

“Tanguy washes the car”

For French Learners

To get the recording: <http://www.fluentfrench.com/tanguy.html>

I hope you enjoy learning from this recording!
Best regards, David Tolman dtolman@fluentfrench.com
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Step 1 : Do a Finger-follow

Takes 10 minutes, maximum. No need to hear all the words.

1	Confirm your hearing by doing a “finger-follow” in which you match sound to transcript	← You are about to do this.
2	Read for meaning	
3	Listen for meaning	← The learning starts here.
4	Echo ¹ the native speakers	← Fluency starts here.

For this first step, don’t worry about understanding the meaning. Here, I’d just like you to confirm that you can match up sounds with words on a page.

A simple test is, can you follow along in the text with your finger? Do you get to the end of the sound at about the same time the speaker stops speaking? We’ll worry about what it all means in the next step.

**Tanguy, vers neuf ans,
vous avez voulu rendre service à vos parents
en lavant la voiture. Que s’est-il passé ?**

¹ Most people call this ‘shadowing’ or ‘delayed shadowing’: it’s when you repeat a recording of a native speaker. It’s not suitable for high school classrooms; but it works well for adults. It is my favorite way to learn a language because it is easy to do (doesn’t involve doing grammar exercises) and I can fit it into my daily routine. It what helped me finally become fluent, back in 1993.

Eh bien oui, j'étais un gentil petit garçon à cet âge-là et j'avais envie de faire une surprise, un mercredi après-midi, quand mes parents n'étaient pas là : laver la voiture, puisque la voiture était sale. On s'était promenés à la campagne, il y avait de la boue partout sur les vitres et je me suis dit : « Ben, je vais leur faire plaisir. »

Donc, je prends une bassine, je m'approche de l'évier de la cuisine, je fais couler de l'eau, j'y mélange différents produits nettoyants – ça mousse beaucoup d'ailleurs, hein, et forcément, en tant qu'enfant ça me réjouissait de voir toute cette mousse –, et je prends, eh bien, une éponge. Bon, je m'approche de la voiture et je commence à frotter sur les vitres, frotter, frotter, frotter encore : le pare-brise, les vitres avant, les vitres arrière.

Je me dis à un moment « tout est propre » et j'ai envie de rincer ces vitres, hein, pour enlever la mousse et voir ce que ça donne. Résultat : eh bien, malheureusement, j'avais complètement rayé les vitres, puisque j'avais frotté de toutes mes forces du mauvais côté de l'éponge !

Une éponge a deux côtés : un côté éponge et un côté « gratounette », un côté grattoir. Et j'avais utilisé, eh bien malheureusement, le côté grattoir, qui sert à laver le fond des casseroles et à enlever le reste des... de ce qui colle, hein, de la nourriture qui colle au fond de la casserole.

Du coup, j'avais rayé toutes les vitres du véhicule !

Et comment ont réagi vos parents ?

Très mal ! Évidemment, c'était une succession de hurlements quasiment hystériques. J'avais quand même, eh bien, rayé toutes les vitres de la voiture. C'était assez difficile, y compris financièrement, parce qu'il fallait changer toutes les vitres d'une voiture, ce qui représente quand même un chèque à faire, assez conséquent. Donc, ça [ne] s'est pas très bien passé.

Vous en reparlez avec vos parents, de temps en temps ?

On évite d'en reparler. J'ai moi-même, depuis, une voiture que je sais laver convenablement. D'ailleurs, je la fais laver aujourd'hui par d'autres personnes, des professionnels, et je ne touche plus à ma voiture en matière de lavage.

Vous n'avez pas reçu de fessée pour cette bêtise ?

Non, mes parents étaient systématiquement contre les châtimements corporels. Par contre, j'ai eu des rétorsions psychologiques terribles. Je n'ai pas eu le... le droit, par exemple, de lire les livres

4 *Don't worry about the meaning yet. Once you can finger follow, you'll move on to the next step.*

de la Bibliothèque Rose, le *Club des Cinq*, pendant au moins un mois, alors que c'étaient mes héros, y compris le chien Dagobert !

Tanguy, merci !

Merci.

Step 2 : Read for meaning

1	Confirm your hearing by doing a "finger-follow" in which you match sound to transcript	← You just did this.
2	Read for meaning	← You are about to do this.
3	Listen for meaning	← The learning starts here.
4	Echo the native speakers	← Fluency starts here.

The previous step took you just a few minutes. You confirmed that you can hear the sound and follow along in the transcript; but you didn't worry about the meaning of the words.

In this second step, I just want you to understand the written transcript. Don't worry *too* much about grammar. The only reason that these grammar notes are here is so that those who *want* to understand the grammar can find the answers right here, without having to search elsewhere.

6 I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.

Tanguy, vers neuf ans,
Tanguy, around age nine,

vous avez voulu rendre service à vos parents
you wanted to help out your parents

en lavant la voiture. Que s'est-il passé ?
by washing the car. What happened?

vers neuf ans (at around nine years old. Literally, toward nine years).

Il va vers l'aéroport. (He is going toward the airport.)

Elle arrive vers 10 heures. (She arrives at around 10 o'clock.)

vous avez voulu rendre service à vos parents (you wanted to help out your parents) Literally, you have wanted to render service to your parents.

1) **vous avez voulu** (you have wanted). From **vouloir** (to want)

vouloir (to want) au présent			
je veux	I want	nous voulons	we want
tu veux	you want	vous voulez	you (plural) want
elle/il veut	she/he wants	elles/ils veulent	they want

avoir (to have) au présent			
j'ai	I have	nous avons	we have
tu as	you have	vous avez	you (plural) have
elle/il a	she/he has	elles/ils ont	they have

avoir voulu (to have wanted) see note below			
j'ai voulu	I have wanted	nous avons voulu	we have wanted
tu as voulu	you have wanted	vous avez voulu	you (plural) have wanted
elle/il a voulu	she/he has wanted	elles/ils ont voulu	they have wanted

Note: this is perhaps the only time you'll see the above grid labeled as being a conjugation of **avoir voulu**. Grammar fans and French teachers will recognize it as being the **passé composé** conjugation of **vouloir**. The reason I labeled it as being the conjugation of **avoir voulu** instead of the **passé composé** of **vouloir** was to help beginners see the relationship between **avoir, vouloir** and **j'ai voulu, tu as voulu...** For more information, see 'What you need to know about verbs' on page 48.

2) **rendre service à vos parents** (literally, to render service to your parents).

Vous rendez service à vos parents.

(Literally, You render service to your parents.)

Vous avez rendu service à vos parents.

(Literally, You have rendered service to your parents.)

Related: **demandeur un service à** (to request a favor of); **rendre un objet à** (to return an object to); **se rendre** (to surrender; to turn oneself in); **se rendre à** + location (to go to + location); **se rendre compte de** (to realize, to become aware of. Literally, 'to render to oneself an account of')

en lavant (by washing, in washing, while washing, upon washing) --> **laver** (to wash). Here you have an example of **en** followed by the **-ant** form of the verb. We can usually translate this as “while... -ing” or “by... -ing.”

En lavant la vaisselle, j’ai cassé une assiette.

(While washing the dishes, I have broken a plate)

En arrivant à Paris, j’ai vu la Tour Eiffel.

(Upon arriving in Paris, I have seen the Eiffel Tower)

Que s’est-il passé ? This is the question version of **Il s’est passé...** (It so happened (that...)) Literally, we are asking, “What is happened?” To make this sentence into a question, the speaker used subject-verb inversion. To see more examples of subject-verb inversion, turn to “The three ways to ask a question in French” on page 53.

Que s’est-il passé ? (What has happened?) From **s’être passé** (to have happened), from **se passer** (to happen, to occur, literally, to pass itself), from **passer** (to pass; to pass by.) Note that **se passer** is one of a special class of verbs called pronominal verbs. (Learn more on page 50 of the appendix).

Se passer in the present tense:

Il se passe quelque chose de bizarre.

(Something strange is happening.)

Se passe-t-il quelque chose de bizarre ?

(Is something strange happening? Notice the inversion.)

Se passer in the **passé composé** (conjugated with **être**, but translated with ‘to have’)

Il s’est passé quelque chose de bizarre.

(Something strange has happened.)

S’est-il passé quelque chose de bizarre ?

(Has something strange happened?)

To understand why **se passer** gets transformed to **s’est passé** in the past, you need to know that **se passer** uses **être** as its auxiliary verb. (Learn more about auxiliary verbs on page 48.)

The **elle/il** version of **être** (**est**) gets used when you put **se passer** into the past...

être (to be)		s’être passé (to have occurred) literally, to be occurred	
elle/il est	she/he is	il s’est passé...	... (such and such thing) occurred

More examples with **se passer** in the past tense (using **être**):

L’histoire s’est passé en France.

The story took place in France.

Je ne sais pas quand cela s’est passé.

I do not know when this happened.

La scène s’est passée hier soir.

The scene took place yesterday evening.

See also **ça ne s’est pas très bien passé** on page 29.

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Eh bien oui, j'étais un gentil petit garçon à cet âge-là
Well, yes, I was a nice little boy at that age

et j'avais envie de faire une surprise, un mercredi après-midi,
and I had a desire to make a surprise, on a Wednesday afternoon,

quand mes parents n'étaient pas là : laver la voiture,
when my parents were not there, to wash the car,

Eh bien ! : this expresses surprise, admiration, a hesitation. It can also come at the end of a sentence.

« **Eh bien ! dansez maintenant** », dit la fourmi à la cigale.

(“Well! Dance now,” said the ant to the grasshopper.)

Eh bien, qu'est-ce que vous faites chez moi ?

(Well! What are you doing in my house?)

j'étais (I was) --> **être** (to be) in the imperfect (**imparfait**). The imperfect is used for a continuing action or state. Compare to **je suis** (I am) and **j'ai été** (I have been).

être (to be) à l'imparfait			
j'étais	I was	nous étions	we were
tu étais	you were	vous étiez	you (plural) were
elle/il était	she/he was	elles/ils étaient	they were

Imparfait: **Ils étaient dans l'avion qui partait pour Rome.** (They were on the plane that was leaving for Rome.)

Passé Composé: **Ils ont été conduits à l'ambassade.** (They have been taken to the Embassy.)

Given the choice between the **passée composé** (**j'ai été** (I have been)) and the **imparfait** (**j'étais** (I was)), the speaker chose the **imparfait**, because his having been a nice little boy is not an event that occurred and then was over at a definite time. Rather, it was a state that continued for an indefinite period.

gentil petit garçon (nice little boy). **gentil / gentille** (nice, kind.)

à cet âge-là (literally, 'at that age there'). Examples with **là** (literally, 'there')

Voyez-vous cette femme-là ?

(Do you see that lady, there?)

Ces oranges-là sont bon marché.

(Those oranges there are inexpensive.)

Ce jour-là sera le plus beau.

(That day there will be the most beautiful.)

Compare **là** to **ci**. **Ci** is short for **ici** (here), to speak of something or someone close to you or just mentioned.

Je préfère cette robe-là à cette robe-ci.

(I prefer that dress there to this dress here.)

j'avais... This is the imperfect.

avoir à l'imparfait			
j'avais	I had	nous avions	we had
tu avais	you had	vous aviez	you (plural) had
elle/il avait	she/he had	elles/ils avaient	they had

j'avais envie de faire une surprise à mes parents. (I wanted to surprise my parents. Literally, I had desire to make a surprise for my parents).

1) **j'avais envie de faire...** (Literally, I had desire to do...) --> **avoir envie de faire quelque chose** (to want to do something. Literally, to have desire to do something).

Mes amis ont envie de jouer au football.

(My friends feel like playing football.)

Nous avions envie de rire. (We felt like laughing.) (**avons** is **imparfait**)

2) Related : **une envie** (a desire), **envier quelqu'un** (to envy someone), **faire envie à quelqu'un** (to make someone envious)

3) **faire une surprise à mes parents** (to surprise my parents. Literally, 'to make a surprise to my parents.)

mes parents n'étaient pas là (my parents weren't there (weren't at home))

Recall the previous use of **là** in **cet âge-là**. Notice also **étaient**: **être** in the imperfect.

Nous avons cherché partout. Les clés n'étaient pas là.

(We looked everywhere. The keys were not there)

Note **avons cherché** = have looked (passé composé; but **étaient** = were (imperfect))

laver la voiture (to wash the car). Notice that **laver** (to wash) is in the infinitive here. Compare these sentences: in the first, **laver** is conjugated; in the second, **aimer** is conjugated and **laver** is in the infinitive.

Je lave la voiture. (I wash the car. /I am washing the car.)

J'aime laver la voiture. (I like to wash the car.) Here, **laver** is in the infinitive.

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puisque la voiture était sale. On s'était promenés
since the car was dirty. We had taken a ride

à la campagne, il y avait de la boue partout sur les vitres et
in the countryside, there was mud everywhere on the windows and

la voiture était sale (the care was dirty). Notice imperfect of **être** (to be). You would not use the **passé composé** here and say, 'the car has been dirty.'

On s'était promenés (We had gone for a drive) --> **se promener** (depending upon the context, "to go for a walk," "to go for a drive," "to go for a ride.") Note that you can say **promener un chien** (to take a dog for a walk). You may notice that **était** is an imperfect version of **être** and wonder what it is doing here. First, we should explain **se promener**. (By the way, **se promener** is a pronominal verb: more information on page 50.

se promener au présent

On se promène au bord de l'eau. (Depending on the context, People take a walk at the water's edge., People are taking a walk... We are taking a walk...)

Nous nous promenons dans les bois. (We take a walk /We are walking in the woods) OR
(We take a ride in the woods (if we use bicycles.)

...à l'imparfait :

On se promenait au bord de l'eau. (We were taking a walk at the water's edge.)

Nous nous promenions dans les bois. (We were taking a walk in the woods.)

...au passé composé :

On s'est promenés au bord de l'eau. (We have taken a walk at the water's edge.) (Uses **être** in the present: **est**)

Nous nous sommes promenés dans les bois. (We have taken a walk in the woods.) (Uses **être** in the present: **sommes**)

...au plus que parfait :

On s'était promenés au bord de l'eau. (We had taken a walk at the water's edge.) (Uses **être** in the imperfect: **était**.) See **être** p. 8.

Nous nous étions promenés dans les bois. (We had taken a walk in the woods.) (Uses **être** in the imperfect: **étions**.)

Note in the original text the **S** at the end of **On s'était promenés**. If **on** had referred to a single person, it would have been **On s'est promené**. Here we understand "on" to mean "we" and so we must make the subject and verb agree.

Il s'est promené. (He took a walk.) No S

Nous nous sommes promenés. (We took a walk.) With S

à la campagne (in the countryside, out in the country). Note that 'a country' is **un pays**. But countryside (as opposed to urban areas) is **la campagne**.

C'est agréable de passer le dimanche à la campagne, au lieu de rester en ville.

(It is nice to spend Sunday in the countryside instead of (**au lieu de**: literally, 'at the place of') staying in town). Note the use of **à la campagne** but **en ville**.

En campagne means 'engaged in a campaign.' The campaign can be political or military.

Les hommes politiques sont actuellement en campagne pour les législatives.

(Politicians (literally, 'the political men') are currently campaigning for Legislative elections.)

La campagne de Russie est une opération militaire menée par Napoléon 1er. (The Russian campaign is a military operation led by Napoleon 1.)

il y avait (there was). This is an example of **il y a**, which is a way of saying, 'there is' or 'there are.' In this case, you have **avait** – imperfect tense. Here, we are saying, literally, **il** (it) + **y** (there) + **avait** (had). Compare the following: **il y a** (there is/there are); **il y avait** (there was); **il y a eu** (there has been / there have been); **il y aura** (there will be). As you see, the expression uses different forms of **avoir** (to have). For more uses of **y**, see the discussion on page 15.

de la boue (some mud). We thought you might wonder why the speaker did not say **il y avait la boue** but rather added a **de** and said **il y avait de la boue**. Here are examples to help you understand how the French distinguish "the" from "some of."

J'entends la musique. (I hear the music).

J'entends de la musique. (I hear some music)

Passe-moi le sucre. (Pass the sugar [the sugar that is available now]).

Donne-moi du sucre. (Give me some sugar.) Literally, of the sugar.

les vitres (the windows). Here is the difference between **la fenêtre** and **la vitre** : **fenêtre** refers to the opening, which allows us to let daylight into a building. **Vitre** is the glass that makes up "**la fenêtre**." In the house, you would say **ouvrez la fenêtre** (open the window), **fermez la fenêtre** (close the window), but **lavez les vitres** (wash the window panes.) In a car, you would use **vitre**, because you are thinking about the glass, so you might say **Baissez la vitre** (Put down the window).

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je me suis dit : « Ben, je vais leur faire plaisir. »
 I said to myself, "Why, I am going to please them."

je me suis dit (I said to myself; I told myself) --> **se dire** (to say to oneself, to tell oneself.) See the conjugations below. To form compound tenses, reflexive verbs use **être**, not **avoir**. Literally, **je** (I) **me** (to me) **suis** (am) **dit** (said.)

See page 20 for an example of **se dire** in the present tense: **je me dis à un moment...**

dire au présent			
je dis	I say	nous disons	we say
tu dis	you say	vous dites	you (plural) say
elle/il dit	she/he says	elles/ils disent	they say

se dire au présent			
je me dis	I say to myself	nous nous disons	we say to ourselves
tu te dis	you say to yourself	vous vous dites	you (plural) say to yourself
elle/il se dit	she/he says to herself/himself	elles/ils se disent	they say to themselves

se dire au passé composé (conjugated with être (to be))	
je me suis dit	I said to myself
tu t'es dit	you said to yourself
elle s'est dit / il s'est dit	she said to herself /he said to himself
nous nous sommes dit	we said to ourselves
vous vous êtes dit	you (plural) said to yourself
elles se sont dites/ils se sont dit	they said to themselves

See also 'Conjugating pronominal verbs' on page 51. (Reflexives are one of the types of pronominal verbs.)

Some examples:

se dire au présent

Elle se dit que tout est faux. (She tells herself that everything is false)

Je me dis qu'en fait, je suis le seul à pouvoir faire ce travail. (I tell myself that in fact, I am the only one able to do this work.)

Tu te dis qu'il va se passer quelque chose. (You tell yourself that something is going to happen.)

se dire au passé composé

Il s'est dit qu'il était le seul à pouvoir faire ce travail. (He told himself that he was the only one able to do this work.)

Je me suis dit que j'avais tort. (I told myself that I was wrong.)

Vous vous êtes dit que je devais être là. (You told yourself that I must be here.)

Ben... (why; well)

Pourquoi est-il absent ? – Ben, je ne sais pas.

(Why is he absent ? – Why, I don't know.)

As-tu pensé à acheter du pain ? – Ben non.

(Have you thought about buying bread ? – Well, no.)

je vais leur faire plaisir (I am going to please them) Literally, **je vais** (I am going) + **leur** (to them) + **faire** (to make) + **plaisir** (pleasure). From **faire plaisir à quelqu'un** (to please someone, to make someone happy, usually by doing something for them.). Note that **je vais faire** is an example of using **aller** (to go) to put something in the immediate future. See page 52 of the appendix for examples.

Ces fleurs font plaisir à mon amie. (These flowers give my friend pleasure.) [**Ces** (These) **fleurs** (flowers) **font** (make) **plaisir** (pleasure) **à** (to) **mon** (my) **amie** ((female) friend).]

Nous avons invité nos parents à dîner. Cela leur a fait plaisir. (We have invited our parents for dinner. That pleased them. [**Cela** (That) **leur** (to them) **a** (has) **fait** (made) **plaisir** (pleasure).])

Donnez un gâteau à votre grand-mère pour lui faire plaisir. (Give a cake to your grandmother to make her happy.) [**pour** (in order) **lui** (to her / to him) **faire** (to make) **plaisir** (pleasure)]

Ça me fait plaisir d'écouter un opéra. (It pleases me to listen to an opera). [**Ça** (That) **me** (to me) **fait** (makes) **plaisir** (pleasure) **d'écouter** (to listen to) **un** (an) **opéra** (opera).]

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Donc, je prends une bassine, je m'approche de
So, I take a container, I walk up to

l'évier de la cuisine, je fais couler de l'eau, j'y mélange
the kitchen sink, I run some water, I mix with it

je prends une bassine (I get a tub, I get a basin.) Literally, I take a basin. Note that the French often use **prendre** (to take) in cases where an English speaker would 'get' or 'go get,' and also in situations where one is going to 'have' something to eat or drink.

Bonjour, vous prendrez un thé ? (Hello, Will you have tea ?)

Je prendrai une côtelette d'agneau. (I will have a lamb chop)

Et vous mademoiselle, que prendrez-vous ? (And you, Miss, what will you have?)

prendre au présent			
je prends	I take	nous prenons	we take
tu prends	you take	vous prenez	you (plural) take
elle/il prend	she/he takes	elles/ils prennent	they take

Note the speaker's use of the present tense even though events took place in the past. (In other words, instead of the expected **j'ai pris une bassine**, he says, **je prends une bassine**.) This is common in French: often, the speaker will use a past tense (**passé composé** or **imparfait**) to set the stage, then give a sequence of events in the present.

je m'approche de l'évier (I go to the sink; I go toward the sink. Literally, 'I approach myself of the sink') --> **s'approcher de quelque chose** (to approach, to get closer to something, to go toward something). Related : **proche** (near)

Examples in the present

Nous nous approchons de la vérité. (We are getting closer to the truth.)

Elles s'approchent de l'eau. (They are coming near the water.)

Je m'approche du bord la de falaise. (I am getting close to the edge of the cliff.)

Il ne faut pas s'approcher de cet animal. (You must not come close to this animal.)

Literally, 'It is not necessary to approach oneself of this animal.'

Examples in the **passé composé**

Ils se sont approchés de l'eau. (They have come close to the water.)

Elles se sont approchées de l'eau. (They have come close to the water.) Note that the past participle agrees with the subject : feminine - **approchées**; masculine – **approchés**.

Je me suis approché (masculine subject) **du bord de la falaise.**

Je me suis approchée (feminine speaker) **du bord de la falaise.**

See also "Conjugating pronominal verbs" on page 51.

je fais couler de l'eau (I run some water. Literally, 'I make to flow some water.')

Je ne fais pas couler d'eau. (I am not running any water) Note that **de l'eau** (some water) in the original sentence becomes **d'eau** (any water) in the negative. The definite article is dropped.

Les gens font couler le vin dans le caniveau. (People are causing the wine to flow in the gutter.)

j'y mélange (I mix into it. Literally, I there mix.) --> **y mélanger quelque chose** (to mix something into it) --> **mélanger une chose à autre chose** (to mix one thing into/with another thing). For more about y, see **y obéir** on page 17, **y compris** on page 28 and **il y avait** on page 11.

- 1) **y** replaces **à** + something or **dans** + something

Without the y : **Je mélange à l'eau différents produits nettoyants.** (I mix different cleaning products into the water.)

With the y : **J'y mélange différents produits nettoyants.** (I mix different cleaning products therein.) Here, **y** has replaced **à l'eau**.

Je prends un bassin et j'y mets de l'eau. (I take a tub and I put some water into it.)

J'ai pris un bassin et j'y ai fait couler de l'eau. (I took a tub and I ran water into it.)

Allez chez la voisine. Allez-y. (Go to the neighbor's house. Go there.)

Vous êtes à Paris aujourd'hui? – Non je n'y suis pas. (You are in Paris today? - No, I am not there.)

- 2) **un produit** is short for **un produit chimique**. It is the French way to say 'a chemical.'

Aujourd'hui, on utilise trop de produits sur les fruits et les légumes. (Today, they are using too many chemicals on produce.) (**Les fruits et légumes** = fruits and vegetables.)

À quoi sert ce produit ? (What is this chemical used for?). See **servir à** on page 54.

C'est un produit nettoyant. (It is a cleaning product.)

Tous ces produits pulvérisés sur nos aliments nous rendent malades. (All those chemicals sprayed on our food are making us sick.)

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différents produits nettoyants – ça mousse beaucoup
various cleaning products – that lathers a lot

d'ailleurs, hein, et forcément, en tant qu'enfant
actually, you know, and of course, as a child,

ça mousse beaucoup (that makes a lot of bubbles). Literally that suds up a lot.

la mousse : moss; foam; lather.

mousser : to foam; to lather

Note the use of **ça** (that). It works, as in English, as a catchall pronoun.

On fait la cuisine ici ? Ça sent bon. (Are people cooking here? That smells good)

J'adore le muguet. Ça pousse dans les bois et on peut le cueillir au 1^{er} mai. (I love lilies of the valley. It grows in the woods and you can pick it on May 1st.) [NOTE: May 1st in France is called la Fête du Muguet. People go to the woods in search of this wonderful flower and exchange bouquets with friends to bring them luck.]

d'ailleurs (moreover, by the way, actually, besides). Note that the original meaning is 'from elsewhere': **de** + **ailleurs** (elsewhere). So it is possible to see **d'ailleurs** used this way. Here is an example : **Ils viennent d'ailleurs.** (They come from elsewhere.)

Sentences with **d'ailleurs** (moreover, by the way, actually, besides)

Mon père ne comprend pas. D'ailleurs, je ne comprends pas non plus. (My father does not understand. Actually, I do not understand either)

Tu ne peux pas sortir ce soir. D'ailleurs, tu as du travail à faire. (You cannot go out this evening. By the way, you have work to do)

N'apportez pas de gâteau au chocolat. D'ailleurs, nous n'aimons pas ça. (Do not bring chocolate cake. Besides, we do not like that)

Sentences with **ailleurs** (elsewhere)

Vous n'avez pas de confiture? Je vais donc voir ailleurs. (You do not have jelly? I will then see elsewhere. Literally, I am going then to see elsewhere.)

Les habitants sont partis habiter ailleurs. (The inhabitants left to live elsewhere.)

Où sont-ils ? Ici ou ailleurs ? (Where are they? Here or elsewhere?)

et forcément (and of course, necessarily)

S'il y a une erreur, c'est forcément moi. (If there is an error, it is necessarily me (who is incorrect/who is the source of the error).) For an explanation of **il y a**, see page 11.

Il est trois heures du matin, et forcément le chat va miauler. (It is 3 AM and of course, the cat is going to meow.)

Il dit des choses bizarres, mais il n'a pas forcément tort. (He says strange things, but he is not necessarily wrong.)

À midi, les employés ne prennent pas forcément l'apéritif. (At noon, employees do not necessarily have an "apéritif.")

en tant qu'enfant (as a child) --> **en tant que** (as; in the capacity of.) Related : **tant** (so much; so many), **tant que** (while; as long as), **autant** (as much; as many), **autant que** (as much as). Also related : **tant mieux** (so much the better)

Sentences with **tant** (so much; so many)

Pourquoi entendons-nous tant de mauvaises nouvelles ? (Why do we hear so much bad news? Literally, 'so many bad news.') [**une nouvelle** = a piece of news; a news item.]

Ne mangez pas tant de pâtes. (Don't eat so much pasta. Literally, 'so many pastas.')

Marco Polo a vu tant de trésors. (Marco Polo has seen so many treasures.)

Sentences with **en tant que** (as; in the capacity of)

En tant que maire du village, j'organise une fête. (As mayor of the village, I organize a party).

En tant que chef, je donne des ordres et vous devez y obéir. (As a leader, I give orders and you must obey them.) [Note that, literally, **vous devez y obéir** means 'you must to them obey.' In French, one doesn't 'obey orders;' rather, one 'obeys to orders' : the expression is **obéir à quelque chose** (literally, to obey to something) or **obéir à quelqu'un** (literally, to obey to someone).] Refer to **y** discussion p 15.

Sentences with **autant** (as much; as many)

Pierre a autant de pommes que Jean. (Peter has as many apples as John.)

Ils n'ont pas autant de patience que vous. (They do not have as much patience as you.)

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ça me réjouissait de voir toute cette mousse –, et je prends,
that filled me with joy to see all that lather – and I take,

eh bien, une éponge. Bon, je m'approche de la voiture et
well, a sponge. Well, I walk up to the car and

je commence à frotter sur les vitres, frotter, frotter, frotter
I begin to scrub the windows, scrub, scrub, scrub,

encore : le pare-brise, les vitres avant, les vitres arrière.
again, the windshield, the front windows, the rear windows.

ça me réjouissait de voir (that filled me with joy to see) --> **réjouir quelqu'un** (to delight someone). Related: **se réjouir de quelque chose** (to be delighted about something)

Sentences using **réjouir quelqu'un**

Cette nouvelle réjouit ma mère. (This news delights my mother.)

Cette nouvelle la réjouit. (This news delights her.)

L'élection du nouveau président ne réjouit pas ses adversaires. (The election of the new president does not delight his opponents)

L'élection du nouveau président ne les réjouit pas. (The election of the new president does not delight them.)

Sentences using **se réjouir de quelque chose** (to be delighted about something. Literally, 'to rejoice oneself of something.')

Nous nous réjouissons de la visite de nos amis. (We are delighted about our friends' visit.)

Réjouissez-vous, vous avez réussi votre examen d'entrée. (Rejoice (Be delighted), you have passed the entrance exam.)

Le professeur se réjouit de la réussite de ses élèves. (The teacher is delighted about his students' success.)

je prends (I get. Literally, 'I take') See the earlier note on **je prends une bassine** in which we give other examples of French people using **prendre** (to take) in situations where English speakers would use 'get.'

eh bien. See earlier note on page 8.

je m'approche de la voiture (I go to the car. I approach the car. Literally, I approach myself from the car.) See the earlier note on **je m'approche de l'évier de la cuisine.**

je commence à frotter sur (I start to rub on). --> **commencer à faire quelque chose** (to start to do something). Note that when you see **commencer à...**, the second verb (the thing that the person is starting to do) will be in the infinitive.

Nous commençons à peindre la maison. (We begin to paint the house. / We are beginning to paint the house.) [**Commencer** is conjugated, **peindre** is in the infinitive.]

Il faut commencer à manger. (We must begin to eat / We need to start eating. Literally, 'It is necessary to commence to eat.) [Here, the conjugated verb is **falloir** (to be necessary) : both **commencer** AND **manger** are in the infinitive.]

Commencez à vous approcher de la gare. (Begin to come to the train station.)

[**Commencer** is conjugated, **s'approcher de** (to get closer to, literally, 'to approach oneself of') is in the infinitive; and the **s'** in **s'approcher de** becomes **vous** to show who needs to start going toward the station.]

le pare-brise (the windshield). This is a combination of **parer** (to avoid, to ward off) and **la brise** (breeze, wind).

Similar terms :

un parapluie (an umbrella). [**la pluie** = rain]

un gilet pare-balles (a bullet-proof vest). [**une balle** = a ball; a bullet]

un pare-chocs (a bumper). [**un choc** = an impact, a collision]

une cloison pare-feu (a firewall). [**le feu** = fire]

un pare-boue (a mud flap). [**la boue** = mud]

les vitres avant, les vitres arrière (the front windows, the back windows)

Note that, in English, whether we are talking about a car or a house, we can use the same reference words, 'front,' 'back,' 'rear.' However, in French...

For a house, we would say : **la porte de devant, la porte de derrière**

Fermez la porte de devant à clé. (Lock the front door.) [**fermer** = to close ; **fermer à clé** = to lock (literally, 'to close (using a) key')]

Ne fermez pas la porte de derrière à clé. (Do not lock the back door)

For a car, we would say : **la portière avant, la portière arrière**

Vérifiez que les portières avant et arrière sont fermées à clé. (Check that the front and back doors are locked.)

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Je me dis à un moment « tout est propre » et
I tell myself at one point "everything is clean" and

j'ai envie de rincer ces vitres, hein, pour enlever la mousse
I want to rinse these windows, you know, to remove the lather

et voir ce que ça donne. Résultat : eh bien,
and see the result. Result: well,

malheureusement, j'avais complètement rayé les vitres,
unfortunately, I had completely scratched the windows,

Je me dis (I say to myself). This is another example of **se dire** (to say to oneself). See the note on **je me suis dit** (I said to myself) on page 12. Note the use of the present tense even though the events took place in the past.

à un moment (at one point. Literally, at a moment)

J'ai beaucoup travaillé. Mais à un moment, j'ai décidé d'arrêter. (I worked a lot. But at one point, I decided to stop.)

Le véhicule roulait et à un moment, il a tourné à droite. (The vehicle was going and at some point it turned to the right.)

La sentinelle surveillait les alentours, mais à un moment, il s'est endormi. (The sentinel was watching the area, but at one point he fell sleep.)

j'ai envie de rincer (I want to rinse)

Another example of **avoir envie de faire quelque chose** (to want to do something). See earlier note on **j'avais envie de faire une surprise à mes parents** on page 9.

pour enlever la mousse et voir (in order to remove the suds and to see)

Notice that, after **pour**, both **enlever** and **voir** are in the infinitive. To help you notice this, we sometimes translate **pour** as 'in order,' instead of as, 'to.'

Nous irons au Centre Belle Épine pour faire des achats et prendre l'apéritif. (We will go to the Belle Épine shopping center in order to make some purchases and to have an apéritif.) [Both **faire** and **prendre** are in the infinitive. In addition, you will notice **prendre** (to take) where an English person would have said 'have.' See the note about **prendre** on page 14.]

Au 14 juillet, les français vont sur les Champs-Élysées pour se promener et voir le défilé militaire. (On July 14, the French go to the Champs-Élysées in order to take a walk and to see the military parade.) [Both **se promener** and **voir** are in the infinitive.]

Ouvrez la boîte pour voir les friandises et en manger. (Open the box in order to see the treats and to eat some of them. (**en** = of it; of them) [Both **voir** and **manger** are in the infinitive.]

pour voir ce que ça donne (in order to see what results. Literally, in order to see that which that gives) --> From **ce** (that) + **que** (which) + **ça** (that) + **donne** (gives) --> **donner** (to give)

De mauvais matériaux donnent de mauvais résultats. (Bad materials give bad results.)

Ce produit donne d'excellents résultats sur vos planchers. (This product gives excellent results on your floors.) [**le plancher** = a floor (wooden); the floor of a car. **une planche** = a plank; a board)]

Essaie cette robe et voyons ce que ça donne sur toi. (Try on this dress and let's see how it looks on you. Literally, Try this dress and let's see that which that gives on you.) [In case you are wondering where the 'let's see' comes from, it is the only way to translate the **voyons** (literally, see.)]

malheureusement (unfortunately). Compare to **heureusement** (happily, fortunately).

Sentences using **heureusement**

Nous étions en retard, mais heureusement nous avons pu quand même prendre notre train. (We were late, but fortunately nous were able nonetheless to take our train.)

[Note : **nous** (we) + **avons** (have) + **pu** (been able, past participle of **pouvoir** (to be able))]

Un terrible accident s'est produit. Heureusement, personne n'a été blessé dans notre voiture (A terrible accident happened. Fortunately, nobody was hurt in our car.) [**se produire** = to occur; to happen. Literally, 'to produce itself.']

Sentences using **malheureusement**

Malheureusement, deux personnes ont été blessées dans l'autre voiture.

(Unfortunately, two people were hurt in the other car.)

Malheureusement, il perd son temps. (Unfortunately, he is wasting his time.) Literally, he is 'losing' his time. **perdre** = to lose. **perdre son temps** = to waste one's time.

j'avais complètement rayé (I had completely scratched) --> **j'avais rayé** (I had scratched) -->

raier (to scratch). To understand the verb construction, see **j'avais frotté** on the next page.

Compare the following: **je raie** (I scratch); **j'ai rayé** (I have scratched); **j'avais rayé** (I had scratched); **j'aurai rayé** (I will have scratched); **j'aurais rayé** (I would have scratched). These last two sound the same to the ear.

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puisque j'avais frotté de toutes mes forces du mauvais côté
 since I had scrubbed with all my strength with the wrong side

de l'éponge !
 of the sponge!

Une éponge a deux côtés : un côté éponge et
 A sponge has two sides: a sponge side and

un côté « gratounette », un côté grattoir. Et j'avais utilisé,
 a scraper side, a scraper side. And I had used,

j'avais frotté (I had rubbed) --> **frotter** (to rub). To understand the verb construction, see how the imperfect of **avoir** is used.

avoir à l'imparfait			
j'avais	I had	nous avions	we had
tu avais	you had	vous aviez	you (plural) had
elle/il avait	she/he had	elles/ils avaient	they had

avoir frotté à l'imparfait	
j'avais frotté	I had rubbed
tu avais frotté	you had rubbed
elle/il avait frotté	she/he had rubbed
etc...	

Compare to **frotter** in the imperfect

frotter à l'imparfait			
je frottais	I was rubbing	nous frottions	we were rubbing
tu frottais	you were rubbing	vous frottiez	you (plural) were rubbing
elle/il frottait	she/he was rubbing	elles/ils frottaient	they were rubbing

de toutes mes forces du mauvais côté de l'éponge (with all my might using the wrong side of the sponge) --> **de toutes ses forces** (with all of one's might. Literally, of all one's forces)

Elle a tiré de toutes ses forces sur le cordon. (She pulled with all of her might on the cord.)

Nous crions de toutes nos forces, mais personne ne nous entend. (We shout/are shouting with all our might; but nobody hears us.)

Poussez de toutes vos forces pour ouvrir cette porte. (Push with all you might to open this door).

Regarding **du mauvais côté de l'éponge** : although **avec le mauvais côté** would not have been incorrect, **du mauvais côté** would be used more often. Here are some similar examples.

Il habite du mauvais côté de la voie ferrée. (He lives on the wrong side of the tracks).

Vous vous trouvez du mauvais côté de la rue. (You are on the wrong side of the street.)

[Note that literally, **Vous vous trouvez** means ‘You find yourself.’ **se trouver** = to be located; literally, ‘to find oneself’]

Je ne trouve pas cette adresse. Est-ce que je me trouve du mauvais côté de l’avenue ?

(I don’t find this address. Am I on the wrong side of the avenue?) [Note the usage of **trouver** in the normal sense (I don’t find this address) and **se trouver** (to be located): **je me trouve du mauvais côté...** (I find myself on the wrong side...)]

gratounette a made-up word, probably coming from another made-up word **gratouner** (scrape a little bit; scrape around the edges) which would come from **gratter** (to scrape). In popular language people tend to create words that are more readily understood by children. These made-up words are often nouns that come from verbs; and the **ette** ending is more frequent than the **nette** ending. Some examples are...

laver (to wash) --> **lavette** (a dish rag)

sucre (sugar) --> **sucre** (to sweeten) --> **une sucrète** (sugar-free powder or tablets for sweetening coffee)

sucer (to suck) --> **une sucette** (a sucker)

boire (to drink) --> **une buvette** (a place that sells drinks, for example at outdoor events)

tirer (to pull) --> **une tirette** (a cord)

allumer (to light) --> **une allumette** (a match)

et j’avais utilisé (and I had used). As with **j’avais frotté**, this is the imperfect form of **avoir** (to have), coupled with the past participle of the verb **utiliser** to show that the speaker *had* used...

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eh bien malheureusement, le côté grattoir, qui sert à laver
well, unfortunately, the scraper side, which is used to clean

le fond des casseroles et à enlever le reste des... de ce qui
the bottom of the pots and to remove the rest of the... of what

colle, hein, de la nourriture qui colle au fond de la casserole.
sticks, you know, of the food that sticks to the bottom of the pans.

Du coup, j'avais rayé toutes les vitres du véhicule !
As a result, I had scratched all the windows of the car!

Et comment ont réagi vos parents ?

And how did your parents react?

qui sert à laver... et à enlever (Literally, “which serves to wash... and to remove”). This is an example of **servir à faire quelque chose** (to be used for doing something). See the appendix, page 54 for examples of **servir**, **servir à**, **servir de**, and **se servir de**.

le fond (the bottom). Expressions: **au fond de** (at the bottom of; at the back of); **au fond de la classe** (at the back of the class). Related : **fonder** (to found; to establish); **fonder une famille** (to start a family); **la fondation d'une maison** (the foundation of a house)

le reste des... (the rest of) Compare **rester** (to remain; to stay) to **le reste** (the rest) and **les restes** (the leftovers; that which remains)

rester (to remain)

Je vais rester à Rouen ce weekend. (I will stay in Rouen this weekend.)

Restez encore un petit moment. (Stay a little while longer.)

Elle restera en classe pour finir son travail. (She will stay in class to finish her work.)

le reste de (the rest of)

Voici le reste des objets à vendre. (Here is the rest of the objects for sale.)

Le professeur corrige le reste des copies. (The teacher is correcting the rest of the homework / of the papers. Literally, ‘of the copies.’)

Ils ont fait le reste du trajet à pied. (They traveled the remainder of the distance on foot.) [à pied = on foot]

Les restes (the remains; the leftovers)

Toute la famille va manger les restes de la semaine dernière. (The whole family will eat the leftovers from last week.)

Les restes humains doivent être traités avec dignité. (Human remains must be treated with dignity.)

ce qui colle (what sticks, what is sticking) Literally, that which sticks.

coller (to stick). Related : **la colle** (glue.)

Pour coller un timbre sur une lettre, nous n'avons pas besoin de colle. (To affix a stamp on a letter, we do not need any glue.)

Des personnes collaient des affiches sur les murs. (People were pasting posters on the walls)

On peut copier ce texte et le coller dans un autre fichier. (You can copy the text and paste it into another file.)

Sentences with **la colle** (glue)

Il y a de la colle au dos du timbre. (There is glue on the back of the stamp) **Il y a** page 11.

Combien coûte ce pot de colle ? (How much does this jar of glue cost?)

Comment allez-vous enlever cette colle de vos mains ? (How are you going to remove this glue from your hands?)

j'avais rayé (I had scratched). See previous note page 70, line 79 **j'avais complètement rayé les vitres**

du coup = as a result. Literally, "from the strike, the hit, the blow." **le coup** = the strike, the hit, the blow.

Et comment ont réagi vos parents ? (Literally, 'And how have reacted your parents?') --> **ont réagi** (have reacted) --> **réagir** (to react). Notice how subject-verb inversion is used to transform these statements into questions.

Ils ont réagi. (They have reacted.)

Ont-ils réagi ? (Have they reacted?)

Vos parents ont réagi. (Your parents have reacted.)

Vos parents, ont-ils réagi ? (Your parents, have they reacted?)

avoir au présent			
j'ai	I have	nous avons	we have
tu as	you have	vous avez	you (plural) have
elle/il a	she/he has	elles/ils ont	they have

réagir au passé composé			
If it helps you, think of this as being avoir réagi (to have reacted) in the present.			
j'ai réagi	I have reacted	nous avons réagi	we have reacted
tu as réagi	you have reacted	vous avez réagi	you (plural) have reacted
elle/il a réagi	she/he has reacted	elles/ils ont réagi	they have reacted

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Très mal ! Évidemment, c'était une succession de
Very badly! Of course, it was a succession of

hurlements quasiment hystériques. J'avais quand même,
almost hysterical screams. I had nevertheless

eh bien, rayé toutes les vitres de la voiture. C'était assez
well, scratched all the windows of the car. It was quite

Très mal (Very poorly)

You might wonder why the speaker did not say **Très mauvais**. It is because **mauvais** is an adjective. Here, we are not describing a thing; we are describing how something was done. So, we need an adverb. Compare these two sentences:

Mes parents ont mal réagi. (My parents reacted poorly.)

La réaction de mes parents a été mauvaise. (The reaction of my parents was bad.)

Evidemment (obviously). Related to **évident** (obvious, evident). Note that **évidemment** means “obviously” and not “evidently.”

évident (obvious)

Ces enfants sont trop gâtés, c'est évident. (These children are too spoiled, it's obvious.)

Les avantages de ce changement sont évidents. (The advantages of this change are obvious.)

Compare **évident** (obvious) to **ce n'est pas évident** (it is not easy)

Faire connaissance avec les gens si on ne parle pas leur langue, ce n'est pas évident. (Getting acquainted with people if you do not speak their language is not easy.) [**faire connaissance** = to make the acquaintance]

évidemment (obviously)

Nous sommes évidemment prêts à vous rendre service. (We are obviously ready to render this service to you)

Vos cousines seront-elles au concert ? – Evidemment ! (Will your cousins be at the concert ? – Of course!)

If you want to express the English idea of “evidently”, do not use **évidemment** (obviously); instead you could use **apparemment**.

apparemment (evidently, apparently)

La ville est déserte. Apparemment, les habitants se sont enfuis. (**s'enfuir** = to flee) (The town is deserted. Apparently, the inhabitants have fled)

Apparemment, tu as choisi la mauvaise taille pour ton complet. Il est trop petit. (Apparently, you have chosen the wrong size for your suit. It is too small).

c'était (it was). From **ce** (it; that) + **était** (was) So this is the 3rd person singular in the table below.

être (to be) à l'imparfait			
j'étais	I was	nous étions	we were
tu étais	you were	vous étiez	you (plural) were
elle/il était	she/he was	elles/ils étaient	they were

quasiment (almost; nearly).

Nous étions quasiment certains de cela. (We were almost certain of that.)

Il avait quasiment terminé sa rédaction. (He had almost finished his essay)

Ils nous ont quasiment chassés de l'établissement. (They almost drove us out of the establishment.)

Related **quasi** / **quasi-** (almost; nearly). When **quasi** modifies a noun, it takes the hyphen. When it modifies a verb or adjective, it does not take the hyphen.

Le voleur a emporté la quasi-totalité de nos biens. (The thief took almost all of our possessions.) Here, **quasi** precedes a noun: it takes a hyphen.

Nous sommes quasi certains qu'il acceptera le poste. (We are practically certain he will accept the position.) Here, **quasi** precedes an adjective: no hyphen.

C'est pour nous une quasi-certitude. (This is for us a near certainty.)

j'avais quand même, eh bien, rayé (I had nevertheless, well, scratched). From **j'avais rayé** (I had scratched) + **quand même** (nevertheless) + **eh bien**. Look back to the previous explanation of **eh bien** on page 8.

c'était assez difficile (it was quite difficult; it was rather difficult). See **c'était** a few lines above.

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difficile, y compris financièrement, parce qu'il fallait changer
difficult, including financially, because it was necessary to change

toutes les vitres d'une voiture, ce qui représente
all the windows of a car, which represents

quand même un chèque à faire, assez conséquent. Donc,
nevertheless a fairly sizeable check to write. So,

ça [ne] s'est pas très bien passé.
that did not go very well.

y compris financièrement (including financially) --> **y compris** (including. Literally, "there included"). One of the meanings of **comprendre** is "to include;" and the **y** is used to replace **dans..., en..., à...** See another discussion of **y** on page 15 and then compare the following :

comprendre used to mean 'to comprehend'

Est-ce que vous comprenez l'anglais ? (Do you understand English?)

Ce texte est difficile à comprendre. (This text is difficult to comprehend.)

comprendre used to mean 'to include'

La chambre coûte 135 euros, petit déjeuner compris. (The room costs 135 euros, breakfast included.)

Le complexe comprend des appartements, une piscine, des terrains de sport et une vue sur la mer. (The complex includes apartments, a swimming pool, sports areas and a view on the sea.)

Il y a dix ans, le séjour comprenait une visite de plusieurs musées. (Ten years ago, the stay included a visit to several museums.) **Il y a** page 11.

y compris (including, therein included)

Le visiteur a admiré l'intérieur de l'appartement, y compris le balcon. (The visitor admired the inside of the apartment, including the balcony.)

Apportez toutes les boissons, y compris le champagne. (Bring all the drinks, including the champagne)

Ils ont acheté l'entreprise, y compris les meubles et le personnel. (They bought the company, including the furniture and the personnel.)

See **y compris** again on page 39: **y compris le chien Dagobert**.

il fallait changer (it was necessary to change) --> **falloir** (to be necessary)

Note that **falloir** (to be necessary) is conjugated and **changer** (to change) is in the infinitive.

Compare **il faut** (it is necessary), **il faudra** (it will be necessary) to **il fallait** (it was necessary), **il a fallu** (it has been necessary), **il aura fallu** (it will have been necessary), and **il aurait fallu** (it would have been necessary).

ce qui représente (that which represents) --> **représenter** (to show, to depict, to symbolize.)

When there is a lot of money involved, the French sometimes express the idea with **ça représente** to say, 'that adds up to a lot of money.'

représenter used to mean 'to represent, to symbolize'

Napoléon représentait la France. (Napoleon symbolized France.)

Ce point sur la carte représente notre ville. (This dot on the map represents our town.)

Ces enfants représentent l'avenir de la France. (These children are the future of France.)

représenter use to mean 'that adds up to...'

Trois documents ? Ça représente beaucoup de travail! (Three documents? That represents a lot of work!)

Cette somme est énorme ! Ça représente trois mois de mon salaire. (This sum is huge. That represents 3 months of my salary.)

Mettre le tramway en service ? Ça représente un gros investissement. (To put a streetcar in operation? That represents a huge investment.)

un chèque à faire, assez conséquent (Literally, 'a check to do (which was) fairly consequential')

ça ne s'est pas très bien passé (that didn't go very well) --> From **ça** (that) + **ne... pas** (not) + **très** (very) + **bien** (well) + **s'est passé** (happened; took place) --> **se passer** (to happen, to occur).

For more examples of **se passer**, see **Que s'est-il passé ?** on page 7.

30 *I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.*

Vous en reparlez avec vos parents,
Do you still talk about it with your parents,

de temps en temps ?

from time to time?

On évite d'en reparler. J'ai moi-même, depuis,
We avoid speaking about it. I have, myself, since that time,

une voiture que je sais laver convenablement. D'ailleurs,
a car that I know how to wash correctly. Actually,

vous en reparlez ? (Literally, 'you of it re-speak?'). **En** replaces **de** + something.

Adding **re-** to the front of a verb (as in **parler** --> **reparler**) conveys the notion of repeating the action. Example: **parler de ce jour** (to speak about that day) --> **reparler de ce jour** (to speak about that day again).

Examples of adding **re** to verbs:

Tu as vérifié ton travail ? Eh bien, il faut le revérifier : il y a des fautes. (Have you checked your work? Well, you will have to recheck it: there are mistakes.) [**il faut** = it is necessary. See the entry on **falloir** (to be necessary) on page 28.]

La maison a besoin d'être repeinte. (The house needs to be repainted.) [Literally, the house has need to be repainted. **avoir besoin de** = to have need of]

C'était très mauvais. Nous devons recommencer. (It was very bad. We have to start over (to re-start)) [**devons** is a form of **devoir** (to be obliged).]

de temps en temps (from time to time). Note in the sound that the S at the end of the first 'temps' is heard as a Z sound. So you hear "**duhtempzentemps.**"

on évite d'en reparler (we avoid talking about it again. --> From **on** (we) + **évite** (avoid) + **d'en** (of it) + **reparler** (to re-speak).

As in English, you can avoid something or avoid doing something.

éviter quelque chose (to avoid something)

Le pilote a évité une catastrophe (The pilot has avoided a disaster.)

Nous avons évité le pire. (We have avoided the worst.)

éviter de faire quelque chose (to avoid doing something)

J'évite toujours de passer par Paris. (I always avoid going through Paris.)

Évitons de parler sans savoir. (Let's avoid speaking without knowing.)

depuis (since, since then) used here to mean 'since that time.'

que je sais laver convenablement (that I know (how) to wash suitably) --> **convenablement** (suitably, properly, decently) related to **convenir** (to suit)

convenir à quelqu'un (to suit someone)

Veillez¹ parler convenablement. (Please speak appropriately.)

¹ What is **veillez**? It is **vouloir** (to want) in the **impératif**. It used in formal settings to ask someone to do something. **Veillez éteindre vos téléphones portables...** Please turn off your cellphones...

Cet ouvrier ne travaille pas convenablement. (This workman does not work correctly)

Le client est traité convenablement. (The client is treated appropriately).

savoir laver (to know how to wash) is an example of **savoir** + verb (to know how to...). Examples of **savoir** + verb:

Est-ce que vous savez conduire une voiture ? (Do you know how to drive a car ?)

Cet enfant est trop jeune. Il ne sait pas lire. (This child is too young. He does not know how to read)

Notre voisine sait très bien coudre. (Our neighbor knows how to sew very well)

d'ailleurs (moreover; besides). See the previous note on **d'ailleurs**, with examples of usage, on page 16.

32 *I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.*

je la fais laver aujourd'hui par d'autres personnes,
I have it washed today by other people,

des professionnels, et je ne touche plus à ma voiture
professionals, and I no longer touch my car

je la fais laver (I have it washed). This is an example of **faire faire**, the construction you use when you want to express that you do not do the thing yourself, but rather that you make the thing happen or have it done by someone else.

faire faire quelque chose (to have something done.)

Je fais relire mes traductions. / Je les fais relire.

(I have my translations proofread. / I have them proofread.)

Ma sœur fait faire ses robes par une couturière. / Ma sœur les fait faire par une couturière.

(My sister has her dresses made by a seamstress. / My sister has them made by a seamstress.)

Il fait réparer sa voiture au garage du coin.

(He has his car repaired at the corner garage / at the local garage.)

J'ai fait faire ce costume par un tailleur. / Je l'ai fait faire par un tailleur.

(I had this suit made by a tailor. / I had it made by a tailor.)

Nous faisons laver notre linge à la blanchisserie. / Nous le faisons laver à la blanchisserie.

(We have our clothes washed at the laundry. / We have it (**notre linge**) washed at the laundry.)

Faites préparer vos repas par ce restaurant. / Faites les préparer par ce restaurant.

(Have your meals prepared by this restaurant. / Have them prepared by this restaurant.)

Elle fait laver sa voiture au garage. / Elle la fait laver au garage.

(She has her car washed at the garage. / She has it washed at the garage.)

See also the example of **faire couler de l'eau** (to make some water flow) on page 14.

faire faire quelque chose à quelqu'un (to have someone do something)

Elle fait faire ses devoirs à sa fille. / Elle les fait faire à sa fille.

(She makes her daughter do her homework. / She has her daughter do them. ['them' because **'les devoirs'** (literally, the obligations) is plural])

Nous faisons tondre la pelouse à notre voisin. / Nous la faisons tondre à notre voisin.

(We have our neighbor mow the lawn. / We have our neighbor mow it.)

Faites nettoyer sa chambre à votre fils. / Faites la nettoyer à votre fils.

(Make your son clean his room. / Make your son clean it.)

je ne touche plus à ma voiture (I no longer touch) --> From **je** (I) + **ne... plus** (no longer) + **toucher à** (to manipulate, to tamper with) + **ma voiture** (my car). Note the difference between **toucher** and **toucher à**

toucher quelque chose (to touch something)

Si vous touchez le four allumé, vous vous brûlez les mains. (If you touch the lit oven, you burn your hands.)

L'avion a touché le sol. (The aircraft touched the ground)

Au football, on ne doit pas toucher le ballon de la main. (In soccer, one must not touch the ball with the hand.)

toucher à quelque chose (to tamper with something, to meddle with something)

Touche pas à ma bagnole !

(Hands off my car! Don't meddle with my car!)

[**la bagnole** : an informal word for car]

On peut rénover sans toucher à la façade.

(It's possible to renovate without tampering with the façade.)

[**On** (One/someone/we) **peut** (is able) **rénover** (to renovate) **sans** (without) **toucher** (to touch) **à** (at) **la façade** (the front; the facade).]

Quelqu'un a touché au moteur.

(Someone has tampered with the engine.)

34 *I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.*

en matière de lavage.

as far as washing.

Vous n'avez pas reçu de fessée pour cette

You did not receive a spanking for that

bêtise ?

blunder?

en matière de lavage (as regards washing, as far as washing. Literally, 'in the matter of washing')

en matière de (in the matter of; as regards)

Nous avons des experts en matière d'informatique.

(We have experts in Information Technology.)

Désolé, je ne m'y connais pas du tout en matière de construction.

(Sorry, I do not know much as regards construction)

En matière d'art, la conservatrice du musée est capable de répondre à toutes vos questions.

(As regards art, the museum curator can answer all of your questions.)

Vous n'avez pas reçu de fessée (You have not received any spanking) --> From **Vous** (You) + **avez** (have) + **reçu** (received) + **ne... pas** (not) + **de fessée** (any spanking, literally, 'of spanking').

- 1) **reçu** is the past participle of **recevoir** (to receive)
- 2) Note that **une fessée** (a spanking) is related to the word **une fesse** (a buttock). **J'ai mal aux fesses.** = My rear end hurts. (Literally, I have pain at my buttocks.)
- 3) about **pas... de fessée** (no spanking / not any spanking'). Notice how different articles of speech (**un, une, de la, du**) become **pas de** (not any) in negative sentences below:

As-tu eu une fessée ? Non, je n'ai pas eu de fessée.

(Did you get (literally, 'Did you have') a spanking? No, I didn't get any spanking.

[Se we translate **pas...de** as 'not any.' Literally, it is **je** (I) **n'ai pas** (have not) **eu** (had/gotten) **de fessée** (any spanking).]

As-tu une parapluie ? Non, je n'ai pas de parapluie.

(Do you have an umbrella? No, I don't have any umbrella.)

Voulez-vous du pain? Non, je ne veux pas de pain.

(Do you want some bread? No, I don't want any bread.)

Il y avait de l'eau dans le lac l'année dernière ; mais cette année il n'y a pas d'eau.

(There was [some] water in the lake last year, but this year there is not any water.) We can also replace **pas d'eau** with **en** (not any): **mais cette année, il n'y en a pas.** (but this year, there isn't any.)

Elle lave du linge. (She washes clothes.) **Elle ne lave pas de linge.** (She does not wash any clothes.)

pour cette bêtise (for this silly act). Note: **une bêtise** has two uses. It can be a mischievous act done on purpose or an unwitting or clumsy act done by accident.

Related words :

bête (silly; stupid)

une bête (an animal, literally, “a beast.”)

embêter (to bother, to annoy)

36 *I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.*

Non, mes parents étaient systématiquement contre
No, my parents were systematically against

les châtiments corporels. Par contre,
corporal punishment. On the other hand,

j'ai eu des rétorsions psychologiques terribles.
I had terrible psychological retaliation (inflicted on me).

mes parents étaient... contre (my parents were... against) --> **étaient** is a form of **être** (to be)

les châtiments corporels (corporal punishments).

Sentences using **châtiment**

Quel sera le châtiment pour cette faute ?

(What will be the punishment for this error ?)

Le châtiment doit être égal au crime.

(The punishment must be equal to the crime.)

Pour ce crime, le châtiment doit être exemplaire.

(For this crime, the punishment must be exemplary.)

Sentences using **corporel**

Un accident de la route a causé de graves dégâts corporels. (A traffic accident has caused severe bodily injuries.)

Un étudiant américain a été condamné à un châtiment corporel de 100 coups de fouet. (An American student has been sentenced to corporal punishment in the form of 100 lashes.)

Avez-vous déjà acheté du lait corporel ? (Have you ever bought body milk lotion?)

par contre (on the other hand). Related to **contre** (against)

Nous aimons tous les sucreries. Par contre, elles ne sont pas toujours bonnes pour la santé. (We all like sweets. On the other hand they are not always good for your health.)

La Normandie est très agréable. Par contre, le littoral breton est bien plus beau. (Normandy is very pleasant. On the other hand, the Brittany coastline is much prettier.)

Ces travaux seront utiles. Par contre ils vont coûter cher. (The work will be useful. On the other hand, it will be very costly.)

j'ai eu des... (I have had some...) --> **avoir eu** (to have had) --> **avoir** (to have)

des rétorsion psychologiques terribles (terrible psychological retaliation). Note that knowing what a French person means when he uses the word **terrible** can be difficult, because **terrible** has a standard usage in which it means 'terrible' and an informal usage in which it means 'fantastic.' Context and situation will tell you what the speaker means. However, **pas terrible** always means 'not fantastic.'

terrible as ‘terrible’

Une terrible catastrophe en Colombie a fait au moins 150 victimes. (In Colombia, a terrible catastrophe has caused at least 150 casualties.)

C’est terrible de perdre un enfant. (It is terrible to lose a child.)

La Californie a connu une terrible sécheresse. (California has experienced a terrible drought.) **a connu** : literally, ‘has known.’

terrible as ‘fantastic, wonderful’

Que pensez-vous de ces musiciens? - Terrible ! Je les adore ! (What do you think of these musicians? –Terrific! I love them!)

Les grands espaces en Amérique, c’est terrible ! (Open spaces in America, that’s great!)

Nous avons un professeur très sympa... Terrible ! (We have a very cool teacher...Terrific!)

pas terrible (not fantastic, not very good, not very well)

Par contre, le film n’est pas terrible. (On the other hand the movie is not very good.)

Ce T-shirt n’est pas terrible. Choisissez-en un autre. (This T-shirt is nothing special. Choose another one.)

Je trouve que Saint-Tropez n’est pas terrible. (I find that Saint-Tropez is nothing to write home about.)

38 *I explain the grammar only to help your comprehension. No need to memorize any of this.*

Je n'ai pas eu le... le droit, par exemple, de lire les livres
I was not allowed, for example, to read the books

de la Bibliothèque Rose, le *Club des Cinq*¹, pendant
of the "Bibliothèque Rose," the Famous Five, for

au moins un mois, alors que c'étaient mes héros,
at least one month, whereas those were my heroes,

y compris le chien Dagobert !
including the dog, Dagobert!

Tanguy, merci !
Tanguy, thank you!

Merci.
Thank you.

Je n'ai pas eu le droit... de lire (I did not have the right... to read) --> From **Je** (I) + **ai** (have) + **ne... pas** (not) + **eu** (had) + **le droit** (the right) + **de lire** (to read). This is an example of **avoir le droit de faire quelque chose** (to have the right to do something). Note also that **ai eu** means 'have had;' so this is **avoir** in the **passé composé**.

avoir droit à quelque chose (to be entitled (have the right) to something; to be allowed access to something)

Beaucoup de Français ont droit à des jours de congé. (Many French people are entitled to days off.)

Vous avez droit à un billet gratuit pour le concert. (You have the right to a free ticket to the concert.)

Tu as été très sage. Tu as droit à des bonbons. (You have been very good. You are entitled to candy).

avoir le droit de faire quelque chose (to have the right to do something)

On a le droit de traverser si le feu est vert. (People have the right to cross if the light is green.)

Vous n'avez pas le droit de faire faire vos devoirs par vos parents. (You don't have the right to have your parents do your homework.) [uses **faire faire à quelqu'un**. See page 32.]

Autrefois, on avait le droit de marcher sur les pelouses le jour du 14 juillet.

(Formerly, people had the right to walk on lawns on July 14.) [Cultural note: now, you can walk on the public lawns **every** day. Many years ago, walking on public lawns was strictly forbidden; and July 14, the national Holiday, was the only time when people were allowed to walk on public lawns, which to the French was a way to exercise their freedom.]

¹ **Le Club des Cinq** is the French version of the *Famous Five* series by Enid Blyton. In the English version, there are four children and Timmy the dog. In the French version, the dog is named Dagobert. The French version is published by Hachette as part of its children's collection, called "**La Bibliothèque Rose**."

y compris le chien Dagobert (including the dog, Dagobert. Literally, therein including the dog, Dagobert..)

Dagobert I was a king who lived from 611 to 639 AD.

For another example of **y compris**, see **y compris financièrement** (including financially) on page 28.

Step 3 : Listen for meaning

1	Confirm your hearing by doing a “finger-follow” in which you match sound to transcript	
2	Read for meaning	← You already did this; but you will be flipping back to this section of the booklet.
3	Listen for meaning	← You are now here. The learning starts here.
4	Echo the native speakers	← Fluency starts here.

Here is why I say that the learning starts in this step: because you’ll learn to recognize the words you know.

In this step, you keep the transcript close at hand but look away or close your eyes while listening to the conversation, asking yourself if you understand everything. If there is anything you don’t understand, look into the transcript here or flip back to the “reading for meaning” section and look at the more-detailed notes there. Looking at the transcript is *not* cheating; because your goal here is *not* to test yourself. Rather, your goal is to get to full comprehension as quickly as possible so that you can move on to echoing, where real fluency begins.

The problem is that you can’t echo the native speakers if you don’t already understand the meaning. So, you need to get through this step, listening for meaning, so that you understand the meaning and no longer need to worry about that aspect. Then you’ll be free to pay attention to the nuances of the sound during the next step, echoing the native speakers.

Tanguy, vers neuf ans,¹

Tanguy, around age nine,

vous avez voulu rendre service à² vos parents

you wanted to help out your parents

en lavant la voiture. Que s’est-il passé ?

by washing the car. What happened?

Eh bien oui, j’étais un gentil petit garçon à cet âge-là

Well, yes, I was a nice little boy at that age

et j’avais envie de faire une surprise, un mercredi après-midi,
and I had a desire to make a surprise, on a Wednesday afternoon,

¹ The speaker could also have said, “**vers l’âge de neuf ans.**”

² **rendre service à quelqu’un** = to help someone out.

quand mes parents n'étaient pas là : laver la voiture,
when my parents were not there, to wash the car,

puisque la voiture était sale. On s'était promenés
since the car was dirty. We had taken a ride

à la campagne, il y avait de la boue partout sur les vitres et
in the countryside, there was mud everywhere on the windows and

je me suis dit : « Ben, je vais leur faire plaisir. »
I said to myself, "Why, I am going to please them."

Donc, je prends une bassine, je m'approche de¹
So, I take a container, I walk up to

l'évier de la cuisine, je fais couler de l'eau, j'y mélange
the kitchen sink, I run some water, I mix with it

différents produits nettoyants – ça mousse beaucoup
various cleaning products – that lathers a lot

d'ailleurs, hein, et forcément, en tant qu'enfant²
actually, you know, and of course, as a child,

ça me réjouissait de voir toute cette mousse –, et je prends,
that filled me with joy to see all that lather – and I take,

eh bien, une éponge. Bon, je m'approche de la voiture et
well, a sponge. Well, I walk up to the car and

je commence à frotter sur les vitres, frotter, frotter, frotter
I begin to scrub the windows, scrub, scrub, scrub,

encore : le pare-brise, les vitres avant, les vitres arrière.
again, the windshield, the front windows, the rear windows.

Je me dis à un moment « tout est propre » et
I tell myself at one point "everything is clean" and

j'ai envie de rincer ces vitres, hein, pour enlever la mousse
I want to rinse these windows, you know, to remove the lather

et voir ce que ça donne. Résultat : eh bien,
and see the result. Result: well,

malheureusement, j'avais complètement rayé les vitres,
unfortunately, I had completely scratched the windows,

puisque j'avais frotté de toutes mes forces du mauvais côté
since I had scrubbed with all my strength with the wrong side

de l'éponge !
of the sponge!

Une éponge a deux côtés : un côté éponge et
A sponge has two sides: a sponge side and

un côté « gratounette », un côté grattoir. Et j'avais utilisé,
a scraper side, a scraper side. And I had used,

eh bien malheureusement, le côté grattoir, qui sert à laver
well, unfortunately, the scraper side, which is used to clean

¹ **s'approcher de** = to approach, to go toward.

² **en tant que** = as; in the capacity of.

42 *Learning to follow along while looking less and less often at the transcript.*

le fond des casseroles et à enlever le reste des... de ce qui
the bottom of the pots and to remove the rest of the... of what

colle, hein, de la nourriture qui colle au fond de la casserole.
sticks, you know, of the food that sticks to the bottom of the pans.

Du coup,¹ j'avais rayé toutes les vitres du véhicule !
As a result, I had scratched all the windows of the car!

Et comment ont réagi vos parents ?

And how did your parents react?

Très mal ! Évidemment, c'était une succession de
Very badly! Of course, it was a succession of

hurlements quasiment hystériques. J'avais quand même,
almost hysterical screams. I had nevertheless

eh bien, rayé toutes les vitres de la voiture. C'était assez
well, scratched all the windows of the car. It was quite

difficile, y compris² financièrement, parce qu'il fallait changer
difficult, including financially, because it was necessary to change

toutes les vitres d'une voiture, ce qui représente
all the windows of a car, which represents

quand même un chèque à faire, assez conséquent. Donc,
nevertheless a fairly sizeable check to write. So,

ça [ne] s'est pas très bien passé.
that did not go very well.

Vous en reparlez avec vos parents,

Do you still talk about it with your parents,

de temps en temps ?

from time to time?

On évite d'en reparler. J'ai moi-même, depuis,
We avoid speaking about it. I have, myself, since that time,

une voiture que je sais laver convenablement. D'ailleurs,
a car that I know how to wash correctly. Actually,

je la fais laver³ aujourd'hui par d'autres personnes,
I have it washed today by other people,

des professionnels, et je ne touche plus à ma voiture
professionals, and I no longer touch my car

en matière de lavage.
as far as washing.

Vous n'avez pas reçu de fessée pour cette

You did not receive a spanking for that

bêtise ?

blunder?

¹ **du coup** = as a result. Literally, "from the strike, the hit, the blow." **le coup** = the strike, the hit, the blow.

² **y compris** = including. Literally, "there included"; "included therein." One of the meanings of **comprendre** is "to include."
Example: **Ce document comprend trois parties** (This document includes (or has) three parts).

³ **faire laver quelque chose** = to have something washed. The speaker doesn't wash his car (**Il ne lave pas sa voiture**), instead, he has it washed (**il la fait laver**).

Non, mes parents étaient systématiquement contre
 No, my parents were systematically against

les châtiments corporels. Par contre,
 corporal punishment. On the other hand,

j'ai eu des rétorsions psychologiques terribles.
 I had terrible psychological retaliation (inflicted on me).

Je n'ai pas eu le... le droit,¹ par exemple, de lire les livres
 I was not allowed, for example, to read the books

de la Bibliothèque Rose, le *Club des Cinq*², pendant
 of the "Bibliothèque Rose," the Famous Five, for

au moins un mois, alors que c'étaient mes héros,
 at least one month, whereas those were my heroes,

y compris le chien Dagobert !
 including the dog, Dagobert!

Tanguy, merci !
 Tanguy, thank you!

Merci.
 Thank you.

¹ **avoir le droit de faire quelque chose** = to have the right to do something; to be allowed to do something.

² **Le Club des Cinq** is the French version of the *Famous Five* series by Enid Blyton. In the English version, there are four children and Timmy the dog. In the French version, the dog is named Dagobert. The French version is published by Hachette as part of its children's collection, called "**La Bibliothèque Rose**."

Step 4 : Echo the native speakers

1	Confirm your hearing by doing a "finger-follow" in which you match sound to transcript	
2	Read for meaning	
3	Listen for meaning	
4	Echo the native speakers	← You are here. Fluency starts here.

Three things happen when you echo recordings of native speakers:

- your brain will connect the words you speak with the ideas you are thinking
- your ear will improve because you pay close attention to the sounds of the speakers
- your pronunciation and accent will constantly improve, instead of reaching a plateau

The big mistake you might make in this step is thinking that you have to say the words *at the same time* as the speaker. No; that would require memorization and you would not be able to hear the speaker if you were saying the same words at the same time. Instead you repeat the words that you just heard, just a little behind the speaker. So, you are always trailing the speaker, sometimes by 2 seconds, sometimes by a few seconds. That's why I call this "echoing:" because your voice is going to sound like an echo of the speaker's voice.¹

The other big mistake people make is that they get frustrated because they cannot keep up with the native speaker. The thing you need to know is that, even if you are only getting out one or two words out of 8, it is still beneficial because the feedback loop inside your brain is hearing your sounds right after the native sounds. When I work one on one with students, I tell them that it doesn't matter if they can keep up with the speaker. The benefit from echoing comes from picking out sounds that are challenging and experimenting with one's tongue and lips to try to reproduce those challenging sounds.

As in the previous step, we give you the whole transcript and translation. Looking at the transcript and translation is not cheating. You are not here to test your comprehension by "seeing how much you understand without the transcript." Instead, you are using the transcript as a tool so that you

¹ Most people call this 'shadowing.' I've been calling it echoing since I discovered it by accident back in 1993. I think 'echoing' better communicates the idea of what you are supposed to be doing than 'shadowing' does.

can quickly see what the word you heard was, or what it means, and get back to echoing.

Tanguy, vers neuf ans,¹

Tanguy, around age nine,

vous avez voulu rendre service à² vos parents

you wanted to help out your parents

en lavant la voiture. Que s'est-il passé ?

by washing the car. What happened?

Eh bien oui, j'étais un gentil petit garçon à cet âge-là

Well, yes, I was a nice little boy at that age

et j'avais envie de faire une surprise, un mercredi après-midi,
and I had a desire to make a surprise, on a Wednesday afternoon,

quand mes parents n'étaient pas là : laver la voiture,
when my parents were not there, to wash the car,

puisque la voiture était sale. On s'était promenés
since the car was dirty. We had taken a ride

à la campagne, il y avait de la boue partout sur les vitres et
in the countryside, there was mud everywhere on the windows and

je me suis dit : « Ben, je vais leur faire plaisir. »
I said to myself, "Why, I am going to please them."

Donc, je prends une bassine, je m'approche de³

So, I take a container, I walk up to

l'évier de la cuisine, je fais couler de l'eau, j'y mélange
the kitchen sink, I run some water, I mix with it

différents produits nettoyants – ça mousse beaucoup
various cleaning products – that lathers a lot

d'ailleurs, hein, et forcément, en tant qu'enfant⁴
actually, you know, and of course, as a child,

ça me réjouissait de voir toute cette mousse –, et je prends,
that filled me with joy to see all that lather – and I take,

eh bien, une éponge. Bon, je m'approche de la voiture et
well, a sponge. Well, I walk up to the car and

je commence à frotter sur les vitres, frotter, frotter, frotter
I begin to scrub the windows, scrub, scrub, scrub,

encore : le pare-brise, les vitres avant, les vitres arrière.
again, the windshield, the front windows, the rear windows.

Je me dis à un moment « tout est propre » et
I tell myself at one point "everything is clean" and

j'ai envie de rincer ces vitres, hein, pour enlever la mousse
I want to rinse these windows, you know, to remove the lather

¹ The speaker could also have said, "vers l'âge de neuf ans."

² **rendre service à quelqu'un** = to help someone out.

³ **s'approcher de** = to approach, to go toward.

⁴ **en tant que** = as; in the capacity of.

46 *Here, you learn the native tongue and lip movements by experimentation.*

et voir ce que ça donne. Résultat : eh bien,
and see the result. Result: well,

malheureusement, j'avais complètement rayé les vitres,
unfortunately, I had completely scratched the windows,

puisque j'avais frotté de toutes mes forces du mauvais côté
since I had scrubbed with all my strength with the wrong side

de l'éponge !
of the sponge!

Une éponge a deux côtés : un côté éponge et
A sponge has two sides: a sponge side and

un côté « gratounette », un côté grattoir. Et j'avais utilisé,
a scraper side, a scraper side. And I had used,

eh bien malheureusement, le côté grattoir, qui sert à laver
well, unfortunately, the scraper side, which is used to clean

le fond des casseroles et à enlever le reste des... de ce qui
the bottom of the pots and to remove the rest of the... of what

colle, hein, de la nourriture qui colle au fond de la casserole.
sticks, you know, of the food that sticks to the bottom of the pans.

Du coup,¹ j'avais rayé toutes les vitres du véhicule !
As a result, I had scratched all the windows of the car!

Et comment ont réagi vos parents ?

And how did your parents react?

Très mal ! Évidemment, c'était une succession de
Very badly! Of course, it was a succession of

hurlements quasiment hystériques. J'avais quand même,
almost hysterical screams. I had nevertheless

eh bien, rayé toutes les vitres de la voiture. C'était assez
well, scratched all the windows of the car. It was quite

difficile, y compris² financièrement, parce qu'il fallait changer
difficult, including financially, because it was necessary to change

toutes les vitres d'une voiture, ce qui représente
all the windows of a car, which represents

quand même un chèque à faire, assez conséquent. Donc,
nevertheless a fairly sizeable check to write. So,

ça [ne] s'est pas très bien passé.
that did not go very well.

Vous en reparlez avec vos parents,

Do you still talk about it with your parents,

de temps en temps ?

from time to time?

On évite d'en reparler. J'ai moi-même, depuis,
We avoid speaking about it. I have, myself, since that time,

¹ **du coup** = as a result. Literally, "from the strike, the hit, the blow." **le coup** = the strike, the hit, the blow.

² **y compris** = including. Literally, "there included"; "included therein." One of the meanings of **comprendre** is "to include."
Example: **Ce document comprend trois parties** (This document includes (or has) three parts).

une voiture que je sais laver convenablement. D'ailleurs,
a car that I know how to wash correctly. Actually,

je la fais laver¹ aujourd'hui par d'autres personnes,
I have it washed today by other people,

des professionnels, et je ne touche plus à ma voiture
professionals, and I no longer touch my car

en matière de lavage.
as far as washing.

Vous n'avez pas reçu de fessée pour cette
You did not receive a spanking for that

bêtise ?
blunder?

Non, mes parents étaient systématiquement contre
No, my parents were systematically against

les châtiments corporels. Par contre,
corporal punishment. On the other hand,

j'ai eu des rétorsions psychologiques terribles.
I had terrible psychological retaliation (inflicted on me).

Je n'ai pas eu le... le droit,² par exemple, de lire les livres
I was not allowed, for example, to read the books

de la Bibliothèque Rose, le *Club des Cinq*³, pendant
of the "Bibliothèque Rose," the Famous Five, for

au moins un mois, alors que c'étaient mes héros,
at least one month, whereas those were my heroes,

y compris le chien Dagobert !
including the dog, Dagobert!

Tanguy, merci !
Tanguy, thank you!

Merci.
Thank you.

¹ **faire laver quelque chose** = to have something washed. The speaker doesn't wash his car (**Il ne lave pas sa voiture**), instead, he has it washed (**il la fait laver**).

² **avoir le droit de faire quelque chose** = to have the right to do something; to be allowed to do something.

³ **Le Club des Cinq** is the French version of the *Famous Five* series by Enid Blyton. In the English version, there are four children and Timmy the dog. In the French version, the dog is named Dagobert. The French version is published by Hachette as part of its children's collection, called "**La Bibliothèque Rose**."

Appendix

Message from the editor: I recommend that you use this appendix only to help you understand the transcript. If you try to memorize the rules given here, it will just slow you down. The fastest path to fluency is working through the 4-step process and moving on to echoing as quickly as possible.

What you need to know about verbs

I threw the ball. (The verb is ‘simple’ – it is only one word: threw)

I have thrown the ball. (This a compound verb; the auxiliary or helping verb is ‘to have.’)

Sometimes a verb is simple (one part); sometimes it is compound, which means that an auxiliary verb (a helper verb) is used.

	Number of verb parts	Main verb	Auxiliary verb (helper verb)
I go.	1: go	to go	
I am going.	2: am, going	to go	to be
I went.	1: went	to go	
I have gone.	2: have, gone	to go	to have
I was going.	2: was, going	to go	to be
I did go.	2: did, go	to go	to do

And things can get even more complex: I was going to go.

In English, there are three auxiliary verbs: to have, to be, to do. In French, there are only two: **avoir** (to have) and **être** (to be). Habit and your ear tell you how to combine the different forms of the auxiliary verb and main verbs to suit your meaning.

	Auxiliary verb	Main verb
I have some.	none	to have in present tense
I have gone.	to have in present	past participle of to go
I had some.	none	to have in imperfect tense
I had gone.	to have in imperfect	past participle of to go
I am tall.	none	to be in the present tense
I am going.	to be in present	present participle of to go
I was going.	to be in imperfect	present participle of to go

An example of a compound verb tense is the **passé composé** (literally, the ‘composed past,’ because it is composed of the present of the auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the main verb.) This is the second verb tense that most students learn.

Examples in French: using **avoir** or **être** to form the **passé composé**

In French, there are two auxiliary verbs: **avoir** (to have) and **être** (to be). Here is how you put the main verb and the auxiliary verb together to say something like ‘I have wanted.’

avoir (to have) au présent			
j’ai	I have	nous avons	we have

tu as	you have	vous avez	you (plural) have
elle/il a	she/he has	elles/ils ont	they have

avoir voulu (to have wanted) ¹			
j'ai voulu	I have wanted	nous avons voulu	we have wanted
tu as voulu	you have wanted	vous avez voulu	you (plural) have wanted
elle/il a voulu	she/he has wanted	elles/ils ont voulu	they have wanted

After the **passé composé** : using **avoir** or **être** to form other compound tenses

As in English, once you have the idea of putting two verbs together, you can play on putting together different versions of those verbs. Here is how you use the imperfect tense of **avoir** plus the past participle of **vouloir** (to want) to say something like, “I had wanted.”

avoir (to have) à l'imparfait			
j'avais	I had	nous avions	we had
tu avais	you had	vous aviez	you (plural) had
elle/il avait	she/he had	elles/ils avaient	they had

vouloir (to want) au plus que parfait			
j'avais voulu	I had wanted	nous avions voulu	we had wanted
tu avais voulu	you had wanted	vous aviez voulu	you (plural) had wanted
elle/il avait voulu	she/he had wanted	elles/ils avaient voulu	they had wanted

Which auxiliary verb ? **Avoir** or **être** ?

So, you see in the above example that **voulu** is the past participle of **vouloir**. And we used **avoir** as our auxiliary verb. If we had used **être** as our auxiliary verb, it wouldn't have made sense to a French person. The same problem (knowing which auxiliary verb to use at which time) occurs in English : you can't say, “I have going.” You don't say this because, by habit, you know that the auxiliary verb used here is ‘to be’ and not ‘to have.’

So I don't want you to learn any of this grammar now. Instead, I just want you to look at the grammar notes long enough to understand the recording and no longer. I know you'll become familiar with the grammar constructions over time, as you see the different constructions over and over.

The verb challenges for French student come from:

1. learning the present tense of the most common verbs
2. learning the past participles of the common verbs (**vouloir/voulu** = to want/wanted)

¹ Grammar fans and French teachers will recognize this as the **passé composé** conjugation of **vouloir**. The reason I labeled it as being the conjugation of **avoir voulu** is to help beginners see the relationship between **avoir**, **vouloir** and **j'ai voulu**, **tu as voulu**...

3. learning whether a verb takes **avoir** or **être** as its auxiliary verb
4. learning the present, imperfect and future conjunctions of **avoir** and **être**
5. learning how to put the different forms of **avoir** and **être** together with the past participles to say things such as ‘I would have wanted.’

Here is an example: your teacher asks you how to say, ‘I will have gone’ or, ‘I will have left,’ as in, “By midnight, I will have left the party.” You’ll need to know that the verb for to go / to leave is **partir** and that its past participle is **parti**. You’ll need to know that **partir** takes **être** and not **avoir** to form compound tenses. And finally, you’ll need to know the future forms of **être**. Here is how that works...

être (to be) au futur			
je serai	I will be	nous serons	we will be
tu seras	you will be	vous serez	you (plural) will be
elle/il sera	she/he will be	elles/ils seront	they will be

partir (to leave) au futur antérieur			
je serai parti	I will have left ¹	nous serons partis	we will have left
tu seras parti	you will have gone	vous serez partis	you (plural) will have left
elle/il sera parti	she/he will have left	elles/ils seront partis	they will have left

Pronominal verbs

If you didn’t know that pronominal verbs existed, you would have a hard time understanding written French. This section tells you a little about them, so that you can better match up the French words with their translation.

Background to get your started: in English, you can say that you washed yourself or that two people called each other. The French use pronominal verbs for this.

Il se sont téléphoné.²

They telephoned each other.

Confusion alert: you may know these as “reflexive verbs;” but those are just one type of pronominal verbs.

Je me suis dit... (reflexive because subject acts on himself)

Je me suis souvenu... (not reflexive, but nevertheless pronominal)

¹ This can be confusing because French uses **être**, but English uses ‘to have’ as the auxiliary verb. If we translated the French literally here, it would be, “I will be departed.”

² It’s not **ils se sont téléphonés**, nor is it **téléphonées**, because the callers are indirect objects, not direct objects : **téléphoner à quelqu’un**, not **téléphoner quelqu’un**.

The challenge for beginners, when reading alone, comes from figuring out if the pronoun on the page, **se** or **me**, **te** or **nous**, is a regular old direct- or indirect-object pronoun or if it is part of a pronominal verb construction. Compare...

Je me dit... (I tell myself...) This is pronominal.

Il me dit... (He tells me...) This is not pronominal.

Il se dit... (He tells himself...) This is pronominal.

Il s'était d'ailleurs dit que... (He had, moreover, told himself that...)

Here, we have the pronominal **se dire** conjugated in the **plus que parfait** with **d'ailleurs** thrown into the middle of the construction.

Because I want you to get past the first steps so you can get on to echoing the native speakers, I don't want you to have to wonder what is going on in the sentence. That is why I encourage you to look at the translation. So that you can figure it out, I'll tell you with footnotes what is going on. For example, on page 41, if you look at the bottom of the page, you see that I have made a footnote to tell you that **s'approcher de** is the verb used by the speaker.

Conjugating pronominal verbs

To understand what you read, you do need to know that pronominal verbs are conjugated with their pronoun and that, for the compound tenses, with the auxiliary verb **être**. Here are some examples.

se moquer au présent			
je me moque de	I make fun of	nous nous moquons de	we make fun of
tu te moques de	you make fun of	vous vous moquez de	you (plural) make fun of
elle/il se moque de	she/he makes fun of	elles/ils se moquent de	they make fun of

se moquer au passé composé (uses present of être)			
je me suis moqué de	I made fun of	nous nous sommes moqués de	we made fun of
tu t'es moqué de	you made fun of	vous vous êtes moqués de	you (plural) made fun of
elle/il s'est moqué de	she/he made fun of	elles/ils se sont moqués de	they made fun of

se moquer au plus-que-parfait (uses imperfect of être)			
je m'étais moqué de	I had made fun of	nous nous étions moqués de	we had made fun of
tu t'étais moqué de	you had made fun of	vous vous étiez moqués de	you (plural) had made fun of
elle/il s'était moqué de	she/he had made fun of	elles/ils s'étaient moqués de	they had made fun of

Using **aller** (to go) to show that the action will happen very soon.

Sometimes you need to say that an action is going to happen and you use the future tense: 'I will drive to the airport.' And sometimes you want to say that the action is going to happen not just in the future, but in the immediate future: 'I am going to drive to the airport.' As in English, French uses **aller** (to go) to put actions into the immediate future.

aller au présent	
je vais	I go/am going
tu vas	you go/are going
elle/il va	she/he goes/is going
nous allons	we go/are going
vous allez	you (plural) go/are going
elles/ils vont	they go/are going

conduire (to drive) au future immédiat	
je vais conduire	I am going to drive
tu vas conduire	you are going to drive
elle/il va conduire	she/he is going to drive
nous allons conduire	we are going to drive
vous allez conduire	you (plural) are going to drive
elles/ils vont conduire	they are going to drive

Compare these 3 sentences.

Je fais mes valises. (I am packing my bags. (Literally, I am 'doing' my suitcases.) Here, the conjugated verb is **faire** (to do; to make)

Je ferai mes valises. (I will pack my bags.) Here, the conjugated verb is still **faire**. This is the future. The action will be done at some point in the future.

Je vais faire mes valises. (I am going to do my bags.) Here, we use **aller** to show that we are going to do it right now; and **faire** stays in the infinitive.

More examples with present compared to immediate future:

David lit ces phrases. --> David va lire ces phrases.

(David reads these sentences. --> David is going to read the sentences.)

[In the first sentence, **lire** is conjugated in the present, 3rd person singular: **lit**. In the second sentence, you have **aller + lire**; but **aller** is conjugated and **lire** is in the infinitive.]

Nous commençons la leçon. --> Nous allons commencer la leçon. (We are starting the lesson. --> We are going to start the lesson.)

[In the first sentence, **commencer** is conjugated in the present, 1st person plural: **commençons**. In the second sentence, you have **aller + commencer**; but **aller** is conjugated and **commencer** is in the infinitive.]

Voyons la rose. --> Allons voir la rose.

(Let's see the rose. --> Let's go see the rose.)

[In the first sentence, **voir** is conjugated in the present, 1st person plural: **voyons**. In the second sentence, you have **aller + voir**; but **aller** is conjugated and **voir** is in the infinitive.]

The three ways to ask a question in French

- 1) Subject-verb inversion. In a statement, we usually start with a subject and say what the subject did. To form a question, we can reverse the order of the subject and verb. Notice how the verb and subject are linked together with hyphens to show that inversion is happening.

Nous avons mangé sur la terrasse. --> Avons-nous mangé sur la terrasse ?

(We have eaten on the patio --> Have we eaten on the patio?)

Tu étais dans le jardin. --> Étais-tu dans le jardin ?

(You were in the yard. --> Were you in the yard?)

Note that you will sometimes see an extra **-t-** in subject-verb inversion. Here is why: sometimes, subject-verb inversion would result in a sentence that might be hard for the listener to understand. To make the words more clear to the ear, an additional **-t-** is added. Examples:

Il se passe quelque chose dans sa tête. -->

Mais que se passe-t-il dans sa tête ? (But, what is going on in his head?) The **-t-** is helpful to the listener because **passe-il** would not be clear to the ear: It is one word or 2? Sounds a bit like **facile**...

Elle viendra à 3 heures. --> Viendra-t-elle à 3 heures ?

(She will come at 3 o'clock. --> Will she come at 3 o'clock?) Here, the **-t-** is helpful to the listener because **viendra-elle** is not clear to the ear. It sounds almost like **viendra à elle** (will come to her). With the extra **t** sound, we know for sure the words being spoken.

- 2) Another way to ask a question is to add **Est-ce que** (Literally, 'Is it that') in front of a statement.

Est-ce qu'elle viendra à 3 heures ?

(She will come at 3? Literally, 'Is it that she will come at 3?')

Est-ce que nous avons mangé sur la terrasse ?

(We have eaten on the patio? Literally, 'Is it that we have eaten on the patio?')

Est-ce que tu étais dans le jardin ?

(You were in the yard? Literally, 'Is it that you were in the yard?')

- 3) Still another way to ask a question is to use rising inflection: you speak the last word or syllable with a higher tone of voice.

Elle viendra à 3 heures ? (**heures** is pronounced in a higher voice.)**Nous avons mangé sur la terrasse ?** (**-rass**e pronounced in a higher voice)**Tu étais dans le jardin ?** (**-din** pronounced with a higher voice)

servir, servir à, servir de, se servir de

servir (to serve)**Le dîner sera servi à 19 heures.** (Dinner will be served at 7 PM)**La boulangère sert les clients avec le sourire.** (The baker's wife serves the clients with a smile.)**Nous ne pouvons pas servir tant de repas.** (We cannot serve so many meals).**servir de** (to serve as, to be used for)**Cette jolie maison sert de résidence secondaire.** (This pretty house serves as a vacation house.) Literally, 'a secondary house.'**L'abbaye sert maintenant de musée.** (The abbey now serves as a museum.)**Ces vieux vêtements usés servent de serpillère.** (These old clothes are used as a mop.)**servir à faire quelque chose** (to serve in doing something, to be used in doing something.)**Ces chiffons servent à nettoyer le plancher.** (These rags serve to clean floors.)**Ce bus sert à transporter des voyageurs.** (This bus is used to transport travelers.)**Il y a une cafetière, qui sert à faire du café.** (There is a coffeemaker which is used to make coffee.) **Il y a p. 11.****se servir** (to serve oneself; to help oneself (to something))**Bienvenue à notre réception. Servez-vous !** (Welcome to our party. Help yourself!)**J'adore les huitres, alors je me sers.** (I love oysters, so I will help myself).**Il est comme chez lui. Il se sert.** (He feels at home. He helps himself)

se servir de quelque chose (to make use of something) / **s'en servir** (to make use of it). Note that **se servir de quelque chose** can become **s'en servir** if the **quelque chose** is understood. Compare the sentences.

Vous ne devez pas vous servir de vos doigts pour manger. (You must not use your fingers to eat.)**Vous ne pouvez pas vous en servir pour manger.** (You may not use them to eat.)**Pour cette installation il faut se servir d'un tournevis.** (For this installation, it is necessary to use a screw driver)

Pour cette installation il faut vous en servir. (For this installation, it is necessary to make use of it.)

Quand se servira-t-elle de son ordinateur ? (When will she use her computer?)

Quand s'en servira-t-elle ? (When will she use it?)

servir au présent			
je sers	I serve	nous servons	we serve
tu sers	you serve	vous servez	you (plural) serve
elle/il sert	she/he serves	elles/ils servent	they serve

se servir de ses mains au présent	
je me sers de mes mains	I use/am using my hands
tu te sers de tes mains	you use / are using your hands
elle/il se sert de ses mains	she/he is using her/his hands
nous nous servons de nos mains	we use/are using our hands
vous vous servez de vos mains	you (plural) use/are using your hands
elles/ils se servent de leur mains	they use / are using their hands

Notice that **servir** (to serve) takes **avoir** in the past tense, but **se servir** uses **être** in the past. This is because all pronominal verbs are conjugated with **être**. Compare these two sentences:

J'ai servi une soupe à ma fille. (I have served a soup to my daughter.)

Je me suis servi d'une louche. (I used a ladle. Literally, 'I am served myself of a ladle.)