

LESSON 15 Getting under way II

THE STORY

The next morning, Robert gets stamps from a tobacconist and mails the postcard to his mother. Then he proceeds to wander around the Sorbonne as though he were looking for somebody. The teacher seems not to understand why Robert stays in that area when there are so many other important things to see in Paris.

At last Robert sees Mireille, but before he can speak to her she is greeted by her friend Hubert and walks off with him. Our boy goes to a café to recover from this rebuff. He soon feels better when Mireille, sans Hubert, walks up to his table, says hello, apologizes for her hasty departure the day before, and suggests a walk in the Luxembourg Garden.

From their conversation we learn that Robert tries to be independent of his wealthy father, and that he is helped by cash gifts from his grandparents. Robert has a letter of introduction to an old friend of his mother, Mme Courtois. By an amazing coincidence, Mme Courtois turns out to be Mireille's godmother. Mireille tells Robert a little more about her family. Everything is going just fine when Mireille's little sister, Marie-Laure, butts in to announce that their mother, who is at home, is looking for Mireille. Mireille can't imagine why her mother is not at work, and rushes off, asking Robert to wait. We think he will.

Marie-Laure immediately takes over. She impresses Robert by guessing his nationality. Then, with the characteristic tact of a ten-year-old, she asks a question which, when you put the facial expression and the words together, amounts to: "What in the world can you possibly see in my sister?"

NOTES ON CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

- **Le mercredi.** In France there is no school on Wednesday for children in grade school and junior high school. But children do go to school on Saturday morning.
- **Public versus private selves.** In the space of two brief conversations, Robert has revealed a great deal of his personal and family history to Mireille. Even though she is a perfect stranger, he has volunteered information about such intimate family matters as his father's financial status, his parents' divorce, and his mother's remarriage. He even tells her how much money his grandparents used to give him at Christmas. Mireille is much less forthcoming. She shares certain facts about herself and her life, but she feels no compulsion to tell Robert about her family's finances or interpersonal relationships. Americans, with their open attitude toward strangers and their eagerness to make friends, tend to let their private selves spill into their public selves. The French, who as a rule are more formal (though no less friendly), prefer to keep their public and private lives distinct. Not until Robert gets to know Mireille much better—until he becomes a part of her personal life—will he learn as much about her as she has already learned about him.

CONTENT AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 15

This lesson shows ways in which French speakers express certainty, uncertainty, and different degrees of agreement. It also reviews the days of the week, the months of the year, the French monetary system, and useful expressions for making everyday purchases.

The following points are highlighted in lesson 15 (you should concentrate on sections marked with a ✓):

- ✓ • Use of prepositions with place-names (15.17, 15.18)
- ✓ • Contraction of *à* and *de* with *le* and *les*, review and extension (15.21–15.26)
 - *En*, review and extension
 - *Mener, amener, emmener, promener*
 - Verb forms, review and extension

ASSIMILATION OF THE TEXT

15.1–15.4 Text work-up, aural comprehension, and oral production

- Proceed as usual in sections 15.1–15.4. (Refer to lesson 3.1–3.3 and lesson 4.3 for directions, if necessary.) Work with the text and illustrations in the textbook, as in previous lessons.

TOWARD COMMUNICATION

15.5 Activation: Pronunciation of /r/ (review)

The examples in 15.5 will help you brush up your /r/, first presented in lesson 5. Some of these examples, like *mystère*, contain only one /r/ sound; others, like *leur chirurgien*, have several /r/ sounds in quick succession, which may make them seem like tongue-twisters.

- Listen, then repeat the words and expressions you hear, mimicking the voices as closely as you can. (Give yourself plenty of time with *leur chirurgien*.)

15.6–15.8 Observation and activation: Degrees of assent; certainty and uncertainty

Not all questions or statements require a simple yes-or-no response. Very often the most appropriate answer is somewhere between yes and no. Charts 15.6 and 15.7 present a number of conversationally useful phrases that enable you to react to what is said with gradations of assent. The phrases in chart 15.6 show how to answer the same question in various ways, from noncommittal to emphatically positive. In chart 15.7, you will find two lists of expressions that allow you to express certainty or uncertainty.

- In exercise 15.8, you will hear a series of questions that refer to the story of Robert and Mireille. For each question, three answers are printed in your workbook. Choose the answer that makes the most sense in the context of the story, and circle the corresponding letter.

✓ Check your answers in key 15.8 at the back of the workbook.

15.9, 15.10 Observation and activation: Calendar (review and extension)

Chart 15.9 extends the discussion of months and seasons you saw in lesson 11. Note the characteristic patterns:

En is used with the names of months.

Au is used with the expression *mois de* and the name of the month.

A is used with the names of holidays and other significant dates, such as birthdays.

- In exercise 15.10, you will be asked when various important events occur. Answer each question using the date you see in the workbook.

15.11–15.14 Observation and activation: Accounts and expenses; buying; French money

This section presents vocabulary useful for making purchases in French. It also gives you a quick review of numbers.

Chart 15.11 lists the denominations of coins and bills that are in use in France.

Section 15.12 lists expressions used in a typical transaction: buying stamps at a tobacconist's. Notice the variety of expressions for requesting a stamp and asking how much one owes.

You saw in lesson 14 that the longer an expression is, the more polite it will usually be. The same is true of the statements and questions in 15.12. "Est-ce que je pourrais avoir un timbre, s'il vous plaît?" is somewhere in the neighborhood of degree 4 on the politeness scale, compared to degree 2 or 3 for "Un timbre, s'il vous plaît." (Degree 0 would be: "Un timbre.")

- Exercises 15.13 and 15.14 review the use of numbers in making purchases. In 15.13, you will hear the prices of a number of different items; write each price in figures in the corresponding space in your workbook.
- In 15.14, write the correct combination of banknotes and coins you would give the seller for each of the purchases in 15.13 (presuming that you have exact change). You may want to review the available denominations in chart 15.11 before you begin 15.14. Try not to look at the chart as you complete the exercise.

✓ Check your answers in keys 15.13 and 15.14 at the back of the workbook.

15.15, 15.16 Observation and activation: Approximation

Chart 15.15 shows the expressions that are used to indicate round numbers. While *dix* is exactly 10 and *quinze* is exactly 15, anything from 9 to 11 may be lumped into *une dizaine*; an amount around 15 is *une quinzaine*; 50, more or less, is *une cinquantaine*; and so forth.

- In exercise 15.16, you will hear a series of questions about quantities. For each question, an exact number is given in your workbook. Answer with the nearest round number.

15.17, 15.18 Observation and activation: Where? Whereabouts?

The expressions in 15.17 show ways of referring to various places and locations. As you study the list, notice that the expressions are different for different categories of places:

You would say “à la fac” but “à Paris,” since Paris is the name of a city and is not preceded by a definite article.

You would say that people are “à la Sorbonne” or “au bureau” to indicate a general location, but “dans la cour de la Sorbonne” to specify that they are inside a more or less enclosed space.

Note that *la place* is considered a space upon which people walk (“sur la place”), and *la rue* a space that is closed in by the houses on either side (“dans la rue”).

Notice that articles are generally not used with addresses: “les Courtois habitent quai de Grenelle.” Note the **comma** after street numbers: “Mireille habite 18, rue de Vaugirard.”

- In exercise 15.18, you will be asked about activities that happen or things that can be found in certain places. For each question, the workbook contains an incomplete answer with a place-name. Complete the answers.

✓ Check your answers in key 15.18 at the back of the workbook.

15.19, 15.20 Observation and activation: Promenades; mener, amener, emmener, promener

The chart in 15.19 presents four verbs that are related in meaning and that are formed from the same root, *mener*, preceded by various prefixes: *a-*, *em-*, and *pro-*.

Examples 1–5 illustrate the uses of these four verbs. Note particularly the distinction between *amener* and *emmener*. *Amener* refers to movement from elsewhere to the “here” of the speaker. *Emmener* refers to the opposite movement: from the “here” of the speaker to somewhere else. Inviting her children and grandchildren to Sunday dinner, Grandma Belleau might say, “**Amenez** Marie-Laure!” After Marie-Laure has created havoc in her house, Grandma might say, “**Emmenez-la!**”

Remember that these verbs show a shift in vowel sounds in the stem.

When the syllable is open (that is, when it ends in a vowel sound), the stem vowel is /ə/, as in *le*: *pro-me-ner*.

When the syllable is closed (when it ends in a consonant sound), the stem vowel is /ɛ/, as in *elle*: *pro-mène*.

- In the dictation exercise in 15.20, listen and write the missing words in your workbook.

✓ Check your answers in key 15.20 at the back of the workbook.

15.21–15.26 Observation and activation: Contractions of *de* and *à* with *le* and *les* (review and extension)

You have seen in a number of earlier lessons how *de* and *à* combine with the articles *le* and *les* to produce *du*, *des*, *au*, and *aux*. Charts 15.21 and 15.22 review these contractions, and show that they occur no matter what the function of *à* or *de* may be (indicating destination, indicating origin, expressing a partitive, and so on).

Chart 15.23 summarizes the use of *de* and *à* with all the definite articles: *le*, *la*, *l'*, and *les*. It shows that only *le* and *les* produce contracted forms with *à* and *de*.

- In exercise 15.24, you will hear various suggestions for where Robert and Mireille might meet. Go along with each suggestion and say that that's where they **will** meet. Use *à* and the definite article you hear, remembering to produce combined forms where appropriate.
- In 15.25, you will be asked whether you were in various places. Respond to each query, saying yes, you have just come from there. Use *de* and the definite article you hear, producing combined forms where appropriate.
- In the first two sections of the written exercise in 15.26, complete with the appropriate combined form of *à* or *de* and the definite article. In section 3, complete with the proper verb form.

✓ Check your answers in key 15.26 at the back of the workbook.

15.27–15.29 Observation and activation: *En* (review and extension)

The charts in 15.27 extend the presentation of the **partitive** use of *en*, first described in lesson 9. In a partitive phrase, you remember, a noun is used with *du*, *de la*, *de l'*, or *des* to indicate an unspecified number or amount. As you see from the chart, *en* can replace the noun that is being talked about: “Je voudrais **des timbres**.” “—Combien **en** voulez-vous?” *En* represents both the noun and the partitive notion expressed by *du*, *de la*, and *des*.

En is used, along with expressions of quantity, to indicate how much or how many of the item in question you are referring to: “J'**en** voudrais **deux**.” The quantity may be given in

numbers—*deux*, *quatre*—or by using less precise expressions of quantity—*une dizaine*, *beaucoup*—or, in the negative, with *pas*.

- In exercise 15.28, you will be asked about the availability of certain items. Answer each question using *en* and the expression of quantity you see printed in the workbook.
 - In the written exercise in 15.29, complete the sentences you see using *en*.
- ✓ Check your answers in key 15.29 at the back of the workbook.

15.30, 15.31 Observation and activation: Verb forms; present tense (review and extension)

In lesson 14 you saw that for the majority of verbs ending in *-er*, as well as a number of others, the three singular forms and the third person plural form are all pronounced the same way. The *nous* and *vous* forms are made by adding /*ɔ̃*/ (written *-ons*) and /*e*/ (written *-ez*) to this basic form.

These rules apply to the verbs listed in chart 15.30, except that there is an added semivowel sound, /*j*/, heard before the endings of the *nous* and *vous* forms. This semivowel sound is written *-i-* after consonants (*sourions*) and *-y-* after vowels (*croyons*).

- In exercise 15.31, complete the sentences you see in your workbook with the appropriate form of the verb you hear.
- ✓ Check your answers in key 15.31 at the back of the workbook.

15.32, 15.33 Observation and activation: Verb forms; additional consonant in the plural

Chart 15.32 presents a category of verbs in which the three singular forms are pronounced the same way, but the plural forms have a consonant sound that is not heard in the singular.

- In exercise 15.33, you will hear four questions or statements on the audio program. Each one corresponds to a paragraph in the workbook. Complete each paragraph in the workbook with the appropriate forms of the verb you hear.
- ✓ Check your answers in key 15.33 at the back of the workbook.

15.34, 15.35 Activation: Forms of the imperfect

- In the dictation exercise in 15.34, listen and write the missing forms of the imperfect in your workbook.

- In the written exercise in 15.35, decide from the context which of the missing verbs should be in the present and which should be in the imperfect and write the proper forms in your workbook.

✓ Check your answers in keys 15.34 and 15.35 at the back of the workbook.

15.36 Activation: Dialogue between Marie-Laure and Robert

Listen to the conversation between Marie-Laure and Robert and memorize Robert's lines, imitating and repeating as usual.

SELF-TESTING EXERCISES

- Complete and check exercises 15.37–15.40 as usual.

TOWARD FREE EXPRESSION

15.41, 15.42 Cross-examining the text, Words at large

Proceed as usual. (If necessary, refer to lesson 4 for directions.)

15.43, 15.44 Role-playing and reinvention of the story

In 15.43, describe a birthday party to which you have been invited, using the suggestions in the workbook to get started and inventing others if you like. If you work with a partner, pretend you have both been invited to different birthday parties, and compare notes.

In 15.44, Robert's mother has arrived in Paris and is walking in the Luxembourg Garden with her childhood friend, Mme Courtois. They run into Robert and Mireille. Imagine the scene, supplementing the suggestions you see in the workbook with others you invent. If you work with a partner, take parts and complete the exercise, then switch roles and do it again.

- **Suggested written assignment.** Write out a version of the surprise encounter in 15.44. You may begin your version by combining the suggestions given in the workbook, but try to invent an ending of your own. Write ten to fifteen sentences. Submit this assignment to your instructor (see the course syllabus for details).

DEVELOPING READING AND WRITING SKILLS

At the end of the textbook chapter for lesson 15 you will find a series of documents for reading practice. Study the documents assigned in the course syllabus and complete the corresponding exercises in sections 15.45–15.51 of the workbook. Read each document

once, complete the exercises, and check your answers in the keys at the back of the workbook. Then re-read the document.

Document 1 is a kind of tour guide's introduction to the Quartier Latin in Paris. The imaginary guide locates the Quartier Latin on the Left Bank, points out the places of interest to tourists and students (the ethnic restaurants, the movie houses, the cafés), and reminds us that the area is also a center of learning, with three branches of the University of Paris.

Money is the topic in **document 2**, which contains a collection of aphorisms and opinions on money by French thinkers and writers from Racine and Molière to Tonton Guillaume. Guillaume likes the neutrality of money, its anonymity. For Dumas the younger, doing business means getting ahold of other people's money. The money other people have is crucial to Sacha Guitry as well. Tante Georgette and company state that money can't buy happiness; as far as Henri de Régnier is concerned, what it buys only looks like happiness from the outside. Money is fine, says Dumas *fils* again, as long as it remains a servant. . . . Marcel Aymé disagrees with Tonton Guillaume: unless you get rid of it right away, money will soil your pockets and start to smell bad. For Montesquieu, money exacts a price, a fact that misers understand less well even than spendthrifts. For Chamfort, success, like money, feeds on itself. And once again Coluche has the last word, about a surgeon who once relieved him of an encumbrance. . . .

Document 3 contains two folksongs every French person knows by heart. One of the functions of the first song is to help children remember the days of the week in their proper order, so it's worth memorizing. (The second line of this song refers to a popular expression for shaking hands, *serrer la pince à quelqu'un*.)

Youth and old age are Jean Tardieu's subjects in **document 4**. Tardieu's poem suggests the playful, topsy-turvy world of a small child frolicking with an adult. There are nonsense words, syllables get switched (little kids say "mazagine" and "pasghetti" in English). The *jeu du poulet* is fun to play but it's serious, too: the excitement of the fox running after the chicken translates into the adult's joy and envy at the youth of the child ("You look so good I could eat you!"). But despite all the exertion the adult can never quite catch up to the child ("Je cours après toi / Plus loin que ma vie") because in the end the child is faster. The adult, out of breath, must stop.

SUMMARY QUIZ

Consult the course syllabus or check with your instructor for information about completing and handing in summary quiz 15.

Name _____

Instructor _____ Section _____

SUMMARY QUIZ I 5

- I** Indicate whether the statements you hear about the text of the lesson are true or false. (5 pts.)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| C'est vrai. | | | | | |
| C'est faux. | | | | | |

- II** Jot down the numbers you hear, using figures. (5 pts.)

1-2. _____ francs _____.

3. Un billet de _____ francs.

4-5. Donnez-moi _____ pièces de _____ centimes, s'il vous plaît.

- III** Complete the answers to the questions you hear, providing the appropriate form of *aller* or *venir* and the correct combination of preposition and article. (10 pts.)

1. Elle _____ fac.

2. Je _____ bibliothèque.

3. Ils _____ Luxembourg.

4. Nous _____ cinéma.

5. Ils _____ Louvre.

- IV** Complete as appropriate. (5 pts.)

—C'est quand, la Fête Nationale aux Etats-Unis? En automne?

—Non, c'est _____ juillet.

—Ce n'est pas _____ Noël?

—Mais non, idiot, c'est _____ mois _____ juillet!

—C'est _____ 4 juillet.