

LEÇON 2: LES AUXILIAIRES ÊTRE ET AVOIR

The previous lesson was about *les pronoms personnels (sujets)*. Now it's time to add some verbs to them. [The purpose of this whole chapter is indeed to enable you to make the most simple sentences in French involving a subject (*pronom personnel*) + verb + object]. Here, we are about to study the 2 most important verbs in French: **être/to be** and **avoir/to have**. They belong to the category of verb called *verbes auxiliaires* (auxiliary verbs). One of their functions is to help you conjugate other verbs. (That's exactly why we call them "Auxiliary verbs". In this sentence: **Nous avons mangé une pomme** (We have eaten an apple), **avons** (a conjugated form of **avoir**) helps conjugate the verb **mangé** (from the infinitive **manger**). And if you want to use an adjective in a sentence, or describe something, or somebody, usually the verb **être/to be** will do the job. To make this *leçon 2* very simple, I decided to break it down into two sections:

Section A: L'AUXILIAIRE ÊTRE.

Goal: By the end of this lesson, you should be able to conjugate the auxiliary verb "**être**" in the present tense and employ it with adjectives. Additional tenses (more complex) will be studied later on.

ÊTRE	TO BE	SER
Je suis	I am	Yo soy
Tu es	You are	Tú – Usted eres/es
Il / Elle est	He/She/It is	Él/Ella es
Nous sommes	We are	Nosotros somos
Vous êtes	You are	Vosotros-Uds. sois/son
Ils / Elles sont	They are	Ellos/Ellas son

Let's study these sentences to give a good idea of how useful the auxiliary verb **être** can be in French.

I- When adding an adjective or a noun after *l'auxiliaire être*...

- a) Le ciel est bleu et la terre est ronde. (The sky is blue and the Earth is round).
- b) Je suis docteur ; je suis Pierre. (I am a doctor; I am Peter)
- c) Un chat et un chien sont des animaux. (A cat and a dog are animals).
- d) Tom, es-tu malade? (Tom, are you sick?)
- e) Vous, mes enfants, êtes très heureux. (You, my children, are very happy).
- f) Vous êtes très galant, monsieur. (You are very well-mannered, sir) –

Did you notice the difference between the 2 “vous” above? In sentence e), VOUS refers to a group of children (a father talking to his children – he calls them VOUS, MES ENFANTS). In sentence f), VOUS refers to 1 person (monsieur/sir), probably a gentleman.

g) Nous sommes une équipe de basket-ball. (We are a basketball team).

h) Ces demoiselles sont probablement écossaises. These ladies are probably Scottish.

II- When using *l'auxiliaire être* to form other tenses (compound tenses) as in...

Elles sont arrivées à la fête. (They (females) [have] arrived to the party).

Mes frères sont allés en Amérique. (My brothers went/have gone to America.)

(I will devote an entire lesson to talk just about the *les auxiliaires être/avoir* used in compound tenses. But in this current lesson, knowing how to conjugate l'auxiliaire être in the present tense, and being able to add nouns and adjectives to it will be enough for now.)