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LESSON GUIDE FRENCH PRONOUN “Y”

Lesson Highlights

How to use the pronoun Y in French

The French pronoun Y usually replaces a PLACE

Here are two examples to get started. You've probably seen these and wondered why the Y is there.

- On **y** va - Let's go (there)
- Il **y** a - There is / There are

Y refers to a previously mentioned or implied place.

***Y is not used to replace a person.** To replace people you need to use an **indirect object pronoun**: *me, te, lui, nous, vous, leur*

Y is normally translated by "there" in English. Many times we don't need to say "there" in English, but you can't avoid it in French. That's why you need this pronoun.

Y usually replaces a prepositional phrase beginning with a **preposition of location** like **à, chez, dans, sur, devant, derrière, à côté de**, etc.

Y replaces a preposition + a place or a thing.

Y does **NOT** replace any form of **DE + NOUN**.

Many verbs in French are followed by the preposition **À**, and it is with these verbs that you will often need to use the pronoun **Y**.

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Think of the pronoun Y as **usually referring to a place and meaning THERE** in English.

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Look for a preposition of location followed by a place or thing and **replace all of it with the pronoun Y**.

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Examples from the lesson

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All pronouns follow the same rules of placement.

Are you going to the bank today? No, I'm going (there) tomorrow.	Tu vas à la banque aujourd'hui ? Non, j'y vais demain. *note that the Y comes right before the verb in the present tense.
She's not going to the mall. She's not going (there).	Elle ne va pas au centre commercial . Elle n'y va pas . *note the placement of ne / pas when using the pronoun Y.
We're going to the store. Do you want to go (there)?	Nous allons au magasin . Tu veux y aller ? *note that when you have an infinitive in the sentence the Y comes right before it.
He was at Jean's house. He was there.	Il était chez Jean . Il y était . *note that even when using another tense like the imperfect the Y comes right before the verb.
They waited in front of the restaurant. They waited (there).	Ils ont attendu devant le restaurant . Ils y ont attendu . *note that in the passé composé the Y comes right before the helping verb
I didn't put the cards on the table. I didn't put them there.	Je n'ai pas mis les cartes sur la table . Je n'y ai pas mis les cartes. *note the placement of ne / pas when using Y with negation in the passé composé.

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LESSON GUIDE FRENCH PRONOUN “EN”

Lesson Highlights

EN refers to a noun that is introduced by:

- De / de la / du / des / d’
- Un, une or any other number
- Expressions of quantity like: un verre de / un kilo de / une bouteille de..
- Adverbs of quantity like: beaucoup de / peu de / assez de...

EN is normally translated by "some", "any" or "one" in English. Many times we don't need to say "some" or "of them" in English, but you can't avoid it in French. That's why you need this pronoun.

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Look for any form of DE followed by a noun and replace the noun with EN.

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EN will often refer to QUANTITIES.

Nous voudrions 2 **baguettes**.

We would like 2 baguettes.

Nous **en** voudrions 2.

We would like 2 of them.

***Note that the EN comes right before the verb in the present tense.**

***Note that the number needs to be repeated.**

Je ne mange pas **de frites**.

I'm not eating any fries.

Je n'**en** mange pas.

I'm not eating any of them.

***Note the placement of ne / pas when using the pronoun EN.**

***Note that the form of "de" that introduces the noun also gets replaced.**

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LESSON GUIDE FRENCH PRONOUN “EN”

Examples from the lesson

Tu vas servir **du champagne**?

Are you going to serve champagne?

Tu vas **en** servir?

Are you going to serve some of that?

***Note that when you have an infinitive in the sentence EN comes right before it.**

Vous achetez beaucoup **de citrons**?

Were you buying a lot of lemons?

Vous **en** achetez beaucoup?

Were you buying a lot of them?

***Note that even when using another tense like the imperfect the EN comes right before the verb.**

***Note that you have to repeat the word *beaucoup* or any other adverb of quantity.**

J'ai bu 8 verres **d'eau**.

I drank 8 glasses of water.

J'**en** ai bu 8 verres.

I drank 8 glasses of it.

***Note that in the passé composé the EN comes right before the helping verb.**

***Note that you have to repeat the quantity and the expression of quantity.**

Il n'a pas voulu **de poulet**.

He didn't want any chicken.

Il n'**en** a pas voulu.

He didn't want any of it.

***Note the placement of ne / pas when using EN with negation in the passé composé.**

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STRANGE WAY TO USE “Y” Sometimes “Y” can mean “IT”

The French pronoun **Y** can also replace a **THING**

Y refers to a previously mentioned or implied **thing** when that thing is preceded by **À, AU, À LA, AUX, À L’**

***This can be confusing because you will be tempted to replace a thing by a **direct object pronoun**. Use direct object pronouns when the thing is not preceded by À.**

- Penser à something (like an idea)
 - Je pense à ton idée.
 - J’y pense.
- Réfléchir à something (like a problem)
 - Tu réfléchis au problème?
 - Tu y réfléchis?
- Arriver à faire something (like homework)
 - Il arrive à faire ses devoirs.
 - Il y arrive.
- S’habituer à something (like living in France)
 - Je m’habitue à vivre en France.
 - Je m’y habitue.

- Réussir à faire something (like understanding)
 - Je réussis à comprendre ce qu’il me dit.
 - J’y réussis.
- S’intéresser à something (like history)
 - Nous nous intéressons à l’histoire.
 - Nous nous y intéressons.
- Répondre à something (like an email)
 - Vous répondez à son email.
 - Vous y répondez.

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STRANGE WAY TO USE “EN” Sometimes “EN” can mean “IT”

The French pronoun **EN** can also replace a **THING**

EN replaces a **THING** that has been introduced by a verb and that is preceded by: **de** / **de la** / **du** / **des** / **d'**

Many French verbs are followed by the preposition **DE**

- Avoir peur de quelque chose / to be afraid of something
 - J'ai peur des serpents.
 - J'en ai peur.
- Avoir besoin de quelque chose / to need something
 - Tu as besoin d'argent?
 - Tu en as besoin?
- Avoir envie de quelque chose / to desire or want something
 - Il a envie de manger une pizza.
 - Il en a envie.
- Avoir l'intention de quelque chose / to have the intention of doing something
 - Nous avons l'intention de partir en vacances.
 - Nous en avons l'intention.

- Rêver de faire quelque chose / to dream of doing something
 - Elles rêvent de faire le tour du monde.
 - Elles en rêvent.
- Se souvenir de faire quelque chose / to remember something
 - Je me souviens de ce restaurant.
 - Je m'en souviens.
- Profiter de faire quelque chose / to take advantage of something
 - Tu profites de tes vacances.
 - Tu en profites.
- Se servir de quelque chose / to use something
 - Elle se sert de ma voiture.
 - Elle s'en sert.