

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: The Building Blocks of French</i>	5
Chapter 1: Understanding Parts of Speech and Bilingual Dictionaries	7
Chapter 2: Figuring Out Nouns, Articles, and Possession	19
Chapter 3: The 4-1-1 on Numbers, Dates, and Time	35
<i>Part II: The Here and Now: Writing in the Present</i>	47
Chapter 4: Right Here, Right Now: The Present Tense.....	49
Chapter 5: Asking and Answering Questions	71
Chapter 6: Just Say No: The Negative	81
Chapter 7: “To Be” or “Being” Is the Question: Infinitives and Present Participles	91
Chapter 8: Deciphering the Subjunctive Mood.....	103
<i>Part III: Writing with Panache: Dressing Up Your Sentences</i>	121
Chapter 9: Describing with Flair: Adjectives and Adverbs.....	123
Chapter 10: I Command You: The Imperative	141
Chapter 11: Sorting Out Pronominal Verbs: Idioms, Oneself, and Each Other	153
Chapter 12: An Ode to Prepositions.....	165
Chapter 13: Getting a Hold on Pronouns	183
Chapter 14: Grasping Conjunctions and Relative Pronouns	197
<i>Part IV: That Was Then, and What Will Be, Will Be: The Past and Future Tenses</i>	211
Chapter 15: It’s All in the Past: Passé Composé.....	213
Chapter 16: What Was Happening? The Imparfait Tense.....	225
Chapter 17: It’s All Over! Other Past Tenses	237
Chapter 18: What’ll You Do? The Future.....	249
Chapter 19: What Would You Do? The Conditional Mood.....	261
<i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i>	273
Chapter 20: Ten Common French Mistakes and How to Avoid ‘Em	275
Chapter 21: Ten Ways to Begin a Letter in French.....	283
<i>Part VI: Appendixes</i>	287
Appendix A: Verb Charts.....	289
Appendix B: English-French Dictionary	299
Appendix C: French-English Dictionary	303
<i>Index</i>	307

Table of Contents

***Introduction*..... 1**

About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book.....	2
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
How This Book Is Organized.....	3
Part I: The Building Blocks of French.....	3
Part II: The Here and Now: Writing in the Present.....	3
Part III: Writing with Panache: Dressing Up Your Sentences.....	3
Part IV: That Was Then, and What Will Be, Will Be:	
The Past and Future Tenses.....	3
Part V: The Part of Tens.....	3
Part VI: Appendixes.....	4
Icons Used in This Book.....	4
Where to Go from Here.....	4

***Part I: The Building Blocks of French*5**

Chapter 1: Understanding Parts of Speech and Bilingual Dictionaries.....7

Identifying the Parts of Speech.....	7
What's in a name? Nouns.....	8
The articles.....	8
Verbs take center stage.....	9
Describing adjectives.....	10
Using adverbs.....	10
Pronouns: They're replacements.....	11
Prepositions: On top of it.....	12
Connecting with conjunctions.....	13
Correctly Using a Bilingual Dictionary.....	13
Figuring out what to look up.....	14
Choosing the right word based on context and part of speech.....	14
Understanding symbols and terminology.....	15
Interpreting figurative language and idioms.....	15
Verifying your findings.....	16
Answer Key.....	17

Chapter 2: Figuring Out Nouns, Articles, and Possession19

Genre Bending: Writing with Masculine and Feminine Nouns.....	19
Determining the gender of nouns.....	19
Making nouns feminine.....	20
Nouns that are always masculine or feminine.....	21

Part Deux: Making Nouns Plural	22
Remembering your x's: Other plural patterns	22
Irregular plurals	22
Understanding Articles and How They Indicate Gender and Number	23
Grasping the definite articles	24
Sorting out indefinite articles	24
Looking at some partitive articles	25
A Little of This and That: Using Demonstratives	26
Demonstrative adjectives	26
Demonstrative pronouns	27
Possession: Channeling the Spirit of Ownership	28
Possession using "de"	29
Working with possessive adjectives	29
Yours, mine, and ours: Understanding possessive pronouns	31
Answer Key	33

Chapter 3: The 4-1-1 on Numbers, Dates, and Time.....35

Using Numbers	35
Counting on cardinal numbers: 1, 2, 3.....	35
Sorting out ordinal numbers	37
Mark Your Calendar: Expressing Days, Months, and Dates	39
A full sept: Knowing the days of the week.....	39
An even dozen: Identifying the months	40
Day, month, and year: Scoping out the "dating" scene	40
Understanding Time Differences	41
Answer Key.....	45

Part II: The Here and Now: Writing in the Present.....47

Chapter 4: Right Here, Right Now: The Present Tense49

Understanding Subject Pronouns, Your Conjugation Cues	49
Je or nous: The first person.....	50
Tu or vous: The second person	51
Il, elle, or on: The third person singular	51
Ils or elles: The third person plural	52
The Mainstream: Conjugating Regular Verbs.....	53
The most common regular verbs: -er	53
Another common regular verb ending: -ir	53
The third type of regular verbs: -re	54
Preserving Pronunciation with Spelling-Change Verbs	55
Working with -cer verbs	55
Managing -ger verbs	56
Dissecting Stem-Changing Verbs	56
Tackling -yer verbs.....	57
Figuring out -eler verbs	57
Focusing on -eter verbs.....	58
Looking at -e*er verbs.....	58
Dealing with -é*er verbs	59

The Rebels: Conjugating Irregular Verbs	61
Coming right up: Verbs like venir	61
Going out . . . and out like a light: Verbs like sortir and dormir	62
Offering and opening: Verbs like offrir and ouvrir	62
Taking: Verbs like prendre	63
Beating and putting: Verbs like battre and mettre	63
Abilities and wants: Pouvoir and vouloir	64
Seeing is believing: Voir, c'est croire	64
Tackling unique irregular verbs	65
Answer Key	68
Chapter 5: Asking and Answering Questions.....	71
Oui ou Non: Asking Yes/No Questions	71
Posing informal questions	71
Asking formal questions with inversion	72
Asking Who, What, Which, When, Where, Why, and How Questions	73
Asking wh questions with “est-ce que”	74
Asking wh questions with inversion	76
Answering Questions	77
Answering yes/no questions	77
Answering wh questions	78
Answer Key	79
Chapter 6: Just Say No: The Negative	81
Using Negative Adverbs	81
The most common negative adverb: Ne . . . pas	81
Other negative adverbs	82
Using Negative Adjectives, Pronouns, and Conjunctions	83
Negative adjectives	84
Negative pronouns	85
Negative conjunctions	87
Responding to Negative Questions and Statements	88
Replying with no	88
Answering with yes	88
Answer Key	89
Chapter 7: “To Be” or “Being” Is the Question: Infinitives and Present Participles	91
How to Use Infinitives	91
With the verb: Expressing action	92
Nouns: Standing as subjects	93
Understanding word order with infinitives	94
Presenting Present Participles	95
Forming present participles	95
Using present participles	96
Answer Key	101
Chapter 8: Deciphering the Subjunctive Mood	103
Conjugating the Subjunctive	103
Regular verbs	103
Stem-changing and most irregular verbs	104
Really irregular verbs	105



- Getting Unreal: Using the Subjunctive108
 - With impersonal expressions108
 - Once more, with feelings (and orders and opinions)110
 - Why not? With certain verbs in the negative or interrogative111
 - And with conjunctions112
 - With superlatives: Simply the best113
 - Something else: Words with indefinite and negative pronouns113
 - All by itself114
- Avoiding the Subjunctive.....115
 - Shared and implied subjects: Using de + infinitive.....115
 - Slipping in some indirect objects116
 - Swapping the subjunctive for a noun.....116
 - Doubting: Saying if only116
- Answer Key.....118

***Part III: Writing with Panache: Dressing Up Your Sentences* 121**

Chapter 9: Describing with Flair: Adjectives and Adverbs.....123

- Describing the Role of Adjectives123
 - Making your adjectives agree.....124
 - Correctly positioning adjectives with nouns126
 - Using special forms for six adjectives that precede nouns127
 - Identifying adjectives with meaning changes128
- Identifying an Adverb’s Role129
 - Identifying types of adverbs129
 - Forming adverbs of manner132
 - Positioning adverbs133
- Comparing with Comparatives and Superlatives135
 - More or less, equal: Relating two things with comparatives135
 - Supersizing with superlatives136
 - For better or worse: Special comparative and superlative forms137
- Answer Key.....139

Chapter 10: I Command You: The Imperative141

- Conjugating the Imperative.....141
 - Regular verbs141
 - Irregular verbs.....143
 - Pronominal verbs.....146
- Giving Affirmative and Negative Commands147
 - For the to-do list: Affirmative commands147
 - Don’t do it! Negative commands.....148
- Identifying Other Ways to Give Commands149
 - Commanding with the infinitive.....149
 - Forbidding with “d fense de”149
 - Requesting with the future149
 - Demanding with the subjunctive150
- Answer Key.....151

Chapter 11: Sorting Out Pronominal Verbs: Idioms, Oneself, and Each Other	153
Understanding the Types of Pronominal Verbs.....	153
Reflexive verbs: Acting on oneself.....	154
Reciprocal verbs: What you do to each other.....	155
Figuratively speaking: Idiomatic pronominal verbs.....	155
Introducing the Relationship of Reflexive Pronouns to Pronominal Verbs.....	156
Eyeing the reflexive pronouns.....	156
Knowing where the words go.....	158
Deciding Whether to Make a Verb Pronominal.....	159
Reflexive verbs: Oneself or something else?.....	159
Reciprocal verbs: Returning the favor?.....	161
Idiomatic verbs: What's the meaning of all this?.....	162
Answer Key.....	163
Chapter 12: An Ode to Prepositions	165
Identifying Common Prepositions.....	165
The preposition à.....	165
The preposition de.....	166
Forming contractions with prepositions.....	166
Identifying other useful prepositions.....	168
Distinguishing between Prepositions.....	169
When to use à or de.....	169
When to use dans or en.....	170
Using Prepositions with Places.....	171
Prepositions with countries.....	171
Prepositions with cities.....	173
Looking at Verbs that Need Prepositions.....	173
Verbs with à.....	174
Verbs with de.....	175
Verbs with other prepositions.....	177
Verbs with different prepositions.....	178
Verbs with no preposition.....	179
Answer Key.....	181
Chapter 13: Getting a Hold on Pronouns	183
Using Object Pronouns.....	183
Presenting direct-object pronouns.....	183
Giving you indirect-object pronouns.....	186
Understanding Adverbial Pronouns.....	188
Getting there with the adverbial pronoun y.....	188
Adverbial grammar: Picking up more of it with the pronoun en.....	190
Positioning Double Pronouns.....	192
Lining up: Standard pronoun order.....	192
Using pronouns in commands.....	193
Answer Key.....	195

Chapter 14: Grasping Conjunctions and Relative Pronouns	197
Joining with Conjunctions	197
Coordinating conjunctions	197
Subordinating conjunctions	200
Grasping Relative Pronouns.....	202
Sizing up relative pronouns.....	202
Identifying indefinite relative pronouns	206
Answer Key.....	209

***Part IV: That Was Then, and What Will Be, Will Be:
The Past and Future Tenses***..... **211**

Chapter 15: It's All in the Past: Passé Composé	213
Understanding and Creating the Passé Composé	213
Choosing your helper: avoir or être.....	214
Finding past participles	215
Creating agreement with the passé composé	218
Putting It All Together	219
Using the Passé Composé.....	221
Answer Key.....	223

Chapter 16: What Was Happening? The Imparfait Tense	225
Conjugating the Imparfait	225
Regular verbs	225
Stem-changing verbs	227
Spelling-change verbs	227
Irregular verbs.....	228
Using the Imparfait	229
Deciding Whether to Use the Imparfait or Passé Composé.....	231
Actions with (no) end in sight.....	232
Making a habit of it	233
The way we were	233
Two (or more) at a time	233
Getting interrupted.....	234
Answer Key.....	235

Chapter 17: It's All Over! Other Past Tenses	237
Perfecting the Plus-Que-Parfait: What Someone Had Done	237
Conjugating the past perfect.....	238
The order of events: Using the past perfect.....	240
Waxing Literary: Conjugating the Passé Simple	241
Passé simple of -er verbs	241
Passé simple of -ir verbs	242
Passé simple of -re verbs	244
Answer Key.....	247

Chapter 18: What'll You Do? The Future	249
The Infinitive and Beyond: Conjugating the Futur	249
Regular and spelling-change verbs.....	250
Stem-changing verbs	251
Irregular verbs.....	253
Looking Ahead with the Future Tense	256
Talking about the Near Future in Other Ways.....	257
Making the future into a present.....	258
Where there's a will, there's a vais: Using aller to say what's going to happen	258
Answer Key.....	259
Chapter 19: What Would You Do? The Conditional Mood.....	261
Setting the Mood with Conditional Conjugations	261
Regular and spelling-change verbs.....	262
Stem-changing verbs	263
Irregular verbs.....	265
Terms and Conditions: When to Use the Conditional.....	268
With si clauses: If only.....	268
For special verbs: Could, should	269
In polite requests: What would you like?.....	270
Answer Key.....	271
 Part V: The Part of Tens.....	 273
Chapter 20: Ten Common French Mistakes and How to Avoid 'Em	275
Translating Word for Word	275
Leaving Out Accents	276
Using Too Many Capitals	276
Not Making Contractions.....	277
Trusting False Friends.....	278
Not Knowing When to Use Avoir Idiomatically.....	279
Misusing Auxiliary Verbs	280
Mixing up the Passé Composé and the Imparfait.....	280
Misunderstanding the Subjunctive	281
Not Knowing the Difference between Tu and Vous.....	282
Chapter 21: Ten Ways to Begin a Letter in French.....	283
Messieurs (Gentlemen).....	283
Monsieur, Madame (To Whom It May Concern, Dear Sir or Madam)	284
Monsieur (Dear Sir).....	284
Monsieur . . . (Dear Mr . . .).....	284
Madame . . . (Dear Mrs . . .)	285
Monsieur le Maire (Mr. Mayor — or Other Title).....	285
Madame la Directrice (Madam Director — or Other Title).....	285
Chers Amis (Dear Friends).....	285
Cher . . . (Dear . . .).....	286
Chéri (Darling)	286

<i>Part VI: Appendixes</i>	287
Appendix A: Verb Charts	289
Regular Verbs	289
-er Verbs	290
-ir Verbs	290
-re Verbs	291
Spelling-Change Verbs	291
-cer Verbs	291
-ger Verbs	292
Stem-Changing Verbs	292
-eler Verbs	292
-eter Verbs	292
-e*er Verbs	293
-é*er Verbs	293
-yer Verbs	294
Irregular Verbs	294
Appendix B: English-French Dictionary	299
Appendix C: French-English Dictionary	303
<i>Index</i>	307