

## Chapter 1

# Understanding Parts of Speech and Bilingual Dictionaries

### *In This Chapter*

- Eyeing the basic parts of speech — in any language
- Getting the most out of your bilingual dictionary

Language is made up of parts of speech — nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. Each of these building blocks has its own function and rules, and understanding them is key to using them correctly, particularly with a foreign language. If you don't know the difference between the parts of speech in English, you probably won't understand them in French, either, which means you're likely to make a lot of mistakes when you write and speak.

Bilingual dictionaries are essential tools for speaking and understanding a new language, but misusing them is easy. You can't accept whatever the dictionary says as gospel — you need to know how to understand the symbols and abbreviations, how to make a choice when given several translations, and how much to trust the answers you get. This chapter explains the basic parts of speech as well as how to get the most out of your bilingual dictionary.

## *Identifying the Parts of Speech*

You're probably already familiar with at least some of the parts of speech, like nouns and verbs, even though you don't necessarily think about them when speaking your native language. Because I use these terms throughout the book, I want to give you an overview of the parts of speech.

To help illustrate the differences between parts of speech, I talk about a sentence that has all eight essential parts of speech in both languages:

**Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres.**  
(*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*)

In the following sections, I bold the part of speech under consideration in my French sentence and English translation.

## What's in a name? Nouns

*Nouns* are people, places, things, and ideas. They're the concrete and abstract things in your sentences, the *who* and the *what* that are doing something or having something done to them. Take a look at the example:

Je veux vraiment aller en **France** et visiter les **musées** célèbres.  
(I really want to go to **France** and visit the famous **museums**.)

*France* is a *proper* noun — a noun that refers to a specific person, place, or thing and that's always capitalized. Other proper nouns are *Laura* (that's me!) and the *Louvre*. *Museums* is a plural noun, which means it's also a *countable* noun because it can be counted: one museum, two museums, three museums, and so on. *Collective* nouns, like *group* and *bunch*, refer to a group of nouns considered a single unit. *Uncountable* nouns, like *beauty* and *fear*, are things that can't be counted.



In French, nouns are also masculine or feminine. Chapter 2 explains French nouns in greater detail. Nouns and verbs (see the upcoming section “Verbs take center stage”) are the basic elements of any sentence. Nouns need verbs to tell them what they're doing, and verbs need nouns to explain who or what is acting or being acted upon. You can often replace nouns with pronouns — see “Using Pronouns” later in this chapter.



Underline all the nouns in this section.

**Q.** *Nouns* are people, places, things, and ideas.

**A.** *Nouns* are people, places, things, and ideas.

## The articles

An article is a very particular part of speech. You can use it only with a noun. French has three kinds of articles:

- ✓ Definite articles: **le, la, les** (*the*)
- ✓ Indefinite articles: **un, une** (*a/an*), **des** (*some*)
- ✓ Partitive articles: **du, de la, des** (*some*)



The *definite article* refers to something specific: **le livre** (*the book*), **les idées** (*the ideas*). An *indefinite article* is unspecific: **un homme** (*a man*), **une chaise** (*a chair*), **des idées** (*some ideas*). *Partitive articles* refer to a part of something: **du pain** (*some bread*), **de la bière** (*some beer*). (**Note:** In English, *some* is technically considered an adjective, not an article.) Chapter 2 has a lot more information about the French articles.

Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter **les** musées célèbres.  
(I really want to go to France and visit **the** famous museums.)



Underline the articles in this section.

**Q.** An article is a very particular part of speech.

**A.** An article is a very particular part of speech.

## Verbs take center stage

*Verbs* express actions and describe states of being. They tell you what's happening, what the situation is like, and whether any music is pounding in the background during it all.

Je **veux** vraiment **aller** en France et **visiter** les musées célèbres.  
(I really **want to go** to France and **visit** the famous museums.)

Verbs are the most variable part of speech because they have all kinds of different forms, called *conjugations*, which help tell you who or what is doing something, when they're doing it, and how they feel about it. French verbs are classified by how they're conjugated:

- ✓ Regular verbs
  - **-er** verbs
  - **-ir** verbs
  - **-re** verbs
- ✓ Stem-changing verbs
- ✓ Spelling-change verbs
- ✓ Irregular verbs

In addition, verbs have many different forms that give you all kinds of information about their actions:

- ✓ **Tense:** Tense tells you when the verb action takes place — in the present, past, or future — and whether it was completed (*perfect*) or incomplete (*imperfect*).
- ✓ **Mood:** Mood shows how the speaker feels about the verb action — whether it's *indicative*, *imperative*, *conditional*, or *subjunctive*.
- ✓ **Voice:** Voice indicates the relationship between the subject and the verb — whether it's *active*, *passive*, or *reflexive*.

See Chapter 4 for more information about present-tense verb conjugations and Chapters 7, 8, 10, 11, and 15–19 for information about various tenses and moods.



Underline the verbs in this section.

**Q.** *Verbs* express actions and describe states of being.

**A.** *Verbs* express actions and describe states of being.

## Describing adjectives

*Adjectives* are flowery, helpful, and exciting words that describe nouns. Adjectives may tell you what color something is, whether it's new or old, or its shape, size, or provenance.

Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées **célèbres**.  
(I really want to go to France and visit the **famous** museums.)



Adjectives usually aren't essential, the way nouns and verbs are, because they just add some extra information to the basic facts. Compare *My brother has a car* to *My older brother has a red car* — the important information is that your brother has a car; the fact that he's older than you and that the car is red is just window dressing. Adjectives like these are called *descriptive adjectives*, but adjectives come in many other useful varieties:

- ✓ Demonstrative adjectives: **ce, cette** (*this, that*), **ces** (*these, those*)
- ✓ Indefinite adjectives: **quelques** (*some*), **certain** (*certain*), **plusieurs** (*several*)
- ✓ Interrogative adjectives: **quel** (*which*)
- ✓ Negative adjectives: **ne . . . aucun, ne . . . nul** (*no, not any*)
- ✓ Possessive adjectives: **mon** (*my*), **ton** (*your*), **son** (*his/her*)

Unlike boring old English adjectives, French adjectives have masculine, feminine, singular, and plural forms so that they can agree with nouns. (Chapter 9 tells you lots of other interesting details about adjectives.)



Underline the adjectives in this section.

**Q.** *Adjectives* are flowery, helpful, and exciting words that describe nouns.

**A.** *Adjectives* are flowery, helpful, and exciting words that describe nouns.

## Using adverbs

*Adverbs* easily modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Like adjectives, adverbs aren't always essential, but rather, they add some extra information to the words they're helpfully modifying. In the example sentence, *really* modifies the verb *want*.

Je veux **vraiment** aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres.  
(I **really** want to go to France and visit the famous museums.)

English adverbs often end in *-ly* and indicate how the action of a verb is occurring: happily, quickly, rudely. Most of these words are *adverbs of manner*. The other kinds of adverbs are

- ✓ Adverbs of frequency: **jamais** (*never*), **souvent** (*often*)
- ✓ Adverbs of place: **ici** (*here*), **partout** (*everywhere*)
- ✓ Adverbs of quantity: **très** (*very*), **beaucoup** (*a lot*)

- ✓ Adverbs of time: **avant** (*before*), **demain** (*tomorrow*)
- ✓ Interrogative adverbs: **quand** (*when*), **où** (*where*)
- ✓ Negative adverbs: **ne . . . pas** (*not*), **ne . . . jamais** (*never*)



Read Chapter 9 thoroughly to understand more about French adverbs.

Underline the adverbs in this section.

**Q.** *Adverbs* easily modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

**A.** *Adverbs* easily modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

## ***Pronouns: They're replacements***

*Pronouns* are easy to understand; they replace nouns. That is, pronouns also refer to people, places, things, and ideas, but they let you avoid repeating the same words over and over.

For example, you could say, “I have a sister. My sister has a cat. The cat has fleas, and the fleas make the cat itch.” But hearing those nouns repeated each time gets a little old. A much nicer way to say that would be, “I have a sister. She has a cat. It has fleas, and they make it itch.” *I, she, it, and they* are *personal pronouns* because they have different forms for each *grammatical person*. (You can read about grammatical person in Chapter 4.)

**Je** veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres.  
(*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*)

French has five types of personal pronouns. The following are all equivalent to *I/me, you, or he/him/it*:

- ✓ Subject pronouns: **je, tu, il**
- ✓ Direct object pronouns: **me, te, le**
- ✓ Indirect object pronouns: **me, te, lui**
- ✓ Reflexive pronouns: **me, te, se**
- ✓ Stressed pronouns: **moi, toi, lui**

French also has several kinds of *impersonal pronouns*, which doesn't mean they're unkind, just that they don't have different forms for each grammatical person. However, many of them do have different forms for masculine, feminine, singular, and plural. Take a look (**Note:** I hold off on the definitions for now):

- ✓ Adverbial pronouns: **y, en**
- ✓ Demonstrative pronouns: **celui, celle**
- ✓ Indefinite pronouns: **autre, certain**
- ✓ Interrogative pronouns: **quel, quelle**

- ✓ Negative pronouns: **aucun, personne**
- ✓ Possessive pronouns: **le mien, le tien**
- ✓ Relative pronouns: **qui, que, dont**

I explain the different types of pronouns throughout this book: Chapter 2 explains demonstrative and possessive pronouns, Chapter 4 presents subject pronouns, Chapter 5 discusses interrogative ones, and so on.



Underline the pronouns in this section.

**Q.** *Pronouns* are easy to understand; they replace nouns.

**A.** *Pronouns* are easy to understand; they replace nouns.

## Prepositions: On top of it

A *preposition* is the part of speech you put in front of a noun or pronoun to show the relationship between that word and another word or phrase. When you go to the store, return from vacation, or trip over the shoes you left sitting under a towel lying on the floor, the prepositions tell you how those verbs and nouns fit together. The shoes are *under* the towel, not *on*, *next to*, or wrapped *in* it. Prepositions may be one word (*to*, *at*, *about*) or part of a group of words (*next to*, *in front of*, *on top of*).

Je veux vraiment aller **en** France et visiter les musées célèbres.  
(*I really want to go **to** France and visit the famous museums.*)

Prepositions are difficult to translate, perhaps more so than any other part of speech. The French preposition **à**, for example, usually means *to*, *at*, or *in*, but also has other meanings in certain expressions:

- ✓ Destination: **Je vais à Paris.** (*I'm going to Paris.*)
- ✓ Current location: **Je suis à la banque/à Londres.** (*I'm at the bank/in London.*)
- ✓ Function: **un verre à vin** (*a wine glass, a glass for wine*)
- ✓ Owner: **C'est à moi.** (*It's mine, It belongs to me.*)

Prepositions are therefore not like a list of vocabulary that you can just memorize, but rather, they're grammatical terms with various functions that you have to study and practice. Chapter 12 explains all about prepositions.



Underline the prepositions in this section.

**Q.** A *preposition* is the part of speech you put in front of a noun or pronoun to show the relationship between that word and another word or phrase.

**A.** A *preposition* is the part of speech you put in front of a noun or pronoun to show the relationship between that word and another word or phrase.

## Connecting with conjunctions

*Conjunctions* join two or more words or phrases that are either equal or unequal.

Je veux vraiment aller en France **et** visiter les musées célèbres.  
(*I really want to go to France **and** visit the famous museums.*)

They come in a couple of varieties:



- ✓ **Coordinating conjunctions:** These words — such as *and*, *or*, and *but* — bring together equals, as in *I like coffee and tea*. Other examples include *He can't read or write* and *We want to go, but we don't have time*.

You can tell that a conjunction is coordinating when you can reverse the joined items with little or no difference in meaning. There's no difference between *I like coffee and tea* and *I like tea and coffee*. Likewise, *We want to go, but we don't have time* means pretty much the same thing as *We don't have time, but we want to go*.

- ✓ **Subordinating conjunctions:** Subordinating conjunctions — such as *that*, *when*, and *as soon as* — combine two *clauses*, or groups of words with a subject and verb. The conjunction tells you that the clause after it is *subordinate*, meaning that clause is dependent on the *main clause*, as in *He thinks that I'm smart* (I may or may not be smart, but he thinks I am), *I don't know when they'll arrive* (They're supposed to arrive, but I don't know when), and *She left as soon as the phone rang* (The phone rang, and then she left).

If you reverse the clauses in my examples, you end up with either nonsense or a different meaning. *I am smart that he thinks* doesn't make any sense, and *The phone rang as soon as she left* isn't the same thing as *She left as soon as the phone rang* — in fact, it's just the opposite. This test lets you know that these conjunctions are subordinating rather than coordinating. (Chapter 14 examines coordinating and subordinating conjunctions in more detail.)



Underline the conjunctions in this section.

**Q.** *Conjunctions* join two or more words or phrases that are either equal or unequal.

**A.** *Conjunctions* join two or more words or phrases that are either equal or unequal.

## Correctly Using a Bilingual Dictionary

A bilingual dictionary can be a wonderful tool or a terrible crutch. When you don't know what a word means or how to say something in another language, a bilingual dictionary can give you the answer. But it's not as simple as just looking something up and taking the first thing you see. You have to know what to look up, how to read the information provided, and how much you can depend on the answer you get. This section can help you make a bilingual dictionary a helpful tool and not a hindrance.

## Figuring out what to look up

Although dictionaries have thousands of words, you can't find every single word you want just by looking it up. Different versions of words, including plurals, feminines, verb conjugations, comparatives, and superlatives, for example, aren't listed separately, so you need to know where to find these words. You can find them only by looking for the singular, masculine, infinitive, unmodified word.

For example, suppose you see the word **mettez** for the first time and you want to know what it means. You grab your bilingual dictionary and discover there's no entry for **mettez**. Instead of giving up, do a little grammatical analysis. **Mettez** ends in **-ez**, which is a common French verb ending, so conjugate backwards — the infinitive is likely to be **mettre**, **mettir**, or **mettre**. Look those up, and voilà! You discover that **mettre** means *to put*.

Likewise, if you can't find **traductrice**, remove the feminine ending (which Chapter 2 explains) because the word in the dictionary is the default, masculine form **traducteur** (*translator*).



If you're trying to look up an expression, such as **Qui se ressemble s'assemble**, you can start by looking up the first word, **qui**, but you may not have any luck. The dictionary may include the expression under that entry, or it may list it under a different word that the dictionary editors thought was more of a key to the phrase, such as **ressembler**. Check there, and sure enough, you discover that it means *those who resemble each other assemble*, or rather, that it's the French equivalent of the proverb *birds of a feather flock together*.

**Note:** Pronominal verbs, such as **se ressembler** and **se souvenir**, are listed in the dictionary under the verb, not the reflexive pronoun. So you'd look up **ressembler** and **souvenir**, not **se**. (You can read about pronominal verbs in Chapter 11.)

## Choosing the right word based on context and part of speech



Finding the word you want is only half the battle — you also need to think about what it means, which is why you have to understand *context* — the situation in which you're using the word. You may not have any idea what **un avocat** is (check out Figure 1-1), but you need to figure out from the context of the sentence you saw it in whether it's a food or a person; when you look up **avocat**, you find two translations: *avocado* and *lawyer*. The context you're using it in obviously makes a big difference as to which translation is correct (unless, perhaps, you're reading about a lawyer who dressed as guacamole for Halloween!).

Likewise, if you want to know how to say *record* in French, you need to know whether you're looking for the noun, as in *I bought a record*, or the verb, as in *I want to record this song*. When you look up *record* in the dictionary, you see two translations: **un disque** and **enregistrer**. The dictionary doesn't know which one you want — the correct choice depends on context and on your knowing the difference between a noun and a verb.



**Figure 1-1:**

What the French-English dictionary entry for **avocat** may look like.

**AVOCAT**

[a vɔ ka] m subst  
(person) lawyer,  
(fruit) avocado



Some people like to keep a list of words to look up later instead of putting the book or newspaper down every two minutes to look them up right away. If you're one of these, be sure to jot down the phrase or sentence rather than just the word. Otherwise, you'll find when you get the dictionary out that you can't figure out which translation is best, because you have no context to fit it into.

## Understanding symbols and terminology

Dictionaries save space by using symbols and abbreviations, and these are not necessarily standard from one dictionary to the next. Your best bet is to check the first few pages of the dictionary — you should see some kind of legend that lists the abbreviations used throughout the book, the pronunciation notation, and symbols that indicate things like word stress, formality or informality, archaic words, silent letters, and so on.



The *International Phonetic Alphabet*, or *IPA*, is a standard system for showing how to pronounce words in any language. Unfortunately, many dictionaries either don't use it or adapt it with their own symbols, so you always need to check your dictionary to see which system they're using to explain pronunciation. The second line in Figure 1-1 shows the IPA spelling for the word **avocat** (*lawyer, avocado*).

The symbols and abbreviations aren't there just to look pretty! If a word is listed as archaic, you don't want to use it (unless you happen to be translating 14th-century poetry). If a term is starred three times, indicating that it's vulgar slang, you definitely don't want to say that to your boss. As I explain in the preceding section, you need to think about how you're using a particular word before you make your selection from the translations offered.

## Interpreting figurative language and idioms

When using a bilingual dictionary to determine a word's meaning, you also need to understand whether a term is being used literally or figuratively. French and English are both rich in figurative language, and translating can be tricky. Take the expression *Guy is hot*. Literally, this means that Guy is very warm — he's wearing too many clothes, say, or he has a fever. Figuratively (and informally), it means that Guy is extremely good looking. If you want to translate this sentence into French, you need to figure out which meaning you're after and then make sure to find the correct French translation for that meaning. When you look up the word, in this case, *hot*, the literal meaning(s) is normally listed first, followed by any figurative meaning(s). The

latter will have a notation such as *fig.* (short for *figurative*). (For the record, the literal translation of *Guy is hot* is **Guy a chaud**, and the figurative is **Guy est sexy**.)

You may run across figurative language when you translate into English, too. The French expression **connaître la musique** literally means *to know the music*, such as an actual song. Figuratively, it means *to know the routine*. You have to think about which of these English meanings is right for the context in which you saw or heard the French expression.

An *idiom* is an expression that can't be translated literally into another language because one or more words in it are used figuratively. *It's raining cats and dogs* doesn't really mean that household pets are falling from the sky; it just means that it's raining really hard. You absolutely can't look up the individual words to come up with **Il pleut des chats et des chiens** — that makes no sense at all. The French equivalent of *It's raining cats and dogs* is also an idiom: **Il pleut des cordes** (Literally: *It's raining ropes*).



Automated translators, such as online translation Web sites, translate very literally, which is why you should never use them to translate something that you plan to say to someone or write in a letter. All they're good for is helping you get an idea of what something says — translating into a language you understand.



## Verifying your findings

After you've found your word or expression and have considered the context you'll be using it in, it's a good idea to verify what you've found. I suggest you use the following ideas to double-check that you're using the right meaning:

- ✓ **Ask a native.** The best way to verify that you're using the right word is to ask a native speaker. Dictionaries are wonderful tools, but they're not infallible. Language changes — particularly informal language — and dictionaries change constantly. Even if they didn't, they still couldn't tell you that a certain expression or way of using a particular word “just doesn't sound right.” Native speakers are the experts. To find a native speaker, ask your professor if he or she knows anyone. If there's a local branch of the Alliance française near you, find out the time of the next meeting. Or you can try an online forum such as <http://forums.about.com/ab-french>.
- ✓ **Do a reverse look-up.** One quick and easy way to check whether the word you found is the right one is to do reverse look-up, which is when you look up the translation that the dictionary just gave you. For example, if you've looked up *anger* in the English-French part of the dictionary and found that it means **colère** or **fureur**, you can then look up those two words in the French-English dictionary. You'll see that **colère** says *anger* and **fureur** says *fury*, so that indicates that **colère** is probably the better translation for *anger*.

Another way to confirm a translation is by looking up *anger* in an English dictionary and **colère** in a French dictionary and comparing the definitions.

# Answer Key

## Nouns:

They're the concrete and abstract things in your sentences, the who and the what that are doing something or having something done to them. Take a look at the example: Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) France is a proper noun — a noun that refers to a specific person, place, or thing and that's always capitalized. Other proper nouns are Laura (that's me!) and the Louvre. Museums is a plural noun, which means it's also a countable noun because it can be counted: one museum, two museums, three museums, and so on. Collective nouns, like group and bunch, refer to a group of nouns considered a single unit. Uncountable nouns, like beauty and fear, are things that can't be counted. Nouns and verbs (see the upcoming section "Verbs take center stage") are the basic elements of any sentence. Nouns need verbs to tell them what they're doing, and verbs need nouns to explain who or what is acting or being acted upon. You can often replace nouns with pronouns — see "Using Pronouns" later in this chapter. In French, nouns are also masculine or feminine. Chapter 2 explains French nouns in greater detail. Underline all the nouns in this section.

## Articles:

You can use it only with a noun. French has three kinds of articles: \* Definite articles: le, la, les (the) \* Indefinite articles: un, une (a/an), des (some) \* Partitive articles: du, de la, des (some) The definite article refers to something specific: le livre (the book), les idées (the ideas). An indefinite article is unspecific: un homme (a man), une chaise (a chair), des idées (some ideas). Partitive articles refer to a part of something: du pain (some bread), de la bière (some beer). (Note: In English, some is technically considered an adjective, not an article.) Chapter 2 has a lot more information about the French articles. Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) Underline the articles in this section.

## Verbs:

They tell you what's happening, what the situation is like, and whether any music is pounding in the background during it all. Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) Verbs are the most variable part of speech because they have all kinds of different forms, called conjugations, which help tell you who or what is doing something, when they're doing it, and how they feel about it. French verbs are classified by how they're conjugated: \* Regular verbs \* -er verbs \* -ir verbs \* -re verbs \* Stem-changing verbs \* Spelling-change verbs \* Irregular verbs In addition, verbs have many different forms that give you all kinds of information about their actions: \* Tense: Tense tells you when the verb action takes place — in the present, past, or future — and whether it was completed (perfect) or incomplete (imperfect). \* Mood: Mood shows how the speaker feels about the verb action — whether it's indicative, imperative, conditional, or subjunctive. \* Voice: Voice indicates the relationship between the subject and the verb — whether it's active, passive, or reflexive. See Chapter 4 for more information about present-tense verb conjugations and Chapters 7, 8, 10, 11, and 15–19 for information about various tenses and moods. Underline the verbs in this section.

## Adjectives:

Adjectives may tell you what color something is, whether it's new or old, or its shape, size, or provenance. Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) Adjectives usually aren't essential, the way nouns and verbs are, because they just add some extra information to the basic facts. Compare My brother has a car to My older brother has a red car — the important information is that your brother has a car; the fact that he's older than you and that the car is red is just window dressing. Adjectives like these are called descriptive adjectives, but adjectives come in many other useful varieties: \* Demonstrative adjectives: ce, cette (this, that), ces (these, those) \* Indefinite adjectives: quelques (some), certain (certain), plusieurs (several) \* Interrogative adjectives: quel (which) \* Negative adjectives: ne . . . aucun, ne . . . nul (no, not any) \* Possessive adjectives: mon (my), ton (your), son (his/her) Unlike boring old English adjectives, French adjectives have masculine, feminine, singular, and plural forms so that they can agree with nouns. (Chapter 9 tells you lots of other interesting details about adjectives.) Underline the adjectives in this section.

## Adverbs:

Like adjectives, adverbs aren't always essential, but rather, they add some extra information to the words they're helpfully modifying. In the example sentence, really modifies the verb want. Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) English

adverbs often end in *-ly* and indicate how the action of a verb is occurring: happily, quickly, rudely. Most of these words are *adverbs of manner*. The other kinds of adverbs are \* Adverbs of frequency: jamais (*never*), souvent (*often*) \* Adverbs of place: ici (*here*), partout (*everywhere*) \* Adverbs of quantity: très (*very*), beaucoup (*a lot*) \* Adverbs of time: avant (*before*), demain (*tomorrow*) \* Interrogative adverbs: quand (*when*), où (*where*) \* Negative adverbs: ne . . . pas (*not*), ne . . . jamais (*never*) Read Chapter 9 thoroughly to understand more about French adverbs. Underline the adverbs in this section.

### Pronouns:

That is, pronouns also refer to people, places, things, and ideas, but they let you avoid repeating the same words over and over. For example, you could say, "I have a sister. My sister has a cat. The cat has fleas, and the fleas make the cat itch." But hearing those nouns repeated each time gets a little old. A much nicer way to say that would be, "I have a sister. She has a cat. It has fleas, and they make it itch." I, she, it, and they are *personal pronouns* because they have different forms for each *grammatical person*. (You can read about grammatical person in Chapter 4.) Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) French has five types of personal pronouns. The following are all equivalent to I/me, you, or he/him/it: \* Subject pronouns: je, tu, il \* Direct object pronouns: me, te, le \* Indirect object pronouns: me, te, lui \* Reflexive pronouns: me, te, se \* Stressed pronouns: moi, toi, lui French also has several kinds of *impersonal pronouns*, which doesn't mean they're unkind, just that they don't have different forms for each grammatical person. However, many of them do have different forms for masculine, feminine, singular, and plural. Take a look (*Note: I hold off on the definitions for now*): \* Adverbial pronouns: y, en \* Demonstrative pronouns: celui, celle \* Indefinite pronouns: autre, certain \* Interrogative pronouns: quel, quelle \* Negative pronouns: aucun, personne \* Possessive pronouns: le mien, le tien \* Relative pronouns: qui, que, dont I explain the different types of pronouns throughout this book: Chapter 2 explains demonstrative and possessive pronouns, Chapter 4 presents subject pronouns, Chapter 5 discusses interrogative ones, and so on. Underline the pronouns in this section.

### Prepositions:

When you go to the store, return from vacation, or trip over the shoes you left sitting under a towel lying on the floor, the prepositions tell you how those verbs and nouns fit together. The shoes are under the towel, not on, next to, or wrapped in it. Prepositions may be one word (to, at, about) or part of a group of words (next to, in front of, on top of). Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) Prepositions are difficult to translate, perhaps more so than any other part of speech. The French preposition à, for example, usually means to, at, or in, but also has other meanings in certain expressions: \* Destination: Je vais à Paris. (*I'm going to Paris.*) \* Current location: Je suis à la banque/à Londres. (*I'm at the bank/in London.*) \* Function: un verre à vin (*a wine glass, a glass for wine*) \* Owner: C'est à moi. (*It's mine, It belongs to me.*) Prepositions are therefore not like a list of vocabulary that you can just memorize, but rather, they're grammatical terms with various functions that you have to study and practice. Chapter 12 explains all about prepositions. Underline the prepositions in this section.

### Conjunctions:

Je veux vraiment aller en France et visiter les musées célèbres. (*I really want to go to France and visit the famous museums.*) They come in a couple of varieties: \* Coordinating conjunctions: These words — such as and, or, and but — bring together equals, as in *I like coffee and tea*. Other examples include *He can't read or write and We want to go, but we don't have time*. You can tell that a conjunction is coordinating when you can reverse the joined items with little or no difference in meaning. There's no difference between *I like coffee and tea and I like tea and coffee*. Likewise, *We want to go, but we don't have time* means pretty much the same thing as *We don't have time, but we want to go*. \* Subordinating conjunctions: Subordinating conjunctions — such as that, when, and as soon as — combine two clauses, or groups of words with a subject and verb. The conjunction tells you that the clause after it is *subordinate*, meaning that clause is dependent on the *main clause*, as in *He thinks that I'm smart* (I may or may not be smart, but he thinks I am), *I don't know when they'll arrive* (They're supposed to arrive, but I don't know when), and *She left as soon as the phone rang* (The phone rang, and then she left). If you reverse the clauses in my examples, you end up with either nonsense or a different meaning. *I am smart that he thinks* doesn't make any sense, and *The phone rang as soon as she left* isn't the same thing as *She left as soon as the phone rang* — in fact, it's just the opposite. This test lets you know that these conjunctions are subordinating rather than coordinating. (Chapter 14 examines coordinating and subordinating conjunctions in more detail.) Underline the conjunctions in this section.