

Mastering the simulated conversation

AP French Language and Culture · Lesson

This AP French lesson explains **AP French conversation** step by step, with examples in French and English. Then practise with the worksheet on AP French conversation and check yourself with the quiz.

Quick answer: The AP simulated conversation is a recorded exchange in which you read an outline, then respond to five spoken turns, about 20 seconds each. Keep the register shown (tu or vous), answer the speaker's point, add a detail or example, use natural fillers, and ask a question when invited.

Level: AP French Language and Culture · **Standards:** AP French Language and Culture (College Board CED), Interpersonal Speaking

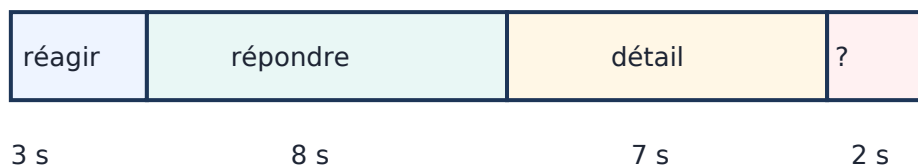
AP French conversation: the lesson

What happens in the simulated conversation?

You read a short outline: it names the person you are talking to, the situation, and the topic. Then the recording speaks, you respond, and the pattern repeats for five turns. Each reply is about 20 seconds, which is roughly 40 to 55 words at a natural pace. Nobody waits for you, so your answers must start quickly and sound confident.

Definition: a complete turn

A complete turn reacts to the speaker, answers the question, adds one detail or example, and, when it makes sense, ends with a question back.



Shape of a strong 20-second turn.

Which fillers and reactions sound natural?

Purpose	French	Meaning
Start	Eh bien, ... / Alors, ...	Well, ... / So, ...
Think	Voyons... / Disons que...	Let's see... / Let's say...
Be honest	À vrai dire, ... / Franchement, ...	To tell the truth, ... / Frankly, ...
Add	En plus, ... / Par exemple, ...	Besides, ... / For example, ...
Ask to repeat	Pourriez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît ?	Could you repeat, please?

Rule: keep the register

If the outline says friend, use tu, ton, ta and casual but correct phrases. If it says teacher, host parent or director, use vous, votre, and polite forms such as Je voudrais.

Example turn with a friend

Speaker: Tu viens au match de basket samedi ?

You: Eh bien, oui, avec plaisir ! En fait, j'ai un entraînement le matin, mais je serai libre à 15 h. Par exemple, on pourrait se retrouver devant le gymnase. Et toi, tu y vas avec qui ? — Well, yes, gladly! ...

1. Salutation + invitation

2. Question sur tes goûts

3. Problème d'horaire

4. Proposition + avis

5. Conclusion polie

Reading the outline in 30 seconds.

Common mistake

English speakers often freeze and say *um* or switch into English when a word is missing. Use a French filler instead, then describe the idea: C'est un objet qu'on porte sur le dos pour aller à l'école. Another trap is answering in four words. Short answers waste the 20 seconds.

How can you use the 30 seconds before speaking?

Scan the outline: who is the speaker, which register, which topic. Jot two ideas per turn. Prepare opening fillers and one question to ask back. Then speak at a steady pace and keep going if you make a small mistake. Self-correcting quickly (pardon, je voulais dire...) is natural and shows control.

Zoé's tip

Train with a stopwatch and a phone recorder. Count your words aloud: about 45 words is a good turn. Listen back and note one thing to improve each time.

Culture note

In Québec, young people often use *tu* very quickly, even with adults they know well, while in France and West Africa people often keep *vous* longer. The outline always tells you which to use.

Key points to remember

- You first read an outline that shows who you are speaking with and the topic.
- There are five turns, and you have about 20 seconds to respond to each one.
- Register matters: *tu* for a friend, *vous* for an adult or a professional contact.
- Fillers such as *eh bien* and *alors* give you thinking time and sound natural.
- If you do not know a word, describe it in French instead of switching to English.

Mastering the Simulated Conversation: frequently asked questions

How long is each turn in the simulated conversation?

You usually have about 20 seconds per response, and there are five turns. That is roughly 40 to 55 words, so aim for a reaction, an answer, a detail and a short question.

Should I use *tu* or *vous*?

Follow the outline. A friend or peer gets *tu*; a teacher, host parent or professional gets *vous*. Switching registers in the middle of a conversation is a common error.

What if I do not understand the question?

Politely ask for repetition with a French phrase, such as *Pourriez-vous répéter ?* Then answer. Never stay silent, and never switch into English.

Is it all right to make a mistake and correct it?

Yes. A quick self-correction is natural and can help, as long as you keep moving instead of starting over or apologizing for too long.

Do fillers lower my score?

No, a few natural fillers such as *eh bien* or *alors* help your fluency. Overuse can waste your 20 seconds, so use one or two per turn.