

Instant French

QUICK PREPARATION
FOR A TRIP TO FRANCE

D. Bruce Foster & Julie Beaufort

A short course focused on making you conversationally skillful at meeting people, ordering in restaurants, and shopping, with a little culture thrown in. All in fifteen short written lessons and thirty-minute videos.

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*To McKenzie, Lleyton, Alexa, & Livy,
the inspirations for this book, and our very first readers.*

D. Bruce Foster

*To all the students who crossed my path for fifteen years, and who
made me want to continue this wonderful profession that is teaching.*

Julie Beaufort

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As you can imagine, creating a multi-media language course is not a one-man or woman affair. It takes a village, as they say. There are many people who contributed to this labor of love to whom we owe substantial credit and gratitude.

Chief among them is Brian Foster, photographer, videographer, and video editor par excellence whose skills enabled much of the excellent graphics in this course. His colleague across the Atlantic in France, Olivier Grimard, likewise produced beautiful images that we hope have helped our readers to feel immersed in the excitement of getting to know France and its language.

The story would not have been possible, of course, without our real-life character cousins, McKenzie, Lleyton, Alexa, and Olivia, as well as their grandmother, Janis Foster, who themselves were the earliest test subjects for Instant French—for the most part willingly. As with Bruce's previous books, Janis was always the very first reader and viewer, lending her experienced and critical editorial eyes and ears to each text chapter and video as they rolled off the printer and screen.

Early on we struggled with the question of whether to have the family members play their own roles, or whether it would be better for our students to hear French actors play the roles of the family so that students would hear native French accents rather than American accents. Ultimately we decided that native French accents would be best for our students. This necessitated recruiting a band of French actors over a wide range of ages. For capably fulfilling this need we are indebted to Gaele and Vincent Parchowski, Florent Alix, David Firmin, Julie and Maya Alix, Michael Alves, Nathalie Firmin, and Laure Mathiot, all of whom generously donated their time and considerable talents to the project.

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We are indebted to our diaspora of faithful first readers all over the world who completed the course and provided valuable insight into its structure, content and utility for novice French students. These included new French students Joanna Jonczyk of Poland, and Maira da Silva Santos of Brazil. Miles and Anna Cole, Monty and Pat Whitley, and Ed and Traci Foster—three unrelated American couples—all enthusiastically prepared for recent trips to France with Instant French, making them perfect test subjects. And Will MacFarland, an experienced international traveler and businessman—also of the U.S.—kindly provided his review from the perspective of a student who had taken French in school many years ago, but sorely needed a review.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our deep thanks to our editor, Professor of French Pauline Lalanne of Copenhagen, whose meticulous review, eagle eyes, good humor, and insightful suggestions made this a far better book.

October 2019

Bruce Foster & Julie Beaufort

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About The Authors

INTRODUCTION

How To Make Your Trip To France More Fun With *Instant French—Quick Preparation For A Trip To France*

Very few things in life are more fun than travelling to another country, speaking their language, and actually having people understand you! If you are headed to France, the goal of *Instant French* is to quickly prepare you for exactly that kind of enriching experience.



Whether you are a complete novice, or had a little French years ago but need a review, *Instant French* is designed to give you the language tools you will need to converse in especially these three most common circumstances, which will cover perhaps ninety percent of the opportunities that you will have to speak...

- Meeting and greeting people
- Ordering in restaurants
- Conversing with sales clerks and shop owners.

There are fourteen approximately half-hour videos that offer lots of opportunity to practice speaking with *Julie Beaufort*, a lovely native French speaker from Fontainebleau near Paris, plus an accompanying text available from *Amazon*. In addition you can download audio files to your iPhone or MP3 player for practice while jogging, working out, or driving in your car. *Bruce Foster* is an American native English speaker who understands the challenges you face in learning French and will provide you with commentary and grammar explanation in English.

In addition to speaking, along the way you'll also learn quite a bit about Paris, as well as French culture. And if you are headed to the *Côte d'Azur* in the south of France there is a fifteenth bonus video that will give you lots of information about the fabulous French Riviera.

The course tells the story of an American family of four teenage children travelling to Paris with their grandparents. This is the very first trip for the kids, although their grandparents have French friends and have travelled to France before, and their parents studied in France. The kids have been studying French in school and at home, and are anxious to try out their new skills. Through a series of typical conversations, as the family meets their French friends, goes out to eat at French bistros, and shops on the famous Avenue des Champs Élysées in Paris, you will quickly learn the language skills needed to make these real-life situations the most fun imaginable.



Alexa, Mckenzie, Olivia, and Lleyton

When you watch the *Introduction To Instant French* video, you will see that we talk about how we all learned to speak English as children. We listened to the sounds of our parents speaking and then we tried to mimic them—over and over again. So we learned to speak English first, and then later on we learned to read. If we read French without having learned to speak it first, we pronounce the words like they were English words, and the result is an English accent that almost no French person can understand!

So you will begin each lesson with the video (not the text), and you will first hear a brief conversation without understanding a word! That's how it was intended! Because, like toddlers, we want you to really *hear* the sounds and practice saying them *before* you see the words or a translation. After the conversation, you will pause the video at the STOP sign, go read the text, and then come back and view the rest of the video for more practice speaking and for more grammatical explanation.

During the video you will have many opportunities to speak. Julie will repeat a phrase several times and then you will hear a *beep*. That is your cue to say the phrase out loud yourself twice before Julie moves on to the next phrase.

You can anticipate that the combination of watching the video and reading the text will take about an hour for each lesson. Unlike many other courses, this one will actually teach you to speak!

This course is equally appropriate for both adults and teenagers. About twelve is probably the lower limit of age appropriateness.

So, *bon voyage* on your exciting trip to France with *Instant French—Quick Preparation For A Trip To France!*

Bruce & Julie



LESSON 1

Mckenzie Meets Baptiste And His Father, Ivan Roussin

Before we begin our conversation, let's talk about which is easier: understanding or speaking? In general listening and understanding is easier than speaking because all the words are already there. You don't have to think of them. But when you are speaking, the words aren't there. You have to bring them to mind from scratch. That takes lots of practice. So in the videos we are going to practice speaking a lot until the words roll off your tongue without thinking about them.

In this first lesson, one of our American kids, Mckenzie, meets up with Baptiste, a French kid she knows from his previous visit to the States. However, she has not yet met Baptiste's father. Here is the French text of the conversation you just heard in the *Lesson 1* video.

- Mckenzie:** Salut, Baptiste.
- Baptiste:** Bonjour, Mckenzie.
- Mckenzie:** Comment ça va ?
- Baptiste:** Ça va bien. Et toi ?
- Mckenzie:** Je vais bien, merci.
- Baptiste:** Mckenzie, c'est mon père, Ivan.
- Mckenzie:** Bonjour Monsieur Roussin. Je m'appelle Mckenzie. Je suis enchantée.
- Ivan:** Ah, Mckenzie. C'est un plaisir. Tu es vraiment belle ! Comme ta mère !
- Mckenzie:** Merci, c'est gentil ! Comment allez vous, Monsieur Roussin?
- Ivan:** Très bien! Très bien, Mckenzie !



"Okay," you say, "but I still don't have a clue what any of it means." Don't worry—a little patience! It's guaranteed that by the end of the next four pages, and after finishing the Lesson 1 video, you're going to feel very comfortable with this conversation. But before we get to a full translation, we're going to start off by learning some pronouns in French. On the next page are the major French pronouns and their English equivalents.

French Pronouns

I	je
you	tu (informal)
he	il
she	elle
it or that or this	ça
one, or we	on (when used as “we”, informal or intimate)
we	nous
you	vous (plural or formal, when showing respect to an adult or superior)
they	ils (masculine or mixed), elles (feminine)

Notice that in English when referring to more than one person we only use the word “they.” We don’t care whether “they” is all girls or all boys or a mixture of boys and girls. The French, however, distinguish among the genders. If they are all females, “they” are referred to as *elles*, and if all males, *ils*. If “they” is a mixed group of males and females, then the French use *ils* for both.

Many words are common to French and English. The Normans (French from Normandy) invaded the Anglo-Saxons (English) in 1066. Many English kings were French, and later, many Norman or French kings were Anglo-Saxons or English. Forty-five percent of English words are derived from French. In English, a



salute is a soldier’s way of greeting an officer. The salutation is the greeting at the beginning of a letter—“Dear Mckenzie”. So, *salut* is an informal form of greeting, like saying, “hi”. *Bonjour*, on the other hand, is more formal, like saying hello or good day instead of hi. Either one is acceptable.

Although we can see that many written words are much the same in English and French (for example, the word “exemple”), we often do not recognize them when they are spoken because they are pronounced so differently. One reason is because **in French the final consonant is not usually pronounced**. Notice that we do not pronounce the “t” in the French word *salut*, but rather pronounce the word like *sah-loo*. We also do not pronounce the final consonant “n” in the French word *on*. Rather, we pronounce the word with a nasal sound much like when we say the “w” in English in the phrase “watch out.” Try saying “watch” slowly and you will notice that you are saying the “w” through your nose. There are many more nasal sounds in French than in English.

The exception to this rule is when the word following the final consonant starts with a vowel. Then we pronounce the final consonant to help string the words together and make the phrase easier to pronounce. This is called *liaison*. For example, in the sentence, “comment allez-vous,” you heard in the

audio presentation that the “t” is pronounced so that it sounds like you are saying “tallay” when you string the words together. The same is true with the sentence “Je suis enchantée.” There is liaison between the final “s” of *suis* and the “e” of *enchantée* so that it sounds like a “z” sliding into the “e” of *enchantée*.

When English speakers try to say French words that they read, they always try to say them the way they would be pronounced in English, so they end up speaking French with an English accent instead of a French accent. Children who can’t read, however, pronounce words the way they hear them. So when a young child learns to speak another language they speak it without an accent. That is why you are better off learning a word by hearing it before you read it if you want to speak French well. For this reason, we will always try as much as is practical for you to hear our conversations before you read them.

Two New French Verbs

Two major verbs were introduced today: **aller** (to go) and **être** (to be) in the present tense. They are both irregular verbs, meaning they do not follow the rules for regular verbs, but are unique. You will need to memorize these conjugations.

to go

Singular

I go

you go

he, she, it, one goes

Plural

we go

you go (plural)

they go

aller

Singular

je vais

tu vas

il, elle, ça, on va

Plural

nous allons

vous allez (plural and formal)

ils, elles vont

to be

I am

you are

he, she, it, one is

we are

you are (plural)

they are

être

je suis

tu es

il, elle, on est

nous sommes

vous êtes (plural and formal)

ils, elles sont

Notice that in English we use “you” whether the person we are speaking to is a child or an adult, and no matter whether we know them well or don’t know them at all. In French, however, there are two words that mean “you”. The first is **tu** and that word is used when addressing children, but also somebody that we know very well, like a family member, or close friends.

The second word for “you” in French is **vous**. That is the form of “you” that we use when speaking to adults, someone we don’t know well, or someone to whom you want to show respect. It is a more formal version of “you.” To be polite, you should always use *vous* when speaking to any adult you have just met.

Lesson 1

We also use the *vous* form when addressing more than one person at once (plural), like saying, “How are you guys?” to a whole family at the same time.

Similarly, the French pronoun **on** not only means “one” in English, as in, “one must be careful when crossing the street,” but also is an informal or intimate way of saying, “we.” More on that later.

English Translation of Our Conversation

Below is our first conversation, but with a *literal* English translation (each word translated directly into English, rather than how we would actually say it in English.)

- Mckenzie:** Salut, Baptiste. (*Hi Baptiste.*)
- Baptiste:** Bonjour, Mckenzie. (*Hello, Mckenzie. Comes from “bon” which means “good”, and “jour” which means “day”.*)
- Mckenzie:** Comment ça va ? (*How it goes?*)
- Baptiste:** Ça va bien. Et toi ? (*It goes (is going) well. And you?*)
- Mckenzie:** Je vais bien, merci. (*I go (am going) well, thank you.*)
- Baptiste:** Mckenzie, c’est mon père, Ivan. (*Mckenzie, this is my father, Ivan.*)
- Mckenzie:** Bonjour Monsieur Roussin. Je m’appelle Mckenzie. Je suis enchantée. (*Hello Mr. Roussin. I am called Mckenzie. I am enchanted.*)
- Ivan:** Ah, Mckenzie. C’est un plaisir. Tu es vraiment belle ! Comme ta mère ! (*It’s a pleasure. You are truly beautiful. Like your mother.*)
- Mckenzie:** Merci, c’est gentil ! Comment allez-vous, Monsieur Roussin? (*Thank you, that is nice. How go you, Mr. Roussin?*)
- Ivan:** Très bien ! Très bien, Mckenzie ! (*Very well! Very well!, or Very good!)*)

In English we actually use two verbs when we say, “It is going well.” We use “is”, which is a form of the verb “to be.” Notice that in French, they only use one verb when they say, **ça va bien** or “It goes well.” So the verb *aller* means both “goes” and “is going.”

The French, like English speakers, often shorten things up. So instead of saying, *comment ça va?* they may just say, **ça va?** Similarly, when replying, they may just answer **bien** rather than *je vais bien*. And when meeting someone, you will often hear people just say **enchantée** rather than *je suis enchantée*.



Elle est belle!

If you thought about it, you might have figured out that **comment** means “how” in English. It is, of course, exactly the same as the English word “comment”. So literally it’s sort of like saying, “Make a comment on your health or status,” which really is the same thing as asking, “How is it going?”

If you know a little Spanish, you may also have noted that *bien* means well or good in both French and Spanish.

C’est

C’est is a contraction of *ça est*, and is a very common expression that means “this is,” or “that is,” or “it is.” So if you want to say “that’s good,” you say, *c’est bien*. You can also say, *c’est bon*. It is incorrect to say *ça est*. That’s why you did not see *ça* included in the list of pronouns in third person singular conjugation for *être*.

Now here’s a more **colloquial** translation into English, meaning translated more the way we would actually say it in English, rather than a direct literal translation.

Mckenzie: Salut, Baptiste. (*Hi Baptiste.*)

Baptiste: Bonjour, Mckenzie. (*Hello, Mckenzie.*)

Mckenzie: Comment ça va ? (*How’s it going?*)

Baptiste: Ça va bien. Et toi ? (*It’s going well. And you?*)

Mckenzie: Je vais bien, merci. (*I’m doing well, thank you.*)

Baptiste: Mckenzie, c’est mon père, Ivan. (*Mckenzie, this is my father, Ivan.*)

Mckenzie: Bonjour Monsieur Roussin. Je m’appelle Mckenzie. Je suis enchantée. (*Hello Mr. Roussin. I’m Mckenzie. I’m so happy to meet you.*)

Ivan: Ah, Mckenzie. C’est un plaisir. Tu es vraiment belle ! Comme ta mère ! (*Ah, Mckenzie. It’s a pleasure. You are really beautiful! Like your mother!*)

Mckenzie: Merci, c’est gentil ! Comment allez-vous, Monsieur Roussin ? (*Thank you, that’s nice of you to say! How are you, Mr. Roussin?*)

Ivan: Très bien ! Très bien, Mckenzie ! (*Great! Great, Mckenzie!*)

Practice this conversation over and over again in your head until it becomes second nature to you. You will then feel perfectly comfortable when meeting someone when you go to France.

Exclamation Points & Question Marks In French

As an aside, you may have thought that there were a few typo errors in our conversation with an extra space between the end of the French sentences and the exclamation points. You will note that there is no

space between the end of the English sentences above and the exclamation points. That's because a space is correct punctuation in French, but, of course, we do not use a space in English before the exclamation point. And, it's the same with question marks. They take a space in French.



NOW RETURN TO THE VIDEO FOR MORE PRACTICE SPEAKING

LESSON 1 EXERCISES (Answers in the Appendix)

Exercise 1: Use the verb *être* (to be) in the correct conjugate form.

1. Je _____ enchanté.
2. Nous _____ enchantés.
3. Tu _____ vraiment belle.
4. Elle _____ vraiment belle.
5. C'_____ un plaisir !
6. Vous _____ très gentil !

Exercise 2: Use the verb 'aller' (to go) at the correct form.

1. Je _____ bien, merci.
2. Ils _____ bien.
3. Comment ça _____ ?
4. Comment _____-vous ?
5. Nous _____ très bien, merci, et toi ?
6. Salut, tu _____ bien ?

Exercise 3: Rearrange the words to create correct sentences :

1. appelle / Roussin / Je / Monsieur / m' / Bonjour / Mckenzie

2. ça / Salut, / comment / va ?

3. bien / vais / Je / toi ? / merci / et

4. C' / gentil ! / est / très

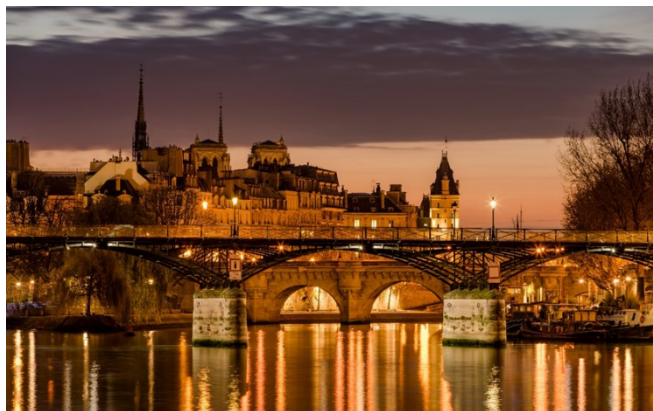
5. enchanté. / Bonjour, / suis / je

LESSON 2

Essential Words & Phrases, Regular Verbs, Articles – Part I

In every language there are a handful of essential words and phrases that we use many times every single day. These include words like yes, no, please, thank you, etc. In Lesson 2 we will learn some essential words and phrases, including a really essential one: “Where are the restrooms?!”

Hello	Bonjour
Goodbye	Au revoir
Good night	Bonne nuit
Yes	Oui
No	Non
OK	D'accord
Please	S'il vous plaît



Le Pont Neuf, Paris

Thank you	Merci
Excuse me!	Excusez-moi ! (To get someone's attention)
I'm sorry	Je suis désolé/désolée (Masculine and feminine)
Good	Bon/bonne (masculine and feminine)
You're welcome	De rien
Speak slowly please	Parlez lentement, s'il vous plaît.
Repeat please	Répétez, s'il vous plaît.
I don't understand	Je ne comprends pas.
I don't speak French	Je ne parle pas français.
I speak English	Je parle anglais.
Do you speak English?	Vous parlez anglais ?
Do you speak French?	Vou parlez français ?
What is your name?	Comment tu t'appelles ?
I'm an American	Je suis américain/américaine. (masculine and feminine)
Where are the restrooms?	Où sont les toilettes ?
What is that?	Qu'est-ce que c'est ?

Regular *er* Verbs

This is a good time to introduce regular verbs. Three of the verbs that were introduced above are *excuser*, *parler*, and *appeler*, in English meaning “to excuse”, “to speak”, and “to call or name”. These are called “*er*” verbs because they end in *er*, and almost all verbs ending in *er* are regular. And there are lots of *er* French verbs! That makes *er* verbs easy. Below is the present tense conjugation for regular *er* verbs (not, of course, for the irregular *er* verb *aller* which you have already learned).

to speak

I speak we speak
you speak you speak
he, she, it, one speaks they speak

parler

je parle **nous parlons**
tu parles **vous parlez**
il, elle, ça, on parle **ils, elles parlent**

As you can see above, French verbs are a little more difficult than English verbs because there are more different endings for the various singular and plural pronouns. But it doesn’t take long to memorize the various endings. To properly construct an *er* verb you simply take off the *er* and add the appropriate ending depending upon which pronoun you are using. Pretty soon it will seem like second nature to you:

je	e (silent)	nous	ons
tu	es (silent)	vous	ez
Il, elle	e (silent)	ils, elles	ent (silent)

It’s easier speaking than writing, however, because the *s* on the end of all the singular pronoun forms is silent as well as the *ent* on the end of the plural *ils/elles* form. So all the singular forms are pronounced the same way, as well as the *ils/elles* form. Therefore, when speaking, you only have to remember to pronounce the *nous* and *vous* endings. *Fantastique!*

So let’s look at how we used these two *er* verbs in our essential words and phrases above.

Speak slowly, please. **Parlez lentement, s’il vous plaît.**

We used the *ez* ending for *parler* because we are assuming that we are talking to a stranger, like a waiter, not to someone with whom we are familiar, like a family member. So we use the *vous* form.

By the way, *lentement* is an adjective, not a verb, so we do pronounce the *ent* on the end of *lentement*, although the ending consonant “t” is not pronounced.

It is exactly the same for the other *er* verb commands in our list of essential words and phrases:

Repeat please. **Répétez, s’il vous plaît.**

The verb *répéter* (to repeat) is also another *er* verb. Because, as before, we are assuming that we are talking to a stranger like a waiter, we are using the *vous* ending of *ez* for the verb *répéter*.

Ne...pas

By now you may have figured out that the way you say “not” in French is to use two words: **ne** and **pas**. They are placed on either side of the verb.

Je parle français. I speak French.

Je ne parle pas français. I not speak French.

Notice that in English we would say, “I do not speak French.” But the French language did not evolve with the verb “do” in that sentence and they get along just fine without it. That actually makes it easier. The French cannot figure out why we think that sentence needs a “do.” “I not speak French” is, of course, a literal translation. A colloquial translation would be “I do not speak French.”

Here’s another *ne...pas* example:

Je comprends. I understand.

Je ne comprends pas. I not understand. (I do not understand.)



Alexa arrive à l’hôtel Artus

Explode Your Vocabulary!

Easy Words That Are Common To Both English & French

Here’s a terrific little secret. There are literally thousands of words that are essentially the same in both English and French. You just wouldn’t recognize them because they are often pronounced so differently. But, you can remember them in just seconds once you know how to pronounce them!

Superb	Superbe
Fantastic	Fantastique
Extraordinary	Extraordinaire
Magnificent	Magnifique
Excellent	Excellent
Exceptional	Exceptionnel
Remarkable	Remarquable
Comfortable	Confortable (only for objects like chairs, not how people feel)



Adorable	Adorable
Visible	Visible
Agreeable	Agréable
Delicious	Délicieux
Immediately	Immédiatement
Chic	Chic
Attention	Attention
Communication	Une communication
Information	Une information
Television	Une télévision
Chauffeur	Un chauffeur
Fiance	Un fiancé/Une fiancée
Boutique	Une boutique
Place	Une place (a square in a city, or a seat in a theater, not a “place like Paris”)



Elle n'est pas très agréable!

So there you go. You just expanded your French vocabulary by 22 words in about a minute!



NOW RETURN TO THE VIDEO FOR MORE PRACTICE SPEAKING

LESSON 2 EXERCISES (Answers in the Appendix)

Exercise 2-1: Translate the sentences.

1. Bonjour, où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît ?

2. C'est délicieux, merci !

3. Je suis désolé, je ne comprends pas.

4. Parlez lentement, s'il vous plaît.

5. Je suis américain. Vous parlez anglais ?

6. La boutique est superbe et très chic !

Exercise 2-2: Add the correct endings to the verbs. (*Appeler* is an er verb.)

1. Vous parl___ anglais ?
2. Nous ne parl___ pas bien français.
3. Comment tu t'appell___ ?
4. Je m'appell___ Juliette.
5. Ils parl___ français et anglais, c'est fantastique !
6. Le chauffeur parl___ lentement.

Exercise 2-3: Create the negative of the following sentences:

1. Nous parlons anglais. _____
2. Vous êtes français ? _____
3. Tu comprends ? _____
4. Je m'appelle Marc. _____
5. Elle est américaine. _____
6. Oui, ça va. _____