

LEÇON 2: LESAUXILIAIRES ÊTRE ET AVOIRSection B: L' AUXILIAIRE AVOIR (TO HAVE).

Week 1-Leçon 2 (Section A) was about l'auxiliaire être/to be and its different uses as a descriptive verb and also as a verb that helps form other compound tenses in French, hence the term *auxiliary* (Please, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKONh8cc7EE> to listen to the audio file) . Here, we now learn about the auxiliary verb *Avoir/to have* (got) and what it can achieve in a sentence. For the sake of simplicity, let's just remember that avoir indicates possession. So in a way avoir is also posséder (to possess/to own). Avoir and posséder can be used interchangeably (**for objects you can count mostly!**) Let's look at an example: *Mon père a /possède une belle voiture de course.* (My dad has (got) / possesses / owns a nice sports car). Just like the auxiliary verb être, avoir helps form all the compound tenses in French. But we will study this when we learn the compound tenses in French.

**Goal:** By the end of this lesson, you should be able to conjugate the auxiliary verb “**avoir**” in the present tense. Additional tenses (more complex) will be studied later on.

<u>AVOIR</u>	TO HAVE	TENER
J' <b>ai</b>	I <b>have</b>	Yo <b>tengo</b>
Tu <b>as</b>	You <b>have</b>	Tú – Usted <b>tienes/tiene</b>
Il / Elle <b>a</b>	He/She/It <b>has</b>	Él/Ella <b>tiene</b>
Nous <b>avons</b>	We <b>have</b>	Nosotros <b>tenemos</b>
Vous <b>avez</b>	You <b>have</b>	Vosotros-Uds. <b>teneis/tienen</b>
Ils / Elles <b>ont</b>	They <b>have</b>	Ellos/Ellas <b>tienen</b>

Below are a few sentences which include the verb avoir. I have provided their translation in English so you can see how it works in both languages.

A- Avoir to express that you **own/possess** something.

- La sœur d'Anna a trois poupées Barbie. (Anna's sister has (got) three Barbie dolls).
- Notre équipe a deux trophées. (Our team has two trophies.)
- Vous avez de la fièvre. (You have a fever).
- J' ai trois dollars dans mon compte bancaire. (I have (got) three dollars in my bank account).
- Leurs voisins ont un chien très méchant. (Their neighbors have a very mean dog).
- Tu as raison. Wait a second here! Shall we say “*You have reason?*” Nope, the most accurate translation for this sentence will be (You ARE right). Yes, there are idiomatic expressions like that in all languages that just can't have a straightforward translation in other languages. Our next lesson (the last of the week) will be about such useful expressions in French. (Since we have now completed the chapter on the French auxiliary verbs, we will focus on French idiomatic expressions using être/avoir. Quite helpful in improving our vocabulary 😊)

B- A peculiar use of Avoir in this Gallicism: Il y a... (*There is..., there are...*)

What is a “Gallicism”? I may not come up with the most *polished* definition for this word, but you can always look it up in a *real* dictionary ☺

What I can tell you about Gallicism is that it originates from “Gaulois” and the Gaulois were the ancestors of the French. So a Gallicism is simply a French idiom that is specific to the French (well, I’m sounding a little redundant here☺). Anyway, the French expression “*Il y a*” is a Gallicism. Its equivalent in English is “*There is/ there are*” and “*hay*” in Spanish. The good thing about Gallicisms is that you don’t have to think when applying them in a sentence. All you have to do is memorize how and when to use them, and you’re fine. Now let’s use “*Il y a*” in different French sentences.

- a) Il y a un oiseau sur cette branche. (There is a bird on this branch.)
- b) Il y a des oiseaux sur cette branche. (There are birds on this branch.) *Il y a* does NOT vary even though “oiseaux” here is plural in the second example.
- c) Il y a une personne dans cette voiture. (There is a person in this car).
- d) Il y a deux personnes dans cette voiture. (There are two people in this car).

But how do you ask if there is something....?

*Is there...? Are there...?* can be translated by “y a-t-il...?” So if you want to ask:

- a) Is there anyone in this car? Y a-t-il quelqu’un dans cette voiture ?
- b) Are there many chairs in this classroom? Y a-t-il beaucoup de chaises dans cette classe?
- c) Is there a bird on this tree? Y a-t-il un oiseau sur cet arbre?
- d) Are there two birds on this tree? Y a-t-il deux oiseaux sur cet arbre?

Again, it does not matter whether the noun following Y a-t-il is singular or plural. It stays invariable, unlike in English where you’ll use is there? /are there?.

C- Avoir as an auxiliary verb (to form compound tenses)

Just like être, avoir can be used to form many compound tenses in French such as the passé composé tense (present perfect), which is widely used in French, the plus-que-parfait tense (the past perfect), le conditionnel passé tense (past conditional) and many other compound tenses. But again, let’s take it easy for now☺. We will study this other function of être/avoir sometime in the future.