

# French Language Vacation Primer

## Personal pronouns:

**He/It, She** – IL, Elle.

- Il – (EEL)
- Elle – (like the letter “L”)

## Definite Articles:

**The** – *Le, La, Les* depending on whether the noun is masculine, feminine, or plural. When the noun begins with a vowel or an “h”, the le or la article is hyphenated as “L’aéroport” (the airport).

- Le – (like the “loo” in **LOOK**)
- La – (doe, ray, mee, fa, sew, **LA**, tee, doe)
- Les – (**LAY** egg)

## Indefinite Articles:

**A, An** – *Un, Une, Des* depending on whether the noun is masculine or feminine.

- Un – (like the “u” in **U**nder while holding your nose for a nasal twang. The twang is in place of the N)
- Une – (**EWN or OON** like P-U, without the the “P” sound and adding the “N” sound.)
- Des – (**DAY**)

## Partitive Articles:

**Some** – *Du, De la, Des* depending on whether the noun is masculine or feminine.

- Du – (DEW – like P-U without the “P”, but a “D” instead.)
- De la – **Doo** (like the OO in **LOOK**) (doe, ray, mee, fa, sew) **LA** (tee, doe)
- Des – (**DAY**)

And don’t forget the **pronouns**... You’ll need to know the gender of the subject to know which pronoun to use. For example,

- “A big hotel” is “Un grand hôtel”. (Masculine)
- “A big chair”, it’s “Une grande chaise”. (Feminine)

And we haven't even addressed **verbs**, yet! French verb conjugation is beyond comprehension for us normal English speaking Americans. As an example, take our future tense. In English, we form the **future tense** by adding the present form of the verb (Walk) to the auxiliary verb **will** or **shall**. It doesn't matter if there is a single man, a single woman, or a group of either or both. In French, not so much...

### In English

I will walk.

You will walk. (You – whether I know you well or you're a stranger to me and also, plural you.)

He, She, They (an single person) will walk.

We will walk.

They (more than two people) will walk.

### En Français

*Je marcherai.*

*Tu marcheras.* (I know you really well.)

*Vous marcherez.* (I don't know you, single person – or plural “you”, in general)

*Il; Elle; On* (unknown single person) *marchera.*





*Els, Elles* (more than two people) *marcheron*


OK, OK, before your head explodes – Just recognize the languages are very different, but that shouldn't stop you from giving it a go.

The message? Learn some vocabulary and a few helpful phrases. Don't get bogged down with tenses right away. As much as you can, do try and remember whether the word you're learning is a chic feminine word or a masculine. One way to do that, is to learn the vocabulary with the articles.







Below are some French words and phrases (including articles) that are helpful to know when visiting France. A general rule (but not gospel – those crazy French), when a word ends in a consonant, that consonant is silent. If the word ends in an e, the consonant before the e is sounded.

## Words

1. **Hello** -- *Bonjour.* (**bon-zhour**) – [Listen](#) 
2. **Thank you** -- *Merci.* (**mair-see**) – [Listen](#) 
3. **Goodbye** -- *Au revoir.* (**oh-reu-vwar**) – [Listen](#) 
4. **Please** -- *S'il vous plaît* (**see-voe-play**) – [Listen](#) 


5. I am... -- *Je suis* (zheu swee) – [Listen](#) 
6. I'm looking for... -- *Je cherche* (zheu share-sh) – [Listen](#) 
7. I want... -- *Je veux* (zheu veu) – [Listen](#) 
8. A hotel -- *Un hôtel* (ern otell) – [Listen](#) 
9. A room -- *Une chambre* (une shombre) – [Listen](#) 
10. To eat -- *Manger* (mon-zhay) – [Listen](#) 
11. To drink -- *Boire* (bwar) – [Listen](#) 
12. To pay -- *Payer* (pay-yeh) – [Listen](#) 
13. To buy -- *Acheter* (ash-tay) – [Listen](#) 
14. Breakfast -- *Petit-déjeuner* (peuti – dayzheurnay) – [Listen](#) 
15. Dinner -- *Diner* (dee-nay) – [Listen](#) 
16. A glass -- *Un verre* (ern vair) – [Listen](#) 
17. Some water -- *De l'eau* (deu-lo) – [Listen](#) 
18. A tea -- *Un thé* (ern tay): A tea with milk -- *Un thé au lait* (ern tay olay) – [Listen](#) 
19. The washroom, the ladies room, the toilet -- *La toilette* (lar twa-lette) – [Listen](#) 
20. Price -- *Prix* (pree) – [Listen](#) 
21. Credit card -- *Carte de crédit* (kart deu cray-dee) – [Listen](#) 
22. A bank -- *Une banque* (une bonk) – [Listen](#) 
23. The shops/stores -- *Des magasins* (day magga-zan) – [Listen](#) 
24. The bill/tab -- *L'addition* (la dissyon) – [Listen](#) 
25. A supermarket -- *Un supermarché* (ern supair-mar-shay) – 
26. The train station -- *La gare* (lar gar) – [Listen](#) 
27. The airport -- *L'aéroport* (l'aero-por) – [Listen](#) 
28. A car -- *Une voiture* (une vwa-tiure) – [Listen](#) 

## French Phrases

1. I don't understand -- *Je ne comprends pas.* (zheu neu kompron paw) – [Listen](#) 
2. I don't speak French -- *Je ne parle pas français.* (zheu neu parl par fron-say) [Listen](#) 
3. Could you speak more slowly, please? -- *Pouvez vous parler plus lentement, s'il vous plait?*  
(poo-vay-voo par-lay ploo lontermon) – [Listen](#) 
4. Could you repeat that please? -- *Pouvez-vous répéter, s'il vous plait?* (poo-vay-voo ray-pay-tay, see-vo-play) – [Listen](#) 
5. Please, I'm looking for... -- *S'il vous plaît, je cherche.....*  
(see-vo-play, zheu share-sh ..... ) – [Listen](#) 
6. Do you have...? -- *Avez-vous....* (avay -vo) – [Listen](#) 
7. Do you have a room for two? -- *Avez-vous une chambre pour deux personnes?*  
(avay -vo une shombre poor deuh pair-sonn) – [Listen](#) 
8. What time does it close? -- *A quelle heure est-ce que cela ferme ?*  
(a kel eure esk slar fairme) – [Listen](#) 
9. How much does it cost? -- *Combien ça coûte?* (kom-bjanne sar coot) [Listen](#) 
10. Where are the toilets/washrooms, please? -- *Où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît?* ( oo son lay twar-let, see-vo-play – [Listen](#) 
11. A black coffee and a coffee with milk, please. -- *Un café et un café au lait, s'il vous plaît.* (ern caffay ay ern caffay olay, see-vo-play) – [Listen](#) 
12. This bill/tab, please. -- *L'addition, s'il vous plaît.*  
(lad-eesi-onsee-vo-play) – [Listen](#) 
13. To the airport, please. -- *A l'aéroport, s'il vous plaît.* (ar l'aeropor see-vo-play) – [Listen](#) 
14. A table for two people -- *Une table pour deux personnes.*(oon tarbleu poor deuh pair-son); A table for four people -- *Une table pour quatre personnes.* (oon tarbleu poor cat-r pair-son) – [Listen](#) 
15. I'm not feeling well. -- *Je ne me sens pas bien.*(zheu neu meu son par bjanne) – [Listen](#) 
16. We're lost. -- *Nous sommes perdus.*(noo som pair-dju) – [Listen](#) 
17. We want to go... -- *Nous voulons aller à...* (noo voolon allay are...) – [Listen](#) 
18. I'm looking for an ATM/cash machine. -- *Je cherche un distributeur (automatique not included commonly).* (zheu share-sh ern dee-stree-beaut-eur deu bee-ay) – [Listen](#) 

19. **Could you call me a taxi, please?** -- *Pouvez-vous m'appeler un taxi, s'il vous plaît;*

(**poovay voo maplay ern taxi see-voo-play**) – [Listen](#) 

20. **We're in a big hurry.** -- *Nous sommes très pressés.* (**noo som tray pressay**; **We're late.** -- *Nous sommes en retard.* (**noo som on retar**) – [Listen](#) 

21. **What will the weather be today?** -- *Quel temps va-t-il faire aujourd'hui?* (**kel tom vartil fair oh-zhour-dwee**) – [Listen](#) 

I am brushing up my French and am using <https://www.frenchlearner.com>. This is the site where I found the audio examples. FrenchLearner.com is [David Issokson's](#) site where he has video and podcast lessons for French phrases, grammar and vocabulary. He also provides French lessons via Skype, something I'm actually interested in. Will report back if I sign up.