3 MINUTE FRENCH COURSE 13
RECAP NOTES

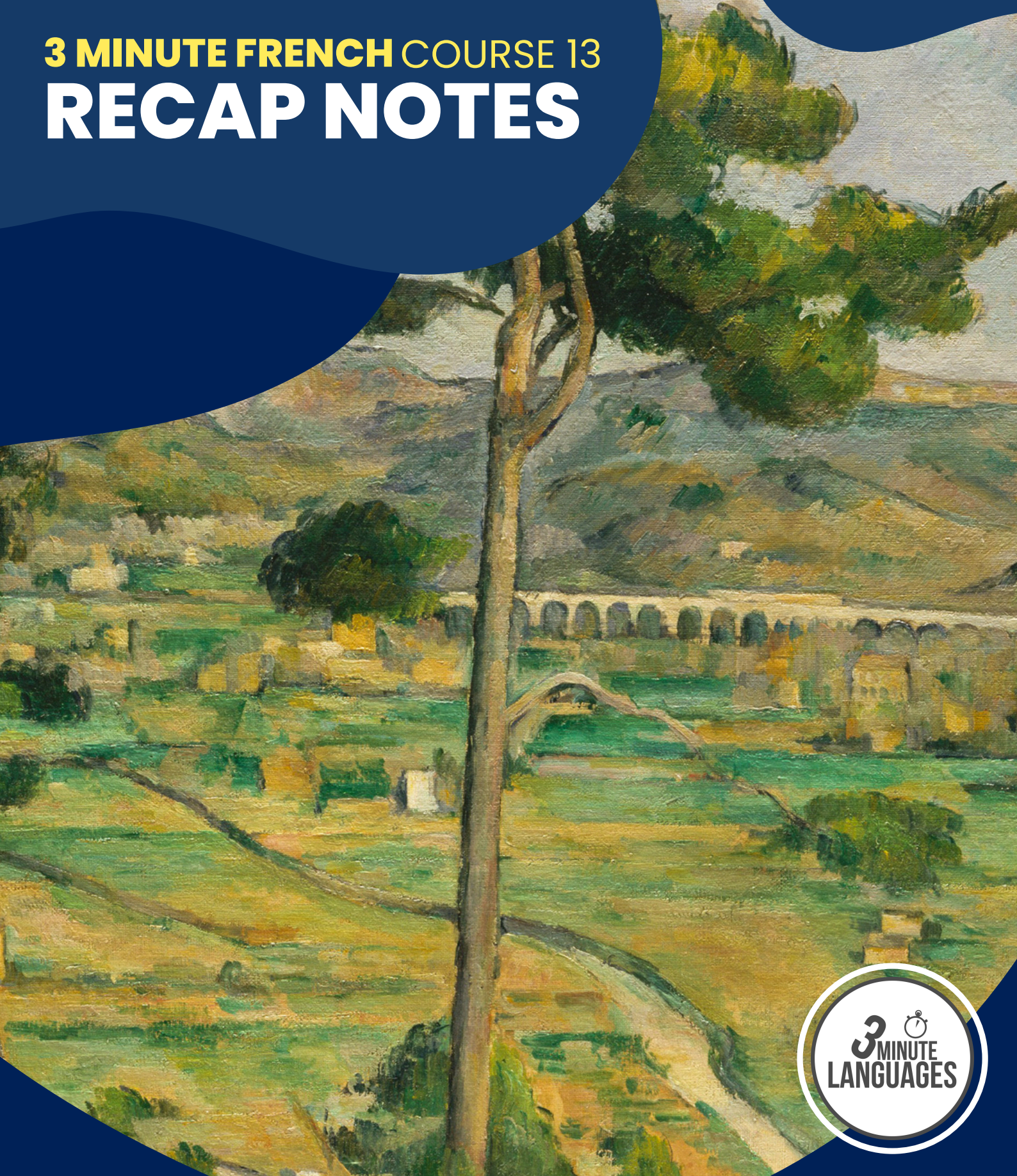# Table of
CONTENTS

WELL

The adverb "**bien**" means "**well**" in French. You can use it in the same way we use "**well**" in English.

il chante très bien - *he sings very well*

If you want to use "**bien**" with a verb in the past tense, you place it in between the auxiliary verb and the past participle.

ils ont bien joué - *they played well*
j'ai bien travaillé - *I worked well*

SPEAK *GOOD* FRENCH

If you want to say that somebody speaks good French, or good English, you have to say it a little differently in French.

elle parle bien le français
she speaks good French
(Literally: she speaks well the French)

So, you literally have to say that **somebody speaks well the language**. The same is true if you want to say that they speak the language badly. You have to literally say that **somebody speaks badly the language**.

il parle mal l'anglais
he speaks bad English
(Literally: he speaks badly the English)

MEILLEUR VS. MIEUX

The two words "meilleur" and "mieux" both mean "better", but one is an adjective and the other is an adverb.

meilleur - *better (adjective - describes nouns)*
mieux - *better (adverb - describes verbs)*

le vin rouge est meilleur
the red wine is better

Pierre chante mieux
Pierre sings better

You can use the word "**que**" to mean "**than**" if you want to make comparisons.

le vin rouge est meilleur que le vin blanc
the red wine is better than the white wine

Marie chante mieux que Pierre
Marie sings better than Pierre

LE MIEUX

We've already seen that you can put the word "**le**" in front of "**meilleur**"

meilleur - *better*
le meilleuer - *the best*

You can do the same with "**mieux**" to describe who does something the best

mieux - *better*
le mieux - *the best*

Pierre joue le mieux
Pierre plays the best

Marie travaille le mieux
Marie works the best

SUPERLATIVES

Comparatives are used to say that something is more or less than something else using the word "**plus**" in French.

le restaurant est plus grand que l'hôtel
the restaurant is bigger than the hotel
(the restaurant is more big than the hotel)

The superlative is used to say that something is the most something. To form it in French, you put "**le plus**" in front of an adjective. In English, sometimes you put "**est**" on the end of an adjective, and other times you put "**the most**" in front of it.

le plus grand - *the biggest*
le plus délicieux - *the most delicious*

There are a couple of irregular comparatives and superlatives (**bon** and **mauvais**), but I'll put them all in the table below along with some normal examples:

adjective	comparative	superlative
grand *big*	plus grand *bigger*	le plus grand *the biggest*
petit *small*	plus petit *smaller*	le plus petit *the smallest*
cher *expensive*	plus cher *more expensive*	le plus cher *the most expensive*
bon *good*	meilleur *better*	le meilleur *the best*
mauvais *big*	pire *bigger*	le pire *the biggest*

BIGGEST *IN* PARIS

If you want to say something like "**the biggest in Paris**" or "**the best wine in France**", you have to use the word "**de**" (*of*) instead of saying "**in**"

le plus grand bâtiment de Paris
the biggest building in Paris

le meilleur vin de France
the best wine in France

la montre la plus chère du monde
the most expensive watch in the world

INSTEAD OF...

The phrase "**au lieu de**" means "**instead of**" in French, and you can place a noun or a verb after it. In English, the verb gets an "**ing**" on the end, whereas in French, you just use an **infinitive**.

au lieu de jouer au foot
instead of playing football

au lieu du vin rouge
instead of the red wine

au lieu d'aller en France
instead of going to France

je veux ceci au lieu de cela
I want this one instead of that one

il a acheté le manteau au lieu de la veste
he bought the coat instead of the jacket

je suis allé à Paris au lieu de Marseille
I went to Paris instead of Marseille

IT MEANS

If you want to say, "**it means**" in French, you use the phrase, "**ça veut dire**".

ça veut dire - *it means / that means*

ça veut dire "maison" en italien
it means "house" in Italian

Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?
What does it mean? / What does that mean?

VOULOIR DIRE

The combination of the verbs "**vouloir**" and "**dire**" are how you say, "**to mean**" in French. Literally, they mean, "**want to say**"

ce n'est pas ce que je veux dire
it isn't what I mean

Que voulez-vous dire?
What do you mean?

Je ne comprends pas ce qu'il voulait dire
I don't understand what he meant

je ne voulais pas dire ça
I didn't mean that

S'ÉCRIRE

If you want to ask how something is spelled in French, you have to literally ask, "How does it write itself?". You use the verb "s'écrire"

Comment ça s'écrit?
How is it spelled?

ça s'écrit M-A-R-I-E
it's spelled M-A-R-I-E

L'ALPHABET

Here's how you pronounce the alphabet in French:

a	*"ah"*	**n**	*"en"*
b	*"beh"*	**o**	*"oh"*
c	*"seh"*	**p**	*"peh"*
d	*"deh"*	**q**	*"koo"*
e	*"eugh"*	**r**	*"air"*
f	*"eff"*	**s**	*"ess"*
g	*"jsheh"*	**t**	*"teh"*
h	*"ash"*	**u**	*"ooh"*
i	*"ee"*	**v**	*"veh"*
j	*"jshee"*	**w**	*"doobleugh-veh"*
k	*"kah"*	**x**	*"eeks"*
l	*"el"*	**y**	*"eegrek"*
m	*"em"*	**z**	*"zed"*

3

ADVERBS & ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are used to describe nouns, whereas adverbs are used to describe verbs, or actions. In English, to turn an adjective into an adverb, you can very often simply add the letters "**ly**" to the end.

In French, it's almost as simple. You have to take the feminine version of the adjective, and then add the letters "**ment**" to the end.

adjective	adverb
rapide *quick*	rapidement *quickly*
lent *slow*	lentement *slowly*
possible *possible*	possiblement *possibly*
sûr *sure*	sûrement *surely*
heureux *happy*	heureusement *happily / luckily*

In both English and French, there are adverbs that don't have the usual adverb endings.

bien - *well*
mal - *badly*
mieux - *better*
pire - *worse*
vite - *fast*
volontiers - *gladly*
surtout - *especially / above all*

ACTUELLEMENT

The adverb "**actuellement**" might look like the English word, "**actually**", but it actually means "**currently**"

actuellement - *currently*

In French, the word "**actuellement**" tends to go at the start of the sentence, whereas in English, it can also go in the middle.

actuellement, je suis à Paris
I'm currently in Paris

Actuellement, où es-tu?
Where are you currently?

ACTUALLY

If you want to say, "**actually**" in French, you say, "**en fait**". Literally, "**en fait**" means "**in fact**"

c'est en fait très bon
it's actually very good

en fait, il n'est pas médecin; il est vétérinaire
actually, he isn't a doctor; he's a vet

en fait, il pleut demain
actually, it's raining tomorrow

The noun "**un fait**" means "**a fact**"

ça c'est un fait
that's a fact

dites-moi un fait intéressant
tell me an interesting fact

4

LOCATION

We learnt lots of phrases that talk about something's location. Now, there are slight differences you need to consider depending on whether you use these words by themselves or with a noun.

For example:

dedans - *inside*
dans - *inside + noun*

je l'ai laissé dedans
I left it inside

je l'ai laissé dans la maison
I left it in the house

Here are the location words and phrases we learnt in course 13:

English	by itself	with a noun
inside	dedans	dans
outside	dehors	en dehors de
on top	dessus	sur
underneath	dessous	sous
below	en dessous	en dessous de
above	au-dessus	au-dessus de

mon sac est dedans
my bag is inside

la clé est dans mon sac
the key is in my bag

Pierre est dehors
Pierre is outside

Pierre est en dehors du café
Pierre is outside the café

ABOVE & BELOW

If you're reading a document, sometimes, you might see something like, "see above" or "read the extract below". To say "above" and "below" in these instances, you would say:

ci-dessus - *above*
ci-dessous - *below*

les détails sont ci-dessous
the details are below

voir ci-dessus
see above

FIRST FLOOR

In British English, we call it the "ground floor", and then the floor below that is the "first floor". In American English, the very bottom floor can sometimes be referred to as the first floor. In French, the "ground floor" is the very bottom floor, and it's called "rez-de-chaussée".

Here are the other floors:
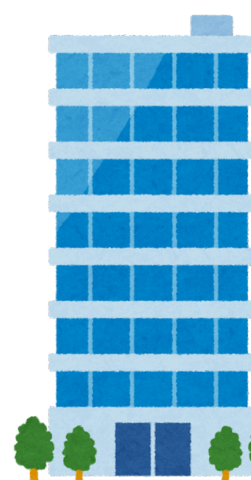
(au) cinquième étage
(on the) fifth floor

(au) quatrième étage
(on the) fourth floor

(au) troisième étage
(on the) third floor

(au) deuxième étage
(on the) second floor

(au) premier étage
(on the) first floor

(au) rez-de-chaussée
(on the) ground floor

5

QUE

The word "**que**" has various meanings.

que - *what*
plus que - *more than*
la même que - *the same as*
je pense que - *I think that*

In that last example, the word "**that**" is optional in English, but the "**que**" is obligatory in French.

je pense que Pierre est ici
I think (that) Pierre is here

SUR VS. SÛR

The words "sur" and "sûr" look similar, but they have very different meanings.

sur - *on*
sûr - *sure*

c'est sur la table - *it's on the table*
ils sont sur la plage - *they're on the beach*

je suis sûr - *I am sure*
es-tu sûr? - *are you sure?*

BIEN SÛR

The phrase "**bien sûr**" means "**of course**". If you want to follow it with anything, you need the word "**que**".

bien sûr que tu peux
of course you can

bien sûr qu'il vient avec nous
of course he's coming with us

bien sûr que je comprends
of course I understand

TRANSITIVE VS. INTRANSITIVE

If you describe a verb as **transitive**, it simply means that it **has an object**. Conversely, if you describe a verb as **intransitive**, it means it **doesn't have an object**. Some verbs can be used either **transitively** or **intransitively**.

je suis sorti
I went out (intransitive)

j'ai sorti la poubelle
I put the bin out (transitive)

When you use **sortir** transitively in the past tense, it uses "**avoir**" as its auxiliary verb. When you use **sortir** intransitively in the past tense, it uses "**être**" as its auxiliary verb. The same is true with the verb "**retourner**" meaning "**to return**"

je suis retourné au magasin
I went back / returned to the shop

j'ai retourné les chaussures
I took the shoes back / I returned the shoes

It's also the same with "**descendre**". If you put an object on the end, you use "**avoir**" as the auxiliary verb; if there's no object, use "**être**".

ils sont descendus
they went down

ils ont descendu l'escalier
they went downstairs