

## Chanson&Grammaire : JE M'ENDORS (traditional)

**LA GRAMMAIRE** : conjugating the verb être (“to be”) in the present tense ~ a few expressions with avoir ~ the prepositions à, de, dans, pour, avec, loin de, & à côté de ~ notes about pronouncing the letter E

In Chanson&Grammaire: La Cheminée, you learned the subject pronouns and the way we change the verb avoir (“to have”) to correspond to them. Let’s look at the verb **être** (“to be”):

<p><b>ÊTRE</b> (“to be”)  <b>j’sus</b> I am                    <b>il est</b> he is            <b>ils sont</b> they are  <b>t’es</b> you are                    <b>elle est</b> she is     <b>on est</b> we are  <b>vous êtes</b> you are    <b>vous-autres est</b> y’all are  <small>formal</small></p> <p><b>Ils sont nerveux.      T’es farce, toi!      J’sus pas perdu.</b>  <i>They are nervous.      You’re funny, you!      I’m not lost.</i></p> <p>Other forms:  <b>eux-autres est    eusse est</b> they are  <b>c’est</b> it/that is OR they are (sometimes <b>ça c’est</b>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You won’t often hear the -re in <b>être</b>. People will simply pronounce it “ett” in the same way you don’t hear the -re in the last name Pitre (“peet”) or in <i>vous-autres</i> (“voo-zawt”)</li> <li>• <b>j’sus</b> is often written this way in Louisiana French to better reflect pronunciation (it sounds a bit like the English “shoo!”). You could also write <i>je suis</i> which would be more formal and more international. But a Frenchman speaking informally might end up saying something close to “shoo!” as well.</li> <li>• <b>tu+es=t’es</b> just like <i>tu+as=t’as</i></li> </ul>
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Pratiquez! Fill in the missing words in the sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ nerveux. (**Y’all are nervous.**)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ farce! (**It’s not funny!**)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ tout le temps malade. (**I’m always sick.**)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ à la maison. (**We’re not at home.**)
5. Vous \_\_\_\_\_ de la France, Madame? (**Are you from France, ma’am?**)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ avec la gazette! (**They are with the newspaper!**)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ la sœur à Léo? (**You’re Leo’s sister?**)

“To be” **is not always “to be.”** There are a number of expressions in French that use *avoir* (to have) where in English you would use “to be.” In French you have hunger, you have fear, etc. Here are just a few common examples:

avoir faim	to be hungry
avoir soif	to be thirsty
avoir peur	to be afraid
avoir ___ ans	to be ___ years old
avoir froid	to be/feel cold
avoir chaud	to be/feel hot

Pratiquez! Use the appropriate expression with *avoir*.

Ex. It’s July, and you’re sweating - you say: **“J’ai chaud!”**

State your sibling’s age: Charles a 28 ans.

1. State your age.
2. Your friend is shivering; ask her if she’s cold.
3. Children are hearing a ghost story. Say that they’re afraid.

1. \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ?
3. \_\_\_\_\_.

**Les prépositions.** A lot of language learners want to immediately focus on nouns (*child, bathroom, book...*) or on verbs (*to talk, to eat, to work...*) and these are certainly good things to learn, but people sometimes forget how often we use prepositions - words like *with, for, to, from, at...* They're really common! So let's look at just a few prepositions:

<b>avec</b>	<i>with</i>	<b>Je voyage <u>avec</u> mes amis.</b> ( <i>I travel with my friends.</i> ) <b>Elle coupe les oignons <u>avec</u> un couteau.</b> ( <i>She cuts the onions with a knife.</i> )
<b>pour</b>	<i>for</i>	<b>C'est <u>pour</u> toi</b> ( <i>It's for you.</i> ) <b>Ils vont louer la maison <u>pour</u> l'été.</b> ( <i>They are going to rent the house for the summer.</i> )
<b>dans</b> (or <b>dedans</b> )	<i>in,</i> <i>inside</i>	<b>Elle est la seule <u>dedans</u> mon cœur.</b> ( <i>She is the only one in my heart.</i> ) <b>Les épices sont <u>dans</u> le garde-manger.</b> ( <i>The spices are in the pantry.</i> )
<b>à</b>	<i>to, at, in</i>	<b>Allons <u>à</u> Lafayette!</b> ( <i>Let's go to Lafayette!</i> ) <b>Il est <u>à</u> la maison.</b> ( <i>He is at the house.</i> ) <b>Il neige beaucoup <u>à</u> Montréal.</b> ( <i>It snows a lot in Montreal.</i> )
<b>de</b>	<i>from, of</i>	<b>Ma mère est <u>de</u> Lafayette et mon père est <u>d'</u>Arnaudville.</b> ( <i>My mother is from Lafayette and my father is from Arnaudville.</i> ) <b>Tu gardes les traditions <u>de</u> tes ancêtres.</b> ( <i>You keep the traditions of your ancestors.</i> )
<b>loin de</b>	<i>far from</i>	<b>C'est pas <u>loin d'</u>icitte.</b> ( <i>It's not far from here.</i> ) <b>Elle reste <u>loin de</u> sa famille.</b> ( <i>She lives far away from her family.</i> )
<b>à côté de</b>	<i>next to</i>	<b>L'école est <u>à côté de</u> l'église.</b> ( <i>The school is next to the church.</i> ) <b>Y a une 'tite table <u>à côté de</u> la porte.</b> ( <i>There's a little table next to the door.</i> )

**La prononciation: la lettre E.** The letter E sounds closer to "uh" in French, though its pronunciation can change if it has an accent. With an *accent aigu*, **é**, it becomes "ay"; this is easy for English speakers because we see it in words like "café" and "blasé." Not all accents make the "ay" sound though: an *accent grave*, **è**, is often pronounced "eh" like in the English word "shed" or the French word "*collège*". With no accent, however, the **e** will simply be pronounced "uh" or it will be silent. You may get frustrated with French's silent letters but there are plenty of silent E's in English, too (think "table," "foe," "engagement"). As a general rule, don't pronounce the final E in French unless it has an accent:

<i>Je t'aime</i>	"zhuh tam"	I love you	<i>aimé</i>	"am-may"	loved, beloved
<i>couche-couche</i>	"koosh koosh"	cornmeal dish	<i>couché</i>	"koo-shay"	gone to bed (set if the sun)
<i>aise</i>	"ehzz"	ease, comfort	<i>aisé</i>	"ay-zay"	easy

You may notice a final E that is pronounced in that list - the E in **je**. For one syllable words like **je, de, le**, etc. the E wouldn't be dropped in formal speech because, well, there goes half the word! But in reality, we drop these a lot in informal speech. You'll often see this represented with an apostrophe: **j't'aime** ("shtam") or **à côté d'la** ("ah ko-tayd lah"). You'd never write **d'la** in a formal work email, but it's perfectly normal to say it, and you might write it if you were scribbling a note to a friend.

In the song we're about to look at there are some silent E's (**blonde, belle, malfaire**, etc.) as well as some examples of dropping the E altogether (**de la maison** → **d'la maison**, **le chemin** → **l'chemin**).

**Answer key for the Pratiquez! section:**

1. *Vous-autres est nerveux.* 2. *C'est pas farce!* 3. *J'sus tout le temps malade.* 4. *On est pas à la maison.*  
5. *Vous êtes de la France, Madame?* 6. *Ils sont avec la gazette.* (or *Eux-autres est avec la gazette* or *Eusse est avec la gazette.*) 7. *T'es la sœur à Léo?*

1. *J'ai 20 ans* (if you're 20) or *J'ai 52 ans* (if you're 52) 2. *T'as froid?* 3. *Ils ont peur.* (or *Eux-autres a peur*, *Eusse a peur*, *Ça a peur.*)

## LA CHANSON

If you've completed this worksheet and the previous one using the song "La Cheminée," you should be able to understand pronouns like *je, il, moi, lui*, etc., as well as the verbs *avoir* (to have) and *être* (to be), and a few prepositions. Let's use what you know to fill in the blanks for the traditional song, "Je m'endors" which translates roughly to "I'm falling asleep" or "I grow tired." It's an old song that's been interpreted by many artists, but here's the version by Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys, sung by fiddler David Greely.

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RE8TDgEQBB8>

Je m'endors, je m'endors,	<i>I grow tired, I grow tired</i>
Et j'ai soif et j'ai <sup>1</sup> _____	<i>And I'm thirsty and I'm <u>hungry</u></i>
Le soleil <sup>2</sup> _____ couché	<i>The sun <u>is</u> set</i>
<sup>3</sup> _____ bien loin d'la maison	<i><u>I'm</u> real far from home</i>
Qu'avez-vous, oui, belle blonde?	<i>What have you, yes, beautiful blonde?</i>
Qu'avez-vous, oui, belle brune?	<i>What have you, yes, beautiful brunette?</i>
C'est tout <sup>4</sup> _____ la blonde	<i>It's all <u>for</u> the blonde</i>
Et pas rien <sup>4</sup> _____ la brune	<i>And nothing <u>for</u> the brunette</i>
Oh les jeunes de Crowley	<i>Oh the young men of Crowley</i>
<sup>5</sup> _____ toujours dans l'chemin	<i><u>Are</u> always in the road</i>
<sup>5</sup> _____ toujours dans l'chemin	<i><u>Are</u> always in the road</i>
À chercher z-à malfaire	<i>Looking to cause trouble</i>
<sup>6</sup> _____ la jogue au plombeau	<i><u>With</u> jugs on their pommels</i>
Et la ferraille à la poche	<i>And brass knuckles in their pockets</i>
Toujours <sup>7</sup> _____ l'chemin	<i>Always <u>in</u> the road</i>
À chercher z-à malfaire	<i>Looking to cause trouble</i>
Je m'endors, je m'endors,	<i>I grow tired, I grow tired</i>
Et j'ai soif et j'ai <sup>1</sup> _____	<i>And I'm thirsty and I'm <u>hungry</u></i>
Le soleil <sup>2</sup> _____ couché	<i>The sun <u>is</u> set</i>
<sup>3</sup> _____ bien loin d'la maison	<i><u>I'm</u> real far from home</i>
Bye-bye, oui, belle blonde!	<i>Bye-bye, yes, beautiful blonde!</i>
Bye-bye, oui, belle brune!	<i>Bye-bye, yes, beautiful brunette!</i>
C'est tout <sup>4</sup> _____ la blonde	<i>It's all <u>for</u> the blonde</i>
Et pas rien <sup>4</sup> _____ la brune	<i>And nothing <u>for</u> the brunette</i>

### Answer key:

1. *faim* 2. *est* 3. *j'sus* 4. *pour* 5. *sont* 6. *avec* 7. *dans*