

French For Gringos Lesson 3 Numbers 120 2026 10 04

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Maya: Bonjour, and welcome back to French for Gringos. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. You've got greetings and good manners. Today: numbers one through twenty. You'll need these for prices, hotel rooms, train platforms, and telling the waiter exactly how many croissants you want.

Maya: Let's start with one through five. Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq. That's uh(n), duh, trwah, kah-truh, sah(n)k. Tip: un is a nasal vowel, uh(n), hum it through the nose. In deux, the x is silent, so it's just duh. And cinq ends with a nasal plus a little k, sah(n)k.

Devon: Six through ten: six, sept, huit, neuf, dix. That's sees, seht, weet, nuhf, dees.

Tip: six is just sees, easy. Huit starts with a w sound, weet, not hoo-it. And dix is dees, with a z sound, never dicks.

Maya: Eleven through fifteen are their own special words. Onze, douze, treize, quatorze, quinze. That's oh(n)z, dooz, trehz, kah-tohrz, kah(n)z. Tip: onze starts with a nasal, oh(n)z. Douze is just dooz. And watch out for quinze, kah(n)z: nasal in the middle, and don't confuse it with the English word fifteen sounding anything like it.

Devon: Sixteen through twenty: seize, dix-sept, dix-huit, dix-neuf, vingt. That's sehzh, dee-seht, dee-zeweeet, dee-znuhf, vah(n). Tip: from seventeen to nineteen, it's literally ten plus the number, glued together. And notice the liaison in dix-huit, dee-zeweeet: the x of dix flows into a z sound before the vowel. That smooth linking is called liaison, and it's music to French ears.

Maya: And twenty is vingt, vah(n). Nasal vowel, no hard t, just vah(n). So a twenty in a price is vingt euros, vah(n) uh-roh.

Devon: Let's demo. Scene: a market in Provence. I'm the vendor, Maya's buying croissants.

Maya: Boh(n)-zhoor, and trwah croissants, seel voo pleh.

Devon: Trwah croissants. Neuf uh-roh, seel voo pleh.

Maya: Voilà Mehr-see!

Devon: Duh ree-ah(n), of course!

Maya: Cultural note for today: in France, phone numbers are read out in pairs, like sixty-two, forty-eight, instead of digit by digit. And when you count on your fingers, the French start with the thumb as one, then the index as two. Watch for it. You'll look like a local.

Devon: Recap drill. Say them back to us. One: un, uh(n), the number one.

Maya: Two: vingt, vah(n), the number twenty.

Devon: Three: dix-huit, dee-zeweeet, the number eighteen, with that lovely liaison. Numbers unlocked. À demain!