



Bonuses: English Story Translations

Companion Guide for Our Top-Rated Book on Amazon:
Short Stories in French for Beginner Learners

Full English translations for every story in the book

By MindSmith Books

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. The Job Interview	4
2. A Coffee in the Sun	7
3. The Saturday Market	10
4. The Train to Bordeaux	13
5. Dinner at a Friends' House	17
6. The Local Bakery	21
7. The Yoga Class	25
8. A Phone Call with Grandma	29
9. A Night Without Electricity	33
10. First Day at Work	37
11. A Sunday in the Park	43
12. At the Pharmacy	48
13. The Garage Sale	53
14. At the Library	58
15. A Hairdresser Appointment	63
Thank You & What's Next?	68

Introduction

Welcome to your *French Short Stories - Complete English Translations* guide!

You've been enjoying our French short stories book – thanks for making us a small part of your French language-learning journey. These complete English translations are designed to be a companion for the original book, helping you unlock every detail, cultural reference, and linguistic nuance from the 15 engaging stories you've been reading.

We know that sometimes you might translations to fully digest some parts of the book, confirm your understanding, or just to satisfy your curiosity about a particular phrase. That's exactly why we created this comprehensive translation guide – **so you can learn with confidence and never feel stuck.**

Each section contains the complete English translations of the stories, plus all the comprehension questions translated as well, maintaining the same formatting and structure as your French book, to make it easy to refer back.

How to Use This Translation Guide

- **Read the French first** – always attempt to understand the story in French before checking the translation (in the original book!). Look up specific sentences or paragraphs rather than reading the entire English version.
- **Check your comprehension** – after reading in French, you can then double-check your understanding in English
- **Learn cultural context** – use the translations to understand French cultural references and expressions that might not be obvious
- **Review the vocabulary** – compare how French expressions translate into natural English

Important Note: These translations are meant to support, not replace, your French reading practice. The magic happens when you read in French first, then use these translations to confirm, clarify, and deepen your understanding.

This guide pairs perfectly with your main French stories book – keep them together and use this translation guide whenever you need an extra boost.

Gracias!

– *The MindSmith Books Team*

1. The Job Interview

Camille lives in Lyon. She is twenty-three years old and has been a **graduate** from university for three months. Today is an important day for her. She has a **job interview** at 2:30 PM in a downtown company called "Digital Innovations."

It's 7:30 in the morning. Camille wakes up and **gets ready** for this special day. She takes a shower and chooses professional **clothes**: black pants, a white shirt, and a blue jacket. She **puts on makeup** a little, but not too much. In France, it's important to have a natural and **neat** appearance for an interview.

"I'm very nervous," she says to her cat, Oscar.

Oscar meows and **rubs** against her **legs**.

"You're right, Oscar. I must stay calm."

Camille has her **breakfast**: coffee and **toast**. Then, she looks at her CV and the company information one more time.

How am I going to answer the difficult questions? she thinks.

She decides to call her friend Sophie to **practice**.

"Hello Sophie, it's Camille. Do you have a moment to help me **prepare** for my interview?"

"Of course!" Sophie responds. "I'll ask you questions like a recruiter."

For an hour, Sophie asks Camille questions.

"**Introduce yourself**, please."

"Why do you want to **work** in our company?"

"What are your **skills**?"

Sophie uses the formal "vous" and not the informal "tu," as in a professional situation in France. It's very important to use "vous" with people you don't know, especially in a professional context.

"Very good, Camille," Sophie says at the end of the practice. "You're **ready**!"

"Thank you so much for your **help**," Camille responds.

It's now 1:00 PM. Camille decides to leave **early** for her interview. In France, **punctuality** is very important. Arriving **late** to a job interview makes a very bad impression.

She takes the metro and arrives in front of the company **building** at 2:00 PM. She still has thirty minutes before the interview. She enters a café near the company and **reviews** her notes one more time.

At 2:15 PM, she enters the company building and introduces herself at **reception**.

"Hello," she says to the receptionist. "My name is Camille Dubois and I have an **appointment** with Mr. Moreau at 2:30 PM."

"Hello, Miss Dubois. I'll **notify** Mr. Moreau of your arrival. You can **sit down** in the **waiting room**, over there."

Camille sits down and breathes deeply. At exactly 2:30 PM, a man of about forty arrives.

"Miss Dubois? Hello, I'm Pierre Moreau, the human resources manager. **Follow me**, please."

They enter a small office. Mr. Moreau **smiles** and indicates a chair to Camille.

"Sit down, please. Would you like coffee or a glass of water?"

"A glass of water, please," Camille responds.

The interview **begins**. Mr. Moreau asks questions about Camille's studies, her experiences, and her motivations.

At first, Camille is very nervous. She **stammers** a little. But after a few minutes, she feels more at ease. She answers the questions clearly and shows her interest in the **position**.

"Why do you want to work at Digital Innovations?" asks Mr. Moreau.

"I admire your company for its innovation and values. I think my skills in digital communication can be **useful** for your **team**."

Mr. Moreau seems **impressed**. He smiles and takes notes.

At the end of the interview, he says:

"Thank you, Miss Dubois. Your **application** is very interesting. We still have a few people to see this week. We will **contact** you by phone or email **next week** to give you our answer."

Camille stands up and **shakes hands** with Mr. Moreau.

"Thank you very much for this interview, sir. I remain at your disposal if you need additional information."

Camille leaves the building with a big smile. She's not sure about getting the position, but she's **proud** of herself. Her first job interview in French **went well!**

She immediately calls Sophie.

"So?" Sophie asks.

"It was stressful, but I think it went well!" Camille responds. "I'll **tell** you everything tonight over a drink!"

Comprehension Check

1. How old is Camille?
a) 20 years old b) 23 years old c) 25 years old d) 30 years old
2. In which city does Camille live?
a) Paris b) Marseille c) Lyon d) Bordeaux
3. How does Camille practice for the interview?
a) She watches videos on the Internet b) She practices with her cat Oscar c) She calls the company d) She practices with her friend Sophie
4. Why is it important to arrive early for an interview in France?
a) To have time to drink coffee b) Because punctuality is very important c) To meet other candidates d) To visit the company before the interview
5. What does Camille propose to Sophie at the end of the story?

a) To help her with her own interview b) To tell her everything over a drink c) To work together in the same company d) To meet Mr. Moreau

Answers: 1.b, 2.c, 3.d, 4.b, 5.b

2. A Coffee in the Sun

It's 3:30 PM in Aix-en-Provence. The sun is shining and the temperature is perfect: neither too hot nor too cold. Luc, a 34-year-old graphic designer, **leaves his office** to take a **coffee break**. He has been working since six o'clock this morning and needs to breathe some fresh air.

He walks through the small **streets** of the historic center. The golden-colored **stone** buildings shine under the sun. Aix-en-Provence is a magnificent **city**, especially in spring. Luc looks for a café with a **terrace** in the sun. In France, sitting on a terrace is almost an art of living, especially in the south.

After a few minutes, he finds a small café with several **available** tables **outside**. He sits at a table for two people and looks around him. There are **a lot of people** today: tourists with their cameras, students with their books, elderly people who **talk comfortably**.

A waiter approaches his table.

"Hello sir, what would you like?" the waiter asks with a smile.

"Hello, I would like an **espresso**, please," Luc responds.

In France, an "espresso" is a small black coffee, very **strong**. It's the typical way to order a simple coffee.

"**Right away**, sir," says the waiter before leaving.

Luc takes out his phone to check his messages, but he changes his mind. No, not now. This break is a moment for him, to **relax** and observe life around him. It's a very French habit to sit on a café terrace and simply watch people passing by.

Luc observes a couple of tourists trying to read a city map. They **seem lost**. Two tables away, a woman reads a book and takes notes. A man walks his dog, a small white **poodle**, very elegant.

The waiter returns with Luc's coffee and a small glass of water.

"Here's your coffee, sir. **Be careful**, the cup is hot."

"Thank you very much."

The waiter stays a moment **near** the table.

"**What beautiful weather** today, isn't it?" he says looking at the sky.

"Yes, it's true. It's a perfect day for coffee on the terrace," Luc responds.

"The **weather forecast** announces beautiful weather all week. We're lucky!"

"Excellent! I'll come back tomorrow then," says Luc, smiling.

This little conversation about the weather is very typical in French cafés. It's a simple and pleasant way to create a social connection. The waiter smiles and goes to **take care of** other customers.

Luc **savors** his coffee. It's strong and perfectly prepared. In France, you don't drink coffee **quickly**. You take time to appreciate it, it's a moment of **pleasure**. Luc watches people walking past the café. A young woman with an elegant **hair bun** catches his attention. She wears a blue dress and **walks confidently**.

A group of high school students passes in front of the café. They laugh loudly and talk about their teachers. An old lady walks her little dog and **greet**s the waiter. She's probably a **regular customer** of the café.

Luc likes these moments of observation. Daily life in France is full of interesting little details. **He's not in a hurry**. In France, having coffee can last five minutes or an hour, depending on your mood and available time. No one asks you to leave, even if you finished your **drink** a long time ago.

After twenty minutes, Luc has finished his coffee. He signals to the waiter to ask for **the bill**.

"I'll bring that right away, sir," says the waiter.

A few moments later, the waiter returns with a small **tray**. There's a ticket on the tray.

"That's 2 euros 50, please."

Luc takes out his **wallet** and gives 3 euros to the waiter.

"**Keep the change**," he says.

"Thank you very much, sir. **Have a nice day!**"

"You too, goodbye."

Luc stands up and leaves the café. He feels **refreshed** and in a good mood. This little break did him a lot of good. He walks slowly toward his office, still enjoying the sun and the lively atmosphere of the city.

This coffee break was exactly what I needed, he thinks. Sometimes, the simplest moments are the best.

He returns to his office with a smile on his lips, ready to **resume** his work with new energy. This little break at the café is perhaps the best moment of his day.

Comprehension Check

1. Where is Luc at the beginning of the story?
a) At the beach b) In his office c) At the café d) At home
2. What type of coffee does Luc order?
a) Coffee with milk b) A cappuccino c) An espresso d) An American coffee
3. What does Luc talk about with the waiter?
a) Politics b) The weather c) Sports d) His work
4. How long does Luc stay at the café?
a) Five minutes b) Ten minutes c) Fifteen minutes d) Twenty minutes
5. How does Luc feel after his coffee break?
a) Tired b) Stressed c) Refreshed d) Bored

3. The Saturday Market

It's nine o'clock in the morning in Annecy, a beautiful city near a lake in the French Alps. It's Saturday and Sophie is getting ready with her partner, Paul, to go to the market. The Saturday market is an important tradition in France.

"Do you have the **shopping** list?" Paul asks while looking for his keys.

"Yes," Sophie responds. "We need fresh **vegetables**, cheese, and bread. I also want to buy flowers for the house."

Sophie and Paul live five minutes **on foot** from the market. They take a **basket** and a **cloth** bag to put their purchases. In France, many people use baskets or reusable **bags** to do their shopping at the market.

They arrive at the market at 9:15 AM. It's already very lively! There are many people walking between the **stalls**. Colors and smells are everywhere: green and red vegetables, fresh bread, cheeses, flowers...

"Let's go buy vegetables first," Sophie suggests.

They approach a stall with many fresh vegetables. A woman of about fifty **welcomes** them with a smile.

"Hello!" she says. "Are you looking for something in particular?"

"Hello!" Sophie responds. "We want to make **ratatouille** tonight. What do you **recommend**?"

The vendor shows different vegetables on her stall.

"For a good ratatouille, you need **eggplants, zucchini, bell peppers**, and tomatoes. I have all that, and it's **in season**!"

Seasonal products are important for the French. They prefer to eat fruits and vegetables from the current season, not products imported from other countries.

"Do these vegetables come from your **farm**?" Paul asks, interested.

"Yes, from our family farm 20 kilometers from here. Everything is grown without chemicals."

"Perfect!" says Sophie. "So, we would like two eggplants, three zucchini, two red bell peppers, and one kilo of tomatoes, please."

The vendor takes a **paper bag** and begins to select the vegetables. She puts them on a small **scale** to weigh them.

"The tomatoes, that's exactly one kilo!" she says. "For the eggplants, zucchini, and bell peppers, that's 7 euros 50 in total."

"Perfect, we'll take them," says Paul. "Do you also have **garlic** and onions?"

"Of course," the vendor responds. "Here they are."

Paul and Sophie also buy two onions and three **cloves** of garlic. They pay and put their vegetables in their basket.

"Thank you very much and have a good day!" says the vendor.

"Thank you, you too!" they respond.

Now, Sophie and Paul go to buy cheese. They head toward a stall with many different cheeses. There's a small **queue**, but it moves quickly.

The man behind the stall wears a white **coat**. He's a **cheese maker**, a cheese specialist.

"Hello, what can I serve you today?" he asks when it's their **turn**.

"Hello!" says Sophie. "We're looking for a good cheese for tonight, with some bread and red wine. Do you have a suggestion?"

The cheese maker smiles. He likes when customers ask him for advice.

"Of course! To accompany a good red wine, I recommend this **Reblochon**. It's a cheese from our region, mild and creamy. Would you like to **taste**?"

In France, it's normal to **taste** a small piece of cheese before buying. It's a tradition.

"Yes, with pleasure!" says Paul.

The cheese maker cuts two small pieces of Reblochon and hands them to Sophie and Paul. They taste the cheese.

"Mmm, it's delicious!" says Sophie. "We'll take a Reblochon, please."

"Excellent idea," says the cheese maker. "And with that? A little **Comté** perhaps? It's a stronger cheese, perfect for a cheese **platter**."

Sophie and Paul look at each other and **nod**.

"Agreed for the Comté too," says Paul. "A small portion, please."

The cheese maker takes a large piece of Comté and cuts a small portion.

"**How much** is that?" Sophie asks.

"The Reblochon costs 8 euros, and this portion of Comté is 5 euros. That's 13 euros in total."

Paul pays and they continue their **tour of the market**. They then buy a **traditional baguette** in a small **bakery** next to the market. The traditional baguette is made with a special recipe and is often more **crispy** than the normal baguette.

Finally, they stop in front of a flower stall. Sophie chooses a bouquet of seasonal flowers: pink peonies, her favorites.

"These peonies **smell good**," she says while breathing their perfume. "They'll be perfect on our table tonight."

It's now 10:30 AM. Sophie and Paul have finished their shopping. Their basket is full of fresh products: vegetables, cheeses, bread, and flowers.

"It was a good market today," says Paul with satisfaction.

"Yes," Sophie responds. "I love shopping at the market. It's always a pleasure to talk with the producers and find fresh and seasonal products."

They return home, happy with their purchases and ready to prepare a delicious dinner with their ratatouille, fresh bread, and cheeses.

Comprehension Check

1. In which city does this story take place?

a) Paris b) Lyon c) Annecy d) Nice

2. What dish do Sophie and Paul want to prepare?

a) A soup b) A ratatouille c) A quiche d) A gratin

3. Why are seasonal products important for the French?

a) They are cheaper b) They are easier to cook c) They prefer local and seasonal products d) They don't like imported vegetables

4. What does the cheese maker do before Sophie and Paul buy the cheese?

a) He gives them a small piece to taste b) He shows them how to cut the cheese c) He explains the history of the cheese d) He offers them a glass of wine

5. What flowers does Sophie buy?

a) Roses b) Tulips c) Peonies d) Daisies

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.c, 4.a, 5.c

4. The Train to Bordeaux

Hannah looks at her **watch** with worry. She is **Irish** and has been traveling in France for two weeks. Her train to Bordeaux leaves in forty minutes, and she can't find the right **platform** in this immense **station** of Montparnasse.

The **display boards** above her show so much information! **Travelers** walk quickly with their **luggage**, and the announcements in the **loudspeakers** are difficult for Hannah to understand.

Where is my train? she thinks. *There are so many trains and everything is in French!*

She looks for "Bordeaux" on the board, but she can't find her train. She starts to become **worried**. There are only thirty-eight minutes left before departure.

She decides to ask for help. She sees a man in a blue uniform with the SNCF logo. He's an agent from the train company.

"Excuse me, sir," says Hannah with her Irish accent. "I'm looking for the train to Bordeaux, at 10:23 AM."

The agent smiles and looks at his watch.

"Ah, the train to Bordeaux. Do you have a **ticket**?"

"Yes," Hannah responds, taking out her electronic ticket on her phone.

The agent looks at Hannah's phone.

"Your train is at **platform** number 12. It's a **TGV**. Do you know what the TGV is?"

Hannah knows the TGV. It's the "Train à Grande Vitesse," the French high-speed train.

"Yes, I know. Thank you very much. How can I find platform 12?"

"**Follow me**, I'll show you," the agent says kindly. "**This way**, please."

Hannah follows the agent through the station. They pass stores, cafés, and a **terminal** to **validate** tickets.

"There, platform 12 is right there, on the right," says the agent. "You still have thirty minutes before departure. Have a good trip to Bordeaux!"

"Thank you so much for your help," Hannah says gratefully.

Hannah heads toward platform 12. There are already people waiting, but no train. She goes to a small café to buy coffee and a croissant.

Suddenly, she hears an announcement:

"Attention, travelers for TGV number 8453 to Bordeaux. Due to a technical incident, the train departs from platform 7 and not platform 12. I repeat, the TGV to Bordeaux departs from platform 7. We apologize for this **last-minute change**."

Hannah doesn't understand the entire announcement, but she hears "Bordeaux" and "platform 7."

She approaches a woman who is also waiting.

"Excuse me, madam. Is the train to Bordeaux at a different platform now?"

"Yes," the woman responds. "There's a change. The train to Bordeaux now departs from platform 7, not platform 12. It's a bit **annoying**, but that's how it is."

"Oh, thank you very much! I didn't understand the whole announcement."

"You're welcome. You're not French?"

"No, I'm Irish. I'm traveling in France for two weeks."

"Come, I'm also going to Bordeaux. We can go there **together**."

"That's very kind, thank you!"

Hannah follows the woman, whose name is Marie, to platform 7. They arrive just in time. The train is already there, and the doors are open. The TGV is long, modern, and very elegant.

Hannah looks at her electronic ticket to find her **seat**.

"I'm in **car** 8, seat 42," she tells Marie.

"Me, I'm in car 9. We're almost **neighbors!**" Marie responds with a smile. "The cars are **numbered** on the doors, over there."

They board the train and look for their seats. Hannah finds car 8 and her seat number 42. She puts her suitcase in the **luggage space** above the seats and sits down.

At exactly 10:23 AM, the train starts to move. Trains in France are generally on time, except in case of **strikes** or major technical problems.

After a few minutes, a woman passes with a **cart** of **food** and drinks.

"Hello, would you like something?" she asks Hannah.

"A coffee, please," Hannah responds.

Hannah pays and takes her coffee. She looks out the window. The train is going very fast now, and the French landscape **passes by** quickly: green **fields**, small towns, forests...

After thirty minutes, Marie comes to see her.

"Everything okay?" Marie asks. "Are you comfortable?"

"Yes, very well, thank you. I love this train, it's so fast and comfortable!"

"Yes, the TGV is a French **pride**," says Marie, smiling.

"Are you going to Bordeaux for vacation?" Marie asks.

"Yes, I'm going to visit the city and the region. I heard that Bordeaux wines are excellent."

"Oh yes! Bordeaux is **renowned** for its wines. Are you going to visit **vineyards**?"

"Yes, I've reserved a wine **tasting** for tomorrow. I'm very enthusiastic!"

"Excellent choice! I can recommend some good vineyards if you want."

"That would be wonderful, thank you!"

Marie sits next to Hannah, and they talk about Bordeaux wines for the rest of the trip. Marie explains the different wine regions around Bordeaux: Saint-Émilion, Médoc, Graves...

Three hours later, the train arrives at Bordeaux Saint-Jean station. Hannah is surprised by the speed of the journey.

"Are we already here?" she asks Marie.

"Yes, that's the TGV!" Marie responds, laughing. "Three hours from Paris to Bordeaux, that's fast, isn't it?"

"Very fast! In Ireland, this journey would take much longer."

Hannah and Marie get off the train together. They exchange phone numbers on the platform.

"If you need **advice** during your stay in Bordeaux, don't hesitate to call me," says Marie.

"Thank you very much for your help and for this interesting conversation about wines," Hannah responds.

Hannah leaves the station with her suitcase, happy to have met Marie and to have arrived in Bordeaux without problems, despite the platform change. Her French adventure continues!

Comprehension Check

1. What country is Hannah from?
a) England b) France c) Ireland d) Scotland
2. Why doesn't Hannah find her train at the beginning?
a) She arrived at the wrong station b) Her train is cancelled c) She doesn't speak French well d) She's looking at the wrong boards
3. What is the problem with Hannah's train?
a) It's late b) It changes platforms c) It's full d) It's broken
4. What do Hannah and Marie discuss during the trip?
a) French cuisine b) Bordeaux monuments c) Wines and vineyards d) French politics
5. How long does the journey from Paris to Bordeaux by TGV take?
a) Two hours b) Three hours c) Four hours d) Five hours

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

5. Dinner at a Friends' House

Noah adjusts his tie in front of the mirror. He is American and works as an English language assistant in a high school in Lille, in northern France. He has been in France for two months and tonight, he has a special invitation: his French colleague, Élodie, invites him to dinner at her place.

Noah is happy, but also a bit nervous. It's the first time he's going to have dinner at French people's home. He doesn't know French **customs** well for this type of situation.

What should I bring? he wonders. Should I arrive exactly on time?

He decides to do a little research on the internet. He discovers that in France, it's common to bring something when you're invited to dinner: a **bottle of wine**, flowers, or a dessert.

It's 5 PM and dinner is at 7:30 PM. He decides to go to a good **wine shop** near his home.

In the wine shop, Noah looks at the bottles. There are so many! Red wines, white wines, wines from all regions of France...

An employee approaches him.

"Hello sir, can I help you?" she asks.

"Hello," Noah responds. "I'm looking for a bottle of wine for dinner at friends' tonight."

"Do you know what they're going to serve as the **main dish**?"

"I think Élodie mentioned a typical dish from the North."

"In that case, I recommend a good red wine from the region. It **pairs well** with Northern cuisine. This bottle costs 15 euros."

"Perfect, thank you very much," says Noah. "I'll take this bottle."

At 7:25 PM, Noah arrives at Élodie's. She lives in a beautiful apartment with high **ceilings**. In France, it's good to arrive a few minutes after the indicated time, but not too late.

Noah rings the doorbell. Élodie opens with a big smile.

"Noah! **Welcome!** Come in, please."

"Good evening, Élodie. Thank you for the invitation. I brought a bottle of wine," says Noah, offering his **gift**.

"Oh, thank you very much! Come in, I'll introduce you to my husband and our friends."

Noah enters the apartment. There are already three people in the living room: a man of about 35 years old and a couple.

"Noah, let me introduce my husband, Thomas."

"**Pleased to meet you**," says Noah **shaking hands** with Thomas.

"**Likewise**," Thomas responds with a warm smile.

"And here are our friends, Mathilde and Julien," Élodie continues.

Noah also shakes hands with Mathilde and Julien. In France, people shake hands when meeting someone for the first time in a formal context.

"Sit down," says Élodie. "Thomas is going to open a bottle for the **aperitif**."

The aperitif is an important French tradition: it's a moment before the meal when you have a drink and eat small things to **nibble**. Thomas brings a bottle of champagne and glasses.

"**Cheers!**" he says, raising his glass.

"Cheers!" the others respond.

In France, people often say "santé" when they **toast**.

During the aperitif, Noah talks about his experience in France and his work at the high school.

"So, Noah, how do you like life in Lille?" Julien asks.

"I like it a lot. People are very **welcoming**, and I'm trying to discover the local cuisine."

"Have you tried **welsh**?" Mathilde asks.

"Not yet. What is it?"

"It's a typical dish from the North," Mathilde explains. "It's bread with ham, covered with melted cheddar and beer. It's very **hearty!**"

"It sounds delicious! I'd like to try it."

After the aperitif, Élodie stands up.

"Dinner is ready. Let's go to the table!"

The table is nicely set with a beautiful **tablecloth**, candles, and pretty **cutlery**.

"I prepared a **Flemish carbonade**," says Élodie. "It's a typical dish from the North: beef stewed with beer and onions."

"It smells very good!" Noah responds.

The meal begins with a starter: a warm **goat cheese** salad. Then comes the main course, the Flemish carbonade, served with homemade fries. Noah tastes the carbonade.

"It's **delicious!**" he says sincerely. "The flavors are **incredible.**"

"Thank you," says Élodie. "It's my grandmother's **recipe.**"

Noah notices that the French take their time to eat. The meal isn't just for nourishment, it's also an important social moment.

After the main course, Thomas brings a **platter** of cheeses.

"Do you like cheese, Noah?" Thomas asks.

"Yes, very much! There are so many different cheeses in France."

In France, cheese is often served after the main course and before dessert.

Finally, Élodie brings dessert: an apple tart **made at home**.

"It's excellent!" says Noah. "You're a very good **cook**, Élodie."

The meal ends with coffee. It's already 11 PM, and Noah realizes that dinner lasted more than three hours. In France, meals with friends are often long.

At midnight, Noah decides it's time to leave.

"Thank you very much for this **wonderful** dinner," he says. "I had an excellent evening."

"It was a pleasure to have you with us," Élodie responds. "We must **do this again** soon."

Noah leaves the apartment with a big smile. His first experience of dinner at French people's home was a success! He learned a lot about French customs at the table and had a very nice evening.

Comprehension Check

1. What is Noah's nationality?
a) French b) Belgian c) English d) American
2. What gift does Noah bring for dinner?
a) Flowers b) A dessert c) A bottle of wine d) Chocolate
3. What is the main dish served during dinner?
a) Coq au vin b) Flemish carbonade c) Welsh d) Beef bourguignon
4. What is served between the main course and dessert in France?
a) A salad b) Cheese c) Sorbet d) Fruit
5. How long does dinner approximately last?
a) One hour b) Two hours c) Three hours d) More than three hours

Answers: 1.d, 2.c, 3.b, 4.b, 5.d

6. The Local Bakery

Marc wakes up at 7:30 AM like every morning in his Marseille apartment. He is 45 years old and teaches history. His **morning routine** is always the same: buy a fresh baguette at the **bakery** on the corner of his street.

He lives in the Panier district, a historic neighborhood in Marseille with **narrow streets** and colorful houses. His favorite bakery is called "Aux Délices du Panier" and is located three minutes away on foot.

At 8 AM, Marc leaves his apartment. He walks through the small streets and **greet**s some **neighbors**. In France, bakeries open very early so people can buy fresh bread for **breakfast**.

Marc enters the bakery. There's a good smell of warm bread and **pastries**. The shop is small but welcoming, with a large **counter** where bread and pastries are displayed. Behind the counter, you can see the **bakery workshop**, the place where the baker makes the bread.

There are already several customers **queuing up**. An elderly lady in front of Marc buys a baguette and **whole wheat bread**.

"Will that be all?" the saleswoman asks.

"Yes, thank you. How much is that?" the lady responds.

"3 euros 40, please."

Now, it's Marc's **turn**. But today, there's a new saleswoman he doesn't recognize. She's a young woman of about 25 years old with a friendly smile.

"Good morning, sir," she says. "What can I serve you?"

"Good morning, miss. One baguette, please," Marc responds.

Marc has been buying a baguette every morning for five years. The usual saleswomen **know by heart** his order.

The saleswoman takes a baguette and puts it in a paper bag. Then, she also takes a **pain au chocolat** and puts it in the same bag.

"One baguette and one pain au chocolat, that's 2 euros 90," she says.

Marc is surprised. He didn't ask for a pain au chocolat.

"Excuse me, but I didn't ask for a pain au chocolat," Marc says kindly.

The saleswoman **blushes** a little.

"Oh, sorry! I **misheard**. I'm sorry."

"It's not serious," Marc responds with a smile. "Actually, I never have pain au chocolat in the morning..."

He hesitates for a moment. He looks at the pain au chocolat in the bag. It looks delicious, with its golden pastry and chocolate that **sticks out** a little.

"You know what? I'll take it anyway. I feel like changing my habits today."

"Really?" says the saleswoman, relieved. "That's a good idea! Our pains au chocolat are delicious. They're **homemade**, with real dark chocolate."

"In that case, I'm curious to taste it," says Marc.

Marc gives 3 euros to the saleswoman.

"**Keep the change**," he says.

"Thank you very much, sir. **Enjoy your food** and have a good day!"

Marc leaves the bakery with his bag. He decides to taste the pain au chocolat immediately. He sits on a small **bench** in a square near the bakery.

He takes a **bite**. The pastry is **crispy** on the outside and soft on the inside. The chocolate is rich and melting.

It's really delicious! Marc thinks. *Why have I never tried pains au chocolat before?*

The next morning, Marc returns to the bakery. This time, the new saleswoman recognizes him.

"Good morning, sir. One baguette and one pain au chocolat, like yesterday?" she asks with a smile.

Marc smiles too.

"Good morning. Actually, today, I would like one baguette and TWO pains au chocolat, please. One for my breakfast and one for later."

"Excellent choice!" the saleswoman responds. "Was it good, then?"

"Really delicious. The best pain au chocolat I've eaten **in a long time**."

The following days, Marc continues to buy a baguette and at least one pain au chocolat every morning. It has become his new routine. The saleswoman, whose name is Léa, recommends other specialties from the bakery: **almond croissants, raisin pastries, choux pastries...**

One morning, Marc enters the bakery and sees the usual saleswoman, Mrs. Martin, who has been working there for years.

"Good morning, Marc!" she says. "The same as usual? One baguette?"

Marc smiles.

"Good morning, Mrs. Martin. No, not today. One baguette and two pains au chocolat, please."

Mrs. Martin is surprised.

"Pains au chocolat? That's new!"

"Yes, I discovered that I love the pains au chocolat from your bakery. They're excellent."

"I'm happy that you like them! It's **my husband** who makes them. It's our **specialty**."

Marc pays for his purchases and leaves the bakery with a big smile. A simple **mistake** in an order has changed his morning routine, and he's very happy about it.

This little story shows the importance of bakeries in **daily life** in France. It's more than just a place to buy bread. It's a place where you exchange a few words with the baker, where you can discover new **flavors**, and where you participate in a very important French tradition: eating good fresh bread every day.

Comprehension Check

1. In which city does Marc live?
a) Paris b) Lyon c) Marseille d) Nice
2. What does Marc normally buy at the bakery?
a) A croissant b) A baguette c) Whole wheat bread d) Raisin pastries
3. Why does the saleswoman give Marc a pain au chocolat?
a) It's a special promotion b) She wants to please him c) She misheard his order d) It's her first day at work
4. How does Marc react when he tastes the pain au chocolat?
a) He finds it too sweet b) He doesn't like chocolate c) He finds it delicious d) He prefers his baguette
5. What does this story show about bakeries in France?
a) They are too expensive b) They open too late c) They are important in daily life d) They only sell bread

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.c, 4.c, 5.c

7. The Yoga Class

Claire has just **moved** to Nantes for a new job. She is 28 years old and doesn't know many people in this city yet. To **meet** people and continue an activity she likes, she decides to sign up for a **yoga class**.

She finds a studio near her home called "Harmony and Well-being." On the website, she sees that there's a class for **beginners** on Wednesday evening. Claire isn't really a beginner—she has been practicing yoga for two years—but she thinks this class is perfect to start.

Claire **sends** an email to the studio to register. An hour later, she receives a positive response: there's a place for her in Wednesday's class at 6:30 PM.

Wednesday arrives, and Claire is a bit **nervous**. She prepares her **yoga mat** and a water bottle. She dresses in comfortable **clothes**: black leggings and a blue t-shirt.

At 6:15 PM, she arrives at the studio. It's a calm and bright space, with white walls and green plants. There's a pleasant **smell** of essential oils.

A woman of about 40 years old welcomes her with a smile.

"Good evening and welcome," she says.

"Good evening," Claire responds. "I'm new here. My name is Claire."

"Nice to meet you, Claire. I'm Isabelle, the yoga teacher. Have you practiced yoga before?"

"Yes, for about two years, but it's the first time in this studio."

"Perfect! You'll adapt well. You can put your mat over there."

Claire sets up her mat and sits down. She observes the other people: there are women and men of different ages.

At exactly 6:30 PM, Isabelle enters the room and the class begins.

"Good evening everyone," she says. "Get comfortable on your mats and **close your eyes**. Let's begin with some **deep breaths**."

Claire closes her eyes and breathes deeply. She already feels calmer.

After a few minutes, Isabelle continues:

"Now, we're going to do some simple postures to **warm up**. **Raise your arms** above your head, **stretch** your body..."

Claire follows the instructions. She understands most of the words, but she also watches what the others do.

"Now, put your hands on the mat and **extend** your legs behind you for the downward-facing dog posture."

Claire knows this posture. She learns yoga vocabulary in French: the **knee**, the **arm**, the **back**, the head, the foot, the hand...

The class continues with different postures. Isabelle gives clear instructions.

After 45 minutes of exercises, it's time for the final relaxation. Everyone lies on their back, eyes closed.

"**Relax** all the muscles in your body," Isabelle says in a soft voice. "Feel your breathing, calm and regular."

Claire feels very good. At the end of the relaxation, Isabelle says softly:

"You can open your eyes when you're ready."

Claire opens her eyes and stretches.

"Thank you all for this beautiful class," says Isabelle. "Namaste."

"Namaste," the students respond.

Isabelle approaches Claire.

"So, Claire, how did you find this first class?"

"It was very good!" Claire responds. "I loved the **atmosphere** of the studio."

"Thank you! Are you coming back next week?"

"Yes, absolutely!"

"Excellent. By the way, after class, we often have **herbal tea** together in the **reception room**. Do you want to join us?"

"With pleasure," Claire responds.

Claire follows Isabelle to the reception room. Four other people from the class are already there. Isabelle makes the introductions:

"Here's Claire, who joined our class today. Claire, let me introduce you to Marie, Thomas, Sophie, and Lucas."

"Hello everyone," says Claire.

"Welcome Claire," says Marie. "Do you live in the neighborhood?"

"Yes, ten minutes on foot from here. I just moved to Nantes for my work."

"What do you do for work?" Sophie asks.

"I work in a graphic design company, as an illustrator."

"Oh, that's interesting!" Thomas exclaims. "I'm a photographer, we're almost colleagues!"

Isabelle returns with a tray and cups.

"I prepared **verbena** herbal tea and another with thyme. Help yourselves!"

Claire takes a cup of verbena tea and continues to chat. She learns that Marie is a teacher, Sophie works in a bookstore, and Lucas is an engineer.

"There's a very good organic restaurant near here," says Sophie. "We could go there together one day, if you want?"

"That would be great!" Claire responds.

"We also organize **outings** together sometimes," Lucas adds. "Last month, we went on a **hike** near the sea."

"I'd love to participate next time," says Claire.

The conversation continues for an hour. At 8:30 PM, they separate.

"See you next week, Claire!" says Marie.

"Sophie and I are going to the organic restaurant Friday evening," says Thomas. "Do you want to come with us?"

"Yes, with pleasure!" Claire responds.

Claire returns home with a big smile. She not only had an excellent yoga class, but she also met interesting people. She **feels less lonely** in this new city.

The yoga class was an excellent idea, she thinks. It's a good way to meet people who share the same interests.

Comprehension Check

1. Why does Claire sign up for a yoga class?
 - a) To lose weight
 - b) To learn French
 - c) To meet people in her new city
 - d) Because her doctor advised it
2. How long has Claire been practicing yoga?
 - a) She has never practiced
 - b) For six months
 - c) For two years
 - d) For ten years
3. What does Claire learn during the yoga class?
 - a) Cooking recipes
 - b) French vocabulary related to the body
 - c) The history of yoga
 - d) Advanced meditation techniques
4. What do the participants do after the yoga class?
 - a) They immediately go home
 - b) They go to a restaurant
 - c) They share herbal tea together
 - d) They do another sports class
5. What invitation does Claire receive at the end of the story?
 - a) An invitation to a wedding
 - b) An invitation to dinner at an organic restaurant
 - c) An invitation to teach a yoga class
 - d) An invitation to visit a museum

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

8. A Phone Call with Grandma

Élise smiles while looking at her phone. She has just come home after an exceptional work day. She lives in a small apartment in Montrouge, in the Parisian **suburbs**. Today, she has excellent news to share: she got a **promotion** at her company!

The first person she wants to call is her **grandmother**, Grandma Suzanne. Élise is very close to her grandmother, who lives in Lyon. They call each other at least once a week to **catch up** with each other.

Élise settles on her **sofa** and dials the number. After three **rings**, Grandma Suzanne **picks up**.

"Hello?" says Grandma Suzanne's warm voice.

"Hello, Grandma? It's Élise!" she responds enthusiastically.

"Élise, my dear! How are you?"

"I'm very well, Grandma. And you?"

"I'm fine, thank you. I just finished **gardening**. The tomatoes are starting to **grow**, and I planted strawberries too. Your grandfather is taking care of the **zucchini** this year."

"That's great! Does Grandpa still have a **green thumb**?"

"Yes, always! You know how he is with his vegetables. He even talks to them!"

Élise laughs. Her grandfather is known for his passion for gardening.

"Grandma, I have big news to tell you," Élise says excitedly.

"Oh, **tell me** everything! I'm listening."

"I got the promotion I told you about! Starting next month, I'll be the new assistant director of the marketing department!"

"Oh, my dear, that's **wonderful**!" Grandma Suzanne exclaims. "I'm so **proud** of you! You worked hard for this."

"Thank you, Grandma. The work will be more **difficult**, but also more interesting. And there's a salary **raise** too!"

"You **deserve** it, my granddaughter. You've always been **hardworking** and intelligent."

Élise smiles. Her grandmother has always been her greatest **support**.

"And how is your new **boss**?" Grandma Suzanne asks.

"Mr. Lemoine is very professional and nice. He told me he had confidence in my **skills**."

"It's important to have a good boss. So, are you going to **celebrate** your promotion?"

"Yes, I thought... maybe I could come to Lyon next weekend to celebrate with you?"

"Oh, that would be **wonderful!**" Grandma Suzanne exclaims. "Your grandfather will be **delighted**. And I'm going to prepare your favorite dish."

"Your **ratatouille**?" Élise asks hopefully.

"Of course! And also a chocolate **cake**."

"Nobody makes chocolate cake as good as yours."

Grandma Suzanne laughs softly.

"I have a new **recipe** I want to try. My neighbor gave it to me. It's a chocolate cake with a touch of orange."

"That sounds delicious! I can't wait to taste it."

"And don't **forget** to bring a warm sweater. The evenings are still cool in Lyon."

Élise smiles. Her grandmother always worries that she might be cold.

"Okay, Grandma. And are you eating well in Paris? Are you having a good breakfast?"

"Yes, Grandma, I'm eating well, don't worry."

"You know what I always say: breakfast is the most important meal. You can't **work** well with an empty stomach."

"I know, Grandma. I always have good coffee and toast."

"Just coffee and toast? You should also eat fruit..."

This is a conversation they often have. Grandma Suzanne always wants to **make sure** her granddaughter eats well.

Suddenly, Élise hears a man's voice in the **background**.

"Oh, your grandfather came back from his **walk**," says Grandma Suzanne. "He wants to talk to you too."

"Of course, put him on."

Her grandfather's deep voice **echoes** in the phone.

"Hello, my little Élise?"

"Hello, Grandpa! How are you?"

"I'm fine. Your grandmother tells me you have good news!"

"Yes, I got a promotion at work."

"Congratulations! I knew you would **succeed**. You're **determined**, like your father."

Élise feels **moved**. Her father passed away when she was 15 years old.

"Thank you, Grandpa. That touches me a lot."

"So, you're coming to see us soon?"

"Yes, next weekend."

"Perfect! I'm going to prepare a **card game**. Do you remember how to play belote?"

"Of course! You taught me when I was 12 years old."

"Excellent! I'm sure you've forgotten all my secret **strategies** now!"

Élise laughs. Her grandfather loves card games.

Grandpa passes the phone back to Grandma Suzanne.

"So, I'll arrive Friday evening and leave Sunday afternoon," says Élise.

"Perfect! And I was going to **forget** to give you my ratatouille recipe! You wanted to learn it, didn't you?"

"Yes, I'd love to know your secret recipe!"

"Take paper and a pencil."

Élise quickly takes a notebook and pen.

"I'm ready, Grandma."

"So, for a good ratatouille, you need: two eggplants, three zucchini, two red bell peppers, four ripe tomatoes, two onions, three garlic cloves, olive oil, thyme, rosemary, salt, and pepper."

Élise writes down all the ingredients.

"You cut all the vegetables into medium-sized **pieces**. You sauté the onions in olive oil, then you add the garlic and bell peppers. After five minutes, you add the eggplants and zucchini. You let it **cook** for another ten minutes, then you add the tomatoes and herbs. You let it **simmer** on low heat for at least 30 minutes, **stirring** from time to time."

"Is that all?"

"No, there's a secret! The secret is to let the ratatouille **rest** overnight in the refrigerator. The flavors develop better that way."

"I understand why your ratatouille is so delicious!"

"It's late now, my dear. Go **rest**."

"You're right. Thank you, Grandma. I **kiss** you both, you and Grandpa."

"We do too, my dear. Goodbye."

Élise **hangs up** with a big smile. Talking with her grandmother did her a lot of good. She goes to her kitchen to prepare her dinner, already thinking with impatience about her weekend in Lyon and Grandma Suzanne's famous ratatouille.

Comprehension Check

1. What is the good news that Élise wants to announce?

a) She's getting married b) She got a promotion at work c) She's moving to Lyon d) She's expecting a baby

2. Where does Élise's grandmother live?

a) In Paris b) In Montrouge c) In Lyon d) In Marseille

3. What favorite dish does her grandmother promise to prepare?

a) Quiche lorraine b) Beef bourguignon c) Ratatouille d) Bouillabaisse

4. What is the secret of Grandma Suzanne's ratatouille?

a) Adding a special ingredient b) Cooking it for a very long time c) Using vegetables from the garden d) Letting it rest overnight in the refrigerator

5. What does Élise's grandfather want to do with her?

a) Garden b) Play cards c) Look at photos d) Visit a museum

Answers: 1.b, 2.c, 3.c, 4.d, 5.b

9. A Night Without Electricity

Camille looks out the window with **anxiety**. The wind **blows** hard and the rain **falls** non-stop since this morning. She and Julien are having dinner quietly in their small stone house, in a small village in Brittany.

They have been living in this house for six months. Before, they lived in Paris, but they decided to leave the big city for a calmer life in the countryside. Julien works as a freelance graphic designer, and Camille is a teacher in the **neighboring** village school.

"This **storm** is really impressive," says Julien. "I hope it will calm down soon."

"The **weather forecast** said it would last all night," Camille responds. "But our house is solid."

Suddenly, all the lights **go out**. The oven, the television, all the electrical appliances stop at the same time.

"Oh no, a **power outage!**" Camille exclaims.

"Don't panic," says Julien. "It's probably because of the storm. I'm going to look for **candles** and **matches**."

Julien goes to a cupboard in the kitchen. With his phone's light, he finds a box of matches and several candles.

"Fortunately we prepared this **emergency kit** when we **moved in**," he says. "There's also a flashlight and a battery radio."

Julien lights several candles and places them in the living room and kitchen. The house is now lit by a soft golden light.

"It's rather romantic, isn't it?" he says with a smile.

"Yes, it's true," Camille responds. "I hope the electricity will come back quickly. I need to prepare my lessons for tomorrow."

They finish their meal by candlelight. Outside, the storm continues. The wind **howls** around the house and the rain hits against the windows.

After dinner, Julien **turns on** the battery radio to get information.

"Due to the storm, several villages in Brittany are currently without electricity," says the voice on the radio. "EDF teams are working to **restore** power, but it could take several hours..."

"It looks like we're going to spend an evening without electricity," says Julien, turning off the radio.

"What are we going to do?" Camille asks.

"We could play a **board game**," Julien suggests. "I saw Scrabble in the living room cupboard."

"Good idea!"

Julien sets up the game on the **coffee table** in the living room. They sit on the floor, on a large comfortable rug, with cushions.

They start playing Scrabble by the flickering candlelight.

"**Fireplace**," Julien announces, placing his letters. "That's 16 points!"

"Bravo!" says Camille. "And it's a perfect word for our situation. Too bad we don't have a real fireplace."

"It's true, a fireplace would be useful tonight. But the candles give us a beautiful atmosphere."

The game continues for an hour. Camille finally wins.

"I won!" she exclaims. "I demand a **rematch!**"

"Maybe later. It's starting to get cold. I'm going to get **blankets.**"

Camille goes to the bedroom and comes back with two thick wool blankets. They settle comfortably on the sofa, wrapped in their blankets.

"It's strange," says Camille. "When there's electricity, we spend a lot of time **separated** in the evening. You on your computer, me with my tablet..."

"You're right," says Julien. "This power outage **forces** us to be really together, without distractions."

"It's pleasant, actually. We should do this more often, even when there's electricity."

"A **screen-free** evening per week?" Julien suggests.

"I love this idea," Camille responds enthusiastically.

They remain silent for a moment, listening to the sound of the rain. It's a **calming** sound, almost hypnotic.

"Do you remember our first meeting?" Julien suddenly asks.

"Of course!" Camille responds with a smile. "It was at Sophie's birthday party."

"You were wearing a blue dress and you were talking about your trip to Italy. I listened to you, fascinated by your stories."

"And you made me laugh with your imitations of our teachers."

They begin to remember memories from their student years, their first dates, their decision to settle in Brittany.

"I'm happy that we moved here," says Camille. "Life in the countryside is so much more **peaceful**."

"Even with storms and power outages?"

"Yes, even with that. I prefer a natural storm to the daily stress of the city."

After a moment, Julien gets up.

"I have an idea for a little **snack**," he says.

He goes to the kitchen and comes back with a tray. There are two cups of hot chocolate (prepared with water heated on their gas **stove**), cookies, and a chocolate bar.

"A **feast** by candlelight," he announces.

"It's perfect," says Camille. "Thank you, my **darling**."

They savor their hot chocolate, continuing to talk softly. Julien tells Camille a story his grandmother used to tell him: "The Lighthouse Keeper." It's the story of a **lighthouse keeper** who must choose between staying at his post to **guide** all the boats, or leaving to save a boat in distress.

"It's a beautiful story," says Camille. "It talks about responsibility and **hope**."

Around 11 PM, they decide to go to bed. They prepare a few candles for the bedroom.

"It looks like the electricity won't come back before tomorrow," says Julien.

"It doesn't matter," Camille responds. "This evening without electricity was finally very pleasant."

"Yes, we should thank the storm," Julien jokes.

They settle in their bed, surrounded by the soft candlelight. The storm begins to calm down, but the rain is still falling.

"Good night, Camille."

"Good night, Julien. And let's not forget our idea: a screen-free evening per week."

"Promise," Julien responds, blowing out the last candle.

They fall asleep peacefully. This night without electricity allowed them to reconnect with each other, away from the distractions of modern life.

Comprehension Check

1. Where do Camille and Julien live?
a) In Paris b) In Normandy c) In a small village in Brittany d) In a lighthouse
2. What is the cause of the power outage?
a) A technical problem b) A storm c) Construction work in the village d) They didn't pay their bill
3. What do Camille and Julien do during the outage?
a) They argue b) They go to sleep immediately c) They play Scrabble and talk d) They go see the neighbors
4. What decision do they make following this experience?
a) To return to live in Paris b) To install solar panels c) To buy more candles d) To establish a screen-free evening per week
5. What feeling do they have at the end of the evening?
a) They are frustrated b) They are worried c) They are grateful for this moment of connection d) They are impatient for the electricity to return

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.c, 4.d, 5.c

10. First Day at Work

Thomas adjusts his white shirt in front of the mirror. He is 22 years old and today is his first day of **internship** in a graphic design studio in Montpellier. He is in his third year of design studies and this internship is very important for him.

He wakes up at 6:30 AM, an hour **earlier** than necessary. He takes a shower, dresses **carefully**, and has a quick breakfast. He takes a deep **breath** and heads toward downtown.

At 8:45 AM, Thomas arrives in front of the **building**. The studio is called "Creativity Plus" and is located in an old renovated building near Place de la Comédie. His internship officially begins at 9 AM.

At reception, a **smiling** woman greets him.

"Hello," says Thomas. "My name is Thomas Dubois. I'm starting an internship today."

"Hello, Thomas. Welcome!" the receptionist responds. "I'll call someone."

Five minutes later, a young woman with **short** hair arrives.

"Thomas? Hello, I'm Emma, the creative director. Welcome!"

Thomas stands up and **shakes hands** with Emma.

"Hello, Ma'am. Thank you for welcoming me."

"Oh, no 'Ma'am' here," Emma responds, laughing. "We all use **informal 'tu'** in the team. Come, I'll give you a tour."

Thomas follows Emma into a large open space with high windows. There are several **desks** with computers, green plants everywhere, and colorful **posters** on the walls. The atmosphere is modern and creative.

"Here's our main space," Emma explains. "We have twelve designers working here."

Thomas looks around him, impressed.

"It's **great**," he says sincerely.

Emma leads him toward a group of people near the kitchen.

"Everyone, here's Thomas, our new **intern**. Thomas, here are Lucas, our art director, Chloé and Romain, graphic designers, and Malik, UX/UI specialist."

Thomas shakes hands with each person.

"Hello everyone," he says. "I'm very happy to be here."

"Welcome, Thomas," says Lucas. "You arrive just in time for our morning coffee **ritual**."

"Coffee ritual?" Thomas asks, curious.

"Yes," Chloé explains. "Every morning at 9:15 AM, we all have coffee together. It's a moment to discuss projects or simply **chat**."

"It's you who has to make coffee today, Romain," Malik reminds him.

"Thomas, do you want to help me? I'll **show** you our machine."

He follows Romain to the kitchen, where a large chrome coffee machine **sits prominently** on the counter.

"Here's our **pride**," says Romain. "It makes the best coffee in Montpellier. Do you drink coffee?"

"Yes, quite **often**."

"Perfect. Look carefully: first, we check that the **tank** is full..."

Romain explains how to use the machine.

"Now, your turn to try."

Thomas follows the instructions and succeeds.

"**Well done!**" says Romain. "You learn quickly."

Thomas helps Romain prepare coffee for the whole **team**. It's a good way to meet his new colleagues.

At 9:30 AM, Emma takes Thomas to his workspace.

"Here's your desk," she says. "You have a computer with all the **software** you'll need."

"Thank you very much," says Thomas.

"Today, you're going to work with Chloé on a project for a local restaurant. They want a new logo and menu cards. Chloé will explain all the details."

"Great! I can't wait to start."

Chloé comes to sit next to Thomas.

"Ready for your first project?"

"Absolutely!"

Chloé begins to explain the project.

"The restaurant is called 'La Table Provençale.' They serve Mediterranean cuisine and want a design that reflects this **spirit: warm**, authentic, with colors from Provence..."

"I understand," says Thomas. "Maybe shades of lavender, olive, and **terracotta**?"

"Exactly! That's an excellent idea. I see you already have a good sense of design."

Thomas feels **proud** of this compliment. The morning passes quickly as he works with Chloé on the first **sketches** of the logo.

At noon, Lucas approaches.

"Do you want to join us for lunch? We're going to a small restaurant nearby."

"With pleasure," says Thomas.

He's happy to be included from his first day. They go out and walk toward a small **bistro** two streets away. Thomas walks **next to** Malik.

"How do you find your first day?" Malik asks.

"It's great," Thomas responds. "Everyone is very **welcoming**."

"We try to give interns real projects, not just **boring** work," Malik explains.

"I really appreciate it."

At the restaurant, they sit at a large table. During the meal, Thomas tries to participate in the conversation. At one point, Lucas turns to him.

"Where are you from, Thomas?"

"I was **born** in Lyon, but I **grew up** in Nîmes. I came to Montpellier for my studies."

"You're not **far** from home then."

In the afternoon, Thomas continues working with Chloé. They begin creating digital designs based on their sketches.

Around 4 PM, Emma comes to see their progress.

"How's it going?"

"Very well," Chloé responds. "Thomas has good ideas and he's quick with the software."

"Excellent," says Emma. "I'm impressed for a first day."

At 5:30 PM, the employees begin to **tidy up** their things. Thomas isn't sure what he should do.

"Should I continue working?" he asks Chloé.

"No, no, here we have strict hours: 9 AM-5:30 PM," Chloé responds. "We believe in work-life balance."

"That's a good philosophy."

Before leaving, Emma comes to see him.

"How was this first day?"

"Very well, thank you!" Thomas responds enthusiastically. "I already learned a lot."

"Perfect. Tomorrow, Lucas will talk to you about our next big project."

"I can't wait."

"See you tomorrow then. And welcome again!"

Thomas leaves the building and walks toward the tram stop. He **thinks back** to his day and feels very satisfied. The studio atmosphere is exactly what he was looking for: professional but **relaxed**, creative and collaborative.

He realizes he still has a lot to learn, not only about design, but also about the **social norms** of the professional world. For example, he must get used to using "tu" with his colleagues, even those who are **older**.

In the tram, he remembers an embarrassing moment. During lunch, he addressed Lucas by saying "vous," while everyone was using "tu."

"You... uh, have you worked on many interesting projects?" he had said.

Lucas had smiled kindly.

"Yes, I've been lucky to work on varied projects. And don't forget: here, it's 'tu' for everyone!"

Thomas had blushed **slightly**, but Lucas had been understanding.

Thomas smiles thinking about it. Tomorrow, he'll be careful to use "tu" with everyone. He's already starting to feel like part of the team.

His phone vibrates. It's a message from his mother: "How was this first day?"

Thomas responds: "Really well! The team is great, I already started working on a real project, and they have an incredible coffee machine!"

He puts away his phone, satisfied. This internship is an excellent start for his career.

Comprehension Check

1. In which city is the design studio located?
a) Lyon b) Nîmes c) Paris d) Montpellier
2. What is the name of the design studio?
a) Design Plus b) Creativity Plus c) Graphic Studio d) Modern Artist
3. What is the particularity of relationships between colleagues?
a) Everyone uses formal "vous" b) People don't talk during work c) Everyone uses informal "tu" d) Interns eat separately
4. What ritual does Thomas discover on his first day?
a) A morning meeting b) Coffee taken together every morning c) A yoga session d) An evening aperitif
5. What mistake does Thomas make during lunch?
a) He arrives late b) He spills his glass c) He uses "vous" instead of "tu" d) He forgets a colleague's name

Answers: 1.d, 2.b, 3.c, 4.b, 5.c

11. A Sunday in the Park

Isabelle smiles while watching her niece Emma running around her Parisian apartment. It's **Sunday** afternoon, the sun is shining, and Isabelle has invited Emma to spend the afternoon together. Emma is six years old and adores her aunt Isabelle.

Isabelle lives **near** the Luxembourg Gardens, one of the most beautiful parks in Paris. It's a perfect place for a **Sunday** outing with a child.

"Emma, do you want to go to the Luxembourg Gardens?" Isabelle asks.

Emma's eyes **light up**.

"Oh yes! Can I bring my ball?"

"Of course," Isabelle responds. "And don't forget your **coat**."

Emma takes her red ball and her little blue coat. Isabelle prepares a bag with a water bottle, some **cookies**, and bread for the **ducks**.

"Can we feed the ducks?" Emma asks.

"Yes, but not too much. Ducks have a special diet. Too much bread isn't good for them."

"Okay, I'll be **careful**," Emma promises.

They leave the apartment and walk toward the park. It's a very French tradition to spend time in parks on Sunday.

After ten minutes, they arrive at the entrance to the Luxembourg Gardens. The park is magnificent with its large trees, statues, and colorful flower beds.

"Look, Emma! The tulips are **in bloom**!"

"They're so pretty!" Emma exclaims. "I really like the pink color."

They **walk around** the paths. There are many people: families with children, elderly people reading on **benches**, students working.

"Aunt Isabelle, I see the ducks!" Emma says, pointing at the large **pond**.

"Let's go then."

They approach the pond where several ducks are swimming peacefully. Emma is very excited.

"Gently, Emma. Don't scare the ducks."

Emma takes a piece of bread and throws it in the water. A duck approaches immediately.

"He's **hungry**!" Emma laughs.

"Yes, but remember: just a few pieces."

After feeding the ducks, they continue their walk. Emma notices a small **open-air** theater.

"Look, there's a **puppet theater**! Do you want to see the show?"

"What are 'marionnettes'?" Emma asks.

"They're little **dolls** that people make move to tell stories. It's very **funny**."

They **head toward** the theater where a group of children is sitting on benches. A **sign** indicates: "Guignol and the thief - Show at 3 PM."

"We're lucky, the show is going to start in five minutes."

Isabelle buys two tickets and they find seats. Emma is curious.

"Who is Guignol?"

"He's a very **famous** character. He's a boy who's a bit **mischievous** and always gets into trouble, but has a good heart. Children have adored him for generations."

The show begins. Guignol, with his black hair and colorful jacket, makes the children laugh. Emma is fascinated. She **laughs out loud** when Guignol hits the **thief** with a stick.

After the show, Emma applauds.

"That was great! I love Guignol!"

"I'm glad you **liked it**. When I was little, my mother often **brought me** to see Guignol here."

"Grandma too?"

"Yes, it's a tradition that's **passed down** from generation to generation."

They continue their walk. Emma plays with her ball, then she points to a **vendor** of ice cream and **cotton candy**.

"Aunt Isabelle, look! Cotton candy!"

Isabelle smiles. She knows her niece loves **sweets**.

"Okay, but we **share** one. It's very sweet."

"Thank you!"

They approach the vendor.

"Hello, one cotton candy, please."

"What color? Pink, blue, or yellow?"

"Emma, what color?"

"Pink, like the tulips!"

The vendor prepares a large pink cotton candy on a **stick**.

"Here you go, miss. Enjoy!"

"Thank you, sir," Emma responds politely.

They find a bench and sit down. Emma takes a piece of the sweet cloud.

"It's so good!" she says with a big smile.

Isabelle laughs and takes a tissue to **wipe** Emma's face.

"You have sugar everywhere! You look like a little clown."

"A pink clown!"

They share the cotton candy while watching people pass by. It's a moment of **closeness** between aunt and niece.

"Can we see the **carousel** now?" Emma asks.

"Of course."

They walk toward the traditional carousel. It's a beautiful merry-go-round with wooden horses painted in bright colors. A joyful melody accompanies the circular movement.

"I want to ride the white horse!" Emma exclaims.

Isabelle buys a ticket and helps Emma get on a large white horse.

"Hold on tight, okay?"

"Yes, Aunt Isabelle!"

The carousel starts to turn. Emma is **delighted**. She waves enthusiastically every time she passes in front of her aunt.

After three turns, the carousel stops. Emma gets down, her cheeks pink with excitement.

"That was **great**! Can I do another turn?"

"Another time, my dear. It's getting **late** and we have to go home."

Emma makes a little **pout** of disappointment, but doesn't protest.

"Okay. But we'll come back soon?"

"Promise."

They leave the park hand in hand. On the way back, Emma asks:

"Aunt Isabelle, how do you say 'barbe à papa' in English?"

"Cotton candy."

"And 'manège'?"

"Carousel."

"French words are prettier," Emma decides.

Isabelle smiles.

"You're right, some words are more beautiful in French. Each language has its own musicality."

Back at the apartment, Emma tells their day to her mother, who came to pick her up.

"Mom, we saw Guignol and the ducks, and I ate pink cotton candy, and I rode the carousel!"

Emma's mother thanks Isabelle.

"Thank you very much, Isabelle. Emma loves these moments with you."

"It's a pleasure. Sunday afternoons in the park are an important tradition in Paris."

Emma gives her aunt a big hug.

"Goodbye, Aunt Isabelle. It was the best Sunday of my whole life!"

Isabelle laughs.

"Until the next one, I hope!"

She watches Emma and her sister walk away, happy to have created beautiful **memories**. Sunday afternoons in the park are more than just a simple outing in France, it's a precious moment of family connection and cultural transmission.

Comprehension Check

1. What is Maria's nationality?

a) French b) Spanish c) Italian d) German

2. What is the name of the library?

a) National Library b) José Cabanis Media Library c) University Library d) François Mitterrand Media Library

3. What does Maria borrow from the library?

- a) A French film b) A French method, an adapted novel, a comic book, and a magazine
- c) A dictionary and a CD d) Only comic books

4. Who is Thomas?

- a) A librarian b) A French teacher c) A literature student d) An Italian friend of Maria

5. What day do Maria and Thomas meet?

- a) Monday b) Wednesday c) Friday d) Saturday

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

12. At the Pharmacy

Jake **blows his nose** again and looks at his almost empty box of tissues. He is **English** and is visiting Strasbourg for a week. It's his first time in France and he loves this beautiful city with its impressive cathedral.

Unfortunately, today, he doesn't feel very well. He has a **cold**: he **coughs**, his **throat** hurts, and his nose is constantly **running**.

I need to find a pharmacy, he thinks, taking his last tissue.

Jake leaves his small hotel in the city center and starts looking for a pharmacy. In France, pharmacies are easy to identify thanks to their large bright **green cross**. After a few minutes, he finds one.

He enters the pharmacy. It's a clean and well-organized space with several **shelves** filled with medications. Behind the counter, there are two pharmacists in white coats. A smiling young woman addresses him:

"Hello, sir. Can I help you?"

Jake tries to remember his French. He studied this language in high school, but that was a long time ago.

"Hello, madam. I... uh... I am **sick**," he says with his English accent. "I have a cold."

"I understand," the pharmacist responds kindly. "What are your symptoms exactly?"

Jake hesitates. He doesn't know all the words in French.

"I have... uh... I **cough**," he says, coughing lightly. "And I have... my nose... uh..."

He shows his runny nose. The pharmacist understands immediately.

"You have a runny nose, and you cough. Do you also have a fever?"

"Fever?" Jake asks, not understanding this word.

"Temperature," the pharmacist explains, putting her hand on her **forehead**. "Are you hot?"

"Ah, no, no fever," Jake responds, relieved to understand.

"And do you have a sore throat?" she asks, touching her neck.

"Yes, sore throat," Jake confirms. "And I need... uh..."

He looks for the word for "tissues" but doesn't remember it. He pretends to blow his nose.

"Tissues?" the pharmacist suggests.

"Yes, tissues, please."

The pharmacist smiles. She appreciates Jake's efforts to speak French.

"Okay. I'm going to give you something for your cold."

She goes to get several products from the shelves. Jake waits patiently. In France, people often go to the pharmacy for health advice. Pharmacists are very respected for their medical knowledge.

The pharmacist returns with several **boxes**.

"Here," she says. "I recommend this cough syrup. Take one **spoon** three times a day, after meals."

She shows him a box with a drawing of a spoon on it.

"These **lozenges** are for your sore throat. You can take one every two hours. They taste like **honey** and **lemon**."

Jake looks at the lozenges. He understands the word "honey" which is "honey" in English.

"And here are tissues. They're soft for the nose."

"Thank you very much," says Jake, **grateful**.

"I also **advise** you to drink lots of water and hot tea with honey. Rest is important too."

"I'm going to **rest** at the hotel today."

"That's a good idea. Are you allergic to any medications?"

Jake **shakes** his head.

"No, no allergies."

"Perfect. So, that's 21 euros and 50 centimes."

Jake takes out his bank card.

"Can I pay by card?"

"Of course."

He pays for his medications. The pharmacist puts everything in a bag.

"There you go, sir. Don't hesitate to come back if you don't feel better in two or three days. If the symptoms **worsen**, you'll need to see a doctor."

"Thank you for your help," says Jake. "You are very kind."

"You're welcome. **Get well soon!**" she responds with a smile.

Jake isn't sure he understands this expression.

"Get...?"

"Get well soon," the pharmacist repeats. "It's what we say to someone who is sick. It means 'I hope you'll feel better soon'."

"Ah, I understand! In English, we say 'Get well soon!'."

"Exactly!"

Jake leaves the pharmacy with his bag of medications, already feeling a bit better thanks to the **warm welcome** from the pharmacist. He returns to his hotel to rest.

On the way, he passes a small **bakery**. The delicious **smell** of fresh bread gives him a little appetite. He enters and buys a croissant and a bottle of water.

"**You don't look well**, sir," the baker remarks.

"I have a cold," Jake explains simply.

"Ah, good luck then!" she responds kindly.

Jake smiles, appreciating the sympathy of French shopkeepers. He returns to his hotel and goes up to his room. He takes a spoonful of syrup, then a lozenge for his throat. The taste of honey and lemon is pleasant.

*I must learn this expression, he thinks. Get well soon. That's **useful**.*

At that moment, his phone rings. It's his French friend William, calling from London.

"Hi, Jake! How's your trip going?"

"Hi, Will," Jake responds in a slightly **hoarse** voice. "It's great, but I caught a cold."

"Sorry to hear that. Did you find medications?"

"Yes, I just went to the pharmacy. It was an interesting experience."

"Did you manage in French?"

"I tried," Jake responds, laughing. "I made a lot of gestures, but the pharmacist was very kind. She even taught me a new expression: 'Bon rétablissement'."

"Ah, that's good! You're making progress."

"Yes. Pharmacies are different here. Pharmacists give a lot of advice and seem to have more medical knowledge than in England."

"Interesting. And what have you planned for tomorrow?"

"I'm going to rest today, but tomorrow, if I feel better, I want to visit the Petite France district. It's very **picturesque**."

"That sounds magnificent. I hope your cold will quickly **disappear**."

"Thank you. **Get well soon!**" says William, using the new expression.

Jake smiles.

"Thank you, Will. See you soon."

He hangs up and closes his eyes. Before **falling asleep**, he thinks about his day. Even though it's not pleasant to be sick during vacation, this experience allowed him to live a different aspect of French culture. He learned how a pharmacy works in France and a new useful expression.

The next morning, Jake wakes up and feels much better. His sore throat has almost disappeared, and he coughs less. The medications worked well.

He returns to the same pharmacy to thank the pharmacist. When he enters, she recognizes him immediately.

"Hello! How are you today?"

"Much better, thank you. Your medications are very effective."

"I'm glad. You look better."

"Yes, and I wanted to thank you for your help yesterday. You were very patient."

"That's normal. I'm happy that you feel better."

"**Get well soon!**" says Jake with a big smile, proud to use his new expression.

The pharmacist laughs.

"Actually, 'bon rétablissement' is what we say to someone who is sick. Since you're feeling better, we would rather say 'Bonne continuation' or 'Bonne journée'."

"Ah, I understand," says Jake, laughing too. "So, have a good day!"

"Have a good day to you too, and enjoy Strasbourg!"

Jake leaves the pharmacy with a smile, ready to continue his discovery of this beautiful French city, enriched by a new cultural and linguistic experience.

Comprehension Check

1. Which city is Jake visiting?
a) Paris b) Lyon c) Strasbourg d) Bordeaux
2. How does Jake identify a pharmacy?
a) By its blue sign b) By its green cross c) By its red door d) By its French flag
3. What medication does the pharmacist recommend for the cough?
a) Pills b) Syrup c) Cream d) An injection
4. What French expression does Jake learn?
a) Bon voyage b) Bon appétit c) Bon rétablissement d) Bonne chance
5. Why does Jake return to the pharmacy the next day?
a) To buy more medications b) To thank the pharmacist c) To ask for directions d) To report that the medications don't work

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

13. The Garage Sale

Paul looks at his collection of old **vinyl records** with nostalgia. It's seven o'clock in the morning in his small Norman village and today is the annual **garage sale**. A garage sale is like a flea market where residents **sell** objects they no longer need.

Paul has been living in this village for three years. He's a history teacher at the local middle school and really enjoys participating in this event. It's a good opportunity to meet neighbors and find interesting objects.

He quickly has coffee and starts preparing the objects he wants to sell. This year, he decided to **get rid of** his vinyl record collection. He now mainly listens to digital files on his computer.

He puts his records in cardboard boxes and carries them to his car. He also adds some books, clothes, and an old lamp. At 8:15 AM, he arrives at the village square where the event takes place.

Many people are already there, setting up their stands. Each participant received a specific **spot**, marked by a number. Paul finds his: number 42.

He sets up his **folding** table and arranges his objects. He puts his vinyl records prominently displayed, as they are his most interesting items.

Next to him, a lady of about 60 years old is also setting up her stand. She mainly sells toys and children's clothes.

"Hello," she says with a smile. "You're selling records? My husband will be interested!"

"Hello, madam. Yes, mainly rock and jazz from the 70s and 80s."

"My name is Martine. Is this your first time at the garage sale?"

"No, it's my third year. My name is Paul. I'm a teacher at the middle school."

"Ah, you're the new history teacher! My grandson, Théo, is in your class."

Paul smiles. This is one of the things he likes about this village: everyone **knows each other**.

At 9 AM sharp, the mayor officially opens the garage sale. Quickly, visitors start to **move around** between the stands.

A man of about 50 approaches Paul's table. He looks **carefully** at the vinyl records.

"Hello," he says. "You have a beautiful collection! How much does this Pink Floyd record **cost**?"

Paul takes the record: it's the album "The Dark Side of the Moon."

"This record costs 15 euros. It's in very good **condition**."

The man examines the record.

"That's a bit **expensive**. Can you do 12 euros?"

In France, in garage sales, it's normal to negotiate prices. It's almost a ritual.

"I can let it go for 13 euros," Paul proposes.

"Agreed for 13 euros."

He gives a 20 euro bill to Paul.

"I don't have **change** for 20 euros," says Paul. "I'll ask my neighbor."

"Excuse me, Martine. Do you have change for 20 euros?"

"Of course," Martine responds, giving him coins.

Paul gives the change to the man, who takes his record and **moves away**, happy with his purchase.

The morning passes quickly. Paul sells several records, some books, and even the old lamp. Between sales, he chats with Martine and other neighbors. It's an important aspect of garage sales: **friendliness** and social connection.

Around noon, Paul decides to take a tour to see what others are selling. He leaves a small **sign** on his table: "I'll be back in 15 minutes."

He **walks around** between the stands, looking at various objects: **dishes**, toys, tools, clothes, books... At one stand, he sees an old Italian **coffee maker** for 5 euros. He buys it because his is **broken**.

At another stand, run by a couple of **retired people**, Paul finds something that immediately catches his attention: a children's book he loved when he was little.

It's "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, an old edition with beautiful illustrations.

"This book reminds me of my childhood," he tells the seller. "How much does it cost?"

"8 euros," the seller responds. "It's a beautiful 1970 edition."

Paul doesn't even try to negotiate. This book has sentimental value for him.

"I'll take it," he says, **handing over** a 10 euro bill.

"Thank you. Do you like Saint-Exupéry?"

"Yes, very much. 'The Little Prince' was my favorite book when I was a child. I'm a history teacher now, but literature remains a passion."

"Ah, you're the teacher! I was a baker before **retiring**. It's my son who manages the bakery now."

"Of course! Your son makes the best bread in the region."

They chat for a few more minutes, then Paul returns to his stand. On the way, he stops to buy a sandwich at a small **food stand**.

Back at his table, he eats his sandwich and continues selling his things. The afternoon is calmer, which is typical for garage sales. Many visitors come early to find the best **deals**.

A young woman stops in front of his stand and looks at the vinyl records.

"Hello, sir. I'm looking for jazz records."

"Hello, miss. Yes, I have some jazz records here. Are you looking for a particular artist?"

"I really like Miles Davis."

"I have a Miles Davis album, 'Kind of Blue.' It's a **classic**."

"Oh, that's exactly what I was looking for! How much does it cost?"

"18 euros. It's in excellent condition."

"That's a good price," says the young woman. "I'll take it."

While she pays, they discuss jazz. The young woman's name is Claire and she's new to the village. She just moved as a **nurse** at the local medical center.

"If you like jazz, there's a small club in the neighboring town," Paul tells her. "They organize concerts every Friday evening."

"Thank you for the information! It's a bit difficult to meet people when you're new to a small village."

"The garage sale is a good start," Paul smiles. "And if you like reading, we have a book club that meets once a month."

"That sounds interesting. Thank you for your **welcome!**"

Claire leaves with her record, and Paul feels happy to have been able to help a new resident integrate.

Around 5 PM, the garage sale begins to end. Sellers **put away** their things. Paul sold almost all his records and several other objects. He made a **profit** of about 120 euros, but more importantly, he had a pleasant day.

He decides to give the remaining books to Martine.

"For your grandson, Théo," he says. "These are history books adapted for children."

"That's very kind, thank you!" says Martine.

Paul packs his table and unsold objects in his car. Before leaving, he goes to say goodbye to the mayor.

"It was another success this year," says the mayor. "Thank you for your participation, Paul."

"With pleasure. It's always a **friendly** event."

"Next year, we're thinking of also organizing a **community meal** after the garage sale. What do you think?"

"That's an excellent idea! I'll definitely be there."

Paul returns home, tired but happy with his day. Garage sales are more than just an opportunity to sell and buy second-hand objects. In France, these events represent an important tradition of community life, especially in small villages.

While putting "The Little Prince" on his **shelf**, Paul is already thinking about what he could sell next year. For now, he's happy to have found a treasure from his childhood and to have contributed to his village's community spirit.

Comprehension Check

1. What does Paul mainly sell at the garage sale?
a) History books b) Vinyl records c) Clothes d) Antique furniture
2. Why doesn't Paul try to negotiate the book price?
a) The book is already cheap b) The seller refuses to negotiate c) The book has sentimental value for him d) He doesn't know how to negotiate
3. Who is Martine?

a) Paul's wife b) A childhood friend c) His neighbor at the garage sale d) The village mayor

4. What profession does Claire have?

a) Teacher b) Nurse c) Baker d) Doctor

5. According to the text, what is the importance of garage sales in French villages?

a) They only allow people to make money b) They are mandatory for all residents c) They create social connections and friendliness d) They are organized only for tourists

Answers: 1.b, 2.c, 3.c, 4.b, 5.c

14. At the Library

Maria pushes the large **glass door** and enters a modern **building** in the center of Toulouse. She is an Italian student doing a year-long **stay** at the University of Toulouse as part of the Erasmus program. She has been in France for three months and is learning French.

On the facade, she sees written "**Media Library** José Cabanis." In France, many **libraries** now call themselves "media libraries" because they offer not only books, but also films, music, and other digital **media types**.

The interior is spacious and bright, with several floors. At the entrance, there's a large reception desk where several people work. Maria approaches a smiling woman.

"Hello, madam," says Maria with her Italian accent. "I would like to **register** at the library, please."

"Hello and welcome," the **librarian** responds. "Of course, I can help you. Is this your first visit?"

"Yes, it's the first time. I'm a student at the University of Toulouse."

"Perfect. To register, I need a few documents: an ID, proof of address, and an ID photo."

Maria takes out her Italian passport, her **lease agreement**, and a small photo.

"Here are my documents," she says.

"Thank you. I'll make your library card. Meanwhile, you can fill out this **form**."

The librarian gives her a form with fields to fill out: last name, first name, address, date of birth, phone number, and email address.

Maria fills out the form and returns it to the librarian.

"Here's your card," she says a few minutes later. "**Registration** is free and valid for one year. With this card, you can **borrow** up to 15 documents for three weeks."

"Thank you very much," Maria responds. "Could you tell me where the section for books to learn French is?"

"Of course. The languages section is on the second floor. You'll find methods for learning French, simplified books for learners, and dictionaries."

"Perfect! And where is the **comic books** section? I really like reading comics to learn new words."

"Comic books are on the third floor. We have a very large collection, from classics like Tintin and Asterix to more recent comics."

"Thank you for this information. I'm going to explore a bit."

"Don't hesitate to ask for **help**. There's staff on each floor who can guide you."

Maria takes the **elevator** to the second floor. She sees large **shelves** filled with books and some tables where people are reading or working. She easily finds the languages section.

In this section, there are several books for learning French. Maria takes a few and **flips through** them. She finally chooses an intermediate-level French method with an audio CD and a small novel adapted for learners.

Then, she goes up to the third floor to see the comic books. The collection is impressive! There are entire shelves of French, Belgian, American comics, and Japanese manga translated into French.

Maria looks for a series her teacher told her about: "Les Carnets de Cerise." It's a comic that tells the story of a young girl who dreams of becoming a novelist and conducts **investigations** on the people around her.

She finds the first volume and starts reading it, standing between the shelves. The story immediately captivates her. The illustrations are magnificent and the text isn't too difficult to understand.

Maria decides to borrow this book too. She sits at a table to read a bit more. Next to her, a young man is also reading a comic. He looks up and smiles at her.

"It's a very good series, 'Les Carnets de Cerise,'" he says softly. "I've read all the volumes."

"Really?" Maria responds. "It's the first time I'm reading it. My French teacher **recommended** it to me."

"Are you learning French?" he asks, noticing her accent.

"Yes, I'm Italian and I'm in Toulouse for a year with the Erasmus program."

"Welcome to Toulouse! My name is Thomas. I'm a literature student at the university."

"Nice to meet you, Thomas. My name is Maria. I study international relations."

"Your French is very good."

"Thank you, but I still have a lot to learn. That's why I'm looking for easy books to read."

"Comics are perfect for that. If you like 'Les Carnets de Cerise,' I can recommend other similar series."

"That would be nice!"

Thomas tells her about several French comics adapted to her level. They discuss in **low** voices so as not to **disturb** other readers.

After a few minutes, Thomas looks at his watch.

"I have to go, I have a class at 4 PM. But if you want, I'm often here on Wednesday afternoons. We could meet and I could show you my favorite comics."

"That would be great," Maria responds, happy to have made a new friend.

"See you next Wednesday then!"

"See you Wednesday!"

Maria continues exploring the library. She discovers that there's also a film section on the fourth floor and a press area with newspapers and magazines on the ground floor.

Maria spends more than two hours at the library. Finally, she decides to borrow four documents: the French method with the audio CD, the adapted novel, the first volume of "Les Carnets de Cerise," and a cultural magazine about Toulouse.

She goes to the automated lending **terminals**. In France, many libraries have automated systems for borrowing documents. Maria follows the instructions on the screen. She places her card, then her books one by one. The terminal emits a small beep for each **registered** book and displays the titles with the return date. Once all the books are registered, the terminal prints a **receipt** indicating the list of borrowed documents and the deadline to return them: May 12, in three weeks.

Leaving the library, Maria feels very satisfied. Not only did she find useful resources to improve her French, but she also met Thomas. The library will certainly be a place she'll visit regularly during her stay in Toulouse.

The following Wednesday, as promised, Maria returns to the library. She has already read "Les Carnets de Cerise" and is eager to discuss the book with Thomas. She goes directly to the third floor.

Thomas is already there, sitting at the same table. He waves when he sees her.

"Hello, Maria! Did you have a good week?"

"Yes, very good, thank you. I finished reading 'Les Carnets de Cerise' and I loved it! The story is touching and the drawings are magnificent."

"I knew you'd like it. I brought some other comics you might like."

Thomas shows her several comic books he selected for her, briefly explaining the story of each one.

This is the beginning of a **weekly** habit. Every Wednesday, Maria and Thomas meet at the library to discuss their readings.

This **budding** friendship, centered around books and the French language, enriches Maria's experience in Toulouse.

For Maria, the library becomes more than just a place to borrow books. It's a place of discovery, learning, and encounters. Public libraries in France, free and open to all, play an important role in the cultural and social life of cities.

Comprehension Check

1. What is Maria's nationality?

a) French b) Spanish c) Italian d) German

2. What is the name of the library?

a) National Library b) José Cabanis Media Library c) University Library d) François Mitterrand Media Library

3. What does Maria borrow from the library?

a) A French film b) A French method, an adapted novel, a comic book, and a magazine
c) A dictionary and a CD d) Only comic books

4. Who is Thomas?

a) A librarian b) A French teacher c) A literature student d) An Italian friend of Maria

5. What day do Maria and Thomas meet?

a) Monday b) Wednesday c) Friday d) Saturday

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

15. A Hairdresser Appointment

Luc looks at himself in his bathroom mirror and **sighs**. He has been living in Nice for six months and loves this beautiful city in the south of France. He is 30 years old and works as a **computer scientist**, but today, he has a problem: his hair is much too long. He hasn't been to the hairdresser since his arrival in Nice.

*I need to make an **appointment** at the hairdresser, he thinks.*

He searches on the internet and finds a salon called "Elegance Hair" five minutes' walk from his apartment. The **reviews** are good and the prices are reasonable. Luc calls to make an appointment.

"Hello, Elegance Hair, I'm listening," says a female voice.

"Hello, I would like to make an appointment for a **haircut**, please."

"Of course, sir. For what day?"

"Do you have anything **available** tomorrow afternoon?"

"Let me check... Yes, we have a **time slot** at 3:30 PM. Does that suit you?"

"Perfect! I'll take that appointment."

"Your name, please?"

"Luc Martin."

"It's noted, Mr. Martin. See you tomorrow!"

The next day, Luc arrives at the salon at 3:25 PM. He's a bit nervous because it's the first time he's going to the hairdresser in France. The salon is modern and welcoming. There are three hairdressers working and several clients waiting.

"Hello, I have an appointment at 3:30 PM. My name is Luc Martin."

"Hello, Mr. Martin," the receptionist responds. "You can **settle** in the waiting area. Sophie will **take care of** you."

Luc sits down and takes a magazine about men's hairstyles. He looks for photos that resemble what he wants. He prefers hair **short** on the sides and a bit longer on top. He finds a photo he likes and marks the page.

Five minutes later, a young woman with short hair approaches him.

"Mr. Martin? I'm Sophie. **Follow me**, please."

Luc follows Sophie to her workstation. She invites him to sit in the chair and puts a black cape on him to protect his clothes.

"What do you want to do today?" Sophie asks.

Luc shows the photo in the magazine.

"I'd like something like this: short on **the sides** and longer on **the top**."

Sophie looks at the photo carefully.

"Yes, I understand. And for the **nape**, how do you prefer? Rather **tapered** or **sharp**?"

Luc isn't sure he understands the technical terms in French.

"Uh... I'm not sure... Like in the photo, I suppose?"

"Okay, I see. And for the **temples**? Do you want them to be very short?"

Luc starts to be confused with all these technical questions.

"I don't know exactly... Maybe you can advise me? I trust you to adapt the cut to my face."

Sophie smiles, understanding his confusion.

"Of course, I'll advise you. With the shape of your face, I think a short taper on the sides and about 5 centimeters on top would be perfect. Do you usually use a **styling product**?"

"No, not really. I like cuts that are easy to **style** in the morning."

"I understand. I'll cut so that it's easy to arrange. Do you want a shampoo before the cut?"

"Yes, please."

Sophie takes him to the **washing basins** at the back of the salon. Luc settles in a **reclining** chair.

"Is the water temperature good?" Sophie asks, starting to **wet** his hair.

"Yes, it's perfect."

Sophie applies shampoo and gently **massages** Luc's **scalp**. It's very relaxing. After the shampoo, she wraps his head in a **towel** and **brings him back** to her station.

She starts cutting his hair, working with precision.

"Have you been living in Nice for long?" she asks to make conversation.

"Only six months. I **moved** here for work."

"And do you like the city?"

"Yes, very much. I like the climate, the sea, the food..."

In France, it's common to talk with your hairdresser during the cut. It's a moment of relaxation and exchange.

After about 20 minutes, Sophie takes a **mirror** to show the back of Luc's head.

"What do you think?"

Luc looks at his new cut. There's a small problem: the sides are much shorter than he thought, and the top seems a bit too long in comparison.

How do I tell her it's not exactly what I wanted? he thinks. He doesn't want to be rude.

"Uh... it's a bit different from what I imagined," he finally says with hesitation.

"Can you tell me what's wrong?" Sophie asks kindly.

"I think the sides are a bit too short compared to the top. Could we **shorten** the top a bit to balance it?"

"Of course, no problem. I'll fix that right away."

Sophie takes her scissors again and starts adjusting the cut. She **cuts** a few centimeters on top to create better balance.

"Like this, is it better?"

Luc looks in the mirror again. This time, he's much more satisfied.

"Yes, it's perfect now. Thank you for the adjustment."

"I'm glad you like it. Now, I'm going to use a bit of **wax** for the finishing."

Sophie applies a small amount of wax on her fingers and spreads it gently in Luc's hair, structuring the cut.

"There! What do you think?"

"It's very good, thank you. It's exactly what I wanted."

Sophie removes the cape and **brushes** the small hairs that fell on Luc's neck and shoulders.

"Would you like me to quickly show you how to recreate this style at home?"

"Yes, that would be very useful."

Sophie explains how to use a small amount of wax and how to arrange his hair in the morning.

"It's quite simple. You won't need to spend much time in front of the mirror."

"Perfect!"

Luc gets up and follows Sophie to the **counter** to pay.

"That's 28 euros, please," says the receptionist.

Luc pays and leaves a **tip** of 3 euros to Sophie to thank her for her patience and professionalism.

"Thank you very much, Sophie. I'll come back in a few weeks."

"With pleasure, Mr. Martin. Don't hesitate to ask specifically for me."

"I won't forget. Goodbye!"

Luc leaves the salon with his new haircut. He's happy to have **dared** to say he wasn't totally satisfied at the beginning. Sophie reacted well and made the necessary

adjustments. It's a good lesson: in France, as elsewhere, you shouldn't hesitate to **express** your preferences politely.

On the way home, he feels good and decides to take a selfie to send to his friends. In the evening, he receives a message from his colleague Émilie: "Your new haircut looks very good on you!"

Luc responds: "Thank you! It's at Elegance Hair. I recommend Sophie, she's very professional."

This experience at the hairdresser was more than just a simple haircut for Luc. It was also an opportunity to practice his French in an everyday situation and integrate a bit more into his new life in Nice.

What had started as a small **misunderstanding** turned into a positive experience. Luc learned the importance of communication, even when you're not sure of the technical terms.

And above all, he discovered that most professionals in France, like Sophie, are open to feedback and adjustments to satisfy their clients.

Comprehension Check

1. How long has Luc been living in Nice?
a) One year b) Two months c) Six months d) Three years
2. How does Luc explain to Sophie what he wants?
a) He describes it very precisely in French b) He shows her a photo in a magazine c) He draws it for her d) He shows her an old photo of himself
3. What problem does Luc notice after the cut?
a) The color isn't right b) The sides are too short compared to the top c) The top is too short d) There are uneven sections
4. How does Sophie react when Luc expresses his dissatisfaction?
a) She gets offended and refuses to make changes b) She suggests he come back another day c) She agrees to make the necessary adjustments d) She calls another hairdresser

5. What lesson does Luc learn from this experience?

a) You should never go to the hairdresser in France b) It's important to express your preferences politely c) You must always speak perfect French d) It's better to cut your own hair

Answers: 1.c, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.b

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