

Shopping for clothes in a French boutique

French A1 (beginner) · Lesson

Quick answer: To shop for clothes in French, name the item with its color (*une veste verte*), say your size with *Je fais du 40*, and ask *Je peux l'essayer ?*. Use *taille* for clothes, *pointure* for shoes, and *ce, cet, cette, ces* for “this” and “these”.

Level: French A1 (CEFR beginner) · **Standards:** CEFR A1, Spoken interaction

How do you ask for a size and a color in a shop?

Say what you are looking for, then give your size. Clothes have a *taille*, shoes have a *pointure*.

French	English
Je cherche un pantalon noir.	I'm looking for black pants.
Quelle est votre taille ?	What is your size? (clothes)
Je fais du 38.	I'm a size 38.
Quelle est votre pointure ?	What is your shoe size?
Je chausse du 41.	I wear a size 41 shoe.
Vous l'avez en bleu ?	Do you have it in blue?
Où sont les cabines d'essayage ?	Where are the fitting rooms?
C'est trop petit. Je le prends.	It's too small. / I'll take it.



CHEMISE

couleur : bleu

taille : 38

29 €

CHAUSSURES

couleur : marron

pointure : 41

64 €

Taille for clothes, pointure for shoes.

How do you say “this” and “these” in French?

Rule: ce, cet, cette, ces

The word changes with the noun. Before a masculine noun that starts with a vowel or a silent h, use *cet* instead of *ce*.

Noun type	Word	Example
masculine	ce	ce pantalon
masculine, vowel	cet	cet imperméable
feminine	cette	cette robe
plural	ces	ces chaussures

How do colors agree with clothes?

A color goes after the noun and agrees with it: un pull vert, une jupe verte, des baskets blanches. Colors ending in -e such as rouge, jaune and rose keep one form for both genders. marron and orange never change.

Watch out

English puts the color first ("a red dress"). French puts it second: une robe rouge, never *une rouge robe*.

How do you conjugate essayer?

The y becomes *i* before silent endings: j'essaie, tu essaies, il essaie, nous essayons, vous essayez, ils essaient. Ask politely with Je peux essayer cette veste ? — May I try on this jacket?

Je peux vous aider ?

Je cherche une veste verte.

Quelle taille faites-vous ?

Je fais du 40.

A short exchange between seller (left) and customer (right).

How do you talk about the price and the fit?

Ask Combien ça coûte ? or C'est combien ? to learn the price. To comment on the fit, use trop (too) or assez (enough): C'est trop long., Ce n'est pas assez grand. A friendly seller may answer Je

vous apporte la taille au-dessus. — I'll bring you the next size up. Then decide: Je le prends for a masculine item, Je la prends for a feminine one, Je les prends for plural items.

Sales in France

Shops may only run the big “soldes” during two official periods a year, one in winter and one in summer. Outside them, a discount is called a promotion.

Zoé's tip

Learn the size sentence as one block: Je fais du... works for jeans, jackets and shoes. Only the question changes: taille or pointure.

Key points to remember

- Clothes have a *taille*; shoes have a *pointure*: Je fais du 38.
- *This* is ce, cet (masculine before a vowel), cette or ces (plural).
- Colors follow the noun and agree: une jupe noire; marron and orange never change.
- Essayer changes y to i: j'essaie, but nous essayons.
- Say Je le prends or Je la prends to buy an item.

Shopping for Clothes in a French Boutique: frequently asked questions

What is the difference between taille and pointure?

Use taille for clothes and pointure for shoes. The answer is the same pattern for both: Je fais du 40.

When do you use cet instead of ce?

Use cet before a masculine singular noun starting with a vowel or silent h, as in cet anorak. Feminine nouns always take cette.

Do French colors agree with the noun?

Most do: une jupe noire, des pulls bleus. Colors ending in -e do not change for gender, and marron and orange never change at all.

How do you ask to try something on?

Say Je peux essayer ce pantalon ? The fitting rooms are les cabines d'essayage. A seller may point to them and say Voilà, c'est là-bas.

How do you say you will buy an item?

Use prendre with a pronoun that matches the item: Je le prends for a masculine item, Je la prends

for a feminine one, Je les prends for a plural one.