

21 Ways of Getting it Wrong

1. Writing nonsensical ideas
2. Writing nonsensical language
Mes affections respectueux ... baccalauréat ... bachot
Nécessaire ... essentiel
3. Not answering the set question
Premier souvenir d'enfance
4. Telling heartless stories
5. Writing ridiculously long compositions. This does not leave enough time to review and results in errors like:
 - que il ... un personne
 - Votre parents changed to vos; le semaine to la
le jeune fille to la; adresse
6. Thinking examiners are gullible victims
7. Padding by repetition
Le garçon donne une pièce (sic.) de gâteau à la grand-mère
Quelle est la période la plus heureuse de la vie
8. Self – identification
9. Translating essays into French from English
A longue dernier; son devoir lui moyens le sphère
10. Ignorance of elementary vocabulary
Madamesmoiselles; cheveux (chevaux); pleurer .. pleuvoir;
Mon mari est ne il y a cinq ans
Un grand souris sur son visage
11. Not doing rough drafts on space provided
12. Careless genders and accents
Mon femme, sa pere; arreter; esperer; pere, mere;
Gateau; je suis une belle garcon
13. Copying inaccurately words printed on question paper
Troittoir Anecdotes
14. Improving French spelling
Paree Robere
15. Leaving gaps
16. Inadequate preparation for Oral Examination
La chemise (la chimie)
17. Ambiguous handwriting
18. Altering words illegibly
19. Writing in pale ink or pencil
20. Tiny writing
21. NOT COMING TO SCHOOLS' AFTERNOON

FRENCH GRAMMAR THE EASY WAY

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The A.B.C. of French Grammar

ACCURACY BREVITY CLARITY

The key to French grammar is to remember that the French language uses every trick to be accurate and logical; to be brief and direct; to be simple and unambiguous.

Some grammar may seem difficult but follow the rules below and
THE DIFFICULTY WILL MELT AWAY.

GENDER

- Words that end in e usually feminine;
Ending in consonant – masculine
-MENT ending is masculine
(exception: la jument Why?)
- -té ending is feminine. (Exception: le côté)
- -ée ending is feminine. (Exception: le trophée; le musée; le lycée)
- -ence and -ance endings are feminine. (Exception: le silence)
- -eur ending is masculine for doers (eg. acteur);
- -eur ending is feminine for abstract nouns (EXCEPTION:
Le bonheur, le malheur)
- -tion ending is
- Fruits and flowers are feminine

Trees are masculine.

Not accidental, but logical: la pomme; le pommier
because of endings

NB le citron - le raisin. Why?

Midi and Minuit are masculine

Therefore, not accidental, but logical, that demi has no e after them.

Using those few rules you need now learn the gender of no more than 100 nouns in C.
Thornton-Smith's Graded French Vocabulary Topics.

ACCENTS

Remember that accents are just a guide to pronunciation and everything will become simple.

- e (+ e at end of word) takes grave accent.
Practically nowhere else, eg. derrière; complète
- E + 2 consonants has sound of e grave but does not need accent eg. presser
- The one rule that does not seem logical: double l and double r counts as two consonants, eg. terre, elle. But any other consonant l or r counts as only one.

Therefore église and étranger do need accents.

- Elsewhere, e with an accent sound takes either an acute or a circumflex.

Circumflexes usually represent and s omitted from original Latin.

forêt - mât - fête - easy to guess.

Logical French? Dîner (to keep it hot); Tête (hat);
Gâteau (icing); Boîte (lid)

Now, it is logical and easy to remember why espérer becomes espère, lever becomes je lève (e consonant e at end of word); why jeter becomes jette, but acheter becomes achète (e + consonant + e at end of word)

POSITION OF ADJECTIVES

These days French writers take liberties with “rules” about the position of adjectives.

But learn that PENCILS adjectives usually follow the noun

Participles - un homme charmant

e

Nationality - un accent anglais

Colour - le Moulin rouge

i

Long - un poème incompréhensible

Shape - la table ronde

When does dernier follow, when precede, the noun?

semaine

la

dernière

The see-saw balances perfectly

semaine

la dernière

de l'année

ie. if someone (de l'année) is already on one end of the see-saw, dernier must balance it.

Why is CELUI like a unicorn?

A unicorn must have at least one horn. It cannot have more than one. CELUI can never stand on its own. It must be followed by:

- a -ci or -là
- b a phrase: celui sur la table
- c a clause: celui qui est sur le plancher

But you must use only one of those “horns” of those additions.

POSITIONS OF ADVERBS AND NEGATIVE

- Ad-verbs are added to the verb
 - Ne before verb. Pas, personne, rien, after verb
- But in compound tenses, as with 2 slices of bread, you logically sandwich the adverb or second part of the negative

Je n'ai pas mangé
J' ai vite mangé

However, logically,

- Don't sandwich roast duck, ie. very long adverb: incompréhensible
- No cannibal sandwiches. Don't sandwich personne or HILDA:

(hier, ici, là, demain, aujourd'hui)

- Position of que:

Placed before the thing of which you make an exception

(Je n'ai vu au cours des longues années que j'ai passées en France qu'une seule femme barbue)

MORE THAN

LESS THAN

K lause

K onjunction

Ke _____ e

"He eats more than his brother"

"Eats" (a verb) is understood after "brother", therefore "than his brother (eats)" is a kause, and "than" is a konjunction, therefore, logically, plus que (not plus de)

cf. Il mange plus que son frère
Il mange plus d'un oeuf

How do you translate: "This cannibal eats more than a plump lady"?

POPULAR FALLACIES

(a) “You can’t have 2 vowels together in French”

What about: “La terre que Dieu a (creer)” or
The 3rd plural imperfect of jouer?

(b) “Verbs of motion are conjugated with être”

What about naître – mourir - rester?

(c) “Tu is singular, vous is plural”

CONTEMPT
RELATIVES
ANIMALS
FRIENDS
TU

SUBJUNCTIVES

The subjunctive is easy, provided you are not afraid of it and simplify the rules that govern it:

Eg. Il n’y a personne qui le sache

Il n’y a rien qui puisse m’aider

You can learn the rule for this construction as either:

“The subjunctive is used in Adjective clauses, ie., clauses introduced by a Relative Pronoun or Relative Adverb, when the antecedent forms part of a negative, interrogative (with negative implication) or restrictive statement”

OR in the form I shall give you

TO SUM UP: Always look for the logical explanation underlying any rule

The difficulty then melts away

Use the subjunctive in clauses describing nothing or nobody

“If” Constructions

Result Clause	“If” Clause
Conditional	Imperfect
Not conditional	Present

Examples: a) If it rained I would stay home

Q. What is the tense of the verb “would stay” in the result clause?

A. Conditional

Therefore the verb “rained” in the “if” clause is imperfect

b) If it rains I will stay home

If the verbs in the two clauses are in compound tenses eg.

If he had come I would have stayed home

You apply exactly the same rules. Here the result clause auxiliary is conditional to the “if” clause auxiliary is imperfect

WHAT PREPOSITION DO I USE AFTER A VERB BEFORE AN INFINITIVE?

(a) None after the “14”:

Aller, venir, faire, voir, entendre, pouvoir,
savoir, vouloir, devoir, falloir, laisser,
croire, oser, sembler

(b) In order to – pour (except after the “14”)

(c) “Cairo” verbs take a

Commencer, Apprendre, Inviter, Réussir, (Continuer)

(d) If you guess, guess de

By the way, look out for the Cops:

<u>C</u> esser	<u>C</u> an
<u>O</u> ser	<u>O</u> mit
<u>P</u> ouvoir	<u>P</u> as
<u>S</u> avoir	<u>S</u> ometimes

SOME INTERESTING PECULIARITIES

1. La vedette (the star of eg. a film), la sentinelle, la brute, la victime, Sa Majesté – refer to men just as much as (and usually ore often than) to women
2. What is the meaning of:

pire	vent	venir
un	vient	d’un

A VIST TO MR. DOCTOR

It is easy to know that you have been eating garlic
(Il est facile de)

You’ve been eating garlic. It’s easy to know
(C’est facile à savoir)

Il est ... de when it is merely a grammatical subject and the real subject comes later as an infinitive or que clause

When the thing that is easy to know, tell, do, etc. comes before the expression “It’s easy to know: use c’est ... à

(Before the doctor examines you he makes you say “Ah”)

PUNCTUATION

Is tremendously important, often neglected by candidates in exams and

CAN CAUSE FAILURES

50 - 2 - 48% instead of 50%

NOTE HOW PUNCTUATION CHANGES MEANING:

Quel bateau? (which boat?)

Quel bateau! (what a boat!)

“Never put out eyes on land. Only at sea. And even then only to turn eels into seals”

qui il. qu'il must represent que il

Similarly, mi, ni, ci are never elided

Si elle (not s'elle)

“I” is elided only to change il (ils) into s'il (s'ils). Get it?

THE SECTION BELOW is to be studied ONLY BY candidates seeking high marks at VCE

1. Leave no gaps. Make intelligent guesses. Some aids:
 - (a) Substitute s for ^ (crête) or for initial é (étrier, épice)
 - (b) Look for the adjective or noun round which the new word is built (déraciner, entasser, fourmiller)
 - (c) Use Latin knowledge (aubépine: alba spina, white thorn)
 - (d) Remember the force of standard suffixes - diminutives (siffloter); - ish ending (verdâtre); “contents” ending (boucheée)
 - (d) Remember the force of standard prefixes – re (reparaître) en, em (emmener, emporter)
2. Bring out the force of the imperfect tense but don't feel obliged to use: “I was seeing” or “I used to see” where it is just bad English
3. Try to avoid translating “on” by “one”, by using the passive or “you”
4. Watch out for “false friends” (faux amis) – words which look alike in French or like an English word while having a different meaning.

FOUR CLASSES:

- (a) Words spelt similarly in French (le côté, la côte, la part, le parti, la patrie, alléger, alléguer, prétendre, raisin, rude, sensible, vicaire, blesser)
- (b) Inflected forms of words in French resembling each other (du,dû, bâti, battu, je vis (voir), je vis, je suis, je suis (suivre))
- (c) Nouns whose meaning changes with difference in gender (le poêle, la poêle, cf, le poil, le poste, la poste)
- (d) Most insidious, apparently friendly groups – word with exactly or almost exactly the same spelling in both English and French

AGAIN IN THREE GROUPS:

- (a) Words (ombrelle, raisin) of completely different meaning;
- (b) Words sometimes meaning the same as their English equivalents, sometimes meaning something quite different (parent, unique, place);
- (b) Words with roughly the same meaning but where the English equivalent sounds stilted (sauvage, profound, voyage)

USE THE FOLLOWING TECHNIQUES FOR DEFENCE AGAINST “Faux Amis”:

- 1) Specially list words with similar spelling (baiser, baisser, la justice, la justesse, le point, la pointe, le poison, le poisson, répondre, répandre, la tache, la tâche)
- 2) Think out memory devices to distinguish la voile (a in la and sail) from le voile (e in le and veil), le poêle, from la poêle (frying-pan is feminine), le pendule from la pendule
- 3) Check meanings of actuel, appointements, avertir, blessé, établi, ignorer, laboureur, prétendre, prévenir, rude, sensible, vicaire