

How to THINK in French (and WHY you must)



Salut ! Si tu veux progresser, il faut que tu te mettes à arrêter de traduire toutes les phrases mot à mot dans ta tête, tu vois ? Que ce soit du français vers l'anglais ou de l'anglais vers le français, en fait. Le but c'est que tu puisses directement penser en français. Ça ce serait vraiment chouette.

Hi! If you want to improve, you have to stop translating every sentence word for word in your head, you know? Whether it's from French to English or from English to French, in fact. The goal is for you to be able to think directly in French. That would be really cool.

Is your brain stuck in the translation trap? Today, I'll show you the switch that makes French click.

1 - You need to change how you think in French

When you translate while speaking, you create a traffic jam in your brain. Your idea has to be put into English words, then French words, checking for grammar, exceptions, pronunciation... This takes time and cuts the flow of your speech. It prevents you from being fluent and confident.

Also, when translating in your head, you'll pass on everyday French expressions that you might know about, like:

1. **"Avoir le cafard"** – Feeling blue (literally: "to have the cockroach")
2. **"Tomber dans les pommes"** – Fainting (literally: "falling into the apples.")
3. **"Avoir un coup de foudre"** – Love at first sight (literally: "to have a lightning strike")
4. **"Avoir la pêche"** – To feel energetic (literally: "to have the peach")

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2 - French Immersion

A native speaker's universe is encoded in French from dawn to dreams. Fluency grows out of this unbroken linguistic environment, not from additional grammar drills. Your task is therefore not more study time but different study **texture**—converting existing moments into French moments.

Here are 10 powerful ways to start implementing French immersion in your daily life:

1. **Talk to yourself in French while doing routine activities:** “Je me brosse les dents” (I’m brushing my teeth) “Je prépare mon café” (I’m making my coffee)
2. **Label items around your house in French:** Put sticky notes on objects with their French names and gender: “la lampe,” “le frigo”
3. **Create a French corner in your home:** A dedicated space where you only speak/think in French
4. **Keep a small French journal:** Write 3 sentences every day about what you did: “Aujourd’hui, j’ai fait les courses. Il pleuvait. J’ai acheté du pain.”
5. **Convert your daily routines to French:**
 - Shopping lists: “le lait, les œufs, le pain” ? with the articles so you learn them too
 - To-do lists: “appeler le médecin, acheter des fleurs”
6. **Listen to French during “dead time”:** Walking the dog, commuting, cooking, cleaning
7. **Think in simple French sentences:** Instead of “I’m hungry” ? “J’ai faim” Instead of “It’s cold today” ? “Il fait froid aujourd’hui”
8. **Narrate what you see while driving/walking:** “Je vois une voiture rouge” (I see a red car) “Cette femme porte un manteau noir” (That woman is wearing a black coat)
9. **Express your feelings in French:** “Je suis fatigué(e)” (I’m tired) “Ça m’énerve !” (That annoys me!) “J’ai hâte de...” (I’m looking forward to...)
10. **Change your inner monologue to French:** When making decisions, try thinking: “Qu’est-ce que je veux manger?” instead of “What do I want to eat?”

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3 - The Extra Mile: 7-Day French Thinking Challenge

Here's your 7-day challenge with specific tasks for each day:

Day 1: French Morning

- Change your phone language to French
- Name 10 objects you see when you wake up in French
- Say out loud: "Bonjour ! Je m'appelle [your name]. Il est [time] heures et je suis [emotion]."

Day 2: French Eating

- Name all your foods and drinks in French during the day
- Practice these phrases at meals: "J'ai faim." (I'm hungry) "C'est délicieux !" (It's delicious!) "Je voudrais encore un peu de..." (I would like a bit more...)

Day 3: French Emotions

- Express your feelings in French throughout the day
- Practice these emotional phrases: "Ça me fait plaisir." (That makes me happy) "Ça m'énerve quand..." (It annoys me when...) "Je suis stressé(e) à cause de..." (I'm stressed because of...)

Day 4: French Decisions

- Make small decisions in French

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- Practice these decision phrases: “Je préfère celui-ci.” (I prefer this one) “Je devrais faire ça maintenant.” (I should do this now) “Je me demande si...” (I wonder if...)

Day 5: French Descriptions

- Describe 5 people you see during the day in French
- Use phrases like: “Cette personne porte...” (This person is wearing...) “Il/Elle a l’air...” (He/She looks...) “Il/Elle est en train de...” (He/She is in the process of...)

Day 6: French Planning

- Plan your weekend in French
- Use future expressions: “Je vais aller à...” (I’m going to go to...) “Ce weekend, je ferai...” (This weekend, I will do...) “J’ai envie de...” (I feel like...)

Day 7: French Self-Talk Day

- Have a full 2-minute conversation with yourself in French
- Record yourself and listen back
- Use connecting phrases: “D’abord, je vais...” (First, I’m going to...) “Ensuite...” (Then...) “Enfin...” (Finally...)

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4 - Everyday Phrases to Automate

Repeat these everyday phrases after me and connect them directly to situations, not to English translations:

1. **“C’est pas grave.”** – When you spill something or make a minor mistake Context: You drop your keys. Instead of thinking “It’s not a big deal”
? “C’est pas grave.”
2. **“On y va !”** – When you’re ready to leave somewhere Context: Getting up from a restaurant table ? “On y va !”
3. **“Ça me dit bien.”** – When someone suggests something you like Context: Friend suggests a movie ? “Ça me dit bien !”
4. **“J’en reviens pas.”** – When you’re shocked or surprised Context: Seeing an unexpected price ? “J’en reviens pas !”
5. **“Ça marche.”** – When you’re agreeing to a plan Context: Confirming a meeting time ? “15h ? Ça marche.”
6. **“J’ai hâte.”** – When you’re excited for something in the future, you can’t wait. Context: There’s a really fun event tomorrow night at your local Alliance Française club.
7. **“Tant pis”** – When accepting a disappointment Context: Store is out of your favorite item ? “Tant pis !”
8. **“À tout à l’heure”** – When you’ll see someone later the same day Context: Leaving for a short time ? “À tout à l’heure !”

When you stop translating, French recedes into the subconscious like breathing—present yet unobtrusive. Each time you catch and correct a translation impulse you solder a new neural circuit. Over weeks those circuits knit into an effortless whole, granting the freedom to focus on ideas rather than syntax.

[Click here to download your free Personalized Weekly Action Plan](#) – Join over 30,000 French learners who’ve already used this free resource!

It’s a step-by-step roadmap with daily activities tailored for your level, progress tracking tools, and proven strategies to overcome common French challenges. You’ll get a clear structure, a free roadmap to learning French for real.

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À très vite !

I'll see you in the next lesson!