

# Shopping for clothes with ce, cet, cette, ces

## French 1 (high school) · Lesson

**Quick answer:** French demonstrative adjectives mean this, that, these and those: ce (masculine), cet (masculine before a vowel), cette (feminine) and ces (plural). Colors follow the noun and agree with it: cette veste verte. To ask a price, say Ça coûte combien ? and answer with the number and euros.

**Level:** French 1 (high school, ACTFL Novice) · **Standards:** ACTFL Novice Mid, WL 1.1 Interpersonal, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational

## What do ce, cet, cette and ces mean?

### Definition

A demonstrative adjective points to something: "this", "that", "these", "those". It replaces the article and agrees with the noun. French uses the same word for "this" and "that"; add -ci (here) or -là (there) to the noun to tell them apart.

|                                                |                                                   |                                                    |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ce</b><br>masculin<br>+ consonne<br>ce pull | <b>cet</b><br>masculin<br>+ voyelle<br>cet anorak | <b>cette</b><br>féminin<br>singulier<br>cette robe | <b>ces</b><br>pluriel<br>m. et f.<br>ces baskets |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

Choose the form by gender, number and first sound.

| Clothing        | English  |
|-----------------|----------|
| un tee-shirt    | T-shirt  |
| un manteau      | coat     |
| un bonnet       | knit hat |
| une jupe        | skirt    |
| une écharpe     | scarf    |
| des chaussettes | socks    |
| des bottes      | boots    |

## Examples

- Ce pull-ci est trop grand, mais ce pull-là va bien. — This sweater is too big, but that sweater fits.
- Cet imperméable est parfait pour Nantes ! — This raincoat is perfect for Nantes!

## How do you describe clothes with colors?

### Rule: place and agreement

Colors go *after* the noun and match its gender and number: une écharpe grise, des chaussettes grises.



*A shop display with demonstratives, colors and prices.*

| Masculine | Feminine | Meaning                |
|-----------|----------|------------------------|
| noir      | noire    | black                  |
| blanc     | blanche  | white                  |
| vert      | verte    | green                  |
| gris      | grise    | gray                   |
| rouge     | rouge    | red                    |
| orange    | orange   | orange (never changes) |

Combine everything in one phrase: demonstrative, noun, color. Ce bonnet gris — this gray hat. Cette écharpe jaune — this yellow scarf. Ces bottes noires — these black boots. With the verb porter (to wear), you can describe a whole outfit: Aïcha porte ce jean bleu et cette veste verte. Notice that jaune and rouge already end in -e, so the feminine form is identical.

### Common mistake

English puts the color first ("a red skirt"). In French, say une jupe rouge, not une rouge jupe. Do not forget to add -e and -s: des baskets blanches.

## How do you ask a price or a size?

Ask Ça coûte combien ? or C'est combien ? The answer uses the number and the currency: Ça coûte trente-cinq euros. — It costs thirty-five euros. For several items, use Ils coûtent or Elles coûtent. To ask about size: Vous avez ce jean en taille 40 ? — Do you have these jeans in size 40? The word essayer means to try on: Je voudrais essayer cette veste.

### Culture note

French clothing and shoe sizes follow a European system that differs from US sizes, so always check the size chart. The big national sales (les soldes) happen twice a year at dates set by law.

### Zoé's tip

Say cet anorak out loud: the final t links with the vowel, so it sounds like *ce-tanorak*. If a word starts with a vowel, your ear tells you to use cet.

### Key points to remember

- Ce, cet, cette and ces all replace the article before the noun.
- Cet is used before a masculine noun starting with a vowel or mute h: cet anorak.
- Color adjectives come after the noun and agree: des baskets blanches.
- Orange and marron never change form.
- Ask a price with Ça coûte combien ? or C'est combien ?

## Shopping for Clothes with Ce, Cet, Cette, Ces: frequently asked questions

### What is the difference between ce, cet, cette and ces?

Ce is masculine singular, cet is masculine singular before a vowel, cette is feminine singular and ces is plural. They all mean this, that, these or those.

### When do you use cet?

Use cet before a masculine singular noun that begins with a vowel or mute h, like cet imperméable. It makes the phrase easier to pronounce.

### Where do color adjectives go in French?

Colors go after the noun and agree in gender and number: une jupe verte, des pulls verts. Orange and marron stay the same.

**How do you ask how much something costs?**

Say Ça coûte combien ? or C'est combien ? For the answer, use Ça coûte plus the price in euros.

**How do you tell "this" from "that" in French?**

Add -ci for something close and -là for something farther away: ce sac-ci, ce sac-là. Without them, one word covers both meanings.