

Judy's LanguageBites



5 top tips for Beginners of French

Bite one

"I say goodbye and you say hello...Bonjour Bonjour...."

Yes it's as simple as the Beatle's song, saying **Bonjour** and **Aurevoir** are the key to being accepted in France and top of the list of good manners. In fact this is important as saying please and thank you in English.

1. **Bonjour** (daylight hours) and **Bonsoir** (evening) should be said to everyone you come into contact with during the course of the day. You will say **Bonjour** and **Bonsoir** in the elevator, to your concierge, neighbour, work colleagues, civil servants, shop assistants, teachers etc **Bonne nuit** will be used as a final greeting only when you are going home to bed.
2. Titles: Don't forget to add a title or name. **Bonjour Monsieur, Bonsoir Mademoiselle, Bonjour Madame Garnier, Bonjour Docteur, Bonsoir Madame le Maire, Bonne nuit Pierre**. The French are very keen on identification and just a plain **Bonjour** is not enough unless you're waving from a distance or in your car for example.
3. Goodbyes: As with **Bonjour**, saying **Aurevoir, Madame, Mademoiselle, Monsieur, Mesdames, Messieurs** is equally important and should always be said when leaving, your apartment block, elevator, shop, bank, office, restaurant, bar, friends etc. In fact those who leave without saying **Aurevoir**, will be accused of "**Filer à l'anglaise**" which literally means to leave like an English person (i.e. without saying **Aurevoir**!!)
4. Handshakes/kissing: **Bonjour** and **Aurevoir** between you and new acquaintances, old friends, colleagues, your doctor, hairdresser is accompanied by a handshake both on arrival and departure. Kissing on both cheeks is also very common and depends on the level of familiarity.
5. Look Listen Learn: Take your lead from observing **Les Français**. Listen and watch how they greet each other. You'll be surprised how many **Bonjour Madame** and **Aurevoir Monsieur/dame** you'll hear if you start listening.

Bon courage et à bientôt.

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