

**frenchtoday™**



**À Moi Paris - Level 1**  
The Beginnings

***SAMPLE***

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# Introduction

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When I read a French method, I am always appalled by its difficulty. Even 'Beginner 101' courses assume you have had some French before or are a language genius...

This method was created from the ground up with the total beginner in mind. As the story develops, I will be using vocabulary and concepts studied in the previous chapters, and will slowly add new ones. Your knowledge of French will, therefore, expand gradually. As we learn best with repetitions, I will be using both known and new vocabulary in the story part, as well as in the examples and exercises.

Guessing from the context is essential when you learn any foreign language. Another essential concept is to accept and embrace the fact that you will not always understand every single word being used. As we advance through this audio method, I will introduce some very common concepts, which are too advanced to be studied here. Doing so will train your ear to understand them, even if you may not be able to use them yet yourself. Rest assured however that I will mostly use concepts that I do explain, and that you will fully master them once you complete this audiobook.

French pronunciation can be a challenge. This book is full of pronunciation notes, and with the recorded audio may be self-sufficient. However, French pronunciation follows simple rules and knowing them will make more sense than just guessing. I strongly suggest that you study "Secrets of French Pronunciation" (<http://www.french-today.com/sfp>) at the same time as you are following this method. As you work your way through this audiobook, I will be suggesting other in-depth lessons that you could benefit from if you want to focus on particular, more specific, concepts.

The amount of work you will put into this book is up to you: you can just listen to the story part, enjoy, and learn some truly useful French sentences... and have fun along the way. If you are motivated, however, this method could be the basis for hours of serious studying, gradually building up your knowledge and giving you the confidence that you need to interact in French.

So now, here is my advice on how to best use this book.

# How to work with the audio recordings

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Each chapter of the story is recorded three times: once very slowly so you can really hear all the French sounds, then at a normal speed, respecting the modern glided pronunciation of spoken French. The whole section is then recorded in a "street French" manner, mostly for you to practice on understanding French people when they speak among themselves in everyday life. Don't sweat trying to speak that fast yet, this will come with experience and practice.

Written French and spoken French are quite different, so make sure you **always** work with the audio first, and memorize the correct pronunciation before you memorize the spelling. Beware of the many silent letters. And repeat out loud, not only in your head, that doesn't count :-)

1. LISTEN to the slow recording of the story part. Can you guess what is happening?
2. Read the English translation, then read the French at the same time as the normal recording is playing. Note the glidings, liaisons, intonation and word groupings that happen. Write them down on the print out of this PDF to help you read the story better.
3. REPEAT OUT LOUD - first sentence by sentence with the slow recording, then once you master the slow recording, repeat longer dialogues with the normal recording speed. You will probably need to use the pause and play buttons to have time to repeat in between each phrase.
4. Use the "street French" recording of the whole section to test your understanding. You will probably not be able to speak that fast at first, but you need to train your ear to be able to understand people speaking that way (which is 'normal' speed for natives)!

## The study guide

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ALWAYS STUDY WITH THE AUDIO. Go as slow as you need, repeating as many times as necessary until you get the pronunciation and are able to memorize the points being explained. It's not about going as fast as possible to the next chapter. Au contraire, you need to focus on the same point until you **really** get it, and can do the exercises without hesitation.

- Do and redo the exercises. After I give you the English sentences, pause to have time to answer out loud or to write down your answer. Then check both your answer and its pronunciation with the audio and pdf. Train with the audio to repeat my answer out loud.
- Make flash cards to memorize the new words and expressions. Test yourself with your flashcards.
- Remember the golden rule of studying: for any time spent studying new material, try spending twice as much time reviewing previously studied material: so go back! Repetition is the key!

## The story part

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You can use the story to improve your understanding and pronunciation, as well as your written French.

Once you are familiar with the meaning of the story, go back then play, pause and REPEAT OUT LOUD each

sentence. Try to mimic the sing-song of my voice as if you were an actor: pay close attention to the glidings, the elisions and liaisons, and also to the word grouping: where I pause and breathe within the sentence. Repeat as many times as necessary for you to be able to read comfortably.

Try not to translate! Stay focused on the context and the storyline. So you didn't understand one word? The worse that can happen is for your brain to freeze - and then you'd miss the rest of the story. What you don't know, you can usually guess: guessing what is logically happening in a given context is very important in language learning. It's essential that you develop this ability in French and force your brain to go with the flow of the story or conversation.

Don't try to link the French words to English! Link the words to images, verbs to actions, get a visual image of it all - you don't need to go through English to speak French. Doing so will lead to mistakes, and will considerably slow you down when speaking since your brain would be doing twice the work (idea to English, THEN English to French... rather than idea to French directly!!)

If you want to work on your written French, you can use the audio of the slow story as a dictation. Play with the pause button as needed so you have time to write the sentences down.

Good luck with your French studies, and remember, repetition is the key!

## Key

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### **Pronunciation Note**

*Any note related to specific pronunciation will be highlighted with this icon.*



### **Language Note**

*Any note on the particularities of the French language will be highlighted with this icon.*



### **Cultural Note**

*When an aspect of French culture affects the way we use the French language, it will be noted with this icon*



### **Suggested Additional Reading/Listening**

*Some subjects are beyond the scope of this beginner method. When that subject is explored in greater length in another French Today product, I'll point it out.*

# Section Quatre

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## Tugdual

### Tugdual

Mary is at the park. She runs into Camille, an acquaintance who introduces her to her boyfriend, Tugdual. They talk about his name, where they come from and which countries they would like to travel to.

In this section, we will study:

- The indefinite article: un, une, des, pas de
- The reflexive verbs: se or s' + verb
- The French verb «s'appeler» = to say your name
- The differences between la France, le français, un Français, français
- The countries and nationalities
- The prepositions of place

## Chapitre 10

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# Je m'appelle Tugdual

My name is Tugdual

## Story

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Mary est au parc. Elle rencontre Camille, une amie de Sylvie.

*Mary is at the parc. She runs into Camille, a friend of Sylvie.*

Camille      Salut Mary, ça va ?  
*Hey Mary, what's up?*

Mary          Salut Camille ! Ça va, merci, et toi ?  
*Hey Camille! I'm fine, thanks. You?*

Camille      Ça va très bien, merci. Mary, voici Tugdual, mon petit-copain, qui est ici pour le weekend.  
*I'm all right, thanks. Mary, this is Tugdual, my boyfriend, who is here for the weekend.*

Mary          Bonjour.  
*Hi.*

Tugdual      Salut.  
*Hey.*

Mary          Excuse-moi, mais tu t'appelles comment ? Je n'ai pas bien compris.  
*Excuse-me, but what's your name? I didn't quite get it.*

Tugdual      Je m'appelle Tugdual.  
*My name is Tugdual.*

- Mary            C'est compliqué pour moi de dire ça. Tug du al. C'est un prénom français ?  
*It's hard for me to say that. Tug du al. Is it a French first name?*
- Tugdual        Oui, mais c'est un peu spécial. C'est un prénom breton. Là-bas, c'est un prénom commun, mais pas dans le reste de la France.  
*Yes, but it's a bit special... It's a first name from Brittany. Over-there, it's a common first name, but not so in the rest of France.*
- Mary            Ah, d'accord. Et tu habites en Bretagne ?  
*Oh, all right. And do you live in Brittany?*
- Tugdual        Oui, je suis de Paimpol, mais j'étudie à Rennes maintenant. Tu connais la Bretagne ?  
*Yes, I am from Paimpol, but I study in Rennes now. Have you been to Brittany? (The verb "connaître" mean to be personally acquainted with a place or a person: to have been to the place, to have met the person).*
- Mary            Oui, j'y suis allée avec mes parents en vacances, il y a longtemps. C'est très joli là-bas. Ça ressemble un peu à l'Irlande.  
*Yes, I have been there with my parents on vacation, a long time ago. It's very pretty over there. It looks a bit like Ireland.*
- Tugdual        Et toi, tu es irlandaise ?  
*What about you, are you Irish?*
- Mary            Non, je suis anglaise, mais j'ai de la famille en Irlande aussi. En fait, ma famille est d'origine américaine, et nous allons souvent aux États-Unis pour voir le reste de notre famille.  
*No, I'm British, but I have family in Ireland as well. In fact, my family is originally American, and we often go to the States to see the rest of our family.*

## Study Guide

---

### 1. "Un", "une" = a, an, one

We have already studied these little words, so you should be familiar with them.

We use **un** + a masculine word and **une** + a feminine word

It's important that you master the pronunciation of these 2 words:

1. "Un" is a short nasal sound. The "n" sound disappears unless it's followed by a liaison.

*Un frère, un père, un mari*



*But un enfant, un ami, un oncle – liaison in N*

2. "Une" is a longer sound. "u-ne". The N is clearly pronounced. When "Une" is followed by a vowel or an h, it will have a strong gliding.

*Une soeur, une mère, une femme*

*Une amie, une Américaine – gliding in N*

"Un, une" are also the cardinal number for "one".

*J'ai un frère et une soeur - I have one brother and one sister*

## 2. Des = indefinite plural quantity, both feminine and masculine

"Des" is used with a plural word (both feminine and masculine). In English, you could use the word "some", but usually, you don't use anything there. "Des" is used to describe an unspecified plural quantity; it tells you there is more than one item, but again, it's a vague plural quantity (could be 2, could be 10,000 or more)... This "des" usually applies to whole items, which you could count, but decided not to.



*Watch out - we have several little words starting with "d" = des, du, de and d'. Here again, you need to train on pronunciation to be sure you associate the right sound with the right word. Des ≠ de.*



*Refer to the extensive pronunciation drills found in Secrets of French Pronunciation:  
<http://www.frenchtoday.com/sfp>*

## Exercise

Translate the following:

1. I have one sister and one brother.
2. She invites a girlfriend
3. We are cooking pizzas
4. They are meeting some friends

### Answers

1. *I have one sister and one brother- J'ai une soeur et un frère*
2. *She invites a girlfriend- Elle invite une amie*
3. *We are cooking pizzas - Nous cuisinons des pizzas*

4. *They are meeting friends - Ils rencontrent des amis*

### 3. Reflexive verbs = se or s' + verb

A lot of French verbs have a "normal" form, and a "reflexive" form.

*Il coupe une pomme – He is cutting an apple.*

*Il se coupe – He cuts himself (on the finger for example)*

#### A. When do we use a reflexive form?

Using a "reflexive" form may change the meaning of the verb, slightly.

We use a "reflexive" form in 3 situations:

1. When the subject is the same person as the direct object.

In other words, when one does the action to oneself, as in you (subject) are brushing your own hair (direct object) versus brushing your daughter's hair. These situations are often in the context of toiletry, injuries, locomotion and attitudes.

*Elle se brosse les cheveux - she is brushing her hair*

2. In the plural, to show reciprocity, similar to the notion of "each other" in English.

*We love each other = "nous nous aimons".*

3. Idiomatic expressions. The original verb and its "twisted" reflexive version have nothing in common, you have to consider them like idioms, expressions.

*"Sentir" - to smell*

*"Se sentir" - to feel*

#### B. How to make a verb reflexive?

This is easy. You just have to add what is called a "reflexive pronoun".

The list of reflexive pronouns is:

**Me, te, se, nous, vous, se.**



*Me, te, se take elision and become m', t', s'.*

So in certain situations, if you are already using a subject pronoun, then you'll have 2 pronouns one after the other.

It's a bit weird (especially when it comes to the "nous nous" and the "vous vous") but you'll get used to it!

### Example: Se réveiller – to wake up

Je <b>me</b> réveille	Nous <b>nous</b> réveillons
Tu <b>te</b> réveilles	Vous <b>vous</b> réveillez
Il, elle, on <b>se</b> réveille	Ils, elles <b>se</b> réveillent



"Je me", "Tu te" and "on se" are going to glide, and become more of a "jeum", "tut" and "ons" kind of sound in street French.



As in any language, you have different levels of formality. The way French is taught in schools usually focuses on written formal French, and teaches you to speak like you write. French Today's approach is quite the opposite: we want you to understand real French people, and be understood by them. In order to do so, you need to learn the modern French language, like it's spoken nowadays in France. We will always make a point to teach you the modern French pronunciation of things. You can then choose to follow it or stay more "conventional".



You will find out much more about reflexive verbs, as well as find lists of common ones in my French Verb Fundamentals masterclass: <http://www.frenchtoday.com/fvf>

## Exercise

Study the reflexive verbs below. Then see how they are used in the text.



For actions of toiletry, injuries, locomotion and attitudes, English usually uses a 'possessive adjective' before the noun (I brush MY hair) - In French, we use a reflexive verb and a definite article - no possessive adjective (Je me brosse LES cheveux, not mes cheveux).

- Se brosser les cheveux, les dents - to brush one's hair, one's teeth
- S'habiller - to get dressed
- Se laver (les mains, les cheveux...) - to wash oneself (to wash one's hands, one's hair - hair is plural in French)
- Se maquiller - to apply makeup

- Se raser - to shave
- Se coucher – to go to bed
- Se lever - to get up

Translate the text. You may have to guess a few words. Focus on the context, you will get them!

Le matin, Mary se réveille à 6h30. Elle se lève à 7h00. Elle va dans la salle de bains, elle se lave, et puis elle s'habille. Elle se brosse les dents, elle se brosse les cheveux, et puis elle se maquille. Après, elle va dans la cuisine prendre son petit-déjeuner.

*In the morning, Mary wakes up at 6:30AM. She gets up at 7:30AM. She goes in the bathroom, she washes herself, and then gets dressed. She brushes her teeth, she brushes her hair, and she puts on makeup. After, she goes to the kitchen to have breakfast.*

## Exercise

---

Answer these questions:

Le matin, à quelle heure est-ce que vous vous réveillez ?

---

Vous vous levez à quelle heure ?

---

Vous vous habillez dans la salle de bains ou dans la chambre ?

---

### Answers

*Le matin, à quelle heure est-ce que vous vous réveillez ?*

*Je me réveille à ....*

*Vous vous levez à quelle heure ?*

*Je me lève à ....*

*Vous vous habillez dans la salle de bains ou dans la chambre ?*

*Je m'habille dans la chambre / dans la salle de bain.*

## 4. Le verbe s'appeler - to say your name

A common reflexive verb is the verb "s'appeler".

In its reflexive form, "s'appeler", it means to be called, to be named.

In its standard form, "appeler", it means to call someone (on the phone, or in the street).

Since "appeler" starts with a vowel, "me, te, se" are going to become "m', t', s'" in elision. Study the pronunciation of the pronouns and the liaisons that take place.

"Appeler" is slightly irregular, just like "préférer" was. You will notice that the L becomes LL for the je, tu, il, elle, on, ils and elles forms, creating a "elle" sound.

### S'appeler

Je <b>m'</b> appelle	Nous <b>nous</b> appelons
Tu <b>t'</b> appelles	Vous <b>vous</b> appelez
Il, elle, on <b>s'</b> appelle	Ils, elles <b>s'</b> appellent

## 5. Related vocabulary

- Le nom - the name (generic)
- Le prénom - the first name/surname (like Anne, Mary)
- Le nom de famille - the family name (like Castel, Joe)
- Le surnom - the nickname (like Bob for Robert – not as common in France as in the US)
- Le petit nom - the (cute) nickname, used for love names as "ma chérie" (sweetie)

## Exercise

Translate these sentences. If you are not sure, look for the answers in the story chapters.

1. What is your name? (using vous)
2. What is your name? (using tu)
3. My name is Anne.
4. What is her name?
5. Her name is Clothilde.

Answers

1. *What is your name? (using vous)*  
*Vous vous appelez comment ? (Also comment vous appelez-vous, but it's more formal)*
2. *What is your name? (using tu)*  
*Tu t'appelles comment ? (Also comment t'appelles-tu)*
3. *My name is Anne.*  
*Je m'appelle Anne.*
4. *What is her name?*  
*Elle s'appelle comment ? (Also comment s'appelle-t-elle ?)*
5. *Her name is Clothilde.*  
*Elle s'appelle Clothilde.*

## À Moi Paris Series

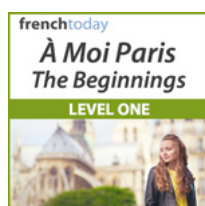
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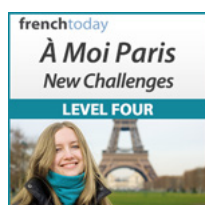
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