

100
common French words

*compiled by
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Introduction

Often it is not the long words that get people into a tizz, it is the wee ones. They can have different meanings which can be confusing. You need to bear this in mind when trying to work out what the French means.

Take *le*, for instance, which can mean 'the', 'it' and 'him'. You need to stand back a bit from the French and try to take in the bigger picture. Otherwise, Huston, we could have a problem.

Here we give an a-z of the most common French words.

If it doesn't make sense, don't assume that the French is wrong, it is the way you are interpreting it.

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Feel free to suggest any subjects you think would benefit from the Nod Off approach.

compiled by Harry Campbell

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100 common French words

a (from the verb *avoir*, to have)

•••

à = to, at, in, on

à Paris = to/in Paris

à la télévision = on television

(*à+le= au, à+les= aux*)

•••

alors = then, so

tu viens, alors? = so, are you coming? are you coming then?

et alors? = so what?

•••

après = after, afterwards

•••

assez = enough

tu as assez? = have you got enough?

tu as assez mangé? = have you had enough to eat?

assez de vin = enough wine

= rather, quite

c'est assez difficile = it's rather difficult

•••

au [contraction of *à+le*]

= to (the), at (the), in (the), on (the)

au troisième étage = on the third floor

au Canada = to/in Canada

•••

aussi = too, as well

moi aussi = me too, so am/have/did/etc I

•••

100 common French words

aux [contraction of *à+les*]

= to (the), at (the), in (the), on (the)

•••

avant = before, beforehand

avant dix heures = before ten o'clock

avant de signer = before signing

•••

avec = with

•••

beaucoup = a lot, much

vous voyagez beaucoup? = do you travel much?

pas beaucoup = not much

beaucoup de = a lot of

beaucoup plus rapide = much faster

•••

bien = well

c'est bien! = that's good! (a good thing)

eh bien... = well...

•••

bon = good

c'est bon! = that's good! (nice, fine, OK)

•••

ça = that

ça va? = is that OK?

salut, ça va? = hi, how's it going?

ça y est! = that's it! it's done

•••

100 common French words

ce = this/that [when followed by masculine noun beginning with a consonant]

ce garçon-ci = this boy

ce garçon-là = that boy

•••

cela = that [more formal version of *ça*]

•••

ces = these, those

ces hommes-ci = these men

ces femmes-là = those women

•••

c'est = it's...

c'est facile = it's easy

c'est ça = that's right

qu'est-ce que c'est? = what is it?

•••

cet = this [when followed by masculine noun beginning with a vowel or mute h]

cet homme-ci = this man

cet homme-là = that man

•••

cette = this [with feminine noun]

cette fois-ci = this time

cette fois-là = that time

•••

comme = as

•••

100 common French words

comment = how

comment ça va? = how's it going?

comment vous appelez-vous? = what's your name?

comment? = sorry? pardon?

•••

d' [contraction of *de* before a vowel or mute h] = of, from

•••

dans = in, inside

dans trois jours = in three days' time

•••

de = of, from [becomes *d'* when followed by a vowel; see also *du*, *des*]

beaucoup de gens = a lot of people

un kilo d'oranges = a kilo of oranges

le jour de l'An = New Year's Day

je suis de Londres = I'm from London

(*de+le* = *du*, *de+les* = *des*)

•••

depuis = since, for

je suis ici depuis trois jours = I've been here for three days

depuis mon arrivée = since my arrival

•••

des [contraction of *de+les*] = of the [with plural noun]

la chambre des enfants = the children's bedroom

= some

des oranges = some oranges

•••

100 common French words

donc = so, then

•••

dont = of which

l'hôtel dont je te parle = the hotel I'm telling you about

•••

du [contraction of *de+le*] = of the [with masculine noun]

le conducteur du taxi = the driver of the taxi

= some

du fromage = some cheese

•••

elle = she, it

= *elle est excellente, cette voiture* = it's excellent, this car

elles = they [feminine plural]

•••

en = in, at, to

en France = in/to France

en famille = as a family

•••

encore = yet, still, again

pas encore = not yet

encore une fois = once again

encore plus difficile = even more difficult

encore une bière = another beer

•••

enfin = at last

te voilà enfin! = there you are at last!

= well...

c'est prêt? - oui! enfin, presque = is it ready? - yes! well, almost

100 common French words

entre = between

•••

et = and

•••

faut [from the verb *falloir*]

il faut signer = you have to sign

il me faut une voiture = I need a car

•••

il = he, it

= *il est bon, ce fromage* = it's good, this cheese

•••

ils = they [masculine plural, or mixed masculine and feminine]

(see also *il, elle, elles*)

•••

il y a = there is/are

il y a un problème = there's a problem

il y a trois ans = three years ago

•••

A mute h is one that is not sounded:
habiter, huit, homme, hôtel.

j' [contraction of *je* before a vowel or mute h] = I

•••

jamais [often in the construction *ne ... jamais*] = never, ever

je n'ai jamais fait ça = I have never done that

avez-vous jamais vu ça? = have you ever seen that?

100 common French words

je = I

•••

l' [contraction of *le* or *la* before a vowel or mute *h*] = the
l'orange = the orange, *l'horaire* = the timetable
= him, her, it [contraction of *le* or *la* before a vowel or mute *h*]

je l'ai vu(e) = I saw him/her/it

•••

la = the

la confiture = the jam, jam [in general]

= her, it [direct object of a verb]

je la cherche = I look for her/it

•••

là = there

cet homme-là = that man

là-bas = over there

•••

le = the

le café = the coffee, coffee [in general]

= him, it [direct object of a verb]

je le cherche = I look for him/it

•••

les = the

les animaux = the animals, animals [in general]

= them [direct object of a verb]

je les cherche = I look for them

•••

100 common French words

leur/leurs = their [singular/plural]

leur hôtel = their hotel [singular]

leurs passeports = their passports [plural]
= them, to them

je leur ai dit que... = I told them that...

•••

lui = (to) him/her

je lui ai dit que... = I told him/her that...

•••

m' [contraction of *me* before a vowel or mute *h*] = me

il m'a aidé = he helped me

•••

ma = my [with feminine singular noun]

ma voiture = my car

[DON'T CONFUSE WITH: *m'a*]

•••

mais = but

•••

mal = badly

j'a mal compris = I misunderstood

•••

mauvais = bad

le mauvais temps = bad weather

être de mauvaise humeur = to be in a bad mood

•••

me = me

elle me dit que... = she tells me that...

•••

100 common French words

mes = my [with plural noun]

mes amis = my friends

•••

moins = less

moins cher = cheaper

•••

mon = my [with masculine singular noun and feminine singular words beginning with a vowel or mute h]

mon sac = my bag

mon amie = my friend (girl)

•••

n' [contraction of *ne* before a vowel or mute h]

je n'ai pas dit ça = I didn't say that

•••

ne = not

je ne prends pas de sucre = I don't take sugar

•••

non = no, not, non

non seulement... = not only...

non toxique = non-toxic

non plus = no longer

•••

nos = our [plural]

nos passeports = our passports

•••

notre = our [singular]

notre hôtel = our hotel

•••

100 common French words

nous = we, us

•••

nulle part = nowhere

•••

on [impersonal pronoun] = one, people, we, you

à la Noël on offre des cadeaux = at Christmas people give presents

on a visité Paris = we visited Paris

•••

ou = or

•••

où = where

•••

oui = yes

•••

par = by, via

par hasard = by chance

par ici = this way, round here

•••

parce que = because

•••

pas [often in the construction *ne ... pas*] = not

je ne suis pas certain = I'm not sure

•••

pendant = during

pendant que... = while...

•••

100 common French words

personne [often in the construction *ne ... personne*] = nobody

je n'ai vu personne = I didn't see anybody

il n'y avait personne = there was nobody there

•••

peu = little, not much

peu de temps = not much time

un peu = a little

un peu d'argent = a little money

•••

peut-être = perhaps

•••

plus (1) [with silent *s*] = more...

c'est plus grand = it's bigger

ne plus = no longer

ce billet n'est plus valable = this ticket is no longer valid

je n'ai plus d'argent = I have no more money

plus (2) [with *s* pronounced] = more

il nous faut plus d'argent = we need more money

plus ou moins = more or less

•••

pour = for

•••

presque = almost

•••

quand = when

•••

100 common French words

que = that

le problème que j'ai eu = the problem I had

quel (*quel, quelle, quelles*) = which

•••

quelque/quelques [*singular/plural*] = some

quelque chose = something

quelque part = somewhere

quelques oranges = some oranges

quelquefois *sometimes*

quelqu'un = somebody

•••

qu'est-ce que... = what...

qu'est-ce que c'est? = what is it?

qu'est-ce que vous avez dit? = what did you say?

•••

qui = who

•••

quoi = what

•••

rien [often in the construction *ne ... rien*] = nothing

•••

s' [form of *se* used before vowel or mute *h*]

•••

sa = his/her/its [with feminine singular noun]

sa voiture = his/her car

•••

sans = without

•••

100 common French words

se [used in reflexive constructions]

se laver = to wash (oneself)

se changer de vêtements

•••

ses = his/her/its/their [with plural noun]

une chatte et ses petits = a cat and its kittens

•••

si (1) = if

si (2) = yes [contradicting the idea of no]

vous n'êtes pas tired? - si, un peu = you're not tired? - yes,

a bit

•••

son = his/her/its [with masculine singular noun]

elle a bu son vin = she drank her wine

•••

sur = on

•••

surtout = above all, especially

•••

t' [contraction of *te* before a vowel or mute *h*] = you [informal]

je t'aime = I love you

•••

ta = your [informal, with feminine singular noun]

ta voiture = your car

•••

te = you

il te regarde = he's looking at you

•••

100 common French words

tes = your [informal, with plural noun]

tes affaires = your things

•••

ton = your [informal, with masculine singular noun and singular

feminine nouns beginning with vowel or mute *h*]

ton café = your coffee

ton amie = your friend (girl)

•••

tous (1) [with silent *s*] = all [with masculine plural noun]

tous mes problèmes = all my problems

tous (2) [with *s* pronounced] = everyone

•••

tout = all [with masculine singular noun]

tout le temps = all the time

•••

toute = all [with feminine singular noun]

toute ma famille = all my family

•••

toutes = all [with feminine plural noun]

toutes leurs valises = all their suitcases

•••

très = very

•••

trop = too

trop chaud = too hot

= too much

non, c'est trop = no, that's too much

•••

100 common French words

tu = you [informal]

•••

un/une = a, one [masculine/feminine]

un verre = a glass

une tasse = a cup

•••

vers = towards

•••

vos = your [formal, with plural noun]

vos plans = your plans

•••

votre = your [formal, with plural noun]

votre valise = your suitcase

•••

vous = you [plural you and formal singular]

•••

y = there