Your notes

GCSE French: revision notes

Translation skills

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Translating into English

- Read the whole sentence first, then write the meaning in natural English rather than word for word.
- Watch the tense: je suis allé(e) = I went (not "I am gone"); j'allais = I used to go / I was going; j'irai = I will go; j'irais = I would go.
- Depuis + present = have been doing: j'habite ici depuis dix ans = I have lived here for ten years.
- Don't miss small words: très, souvent, toujours, ne... jamais, ne... plus, possessives and time phrases.
- On can mean we, you, people or they: choose what sounds natural.

False friends (faux amis)

- **actuellement** = currently (not actually), **la librairie** = bookshop (a library is la bibliothèque), **la journée** = the day (not journey), sensible = sensitive, rester = to stay (not rest).
- le car = coach, **les chips** = crisps (chips are les frites), assister à = to attend, **passer un examen** = to sit an exam (**réussir** = to pass), la monnaie = change (coins).

Translating into French

- Most adjectives come after the noun (une voiture rouge), but BAGS adjectives (beauty, age, goodness, size) come before: une belle maison, une vieille voiture, un bon film, un petit chien.
- French needs articles where English doesn't: I like dogs = j'aime les chiens; I eat bread = je mange du pain.
- Object pronouns go before the verb: I see him = je le vois.

- Negatives go round the verb (je ne mange pas), and round avoir or être in the perfect tense (je n'ai pas mangé).
- Check agreement: adjectives, past participles after être, and possessives (mon père, ma mère, mes parents).
- Choose the tense carefully: I have been living = present with depuis; I used to = imperfect; I would = conditional.

Exam technique

- Translate every idea: each part carries a mark. Don't add or leave out detail.
- If you don't know a word, use a similar word you do know rather than leaving a gap.
- Check verb endings: je parle, tu parles, il parle, nous parlons, vous parlez, ils parlent.
- Read your translation back: does the English make sense, and is every French word spelled and accented correctly?

Key terms

un faux ami	a false friend: a word that looks like English but means something else
actuellement	currently
la librairie	bookshop
la journée	day (the whole day)
sensible	sensitive
rester	to stay
les chips	crisps
passer un examen	to sit (take) an exam
réussir	to pass (succeed)
la monnaie	change (coins)
assister à	to attend

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What does "actuellement" mean?
2. What is "une librairie"?
3. What does "la journée" mean?
4. What does "sensible" mean in French?
5. What does "rester" mean?
6. What does "passer un examen" mean?

Your notes

7. How do you translate "J'habite ici depuis dix ans"?
8. How do you translate "I like dogs" into French?

Answers

1. currently
2. a bookshop
3. the day
4. sensitive
5. to stay
6. to sit an exam
7. I have lived here for ten years
8. J'aime les chiens

What to do next

Practise 14 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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