

LES PRONOMS DÉMONSTRATIFS

We studied the demonstrative adjectives and learned how they help us indicate/locate something or somebody. This week, we will study the demonstrative pronouns, whose main function is to replace a noun preceded by a demonstrative adjective. This helps avoid repetitions or express a choice or comparison.

Goal: By the end of this lesson, you should be able to use correctly demonstrative pronouns in lieu of nouns preceded by demonstrative adjectives wherever possible in order to avoid needless repetitions. Please, before going further, make sure you've mastered the 4 demonstrative adjectives studied a few days ago in the previous lesson. It may save you lots of time.

Important Tip: In case you're wondering how to make a quick distinction between a demonstrative adjective and a demonstrative pronoun, just keep in mind that a demonstrative adjective is ALWAYS followed by noun, while a demonstrative pronoun is NOT. Demonstrative pronouns are often followed by verbs, relative pronouns, prepositions, etc, etc, but NEVER by nouns. We may start our lesson now 😊.

There are 2 categories of demonstrative pronouns: The plain ones and the compound ones. In order to use the plain ones, you will need to know about French relative pronouns, and some other “stuff” that can make the plain demonstrative pronouns actually quite difficult to use. So, how about learning them simultaneously with the relative pronouns and these other stuff? A little bit of patience 😊. We'll get there soon. But here is a list of the plain demonstrative pronouns and a few sentences to illustrate their use:

- Celui → (The one) It replaces male-singular nouns
- Ceux → (The ones) It replaces male-plural nouns
- Celle → (The one) It replaces female-singular nouns
- Celles → (The ones) It replaces female-plural nouns
- Ce (Neutral) → (This/That). Ce becomes C' before a vowel. Ce is used almost always before the verb être.

Examples:

- Herman is **the one** that speaks French. (*Herman est celui qui parle le français*)
- Herman and Claude are **the ones** that speak Martian. (*Herman et Claude sont ceux qui parlent le Martien*)
- Natasha is **the one** that we saw today. (*Natasha est celle que nous avons vue aujourd'hui*)
- Natasha and Sabrina are **the ones** that speak Russian. (*Natasha et Sabrina sont celles qui parlent le russe*).
- **C'**est un homme. **Ce** sont des hommes. **This** is a man. **These** are men. [*This/These may look like demonstrative adjective here, but they are NOT. They are demonstrative pronouns.*]

As you can see in above examples, the plain demonstrative pronouns are followed by QUI or QUE (French relative pronouns). They can also be followed by a whole bunch of other grammatical particles. To avoid making this lesson confusing, we will come back to the plain

demonstrative pronouns a little later when we tackle the relative pronouns and prepositions. They will make much more sense then.

Okay, now that we've listed the plain demonstrative pronouns, let's work on the compound ones, which happen to be much easier as a matter of fact.

In order to form compound demonstrative pronouns, take the plain ones, and add the particles **-ci** and **-là** to them. Easy!

I hope you still remember these two important particles. They help establish a notion of distance (near versus far) or establish a choice/comparison between things. So let's list them:

- Celui-ci → (This one) It replaces male-singular nouns that are near the speaker
- Celui-là → (That one) It replaces male-singular nouns that are far from the speaker
- Ceux-ci → (These ones) It replaces male-plural nouns that are near the speaker
- Ceux-là → (Those ones) It replaces male-plural nouns that are far the speaker
- Celle-ci → (This one) It replaces female-singular nouns that are near the speaker
- Celle-là → (That one) It replaces female-singular nouns that are far from the speaker
- Celles-ci → (These ones) It replaces female-plural nouns that are near the speaker
- Celles-là → (Those ones) It replaces female-plural nouns that are far the speaker
- Ceci, Cela, Ça (Neutral) → (This (one)/That (one))

Examples: Now let's see how compound demonstrative pronouns really work.

First, we will use a sentence with demonstrative adjectives, and second, we will replace these adjectives + nouns with their corresponding demonstrative pronouns. The gender and number of nouns is the most important aspect to consider in this lesson. If you're not really sure about which gender to apply to a French noun, please never hesitate to use a dictionary. Again, that's the **ONLY** way to be sure. Even as a native speaker, I won't be able to explain you how gender selection for French nouns works, (and that makes me very sad, believe me.)

1)

a- I like this coat, but you like that coat. (*J'aime ce manteau-ci, mais tu aimes ce manteau-là*)

b- I like this one, but you like that one. (*J'aime celui-ci, mais tu aimes celui-là*)

2)

a- I like these coats, but you like those coats. (*J'aime ces manteaux-ci, mais tu aimes ces manteaux-là*)

b- I like these ones, but you like those ones. (*J'aime ceux-ci, mais tu aimes ceux-là*)

3)

a- I like this school, but you like that school. (*J'aime cette école-ci, mais tu aimes cette école-là*)

b- I like this one, but you like that one. (*J'aime celle-ci, mais tu aimes celle-là*)

4)

a- I like these schools, but you like those schools. (*J'aime ces écoles-ci, mais tu aimes ces écoles-là*)

b- I like these ones, but you like those ones. (*J'aime celles-ci, mais tu aimes celles-là*)

5)

Would you like this or that? (*Aimeriez-vous ceci ou cela?*) [this or that in this situation do not express distance but a comparison/choice]

6)

That is difficult. (*Cela est difficile*) In this sentence, THAT is a demonstrative pronoun, and so is CELA. They both replace something (which one?). Well, it can be assumed that THAT problem is difficult, or that THAT situation is difficult.