

Leçon 14: Le verbe *être*

Subject pronouns (Review from Leçon 2 & Entracte 3)

Words like **I, you, he, she, it, we, and they** are called *subject pronouns*. Singular pronouns refer to one person or object. Plural pronouns refer to more than one. The subject pronouns of French and English are as follows:

	Singular	Plural
1st person (the person speaking)	I = Je	We = Nous
2nd person (the person being spoken to)	You = Tu	You = Vous (Y'all)
3rd person (the person or thing being spoken about)	He = Il She = Elle	They = Ils Elles

NOTE:

Je becomes **J'** before vowels.

Le verbe *être* (Review from Leçon 2)

Être (to be) is the most frequently used verb in French. Remember the forms of **être** you learned back in Leon 2 (in the chart below).

Je SUIS	Nous SOMMES
Tu ES	Vous ÊTES
Il EST	Ils SONT
Elle EST	Elles SONT

A chart, like the one above, showing all the forms of a verb is called a **CONJUGATION**.

Verbs that don't follow a predictable pattern, like *être*, are called **IRREGULAR VERBS**.

NOTE:

(1) when the subject is not a pronoun, but is a noun (*Jean-Claude, le crayon, les pupitres*), use a third person form (depending on whether the noun is singular or plural).

Negatives

Compare the following affirmative (positive) and negative sentences:

Je suis américain.	Je ne suis pas français.
Tu es stupide.	Tu n'es pas intelligent.
Il est mon ami.	Il n'est pas ma soeur.
Elle est grande.	Elle n'est pas petite.
Nous sommes élèves.	Nous ne sommes pas professeurs.
Vous êtes sociable.	Vous n'êtes pas timide.
Ils sont blonds.	Ils ne sont pas bruns.
Elles sont au cinéma.	Elles ne sont pas à la maison.

Negatives in French follow this pattern:

SUBJECT + ne + VERB + pas (*ne* becomes *n'* before vowels)

Forming questions in French:

1. the simplest way ☐ use the tone of your voice to make a question ☐

ex. *Il est français?*

2. the simplest way in WRITING: the phrase «Est-ce que» added to a sentence turns it into a question (que becomes *qu'* before vowels):

ex. *Est-ce qu'il est français?*

3. a more complicated way ☐ inversion – switching a subject pronoun with the verb ☐

ex. *Est-il français?*

The complication: this has a number of special rules:

-You can only use this with pronouns, no nouns

-You don't use this with «Je»

-If you're using it with «il» or «elle» and the verb ends with a vowel, insert a «-t»

ex *A-t-il seize ans?*

4. for «tag» questions (isn't she, aren't they) add «n'est-ce pas»

ex. *Anne est sa soeur, n'est-ce pas?*