



Progrès, pas perfection

Beat the French Freeze

A quickstart guide for English speakers to stay calm, be understood, and keep conversations flowing *en français*.

The Two Goals

Se faire comprendre and Comprendre.
Everything else is a bonus.

Rescue, don't freeze

Use simple frames like "C'est un truc pour..." when the exact word won't come.

Lifelines

"Comment dire... ?", "Ce que j'essaie de dire, c'est...", and more.





Vous êtes en train de lire Partie 2 sur 2

The French Confidence Starter Kit



The Mindset Foundation

Discover the psychological beliefs keeping you stuck



Beat the French Freeze (this guide)

Learn the rescue phrases and other tactics to keep you talking when you blank

These guides work together.
Read both for maximum impact.



Bienvenue

Bonjour,

If you've got a head full of French but freeze when it's time to speak, you're not alone—and it's not your fault. As English speakers, we've always had an "escape hatch" back to English. We weren't forced to build the resourcefulness muscles that real conversation needs.

This mini-guide gives you a simple plan to handle blanks, reduce pressure, and keep the conversation moving—today.

— Alex, *French in Plain Sight*



The Two Goals

In any French conversation, there are only two things you have to do to consider it a successful interaction.

Se faire comprendre

Make yourself understood

Comprendre l'autre

Understand the other person

Seriously! Everything else is a bonus. La cerise sur le gâteau 🍒.

The Mindset You Need: Aim for connection, not perfection.

Repeat after me

*"Je vise à me faire comprendre
et à comprendre avant toute
autre chose."*





Why Your Mind Goes Blank

It's not a memory problem—it's a strategy problem. In English, you naturally describe around gaps: *"the thingy for opening wine."* In French, perfectionism makes you hunt for the one "correct" word. When it doesn't appear, panic does.

The fix: stop searching, start rescuing. Use simple frames that keep you talking while your brain catches up.





Rescue Yourself

Use any one of these to bypass a block.



Describe the function

- « C'est un truc pour ouvrir les bouteilles. »
- « C'est une chose/une appli/un appareil pour... »
- « On l'utilise pour... »

Combine #1
and #2 for
extra clarity.

Define in simple words

- C'est quand/ce que/une sorte de + simple idea.
- « C'est quand on... » (décrit une situation)
- « C'est une sorte de dessert très froid... » (glace/sorbet)

Ask for the word

- « Comment on dit ... en français ? »
- « Comment s'appelle ... en français ? »
- « Le mot m'échappe. C'est... » + petite description.

Micro-drill with Alex

Pick 3 everyday objects around you.
Describe each with
« C'est un truc pour... »





Lifeline Phrases

As well as those, keep these handy. It's so challenging to pull these out when we are struggling to communicate but they make all the difference when it comes to letting the other person know why you're suddenly not flowing.

Flow lifelines

- « *Ce que j'essaie de dire, c'est....* » (Rephrase)
- « *Attends, je reformule...* » (Rephrase)
- « *D'accord, donc si je comprends bien...* » (Summarise what they said)

Repair lifelines

- « *Le mot m'échappe, mais c'est un truc pour...* » (Instead of silence, describe)
- « *Comment on dit... déjà ?* » (Ask for help. 'Déjà' just makes it more natural.)
- « *Je ne connais pas le mot précis, mais...* » (Prepare them for a description)

Boundary lifelines (avoid switching to English)

- « *On peut rester en français, même si je fais des erreurs ?* »
- « *Si je bloque, je décrirai autour. Merci de me laisser essayer.* »
- « *Si je ne trouve pas le mot, je te le décris—tu me diras le mot après.* »

Remember, it's about making yourself understood, and understanding the other. Therefore, saying these perfectly is not the goal. They are tools.



5 minutes

Ready-to-Speak Warm-up

1

Breathe 5 slow breaths (45s): In through the nose, out through the mouth.

2

Set intention (15s): *"I'm here to connect, get my point across, and understand enough to keep it moving."*

3

Mouth wake-up (60s): Exaggerate French vowels : a-e-i-o-u; read a short sentence aloud twice.

4

Lifeline rehearsal (90s): Say each out loud once with feeling:
« *Ce que j'essaie de dire, c'est...* », « *C'est un truc pour...* »,
« *Comment on dit... ?* »

5

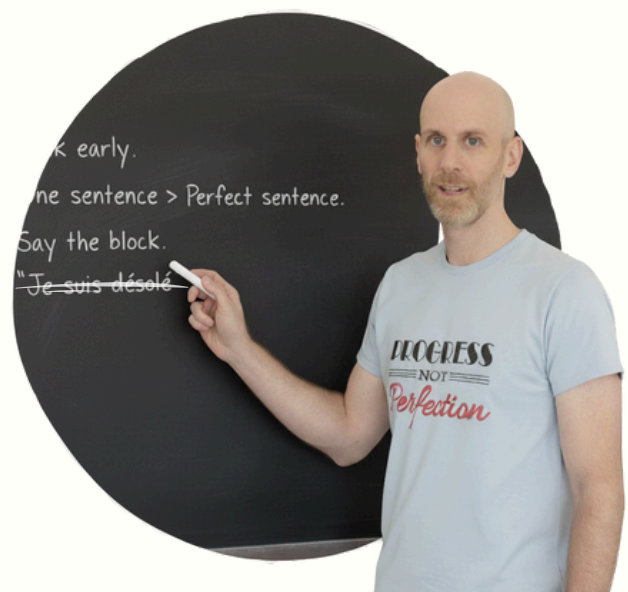
One scenario (90s): Describe one object or need. Don't pause to "remember"—keep talking.





7 Tiny Rules for Confidence

- 1 Talk early in the chat:** say something small within the first 10 seconds.
- 2 One messy sentence is better than a perfect sentence unsaid.**
- 3 Label the gap, then move:** *"Le mot m'échappe... C'est un truc pour..."*
- 4 Don't apologise for existing and doing your best;** smile and continue.
- 5 Check-in:** *"Ça va ? Tu me suis ?"* (Ok? Following me?)
- 6 Repeat once, then progress:** if they don't get it after a rephrase, switch tactic.
- 7 Learn after, not during:** note the missing word later. Stay present.





Micro-Tracker

Print me out as many times as you need.

Today's Chat

Context:

Did I achieve the Two Goals?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Partly

Lifeline phrases used:

One win (tiny counts):

One word to learn later:

Weekly Reflection

Next time I will:

How many conversations did I start?

Which lifeline felt most natural?

One source of friction to remove next week:



Quick Scenarios

Some plug-and-play example phrases in contexts you're likely to find yourself in.

Au magasin (at a shop)

« *Bonjour, je cherche un truc pour réparer...* (décris le problème) »

« *C'est une sorte de...* »

« *Comment on dit... ?* »

Lors d'une rencontre (meeting someone)

« *Enchanté(e). Je suis en train d'apprendre le français donc si je bloque, j'essaie de me débrouiller—ça te va ?* » (Nice to meet you. I'm learning French so if I get stuck, I try to figure it out—is that ok with you?)

« *Attends, je reformule... Ce que j'essaie de dire, c'est...* » (Hold on, I'll rephrase... What I'm trying to say is...)

Au téléphone (on a call)

« *Si la connexion coupe, je répète autrement. Tu me dis si tu m'entends mal.* » (If the connection cuts out, I'll repeat it another way. You tell me if you can't hear me properly.)

« *D'accord, donc si je comprends bien...* » (Ok, so, if I understand correctly...)



Your First Win Challenge

In the next 24 hours:

- Use *"C'est un truc pour..."* + a description once.
- Use *"Ce que j'essaie de dire, c'est..."* once.
- Ask *"Comment on dit... ?"* once.
- Check in once with *« Ça va ? Tu me suis ? »* once.

Then:

Write down one sentence you were proud of—even if it was messy. Develop that mindset that shows self-appreciation.



Vas-y, tu vas y arriver !

Go for it, you can do it!



You've completed Guide 2 of the French Confidence Starter Kit

What's Next: The French Conversation Rescue Kit

Quick note: This is Part 2 of 2. If you haven't read "The Mindset Foundation" PDF yet, it reveals the psychological blocks keeping you stuck—the perfect companion to the tactical rescue phrases you just learned.

Or, if you're ready to turn these tools into real conversation skills...

If this mini-guide helped, the Rescue Kit turns moves into reflexes—for real conversations.

What you get

- Module 1: 5-minute "Ready-to-Speak" warm-up
 - Plus fillable worksheet
- Module 2: The "Never Get Stuck Again" rescue method with prompts
 - Plus printable Conversation Rescue Cheat Sheet
- Module 3: Real-world conversation breakdowns with timestamps
 - Plus printable Rescue Trinity Challenge worksheet
- Audio versions + complete transcripts
- 30-day "Connection, Not Perfection" guarantee

What my students are saying



I felt able to hold a conversation with 'les français'. Less shy about my French, able to work around blocking, having no fear.



For someone like me, who has lived in France for 11 years but struggled to hold a simple conversation in French, it has been perfect.

Regular price: ~~69€~~

Get Instant Access
for 59€



Instant access. 30-day guarantee.



Appendix

French Filler Words That Buy You Time (And Make You Sound Native)

Use these tiny phrases to hold the floor while your brain catches up. Mix and match. Keep your tone light and natural.

Ben / Eh ben... — “well.../so...”

- *Ben... je ne suis pas sûr. On peut vérifier.*
- *Eh ben, ça alors !*

Euh... — “uh...”

- *Euh... comment dire... j’ai oublié le mot.*
- *Euh, attends une seconde.*

Voilà — “there you go / so”

- *Voilà, c’est exactement ça.*
- *Et voilà, on a tout.*

En fait — “actually”

- *En fait, j’avais mal compris.*
- *En fait... c’est plus simple que ça.*

Alors — “so / well / then”

- *Alors, on fait quoi maintenant ?*
- *Alors... si je comprends bien...*

Du coup — “so / as a result”

- *Du coup, on a pris le train.*
- *Du coup... j’ai laissé tomber.*

Bah / Ben oui / Ben non — casual “well/yeah/no”

- *Bah oui, bien sûr.*
- *Ben non, pas vraiment.*

Tu vois / Vous voyez — “you know / you see”

- *Tu vois, c’est pas si compliqué.*
- *Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ?*

Genre — “like / kind of”

- *C’était genre impossible.*
- *Genre... tu pourrais venir vers 8h ?*

Bref — “anyway / long story short”

- *Bref, on le fait demain.*
- *Bref... j’ai changé d’avis.*



Appendix

French Filler Words That Buy You Time (And Make You Sound Native)

Use these tiny phrases to hold the floor while your brain catches up. Mix and match. Keep your tone light and natural.

Combos

Eh ben... alors...

- *Eh ben... alors, on fait simple et on se retrouve demain.*

Euh... du coup...

- *Euh... du coup, je proposerais une autre date.*

En fait... voilà.

- *En fait... voilà, c'est ce que je voulais dire depuis le début.*

Bah... tu vois...

- *Bah... tu vois, c'est pas si urgent que ça.*

Alors... bref...

- *Alors... bref, on garde le plan A et on avance.*

Mini-practice

- _____ je pense qu'on peut repousser à demain.
- _____ j'ai perdu le mot, mais c'est l'outil pour couper les légumes.
- _____ on fait comme tu préfères.

Don't stress too much about the rules for each one. Throw them around in different orders and you'll sound more French.