

Chanson&Grammaire : LA CHEMINÉE par Sweet Crude

LA GRAMMAIRE : Pronouns like I, me, he, him ~ conjugating the verb avoir (“to have”) in the present tense

One thing you’ll need to learn early on is pronouns. A pronoun replaces a noun; so, instead of saying “Bob does this, Bob does that,” you can replace Bob with “he” - or if your name is Bob, you’d say “I do this.”

If you’ve learned some French at school before, you will have probably learned the following subject pronouns:

je	I	nous	we
tu	you	vous	you/y’all (formal/plural)
il	he	ils	they
elle	she	elles	they (if only females)

Subject pronouns are important because they help you learn to conjugate verbs.

Conjugating a verb just means changing it to match the subject.

You probably also learned **ça** (it/that) and **on** (=technically ‘one,’ but can be used as ‘we’ or an editorial ‘you’)

An easy example in English is the verb “to be”: in English, we say I am, you are, he is, etc...

In Louisiana, our subject pronouns are MOSTLY the same but there are a few differences...

je	I	il	he	ils	they <i>male or female</i>
tu	you	elle	she		
		on	we		
vous	you <i>formal</i>	vous-autres	y’all		

There’s actually several ways to say “they” - sometimes you might say **ils**, sometimes you might say **eux-autres**; people also often use **ça**, which normally means “it”/“that,” to refer to “them”: *Ça parle français à Arnaudville?* (“Do they speak French in Arnaudville?” - the answer is *Ouais!* of course); in some parishes, particularly Terrebonne and Lafourche, people tend to say **eusse** to mean “they.”

Let’s look at how we conjugate the verb avoir:

AVOIR (“to have”)

j’ai	I have	il a	he has	ils ont	they have
t’as	you have	elle a	she has		
		on a	we have		
vous avez	you have formal	vous-autres a	y’all have		

Ils ont 2 chiens, Lulu et Graton.

They have 2 dogs, Lulu and Cracklin.

Il a une excuse pour tout.

He has an excuse for everything.

T’as pas ta clé?

You don’t have your key?

Other forms:

eux-autres a eusse a they have

ça a it/that has OR they have (sometimes written **ç’a**)

A few things you may notice:

- **je + ai = j’ai** It’s always written and pronounced that way; in Louisiana, *tu + as* generally becomes **t’as**; you may hear *t’as* in International French, but only when speaking very *informally*
- **il** and **elle** are always conjugated the same way. In fact, **ça**, **on**, **vous-autres**, etc. are also conjugated that way.
- To make something negative, place **pas** after the conjugated verb. In International French, you learn to use *ne...pas* around the verb, but in Louisiana, like in *informal* French worldwide, we tend to drop the *ne*.

Pratiquez! Put the appropriate form of the verb **avoir** in the blank.

1. Adèle _____ un beau jardin. (*Adele has a beautiful garden.*)
2. Vous _____ une réservation, monsieur? (*You have a reservation, sir?*)
3. Monsieur et Madame Landry, ils _____ 3 enfants. (*Mr. & Mrs. Landry, they have 3 children.*)
4. J' _____ mes raisons. (*I have my reasons.*)
5. On _____ pas le temps. (*We don't have the time.*)
6. Vous-autres _____ une grande maison! (*Y'all have a big house!*)
7. T' _____ des cheveux gris, là! (*You have some gray hairs, there!*)
8. Eux-autres _____ tout l'argent. (*They have all the money.*)

The pronouns we've talked about so far are called subject pronouns because they act as the subject of the sentence: "**She** loves gardening" or "**We** work all week"

But in different parts of the sentence, you need different kinds of pronouns - just as you do in English: "My sister loves ~~he~~ **him**" or "You lied to ~~I~~ **me**"

As you'll notice below, sometimes these 2 pronouns are different and sometimes they're the same.

moi (me)	je (I)	C'est juste moi . // <i>It's just me.</i>
toi (you)	tu (you)	J'ai un cadeau pour toi . // <i>I have a gift for you.</i>
vous (you)	vous (you)	Après vous , madame. // <i>After you, ma'am.</i>
lui (him)	il (he)	Lui et son frère, ils sont riches. // <i>Him and his brother, they're rich.</i>
elle (her)	elle (she)	Je parlais pas d' elle . // <i>I wasn't talking about her.</i>
nous or nous-autres (us)	on (we)	Il est perdu sans nous-autres . // <i>He's lost without us.</i>
vous-autres (y'all)	vous-autres (y'all)	Avec vous-autres , tout est difficile. // <i>With y'all, everything is difficult.</i>
eux, eusse, or eux-autres (them)	ils (they)	On va arriver avant eux-autres . // <i>We're going to arrive before them.</i>
ça (it/that)	ça (it/that)	\$20 pour ça ?! C'est trop! // <i>\$20 for that?! That's too much!</i>

In French we use this second kind of pronoun a lot when we want to emphasize something:

"**Moi** j'aime le thon, mais **lui, il** déteste l'odeur." (*"Me, I love tuna, but him he hates the smell."*)

If you've been in Louisiana long enough, you may have heard things like "You're crazy, you!" or "I don't know, me!" in people's English. This is a little 'crossover' from French! 😊

Answer key for the Pratiquez! section:

1. Adèle a un beau jardin. 2. Vous avez une réservation, monsieur? 3. M. et Mme Landry, ils ont 3 enfants.
4. J'ai mes raisons. 5. On a pas le temps. 6. Vous-autres a une grande maison. 7. T'as des cheveux gris, là!
8. Eux-autres a tout l'argent.

LA CHANSON

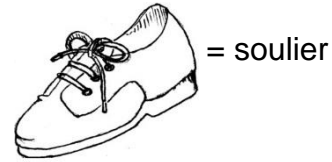
Remember that a handful of words in a language can make up a huge percentage of what we say in an everyday conversation. So, even if all you know are the words *moi, je, toi, tu*, and the verb *avoir*, guess what? You know roughly a third of the lyrics in "La Cheminée" by Sweet Crude! We've left pictures to help you figure out some of the rest!

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9aSXJ-Ujw8>

Toi t'as la cheminée;
Moi j'ai le feu
Toi t'as la cheminée;
Moi j'ai le feu
Moi j'ai le feu

You, you have the fireplace

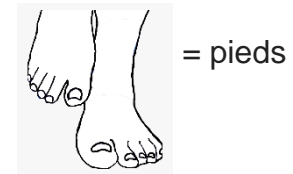
Me, I have the fire



Toi t'as les **souliers**;
Moi j'ai les pieds
Toi t'as les souliers;
Moi j'ai les pieds
Moi j'ai les pieds

You, you have the ¹ _____

² _____ the ³ _____



*What I need is what you've got
Unless you've got it bad
In which case, I've had enough for both of us*

Toi t'as la carabine;
Moi j'ai les balles
Toi t'as la carabine;
Moi j'ai les balles
Moi j'ai les balles

⁴ _____ have the rifle

² _____ the ⁵ _____



Et toi tu manques jamais;
Je reste tranquille
Et toi tu manques jamais;
Moi je reste tranquille
Moi je reste tranquille

And you, you never miss
I stay calm (or still)

What I need is what you've got...etc.

Mon wagon a des roues en bois
Et la boue, la boue c'est toi !
Mon wagon a des roues en bois
Et la boue, la boue c'est **toi** !

My wagon ⁶ _____ wooden wheels

And the mud, the mud is ⁷ _____!

Toi t'as le cœur cassé
Moi j'ai de la colle
Toi t'as le cœur cassé
Moi j'ai de la colle
Moi j'ai de la colle

You, you have a broken heart

Me, I have some glue

What I need is what you've got... etc.

1.shoes 2. Me, I have 3. feet 4. You, you have 5. bullets 6. has 7. you

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