this phrase is in the present tense in French, it is more natural to translate it in the past tense in English. The pronoun **en** suggests “about it”, ie. she has said too much about her future plans.

### **un site web pour les Australiens qui cherchent l’âme sœur**

“A website for Australians who are looking for their soul mate”. The word **âme** means “soul”, but note that in French the expression is “soul sister”.

### **c’est dommage, parce que Veronica n’a personne**

“It’s a pity because Veronica doesn’t have anyone”. Note two things in this sentence: firstly, **c’est dommage** means “it’s a pity” or “it’s a shame”. We will see another example of this later in the passage. Note also **Veronica n’a personne** meaning literally “Veronica does not have no-one”, with **personne** meaning “no-one”. **Une personne** is “a person” but when it is used in the expression **ne ... personne** it means “no-one”.

### je pense qu'elle devrait s'inscrire sur son propre site!

"I think that she should sign up to her own website!" Here, we see an example of an irregular conditional: **devoir**. Normally the conditional tense is formed by adding the conditional endings to the infinitive but it is important to remember that some verbs have an irregular stem and that these must be learned by heart.

### ...j'ai l'impression qu'elle travaille trop et qu'elle n'a pas assez de temps pour trouver quelqu'un.

"...I get the impression that she works too much and that she doesn't have enough time to find someone." Remember that **avoir l'impression** means "to have/get the impression" in English.

### c'est dommage qu'elle ne suive pas ses propres conseils!

"It's a shame that she doesn't follow her own advice!" Earlier we saw **c'est dommage, parce que ...** meaning "it's a pity, because...". In this example **c'est dommage** is followed immediately by **que**, meaning "it's a pity that..." and this expression triggers the subjunctive. **Propre** is an adjective which can either go before or after the noun, however, its position alters its meaning. When it goes before a noun, it means "own", eg. **sa propre maison**, "his/her own house"; and when it follows the noun it means "clean", eg. **sa maison propre**, "his/her clean house".

## LISTEN AGAIN

We'd now suggest that you listen to the normal speed version of the text again. We've included just the first two paragraphs and we'll consider the remaining half of this text in the next lesson.

*Il faut dire que j'ai un peu honte! J'ai relu mon journal de la semaine dernière et je n'ai parlé que de Jérôme! Je pense que je fabule un peu sur lui! Ne vous inquiétez pas: ça va toujours très bien avec Jérôme, mais je me suis promise de ne pas parler de lui dans mon journal cette semaine. Désolée, Sandrine! Je sais que vous aimez savoir tout ce qui se passe dans ma vie privée!*

*Alors cette semaine en classe nous avons parlé de «ce que» et «ce qui», ce qui était quand même assez difficile! [Ça se dit comme ça, Sandrine?] Nous avons dû faire un exercice de conversation dans lequel nous devons décrire notre vie dans dix ans. C'était bien difficile! Je travaillais avec Veronica - c'est une australienne vraiment rigolote qui est toujours très vivante en classe. J'ai décidé que dans vingt ans je serai*

*mariée, que j'aurai fini mes études à Boston et que je serai retournée en France où j'habiterai avec mon mari français... Bref, j'en dis trop, je pense! Veronica est trop marrante! Elle est directrice d'un site web pour les australiens qui cherchent l'âme sœur! C'est dommage parce que Veronica n'a personne. Je pense qu'elle devrait s'inscrire sur son propre site! Elle est super-sympa, et en plus elle est très belle comme femme, mais j'ai l'impression qu'elle travaille trop et qu'elle n'a pas assez de temps pour trouver quelqu'un. C'est dommage qu'elle ne suive pas ses propres conseils!*

