

Student e-book

# Grammar

## French Basics

Easy French Grammatical Explanations in English  
and Practical, Everyday Language

**With More Than  
170 Exercises**

**New Edition 2017**

A Publication of  
*Learn Languages at Home*

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Others:

—*Learn French at Home*: [www.learnfrenchathome.com](http://www.learnfrenchathome.com)

—*French Accent Magazine*: [www.frenchaccentmagazine.com](http://www.frenchaccentmagazine.com)

—*The French Learning Boutique*: [www.frenchlearningmaterial.com](http://www.frenchlearningmaterial.com)

—*Learn English at Home*: [www.learningenglishathome.com](http://www.learningenglishathome.com)

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# About *Learn French at Home*

***Learn French at Home***, created in 2004 by Céline and Vincent Anthonioz, has helped thousands of French learners, each with very different learning goals. The main ingredient of our success lies in our team of professional and friendly native French teachers who take the time to personalize every single lesson according to the student's personal and professional goal. Our main purpose is to deliver true quality service to each student.

Since the lessons take place in the student's home or workplace, it doesn't matter where you live. The teachers are located in France, Switzerland, Canada and the USA.

When you're ready to take your French learning to another level, *Learn French at Home* can set you up with one-on-one personalized French lessons with a professional and encouraging French native teacher. Take a look at our long distance French learning school: [www.learnfrenchathome.com](http://www.learnfrenchathome.com)

Every lesson is given on Skype. Whether you need to learn the language to prepare for your upcoming trip to a French speaking country, or whether you need it to work on any professional objectives, or you simply wish to enjoy communicating in French, you'll find the appropriate program on our website. We also offer French lessons for kids, which are a big success among parents wishing that their children become fluent in a foreign language.

During the session on Skype, the teacher privileges that time to stimulate the learner to speak in French, and explains grammatical points. You'll get real practice as though you were travelling or living in France!

If you're interested in speaking to a language advisor/teacher, or to order a first pack of lessons, please consult our website :

**[www.learnfrenchathome.com](http://www.learnfrenchathome.com)**



*Bienvenue à Learn French at Home !*

*Every teacher at Learn French at Home teaches French with passion and establishes a caring and friendly relationship with each student. Learning from home in a relaxed atmosphere inevitably leads to positive results. Having fun learning while experiencing real progress is our main objective for each lesson.*

*A bientôt !*

*Céline*

# WHY A FRENCH GRAMMAR BOOK IN ENGLISH?

*"The most important thing is to learn French, and to keep studying it after you get here."  
(Channel 4, Relocation).*

At Learn French at Home, we have been teaching students located all over the world and many of them do not have access to a French grammar book. Creating an e-book that can be sent to our students in just one click became the obvious solution.

In addition, we noticed that there was a need for a grammar book with easy to understand grammar explanations. One difficulty in learning French is the complexity of the grammar and the fear that many students have of studying grammar rules. This is why we wrote this e-book in English in order to facilitate comprehension. We wanted it to be an attractive and accessible grammar reference for our students. We have not included answers to the exercises since this book is intended to be used together with a French teacher. Also, many of the questions in the exercise sections are for the students to answer freely, as well as many of the translations from English to French have, of course, more than one possible version.

This French basics grammar e-book is written for beginner learners; they will be able to learn and exercise their understanding of the basic elements of the language. Step by step, together with a teacher or on his/her own, the student can construct the sentences and gain plenty of practice.

A first edition was published in 2011. This is a new revised edition.

# OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF *LANGUAGES AT HOME*

## Books

***Cook Like a French Person. 33 Bilingual (French English) Recipes.*** E-book. New Edition (2017).

***Le bruit des vagues. 12 Short Suspense Stories in French, Nr. 1.*** (2017). For French Learners (Intermediate and Advanced). With Glossaries, Grammar Tips, Cultural Notes, Exercises and Full Audio for Each Story. Available in print format, together with an e-book with audio links. The e-book version can be purchased separately.

***Learn French? Of Course You Can!*** (2016): The First Self-Help Guide For French Learners. Its goals are to motivate the French learners, to give them confidence, and to provide them with many useful tips. With the advice and testimonials of hundreds of students and celebrities. Available in print format. An e-book version can also be purchased.

***Travelling in France: Essential Communication for the Smart Tourist*** (2016). An easy guide of everyday French expressions and vocabulary indispensable for foreigners travelling in France. Available in print format, together with an e-book with audio links. The e-book version can be purchased separately.

***Say It With a French Accent*** (e-book): Grammar explanations and audio scenarios.

***Live Like a French Person*** (e-book): Audio scenarios on daily life in France.

***Raise Your Children With a French Accent*** (e-book): Audio scenarios on children's daily life; songs and stories.

***Write Like a French Person*** (e-book): A compilation of dictations, for beginners and intermediary French students, with audio links.

## Magazine

***French Accent Magazine:*** Published every two months, the essential e-magazine for French learners, with a central theme, articles on various topics such as politics, culture and literature, grammar, scenarios and vocabulary with audio links.

**For more details on all publications and to see samples:  
[www.frenchaccentmagazine.com](http://www.frenchaccentmagazine.com)**

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# Bonjour !

## **Bonjour, bonsoir...**

When you walk into a boutique or a small shop in France, the people in the place will acknowledge you by saying **bonjour** (all day) or **bonsoir** (after 5:00 p.m.). Of course, in return you should do the same. If you walk into a place filled with women only, you could say *Bonjour Mesdames*, in a place filled with men and women *Bonjour Mesdames et Messieurs* (or simply *Messieurs-dames*). If you're facing one person only, it is customary to say *Bonjour Monsieur* or *Bonjour Madame*, if you're greeting a younger female person (18 years or less), you should say *Bonjour Mademoiselle*.

## **Au revoir, bonne journée, bonne soirée, bonne nuit...**

When you leave a shop or a restaurant during the day, you should always automatically say **au revoir** (good bye) or **bonne journée** (have a good day!). In the evening, you must say **bonne soirée** (good evening). And when you leave someone at night, you say **bonne nuit** (good night).

## **A bientôt, à plus tard !...**

Here is a list of common expressions you say when you leave people, and when to use them:

**A bientôt !** = See you soon! Used when you are going to see that person again one day but you're not sure when! The equivalent of "see you later."

**A samedi, à mercredi, à ce soir, à demain, à la semaine prochaine, à demain soir, à midi**, etc. = See you Saturday, Wednesday, tonight, tomorrow, next week, tomorrow evening, at lunch time, etc. When you are indicating the specific day and time when you will meet again, just start the phrase with **à** + any specific day or time.

**A tout à l'heure !** = See you later today! It is said when you are going to see that person again in just a few hours within that same day. The younger kids and adults may just say **à tout'** and will pronounce the *t* at the end of the word.

**A plus tard !** = See you later ! It is used when you are unsure if you're going to see that person again or not but most likely will. The younger kids and adults may just say **à plus** and will pronounce the *s* at the end of the word. In text messages (sms), they simply write: **A+**.

**A une prochaine !** = See you next time! Same as above.

**A un de ces quatre !** = See you one of these days!. You use it when you are not sure when you will see someone again.

## **Les bises (kisses on the cheek)**

Each time you run into someone you know or even if you're meeting that person for the first time and if you're a woman, you should be prepared to give from 2 to 4 *bises* (depending on your location in France) to the other person (male or female) on their cheeks. The French person in question will more than likely initiate the action. If you're a man, you should also be ready to *faire la bise* to a woman but normally you would shake hands (*serrer la main*) with another man.

.....  
.....EXERCISE.....  
.....

**What do you say:**

1. When you enter a *boulangerie* in the morning?
  2. When you enter a *fromagerie* in which the *fromagère* (a woman) is alone?
  3. When you enter a bank in which you are welcomed by the *banquier* (a man)?
  4. When you leave a friend that you will meet again in the afternoon?
  5. When you enter a café in the evening?
  6. When you leave a shop during the day?
  7. When you leave a teacher that you will meet again the following Wednesday?
  8. When you leave a restaurant at the end of the afternoon?
  9. When you leave your friends at night before going home to bed?
  10. When you leave a colleague that you will see very soon?
- .....

## Spelling and the Alphabet

**It is important to first learn the alphabet to the point where you can easily spell any word.**

.....EXERCISES.....  
.....

**1) Say the alphabet to the teacher:**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**2) Spell the following words:**

Maison  
Architecte  
Rasoir  
Queue  
Grange  
Rêve  
Bouteille  
Bâtir  
Vendre  
Courir

**3) Difficult syllables with the vowels – learn to pronounce the following to your teacher:**

<b>eu:</b> jeune; bleu	<b>ui:</b> oui, puits
<b>au:</b> automne; faux	<b>ou:</b> roux; loup
<b>an:</b> maman; charmant	<b>on:</b> ronde; longue
<b>en:</b> vent; lentille	<b>eau:</b> chapeau, tableau
<b>ain:</b> pain; vain	<b>oi:</b> poisson; croire
<b>in:</b> vin; malin	

## ***Etre (to be)***

The verb **être** is an irregular verb. Study and memorize the way it is conjugated according to the different subject pronouns:

First let's learn what the subject pronouns are:

*Je* = I  
*Tu* = You (the familiar form)  
*Il* = He  
*Elle* = She  
*On* = One/We  
*Nous* = We  
*Vous* = You (plural form)  
*Ils* = They (masculine)  
*Elles* = They (feminine)

**Note:** A mixed group of males and females is referred to as masculine, even if there are 10 women and only one man. You will have to use *ils*.

### ***Tu and vous***

There are two different words to express “you” in French: ***tu*** and ***vous***.

***Tu*** is the familiar “you”. It expresses a certain closeness and informality. Use *tu* when speaking to a friend, a colleague, a relative or a child.

Example:

*Salut Jean, tu es content d'être en vacances ?* = Hi, Jean, are you happy to be on holidays?

***Vous*** is the formal form of “you”. It is used when one has to express respect or in formal situations.

Example:

*Bonjour Monsieur Desbois, vous êtes ici pour quelques semaines ?* = Good morning Mr Desbois, you are here for a few weeks?

**Note:** However, when speaking to more than one person, *vous* is used, even if you are talking to people you would say *tu* to individually.

Examples:

*Salut Jean, tu vas bien ?* = Hi John, are you OK?

*Bonjour, tu es très belle aujourd'hui.* = Good morning, you are very beautiful today.

*Jean et Marie, vous êtes contents ?* = John and Mary, are you happy?

### **The conjugation of être**

*Je suis* = I am  
*Tu es* = You are  
*Il/elle/on est* = He/she/one is (we are)  
*Nous sommes* = We are  
*Vous êtes* = You are  
*Ils/elles sont* = They are  
***C'est*** = This is

## On and nous

There are 2 ways to express “we”: *on* or *nous*.

*On* is more casual than *nous*. It is conjugated at the 3rd person just like *il* or *elle*.

Example:

*Vincent et moi, nous sommes français. On est de Lyon.* = Vincent and I, we are French. We are from Lyon.

*On* also means “one” or “everyone”. It is used when expressing facts, generalities or obligations.

Examples:

*En France, on boit un apéritif avant le repas.* = in France, one (we) drinks an aperitif before the meal.

*On doit avoir un visa de travail pour travailler en France.* = One (we) must have a work visa to work in France.

## Les nationalités (Nationalities)

**Nouns and adjectives of nationality agree with the gender** (feminine/masculine/singular/plural); if the subject is feminine, then you need to add an **e** and if the subject is plural, then you need to add a **s**.

Examples:

*Elle est française* = She is French

*Il est anglais* = He is English

*Nous sommes américaines* = We are American (females)

*Elles sont anglaises* = They are English (females)

*Ils sont anglais* = They are English (males)

## Quelques adjectifs (A few adjectives)

**An adjective is a word that describes a noun or a pronoun.** In French, an adjective is usually placed after the noun, except for the shorter ones. **Just like nationalities, they must agree with the gender** (feminine/masculine/singular/plural ).

Examples of adjectives:

*petit* = small/short

*grand* = tall

*content* = happy

*drôle* = funny

*triste* = sad

*méchant* = mean

*marié* = married

*fatigué* = tired

In most cases, the feminine form of the adjective is formed by adding an **e**. The plural is formed by adding an ‘s’. To learn more about adjectives, go to page 67.

Examples:

*Mon mari est grand* = My husband is tall.

*Ma femme est grande* = My wife is tall.

*Mes enfants sont grands* = My children are tall.

*Mes filles sont grandes* = My daughters are tall.

**With some of adjectives, the feminine form is irregular.**

Examples:

*beau* becomes *belle* (handsome, beautiful)

*mignon* becomes *mignonne* (cute)

*gentil* becomes *gentille* (nice)

*gros* becomes *grosse* (big, fat)

## The more usual negative construction (*ne . . . pas*)

In order to make a sentence negative, you need to add **ne** and **pas** around the verb.

Example:

Je **ne suis pas** *grande* = I am not tall.

**Note:** in everyday speech the French will often drop the *ne*: *Je suis pas grande*.

## .....EXERCISES.....

### 1) Fill in the blanks with the proper form of the verb *être*:

1. Bonjour, je \_\_\_\_\_ Caroline Dupuy.
2. Et vous ? Qui \_\_\_\_\_ vous?
3. Bonjour, je \_\_\_\_\_ Roger Carlson !
4. Je \_\_\_\_\_ Belge
5. Et vous, \_\_\_\_\_ vous anglais ?
6. Non, je \_\_\_\_\_ canadien.

### 2) Translate the following sentences:

1. I am tired =
2. I am happy =
3. You are busy =
4. I am not Irish =
5. You are not English =
6. I am a student =
7. We are married =
8. He is nice =
9. She is short =
10. They are tall =
11. She is funny =

### 3) Complete the following sentence by filling the blanks with the proper form of the verb *être*:

Paul \_\_\_\_\_ grand, il \_\_\_\_\_ sympa et il \_\_\_\_\_ professeur d'anglais. Je \_\_\_\_\_ son meilleur ami. Nous \_\_\_\_\_ dans la même école. Paul \_\_\_\_\_ français, il n'\_\_\_\_\_ pas le plus jeune de la famille, il \_\_\_\_\_ le grand frère de Camille. Il \_\_\_\_\_ très gentil et comique, je \_\_\_\_\_ heureux d'\_\_\_\_\_ son ami.

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