



Audio Exercise 1: La Famille Lebrun

This audio recording was designed for beginners who wish to train their ear to the sounds of French and learn certain key verbs and rules of pronunciation.

In this story, we cover basic ER verbs as well as AVOIR, FAIRE and POUVOIR. We also look at the sounds of individual letters and “liaisons”.

1. General Understanding

Task: Listen to the text and make note of your answers. You will be able to self-correct when you read the full text in the present document. Youtube video link: https://youtu.be/Op_GORUkirA

1. Where does the family live?
2. How is the region described?
3. What can one do in Summer and Winter?
4. Is there a lack of activities?
5. How many people are there in the Lebrun Family?
6. What is the profession of the parents?
7. What is the advantage of their profession?
8. What are the ages of the children?
9. What is Elias' passion?
10. What does Maude like to do?

2. French Pronunciation and Grammar

Task: Listen to the story again. Answer the following questions:

1. What sound does “ill” do as in “famille” or “travail”?
2. What sound does **the letter A** make in French?
3. “A lot of mountains” - Do we say **beaucoup de** / beaucoup des?
4. “**Il y a**” - can you note 2 cases in which it is used in the text. Can you work out when we use it?
5. “**C'est**” is used in the text several times. When do we use it?
6. The verb “**Pouvoir**” is used twice = On peut / Ils peuvent. What could be its meaning ?
7. “**Deux**” is used twice in the text: Deux parents / Deux enfants. Can you hear a difference in the pronunciation of “deux”? Why is that?
8. **Liaisons:** Pay attention to the pronunciation of the following:
Dans un village / C'est une région / En hiver + En été / Deux enfants / Des événements / Ils ont un / Ils peuvent être / Les enfants / est un garçon / est une fille / Les ordinateurs.
9. The suffix “**tion**”: Note which sound it makes. Do you see the difference with English?
10. **Accents: é / è** - Can you see the change to the sound of the letter E that these accents create?

3. Full Text

La Famille Lebrun habite à Curé-la-Flûte, dans un village. Ils sont dans une région où il y a beaucoup de montagnes et de rivières. C'est la campagne. En hiver on peut faire des sports comme par exemple le ski. Et en été on peut se promener et faire des randonnées ou du vélo. Il y a toujours quelque chose à faire.

Il y a quatre personnes dans la famille: les deux parents et les deux enfants. Monsieur Lebrun s'appelle Jacques et travaille comme photographe. Madame Lebrun s'appelle Eveline et organise des événements touristiques dans la région. Ils ont un métier dans lequel ils peuvent être créatifs.

Les enfants Lebrun s'appellent Elias et Maude. Elias est un garçon qui a 14 ans et Maude est une fille qui a 12 ans. Elias a une passion, c'est le théâtre. Maude aime les ordinateurs et la programmation.

4. Answers to Part 2: Pronunciation and Grammar

1. “ill” creates a long “i” in which the “L” is not pronounced. Exceptions to this rule are: Le village / La ville / Tranquille / Mille.
2. The letter A always makes the sound same as in “Jack”. It can sometimes combine with another letter to make up a new sound but an “A” all alone is only linked to one sound in French.
3. **Beaucoup de montagnes**. Even if “beaucoup de” is followed by a plural word, we never say “beaucoup des”.
4. “Il y a des montagnes / Il y a toujours quelque chose à faire. Il y a is used when giving new information to someone. It is the equivalent of “There is”. For example, if we were to tell someone of the existence of a restaurant where we live we would say: “Il y a un restaurant”.
5. “C'est” is used when giving extra information about a thing whose existence has already been established. It is the equivalent of “It is”. When we learn about Elias' passion we then learn what it is: C'est le théâtre.
6. The verb “Pouvoir” is an irregular verb which is why it looks very different when used with “On” and with “Ils”. Pouvoir is used when expressing Permission or a Physical or mental ability. (P for Power and Permission!)
7. “Deux” is subject to the rules of liaison - as are the numbers 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 20. This means that they will be pronounced differently when placed in front of a consonant or vowel. The final letter will be silent in front of a consonant.
8. **Liaisons**: The French language adds sound between words that are not represented in writing. We add a “Z” after “Ils / Elles / Nous / Vous / Les / Des / Mes / Dans...” and the following vowel. Verbs don't follow this rule with a few exceptions such as Etre and Pouvoir.
9. The suffix “tion” is pronounced S.
10. **Accents: é / è** - An accent on an E can never be ignored in French ! It always changes the sound of that letter. Remember that an accent towards the Left makes the same “è” as in “left”.

