



Introduction Bakery Goodies!

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* Audio Conversation



Formal French

Celine Hmmm, un croissant...
 Celine Un croissant, s'il vous plaît !
 Celine Aaah, une baguette...
 Celine Une baguette, s'il vous plaît !

Formal English

Celine Hmmm, a croissant...
 Celine A croissant, please!
 Celine Aaah, a French bread...
 Celine A French bread, please!

Vocabulary

French	English	Class	Gender
un	a, an	indefinite article	masculine
une	a	indefinite article	feminine
croissant	croissant	noun	masculine
S'il vous plaît.	Please. (formal)	expression	
baguette	French bread (long and skinny), a baguette	noun	feminine

Sample Sentences

un peu, un homme, un journal a little, a man, a newspaper
 Pour une quiche, j'ai besoin de trois oeufs. For a quiche, I need three eggs.
 Une jeune fille.
 Nous avons des croissants nature au beurre et des croissants aux amandes. We have plain croissant with butter and almond filled croissants.
 La carte des vins, s'il vous plaît. The wine list, please.
 C'est une bonne baguette! It's good french bread!
 Une baguette pour deux, ça suffit amplement. One baguette for two, it is largely enough.

Grammar Points

SIMPLE REQUESTS.



When traveling or living in a foreign speaking country requests are indispensable to meet your very vital needs as eating... *un croissant!*

Even at a newbie or true beginner level, requests are possible to make. Simply say the item you need and add a kind "please," and you'll get what you're looking for in a heart beat.

▷ Ask for something, (an item, a place or anything else)

In order to get an item you can not reach in a store, such as a bakery, you will need to ask for it. Doing this will allow you to acquire the item or look at it in order to inspect it and make sure it will satisfy your expectation (for example, cool sunglasses, French men and woman perfume). The same can be done for places you are searching for.

First, think of the gender in French of the item, place or person you wish to ask for and choose the correct article. Let's look at this first step below.

▷ Un - a, an

****Un croissant.****

A croissant.

In the conversation *Céline* is in a bakery knowing she's hungry but has not decided on what to get. She sees a delicious croissant in the display and in a fraction of a second choose to get one. To do so she asks for it by saying "*Un croissant, s'il vous plaît !*". There are three words. The first one is "un".

The word "*croissant*" is a masculine noun requiring a masculine article. As they are many identically looking "*croissants*" on the display, she asks for one of them (any among the bunch of them) using an indefinite article.

Once you determine the gender of the object, person or place you asking for is masculine, use the masculine indefinite article "*un*".

Un or indefinite articles are used when referring to a non-specific item, object or place or simply when talking in a general context.



Examples:

Situation 1: You are in a store and trying to guess what a particular item is named in French.

=> *Un guide touristique* / a tourist guide.

Situation 2: You are visiting a monastery and ask what a strange looking room is. The answer could be:

=> *Un scriptorium*. / A writing room.

Situation 3: You are walking in a town and suddenly you identify further from you a bell tower, you'd say surprised

=> *Un clocher!* / A bell tower! (you don't know if it is from a church or a convent!)

Situation 4: You are passenger of a long car ride and are sleepy. You dream and wish for a pillow, you can say or think:

=> *Ahhh un coussin*. / Ahhhh a pillow. (talking about *a* pillow not a specific one)

Situation 5: You are asking about a person in a party. The response could be:

=> *un invité* / a guest (We don't know which guest it is)

▷ Une - a, an

****Une baguette****

A French bread - a baguette.

In the conversation *Céline* saw "croissants" and orders one. She sees and realizes she also needs some bread. So she asks for one French bread with "*Une baguette, s'il vous plaît!*". Here are three words and the first one is "*une*".

The word "*baguette*" is a feminine noun requiring a feminine article. As she is not picky she just asks for any baguette from the display by using the feminine indefinite article "*une*".

Now your turn to ask for something. You are thinking about how to say it. First determine the gender of the item. Then figure out the gender of the object, person or place you are asking for is feminine. Therefore use the feminine indefinite article "*une*".

Une or indefinite articles are used when referring to non-specific item, object

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or place or talked in a general context.

Examples:

Situation 1: You are in a luxurious antique shop and ask what an object is, you might hear.

=> *Une table Louis XVI* / a Louis the 16th table

Situation 2: You are trying to buy some fruit and ask for an apple:

=> *Une pomme.* / An apple.

Situation 3: You are at the Moulin Rouge show and it's time for the woman star show and you say with extase

=> *Une femme!* / A woman!

Situation 4: You are driving in the French countryside and your young child practices his FrenchPod101 vocabulary by naming what he sees:

=> *Ahhh une vache.* / Ahhhh a cow.

Situation 5: You are at a meeting and are out of paper for taking notes, you request one sheet only:

=> *une feuille* / a sheet

▷ *S'il vous plaît* - Please

****Un croissant, s'il vous plaît.* - *Une baguette, s'il vous plaît.****

A croissant, please. - A French bread, please.

These two phrases from the dialog are two distinct but polite requests. The same structure of both phrases is short, simple and efficient to get what you need. Once you've put together the article either un (masculine) or une (feminine) with the corresponding noun (object, place, animal or person), you just have to add the indispensable phrase "please."

"Please" has two matches in French: "S'il vous plaît" or "S'il te plaît". Both literally mean "if you please" (quite courteous no?)

The one used in the dialog is the most formal one: "S'il vous plaît". It is used in every day situations when speaking to people you don't know. It is also commonly said to the elderly and people who are, professionally speaking, your superior. "S'il vous plaît" is identifiable for its formality by the use of "vous" the formal pronoun "you," and is referring to the person you are speaking to.



Examples:

Situation 1: A Belgian tourist asks you to take a picture of his family with the Eiffel tower.

=> *Une photo, s'il vous plaît.* / A picture, please.

Situation 2: You've recently met your French counterpart from the sister company you work for and ask for a company car to visit another plant nearby.

=> *Une voiture, s'il vous plaît.* / A car, please.

Situation 3: You're at the post office asking for a stamp for your post card.

=> *Un timbre, s'il vous plaît.* / A stamp please.

Situation 4: You're speaking with an elderly couple in a park about their typical "French" past. They become emotional and they ask you for a tissue.

=> *Un mouchoir, s'il vous plaît.* / A tissue, please.

Situation 5: Your boss asks you for clarification on an important document.

=> *Une explication, s'il vous plaît.* / An explanation, please.

The other version of "please" is the informal. "S'il te plaît" is used among friends, family or people who gave you the permission to address them with the informal "tu" and consequently "S'il te plaît". It is informal because of the use of "te" a pronoun corresponding to "tu" the informal "you" 2nd person singular.

Examples:

Situation 1: Your French exchange student classmate asks for a pen:

=> *Un stylo, s'il te plaît.* / A pen, please.

Situation 2: You are trying to buy some fruit and ask for an apple:

=> *Une pomme, s'il te plaît.* / An apple, please.

Language Tip: "s'il vous plaît" or "S'il te plaît"

There isn't any exact rule on when you should use "s'il te plaît" or "s'il vous plaît" when getting to know someone. Switching from "s'il vous plaît" to "s'il te plaît" is usually done either agreeing on using the informal "tu" by both speakers or by asking if you can do so. In other context, it can be done by "feeling". Let's say you feel comfortable enough with someone to initiate using "tu" and therefore "s'il te plaît", you will in that case expect that the other person will accept it and in return do the same with you. It's for you to be the judge of the situation or

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simply wait for the person you're speaking with initiates the use of "*tu*" or "*s'il te plaît*" for you.

Cultural Insight

Le croissant

This pastry is part of the "*viennoiserie*" kind. *Viennoiserie* refers to all sweet puff pastries. Its dough, which is hard to reproduce by novice hands, is made of butter, eggs, milk, flour and a little salt. It is folded and flattened many times to give a leafy stacked appearance. A delicious *croissant* should be crispy on the outside and melty, soft and tender on the inside. The art of the *croissant* tasting is mainly its texture and light buttery flavor.

Its origin is subject of debate and uncertainty. One version is that it was invented in Poland to celebrate the defeat of a Muslim invasion at the Battle of Tours (French city) by the Franks in 732. The croissant shape supposedly represents the Islamic crescent. Another similar story is that it was invented in Vienna in 1683 to celebrate the defeat of the Turkish siege of the city, as a reference to the crescents on the Turkish flags. Lastly another one tells Marie Antoinette craving after a Viennese specialty.

The most trustworthy written source of the *croissant* appears as a recipe in the 1680 printed edition of "*Le cuisinier françois*" (the founding text of modern French cuisine) from François Pierre (de) La Varenne.

From then on, "*le croissant*" became the national pastry sold in any good bakery all over France. It is now the recurrent part of a continental breakfast in any hotel in France including a hot beverage, some bread and/or "*viennoiseries*" with the famous "*croissant*" and some butter and jam. The croissant is also found in any bar, restaurant offering breakfast. Supermarket and convenient store sell them as well but usually are industrially made and of course its culinary qualities are far from the ones made by the local baker's hand.

My suggestion? Walk around the center of a small town or around the main local church of villages and cities to find the local bakery. Even better ask the local city or town inhabitants where they go to buy their "croissant" as they will be the best advisers you'll ever meet! Keep your ears open and be attentive as some bakeries have a better reputation for their breads and others for their bakeries!