

Jean K. Mathieu

STATISTICS  
TO  
LEARN FRENCH  
2X FASTER

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## **How to learn French quickly and efficiently using statistics?**

Teaching French is my job, but I must admit it's not easy. Some people say there's no shortcut to learning a language. As much as this may be true, there is only one, and most efficient way, which is practice or immersion. But many French learners study in textbooks. French people just speak in a different way every day. Whereas its word, expressions or structures, of everyday spoken French, is often very different, from what you expect. Not only is the quality different but also the quantity.

It's not possible to teach every single rule or reason. French has many exceptions. Then, it's necessary to find a shortcut, or some tricks to stay motivated. For example, It is a common idea that we only use only 3000 words or 10% of the 10000+ we know.

Using Gauss curve, we can say that 80% of what you can expect to listen in France is spoken French, 10% will be very formal and 10% slang. I think the same applies to Pareto law. 80% of what you learn in books will be different in daily French. This book is all about French language and statistics. Whereas we can't only rely on statistics, you can leapfrog many things and find your way thanks to it. Thanks to my experience with my students and as a native, I know most of the time we only use a part that we are taught in textbooks.

Finally, there is at last one thing about statistics that depends on you. As I always tell my students, better to learn to understand spoken French because it's the structure you will encounter the most. This way, you can speak a proper formal French with all the liaisons and negations, etc. but

still be able to understand people. Spoken French is the real French that we speak in France. Written/Formal French is more passive (it means we can understand it but we might not be able to speak it easily). Focusing on Spoken French can save you a lot of time. That being said I'm sure this book will help you to focus on what's necessary and useful.

**Jean K. Mathieu**

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## About Me

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Teaching French is my job, and I specialized in pronunciation and exam/interview preparation.

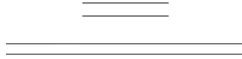
For several years, I have helped French learners to achieve their goal, [succeed the DELF B2](#), pass interviews with French recruiters or universities, and help French learners to travel in France with more confidence.

My only concern is to be the most effective for you and that's why I focus only on your goal. The most important for me is that you can actually receive something more than just French language knowledge. Since language always implies a communication situation ; I have this in mind when I teach you.

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MORE ABOUT FRENCH LANGUAGE on [itsfrenchjuice.com](https://itsfrenchjuice.com)

# STRUCTURE STATISTICS



## Suffixes and prefixes

FRENCH IS A LANGUAGE that is full of prefixes and suffixes derived from Latin and Greek. If you want to learn to speak French and save yourself time and energy, you need to learn how to use prefixes and suffixes.

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# Prefixes

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## WHAT IS A PREFIX?

A prefix (affix) is a word, or letters placed at the beginning of another word (a base word) to adjust or qualify its usage or meaning. The opposite of prefix is the suffix.

Prefixes are elements that when added before a noun, adjective or verb, can build a new word with a new meaning, without changing the grammatical value. Some prefixes change the meaning to the opposite.

Example : *probable* ==> **im** + *adjectif* = **improbable**

The following shows the most common cases with some examples.

### Verbs prefixes

The main verb prefixes are DÉ-, RE-, EN-

DÉ-

DÉ- (oppose a prefixed verb with a simple verb):

Examples:

*Faire - défaire*

*Boucher - déboucher*

*Composer - décomposer*

*Coudre - découdre*

Before a vowel or a muted H it gives dés- and before a S it gives des-

*désabonner, déshabiller*

*desserrer, desservir*

DÉ- (negative prefix replace the base prefix)

Examples:

*accrocher/décrocher*

*accroître/décroître*

*agrafer/dégrafer*

*attacher/détacher*

R- /RE- /RÉ-

r-, re- ou ré- (scientific version) indicates a repetition, a restart:

re- + consonne: *rebâtir, remettre, repousser, recouper, retransmettre, restructurable*

ré- ou r- + voyelle: *réapprendre, réunir, raccompagner, réinventer, réexamen*

ré- +consonne: in this case, the simple verb and the one with prefix have different meanings: *réclamer, réfléchir, se réjouir*

EN- /EM- has the meaning of <dans>

*déballer/emballer*

*déchaîner/enchaîner*

*déménager/emménager*

EN- /EM- has the meaning of <far from, entering a certain state>

*emporter*

*s'enfuir*

*s'envoler*

*embellir*

*s'endormir*

*enlaidir*

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## **ADJECTIVES PREFIXES**

### **I - Le préfixe in-**

Adding IN- before an adjective (e.g. *visible*) we get the opposite (e.g. *invisible*). These are “antonyms” which are word with an opposite meaning (contrary to synonyms).

IN- is a negative prefix that we add before an adjective:

*certain* → *incertain*.

This prefix change according to the word right after:

- before l, it becomes il-
- before m, b or p it becomes im-
- before r it becomes ir-

So the opposite of *lisible* is *illisible*. The opposite of *modéré* is *immodéré*, the opposite of *récupérable* is *irrécupérable*.

## II - Le préfixe a-

The prefix a- comes from Greek and means « not » or « without ». Then, “*apatride*” is someone without “*patrie*”, who doesn’t have any “*patrie*”. Someone “*asocial*” is someone living outside from the society (not in the social life).

ad- + c,f,g,l,p,t (scientific version) = leads to...

= *affaiblir, aggraver, allonger, apporter, apparaître, attrister, attire*

find a complete list of French prefixes here:

[https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:French\\_prefixes](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:French_prefixes)

# Suffixes

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**W**hat Are Suffixes?

A suffix is a word, or letters placed at the end of another word to adjust or qualify its usage or meaning.

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## VERBS SUFFIXES

Express the idea of to do, to drive to something, to become, to change to a certain state.

-er / -ier, -eler=

*calmer (rendre calme)*

*différencier (la différence)*

*ciseler (le ciseau)*

-ifier gives the nominal suffixe -ification

*amplification, clarification..*

-ifier, -iser =

*amplifier (agrandir)*

*clarifier (rendre clair)*

*simplifier (rendre simple)*

*actualiser (rendre actuel)*

*favoriser (donner un avantage)*

*sécuriser (rendre plus sûr)*

-iser gives the nominal suffixe -isation

*généralisation, organisation, utilisation*

-ir =

*blanchir, noircir, pâlir*

*épaissir (rendre épais)*

s'épaissir (devenir épais)

-ir gives the nominal suffixe -issement

agrandissement , éclaircissement

### **Adjectives suffixes**

They can be added to a noun, a verb or another adjective.

The new adjective means "kind of, sort of, somewhat" plus whatever the original adjective means.

-ain/-aine et -ain/ -ine : *humain(e)*

-aire : *alimentaire, bancaire...*

-al/-ale, -eau(or -el+voyelle)/ -elle,-el/-elle: *amical, nouveau, partiel...*

-eur/-euse: *bagarreur/bagarreuse , trompeur/trompeuse*

-eux/-euse, -ieux/-ieuse: *amoureux-amour/douloureux-douleur/curieux -curiosité*

-ic/-ique,-iaue,-atique: *public /publique , catégorique*

-ien/-ienne: *italien / quotidien / mozartien*

-ier/-iere: *infirmier/infirmière*

Find a complete list of French suffixes here:

[https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:French suffixes](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:French_suffixes)

# Nominalization

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Nominalization makes it possible to build a noun from a verb or an adjective. It's useful especially in written French; where it can give a lot of information in a short time.

Example :

*partir → le départ*

*chaud → la chaleur*

If built from a verb, most ending are -age, -ation, -ment, -sion, tion, -uction, -ure.

age:

*passer → le passage*

*laver → le lavage*

- ation :

*démolir → la démolition*

*dériver → la dérivation*

- ment :

*acquitter → l'acquittement*

*détourner → le détournement*

- sion :

*exploser → l'explosion*

- tion :

*protéger → la protection*

*détruire → la destruction*

- uction :

*déduire → la déduction*

- ure :

*brûler* → *la brûlure*

*fermer* → *fermeture*

*ouvrir* → *l'ouverture*

If built from an adjective, most ending are *-ance, -ence, -esse*,

*-ie, -ise, -té, -eur*

- ance/ence :

*élégant* → *l'élégance*

*absent* → *l'absence*

*violent* → *violence*

*abondant* → *abondance*

- esse :

*paresseux* → *la paresse*

*large* → *largesse*

- ie :

*démocrate* → *la démocratie*

- ise :

*bête* → *la bêtise*

*franc* → *franchise*

- té/ité :

*beau* → *la beauté*

*bon* → *bonté*

*précaire* → *précarité*

- eur :

*pâle* → *pâleur*

But several nominalizations are possible, for example

*doser* :

- *dosage* : *action de doser.*

- *doseur* : *appareil permettant de faire des dosages.*

*blanc* :

- *blanchissage* : *action de nettoyer, de blanchir le linge.*

- *blanchiment* : action de recouvrir de blanc ; blanchir de l'argent sale.

agir :

- *action* : ce que fait quelqu'un ou quelque chose.

- *agissement* : suite de procédés ou de manœuvres condamnables.

abattre :

- *abattage* : action d'abattre, de faire tomber.

- *abattement* : action d'abattre, de diminuer.

- *abatteur* : celui qui abat.

- *abattoir* : bâtiment où l'on abat les animaux.

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# Collocations

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## WHAT ARE COLLOCATIONS?

In French, collocations are called « cooccurrences ». I always thought that some words are really good friends, but I discovered this concept not a long time ago. Collocations are not idioms, but just words that we tend to put together. It's particularly true when someone begins a sentence; then you know what's going to come next, and even more when it's written in French. Written French is full of implied codes that all French understand but don't know how to explain (eg. passive vocabulary). We just don't know why, we just say it sounds better...

e.g.

*demander une question → poser une question*

*dire une nouvelle → annoncer une nouvelle*

French from medias is a very specific kind of French, and it's where you can find the most collocations. Medias all speak the same « dialect ». I'm pretty sure every language use collocations. Of course, because it will be too hard to think of every word every time you say something. So there are patterns almost everywhere; although we don't see them at first. Usage of collocation is very useful to understand or produce written French (articles, newspapers, novels...).

There are different ways to use French collocations:

### **1. verb + noun**

## **2. noun + adjective**

## **3. verb + adverbial phrase**

### **Verb + noun**

At first, there are verbs that are systematically used with certain nouns.

*faire une annonce, passer une annonce*

*faire un appel, lancer un appel*

*faire ses bagages, boucler/plier ses bagages*

*faire un catalogue, dresser un catalogue*

*faire un métier, exercer/pratiquer un métier*

In some cases, it's about the nounification of verbs:

*apporter une aide : aider*

*pousser un aboiement : aboyer*

*formuler une accusation : accuser*

*accorder une amnistie : amnistier*

*donner son approbation : approuver*

We can also start with the noun and get the most common verbs related:

*contrat: conclure, décrocher, dénoncer, empocher, emporter, entériner, exécuter, honorer, négocier, passer, rédiger, remplir, renégocier, résilier, rompre, signer.*

There are also the structure with « noun + intransitive verb »

*une flamme vacille*

*un fleuve gronde*

*une explosion retentit*

*l'Histoire bégaye*

### **Noun + adjective**

The combination « noun + adjective » is one of the most common. For example the noun « précision » is often followed by one of the following adjectives: