

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1

Easy Self-Introductions in French

CONTENTS

- 2 French
- 2 English
- 2 Vocabulary
- 3 Sample Sentences
- 4 Grammar
- 10 Cultural Insight

1

FRENCH

1. Rob : Bonjour.
2. Giulia : Salut !
3. Rob : Je suis Rob. Tu t'appelles ...?
4. Giulia : Je m'appelle Giulia.
5. Rob : Tu es française ?
6. Giulia : Non, je suis italienne.

ENGLISH

1. Rob: Hello.
2. Giulia: Hi!
3. Rob: I'm Rob. Your name is...?
4. Giulia: My name is Giulia.
5. Rob: Are you French?
6. Giulia: No, I'm Italian.

VOCABULARY

French	English	Class	Gender
bonjour	hello	noun	masculine

salut	hi, bye (informal)	noun	masculine
je / j'	I	personal pronoun	
tu	you (informal)	personal pronoun	
s'appeler	to be called	verb	
être	to be	verb	
non	no	expression	
français(e)	French	adjective	
italienne	Italian	adjective	feminine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Bonjour Monsieur. "Hello, sir."</p>	<p>Bonjour Madame. "Hello, ma'am."</p>
<p>Salut Pierre! "Hi, Peter!"</p>	<p>Salut, Estelle. "Bye, Estelle."</p>
<p>Je vais bien. "I am well."</p>	<p>Tu as 20 ans. "You are twenty years old."</p>
<p>Tu vas au travail. "You go to work."</p>	<p>Je m'appelle Nicolas. "My name is Nicolas."</p>
<p>Comment tu t'appelles ? "What is your name?"</p>	<p>Il vaut mieux être seul que mal accompagné. "It is worth more to be alone than badly accompanied."</p>
<p>Il semble être heureux. "He seems to be happy."</p>	<p>Être ou ne pas être. "To be or not to be."</p>

<p>Non, je ne suis pas Madame Henri. "No, I'm not Madame Henri."</p>	<p>Non, je ne suis pas d'accord. "No, I don't agree."</p>
<p>Non, ce n'est pas vrai. "No, it's not true."</p>	<p>La chanteuse Vanessa Paradis est française. "The singer Vanessa Paradis is French."</p>
<p>Elle est italienne. "She is Italian."</p>	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is on How to Ask and Tell Your Name.

Je suis Rob. Tu t'appelles... ?

"I'm Rob. Your name is...?"

Enchanté(e)! "Nice to meet you!" You've surely heard this well-known phrase, which is usually what you hear after you tell someone your name. Sharing your name and getting another person's name are two of the first steps in engaging conversation and a relationship.

So how do you tell someone your name in French? Simply use the specific verb *s'appeler* to indicate your identity!

Telling Your Name With the Verb *s'appeler*

The verb *s'appeler* means literally "to be named." It's part of the first verb group, as its infinitive form (verb not conjugated) ends with the letters *-er*, similar to the verbs *regarder*, which means, "to look," and *rêver*, which means, "to dream."

Another particularity of the verb *s'appeler* is that the first particle is composed of the letter *-s* followed by an apostrophe. This particle has the function of reflecting the information provided to the subject. Does it seem a bit complicated? Well, let's take a look at an illustration of it with an example.

In the dialogue, Giulia says *Je m'appelle Giulia*. ("My name is Giulia.")

Here, the subject of the verb *s'appeler* is *je*, which refers to the Italian student. The particle *m'* in the phrase *Je m'appelle* tells us that *je* owns the first name Giulia; therefore, our female speaker Giulia is the Italian student.

For each person (first, second, or third of the singular or plural form), the reflexive particle *s'* of the infinitive verb *s'appeler* changes as follows:

Singular Form

French	"English Translation"
<i>Je m'appelle</i>	"My name is"; "I'm + name"
<i>Tu t'appelles</i>	"Your name is"; "You are + name"
<i>Il s'appelle</i>	"His name is"; "He is + name"
<i>Elle s'appelle</i>	"Her name is"; "She is + name"

Plural Form

<i>Nous nous appelons</i>	"Our names are"; "We are + names"
<i>Vous vous appelez</i>	"Your names are"; "You are + names"
<i>Ils s'appellent</i>	"Their names are"; "They are + names"
<i>Elles s'appellent</i>	"Their names are"; "They are + names"

Dialogue Focus:

Other possible solutions to tell someone your name include using a form of the verb *être* meaning, "to be." You'd say:

Je suis followed by your first name or full name, as in *Je suis Antoine*. ("I'm Antoine.")

or

Moi c'est followed by the first name, as in *Moi c'est Marie*, which literally means "Me, it's Mary," or more commonly, "I'm Mary."

To tell someone the name of your interlocutor informally, you'd say *Tu es* followed by the name of the person you are talking to.

For Example:

1. **Informal:**
Tu es Luc.
"You are Luc."
2. **Formal:**
Vous êtes Antoine et Luc.
"You are Antoine and Luc."
3. *Vous êtes Monsieur Cardin.*
"You are M.Cardin."

Asking About Names With *s'appeler*

To ask for a person's name directly, use the verb *s'appeler* rather than the verb *être*. It is simply more specific and cannot be misinterpreted as making some kind of accusation as could be the case if someone asks you "Who are you?"

In the dialogue, the question asks about the speaker's name using *Tu t'appelles ...?* This yes-no question (referred to as a "closed question" or *question fermée* in French) could be completed as *Tu t'appelles comment ?*, meaning "What is your name?" It could also be completed as follow *Tu t'appelles Julie ?* or any other name you had guessed to verify your interlocutor's identity.

To ask for names, use *comment* (literally "how") in conjunction with the verb *s'appeler*, as in:

Informal situation

French	"English Translation"
<i>Comment tu t'appelles ?</i>	"What is your name?"
<i>Tu t'appelles comment ?</i>	"What is your name?"

Formal Situation

French	"English Translation"
<i>Comment vous vous appelez ?</i>	"What is your name?"
<i>Vous vous appelez comment ?</i>	"What is your name?"

Dialogue Focus: Ask and Tell Your Nationality With être, "To Be"

If you want to ask or tell about someone's origin, use the verb *être*, which means, "to be." The phrase word order is identical in either case. Observe in the dialogue the two phrases:

1 - *Tu es française ?* (Rob)

"Are you French?"

2 - *Non, je suis italienne.* (Giulia)

"No, I'm Italian."

In both cases, the subject comes first; followed by the conjugated verb *être* and the adjective of nationality (see below for some examples). Therefore, you can hear or read the following:

Function	French	"English Translation"
Tell your origin	<i>Je suis + adjective de nationalité</i>	"I'm + adjective of nationality"
Tell your interlocutor's origin informally	<i>Tu es + adjective de nationalité</i>	"You are + adjective of nationality"
Tell your interlocutor's nationality formally	<i>Vous* êtes + adjective de nationalité</i>	"You are + adjective of nationality"

Orally, the only difference is the intonation. When asking the question, the intonation rises. To tell the origin, the intonation falls.

A Few Nationalities:

Masculine/Feminine Nationalities in French-English

French	"English Translation"
<i>allemand/allemande</i>	"German"
<i>anglais/anglaise</i>	"English"
<i>américain/américaine</i>	"American"
<i>argentin/argentine</i>	"Argentinian"
<i>autrichien/ autrichienne</i>	"Austrian"
<i>belge/belge</i>	"Belgian"

<i>brésilien/brésilienne</i>	"Brazilian"
<i>chinois/chinoise</i>	"Chinese"
<i>espagnol/espagnole</i>	"Spanish"
<i>portugais/portugaise</i>	"Portuguese"
<i>russe/russe</i>	"Russian"
<i>suisse/suisse</i>	"Swiss"

For Example:

Context 1: Two people meet through a friend:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Tu es belge ?</i>	"Are you Belgian?"
<i>Non, je suis américaine.</i>	"No, I'm American."

Context 2: A father asks his son's girlfriend and future daughter-in-law:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Vous êtes espagnole?</i>	"Are you Spanish?"
<i>Oui, je suis espagnole.</i>	"Yes, I'm Spanish."

Context 3: On the 14th of July on the Champs Elysée:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Je suis anglaise. Tu es allemand?</i>	"I'm English. Are you German?"
<i>Non, je suis hollandais.</i>	"No, I'm Dutch."

***NOTE:** The pronoun *vous* can refer formally to one person or several ones as in *Madame Schwartz, vous êtes allemande.* ("Mrs. Schwartz, you are German.") Or *Anne et Marie, vous êtes suisses.* ("Ann and Mary, you are Swiss.")

Dialogue Expansion: Ask About the Origin

To ask about someone's origin, you can also ask the wh- question ("Where are you from?"), or in French, *une question ouverte*:

Question with the verb *venir*, "to come":

Informal:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où viens-tu ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Tu viens d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"

Formal:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Vous venez d'où ?</i>	"Where are you from?"

Note: You can ask this question either to learn the person's city of birth or the place where a person began a trip.

For Example:

At the customs counter:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je viens de Paris.</i>	"I come from Paris."

On a first date:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où venez-vous ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je suis de Toulon.</i>	"I'm from Toulon."

Question with être:

French	"English Translation"
<i>D'où es-tu ?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Tu es d'où?</i>	"Where are you from?"

For Example:

French	"English Translation"
<i>Tu es d'où?</i>	"Where are you from?"
<i>Je suis de la région parisienne.</i>	"I'm from the Parisian region."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Don't Let Initial Greetings in French Be Awkward...

Using *vous* or *tu*? Kissing or not kissing? Those are the questions when you meet a French native for the first time.

Fixed rules don't exist in this scenario! You will have to feel out the situation! However, some general guidelines will help you to decide what to do. Obviously, the context of the situation you are in will dictate your behavior and that of others.

In general, if you are among friends or in a relaxed situation, choose to use the informal you, the famous *tu*. If you are shy and timid, observe what is going on around you and imitate others.

Kissing is usually done among people you know or friends of friends. The process is simple: extend your cheek to the other person and make contact while making a kissing noise. Your lips should not be in contact with the other person's cheek. The usual number of kisses is two but may vary up to four, according to the region. No worries there—even the French natives have issues with the number of kisses to give. So simply ask or let the other person guide you. After all, you can always sincerely apologize!

If you want to show respect or you are in a more formal situation as in a business meeting or interacting with the elderly, just shake hands and use the formal you, *vous*. If you are unsure of what to do, wait for the person in front of you to initiate the contact. He or she might be *un bon vivant*, a person who likes to live the good life and set a more relaxed atmosphere by asking

you to use *tu* after a few times and giving you a tap on the shoulder.

To be safe in any situation, smile, shake hands, and use *vous* until you are told otherwise. At least that way you won't run into trouble. On this note, I'll send you a kiss on the cheek while making a lip-smacking noise!