

Understand Fast Spoken French with Netflix's 'Call My Agent'



Real, fast spoken French can be very hard to understand, no matter how long you've been studying the language! French slang, eating syllables... even dropping the “*ne*” in negative sentences.

One of the best ways to improve your understanding of fast spoken French is through exposure. Today, we're going to practice your understanding with the popular Netflix show, *Call My Agent*.

C'est parti!

1. Dropping the “ne” : practice with a French resource

In the video lesson above, you can watch a short clip from the French TV show *Dix pour cent* (= “Ten percent” literally, also called *Call My Agent* in the international release.)

In the clip, an agent named Andrea is angry at her assistant who's quitting after enduring too much abuse. Can you understand what they're saying, even in very broad strokes?

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One of them is angry, the other is crying, and it makes it hard to understand what they're saying – even if you've been learning French for decades!

2. Dropping the “ne” : full written transcript

Watch the video lesson first, where we watch the clip multiple times at a slower pace to understand it better.

Have you watched it?

OK. Here's the full transcript of the subtitles:

Andrea is in red.

Her assistant is in blue.

The signs of everyday spoken French are underlined.

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Correct French	Spoken French	Translation
<i>Non mais attends, c'est comme ça que tu me remercies ? Je t'ai formée moi, pendant des années. Je t'ai présenté tout Paris. Attends...</i>	<i><u>Nan</u> mais attends, <u>eh</u> c'est comme ça <u>qu'</u>tu m'remercies ? <u>J'</u>t'ai formée moi, pendant des années. <u>J'</u>t'ai présenté tout Paris. Attends...</i>	No but wait, eh, that's how you're thanking me? I trained you, I did, for years. I introduced you to all (the important people in) Paris. Wait...
<i>Non ce n'est pas possible, je ne veux plus entendre tout ça, OK ? Je veux juste partir.</i>	<i><u>Nan</u> c'est pas possible, je veux plus entendre tout ça, OK ? <u>J'</u>veux juste partir.</i>	Non that's not possible, I don't want to listen to all this anymore, OK? I just want to go.
<i>Ce n'est pas toi qui pars, c'est moi qui te vire. Tu es virée ! (Fermeture des portes) Comment je vais faire, moi, sans assistante, maintenant ?</i>	<i><u>C'est pas</u> toi qui pars, c'est moi qui <u>t'</u>vire. T'es <u>virée</u> ! (Fermeture des portes) ...<u>Comment j'</u>vais faire, moi, sans assistante, maintenant ?</i>	You're not the one who's leaving, I'm the one firing you. You're fired! (Doors close.) ...What am I going to do, without an assistant now?

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3. Dropping the “ne” : explaining the spoken French in the clip

In correct written French, a negative sentence often looks like this:

- **[subject] + ne + [verb] + pas** (like “I don’t”)
? *Je ne pense pas.* = I don’t think so.
- **[subject] + ne + [verb] + plus** (like “not anymore”)
? *Je ne nage plus.* = I don’t swim anymore.
- **[subject] + ne + [verb] + jamais** (like “I never...”)
? *Je ne cours jamais.* = I never run.
- **[subject] + ne + [verb] + rien** (like “I don’t [verb] anything.”)
? *Je ne vois rien.* = I don’t see anything.

In everyday spoken French, though, French people cut everything they can — and “ne” is the first one to go!

So, in real conversation, we would instead say:

- *Je pense pas.* = I don’t think so.
- *Je nage plus.* = I don’t swim anymore.



A very fun (but also very useless) French fact is that there used to be a different word for the negative after “ne” for each verb. Like: “*Je ne vois goutte.*” = I don’t see a droplet. **Un pas** is a step, so “*Je ne marche pas.*” = I don’t walk (even) a step.

But through slow simplification, **pas** slowly became the only word we use with ALL verbs. The main exception is **rien** which used to mean “a thing.” *Je ne vois rien.* = I don’t see (even) a thing. And that’s how, with slow simplification again, **rien** now means... “nothing.”

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- *Je cours jamais.* = I never run.

Or, like we heard in the clip:

- *Ce n'est pas possible.* ? *C'est pas possible.* (= It's impossible. / I can't.)
- *Ce n'est pas toi qui pars* ? *C'est pas toi qui pars.* = You're not the one who's leaving.
- *Je [ne] veux plus entendre tout ça.* = I don't want to hear all that anymore.

And because "*Dix pour cent*" is a real resource, and not a school exercise about this specific topic, Andrea also adds other marks of real spoken French, like:

- "Eating" some letters: *je veux* (= I want) is pronounced "*j'veux*"
- Everyday slang: *virer quelqu'un* (= to fire someone), *tu es virée !* = you're fired!
- Informal French: *Non* becomes "*Nan*," "*Eh*" as a filler word...

4. Dropping the "ne" : Quiz!

The problem with dropping the "*ne*" in spoken French is that it's much harder to hear whether a sentence is negative or affirmative.

In the video lesson, can you hear if these real spoken French sentences are in the negative?

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Answers:

Spoken French	Correct French	Translation	Answer
<i>J'suis là !</i>	<i>Je suis là !</i>	<i>I'm here / Here I am.</i>	Affirmative
<i>J'ai toujours aimé Paris. (same)</i>		<i>I've always loved Paris.</i>	Affirmative
<i>C'est pas c'que j'dis.</i>	<i>Ce n'est pas ce que je dis.</i>	<i>It's not what I'm saying.</i>	Negative
<i>C'est plus le bon mot de passe.</i>	<i>Ce n'est plus le bon mot de passe.</i>	<i>It's not the correct password anymore.</i>	Negative
<i>J'en veux plus ! (same)</i>		<i>I want more (of that)!</i>	Affirmative

Is it easier for you to understand the spoken French in the original clip now?

Practice by yourself with your own favourite French TV shows, movies, or podcasts! Just remember to stop and pay attention when you don't understand something.

For instance:

- **Plus** (silent s) = "not anymore" / **Plus** (with "s" sound) = "more"
- **Je sais** is often pronounced "Chais"
- What does the expression **Quand même** mean?

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Find more tips on everyday spoken French with these lessons:

- [French Grammar: How to say "Plus"](#)
- [Understanding spoken French pronunciation \(with a French Minister\)](#)
- ["Quand Même" in French: Why it's so weird.](#)

À tout de suite.

I'll see you in the next lesson!

And now:

👉 If you enjoyed this lesson (and/or learned something new) – why not **share this lesson with a francophile friend**? You can talk about it afterwards! You'll learn much more if you have social support from your friends :)

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