

## **French, Grammar, Glossary & Rationale Modern Languages 5 – 14**

The accompanying documents are provided as a framework within which teachers can more effectively offer French to all pupils in the later stages of the primary school, and, eventually, to all pupils in the first two years of the secondary school.

Production was supported by the Scottish Executive Education Department's innovation fund.

The underlying rationale behind the materials is that pupils need to have a clearly defined progression in French, not simply a progression in terms of topic areas covered, but a progression in grammar. In addition, experience from the MLPS development and from HMI activities in primary schools suggests that pupils at an early stage of their language learning are capable of much more than has been expected. Expectations have been too low, particularly in the area of reading, where pupils appear to be much more capable of tackling longer reading passages than many teachers expect. Similarly in writing, which many teachers have avoided totally, some pupils have shown a facility and an ability which need to be consolidated. Therefore, reading and writing have both been prioritised in the later stages of the programme.

It is to be stressed from the outset that these materials in themselves are not a course, nor were they ever intended as a course. They are a road map through the MLPS training materials and an attempt to assist teachers in their provision. They are an essential base, beyond which teachers can, and should, go. They do not represent materials which should be used to the exclusion of others, and teachers are encouraged to make as much use of supplementary MLPS materials, such as songs, games and classroom activities, as they can. The programme is based solidly on the MLPS training materials. Teachers whose knowledge of French is basically that of the MLPS training days should have no anxieties in using the programme, and reference to the programme is included throughout.

The programme should be seen as basic provision in French, to which all pupils should be exposed. If teachers stick to the basic programme, their pupils will have done enough French to enable them to adapt to the demands of the secondary school. However, it is a basic programme, and teachers should not hesitate from development as they see fit.

### **Background**

Background to language learning can take many forms. At the basic level, pupils generally show an interest in the differences between societies at the everyday level – what might be called the *boules et croissants* background element. There is nothing wrong with highlighting those differences, but there is scope to do more. One element which is often overlooked is the extent of French usage throughout the world. Our teaching of French is very 'France centred', and pupils can leave school after six years exposure to French unaware that French is widely spoken in countries other than metropolitan France. Accordingly, an effort has been made formally to show pupils where French is used through identification of the Francophone countries, and if teachers wish to adapt this to a mini-project, that would be entirely appropriate. A deliberate decision has been taken to include in the reading passages areas of France

other than Paris. The reason is simple: in the United Kingdom we would not like foreign learners of English to learn only about London or the south of England. So our pupils need to be aware of areas and cities other than Paris, and accordingly one of the reading passages is set in the small town of Gravelines in the north of France, another in Marseille, and another in rural Quebec.

## **Grammar**

As suggested in the *Language into Languages Teaching* series, grammar is the way that words make sense. To attempt to learn a foreign language without some understanding of how the language works leaves the learner without a sense of pattern and order, and can reduce the experience to one of learning disconnected words which do not appear to fit together.

The swing of the pendulum back towards greater emphasis on grammatical competence as an essential element in communicative competence, and towards a more central role for the skill of writing, has been discernible in recent years. There is a sense that a functional approach stressing communicative competence in social situations tends not to produce sufficient repetitive structural patterns, at least not within the limits of (*school*) exposure a week. \*

Within the programme, from the very beginning, there is an emphasis on the careful explanation of what is being taught in grammatical terms. Sometimes the word ‘grammar’ is used in a very broad sense, but what is considered important is that pupils receive an explanation of what it is that they are learning, about why certain structures are needed, about how the structures work, and about the linguistic patterns. There is nothing to be gained from leaving pupils unaware of grammar rules or terminology, and appropriate explanations should be given in accordance with pupils’ needs. In addition, it is very important for teachers to illustrate the links between French and English, and, where they feel confident, to make wider links with other languages and to try to show pupils the interconnections between the families of European languages and their development – albeit in a very basic way. Guidance and suggestions are included in the notes for teachers. It should be stressed from the outset that this ‘language awareness’ element is at the heart of the programme, and teachers should not think of it as an optional extra or a luxury to be added if there is time. There is enough in the teachers’ notes to allow class discussion to take place. If teachers wish to develop each topic more, they should do so.

## **Listening**

The skill of listening, while clearly vital in second language acquisition, receives less prominence than might be expected in the programme, for the following reasons.

- Research conducted recently by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (Scottish CILT) shows that pupils find listening one of the most difficult and stressful exercises which they undertake in their language learning experience. Pupils indicated particular difficulties with listening to

passages on tape. Some have stated that it is the stress of listening exercises which adversely affects their attitudes towards modern language learning.

- Teachers with little previous experience of French who have undergone the MLPS training programme understandably feel less than secure about their own speaking skills. To ask them to undertake extensive ad lib communication in class would be unreasonable and possibly counterproductive.

The secondary specialist, however, has a facility and fluency in French which make classroom use of the language much easier, and the programme has been constructed so that the secondary specialist's initial task will be to extend pupils' listening skills through extensive use of French in the classroom – something which, unfortunately, does not happen at the moment with any degree of consistency.

In primary classes, the teacher is asked to use French as much as possible in daily classroom situations, relying on the programme as a base line. If more can be done, so much the better. In secondary classes, the teacher will be asked to increase pupils' exposure to French as the normal vehicle for classroom interchange in most situations. It is felt that this gradual incremental approach will help to lessen pupils' concerns and anxieties about listening, so that when formal taped exercises are used, later in the secondary school, pupils will be reasonably secure through everyday exposure in earlier years.

## **Speaking**

From the very beginning, pupils are expected to use French even in very basic situations. This, after all, is a prime feature of communicative competence – the ability to use the foreign language in speech. The programme has been constructed to allow progression in vocabulary acquisition, but it is to be emphasised again that it is merely a programme, and teachers will need to ensure that there is constant recycling of previously learned material in order to ensure consolidation. For example, it is not good practice to assume that, once colours have been taught, there is no need to return to them again. As pupils progress through the programme, the teacher's role becomes more complex, because he or she has to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for recycling of language so that previously learned material does not become redundant. Teachers will have their own strategies for ensuring this, and it does not really matter if recycling is a formal rehearsal of previously learned material through brisk question and answer sessions, or whether the teacher can integrate previously learned material into the new. Ideally the latter would be preferable, so that pupils come to be aware that language learning is not compartmentalised, but the former is better than no recycling at all.

It is important that teachers should try, from the beginning, to encourage and develop the art of building up utterances, so that every pupil becomes aware that it is relatively easy to construct longer passages of speech. For an easy example, pupils should be encouraged, and indeed taught, to say things like:

*Je m'appelle Michel. J'habite en Écosse. J'ai deux sœurs. J'ai un petit chien. Il est mignon.*

This 'stringing together' of single utterances is very important in developing confidence and in learning to be adventurous with language, and also in using language other than in the question/answer situation. In the above example, the utterances taken individually are basic. Strung together, they create a different impression on the listener. It is hoped that all pupils will, to a greater or lesser extent, become adept at 'stringing together' the single utterances, because single utterance language is very limiting.

Another speaking skill which needs to be encouraged is that of asking questions. Teachers should try to ensure that pupils, in their classroom activities, are given sufficient practice so that they become confident in asking one another the essential questions which arise in the programme.

## **Reading**

As has been suggested, pupils' ability to handle reading may have been underestimated. One of the innovations of the programme is the inclusion of reading passages for formal exploitation in class. Suggestions for use are included in advice for teachers in the text, and no apologies are made for the traditional approach to reading texts.

The passages build on what has been taught. Occasionally there are words which have not been previously met, but teachers should take the opportunity to lead pupils to deduce meanings from comparison with English, where possible. It is better if pupils are taught to be self-reliant and to use previous knowledge and analogy than to rely on a dictionary. (In fact, use of the dictionary is not really necessary in the programme.) Teachers might wish to note that the passages are probably at the level of Standard Grade, upper Foundation or lower General. If pupils can tackle them with success in primary school, then the key aim of MLPS, that of raising pupil achievement, will have been realised in one language learning skill, and that will be significant for the future.

In the forthcoming year, additional passages will be produced, and the additional passages will be available either for extension work or for use in the small school in an attempt to meet the challenge of a language learning cycle longer than two years – that is, pupils will not need to repeat exactly the same work in different years.

## **Writing**

Some teachers who have undertaken the MLPS training days may have felt that pupils should not be asked to do any writing tasks. Language learning theory varies in its opinion on writing in the early years. Some writers advocate that learners eschew writing altogether until adequate progress in the other skills has been established, arguing that the natural development of first language acquisition is listening and talking, followed in formal education by reading and writing. However, pupils come to their second language learning with the four skills well developed in the first language, and second language acquisition does not exactly mirror first language acquisition. Whatever can be used to strengthen the second language learning should be used, and so, from the beginning, teachers are encouraged to ask pupils to copy-

write and to transcribe. Later in the programme, there are greater opportunities for writing, in both formal and imaginative contexts.

At the early stages of writing the foreign language, pupils need to be encouraged. A degree of tolerance of pupil error will be more helpful than assiduous correction of every mistake. Correctness of form can be developed at later stages. This does not mean that there should be no correction, but teachers should use their judgement to correct what is impeding comprehension rather than look for every minor error.

### **Assessment**

It is more important to teach pupils what is in the programme, to develop their confidence in using French, their self-confidence and their self-esteem, to give them a liking for foreign language learning, an awareness of language links and basic cultural understanding than it is to have a programme dominated by frequent assessments. On-going observational assessment is perfectly appropriate in the early years. If pupils can do in class what the programme asks them to do, then formal assessment opportunities are superfluous. The teacher will be well aware of what pupils can and cannot do in this programme, and will be able to report with confidence. Once the reading and writing elements are introduced, the teacher can use them for confirmation of progress, but at the moment there does not seem to be a great need for the development of assessment packs.

The pupils should be led to an enjoyment of language learning, and formal assessment may well impede that enjoyment.

### **The role of the teacher**

Most pupils do not acquire languages by a process of internalisation. They need to be **taught**. The teacher's role in the early stages is not just that of presenter of materials or of classroom organiser. It is those plus that of **teacher**, and it is a presumption in this programme that there will be much active teaching throughout, much explanation of how the language works, much comparison with English and a great deal of activity in class. Even reading does not have to be passive.

### **Progress and transition**

The expectation is that, by the end of P7, pupils will have completed Unit 11, a unit which logically precedes the summer holidays. Experience in schools which have piloted the materials suggests that this is a reasonable goal.

However, instead of starting immediately on the perfect tense in S1, which had been the plan, a period of consolidation will probably be necessary, as the class composition will be new and the secondary teacher will need time to get to know the class. Accordingly, three transition units have been added to try to make the resumption of French in the secondary school more accessible.

Transition One is a recap on personal details, talking about themselves and introductions. It should be quite natural to use this unit, as pupils will be unlikely to be acquainted with their new classmates. The unit can also be used as an introduction

to more time spent on listening activities, which have been mentioned on page 3 above. Transition Two extends and develops these themes, and encourages pupils to find out about and talk about other people. There are six reading passages in this unit, and they are designed to introduce a degree of differentiation. Some of the questions and activities are at level E only, and the differentiation arises from the lack of supported questioning, leaving the pupil to find out much about the text without the 'scaffolding' which is provided by questions. Even so, it would be unwise to ask pupils to tackle the passages without some degree of preparation or introduction by the teacher. We want pupils to experience success, not failure. Two of the reading texts with questions at level D could certainly be used with pupils who are not yet attaining that level, but with a great deal of teacher help and guidance. There is nothing wrong with that. It's called teaching! Transition Three provides an introduction to the subjects and routines of the secondary school, and should be supplemented by the usual activities such as writing out timetables, making comparisons with French schools and so on.

It is suggested that the programme should lead on to a published course such as Métro pour l'Écosse or Avantage. Once pupils have completed Units 1-11 and Transition Units 1-3, the logical entry point for Métro pour l'Écosse would appear to be the start of either Métro Rouge or Métro Vert. As Métro pour l'Écosse claims to be 'a two year course providing complete preparation for Standard Grade and Intermediate level 1 and 2 examinations', it would follow that by the end of S2 pupils should have completed a Standard Grade or Intermediate ½ course. This would mean that all pupils would be prepared after two years of French in primary school and two years continuation in secondary school for certification at national levels.

With Avantage it is suggested that the start be made with Book Two after the October break in S1, leaving the teacher to recap on holiday plans from Unit 11 as a logical precursor to Unit 1: Jour J of Avantage 2.

However, as teachers will be well aware, the approach to reading which is used in the Highland Council materials is radically different from that used in Métro and Avantage. Piloting gave very clear indications that it was successful. Reading materials may well have to be adapted to new formats.

It will be extremely important for secondary teachers to familiarise themselves with the materials which will be used in primary schools, and with the basic pedagogical tenets underpinning them. They will also need to be well acquainted with the MLPS materials. The transition to secondary school should not represent an abrupt break with the methods, materials and expectations with which pupils have become accustomed in the primary school. Secondary teachers would be well advised to adopt into their classrooms the methods and activities used in primary schools for teaching French.

Reference:

*\* Language into Languages Teaching: University of Glasgow and the Scottish Executive: 2001*

*Special thanks are due to:*

*Alan Cowie  
Seonaid Grant  
Ariel McKinstry  
John Muir*

## Introduction to Grammar

*Grammar is the way that words make sense. It is a code or set of rules accepted by any community who share a language. (Language into Languages Teaching, SEED, University of Glasgow, 2001)*

What follows is an attempt to set out the rules of grammar for the structures which are recommended in the accompanying outline of work for the teaching of French for P6 and P7.

This grandly styled grammar reference booklet is strictly that: it is a **reference for teachers**. It is not intended for use by pupils under any circumstances, unless perhaps as a spell-check for the months of the year, for example.

It is appreciated that a number of teachers who have completed their MLPS training may feel a little insecure in their knowledge of basic French grammar. This is understandable, and this booklet attempts to be a resource to help. It is by definition very restricted, but closely tied to the requirements of teachers offering French in the primary school.

The fact that it has been produced does not mean that primary school teachers will now be expected to teach grammar formally as it is laid out in this booklet. There is no expectation that pupils should work through this grammar booklet. As noted above, it is a reference resource for **teachers**, to try to make them more comfortable with the rules behind the communicative language which they are offering in class.

It is felt that a degree of security about the rules of grammar will make teachers more comfortable in their use of French.

As will be seen in the course notes, we do not shy away from explaining simple rules of grammar to the pupils. However, such explanations should be done in a sensitive way. There is nothing to be gained in foreign language teaching from leaving pupils unsure and insecure when a simple explanation, where possible drawing analogies with English, would remove doubts and make the picture clearer. Once again, any explanation of grammar given to pupils should not be taken directly from this booklet and written on the board, for example. The teacher will be expected to use this booklet to inform himself or herself about the correctness of form before going on to explain, in his or her words, the basic rules of grammar, according to the needs of the pupils, some of whom will benefit from a sharper exposure to grammar than has been the case heretofore.

## The verb

*Verbs are used to assert or state what is happening, or what is the case. They are sometimes called 'doing words' or 'action words', but they do not always show action: if we say 'he is bone idle' or 'he has stopped' there is not much action going on.*

*Verbs also show the time when things are happening: this is called the **tense** of the verb. (Language into Languages Teaching: SEED: University of Glasgow: 2001)*

## Subject pronouns

The subject pronouns are:

**je** - I

**nous** - we

**tu** - you

**vous** - you

**il/elle** – he/she

**ils/elles** - they

**on** – one

**Je, tu** and **il, elle, on** are first, second and third persons singular respectively.

**Nous, vous** and **ils, elles** are first, second and third persons plural respectively.

- **Tu** is traditionally used to address close friends, members of the immediate family, close relatives, children and animals and pets. Otherwise its use can be considered condescending.
- **Vous**, although strictly speaking second person plural, is the polite form of address to another person when the speakers are not closely acquainted. It is the formal mode of address to a single person. It is also the plural mode of address used when speaking to more than one close friend, member of the immediate family etc. and to more than one person who is not closely acquainted.

In school, teachers would address individual pupils by **tu**, and groups of pupils by **vous**.

Pupils should address the teacher by **vous**.

- **On**, which is translated here as **one**, is used much more frequently in French than in English, and does not carry the hint of a certain social stratum as it does in English. It is used to express **we**, or **you** when that **you** is being used in a very general sense. It can also be used to express **I**. However, young children should be encouraged to use it in its restricted meaning of **we**.

## The present tense of verbs

Some English tenses have various forms to represent the single French tense. One of the most striking is the **present tense**, which can have three different forms in English, but always **only one form in French**.

### Affirmative

**Je regarde la télévision**

I watch the television  
I am watching the television

**Oui, je regarde la télévision  
tous les soirs.**

Yes, I **do** watch television every evening.

### Negative

**Je ne regarde pas la télévision.** I'm not watching television.

I don't watch television

### Interrogative

**Est-ce que tu regardes**

Are you watching television?

**la télévision?**

Do you watch television?

### Form of the present tense

The present tense form of verbs whose infinitive ends in **-er** is given below. ( The infinitive form of a verb is that which appears in a dictionary, and which is indicated in English by the use of the word **to** in front. Thus, *to look* is an infinitive in English. The French form is **regarder**. Infinitives in French end in **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**.)

Structurally and analytically, to form the present tense of an **-er** verb:

- take the infinitive;
- remove the ending **-er**;
- add the first, second and third person endings, singular and plural.

These endings are:

je                    e                    nous                **ons**

tu                    es                    vous                **ez**

il/elle/on        e                    ils/elles           **ent**

So, the full present tense of the verb **regarder** is:

**je regarde                    nous regardons**

**tu regardes                    vous regardez**

**il/elle/on regarde            ils/elles regardent**

This is called the **paradigm** of the present tense.

- **Note:** the endings **–e**, **-es**, **-e** and **–ent** are **silent**. The only endings in the present tense of **–er** verbs which can be heard are the first and second persons plural.

## **Irregular verbs**

Unfortunately, a number of verbs are irregular, and, equally unfortunately, they tend to be ones which are commonly used. This is not a case of French being awkward, it's the same in all languages – think of the present tense of the verb *to be* in English, for example.

This section gives the full present tense of the irregular verbs which appear in the course outline. In all cases, teachers will not actually be using the full present tense, but they are included for reference – and for security!

### **aller: to go**

<b>je vais</b>	<b>nous allons</b>
<b>tu vas</b>	<b>vous allez</b>
<b>il/elle/on va</b>	<b>ils/elles vont</b>

.....

### **appeler: to call**

<b>j'appelle</b>	<b>nous appelons</b>
<b>tu appelles</b>	<b>vous appelez</b>
<b>il/elle/on appelle</b>	<b>ils/elles appellent</b>

.....

### **avoir: to have**

<b>j'ai</b>	<b>nous avons</b>
<b>tu as</b>	<b>vous avez</b>
<b>il/elle/on a</b>	<b>ils/elles ont</b>

.....

### **commencer: to begin, to start, to commence**

<b>je commence</b>	<b>nous commençons</b>
<b>tu commences</b>	<b>vous commencez</b>
<b>il/elle/on commence</b>	<b>ils/elles commencent</b>

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### *The interrogative (question form)*

There are three ways to construct a question:

- use **est-ce que** before the affirmative form;
- invert the subject and the verb, ie turn subject and verb around so that the verb comes first;
- use a raised intonation at the end of the statement, thus turning it into a question.

### **Est-ce que**

Literally, this expression means ‘is it that?’ This formula can be used in English, though it is a bit clumsy. *Is it that the sun is a vast cloud of hydrogen?* is a perfectly understandable question, though one not likely to be encountered often!

In French, the simplest and very frequently used way of formulating a question is to put **est-ce que** in front of the verb form. For example, **est-ce que tu regardes le livre, Michel?**: *are you looking at the book, Michael?*

- **\*Remember:** in front of a vowel, the expression will be abbreviated: **est-ce qu’il pleut?**: *is it raining?*

### **Inversion**

This can also be done in English.

*Stands the Church clock at ten to three?  
And is there honey still for tea?*

Inversion in French can only be used when the subject is a pronoun. When that is the case, simply invert the verb – put the subject pronoun after the verb.

**Regardes-tu le livre, Michel?**: *are you looking at the book, Michael?*

**Regardez-vous les livres, les enfants?**: *are you looking at your books, children?*

- **\*However,** you cannot invert the first person singular form. You must always use **est-ce que** with **je**.

For example, **est-ce que je signe ici?**: *do I sign here?*

- **Note also,** with **il, elle** and **on** you must insert the letter **t** for ease of pronunciation. It also stays in the written form.

- **Regarde-t-il?**
- **Regarde-t-elle?**
- **Regarde-t-on?**

### ***Intonation***

Only applicable in spoken form, though it will appear in dialogue in novels, this formula for asking a question is also very frequently used. It simply means that a normal statement is turned into a question by raising the voice at the end. Note that raising the voice does not mean increasing the volume; it is an upturn in the stress pattern of the sentence which turns the statement into a question.

## The negative

To make a verb **negative**, the particles **ne** and **pas** are placed **around the verb**. For example,

Je **ne** vais **pas** en ville: *I'm not going into town*

Nothing can come between the verb and **pas** except a subject pronoun when the verb is in the interrogative form. For example,

**Ne** regardez-vous **pas** le match de football?: *Aren't you watching the football match?*

- In speech the **ne** is often elided or omitted completely, particularly by younger people and children. It is never omitted in writing.

## The immediate future

This tense is so called because it implies that something is going to be done or is going to happen in the near future, rather than will be done or will happen at some indeterminate point sometime in the future.

*I'm going to wash the dishes* is more immediate than *I will wash the dishes*.

In English, and in French, the immediate future is formed by using the present tense of the verb *to go*, **aller**, followed immediately by an infinitive.

**Je vais regarder la télévision** – *I'm going to watch television*

**Nous allons aller en France** – *we're going to go to France*

In this construction, the infinitive never changes.

- **\*Note:** the use of the immediate future at the later stages of the scheme of work opens up the opportunity for greater flexibility in speech and in pupils' conceptual awareness when using French, and is a very important part of the scheme.
- **\*Note** that the present tense can be used to express futurity if it is accompanied by an appropriate adverb or adverbial expression.

If, for example, you are travelling by train, it is five pm, and you say **on arrive à six heures**, you are expressing futurity though strictly speaking you are using the present tense.

## The imperative mood – commands

The imperative exists basically in three forms, second person singular and plural, and first person plural, though the latter might be considered an exhortation rather than a command.

To form the imperative, take the **second person singular and plural forms** of the present tense and omit the **tu** and the **vous**. Do likewise with the first person plural form, omitting the **nous**.

**vous allez:** *you are going*    **allez!:** *go!*

**vous regardez:** *you are looking at*    **regardez!:** *look at!*

- **\*Note:** in addition, in the written form, omit the final **s** of the second person singular of **–er** verbs, or verbs which are conjugated like **–er** verbs. Thus: the present tense form is **tu regardes:** *you are looking at*; the imperative is **regarde!:** *look at!*

**nous regardons:** *we are looking at*    **regardons!:** *let's look at!*

The imperative forms suggested in the course outline are:

Singular form

Plural form

**colorie** : *colour (in)*

**coloriez:** *colour (in)*

**dessine:** *draw*

**dessinez:** *draw*

**écoute :** *listen*

**écoutez:** *listen*

**écris:** *write*

**écrivez:** *write*

**enlève:** *take off*

**enlevez:** *take off*

**ferme:** *close, shut*

**fermez:** *close, shut*

**mets:** *put*

**mettez:** *put*

**montre:** *show*

**montrez:** *show*

**montre-moi:** *show me*

**montrez-moi:** *show me*

**ouvre:** *open*

**ouvrez:** *open*

**pose:** *put, place*

**posez:** *put, place*

**regarde:** *look (at)*

**regardez:** *look (at)*

## The noun

*Nouns are the types of words which give the names of things, people, places, happenings and ideas...Nouns can be **singular** (referring to one thing) or **plural** (referring to many). (LILT 2001)*

All nouns in French are either **masculine** or **feminine**. In some other languages, including English, nouns can also be neuter.

In English the situation has more or less resolved itself into the use of the masculine for male humans or animals, feminine for female humans or animals, and neuter for objects or things. But things are not quite as simple as they seem. For example, in English we readily say:

*Look at that child. It's going to run across the road.*

*The ship is on time. She will arrive at noon.*

In French, nouns which refer to objects or things are either **masculine** or **feminine**.

Nouns which refer to male humans or animals are, as in English, masculine; nouns which refer to female humans or animals are feminine.

- **\*But** there can be exceptions. Even though a teacher may be a woman, the correct term is **le professeur**. There is some debate about whether or not a female doctor should be referred to as **Madame le médecin**. If a woman is elected mayor (mayoress?), the traditional form of address is **Madame le Maire**. Many nouns denoting occupations or characteristics originally associated with men are still masculine even when applied to women, though, as you might expect, some sections of modern French society are not happy with that situation.
- **\*Note:** when referring to the gender of nouns, the correct grammatical terms must be used. They are **masculine** and **feminine**. It is **not correct** to refer to nouns as male and female, which are terms from biology, botany and zoology, not grammar.

### Plurals

The general rule is to add an **s**, as in English. There are, however, exceptions. The words which are listed in the glossary and which have exceptional plurals are:

<b>animal</b>	<b>animaux</b>
<b>armoire de pharmacie</b>	<b>armoires de pharmacie</b>
<b>armoire de toilette</b>	<b>armoires de toilette</b>
<b>bureau</b>	<b>bureaux</b>

<b>cheval</b>	<b>chevaux</b>
<b>gâteau</b>	<b>gâteaux</b>
<b>genou</b>	<b>genoux</b>
<b>grand-mère</b>	<b>grands-mères</b> ( <i>recommended thus by the Académie</i> )
<b>grand-père</b>	<b>grands-pères</b>
<b>hôpital</b>	<b>hôpitaux</b>
<b>lave-vaisselle</b>	<b>lave-vaisselle</b> (invariable)
<b>Madame</b>	<b>Mesdames</b>
<b>Mademoiselle</b>	<b>Mesdemoiselles</b>
<b>Monsieur</b>	<b>Messieurs</b>
<b>nez</b>	<b>nez</b> (invariable)
<b>nom de famille</b>	<b>noms de famille</b>
<b>rendezvous</b>	<b>rendezvous</b> (invariable)
<b>rez de chaussée</b>	<b>rez de chaussée</b> (invariable)
<b>salle à manger</b>	<b>salles à manger</b>
<b>salle de bains</b>	<b>salles de bains</b>
<b>salle de séjour</b>	<b>salles de séjour</b>
<b>table de nuit</b>	<b>tables de nuit</b>
<b>taille-crayon</b>	<b>taille-crayons</b>
<b>taureau</b>	<b>taureaux</b>
<b>terrain de football</b>	<b>terrains de football</b>
<b>terrain de golf</b>	<b>terrains de golf</b>
<b>veau</b>	<b>veaux</b>

It can be observed that there are certain rules, but it is not necessary to develop the rules fully at this stage.

Some, simply stated, are:

- nouns ending in **-s**, **-x** or **-z** in the singular do not change in the plural;
- nouns ending in **-al** in the singular change to **-aux** in the plural;
- nouns ending in **-au**, **-eau** or **-eu** in the singular take an **x** in the plural.

## The article

*'The' and 'a' are ...called the **definite article** (the) and the **indefinite article** (a, an). In modern grammar, both are called **determiners**. (LILT 2001)*

There are two types of article, the **definite** and the **indefinite**.

The **definite article** is the word *the* in English.

In French, the **definite article** is **le** if the noun is masculine and **la** if the noun is feminine.

Both of these are shortened to **l'** if the noun begins with a vowel, to make pronunciation easier.

**Le, la** and **l'** all become **les** if the noun is plural.

The **indefinite article** in English is *a, an* or *some*.

In French, the **indefinite article** is **un** if the noun is masculine and **une** if the noun is feminine.

**Un** and **une** become **des** if the noun is plural.

- **However**, if the plural noun is preceded by an adjective, **des** is shortened to **de**. For example, **un jardin** becomes **des jardins** in the plural.

If there is an adjective, **un beau jardin** becomes **de beaux jardins** in the plural.

The article can be omitted in English. For example, we can say *I love cakes*. In French, **the article cannot normally be omitted**. Therefore, if we wish to express in French the sentence *I love cakes*, we have to decide whether the speaker means *I love (all) cakes* or *I love (some) cakes*. If we agree that the statement is a general statement referring to *all cakes*, then in French we would use the definite article and the sentence becomes:

**j'adore les gâteaux.**

If we were to say:

**j'adore des gâteaux.**

it would mean that the speaker loves some, but not all, cakes.

- **Note** that after expressions like **beaucoup de** the **de** is invariable, and an article is not used. Therefore, we say **beaucoup de crayons**.

### **The contracted forms**

In French, you cannot use **à** together with the definite article **le** or **les**. Instead, the two words contract to form **au** (**à** + **le**) and **aux** (**à** + **les**), both meaning *to the*.

Similarly, you cannot use **de** together with the definite article **le** or **les**. Instead, the two words contract to form **du** (**de** + **le**) and **des** (**de** + **les**), both meaning *of the*.

## The adjective

*Adjectives qualify nouns, that is give us more detail about them. A noun such as 'man' is nondescript, but if we add words (to) the noun, a transformation occurs. (LILT 2001)*

Adjectives are used to describe, or in grammatical terms to **qualify**, nouns and other expressions.

In English, adjectives precede the noun unless for special effects.

In French, the general rule is that most adjectives **follow the noun**.

- **However**, the commonly used and generally short adjectives precede. Adjectives which precede the noun are:

• **beau/belle**

**bon/bonne**

**ce/cette/ces**

**grand**

**gros/grosse**

**joli**

**mauvais**

**petit**

**quel/quelle**

**vieux/vieille**

- In addition, all of the possessive adjectives like **mon/ma/mes** naturally precede the noun.

Adjectives **agree with** the noun which they qualify. That is, if a noun is feminine singular, the adjective which qualifies it must be made feminine singular. If a noun is masculine plural, any adjective in agreement must also be masculine plural.

The form of the adjective which appears in the glossary or in a dictionary is the masculine singular form. If an adjective has an irregularly formed feminine, that is usually given too – hence, **beau/belle** above.

To make the adjective feminine, add **e** to the masculine singular. If the masculine singular already ends in **e**, do not add anything. **Adorable** is both the masculine singular and the feminine singular form.

To make the adjective masculine plural, add **s** to the masculine singular. (But note the comments on forming plurals earlier!)

To make the adjective feminine plural, add **es** to the masculine singular.

Adjectives which have irregular feminines, and which appear in the glossary:

masculine singular	feminine singular
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<b>actif</b>	<b>active</b>
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<b>beau</b>	<b>belle</b>
-------------	--------------

<b>blanc</b>	<b>blanche</b>
--------------	----------------

<b>bon</b>	<b>bonne</b>
------------	--------------

<b>ce</b>	<b>cette</b>
-----------	--------------

<b>gros</b>	<b>grosse</b>
-------------	---------------

<b>mignon</b>	<b>mignonne</b>
---------------	-----------------

<b>paresseux</b>	<b>paresseuse</b>
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<b>quel</b>	<b>quelle</b>
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<b>vieux</b>	<b>vieille</b>
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### *Possessive adjectives*

Possessive adjectives are the words *my, your, his/her* etc in English. In French they too have to agree with the noun. They are arranged here as first, second and third person, singular and plural.

- **Note** that the plural forms are both masculine and feminine.

Masc sing	Fem sing	Pl	
<b>mon</b>	<b>ma</b>	<b>mes</b>	<i>my</i>
<b>ton</b>	<b>ta</b>	<b>tes</b>	<i>your</i>
<b>son</b>	<b>sa</b>	<b>ses</b>	<i>his, her, one's</i>

<b>notre</b>	<b>notre</b>	<b>nos</b>	<i>our</i>
<b>votre</b>	<b>votre</b>	<b>vos</b>	<i>your</i>
<b>leur</b>	<b>leur</b>	<b>leurs</b>	<i>their</i>

## The days of the week

The days of the week are all masculine.

They are:

<b>dimanche</b>	<i>Sunday</i>
<b>lundi</b>	<i>Monday</i>
<b>mardi</b>	<i>Tuesday</i>
<b>mercredi</b>	<i>Wednesday</i>
<b>jeudi</b>	<i>Thursday</i>
<b>vendredi</b>	<i>Friday</i>
<b>samedi</b>	<i>Saturday</i>

- **Note** that they are written **without capital letters** and printed without upper case letters unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

To say *on Sunday* you do not use a preposition in French. *On Sunday* is **dimanche**.

*Every Sunday* is **tous les dimanches**.

## The months of the year

The months of the year are all masculine.

They are:

<b>janvier</b>	<i>January</i>
<b>février</b>	<i>February</i>
<b>mars</b>	<i>March</i>
<b>avril</b>	<i>April</i>
<b>mai</b>	<i>May</i>
<b>juin</b>	<i>June</i>
<b>juillet</b>	<i>July</i>
<b>août</b>	<i>August</i>
<b>septembre</b>	<i>September</i>
<b>octobre</b>	<i>October</i>
<b>novembre</b>	<i>November</i>
<b>décembre</b>	<i>December</i>

- **Note** that they are written **without capital letters** and printed without upper case letters unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

To say *in* with a month, you use the expression **au mois de**, literally *in the month of*. Therefore, *in January* is **au mois de janvier**. You can also use **en**, and so you can say **en janvier**.

The date

Apart from *the first*, which is **le premier**, cardinal numbers instead of ordinals are used with dates. There is no word for *of* when giving the date in French. Thus:

**le premier mars**

**le deux mars**

**le dix-sept mars**

**le trente mars** etc

To say *on* with a date, simply use the forms given above. French does not use a word for *on* in expressions which give the date. Thus, **le premier avril** can also mean *on the first of April*.

## The numerals

Numerals are of two kinds, cardinal, giving the number of articles in question and ordinal, giving the place of each article in numerical order.

The cardinal numbers are given below.

<b>zéro</b>	0	<b>dix</b>	10
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<b>un/une</b>	1	<b>onze</b>	11
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<b>deux</b>	2	<b>douze</b>	12
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<b>trois</b>	3	<b>treize</b>	13
--------------	---	---------------	----

<b>quatre</b>	4	<b>quatorze</b>	14
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<b>cinq</b>	5	<b>quinze</b>	15
-------------	---	---------------	----

<b>six</b>	6	<b>seize</b>	16
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<b>sept</b>	7	<b>dix-sept</b>	17
-------------	---	-----------------	----

<b>huit</b>	8	<b>dix-huit</b>	18
-------------	---	-----------------	----

<b>neuf</b>	9	<b>dix-neuf</b>	19
-------------	---	-----------------	----

<b>vingt</b>	20
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<b>vingt et un</b>	21
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<b>vingt-deux</b>	22
-------------------	----

<b>vingt-trois</b>	23
--------------------	----

<b>vingt-quatre</b>	24
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<b>vingt-cinq</b>	25
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<b>vingt-six</b>	26
------------------	----

<b>vingt-sept</b>	27
-------------------	----

<b>vingt-huit</b>	28
-------------------	----

<b>vingt-neuf</b>	29
-------------------	----

<b>trente</b>	30
<b>trente et un</b>	31
<b>trente-deux</b>	32 etc
<b>quarante</b>	etc 40 etc
<b>cinquante</b>	etc 50 etc
<b>soixante</b>	etc 60 etc
<b>soixante-neuf</b>	69
<b>soixante-dix</b>	70
<b>soixante et onze</b>	71
<b>soixante-douze</b>	72
<b>soixante-treize</b>	73
<b>soixante-quatorze</b>	74
<b>soixante-quinze</b>	75
<b>soixante-seize</b>	76
<b>soixante-dix-sept</b>	77
<b>soixante-dix-huit</b>	78
<b>soixante-dix-neuf</b>	79
<b>quatre-vingts</b>	80
<b>quatre-vingt-un</b>	81
<b>quatre-vingt-deux</b>	82
<b>quatre-vingt-trois</b>	83
<b>quatre-vingt-quatre</b>	84
<b>quatre-vingt-cinq</b>	85
<b>quatre-vingt-six</b>	86
<b>quatre-vingt-sept</b>	87

<b>quatre-vingt-huit</b>	88
<b>quatre-vingt-neuf</b>	89
<b>quatre-vingt-dix</b>	90
<b>quatre-vingt-onze</b>	91
<b>quatre-vingt-douze</b>	92
<b>quatre-vingt-treize</b>	93
<b>quatre-vingt-quatorze</b>	94
<b>quatre-vingt-quinze</b>	95
<b>quatre-vingt-seize</b>	96
<b>quatre-vingt-dix-sept</b>	97
<b>quatre-vingt-dix-huit</b>	98
<b>quatre-vingt-dix-neuf</b>	99
<b>cent</b>	100
<b>cent un</b>	101
<b>cent deux etc</b>	102 etc
<b>mille</b>	1000
<b>mille un</b>	1001
<b>mille cinq cents</b>	1500
<b>mille cinq cent dix-neuf</b>	1519
<b>deux mille</b>	2000
<b>un million</b>	1 000 000

## Notes

- A hyphen is used between the numbers when they are used to build up in the teens, twenties etc, **but not for 21, 31, 41, 51, 61 and 71.**

- In these numbers the word **et** without hyphens joins the two numbers; thus: **vingt et un, trente et un, quarante et un, cinquante et un, soixante et un** and **soixante et onze**.
- From 60, the numbers 1 to 19 are used to build up from 61 to 79, and from 80 they are used to build up from 81 to 99.
- **Quatre-vingts** is 80, and has a final **s** - just like four twenties.
- From then on, when **quatre-vingt** is followed by another number in the building up process, there is no **s**, nor is there an **et** at 81 or 91. Thus, **quatre-vingt-un, quatre-vingt-cing, quatre-vingt-dix, quatre-vingt-onze, quatre-vingt-douze**.
- From 100, there is no hyphen or **et** between the word **cent** and the next number, but the previous rules still hold with the numbers used to build up from the hundred. Thus, **cent, cent un, cent deux, cent dix-huit, cent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf**.
- 200, 300, 400 etc have an **s** on the **cent**, thus **deux cents, trois cents** etc, but there is no **s** if another number follows. Thus, **deux cents**, but **deux cent un**.
- **Mille** meaning *thousand* never has an **s**. Thus, **deux mille**. If you add an **s** and write **deux milles**, it means *two miles*.
- Relax: how often do you ever need to write the numbers out in full?

The ordinal number most likely to be needed is *first*, which is **premier/première**. It is used in dates

## The weather

The verb used with general weather statements is **faire** in the third person singular.

**Il fait beau**                      It's fine weather, it's lovely weather

**Il fait mauvais**                It's bad weather

**Il fait chaud**                    It's warm

**Il fait très chaud**              It's hot

**Il fait froid**                    It's cold

**Il fait frais**                    It's cool

**Il fait du soleil**                It's sunny

**Il fait du brouillard**         It's foggy

**Il fait du vent**                 It's windy

**Il fait de la tempête**         It's blowing a gale

**Il fait de l'orage**              It's a thunderstorm

Some verbs are used in their own right:

**Il gèle**                            It's freezing

**Il neige**                         It's snowing

**Il pleut**                         It's raining

## Glossary

### A

à: to, at  
à bientôt: see you soon  
à demain: see you tomorrow  
à peu près: almost  
absent: absent  
accent(*m*): accent  
accueillant: welcoming  
acheter: to buy  
actif/active: active  
adorable: adorable, lovely  
âge(*m*): age  
âgé: old(*adjective*)  
agrafeuse(*f*): stapler  
agriculteur(*m*): farmer, farm worker  
aider: to help  
aimable: pleasant, kind, nice  
aimer: to like  
allemand: German  
aller: to go  
ami(*m*): friend  
an(*m*): year  
anglais: English  
Angleterre(*f*): England  
animal/animaux(*msing/pl*): animal  
année(*f*): year  
anniversaire(*m*): birthday  
août(*m*): August  
appartement(*m*): flat, apartment  
appeler: to call  
s'appeler: to be called  
après: after  
après-midi(*m*): afternoon  
armoire(*f*): cupboard  
armoire de pharmacie(*f*): medicine cabinet  
armoire de toilette(*f*): bathroom cabinet  
arriver: to arrive  
art(*m*): art  
assez: enough, quite (*when used with an adjective*)  
assistante(*f*): assistant  
athlétique: athletic, fit  
aujourd'hui: today  
au: to the (*contraction of à and le*)  
au revoir: goodbye  
aussi: also  
automne(*m*): autumn  
autre: other

aux: to the (*contraction of à and les*)  
avant: before(*with expressions of time*)  
avec: with  
avoir: to have  
avril(*m*): April

## B

badminton(*m*): badminton  
baignoire(*f*): bath  
banlieue(*f*): suburbs, outskirts  
banque(*f*): bank  
bâtiment(*m*): building  
beau/belle: beautiful, handsome  
beaucoup: a lot, much  
beaucoup de: a lot of, many  
beauté(*f*): beauty  
belge: Belgian  
Belgique(*f*): Belgium  
berger(*m*): shepherd  
bêtise(*f*): silly, stupid thing  
bidet(*m*): bidet  
bien: well, very  
bien sûr: of course  
bientôt: soon  
biochimie(*f*): biochemistry  
blague(*f*): joke  
blanc/blanche: white  
bleu: blue  
blond: fair, blond  
bon/bonne: good  
bonjour: hello, good day, good afternoon  
bord(*m*): edge, side  
bouche(*f*): mouth  
boutique(*f*): shop  
bras(*m*): arm  
breton: Breton (*language*)  
brouillard(*m*): fog  
buffet(*m*): sideboard  
bureau(*m*): office  
bus(*m*): bus(*in town*)

## C

ça: that (*shortened form of cela, a demonstrative pronoun, not an adjective*)  
ça va: OK (*as a question*) how are things?  
ça va bien: (things are) fine, OK  
ça va mal: (things are) not so good, going badly  
café(*m*): café; coffee  
cahier(*m*): exercise book, jotter  
calculatrice(*f*): calculator  
campagne(*f*): country, countryside

Canada(*m*): Canada  
 canapé(*m*): sofa, settee  
 capitale(*f*): capital  
 car: for, because  
 cartable(*m*): schoolbag  
 cathédrale(*f*): cathedral  
 ce/cette/ces: this, that, these, those (*demonstrative adjective*)  
 célèbre: famous  
 celui/celle/ceux/celles: this, that, these, those (*demonstrative pronoun*)  
 celtique: Celtic  
 cent: a hundred  
 centrale nucléaire(*f*): nuclear power station  
 centre(*m*): centre  
 centre commercial(*m*): shopping centre  
 c'est: it is  
 chaîne hi-fi(*f*): hi-fi set, stereo system  
 chaise(*f*): chair  
 chambre(*f*): bedroom  
 chance(*f*): (good) luck  
 chapeau(*m*): hat  
 chaque: each  
 chat(*m*): cat (*the feminine form is chatte*)  
 châtain: (chestnut) brown (*of hair*)  
 château(*m*): castle, country house  
 chaud: warm  
 chauffage centrale(*m*): central heating  
 chaussette(*f*): sock  
 chaussure(*f*): boot, shoe  
 chef-lieu(*m*): chief town, administrative centre  
 cheminée(*f*): fireplace  
 chercher: to look for, to search  
 cheval/chevaux(*msing/pl*): horse, horses  
 cheveux(*mpl*): hair  
 chèvre(*f*): goat  
 chez: to the house of, at the house of (*for example, chez Robert = to, at Robert's house*)  
 chien(*m*): dog (*the feminine is chienne*)  
 chien de berger(*m*): sheepdog  
 chose(*f*): thing  
 cinéma(*m*): cinema  
 cinq: five  
 cinquante: fifty  
 ciseaux(*m pl*): scissors  
 citadelle(*f*): citadel, stronghold  
 classe(*f*): class  
 classeur(*m*): filing cabinet  
 climat(*m*): climate  
 club(*m*): club  
 cochon d'Inde(*m*): Guinea pig  
 colorier: to colour, to colour in

coiffe(f): lace cap, headdress  
coiffeuse(f): hairdresser  
collège(m): secondary school  
combien de: how much, how many  
comme: as, like  
comme ci, comme ça: so so  
commencer: to begin, to start  
comment: how, what (*as in comment t'appelles-tu*)  
commerçant(m): shop keeper, shop worker  
communauté(f): community  
compagnie(f): company  
concert(m): concert  
congélateur(m): deep freeze, freezer  
content: pleased, happy, content  
copain/copine(m & f): friend, pal  
côte(f): coast  
cottage(m): cottage, bungalow  
cou(m): neck  
couleur(f): colour  
couloir(m): corridor  
cour(f): yard, courtyard, (school) playground  
cours(m): lesson, course  
court de tennis(m): tennis court  
cousin/cousine(m & f): cousin  
couvert: covered  
crabe(f): crab  
crayon(m): pencil  
croissant(m): croissant, crescent  
Cuba(m): Cuba  
cuisine(f): kitchen  
cuisinière(f): cooker  
curling(m): curling (*the game*)  
cyclisme(m): cycling

## D

dame(f): lady  
dans: in, inside  
danser: to dance  
date(f): date  
de: of, from  
décembre(m): December  
délivrer: to free, to set free  
demain: tomorrow  
demi/demie: half  
dent(f): tooth  
derrière: behind  
dessiner: to draw  
détendre, se: to relax  
deux: two  
deuxième: second

devant: in front (of)  
développé: extended, extensive, developed  
différent: different  
dimanche(*m*): Sunday  
disque(*m*): record, disk  
diviser: to divide  
dix: ten  
doigt(*m*): finger  
domestique: domestic, household  
donc: so, therefore  
dos(*m*): back  
douche(*f*): shower  
douze: twelve  
drôle: funny  
du: of the (*the contraction of de and le*)  
dur: hard  
durer: to last

## **E**

école(*f*): school  
école primaire(*f*): primary school  
écossais: Scottish  
Écosse(*f*): Scotland  
écrire: to write  
écouter: to listen (to)  
écurie(*f*): stable  
égaler: to equal  
église(*f*): church  
électricien(*m*): electrician  
éléphant(*m*): elephant  
élève(*m & f*): pupil  
elle/elles: she/they (*f*)  
embrasser: to kiss  
employé(*m*): employee, worker  
en: in  
encore: still, yet  
endroit(*m*): place  
enfant(*m*): child  
enlever: to take off  
ennuyer, s': to become bored  
enrhumé: (*used with être*) to have the cold  
entendre, s': to get on with (*relationships*)  
entre: between  
épaule(*f*): shoulder  
équitation(*f*): horse riding  
Espagne(*f*): Spain  
espagnol: Spanish  
est(*m*): east  
est-ce que: (*literally*) is it that; *the formula used to turn a statement into a question*  
et: and

étage(*m*): floor, storey  
États-Unis(*m*): United States  
été(*m*): summer  
être: to be  
étude(*f*): study  
étudier: to study  
eux: they, them, themselves (*emphatic, strong pronoun*)  
évier(*m*): sink

## **F**

facile: easy  
facilement: easily  
faculté(*f*): faculty, university  
faire: to do, to make  
famille(*f*): family  
fauteuil(*m*): armchair  
fenêtre(*f*): window  
ferme(*f*): farm  
fermer: to close, to shut  
festival(*m*): festival  
festivité(*f*): festival, festivity  
fête(*f*): birthday, festival  
février(*m*): February  
fille(*f*): girl, daughter  
finir: to finish  
fois(*f*): time, occasion (*in arithmetic, times*)  
football(*m*): football (*can be shortened to le foot*)  
forêt(*f*): forest  
fort: strong, good (*at something*)  
four à micro-ondes(*m*): micro-wave oven  
fraîcheur(*f*): coolness  
frais: cool  
français: French  
France(*f*): France  
frère(*m*): brother  
frigo(*m*): fridge  
froid: cold  
fromage(*m*): cheese  
frontière(*f*): frontier, border

## **G**

garage(*m*): garage  
gare(*f*): station  
gâteau(*m*): cake  
geler: to freeze  
genou(*m*): knee  
gens(*m pl*): people  
gentil: nice, kind  
golf(*m*): golf  
gomme(*f*): rubber, eraser

grand: big, tall  
grand-mère(*f*): grandmother  
grand-père(*m*): grandfather  
grande école(*f*): specialist establishment of higher education  
gratuity: free  
grippe(*f*): influenza, flu  
gris: grey  
gros/grosse: big, fat  
guitare(*f*): guitar  
gymnase(*m*): gymnasium

## H

habitant(*m*): inhabitant  
habiter: to live (in), to inhabit  
hamster(*m*): hamster  
heure(*f*): hour, o'clock  
hippopotame(*m*): hippopotamus  
historique: historical  
hiver(*m*): winter  
honneur(*m*): honour  
hôpital(*m*): hospital  
hôtel(*m*): hotel  
huit: eight  
humeur(*f*): humour, mood

## I

il/ils: he, they (*m*)  
il y a: there is, there are (*invariable*)  
île(*f*): island  
Îles Canaries(*f*): Canary Islands  
Îles Orcades(*f*): Orkney Isles  
immeuble(*m*): flat, dwelling  
important: important  
infirmière(*f*): nurse  
ingénieur(*m*): engineer  
intelligent: intelligent  
irlandais: Irish  
Irlande(*f*): Ireland  
Italie(*f*): Italy

## J

jambe(*f*): leg  
janvier(*m*): January  
jardin(*m*): garden  
jazz(*m*): jazz  
je: I  
jeudi(*m*): Thursday  
joli: pretty, nice  
jouer: to play  
jour(*m*): day

juin(*m*): June  
juillet(*m*): July  
jumeaux/jumelles(*m&fpl*): twins  
jusqu'à: until  
juste: right (*as in: juste sur: right onto*)

## **K**

kilomètre(*m*): kilometre

## **L**

lac(*m*): lake  
lampe(*f*): lamp  
langoustine(*f*): (large) prawn  
langue(*f*): language, tongue  
lavabo(*m*): washhand basin  
lave-vaisselle(*m*): dishwasher  
le/la/les(*m/f/pl*): the  
le long de: along  
léopard(*m*): leopard  
lion(*m*): lion  
lire: to read  
lit(*m*): bed  
livre(*m*): book  
loisir(*m*): leisure, pastime  
lundi(*m*): Monday  
lycée(*m*): secondary school (selective, like a grammar school)

## **M**

Madame(*f*): madam, Mrs.  
Mademoiselle(*f*): Miss  
magasin(*m*): shop  
magazine(*m*): magazine  
magnétoscope(*m*): video recorder/player  
mai(*m*): May  
main(*f*): hand  
maintenant: now  
mais: but  
maison(*f*): house  
maîtresse d'école(*f*): primary school teacher  
mal: bad(*adverb*), badly, (*used with avoir to mean ill or sore*)  
maman(*f*): Mother, Mum, Mummy  
manger: to eat  
marché(*m*): market  
mardi(*m*): Tuesday  
marié: married  
marin(*m*): sailor  
Maroc(*m*): Morocco  
marron: brown (*of eyes, invariable*)  
mars(*m*): March  
match(*m*): match, game

mathématiques(*f*): mathematics  
 matin(*m*): morning  
 mauvais: bad, naughty  
 me: me, myself  
 méchant: naughty  
 médiéval: mediaeval  
 même: even, the same  
 menton(*m*): chin  
 mer(*f*): sea  
 mercredi(*m*): Wednesday  
 mère(*f*): mother  
 mettre: to put, to place  
 meubles(*m pl*): furniture  
 midi(*m*): midday, noon  
 mignon/mignonne: pretty, nice  
 mille: thousand  
 mince: thin  
 mine(*f*): mine  
 miner: to mine  
 minuit(*m*): midnight  
 mode(*f*): fashion, way  
 moi: me, I (*emphatic or strong pronoun*)  
 moins: less, minus, to (*when expressing minutes to the hour*)  
 mois(*m*): month  
 mon/ma/mes(*m,f,pl*): my  
 monde(*m*): world  
 Monsieur(*m*): Sir, Mr.  
 monstre(*m*): monster  
 montagne(*f*): mountain  
 montrer: to show  
 monument(*m*): monument, historical building  
 moquer, se: to make fun of  
 moyen âge(*m*); middle ages (*historical*)  
 mouton(*m*): sheep  
 musée(*m*): museum  
 musique(*f*): music

## N

naître (*past participle né*): to be born  
 natation(*f*): swimming  
 nationalité(*f*): nationality  
 naturel/naturelle: natural  
 nautique: nautical, sea (*adjectivally*)  
 ne – pas: not  
 né: born  
 néerlandais: Dutch, Flemish  
 neige(*f*): snow  
 neiger: to snow  
 neuf: nine  
 nez(*m*): nose

nickel(*m*): nickel  
Noël(*m*): Christmas  
noir: black  
nom(*m*): name  
nom de famille(*m*): surname  
non: no  
nord(*m*): north  
normalement: normally  
nous: we  
novembre(*m*): November

## O

octobre(*m*): October  
official/officielle: official(*adjective*)  
on: we, one  
oncle(*m*): uncle  
onze: eleven  
orange: orange(*adjective*)  
oreille(*f*): ear  
orteil(*m*): toe  
où: where  
ou: or  
ouest(*m*): west  
oui: yes  
ouvrir: to open

## P

Papa(*m*): Father, Dad, Daddy  
par: through  
parade(*f*): parade  
parce que: because  
parents(*m pl*): parents  
paresseux/paresseuse: lazy  
parfois: sometimes  
parler: to speak  
parleur(*m*): speaker  
partie(*f*): part  
pas de + *noun*: no(*for example*: pas de montagnes: no mountains)  
passer: to pass  
passion(*f*): passion  
patinoire(*f*): skating rink  
patron(*m*): patron saint  
pause(*f*): lunch break  
pays(*m*): country  
paysage(*m*): countryside  
Pays de Galles(*m*): Wales  
pêche(*f*): fishing  
pêcher: to fish (for)  
pêcheur(*m*): fisherman  
pendant: during

pente(*f*): slope, hill  
père(*m*): father  
petit: little, small  
peu(*m*): little, bit  
peut-être: perhaps, maybe  
pièce(*f*): room  
pied(*m*): foot  
piscine(*f*): swimming pool  
placard(*m*): cupboard  
plage(*f*): beach  
plat: flat  
plein: full  
plein air, en: in the open air  
pleuvoir (il pleut): to rain (it's raining)  
pluie(*f*): rain  
plus: more, plus (*arithmetic*)  
plus, en: moreover  
poisson(*m*): fish  
poitrine(*f*): chest  
porte(*f*): door  
porter: to bring  
porter, se: to bring(to oneself): *ie*: se porter chance: to bring good luck  
poser: to place, to put  
poster(*m*): poster  
pouce(*m*): thumb  
pour: for  
pouvoir (il peut): to be able, can (he can)  
préférer: to prefer  
premier: first  
près de: near  
présent: present  
presque: almost  
primaire: primary  
printemps(*m*): spring  
produit(*m*): product, produce  
professeur(*m & f*): teacher  
professeur d'école(*m & f*): primary school teacher  
promenade(*f*): walk  
proper: own(*adjective*)  
provence(*f*): south of France  
province(*f*): province  
pupitre(*m*): desk

## Q

quand: when  
quarante: forty  
quart(*m*): quarter  
quartier(*m*): district, quarter(*of a town*)  
quatorze: fourteen  
quatre: four

quatre-vingts: eighty  
quatre-vingt-dix: ninety  
qu'est-ce que: what (*interrogative*)  
qu'est-ce que c'est: what is it  
quel/quelle(*m, f*): what, which (*adjective*)  
quelquefois: sometimes  
qui: who, which  
quinze: fifteen  
quitter: to leave  
quoi: what

## R

radiateur(*m*): radiator  
radio(*f*): radio  
rang(*m*): row  
réception(*f*): reception  
récréation(*f*): interval, morning break  
regarder: to look, to look at, to watch  
région(*f*): region  
règle(*f*): ruler  
restaurant(*m*): restaurant  
rendezvous(*m*): meeting place  
réseau(*m*): network  
ressembler: to resemble  
restaurant(*m*): restaurant  
rester: to stay, to remain  
rêve(*m*): dream  
rez de chaussée(*m*): ground floor  
rouge: red  
roux: red (*of hair*)  
Royaume Uni(*m*): United Kingdom  
rugby(*m*): rugby

## S

sac(*m*): bag  
salle à manger(*f*): dining room  
salle de bains(*f*): bathroom  
salle de séjour(*f*): living room  
salon(*m*): sitting room; salon(*as in hairdressing etc*)  
salut: hello, hi  
samedi(*m*): Saturday  
science(*f*): science  
se: himself, herself, themselves  
secrétaire(*m & f*): secretary  
seize: sixteen  
selon: according to  
semaine(*f*): week  
sept: seven  
septembre(*m*): September  
serpent(*m*): snake

serveuse(f): waitress  
shinty(m): shinty  
si: if  
s'il te plaît: please (*familiar, singular*)  
s'il vous plaît: please (*formal, plural*)  
simplement: simply  
singe(m): monkey  
situé: situated  
six: six  
sœur(f): sister  
soir(m): evening  
soixante: sixty  
soixante-dix: seventy  
soleil(m): sun  
son/sa/ses(m,f,pl): his, her  
sortir: to go out  
sous: under  
souvent: often  
sport(m): sport  
sportif/sportive: sporty, athletic  
statue(f): statue  
stylo(m): pen  
sud(m): south  
suisse: Swiss  
supermarché(m): supermarket  
sur: on

## T

table(f): table  
table de nuit(f): bedside table  
tableau(m): board, screen  
taille-crayon(m): pencil sharpener  
tante(f): aunt  
tard: late  
tasse(f): cup  
taureau(m): bull  
te: yourself  
téléphone(m): telephone  
télévision(f): television  
tempête(f): storm  
temps(m): weather, time (*but NOT time o'clock*)  
tennis(m): tennis  
terrain de football(m): football pitch  
terrain de golf(m): golf course  
tête(f): head  
tigre(m): tiger  
 tiroir(m): drawer  
toilettes(f pl): toilet, lavatory  
toujours: always, still  
ton/ta/tes(m,f,pl): your

touriste(*m&f*): tourist  
tous les deux: both  
tôt: soon, early  
tout: all  
traditionnel/traditionnelle: traditional  
travailler: to work  
treize: thirteen  
trentaine(*f*): about thirty  
très: very  
trois: three  
trop: too  
trousse(*f*): pencil case  
trouver: to find  
tu: you

## U

un/une(*m,f*): a, an, one  
unique: only (*as in only child*)  
université(*f*): university  
usine(*f*): factory

## V

vacances(*f pl*): holiday, holidays  
vache(*f*): cow  
veau(*m*): calf  
vendredi(*m*): Friday  
venir: to come  
vent(*m*): wind  
vert: green  
vie(*f*): life  
vieux/vieille(*m,f*): old  
village(*m*): village  
ville(*f*): town, city  
vin(*m*): wine  
vingt: twenty  
visiter: to visit  
voici: here is, here are  
voile(*f*): sailing  
voir: to see  
voisin(*m*): neighbour  
vous: you (*plural or polite form*)  
voyager: to travel

## W

WC(*m pl*): W.C. , toilet  
weekend(*m*): weekend

## Y

yeux(*m pl*): eyes



## French Pronunciation

French pronunciation can be difficult to master.

It differs considerably from English in three major respects:

- sounds have a tight-lipped precision compared with loose, slack-jawed and diphthongised English;
- different stress patterns. In French, equal stress is given to all of the syllables in a word. This can be particularly noticed (and practised) where French and English words are very similar. For example, the English word *television* will normally have a stress on the *first i*. The French word *télévision* is pronounced with the same and equal stress on each syllable, and sounds flatter. The equal stress can give the impression that French is being spoken very rapidly, when in fact it is a question of lack of significant stress within words;
- stress pattern in the sentence. In French, normally, intonation **drops** markedly at the end of a sentence, but **rises** within the sentence at commas, for example. (This is particularly noticeable when someone is reading aloud.) Note that this intonation pattern **does not mean speaking more loudly or more softly**. It is the rise and fall of the voice, not the loudness, which is important. A rising intonation at the end of a sentence turns the statement into a question.

### Vowels

*a* as in **hat**

*au* as in **over**

*e* as in **get**

*é* between **get** and **gate**

*è* between **get** and **gut**

*eu* as in **hurt**

*i* as in **machine**

*o* as in **hot**

*ô* as in **over**

*ou* as in the letter **o**

*u* is a tight-lipped version of the English **true**

The following are extra tricky nasal sounds:

*in/im* like **anxious**

*an/am* and *en/em* like **Don**caster said through your nose

*on/om* like **Don**caster with a heavy cold

*un/um* like **un**derstand

Resist the temptation to insert an obtrusive **g** into the nasal sounds.

### **Consonants**

Consonants at the end of words are usually silent. Unfortunately, this is a very general rule and there are many exceptions, quite often in the commonly used words in everyday speech. For example, *pas plus tard* (not later) is pronounced *pa-ploo-tarr*. However, when the following word begins with a vowel, you should run the consonant over (liaison): *pas après* (not after) is *pazapray*.

There are a few differences from English.

*c* is always pronounced like an English *s* before *i* or *e*

*ch* is an English *sh*

*ç* is an English *s*

*j* is pronounced as in pleasure

*h* is always silent, everywhere

*ll* as in bayonet

*r* is growled rather than trilled

*th* is like an English *t*: **thé** pronounced like **tay**

*w* is pronounced as English *v*

(Adapted from *The Rough Guide*)

