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# LEARN FRENCH

FOR BEGINNERS  
CEFR TARGET

AUDIO STREAMING • 80 MIN

# A2

# salut

**TARGET:  
LANGUAGES**

**LEARN  
FRENCH**  
Beginner level  
**A2**

**Anthony Bulger**



**I**

**MEETING**

**AND**

**GREETING**

# 1.

# INTRODUCTIONS

## PRISE DE CONTACT

### AIMS

- INTRODUCING YOURSELF
- SAYING HELLO AND GOODBYE
- THANKING SOMEONE

### NOTIONS

- MASCULINE AND FEMININE GENDERS
- *ÊTRE* (TO BE) AND *AVOIR* (TO HAVE)
- *TU* AND *VOUS*
- NEGATIVE

## INTRODUCTIONS

- Hello (*good day*), I'm Léon. And you?
  - My name is (*I me call*) Virginie. Pleased [to meet you].
  - I'm here at the Sorbonne for the climate conference (*on the climate*).
  - Me too.
  - Are you (*you are*) French, Virginie? You have a slight (*small*) accent.
  - No, I'm Swiss. But I live in (*at*) Lyon.
  - Lyon is a beautiful city.
  - Yes, very nice. And you? Are you (*you are*) from Paris?
  - No, not at all. I'm not French. I'm Belgian!
- 
- Hi, Virginie. How are you?
  - Hi, Jean. Very well, thanks. And you?
  - Fine. But I'm late for the conference.
  - Then so am I (*me too*)! Goodbye, Léon.
  - But wait for me!

- Bonjour, je suis Léon. Et vous ?
- Je m'appelle Virginie. Enchantée.
- Je suis ici à la Sorbonne pour la conférence sur le climat.
- Moi aussi.
- Vous êtes française, Virginie ? Vous avez un petit accent.
- Non, je suis suisse. Mais j'habite à Lyon.
- C'est une belle ville, Lyon.
- Oui, très sympa. Et vous ? Vous êtes de Paris ?
- Non, pas du tout. Je ne suis pas français. Je suis belge !
  
- Salut, Virginie. Tu vas bien ?
- Salut, Jean. Très bien, merci. Et toi ?
- Ça va. Mais je suis en retard pour la conférence.
- Alors, moi aussi ! Au revoir, Léon.
- Mais, attendez-moi !

## ■ UNDERSTANDING THE DIALOGUE

### WORDS AND PHRASES

→ **Bonjour** literally means *good day* (**bon** + **jour**) but is used more broadly to mean *good morning*, *good afternoon* or simply *hello*. **Salut** is a familiar greeting used by young people or between good friends. To say *goodbye*, we use **au revoir**.

→ **enchanté**, literally “enchanted”, is used in everyday French to mean *Pleased to meet you*. In this conversation, the person using the expression is female, so the word has to “agree” with her gender. For this, we add another **-e** to the word ending: **Enchantée**. This does not change the pronunciation. We’ll tell you more about agreement later.

→ **sympa** is an abbreviation of the adjective **sympathique**, which translates a variety of English adjectives, such as *pleasant*, *kind* and *friendly*. The nearest equivalent is *nice*, also an all-purpose adjective.

→ **Français / français**: As in English, nouns of nationality take an initial capital: **Les Français sont sympas**, *French people are nice*. By contrast, we use a small letter for adjectives of nationality: **Il est français**, *He’s French*.

### CULTURE NOTES

Although this book concentrates on the language spoken in France, French is an official language in 28 other nations across the world, from Algeria to the Seychelles. It is also used by a number of international organisations, including the United Nations, the OECD and the International Olympic Committee. So when you hear someone speaking French, it may be worth asking whether they were born in Bordeaux, Belgium or Burundi!

**Lyon** (sometimes written *Lyons* in English), in east-central France, is the county’s third-largest city. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is also famed for its claim to the title of Food Capital of the World.

**La Sorbonne** is a prestigious university founded in Paris in the 13th century by Robert de Sorbon. Although the main building is still located in the once-bohemian Latin Quarter (so-called because Latin was the only language used for teaching at the university in the Middle Ages), there are actually 14 Sorbonne-affiliated faculties and institutes dotted all over Paris.

## ◆ GRAMMAR

### GENDER

All French nouns are either masculine or feminine. Identifying the right gender can sometimes be problematic, but here are some basic rules:

– Logically, all nouns referring to men (**homme**, *man*; **frère**, *brother*; **père**, *father*, **mari**, *husband*, etc.) are masculine, and those designating women (**femme**, *women/wife*, **sœur**, *sister*; **mère**, *mother*, etc.) are feminine;

– Nouns ending in **-é** (**café**, *coffee / café*), **-age** (**ménage**, *household*), **-isme** (**tourisme**, *tourism*), **-eau** (**manteau**, *coat*), **-in** (**vin**, *wine*) and **-ment** (**gouvernement**, *government*) are generally masculine;

– Nouns ending in **-be** (**robe**, *dress*), **-té** (**beauté**, *beauty*), **-erie** (**boulangerie**, *bakery*), **-tion** (**nation**, *nation*), **-ssion** (**émission**, *TV / radio programme*) are generally feminine. (There are, however, a number of exceptions.)

The accompanying articles also agree: **le** and **un** (*the* and *a*) are masculine, **la** and **une** are feminine: **un accent**, *an accent*; **une conférence**, *a conference / lecture*; **la ville**, *the city*; **le climat**, *the climat*. However, if the first letter of the noun is a vowel, the second letter of the definite article is elided: **l'accent**. That's why it is so important to learn the gender of a French noun, along with its meaning!

There is no equivalent of the neutral pronoun *it* in French.

## SUBJECT PRONOUNS

Here are the subject forms of French personal pronouns:

<b>je</b>	<i>I</i>	<b>nous</b>	<i>we</i>
<b>tu</b>	<i>you</i> (familiar)	<b>vous</b>	<i>you</i> (formal/plural)
<b>il</b>	<i>he / it</i>	<b>ils</b>	<i>they</i>
<b>elle</b>	<i>she / it</i>		

Since French does not have a neutral pronoun, **il** and **elle** can mean *it*. Note that **je**, *I*, does not take an initial capital. Remember also that the final **s** is not voiced, so **il** and **ils** are pronounced identically, as are **elle** and **elles**. However, because the accompanying verb will be in either the single or the plural, depending on the context, there is almost no chance of confusion.

## ÊTRE AND AVOIR – “TO BE” AND “TO HAVE”

These are two of the most important verbs in French, because they are both main (or lexical) verbs and auxiliaries – as in English. They are also irregular:

	<b>être</b> , <i>to be</i>		
<b>je suis</b>	<i>I am</i>	<b>nous sommes</b>	<i>we are</i>
<b>tu es</b>	<i>you are</i> (familiar)	<b>vous êtes</b>	<i>you are</i>
<b>il / elle est</b>	<i>he / she / it is</i>	<b>ils sont</b>	<i>they are</i>



avoir, to have			
<b>j'ai</b>	<i>I have</i>	<b>nous avons</b>	<i>we have</i>
<b>tu as</b>	<i>you have (familiar)</i>	<b>vous avez</b>	<i>you have</i>
<b>il / elle a</b>	<i>he / she / it has</i>	<b>ils ont</b>	<i>they have</i>

\* Pronunciation note: take care not to confuse **ils sont** (*they are*) – pronounced with a soft “s”, [eelssohn] – and **ils ont** (*they have*), pronounced with a “z”: [eelzohn]. Note that infinitives in French are single words; there is no equivalent of the infinitive particle *to*.

## TU AND VOUS

French has two words for *you*: **tu** and **vous**, each with a corresponding verb form. Basically, **tu** is used when addressing family, friends and young people, while **vous** is more formal; it's also the plural form of *you*. So, when talking with your son or daughter, for instance, you say **Comment vas-tu ?**, *How are you?*, but if you address a stranger – or more than one person – the correct form is **Comment allez-vous ?**. There are subtle differences but the basic rule is: **tu** = familiar; **vous** = formal, plural.

## THE NEGATIVE

The negative form uses two words: **ne** immediately before the word and **pas** immediately after it: **Je suis française** → **Je ne suis pas française**. Don't use one without the other!

## THE INTERROGATIVE

There are several ways of asking a question. The simplest is to raise the intonation at the end of the sentence. Thus the declarative **Vous êtes française**, *You are French*, can be made into the question *Are you French?* simply by lifting the intonation on **française**: **Vous êtes française ?** We'll look at the other possibilities later on.

## ● VOCABULARY

**avoir** *to have*

**attendre** *to wait*

**être** *to be*

**s'appeler** *to be called, to be named*

**habiter** *to live*

**un accent** *an accent*

**le climat** *the climate*

**une conférence** *a conference*

**une ville** *a town, a city*

**suisse** *Swiss (adjective)*

**belge** *Belgian (adjective)*

**français** *French (adjective)*

**oui** *yes*

**non** *no*

**bien** *well, good*

**en retard** *late (think "tardy")*

**sympa** *nice, good*

**Au revoir** *Goodbye*

**Bonjour** *Good morning, Good afternoon, Hello*

**Ça va** *I'm fine*

**Enchanté (m.) Enchantée (f.)** *Pleased to meet you*

**Merci** *Thank you, Thanks*

**Moi aussi** *Me too*

**Pas du tout** *Not at all*

**Salut** *Hi*

That's the end of your first lesson. We're taking things slowly and progressively, but you can already construct simple sentences and ask basic questions. You could even attend a climate conference! **Allons-y** ("Let's go on").

## EXERCISES

### 1. CONJUGATE THE VERBS AVOIR AND ÊTRE

- Je ..... (*être*) français et ma femme ..... (*être*) belge.
- Virginie ..... (*avoir*) un petit accent.
- Ils ..... (*être*) en retard pour la conférence.
- Vous ..... (*être*) très sympa.
- Elles ..... (*avoir*) un frère et il ..... (*avoir*) deux sœurs.

### 2. PUT THESE SENTENCES INTO THE NEGATIVE FORM

- Alain est français. ....
- Ils sont en retard. ....
- Virginie a deux sœurs. ....
- Lyon est une belle ville. ....
- Nous sommes à la Sorbonne. ....
- Je suis belge. ....

### 3. WHAT GENDER ARE THESE NOUNS? ADD THE DEFINITE AND THE INDEFINITE ARTICLES FOR EACH OF THEM

a. émission	__	__	f. conférence	__	__
b. ville	__	__	g. robe	__	__
c. manteau	__	__	h. vin	__	__
d. boulangerie	__	__	i. père	__	__
e. café	__	__	j. nation	__	__

### 4. TRANSLATE THESE SENTENCES INTO FRENCH

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When you have finished, listen to the recording then check your written answers:

- Hi Jean, how are you? – Very well, thanks.
- Are you Belgian? – Not at all. I'm Swiss.
- Lyon is a beautiful city.
- She's late. – Me too.
- Goodbye. – Wait for me!



**TARGET:  
LANGUAGES**

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DESIGNED BY ASSIMIL,  
THE No. 1 SELF-STUDY  
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# LEARN FRENCH

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