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immediate
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partitive article

Lesson 52

Notes

Elle ne va pas chanter la chanson

The negative of the immediate future

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.

This week we continue from where we left off last week and take a look at the negative form of the immediate future tense.

Remember that the immediate future tense is used to talk about what is “going to” happen, eg. “we are going to learn some French.” Before we look at the negative form, Mark talks about the ‘partitive article’ which is usually translated by “some” in English. We have come across this many times before.

When the noun is masculine, the word for “some” is *du* (*de + le*):

du café
some coffee

du français
some French

When the noun is feminine, “some” is *de la*.

de la musique
some music

de la glace
some ice cream

If the noun begins with a vowel, “some” becomes *de l’*.

de l’eau
some water

de l’architecture
some architecture

Mark gives Anna some phrases to translate into French to practice the immediate future tense and the partitive article.

today we are going to learn some French	aujourd'hui nous allons apprendre du français
today I am going to drink some coffee	aujourd'hui je vais boire du café
this evening they are going to listen to some music	ce soir ils vont écouter de la musique
are you (singular, informal) going to eat some ice cream tomorrow?	est-ce que tu vas manger de la glace demain?
are you (singular, formal) going to eat some ice cream tomorrow?	est-ce que vous allez manger de la glace demain?
I am going to drink some water	je vais boire de l'eau
she is going to look at some French architecture	elle va regarder de l'architecture française

The partitive article is something learners tend to find a little complicated, particularly as the word “some” is often not included in the English translation. For example, *je vais écouter de la musique* can simply be translated as “I am going to listen to music.” We can drop the “some” from the English version but we still need to include *de la* in the French version. In the same way, *est-ce que tu vas manger du chocolat?* can be translated as either “are you going to eat some chocolate?” or “are you going to eat chocolate?”

Note the difference between the following two phrases. The first question is referring to some chocolate in general but the second question is referring to specific chocolate, eg “the chocolate that I gave you earlier”.

est-ce que tu vas manger du chocolat?
are you going to eat (some) chocolate?

est-ce que tu vas manger le chocolat?
are you going to eat the chocolate?

Let's now move on to look at the negative of the immediate future tense. First of all, Mark and Anna revise negatives in general.

je ne parle pas français
I don't speak French

je ne comprends pas
I don't understand

To form the negative of a normal verb in French, you place *ne* and *pas* around the conjugated verb as shown above. One way to think of this is to imagine *ne* and *pas* are the two slices of bread and the verb is the filling of the sandwich.

Now let's apply this rule to the immediate future tense. We simply put *ne* and *pas* around the conjugated verb, which in this case is *aller*, and follow it with an infinitive. Note that the *ne* becomes *n'* in *nous n'allons pas* and *vous n'allez pas* as it is followed by a vowel in each case.

je ne vais pas	nous n'allons pas
tu ne vas pas	vous n'allez pas
il / elle ne va pas	ils / elles ne vont pas

Mark gives Anna some phrases to translate using the negative of the immediate future tense.

I am not going to eat in the restaurant this evening	je ne vais pas manger au restaurant ce soir
she is not going to sing the song	elle ne va pas chanter la chanson
we are not going to visit Paris this year	nous n'allons pas visiter Paris cette année

Notice that to say "this year" in French, we say *cette année*. When the noun is feminine, eg. *année* ("year") the word for "this" is *cette*. However, when the noun is masculine, eg. *soir* ("evening") the word for "this" is *ce*. We have already come across this in the phrase *ce soir*, meaning "this evening." We will come back to this in a future lesson but it is good to be able to recognise the different versions of "this" for just now.

As we know, *se tromper* is a reflexive verb. It would literally mean "to mistake yourself" but is generally translated as "to make a mistake." If we put a reflexive verb into the immediate future tense, the reflexive pronoun changes depending on who is "doing" the verb. Exactly the same thing happens with a negative phrase, eg. "I am not going to make a mistake" would be *je ne vais pas me tromper*.

We need to be very precise in our pronunciation of *se tromper* as it sounds very similar to another verb, *se tremper*, which means "to get soaked." Listen to Mark's pronunciation of the following two phrases. This is a good example of how changing the pronunciation of one vowel sound can change the entire meaning of a phrase.

je ne vais pas me tromper ce soir
I'm not going to make a mistake this evening

je ne vais pas me tremper ce soir
I'm not going to get soaked this evening

Something a bit strange happens with the partitive article in the negative. In the negative *du*, *de la* and *de l'* are replaced by *de* or *d'*. It is also worth pointing out an alternative translation of the partitive article when it is used in negative sentences. In the positive the most natural translation of *du chocolat* is "some chocolate", or simply "chocolate". However, in the negative, when it becomes *de chocolat* it can often be translated as "any chocolate", as in the following example.

je ne vais pas manger de chocolat
I'm not going to eat (some/any) chocolate

je ne veux pas d'eau minérale
I don't want (any) mineral water

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	Je vais manger du chocolat.	I'm going to eat some chocolate.
2	Elle va apprendre un peu de français.	She is going to learn a little French.
3	Les filles ne vont pas aller au théâtre.	The girls are not going to go to the theatre.
4	Je ne vais pas habiter en France.	I'm not going to live in France.
5	Tu vas boire de l'eau?	Are you going to drink (some / any) water?
6	Are you not going to come tomorrow?	Tu ne vas pas venir demain?
7	They are not going to read the book.	Ils ne vont pas lire le livre.
8	We are not going to eat the bread.	Nous n'allons pas manger le pain.
9	I am not going to listen to the radio today.	Je ne vais pas écouter la radio aujourd'hui.
10	Marie-Claire is going to watch the film with us.	Marie-Claire va regarder le film avec nous.



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