

French
Conversation
with
Paul Noble
REVIEW BOOKLET



Collins

This booklet is designed to provide you with a quick and easy way to review and reinforce what you learn during your course and also to help you decode and understand the dialogues that you will encounter later in the course.

But don't worry about any of this for the moment because what I want you to do first of all is to start listening to the audio part of the course and not to even consider coming back to this booklet until I tell you to do so on the audio part of the course. Simple, eh?

So, if you haven't started listening yet, you'd better get started. That French won't learn itself you know!!

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How to use this booklet

This booklet has been designed to help you decode and understand the dialogues included in the course. The first fifteen dialogues, as you will have learned from the audio, are taught and analysed in detail on the audio. After that though, you are encouraged to start analysing the dialogues yourselves. In this booklet, you will find 35 dialogues in total, which include: a transcript of the French audio, an English translation of the meaning of each sentence, a more literal translation given in brackets (where necessary), along with explanations of the grammar and various cultural details in footnotes beneath each dialogue.

You should begin, as has already been stated above, by listening to the audio. Then, as you begin to progress through the dialogues, you can return to this booklet to decode any part of the spoken dialogues that you're struggling with. Make sure though that, once you've checked something in the booklet, you then go and listen through the entire dialogue again. It is through this process of checking, listening, re-checking where necessary and re-listening again and again, that you will gradually master all of the dialogues and by doing so develop the ability to understand French when spoken at native speeds – as well as acquire a great deal of French vocabulary and grammatical knowledge besides.

So, if you haven't done so already, go and press play on that first audio track and get started. You're about to find out just how good a course this is!

Dialogue 1 : Tu viens ?

Sue, tu viens ?

On¹ ne peut pas y aller plus tard ?

Non, on ne² peut pas ! Pourquoi tu fais toujours ça ?

Je fais³ quoi ?

Tu nous fais partir à la dernière minute !

Ce n'est pas vrai !

On peut y aller⁴ alors stp⁵ ?

D'accord. J'ai juste besoin de⁶ trouver mon manteau ... et mes clefs ...

Ahh !

Dialogue 1: Are you coming?

Sue, are you coming (you come)?

Can't we (one) go later?

No, we can't! Why do you always do that?

Do what (I do what)?

You make us leave at the last minute!

I do not (that's not true)!

Can we please go then?

Alright. I just need to find my coat... and my keys...

Uggghh...!

¹ In everyday, informal spoken French, people frequently use "on" to mean "we" instead of "nous".

² Have you noticed how, in the recording, the "ne" is dropped most of the time? This is because in informal spoken, modern French, people drop the "ne" much of the time when speaking. This is something to be aware of and one of the things this course will get you used to.

³ Notice again how different informal French spoken at full speed by native speakers sounds compared to how it is written. "Je fais" ends up sounding like "j'fais". You don't have to speak like this yourself – although you certainly can if you want to – but you do need to get used to understanding French when it is spoken like this. And the best way to do that is to know what is being said (by checking and finding out in this booklet) and then just let the language wash over you. Through repeated listenings, coupled with checking the bits you don't understand in this booklet, your brain will get used to interpreting and understanding French spoken at this speed and gradually you will be able to understand each dialogue without difficulty.

⁴ When "go" is used to mean "leave" in English, for instance when we say "Please can we go, I hate it here!" in French you will say "go **there**" (y aller). I'll repeat that again: if you want to use "go" to mean "leave" (or "split", "scoot" or "skedaddle" or any other way you might want to put it) you won't use "aller" on its own in French – instead you'll say "y aller". So, for instance, to say "I'm tired. I want to go" you'll say "Je suis fatigué. Je veux **y** aller!" (not just "je veux aller") or to say "Can we go now?" you'll say "On peut **y** aller maintenant ?" (not just "On peut aller maintenant ?"). So, if you want to use "go" to mean "to leave" in French, you must say "**y** aller" not just "aller" on its own.

⁵ A shortened way to write "s'il te plaît" – which is the informal way to say "please" in French.

⁶ Again, notice how the "de" here is not clearly sounded in the dialogue. This is very typical in rapid, informal, spoken French. You will hear such omissions time and time again as you progress through the course. The important thing is to keep checking the booklet so that you can understand precisely what's being communicated.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **On peut y aller ?**
2. **On peut y aller plus tard ?**
3. **On ne peut pas y aller maintenant ?**
4. **On ne peut pas partir⁷ plus tard ?**
5. **J'ai besoin de trouver mon manteau.**
6. **On a besoin de trouver mes clefs.**

Going further...

- Can we go?
- Can we go later?
- Can't we go now?
- Can't we go later? / Can't we leave later?
- I need to find my coat.
- We need to find my keys.

⁷ Notice how here, in order to say "go" in the sense of "to leave" in French, the speaker has simply used the French word for "leave": "partir". This demonstrates how in French you have two options when you want to say "go" in the sense of "leave", you can either say "go **there**" (**y** aller) or you can just literally say "leave" (partir). So, to say, for instance, "I'm tired. I want to go" you could say "Je suis fatigué. Je veux y aller." Or you could say "Je suis fatigué. Je veux partir". Both ways are commonly used, and both are correct. Feel free to adopt whichever you prefer!

Dialogue 2 : Parfait !

Je devrais rentrer chez moi⁸ dans une minute.

Tu ne peux pas rester plus longtemps ?

Pas vraiment. J'ai besoin de me lever tôt demain.

OK, je comprends.

Par contre, je peux revenir la semaine prochaine.

Vraiment ? Ce serait génial. Par contre, tu devrais venir plus tôt.

D'accord. Vers 3 heures, ça marche ?

Parfait !

Pour aller pour loin ...

1. J'ai besoin de me lever tôt demain.

2. Je devrais me lever tôt demain.

3. J'ai besoin de rentrer chez moi dans une minute.

4. Je devrais rentrer chez moi dans une minute.

5. Tu as besoin de venir plus tôt.

6. Tu devrais venir plus tôt.

Dialogue 2: Perfect!

I should go home (re-enter my home) in a minute.

Can't you stay longer (more long time)?

Not really. I need to get up (elevate myself) early tomorrow.

Okay, I understand.

I can come over again next week though (By contrast, I can re-come the week approaching).

Really? That would be great. You should come earlier though.

Okay. How about 3 o'clock? (Towards 3 o'clock, that walks?)

Perfect!

Going further...

I need to get up early tomorrow.

I should get up early tomorrow.

I need to go home in a minute.

I should go home in a minute.

You need to come earlier.

You should come earlier.

⁸ "Chez moi" means "my home" (literally "home me"). You can also say "chez toi" for "your home", "chez elle" for "her home", "chez lui" for "his home" and so on.

Dialogue 3 : Menteur !

Paul, on devrait aller se coucher maintenant.

Mais il est encore tôt !

Je sais mais on a besoin d'aller chez mes parents demain matin.

Oh non !

Hé, ce n'est pas sympa. Comment tu peux dire « oh non » juste parce qu'on a besoin d'aller chez mes parents ?

Je voulais dire « oh, nom de nom, quelle excellente nouvelle ! Youpi ! »

Tu n'es pas un très bon menteur !

Pour aller plus loin ...

- 1. On devrait se coucher maintenant.**
- 2. On peut aller se coucher maintenant.**
- 3. Ils peuvent aller se coucher maintenant.**
- 4. Ils devraient aller voir mes parents.**
- 5. Ils ont besoin de voir mes parents.**
- 6. Peuvent-ils voir mes parents ?**

Dialogue 3: Liar!

Paul, we should go to bed (lay oneself) now.

But it's still early!

I know but we need to go to my parents' (my parents' home) tomorrow morning.

Oh no!

Hey, that's not nice. How can you say "oh no" just because we need to see my parents?

I meant (wanted to say) "oh, no way (oh, name of names), what wonderful news! Yay!"

You're not a very good liar!

Going further...

We should go to bed now.

We can go to bed now.

They can go to bed now.

They should go to see my parents.

They need to see my parents.

Can they see my parents?

Dialogue 4 : L'anniversaire de qui ?

**On peut aller voir la Tour Eiffel
demain ?**

Si tu veux.

Et le Louvre ?

Ok.

Et Versailles ?

Très bien.

**Par contre, je ne veux pas me
lever tôt.**

D'accord.

**Et je veux être rentrée avant
la nuit.**

Pas de problème.

**Et on devrait trouver un endroit
sympa où déjeuner en route.
J'ai envie de coq au vin.**

Bien sûr.

**Super ! Je me demande ce qu'on
va faire pour *mon* anniversaire.**

Dialogue 4: Whose birthday?

Can we go to see the Eiffel Tower
tomorrow?

If you want.

And the Louvre?

Okay.

What about (and) Versailles?

Fine (very well).

I don't want to get up early though.

Alright.

And I want to get back before it's dark
(the night).

No problem.

And we should find a nice place to
have lunch (a place nice where to
lunch) on the way. I feel like having
chicken in wine.

Of course.

Wonderful! I wonder what we'll do
when it's *my* birthday.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Je veux déjeuner.**
2. **Je ne veux pas déjeuner.**
3. **Il veut voir la Tour Eiffel.**
4. **Elle veut rentrer tôt.**
5. **Elle a besoin de rentrer tôt.**
6. **Elle devrait rentrer tôt.**

Going further...

- I want to have lunch.
- I don't want to have lunch.
- He wants to see the Eiffel Tower.
- She wants to get back early.
- She needs to get back early.
- She should get back early.

Dialogue 5 : Excellente idée !

**Je devrais écrire ce rapport
aujourd'hui.**

Je peux t'aider ?

**Non, pas vraiment. Ça ne devrait
pas être trop difficile.**

**D'accord, dans ce cas, je vais me
mettre au travail.**

Ah, qu'est-ce que tu as à faire ?

**Ecrire quelques emails, c'est tout.
Je n'ai rien d'autre à faire
aujourd'hui.**

**Et plus tard, on peut peut-être
aller faire les magasins.**

Excellente idée !

Dialogue 5: Excellent idea!

I should write that report today.

Can I help you with it?

No, not really. It shouldn't be too
difficult.

Okay, in that case, I'll get on with my
own work (put myself to the work).

Oh, what do you have to do?

Write a few emails, that's all; I don't
have anything else (of other) to do
today.

And later on, perhaps we can go
shopping (do the shops).

Excellent idea!

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Il devrait aller faire les courses ⁹ . | He should go shopping (do the errands). |
| 2. Il ne devrait pas aller faire les magasins. | He shouldn't go shopping (do the shops). |
| 3. Tu as besoin d'écrire ce rapport aujourd'hui. | You need to write that report today. |
| 4. Tu n'as pas besoin d'écrire ce rapport aujourd'hui. | You don't need to write that report today. |
| 5. Je veux aider. | I want to help. |
| 6. Je ne veux pas aider. | I don't want to help. |

⁹ "Les courses" refers to grocery shopping. So, if you say "Il devrait aller faire les courses" you're suggesting that this person should go down to his local supermarket or grocery store and buy some provisions. If, however, you want to say "shopping" to mean going shopping in a more general sense, then you'll use "les magasins" or "du shopping" instead. So, if, for example, you said "Je veux faire les magasins" or "Je veux faire du shopping" it could mean that you want go out and buy some clothes or look at that new sofa or kitchen you've been thinking about buying: what it doesn't mean, however, is that you're popping out to buy some milk, eggs and fabric softener. So, "faire les courses" = going shopping for provisions, "faire les magasins / faire du shopping" = going shopping for everything else.

Dialogue 6 : Ce sera tout ?

Pommes ! Qui veut des pommes ?
Pommes ! 80 centimes le kilo !
Qui veut des pommes ? Elles¹⁰
sont très belles mes pommes !

Bonjour, je voudrais un kilo de
pommes, svp.

Voici.

Et des oranges aussi svp. Deux
kilos.

Deux kilos d'oranges, pas de
problème.

Et des fraises. J'en voudrais deux
barquettes.

Voilà. Ce sera tout ?

Je pense.

6,50 euros, madame.

Merci, monsieur.

Dialogue 6: Will that be everything?

Apples! Who wants some apples?
Apples! 80 cents a kilo! Who wants
some apples? They're very beautiful,
my apples!

Hello! I'd like a kilo of apples, please.

Here you are.

And some oranges as well, please.
Two kilos.

Two kilos of oranges, no problem.

And some strawberries. I'd like two
boxes.

There you are. Will that be everything?

I think so.

€6.50, madam.

Thank you, sir¹¹.

¹⁰ Notice how, since apples are feminine in French, the word we use for "they" when referring to them is "elles" not "ils".

¹¹ The use of "sir" here sounds quite formal in English but is not abnormal even in modern French. The language is certainly more relaxed with this sort of thing than it was in the past but the use of "madame" and "monsieur" is nevertheless still more frequent even today than the English equivalents.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Je vais prendre deux kilos de pommes.**
2. **Je vais prendre des bananes.**
3. **Je vais prendre deux grappes¹² de raisin.**
4. **Deux grappes de raisin et une demi-pastèque, svp.**
5. **Je pense.**
6. **Je ne pense pas.**

Going further...

- I'll have (I'm going to take) two kilos of apples.
- I'll have some bananas.
- I'll have two bunches of grapes.
- Two bunches of grapes and half a water melon, please.
- I think so.
- I don't think so.

¹²“Grappe” literally means “cluster”. So, “a bunch of grapes” in French is literally a cluster of grapes. And, interestingly, this word “grappe” that means “cluster”, is where the word “grape” in English comes from. Clearly, we must have heard them being referred to as “clusters” and assumed that that was the name of the fruit!

Dialogue 7 : C'est sûr qu'il va gagner !

Je pense que Duclos va gagner les élections cette année.

Duclos ? Non, elle ne sera jamais présidente. Je pense que Gauthier va gagner.

Hé, je te promets, Gauthier ne gagnera pas. Ils le détestent dans le sud.

Oui, mais il est populaire dans le nord. C'est sûr qu'il va gagner là-bas.

Juliette sait que tu soutiens Gauthier ?

Non, pas encore.

C'est ce que¹³ je pensais. Elle ne l'aime pas – elle ne va pas être contente !

Tu ne vas pas lui dire, hein¹⁴ ?

Dialogue 7: It's certain that he's going to win!

I think that Duclos will win the election this year.

Duclos? No, she'll never be president. I think that Gauthier will win.

Hey, I promise you, Gauthier won't win. They hate him in the South.

Yes, but he's popular in the North. It's certain that he's going to win there (over there).

Does Juliette know you're supporting Gauthier?

No, not yet.

That's what I thought. She doesn't like him – she's not going to be happy!

You aren't going to tell her, are you?

¹³When "what" is part way through a sentence and is *not* being used to ask a question in French, you will find that it is typically translated by "ce que". So, when you want to say something like "I don't know what you want" or "I don't know what life's all about" use "ce que".

¹⁴"Hein" at the end of a sentence in French is a way to ask a question or seek confirmation. It is used when in English we might add something like "are you?", "will you?", "don't you?", "isn't it?" to the end of a sentence to make sure of / confirm something. You'll hear "hein" used a lot by native French speakers.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Il ne sera jamais président.**
2. **Tu ne seras pas président.**
3. **Je n'aurai jamais d'enfant.**
4. **Ils ne vont pas gagner, hein ?**
5. **Non, ils ne gagneront jamais.**
6. **Si nous gagnons, je rentrerai tôt chez moi.**

Going further...

- He will never be president.
- You won't be president.
- I'll never have a baby.
- They're not going to win, are they?
- No, they'll never win.
- If we win, I'll go home early.

Dialogue 8 : Elle va avoir un bébé !

Tu ne vas pas me croire : Emma va avoir un bébé !

Pas possible ! Quand ?

En décembre.

Ouah ! Je me demande si ça va être un garçon ou une fille.

Je pense que ce sera un garçon.

C'est ce que je pensais. Quand même, j'espère que ce sera une fille.

Pourquoi ?

Oh, tu sais, les garçons, ils sont tellement pénibles.

Bon, j'imagine qu'on saura en décembre.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Emma va avoir un bébé.**
2. **Emma va avoir un garçon.**
3. **Elle va avoir un bébé.**
4. **Ce sera un garçon.**
5. **Non, ce sera une fille.**
6. **Emma est enceinte.**

Dialogue 8: She's going to have a baby!

You're not going to believe me:
Emma's going to have a baby!

No way (not possible)! When?

In December.

Wow! I wonder (ask myself) if it'll be a boy or a girl?

I think it'll be a boy.

That's what I was thinking. Even so (when even), I hope that it'll be a girl.

Why?

Oh, you know, boys are such a pain.

Well, I guess we'll know in December.

Going further...

Emma is going to have a baby.

Emma is going to have a boy.

She's going to have a baby.

It will be a boy.

No, it'll be a girl.

Emma's pregnant.

Dialogue 9 : On ne vit qu'une fois.¹⁵

Alors, ils font quoi ici ?

Ben, c'est surtout du fast-food ...
Je pense que je vais prendre un
hamburger.

J'imagine que je vais prendre la
même chose. Tu vas prendre des
frites avec ?

Je pense que je vais prendre une
salade.

Moi, je vais prendre une grande
portion de frites.

Quoi ? Mais ce n'est pas sain du
tout, ça !

Hé, on ne vit qu'une fois.¹⁶

J'imagine que tu as raison.

Dialogue 9: You only live once.

So, what do they do here?

Well, it's mainly (some) fast food.
I think I'll have a burger.

I suppose (that) I'll have the same
(thing). Are you going to have some
fries with it?

I think that I'll have a salad.

Me, I'm going to have a large portion
of fries.

What? But that isn't healthy at all
(that)!

Hey, you only live once.

I suppose you're right.

¹⁵ "Une fois" – used here to mean "once" – literally means "one time" or "one instance".

¹⁶ If you've worked through my earlier French courses, you'll have learned how you can make a sentence negative in French by making a "sandwich" in which "ne" and "pas" are *the two slices of bread* surrounding another word inside, which is *the filling* (for instance, "I cannot" = "je ne peux pas"). In the sentence here, however, we have a different type of sandwich, one in which the slices of bread involved are "ne" and "que". This type of sandwich gives the meaning "only". This type of construction often feels quite strange to English speakers but, if you're going to learn a foreign language, it is at times likely to sound, well... foreign!

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Qu'est-ce qu'il va prendre ?**
2. **Qu'est-ce qu'il va manger ?**
3. **Je vais prendre un cheeseburger.**
4. **Je vais prendre les beignets de poulet.**
5. **Je vais prendre un hamburger avec des frites.**
6. **Je vais prendre un milk-shake au chocolat.**

Going further...

- What's he going to have?
- What's he going to eat?
- I'm going to have a cheeseburger.
- I'm going to have chicken nuggets.
- I'm going to have a burger with fries.
- I'm going to have a chocolate milkshake.

Dialogue 10 : Quand ... ?

Quand vas-tu te marier ?

Je ne sais pas.

Et quand vas-tu te mettre à travailler ? Tu as vingt-cinq ans !

Je ne suis pas sûr. J'aurais vraiment besoin de retourner à la fac¹⁷ un jour.

D'accord, mais quand vas-tu aller à la fac ?

Ben, j'ai besoin de décider quelle matière je veux étudier cette fois.

Et quand vas-tu décider ça ?

J'imagine que je vais attendre d'être marié pour décider.

Oh la la ...

Dialogue 10: When...?

When are you going to get married?

I don't know.

And when are you going to get a job (put yourself to work)? You are twenty-five!

I'm not sure. I would really need to go back to college / university one day.

Okay, but when are you going to go back to college / university?

Well, I need to decide which subject I want to study this time.

And when are you going to decide that?

I guess I'll wait until I get married to decide.

Oh la la...

¹⁷ Short for "la faculté", "la fac" is an informal way to say "university" / "college" in French.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Et quand vas-tu décider ça ?**
2. **Ben, j'ai besoin de décider quelle matière je veux étudier cette fois.**
3. **Tu as 25 ans.**
4. **Je ne sais pas.**
5. **Quand vas-tu te marier ?**

Going further...

And when are you going to decide that?

Well, I need to decide what subject I want to study this time.

You're 25.

I don't know.

When are you going to get married?

Dialogue 11 : Leçons de piano

J'ai décidé d'apprendre le piano.

Oh, pourquoi maintenant ?

Eh bien, j'ai toujours été intéressé par la musique. J'adore la musique classique, j'adore le jazz et j'ai toujours voulu apprendre à jouer du piano.

Je n'ai jamais¹⁸ appris à jouer d'un instrument. Peut-être que je devrais venir avec toi.

Tu devrais ! Si tu n'as jamais essayé quelque chose, tu ne peux pas savoir si ça te plaira ou pas.

Tu as¹⁹ trouvé quelqu'un pour te donner des cours ?

Oui, la semaine dernière. Alors, tu vas venir avec moi ?

Absolument !

Dialogue 11: Piano lessons

I've decided to learn the piano.

Oh, why now?

Well, I've always been interested in (by the) music. I love classical music, I love jazz and I've always wanted to learn to play the piano.

I've never learned to play an instrument. Perhaps I should come with you.

You should! If you've never tried something, you can't know if you'll enjoy (if it will please you) it or not.

Have you found someone to give you lessons?

Yes, last week. So, will you come with me?

Definitely!

¹⁸ Another type of sandwich, with "ne" and "jamais" as the slices of bread: it is used to express "never" in a sentence.

¹⁹ Did you notice how this "tu as" sounded like "ta"? You will have heard many words that sound shortened or omitted by now but I thought this one was worth pointing out, as it is very common and distinct!

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **J'ai décidé d'apprendre le français.**
2. **Elle a décidé d'apprendre l'anglais.**
3. **Tu n'as²⁰ jamais appris une langue étrangère ?**
4. **Tu as finalement trouvé un boulot ?**
5. **Tu as déjà mangé du bœuf bourguignon ?**

Going further...

- I've decided to learn French.
- She has decided to learn English.
- Have you never learned a foreign language?
- Did you finally find a job?
- Have you ever (already) eaten beef bourguignon?

²⁰This time the entire "tu n'as" sounds like a "ta"? Again, this is how rapid, informal, modern French is spoken by native speakers. But even though it's a bit different to how it is written, it actually only requires getting used to. Soon enough, you'll be saying "ta" yourself!

Dialogue 12 : Pauvre John ...

Peter, depuis quand tu connais John ?

Eh bien, ça fait dix ans qu'il est marié avec ma sœur, donc ça fait probablement environ douze ans que je le connais.

Il est sympa ?

Oui, mais ma mère ne l'a jamais vraiment aimé.

Et ton père ?

Oh, John et mon père ont toujours eu une bonne relation. Ils ont même fait des voyages ensemble.

Pour aller plus loin ...

- 1. Ça fait dix ans que ma sœur est mariée avec lui.**
- 2. Ma sœur est partie en Espagne.**
- 3. Elle ne l'a jamais aimé.**
- 4. Depuis combien de temps connais-tu John ?**
- 5. Nous avons toujours eu un mariage heureux.**

Dialogue 12: Poor John...

Peter, how long have you known John (since when you know John)?

Well, he's been married to my sister for ten years, so I've probably known him for about twelve years (it makes ten years that he is married with my sister, so it makes probably about twelve years that I know him).

Is he nice?

Yes, but my mother has never really liked him.

What about your dad?

Oh, John and my dad have always had a good relationship. They've even made some trips together.

Going further...

- My sister's been married to him for ten years.
- My sister has gone (is left) to Spain.
- She's never liked him.
- How long have you known John?
- We have always had a happy marriage.

Dialogue 13 : Une voiture neuve

**Salut Peter ! Pourquoi tu souris
comme ça ? Qu'est-ce que t'as
fait ?**

**Je viens d'acheter une voiture
neuve.**

Ouh, quelle marque ?

Une Porsche.

**Une Porsche ? J'ai toujours voulu
avoir une Porsche. Elle²¹ était chère ?**

**Elle était beaucoup, beaucoup
trop chère.**

Alors, elle est où ?

Oh, elle n'est pas encore arrivée.

Oh, vraiment ... ?

Pour aller plus loin ...

- 1. Qu'est-ce qu'il a
fait récemment ?**
- 2. Il a acheté une Porsche !**
- 3. J'ai toujours voulu apprendre
le français.**
- 4. Elle l'a payé.**

Dialogue 13: A brand new car

Hi, Peter. Why are you smiling like that?
What have you been up to (what is it
you have done)?

I've just bought (I come from to buy)
a brand new car.

Ooh, what make (mark / brand)?

A Porsche.

A Porsche? I've always wanted to have
a Porsche. Was it (she) expensive?

It was much, much too expensive.

So, where is it?

Oh, it hasn't arrived yet.

Oh, really...?

Going further...

What has he been up to recently?

He's bought a Porsche!

I've always wanted to learn French.

She's paid for it.

²¹ The speaker here is referring back to a feminine thing / item, so refers to it as "she". In the same way, if a French speaker is referring back to a masculine thing / item, they will refer to it as "he".

Dialogue 14 : Les arrivées

Sont-ils déjà arrivés ?

Pas encore.

Oh, j'ai tellement hâte de les voir.

Je sais. Ils m'ont manqué aussi.

Je parie que le petit Jack a grandi.

Ça fait combien de temps qu'on ne les a pas vus ?

Trois, quatre ans peut-être.

Tu penses qu'ils ont déjà récupéré leurs bagages ?

Je ne sais pas. Peut-être.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. J'ai tellement hâte de te voir !

2. Avez-vous déjà récupéré vos bagages ?

3. Elle a grandi.

4. Ils ont grandi.

5. Vous m'avez tellement manqué.

6. Il est déjà arrivé ?

Dialogue 14: Arrivals

Have they already arrived?

Not yet.

Oh, I can't wait (have such haste of) to see them.

I know. I've missed them (they have lacked to me) too.

I bet that little Jack has grown.

How long is it since we've seen them?

Three, four years maybe.

Do you think they've already collected their luggage?

I don't know. Maybe.

Going further...

I can't wait to see you!

Have you collected your luggage yet?

She's grown / grown up.

They've grown / grown up.

I've missed you so much (You have so lacked to me).

Has he arrived yet?

Dialogue 15 : Habiter ici

Depuis combien de temps habitez-vous ici ?

Presque 20 ans.

Et ça vous plaît ?

J'adore vivre²² ici depuis le tout premier jour.

Et votre mari ?

Je pense qu'il aime aussi.

C'est vrai que vous avez acheté votre appartement pour seulement²³ 90 000 euros ?

C'est vrai, mais les prix ont beaucoup augmenté depuis cette époque.

Combien vaut-il maintenant ?

Je dirais qu'il vaut peut-être 500 000 euros maintenant.

Ouah, ça fait un gros bénéfice !

Dialogue 15: Living here

How long have you lived here (since how much of time live you here)?

Almost twenty years.

And you like it (And it pleases you)?

I've loved living (I adore to live) here since the very first day.

What about your husband?

I think he's enjoyed it (he likes) too.

Is it true that you bought your apartment for just €90,000?

That's right, but prices have increased a lot since that time.

How much is it worth now?

I would say that it's worth maybe €500,000 now.

Wow, that's a big profit!

²² Both "vivre" and "habiter" mean "to live". "Habiter", however, is only used to mean "to inhabit", "to live *somewhere*". "Vivre", on the other hand, means "to live" more generally; it can be used to mean both "to live" in the sense of being alive but also to talk about where you live, just like "habiter".

²³ Using "ne" and "que" (see Dialogue 9) is not the only way to express "only" in French. As you can see in this sentence, it is also very common to use the word "seulement" ("solely") to mean "only". Feel free to use whichever you prefer.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **J'habite ici depuis presque 20 ans.**
2. **Je t'ai toujours aimé.**
3. **Ça ne fait pas très longtemps que je l'ai.**
4. **Avez-vous vu mon appartement ?**

Going further...

I've lived here almost twenty years.

I've always loved you.

I haven't had it very long.

Have you seen my apartment?

Dialogue 16 : La fin du monde (première partie)

Eh, réveille-toi !

Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ?

Il n'y a plus²⁴ de courant.

**Peut-être qu'il y a eu un
tremblement de terre.**

**Peut-être ... oh, attends une
minute. Je n'ai pas de réception
non plus. Et toi ?**

**Euh, moi non plus²⁵. C'est bizarre.
Jette un œil dehors ... Tu vois
quelque chose ?**

**Euh, pas vraiment. Oh, attends.
On dirait²⁶ qu'il y a des gens qui
poursuivent un type dans la rue.**

Ils le poursuivent ?? Pourquoi ?

**Je ne sais pas. Mais ils ont l'air
bizarre.**

Qui ?

**Les gens qui le poursuivent. Ils ont
l'air malade.**

Dialogue 16: End of the world (part 1)

Hey, wake up (wake up yourself)!

What's wrong (what is it that there is)?

The power's off (there's no more
current).

Maybe there's been an earthquake.

Maybe... oh, wait a minute. My phone
doesn't have (I don't have) any
reception either. What about you?

Erm, me neither. That's weird. Take a
look (throw an eye) outside... Can you
see anything (You see something)?

Erm, not really. Oh, wait. There seem to
be (one would say that there are) some
people chasing (who chase) a guy down
(in) the street.

They're chasing him?? Why?

I don't know. But they look kind of (have
the air) weird.

Who?

The people who are chasing him. They
look ill.

²⁴ Another sandwich for you: ne ... plus. These two slices of bread give the meaning "no more" or "not anymore".

²⁵ As you can see "non plus" (not to be confused with ne ... plus) can be used to mean both "either" and "neither".

²⁶ "On dirait" literally means "one would say" and is a really useful expression. It's an excellent way to say "It seems" or "there seem".

Ce n'est pas possible, qu'est-ce qui se passe ?

This is impossible. What is going on (passes itself)?

Je ne sais pas. Oh, attends, il y en a un qui l'a attrapé. Oh, non, ils sont en train de le mordre !

I don't know. Oh, wait, one of them (there is one of them who) has caught him. Oh, no, they're biting him!

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

1. Il n'y a plus de courant.

The power's off.

2. Il y a du courant.

The power's on.

3. Ils ont l'air malade.

They look ill.

4. Il a l'air malade.

He looks ill.

5. Elles le poursuivent.

They're chasing him (female group).

6. Elle le poursuit.

She's chasing him.

Dialogue 17 : La fin du monde (deuxième partie)

C'est quoi ce bruit ?

Quel²⁷ bruit ?

**Ce bruit-là. Il y a quelqu'un qui
tape sur quelque chose.**

**Oh, je l'entends aussi. Il y a
quelqu'un à la porte.**

Va voir qui c'est.

Moi ? Vas-y toi !

Je ne suis pas habillé !

**Moi non plus. Tes vêtements sont
là-bas. Mets-les et va voir qui
c'est.**

C'était qui ?

**Je ne sais pas. Ils n'arrêtent pas de
frapper en criant « cerveau ».**

Dialogue 17: End of the world (part 2)

What's that sound?

What sound?

That sound there. Someone's banging
(there is someone who bangs) on
something.

Oh, I can hear it too. There's someone
at the door.

Go to see who it is.

Me? You go!

I'm not dressed!

Neither am I. Your clothes are over
there. Put them on and go and see
who it is.

(pause)

Who was it?

I don't know. They just keep (don't
stop) banging and saying "brain".

²⁷ Regarding the words for "what" in French, well, there are quite a few of them. "Quel" / "Quelle" should be used to mean "what?" whenever "what?" is used in the sense of "which?" in French. So, you could say "what one do you want for Christmas?" but you could also say "which one do you want for Christmas?". So, if in English, you could replace "what?" in a sentence with "which?" then you should use "quel" / "quelle" in French. The rest of the time when you ask a question in French – so, when you can't replace "what?" with "which?" in the sentence in English – you can use "que", "qu'est-ce que" or "quoi" to mean "what?". "Que" and "qu'est-ce que" are very much interchangeable with one another; "quoi", on the other hand, is *very* informal and colloquial and the best way to learn how it is used is by listening to these dialogues and, by doing so, get a feel for it.

“Cerveau” ? Mais qu’est-ce qui se passe, bon sang²⁸ ?

“Brain”? What the hell is going on (But what is it that is happening, good blood)?

Je ne sais pas, mais je pense qu’on devrait sortir d’ici.

I don’t know, but I think we should get out of here.

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

1. Je pense qu’il y a quelqu’un à la porte.

I think someone’s at the front door.

2. Elle pense qu’il y a quelqu’un à la porte.

She thinks someone’s at the front door.

3. Qu’est-ce qui se passe ?

What’s going on?

4. Qu’est-ce qui va se passer ?

What’s going to happen?

5. Quelqu’un est en train de dire quelque chose.

Someone’s saying something.

6. Quelqu’un est en train de frapper à la porte.

Someone’s banging on the front door.

²⁸ “Bon sang !” (good blood!) can be translated in various ways but tends to correspond to expressions in English like “good grief!” or “for goodness’s sake!”

Dialogue 18 : La fin du monde (troisième partie)

Pourquoi on est sur le toit ?

Pour²⁹ faire signe à quelqu'un.

Faire signe ? A qui ?

Euh, ben, regarde, là-bas, il y a un hélicoptère qui passe.

Il est à des kilomètres d'ici. Ils ne peuvent pas nous voir ... J'ai épousé un imbécile !

Ne dis pas ça. Je t'aime.

Je t'aime aussi, Sam, mais tu dois trouver une meilleure idée que ça ... Oh, ne boude pas.

Je ne boude pas.

Ecoute, je suis désolée, mais il faut qu'on essaie de trouver un moyen de s'en sortir.³⁰ Viens, on va regarder ce qui se passe par terre.

Oh, ce n'est pas encourageant.

Non, ça ne l'est pas. Ils sont en train de manger des gens !

Dialogue 18: End of the world (part 3)

Why are we on the roof?

So that we can signal to someone
(In order to make sign to someone)!

Signal to someone? To who?

Erm, well, look up there, a helicopter's flying past.

That's miles away (it is at some kilometres from here). They can't see us... I married an idiot!

Don't say that. I love you.

I love you too, Sam, but you have to come up with (find) a better idea than that... Oh, don't sulk.

I'm not sulking.

Listen, I'm sorry, but we have to (it is necessary that) try to find a way to get out of here. Come on, let's take a look (one is going to look) at what's going on on the ground.

(pause)

Oh, that isn't encouraging.

No, it isn't. They're eating people!

²⁹ "Pour" can be translated into English as both "for" and "in order to".

³⁰ This sentence includes the French construction "il faut que ..." It looks quite odd to English speakers but for the moment all that you need to know is that it means "it's necessary that..." and is often used where English speakers would say that they "have to" or "need" to do something. Of course, as you will know from your previous lessons, French speakers also have other ways of expressing those ideas as well. Just think of this as an additional method French speakers use to express that idea that something has to / needs to be done.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Nous t'aimons.**
2. **On t'aime.**
3. **Elle ne t'aime pas.**
4. **Je ne suis pas un imbécile.**
5. **Parfois, je me sens stupide.**
6. **Tu n'es pas stupide.**

Going further...

We love you.

We love you.

She doesn't love you.

I'm not an idiot.

Sometimes, I feel stupid.

You aren't stupid.

Dialogue 19 : La fin du monde (quatrième partie)

Je pense qu'on devrait s'agripper à la gouttière pour descendre.

Mais si on fait ça, ils vont nous manger aussi.

Non, regarde, ils partent. Ils s'en vont ailleurs.

Oh, oui, ils ont fini de manger ce pauvre monsieur.

Ok, allez, on descend.

D'accord. Et maintenant ?

On devrait monter dans la voiture et s'en aller d'ici. Aller chez mes parents.

Chez tes parents ? Vraiment ?

Bon sang, comment tu peux te plaindre d'aller chez mes parents à un moment pareil ?

Ok, ok, montons dans la voiture !

Dialogue 19: End of the world (part 4)

I think that we should climb down the drainpipe to get down.

But if we do that, they'll eat us too.

No, look, they're leaving now. They're going somewhere else (elsewhere).

Oh, yes, they've finished eating that poor man.

Okay, (go) let's climb down (we descend).

(pause)

Alright. What now?

We should get in the car and drive (go) away from here. To my parents' (home).

To your parents'? Really?

For goodness' sake, how can you complain about (pity yourself of) going to my parents' at a moment like this (at a moment the same)?

Okay, okay. Let's get in the car.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Si on fait ça, ils s'en iront.**
2. **S'il fait ça, on se plaindra.**
3. **Je vais me plaindre.**
4. **Ils s'en vont.**
5. **Ils partent.**
6. **Allons-y !**

Going further...

If we do that, they'll drive away.

If he does that, we'll complain.

I'm going to complain.

They're driving away.

They're leaving.

Let's go!

Dialogue 20 : La fin du monde (cinquième partie)

Ouah ! Il y a tellement de voitures abandonnées. Et regarde, il y a des centaines d'incendies.

Mais bon sang, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?

Je ne sais pas. C'est encore loin chez tes parents ?

On y est presque. Regarde, voici la maison.

Ok. Allons-y, entrons, mais on devrait essayer de ne pas faire trop de bruit.

Maman ? Papa ? Vous êtes là ?

Chut ... C'est bizarre. La porte d'entrée est ouverte, mais personne ne répond.

Essaie les lumières.

Non, il n'y a pas de courant ici non plus. Zut !

Allons voir en haut !

Oh, regarde, la porte de leur chambre est ouverte.

Dialogue 20: End of the world (part 5)

Wow! There are so many abandoned cars. And look, there are hundreds of fires burning.

What on earth has happened?

I don't know. How much further is it (it is still far) to your parents' house?

We're almost there. Look, here's the house.

(pause)

Okay. Let's go in (inside), but we should try not to make too much noise.

Mum? Dad? Are you there?

Shhh... That's weird. The front door is open, but there's no answer (no-one answers).

Try the lights.

No, there's no power here either. Damn!

Let's go to see upstairs!

(pause)

Oh, look, their bedroom door's open.

Maman ? Papa ? Euh, on dirait qu'ils ne sont pas ici.

Mum? Dad? Mmm, seems like they're not here.

(pause)

Pourquoi tu pleures ?

Why are you crying?

C'est juste que je m'inquiète pour eux.

I'm just worried about (it's just that I'm worried for) them.

Ne t'inquiète pas, ils sont sans doute juste partis se promener.

Don't worry, they probably just went (left) for a walk.

Et ils ont laissé la porte ouverte ?

And left the door open?

Bon, oui, ça c'est étrange. Attends. Regarde par la fenêtre. Les voilà. Ils sont en train de marcher vers la maison. Oh, ils n'ont pas l'air très en forme ...

Well, yeah, that is strange. Wait. Look out the window. There they are. They're walking towards the house. Oh, they don't look very well...

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

1. On y est presque.

We're almost there.

2. On y est !

We're here!

3. Ils ne sont pas là.

They're not here.

4. Ils viennent vers nous.

They're coming towards us.

5. Ils ont l'air en forme.

They look well.

6. Ils n'ont pas l'air en forme.

They don't look well.

Dialogue 21 : Histoire d'amour (première partie)

Alors, comment ça s'est passé avec Adam hier ?

Pas bien. Il a été vraiment méchant.

Sérieusement ? Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit ?

Il m'a blâmée pour tous les problèmes qu'on a.

Qu'est-ce que tu as dit ?

J'ai expliqué combien j'étais malheureuse. Je lui ai dit que ça devait changer.

Et il n'était pas d'accord ?

Non, il pensait que tout était de ma faute. Il m'a dit que je ne faisais que de l'asticoter tout le temps et que j'étais vraiment pénible.

Ouah ! Tu mérites vraiment quelqu'un de mieux, quelqu'un qui t'apprécie.

Je sais. Si seulement je connaissais quelqu'un comme ça.

Eh bien, parfois, la bonne personne est là, juste sous ton nez. Il faut juste la remarquer.

Dialogue 21: Love story (part 1)

So, how did things go (how is that passed itself) with Adam yesterday?

Not well. He was (has been) really mean.

Seriously? What did he say?

He blamed me for all the problems we've been having (that we have).

What did you say?

I explained how unhappy I was (how much I was unhappy). I told him that things (it) had to change.

And he didn't agree (was not of accord)?

No, he thought everything was my fault. He told me I just nagged (was only making hassle of) him all the time and that I was a real pain.

Wow! You really deserve someone better, someone who appreciates you...

I know. If only I knew someone like that.

Well, sometimes, the right person is there right under your nose. You just have to notice them.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Comment ça s'est passé ?**
2. **Qu'est-ce qu'elles ont dit ?**
3. **On a pensé qu'elle était vraiment méchante.**
4. **Il m'a dit que j'étais une imbécile.**
5. **Il l'asticotait tout le temps.**
6. **Ils ont dit que c'était de notre faute.**

Going further...

- How did it go (pass itself)?
- What did they say? (female group)
- We thought she was really mean.
- He told me I was an idiot.
- He nagged her all the time.
- They said that it was our fault.

Dialogue 22: Histoire d'amour (deuxième partie)

Je me suis tellement bien amusée aujourd'hui ! Ça m'a vraiment remonté le moral !

Je suis ravi que ça t'ait plu. Il y a des gens qui n'aiment pas randonner.

Ben, moi, j'ai adoré. Et tu avais même préparé un pique-nique. J'ai tellement de chance d'avoir un ami comme toi.

Hum ... un ami ...

Désolée, je dois répondre. Une minute, stp. Allô ?

Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?

On a rompu.

Ouah ...

Quand il m'a appelée, je me suis sentie tellement contente. Mais il s'attendait à ce que *moi*, je m'excuse. Pourquoi est-ce que j'ai une telle poisse avec les hommes ? J'aimerais bien trouver quelqu'un qui m'apprécie vraiment.

Je suis sûr que, si tu prends le temps de regarder, tu verras que c'est déjà le cas.

Dialogue 22: Love story (part 2)

I had such a great time today (I myself am so well amused today)! This really cheered me up (this to myself has really raised back the morale).

I'm delighted (ravished) that you enjoyed it (that it has pleased you). There are (some) people who don't like hiking.

Well, me, I loved it. And you even prepared a picnic. I'm so lucky to have a friend like you.

Mmm... a friend...

(the phone rings)

Sorry, I've got to answer this. Just give me a minute... Hello?

(pause)

What happened?

We broke up.

Wow...

When he called me, I felt so happy. But he expected *me* to apologise. Why is it that I have such bad luck with men? I wish I could find (I would like well to find) someone who really appreciates me.

I'm sure, if you take the time to look, you'll see that you already have (that that's already the case).

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **On s'est bien amusé.**
2. **Ça lui a plu.**
3. **Je l'ai appelée hier.**
4. **Ils ont rompu la semaine dernière.**
5. **J'ai adoré le pique-nique que tu avais préparé.**

Going further...

We had a great time (amused ourselves well).

She enjoyed it (it has pleased her).

I called her yesterday.

They broke up last week.

I loved the picnic you made (had prepared).

Dialogue 23: Histoire d'amour (troisième partie)

Tu te sens toujours triste ?

Parfois. Adam est venu récupérer ses affaires à l'appartement hier. Ça m'a rendue triste.

Je suis désolé. Les ruptures sont difficiles.

C'est vrai. Tu ne m'as pas téléphoné cette semaine. Ça m'a surprise.

Je ne voulais pas te déranger. Je savais que tu avais beaucoup de choses à faire.

Tu ne me déranges jamais. Je suis toujours contente que tu m'appelles.

Vraiment ?

Absolument.

Ecoute, pourquoi est-ce que tu ne viens pas chez moi pour dîner après-demain ? Apporte du vin.

Dialogue 23: Love story (part 3)

Are you still feeling sad?

Sometimes. Adam came to collect his things from my (at the) apartment yesterday. That made (rendered) me sad.

I'm sorry. Breakups are hard.

They are. You didn't call me this week. That surprised me.

I didn't want to disturb you. I knew you had a lot of things to do.

You never disturb me. I'm always happy for you to call me.

Really?

Definitely.

Listen, why don't you come over to my house for dinner the day after tomorrow? Bring some wine.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Est-ce qu'il a récupéré ses affaires ?**
2. **Il t'a appelé cette semaine ?**
3. **Il ne t'a pas appelé cette semaine ?**
4. **Je ne voulais pas te déranger.**
5. **Elle n'a pas apporté de vin.**
6. **Non, ça ne m'a pas surprise.**

Going further...

- Did he collect his things?
- Did he call you this week?
- Didn't he call you this week?
- I didn't want to trouble you.
- She didn't bring any wine.
- No, it didn't surprise me.

Dialogue 24: Histoire d'amour (quatrième partie)

Oh, ça sent bon. C'est quoi ?

Poulet rôti et gratin dauphinois³¹.

Je ne savais pas que tu cuisinais si bien.

C'est juste un poulet rôti.

Eh bien, quand moi³² je cuisine, ça ne sent pas aussi bon.

Merci. Quelle sorte de vin tu as acheté ?

Un Chardonnay.

Tu sembles plus heureuse aujourd'hui.

Ouais, je le suis. J'ai écrit une longue lettre à Adam hier. Ça m'a libérée. Je lui ai expliqué ce qui selon moi n'avait pas marché entre nous et je lui ai souhaité plein de bonnes choses pour l'avenir.

Ça semble super positif.

Absolument. Je ne sais pas pourquoi je suis restée si longtemps dans cette relation, mais je suis contente d'en être sortie parce que ça veut dire que de nouvelles choses sont possibles.

Dialogue 24: Love story (part 4)

Ooh, that smells good. What is it?

Roast chicken and gratin dauphinois.

I didn't know you could cook so well.

It's only a roast chicken.

Well, when I cook, it doesn't smell that good.

Thanks. What sort of wine did you buy?

Chardonnay....

You seem happier today.

Yeah, I am (it). I wrote Adam a long letter yesterday. It made me feel free (liberated me). I explained to him what I thought (according to me) hadn't worked between us and I wished him a happy future (a lot of good things for the future).

That sounds (seems) really positive.

Definitely. I don't know why I stayed in that relationship so long, but I'm glad to be out of it because it means that new things are possible.

³¹ A delicious baked cream and potato dish. Highly recommended!

³² "Moi" is added here for emphasis; it has the same effect as putting the "I" in *italics* in English.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Quelle sorte de nourriture as-tu achetée ?**
2. **Nous avons expliqué pourquoi nous étions malheureux.**
3. **Je ne les connaissais pas.**
4. **J'y suis resté pendant une semaine.**
5. **Je suis parti il y a un mois.**

Going further...

What sort of food did you buy?

We explained why we were unhappy.

I didn't know them.

I stayed there for a week.

I left a month ago.

Dialogue 25: Histoire d'amour (cinquième partie)

Es-tu heureux ?

Oui, et surpris aussi.

Comment peux-tu être surpris ?

Ben, ça fait longtemps que je t'aime bien mais tu donnais toujours l'impression que tu voulais juste qu'on soit³³ amis.

Oui, mais pourquoi pensais-tu que j'étais venue dîner ?

Ben, j'espérais que c'était parce que tu m'aimais bien mais je ne croyais pas vraiment que je puisse³⁴ avoir cette chance-là.

Eh bien si. J'ai mis longtemps à me rendre compte que ce que je voulais était déjà là.

Et je ne peux pas croire que tu m'as embrassé.

Pourquoi ? Tu n'as pas aimé ?

Bien sûr que j'ai aimé ça, mais ça m'a vraiment surpris.

Super. Maintenant, passons à table !

Dialogue 25: Love story (part 5)

Are you happy?

Yes, and surprised too.

How can you be surprised?

Well, I've liked you for a long time, but you always gave the impression that you just wanted to be friends (wanted just that we are friends).

Yes, but why did you think I came for dinner?

Well, I was hoping it was because you liked me, but I didn't really believe I could have that sort of luck (that I can have that luck there).

Well, you do. It took me (I have put) a long time to realise (render account) that what I wanted was already here (there).

And I can't believe you kissed me.

Why? Didn't you like it?

Of course, I liked it, but it really surprised me.

Excellent. Now let's have dinner (let's pass to table)!

³³ "On soit" is a special way to say "we are" in French. It is triggered by certain expressions and is called the subjunctive. Don't worry too much about it for the moment, as we'll look at this in detail in later dialogues. For the moment, all you are required to do is to make sure you can understand the meaning of that part of the dialogue when you're listening to it.

³⁴ "Je puisse" is a special way to say "I can" in French. As with "on soit", It is triggered by certain expressions and is called the subjunctive. As I said earlier though, don't worry too much about it for the moment, as we'll look at this in detail in later dialogues. For the moment, just make sure you can understand the meaning of that part of the dialogue when you're listening to it.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Tu semblais heureuse.**
2. **Tu semblais heureux.**
3. **Est-ce que tu m'aimais bien ?**
4. **Bien sûr que je t'aimais bien !**
5. **J'ai mis longtemps à en arriver là.**
6. **L'as-tu embrassé ?**

Going further...

You seemed happy. (to a woman)

You seemed happy. (to a man)

Did you like me?

Of course I liked you!

It took a long time to get there.

Did you kiss him?

Dialogue 26: Le fan de films

Tu as vu Titanic ?

Le film ?

Bien sûr, le film.

Ben, tu aurais pu vouloir dire le navire.

Je ne pense pas que qui que ce soit ait vu le navire depuis une centaine d'années.

Ben, il y a sans doute des plongeurs qui l'ont vu.

Penses-tu sérieusement que je te demandais si tu avais plongé pour voir le Titanic ?

Ok, sans doute pas.

Alors, tu l'as vu ?

Le film ?

Oui, bien sûr le film.

Euh, je ne me souviens pas ...

Tu ne te souviens pas ? Comment peux-tu ne pas te souvenir ? Ça parle d'un énorme navire qui coule ... de gens qui se noient ... d'amour ... oh et d'une égoïste qui refuse de partager sa porte ...

Euh ... ah oui, je pense que je vois duquel tu parles ...

Dialogue 26: The film buff

Have you seen Titanic?

The film?

Of course, the film.

Well, you could have meant the ship.

I don't think anyone's seen the ship for a hundred years.

Well, there are undoubtedly divers who've seen it.

Do you seriously think I was asking you if you'd dived to see the Titanic?

Well, probably (undoubtedly) not.

So, have you seen it?

The film?

Yes, of course the film.

Erm, I don't remember...

You don't remember? How can you not remember? It's about (it speaks of) an enormous ship that sinks... (of) people drowning... (of) love ... oh, and a selfish girl who refuses to share a door...³⁵

Erm... oh yeah, I think I know which one (of the which) you're talking about...

³⁵ If you haven't watched Titanic, please do so now, in order to fully appreciate this reference.

Eh bien, regarde, ils le repassent au cinéma cette semaine. Tu veux y aller ?

Well, look, they're re-showing it at the cinema this week. Do you want to go?

Euh, d'accord. Mais ça a intérêt à être bien parce que, en général je n'aime pas les films de science-fiction.

Erm, alright – but it had better be good (that has interest to be well) because I don't generally like Sci-Fi movies.

Science fiction ! Oh la la !

Sci-Fi!? Good grief!

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

- 1. Ne t'inquiète pas, je vais l'organiser.**
- 2. Ne t'inquiète pas, je vais le ré-organiser.**
- 3. J'ai besoin d'écrire le rapport.**
- 4. J'ai besoin de ré-écrire le rapport.**
- 5. La porte était très grande.**
- 6. Pauvre Jack.**

Don't worry (unquiet yourself), I'll arrange it.

Don't worry, I'll re-arrange it.

I need to write the report.

I need to re-write the report.

The door was very large.

Poor Jack.

Dialogue 27 : Je suis le meilleur !

Je suis la meilleure !

Non, certainement pas ! Je suis plus grand que toi.

Moi³⁶, je suis plus forte que toi.

Et moi, je suis plus intelligent que toi.

Bien moi, je suis plus jeune que toi.

Eh bien, je suis plus vieux que toi.

Ah oui ? Eh bien, je marche plus vite que toi.

Je cours plus vite que toi.

Eh bien moi, je nage plus vite que toi.

Eh bien, je gagne plus que toi.

Moi j'ai plus d'amis que toi.

J'ai plus de temps libre que toi.

OK, Papi, tu gagnes.

Dialogue 27 : I'm the best!

I'm the best!

No, definitely not! I'm taller than you.

I'm stronger than you.

I'm cleverer than you.

I'm younger than you.

Well, I'm older than you.

Oh, yeah? Well, I can walk faster than you.

I can run faster than you.

Well, I can swim faster than you.

Well, I earn more than you.

I have more friends than you.

I have more free time than you.

Okay, grandad, you win.

³⁶ You'll notice both here, and when you encounter native French speakers in real life, that when they are comparing themselves to other people, they will use "moi" much more often than we would bother to use the word "me" in English. It's a bit like how in English we could say "As for me, I'm stronger than you" except that in English we usually don't bother. Anyway, this frequent use of the word "moi" for emphasis is something you'll get used to and something you'll begin to do yourself, once you've had sufficient exposure to French.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Il est plus rapide que toi.**
2. **Il court plus vite que toi.**
3. **Il court beaucoup plus vite que toi.**
4. **Elle est meilleure que moi.**

Going further...

He is faster than you.

He can run faster than you.

He can run much faster than you.

She is better than I am.

Dialogue 28: Malade

Bonjour. Pouvez-vous m'aider, svp ? Mon mari est malade.

Oh, qu'est-ce qu'il a qui ne va pas ?

Il n'arrête pas de vomir. Il a besoin de voir un médecin.

D'accord. Vous avez besoin d'aller à l'hôpital. Votre mari peut-il marcher ?

Je pense.

S'il vous plaît, descendez avec votre mari et le taxi devrait être ici dans cinq minutes.

OK. Merci beaucoup. Mais comment vais-je parler aux médecins ? Mon français n'est pas assez bon.

Ne vous inquiétez pas, les médecins parleront sans doute anglais.

Oh, d'accord. Je vais aller chercher mon mari. Où est le taxi ?

Il est juste dehors. Je vais vous y emmener.³⁷ Voilà ... Ça va ? Oh, vous n'avez vraiment pas l'air bien ...

Taxi, s'il vous plaît, emmenez-les au CHU.

Dialogue 28: Sick

Hello. Can you help me? My husband's ill.

Oh, what's wrong with him (what is it that he has that isn't going)?

He can't stop being sick. He needs to see a doctor.

Alright. You need to go to the local hospital. Can your husband walk?

I think so.

Please bring your husband down and the taxi should be here in five minutes.

Okay. Thank you so much. But how will I talk to the doctors? My French isn't good enough.

Don't worry, the doctors will almost certainly (without doubt) speak English.

Oh, okay. I'll go and get my husband... Where's the taxi?

It's just outside. I'll take you there. Here you are... Are you okay? Oh, you really don't look well...

Please take them to the Central Hospital.

³⁷You will be familiar with using the word "prendre" for "take". However, when you are talking about taking *someone* to *somewhere*, you will not use "prendre". Instead, you can use "emmener". So, to say "I took my mother to the park" you will not use "prendre", instead you will say "J'ai emmené ma mère au parc".

Pour aller plus loin ...

- 1. Je suis malade. J'ai besoin de voir un médecin. Pouvez-vous m'emmener à l'hôpital ?**
- 2. J'ai un mauvais mal de tête. Est-ce qu'il y a une pharmacie près d'ici ?**
- 3. J'ai besoin d'acheter des médicaments. Est-ce qu'il y a une pharmacie près d'ici ?**
- 4. On m'a volé mon portefeuille. Pouvez-vous appeler la police ?**
- 5. On m'a volé ma valise. Pouvez-vous m'emmener au commissariat, svp ?**
- 6. J'ai perdu mon passeport. Pouvez-vous m'emmener au consulat, svp ?**

Going further...

- I'm ill. I need to see a doctor. Can you take me to the hospital?
- I've got a bad headache. Is there a pharmacy nearby?
- I need to buy some medicine. Is there a pharmacy nearby?
- Someone stole my wallet. Can you call the police?
- Someone stole my suitcase. Can you take me to a police station?
- I've lost my passport. Can you take me to the consulate?

Dialogue 29: Les vacances

J'ai hâte d'aller en vacances cette année.

Où tu vas ?

Paris ! Imagine ! Les cafés, les musées, la Tour Eiffel. C'est tellement inspirant !

J'attends aussi avec impatience de partir en vacances.

Tu vas où ?

En Angleterre. J'adore énormément Harry Potter et j'attends avec impatience d'aller à Poudlard.

Poudlard ? Euh, tu es sûr qu'on peut y aller ?

Quoi, tu penses qu'ils ne vont pas me laisser entrer parce que je ne suis pas un sorcier ?

Euh, tu sais que Poudlard c'est fictif, hein ?

Fictif ? Ne sois pas ridicule ! Je veux dire, si Poudlard était fictif, où est-ce que les sorciers et les sorcières iraient à l'école ?

C'est une question à la fois très logique et très bête. Quoi qu'il en soit, je serai très intéressée de voir tes photos de vacances !

Dialogue 29: Vacation time

I can't wait to go on holiday this year.

Where are you going?

Paris! Just think of it, the cafés, the museums, the Eiffel Tower. It's so inspiring!

I'm looking forward to going on vacation too.

Where are you going?

To England. I just love Harry Potter and I'm really looking forward to going to Hogwarts.

Hogwarts? Erm, are you sure you can go there?

What, do you think they won't let me in because I'm not a wizard?

Erm, you do realise that Hogwarts is fictional, don't you?

Fictional? Don't be so ridiculous! I mean, if Hogwarts was fictional, where would the witches and wizards go to school?

That is both (at the time / instance) a very logical and very silly question. Anyway (what that is of itself / be that as it may), I will be very interested to see your photos from the trip!

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Est-ce que ce livre est factuel ?**
2. **Non, c'est de la fiction ; un roman extrêmement intéressant.**
3. **J'attends avec impatience de bientôt partir en vacances.**
4. **Je ne suis pas impatient de reprendre le travail lundi.**
5. **J'angoisse à l'idée de reprendre le travail lundi.**
6. **Je redoute de dîner avec mes beaux-parents dimanche.**

Going further...

- Is that book non-fiction?
- No, it's fiction; a really interesting novel.
- I'm looking forward to going on holiday soon.
- I'm not looking forward (not impatient) to going back to work on Monday.
- I'm dreading going to work on Monday.
- I'm dreading having dinner with my in-laws this Sunday.

Dialogue 30: L'étudiante studieuse

Salut Janette. Peux-tu babysitter pour moi demain soir ?

A quelle heure ?

Vers 8 heures.

Je pense. Mais j'ai beaucoup de devoirs à faire.

Oh, pas de problème. Tu peux les faire ici. Les enfants seront endormis de toute façon.

Ok. Super. Jusqu'à quand serez-vous sortis ?

Probablement 11 heures.

Ok, c'est super. Euh, vous avez toujours Netflix, hein ?

Hé, je croyais que tu avais dit que tu avais des devoirs à faire !

Pour aller plus loin ...

- 1. Tu peux le faire ici.**
- 2. Vous pouvez le faire là-bas.**
- 3. Je n'ai pas le temps.**
- 4. Je n'ai pas le temps de toute façon.**
- 5. Hé, qu'est-ce que vous faites ?**
- 6. Quand serez-vous rentré ?**

Dialogue 30: The hardworking student

Hi, Janette. Can you babysit for me tomorrow night?

What time?

About eight.

I think so. I've got a lot of homework to do though.

Oh, that's no problem. You can do it (them) here. The children will be asleep anyway.

Okay. Great. When will you be out until?

Probably eleven.

Okay, that's great. Erm... you do still have Netflix, don't you?

Hey, I thought you said you had homework to do!

Going further...

You can do it here.

You can do it over there.

I don't have time.

I don't have time anyway.

Hey, what are you doing?

When will you get back?

Dialogue 31 : Depuis quand apprends-tu le français ?

**Depuis combien de temps
apprends-tu le français ?**

Deux ans.

C'est difficile ?

Ce n'est pas facile.

Tu trouves ça intéressant ?

**Oui, c'est intéressant. C'est aussi
très utile.**

Comment ça ?

**Et bien, ma femme et moi
recevons souvent des Français
chez nous. Souvent, ils parlent
très bien anglais mais parfois on a
besoin de parler français avec eux.**

**Peux-tu comprendre les Français
quand ils parlent vite ?**

**En général oui, mais ça peut être
difficile.**

Tu vas souvent en France ?

Environ une fois par an.

**Est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose qui
ne te plaît pas là-bas ?**

**De temps en temps, des gens
peuvent être un peu chauvins ;
mais est-ce que chaque pays n'a
pas ce problème ?**

Dialogue 31: How long have you been learning French?

How long have you been learning French?

Two years.

Is it difficult?

It isn't easy.

Do you find it interesting?

Yes, it's interesting. It's also very useful.

In what way?

Well, my wife and I often have (receive) French guests to stay at our house. Often, they speak English very well but sometimes we need to speak French with them.

Can you understand French people when they speak quickly?

Usually yes but it can be difficult.

Do you go to France often?

About once a year.

Is there anything you don't like about it?

From time to time, some people can be a bit chauvinistic – but doesn't every country have that problem?

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. Depuis combien de temps travailles-tu ?
2. Ça fait deux semaines que je travaille ici.
3. Depuis combien de temps étudiez-vous là ?
4. Ça fait deux ans que j'étudie là-bas.
5. C'est intéressant ?
6. Non, c'est extrêmement ennuyeux.

Going further...

How long have you been working here?

I've been working here for two weeks.

How long have you been studying there?

I've been studying there for two years.

Is it interesting?

No, it's extremely boring.

Dialogue 32 : Tu ne devineras jamais ...

Tu ne devineras jamais ce qui m'est arrivé hier.

Quoi ?

Eh bien, je faisais ma valise quand on a frappé à la porte.

Oh, c'était qui ?

Eh bien, c'est ça le truc bizarre, quand j'ai ouvert la porte, il n'y avait personne.

Ben, ce n'est pas si bizarre que ça.

Attends, je n'ai pas fini. Enfin bref, j'ai fermé la porte et je suis retournée finir mes bagages.

D'accord, alors qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ensuite ?

Eh bien, j'ai décidé de me faire à manger. Enfin bon, j'étais en train de couper des légumes quand mon téléphone a sonné.

C'était qui ?

C'était la police. Ils ont dit qu'ils appelaient tout le monde dans le quartier pour leur dire qu'il y avait un dangereux criminel évadé et que je ne devrais pas ouvrir ma porte à qui que ce soit.

Dialogue 32 : You'll never guess...

You'll never guess what happened to me (is arrived to me) yesterday.

What?

Well, I was packing (making) my suitcase when there was a knock (one had knocked) at the door.

Oh, who was it?

Well, that's the strange thing, by the time I opened the door, there was no-one there.

Well, that's not that strange (as strange as that).

Wait, I haven't finished. Anyway, I closed the door and went back to finish packing.

Okay, so what happened next?

Well, I decided to make some lunch (make me some lunch to eat). Anyway, I was in the middle of cutting the vegetables when my phone rang.

Who was it?

It was the police. They said they were calling everyone in the area to let them know (for to tell them) that there was a dangerous, escaped criminal and that I should not open my door to anyone.

Non !! Tu penses que c'était lui ?

No way! Do you think it was him?

Eh bien, qui d'autre est-ce que ça aurait pu être ?

Well, who else could it have been?

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

1. Je regardais la télé quand ma mère est arrivée.

I was watching TV when my mother arrived.

2. Je lisais un livre quand la police a frappé à ma porte.

I was reading a book when the police knocked at my door.

3. Elle regardait son téléphone quand elle m'a bousculé.

She was looking at her phone when she walked into me.

4. Il préparait le dîner quand sa femme l'a quitté.

He was making dinner when his wife left him.

5. Ils conduisaient sur l'autoroute quand ils sont soudain tombés en panne d'essence.

They were driving along the highway when they suddenly ran out of petrol / gas.

Dialogue 33: Etrange ...

Je veux que³⁸ vous travailliez ce soir.

Pourquoi ?

Parce que je veux rentrer tôt chez moi.

Vous auriez dû me le dire hier.

Pourquoi ?

Parce que j'ai prévu de retrouver une vieille amie pour dîner.

Vous ne pouvez pas annuler ?

Je doute que ce soit possible. Elle n'est ici qu'aujourd'hui.

Mais il est important que je rentre tôt. Simon est malade.

Il est étrange qu'il soit toujours malade les soirs où il y a du foot.

Dialogue 33: Strange...

I want you to work (I want that you work) this evening.

Why?

Because I want to go home early.

You should have told me this (it) yesterday.

Why?

Because I've arranged to meet (re-find) an old friend for dinner.

Can't you cancel it?

I doubt that would be possible. She's only here for today.

But it's important that I go home early. Simon is ill.

It's strange that he's always ill on those evenings when there is football on.

³⁸ This, together with the next two dialogues, will introduce you to some of the most important triggers of "the subjunctive". And what is the subjunctive? It is essentially a way in which verbs change after certain expressions or triggers. In this dialogue, you'll learn some of these triggers, which include: "I want that...", "I doubt that...", "it's important that...", and "it's strange that...". Now, you might wonder "why oh why is this necessary" and the only real answer is, "well that's French!" Not very comforting, I know, but remember, all you need to do is to learn to understand what is being said. You don't need to reproduce it. At the end of the booklet, you'll find a detailed description of how verbs change when they follow these expressions but, for the moment, just focus on understanding the dialogue. You don't need to do anything more at this stage.

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Il est étrange que vous l'aimiez.**
2. **Il est important que tu ailles à l'université.**
3. **J'aimerais que tu restes avec nous.**
4. **Nous aimerions que vous restiez avec nous.**
5. **Nous aimerions que tu nous expliques.**
6. **On aimerait que vous nous expliquiez.**

Going further...

- It's strange that you like him.
- It's important that you go to university.
- I'd like you to stay with us.
- We'd like you to stay with us.
- We'd like you to explain to us.
- We'd like you to explain to us.

Dialogue 34: Irrécupérable !

Je suis étonné que³⁹ tu aies faim – tu viens de manger !

Eh bien, je suis étonnée que tu fasses d'aussi bons desserts et que tu sois ensuite surpris quand je veux en manger un autre.

Oui, je suppose que je suis plutôt doué. Tu en as de la chance !

Oui, j'ai beaucoup de chance.

Par contre, je ne pense pas pouvoir cuisiner plus maintenant. Je dois aller à la fête d'anniversaire de Julia dans 30 minutes.

C'est déprimant ...

Eh bien, il est possible que tu puisses venir aussi. Je peux demander à Julia si tu veux.

Il y aura du gâteau ?

Tu es vraiment irrécupérable !

Dialogue 34: Hopeless!

I'm amazed that you're hungry – you just ate!

Well, I'm amazed that you make such good desserts and then are surprised when I want to eat another one.

Yes, I suppose I am pretty good. Lucky you!

Yes, I am very lucky.

I don't think I can cook more now though. I have to go to Julia's birthday party in 30 minutes.

That's depressing...

Well, it's possible that you can come too. I can ask Julia if you want.

Will there be cake?

You really are hopeless!

³⁹In this dialogue, you'll be introduced to more important subjunctive triggers. These include: "I'm amazed that...", "it's possible that...", "I'm surprised that...", and "I would like that..."

Pour aller plus loin ...

1. **Je suis étonné que tu veuilles venir.**
2. **Je suppose qu'elle m'aime vraiment.**
3. **Je ne pense pas qu'on va y arriver.**
4. **Je suis surpris qu'elle ne me haïsse pas.**
5. **Il est possible que j'arrive à l'heure.**
6. **J'aimerais que tu me fasses un gâteau d'anniversaire.**

Going further...

- I'm amazed you want to come.
- I suppose she does love me really.
- I don't think we will succeed.
- I'm surprised she doesn't hate me.
- It's possible that I will arrive on time.
- I would like you to make me a birthday cake.

Dialogue 35 : Je suis désolée que tu partes.

Je suis désolée que⁴⁰ tu partes demain.

Je sais ; mais qu'est-ce que tu peux faire ? Je dois tout simplement tout régler à Paris avant de pouvoir m'installer ici de façon permanente et sans inquiétude. Tu comprends, n'est-ce pas ?

Je comprends. Mais il est possible que tu ne reviennes pas pour un petit moment, n'est-ce pas ?

Je ne pense pas être revenu cette semaine – mais je reviendrai bientôt – et ce sera permanent.

Je suis surprise que tu puisses dire ça avec une telle certitude. Et si ... ?

Non, pas de « et si ». Tout se passera bien parce que tout doit bien se passer ... Il est temps que je m'en aille.

C'est dommage qu'on n'ait pas une journée de plus.

Un jour, on aura plein de journées en plus.

Dialogue 35: I'm sorry that you're leaving.

I'm sorry that you're leaving tomorrow.

I know – but what can you do? I simply must sort things out in Paris before I can stay (install myself) here permanently (of permanent way) and without any worries. You do understand, don't you?

I understand. But it's possible that you won't come back for a while, isn't it?

I don't think I'll be back this week – but I will come back soon – and it will be permanent.

I'm surprised you can say that with such certainty. What if...?

No, no "what ifs". Everything will be alright because it must be alright... It's time that I get going.

It's a pity that we don't have another day.

One day we will have lots of days.

⁴⁰In this dialogue, you'll be introduced to more important subjunctive triggers. These include: "I'm sorry that...", "it's time that..." and "it's a pity that..."

Je l'espère. Mais enfin bon, tu as raison. Tu dois régler la situation à Paris, sinon ...

I hope so. But anyway, you're right. You must fix things in Paris, otherwise...

Non, ne le dis pas.

No, don't say it.

D'accord, vas-y. Et je te vois bientôt.

Alright, go. And I'll see you soon.

Au revoir.

Goodbye.

Pour aller plus loin ...

Going further...

1. Je suis désolée d'être en retard.

I'm sorry that I'm late.

2. Je dois trouver une solution !

I must find a solution!

3. Je ne pense pas pouvoir lui faire confiance.

I don't think I can trust him.

4. Il est dommage que tu ne puisses pas venir plus souvent.

It's a pity you can't come more often.

5. Je suis surprise qu'elle ne veuille pas venir.

I'm surprised she doesn't want to come.

6. Il est important que nous la fassions se sentir la bienvenue.

It's important that we make her feel welcome

The subjunctive

So, you've seen in the final few dialogues of the course that certain expressions trigger certain changes in verbs¹ and that these types of changes are referred to as "the subjunctive".

As is typical of grammatical terminology, the word "subjunctive" is of little help to us in trying to understand what the subjunctive actually is, and when people then try to explain what the term means, those explanations tend to be so complicated that they're pretty useless.

What I will say (instead of giving you a traditional grammar explanation) is that in the final three dialogues of this course, a number of expressions were introduced that "trigger" the subjunctive. And what this means in practice is that the verb that follows those expressions is altered in a way you wouldn't expect it to be. This occurs so that the French speaker you are talking to will hear that change and will think happily to themselves, "oh, good, the subjunctive, how wonderful, I know what that means, I know what that's telling me!".

But what is it telling them? And why is there any need for it? Probably the best way to explain why the subjunctive is used and the purpose of its existence is to say that using it changes the feeling and mood of the sentence. The mood becomes uncertain, as though whatever is being talked about is in no way an absolute fact. It makes things doubtful, unexpected, unsure... perhaps even unreal.

And that, quite simply, is the purpose of its existence; it is there to inject a mood of uncertainty into a sentence, which therefore makes it very logical that it is used following expressions which create that uncertainty. I'll show you what I mean.

Let's take a look at some of those trigger expressions from the final three dialogues:

I doubt that...

Je doute que ...

It's possible that...

Il est possible que ...

It's strange that...

Il est étrange que ...

Do you notice how each of these subjunctive triggers suggests a lack of certainty? When you say "I doubt that... she loves him" in English, you are not suggesting that you know with absolute certainty that she doesn't love him, rather you are showing that you are uncertain about something. You have your doubts. You're not sure whether she loves

¹ What is a verb? An easy way to identify a verb is to see if you can put "I", "he" or "we" directly in front of it. If you can, it is a verb. For example, all the underlined words are verbs: I go, he speaks, we wait, I think, he eats, we finish.

him or not. And when you say “it’s possible that... I’ll quit my job next month”, again, you are not talking about something that is certain but rather something that is just a possibility. It’s like saying “it could be this way, but it might also be that way, *I’m just not certain!*”.

It’s like this again when you say “it’s strange that...”. Once more, there’s uncertainty in this expression, a suggestion that something is not normal, that something is unexpected, that it’s almost impossible to believe that things are the way they appear to be: “It’s strange that he packed his suitcase if he was only going out for a walk...”.

Now, when an expression that creates this sense of uncertainty has been used, French speakers feel that the verb that follows it should be altered to a form that carries that feeling or mood of uncertainty within it, something that tells the listener: “this is all a bit uncertain, a bit unreal, not an absolute fact”. And that form is known as the “subjunctive”. In fact, if you look in a grammar book, you’ll often find that rather than being referred to as simply “the subjunctive”, it is instead referred to as “the subjunctive mood”. And this is because these forms are all about creating a particular feeling or mood in the sentence. Personally, I would prefer it if “the subjunctive mood” was instead called “the uncertain mood” as it would give us all a better idea at the start what it was all about – but hey ho!

Anyway, I hope it is now clear that, in French, certain expressions are seen as triggering this uncertain mood and that the verbs that follow must be in a special form that reflects that mood. Now what you need to know is how to create this form. So, let me show you.

If you want to use the subjunctive correctly, it’s easy, as long as you know how to use the present tense in French. More specifically, you need to know how to use the verb form for “they” in the present tense. I’ll show you what I mean.

“To finish” in French is “finir”, and to say “they finish” is “ils finissent”.

So, just to be clear, that means “they finish” in the regular, normal, boring present tense in French.

By the way, before you mispronounce “ils finissent”, you should be aware that the “**ent**” on the end of “finis**ent**” is silent, so it’s actually pronounced in a similar way to the English word “finish”, except that instead of ending in a “nish” sound like in the English “finish”, the last part of the French word sounds more like the English word “niece”. So, “finissent” is pronounced “fi-niece”. Got that?

What we’re going to do now is use this sound – this “fi-niece” that we got from “they finish” – and we’re going to create the subjunctive mood in French. Look, I’ll show you.

The subjunctive way to say “I finish” in French is “je finisse” – and the finisse part is pronounced in exactly the same way as when you say “they finish” in the present tense in French – “fi-niece”.

And guess what, the subjunctive way to say “you finish” (informal) in French is “tu finisses” and again, the “finish” part is pronounced “fi-niece”.

And guess what, the subjunctive way to say “she finishes” in French is “elle finisse” and again, the “finish” part is pronounced “fi-niece”.

And guess what, the subjunctive way to say “he finishes” in French is “il finisse” and once more, the “finish” part is pronounced “fi-niece”.

And yet again, the subjunctive way to say “they finish” in French is “ils finissent” and yet again, the “finish” part is pronounced “fi-niece”.²

So, as I said earlier, if you know how to say “they finish” in the French present tense, then you know how to pronounce these uncertain / subjunctive forms. Even if they are spelled differently from one another, they are pronounced *in exactly the same way*.

Anyway, now that we know how to make them, we can begin to use the uncertain / subjunctive forms we’ve learned to create sentences in French.

Now, covering up the answers below with your hand as you go along (so that you can’t cheat and look), first of all, can you recall how you would say “I doubt that”?

Je doute que ...

And now, I want you to work out how you would say “I doubt that he finishes” or “I doubt that he’s finishing” (which is the same in French). How would you say that?

Je doute qu’il finisse.

How about “I doubt that she finishes” / “I doubt that she is finishing”?

Je doute qu’elle finisse.

And how about “I doubt that they finish” / “I doubt that they are finishing”?

Je doute qu’ils finissent.

² And yes, you may have noticed “they finish” is the same in both the normal present and in the uncertain / subjunctive mood. Who cares though, eh? Less to learn!

And “I doubt that I finish” / “I doubt that I’m finishing”?

Je doute que je finisse.

What about “I doubt that you finish” / “I doubt that you are finishing” (informal)?

Je doute que tu finisses.

“Your studies” in French would be “tes études” and “this week” is “cette semaine”.

So, how would you say “I doubt that you’re finishing your studies this week”?

Je doute que tu finisses tes études cette semaine.

“Her” or “his studies” would be “ses études”.

So, how would you say “I doubt that she’s finishing her studies this week”?

Je doute qu’elle finisse ses études cette semaine.

“This year” is “cette année”.

So, how would you say “I doubt that he’s finishing his studies this year”?

Je doute qu’il finisse ses études cette année.

To say “you finish” (formal) or “we finish” using the uncertain / subjunctive mood, you say it very slightly differently – a little additional sound is added onto the end of each. “You finish” (formal) and “we finish” are:

You finish (formal)

Vous finissiez (pronounced “fi-niece-ee-ay”)

We finish

Nous finissions (pronounced “fi-niece-ee-on”)

“Your studies” (formal) are “vos études”, while “our studies” would be “nos études”.

So, how would you say “I doubt that you’re finishing your studies this year”?

Je doute que vous finissiez vos études cette année.

And how do you think you would say “I doubt that we’re finishing our studies this year”?

Je doute que nous finissions nos études cette année.

So, by taking the sound that goes after “they” in the present tense – in this case “fi-niece”

– we have discovered how to express the uncertain / subjunctive mood. For “vous” and “nous” all we have needed to do is to add an “ee-ay” or an “ee-on” sound onto the end of this.

Attendre

Other verbs in French work in a similar way. As long as you know how to say verbs that follow “they” in the present tense, you simply steal the sound of whatever comes after “they” and use it to create the uncertain / subjunctive forms. For instance, “to wait” in French is:

attendre

And “they wait” in the present tense is “ils attendent”. The “attendent” part is pronounced “a-tond” and, now that you know that, you know how to pronounce the subjunctive for “I wait”, “she waits”, “he waits” and “they wait” (although the spellings for each may of course be a little different from one another). Let’s do it!

How would you say “It’s possible that...”

Il est possible que ...

And so, how would you say “It’s possible that he waits / is waiting”?

Il est possible qu’il attende.

How about “It’s possible that she’s waiting”?

Il est possible qu’elle attende.

And “It’s possible that they are waiting”?

Il est possible qu’ils attendent.

What about “I doubt that they are waiting”?

Je doute qu’ils attendent.

As before, for “vous” and “nous”, add an “ee-ay” and “ee-on” sound onto the end of the verb. So, how would you say “I doubt that you are waiting” (formal)?

Je doute que vous attendiez.

What is “It is strange that...”?

Il est étrange que ...

And so, how would you say “It is strange that we are waiting”?

Il est étrange que nous attendions.

Parler

So, we have learned how to use “finir” and “attendre” in the subjunctive.

In a moment, we’ll look at how to use “to speak” – “parler” – in the subjunctive, but first, let’s remind ourselves of the other triggers we encountered in the dialogues:

I would like that...

Je voudrais que ...

I want that...

Je veux que ...

It’s important that...

Il est important que ...

I’m amazed that...

Je suis étonné(e) que ...

I’m surprised that...

Je suis surpris(e) que ...

It’s time that...

Il est temps que ...

It’s a pity that...

C’est dommage que ...

Now, with some of these expressions, you may be asking yourself, “What does this have to do with uncertainty?” For instance, an expression like “it’s time that...” or “it’s a pity that...” might not seem to express a sense of uncertainty as clearly as expressions like “I doubt that...” or “it’s possible that...”.

Well, I would answer this in two ways. The first is that the easiest way to think about these expressions more generally is simply to not think too much about them at all and instead just accept that the uncertain / subjunctive mood follows them. So, simply use the subjunctive when you see one of them. The second answer I would give is that actually they do still involve some element of uncertainty; there is something about each that creates a doubtful, unexpected mood in some way. A feeling that whatever is being talked about is in no way an absolute fact, that you are somehow delving into matters that are at least somewhat unreal.

For instance, when you say “it’s time that...” it implies that it’s time that something should occur but that doesn’t necessarily mean it is going to occur. Saying “it’s time that you moved on from this sort of behaviour” sounds more like a hope to me than anything approaching certainty.

Or, for instance, saying “it’s a pity that...” suggests to me that reality isn’t as it ought to be: “It’s a pity that he didn’t live longer” is someone pining for how things are not rather than how they actually are.

And uncertainty also exists in expressions such as “I want that...”. After all, to say that you want someone to do something does in a way imply that you don’t know whether they actually are going to do it. You want them to do it, yes, but it is not yet a fact that they have done it.

So, as I say, there is in all of these cases some sense of something not being an absolute fact, of not yet being real, of something being uncertain, and so they require the uncertain / subjunctive mood.

So, let’s look at how to form the subjunctive for the verb “parler”.

“To speak” is “parler” and “they speak” is “parlent”, pronounced “parl”.

So, how would you say “It’s a pity that he speaks”?

C’est dommage qu’il parle.

And how do you think you’d say “It’s a pity that he doesn’t speak”?

C’est dommage qu’il ne parle pas.

How about “It’s a pity that he doesn’t speak French”?

C’est dommage qu’il ne parle pas français.

What about “It’s a pity that she doesn’t speak French”?

C’est dommage qu’elle ne parle pas français.

And “It’s a pity that you don’t speak French” (informal)?

C’est dommage que tu ne parles pas français.

“It’s a pity that you don’t speak French” (formal)?

C’est dommage que vous ne parliez pas français.

And how would you say “It’s a pity that we don’t speak French”?

C’est dommage que nous ne parlions pas français.

And how about “I’m amazed that you speak English” (formal)?

Je suis étonné(e) que vous parliez anglais.

And how would you say to someone formally “I want you to speak French with me” (literally “I want that you speak French with me”)?

Je veux que vous parliez français avec moi.

And how would you say “I’m surprised that they can’t speak English”?

Je suis surpris(e) qu’ils ne parlent pas anglais.

So, in French, there are certain expressions that trigger the uncertain / subjunctive mood. The key to using this correctly is knowing the present tense for verbs that follow “they”.

Now that you have used this technique with “parler”, “attendre” and “finir”, you should be able to use the uncertain / subjunctive mood fairly well in French.

Having said that, as with almost everything else in French, there are some verbs that are a little unpredictable. You will actually have heard several of these in the dialogues and so, you will fortunately already have begun to become somewhat familiar with the forms they take. I’m going to give you the forms for these unpredictable verbs below, simply as a reference, because you will find the examples you need to absorb them within the final three dialogues. The main key to mastering them is through repeated listening.

to be – être – uncertain / subjunctive forms

je sois	I am
tu sois	you are
il soit	he is
elle soit	she is
ils soient	they are
nous soyons	we are
vous soyez	you are

to have – avoir – uncertain / subjunctive forms

j' aie	I have
tu aies	you have
il ait	he has
elle ait	she has
ils aient	they have
nous ayons	we have
vous ayez	you have

to go – aller – uncertain / subjunctive forms

j' aille	I go
tu ailles	you go
il aille	he goes
elle aille	she goes
ils aillent	they go
nous allions	we go
vous alliez	you go

to do – faire – uncertain / subjunctive forms

je fasse	I do/make
tu fasses	you do / make
il fasse	he does / makes
elle fasse	she does / makes
ils fassent	they do / make
nous fassions	we do / make
vous fassiez	you do / make

can / to be able to – pouvoir – uncertain / subjunctive forms

je puisse	I can
tu puisses	you can
il puisse	he can
elle puisse	she can
ils puissent	they can
nous puissions	we can
vous puissiez	you can

to want – vouloir – uncertain / subjunctive forms

je veuille	I want
tu veuilles	you want
il veuille	he wants
elle veuille	she wants
ils veuillent	they want
nous voulions	we want
vous vouliez	you want

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