superlexa.

FREE FRENCH READER · LEVEL ONE

Amelia Earhart

A true story in easy French, written with words that look like English, so you can read it from day one.

79% of the words in this story are cognates or names you can recognize from English, or one of the 57 little words listed on page 2.

How to read this story

1. Read without stopping. Words like *information* look like English, so trust your guess.
2. A dotted word is explained in the box under its paragraph: first its meaning, then where it comes from. The origin is the link to English that makes it stick.
3. The little grammar words (the, of, and) are listed once, on the next page.

Little words

These short words carry the grammar. They are everywhere, so learn them here and they will not be marked in the story.

le The (masculine); him, it

la The (feminine); her, it

les The (plural); them

l' the (before a vowel)

un A, an, one

une A, an, one; the counterpart of un used with a different set of words

des Some; of the (plural article)

de Of, from

d' of, from (before a vowel)

du Some; of the (a contraction)

au To the, at the

aux To the, at the (plural)

et And

ou Or

à To, at

en In, of it, some (of it)

dans In, inside

sur On, upon, over

avec With

pour For

par By, through

que That, which, than, what

qu' that, than (before a vowel)

qui Who, which

ne Not, the basic word of negation in French

n' not (n'... pas)

pas Step; not (in negation)

plus More

il He, it

elle She, her

ils they (masculine)

se Himself, herself, itself, themselves; a word placed before a verb to show someone does the action to themselves

s' himself, herself, itself (before a vowel)

son His, her, or its, used before a masculine or vowel-starting noun

sa His, her, or its, used before a feminine singular noun

ses His, her, or its, used before a plural noun

ce This, that (demonstrative)

c' it, that (c'est, "it is")

cet This (used before a vowel sound)

cette This, that (feminine)

y There; a pronoun standing in for a place or thing already mentioned

est Is (present of être: il est, "he is"); also east

sont they are

était was (imperfect of être)

étaient were (imperfect of être, plural)

a has (third person singular of avoir, "to have")

ont have, they have (present of avoir)

avait He, she, or it had (imperfect tense)

avaient They had (imperfect tense)

été Summer; also "been," the past form of être

très Very

mais But

aussi Also, too

tout All, every, everything

toute All, every, everything

toutes All, every, everything

jusqu' until, up to (before a vowel)

Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart est née en 1897 à Atchison, une petite ville de l'État du Kansas, aux États-Unis. Enfant, elle a passé beaucoup de temps dehors avec sa sœur, Muriel. Les deux filles ont exploré les collines près de la maison, ont observé les animaux et ont imaginé des expéditions. Amelia collectionnait des articles de journaux sur des personnes qui exerçaient des professions rares ou faisaient des choses inhabituelles.

née (né) *born, née (used for a woman's maiden name).* Né is the past participle of naître, "to be born," from Latin natus, "born," as in je suis né à Paris, "I was born in Paris."

ville *city, town.* Ville comes from Latin villa, "country estate," which English kept as "villa."

beaucoup *a lot, much.* Beaucoup is beau, "fine," plus coup, "blow, stroke," literally "a fine stroke," a big haul.

temps *time; weather.* Temps comes from Latin tempus, "time," the root of English "temporary," "contemporary," and "tempo," and of the motto "tempus fugit," "time flies."

dehors *outside.* Dehors is de, "from," plus hors, "outside," from Latin foris, "out of doors," the root of English "foreign."

sœur *sister.* Sœur comes from Latin soror, "sister," the root of English "sorority," a sisterhood.

deux *two.* Deux comes from Latin duo, "two," the English "duo," and the root of "dual" and "double."

filles *girl, daughter.* Fille comes from Latin filia, "daughter," the root of English "filial," the bond of a child to a parent.

collines *hill.* Colline comes from Italian collina, "hill," from Latin collinus, "of a hill," built on collis, "hill."

près *near, close.* Près comes from Latin pressus, "pressed close," from premere, "to press," the root of English "press" and "pressure."

maison *house.* Maison comes from Latin mansio, "a stay, a lodging," from manere, "to remain," and English "mansion" comes from the same word.

faisaient (faire) *they were doing, they were making (imperfect tense).* Faire comes from Latin facere, "to do, to make," the root of English "fact," "factory," and "manufacture," literally "made by hand."

choses *thing.* Chose comes from Latin causa, "cause, legal case," the root of English "cause," as Latin ca- regularly became French cho-/cha-.

inhabituelles *not usual or customary.* Inhabituel is in-, "not," plus habituel, "habitual," from Latin habitus, "condition, habit," from habere, "to have, to hold."

Vers l'âge de sept ans, elle a construit une rampe en bois sur le toit d'une petite construction, dans le jardin, comme les montagnes russes qu'elle avait vues à une fête. Elle est descendue à toute vitesse dans une boîte en bois. La boîte a quitté les rails et Amelia est tombée, mais elle a décrit la sensation comme parfaite, presque comme le vol.

vers *toward; also, a line of verse.* Vers comes from Latin versus, "turned toward," from vertere, "to turn," the root of English "convert" and "reverse."

sept *seven.* Sept comes from Latin septem, "seven," the root of English "September," the seventh month of the old Roman year, and "septet."

ans *year.* An comes from Latin annus, "year," the root of English "annual," "anniversary," and "per annum."

bois (boire) *wood, forest.* Boire comes from Latin bibere, "to drink," the root of English "imbibe" and "beverage."

toit *roof.* Toit comes from Latin tectum, "roof, covering," from tegere, "to cover."

jardin *garden.* Jardin comes from a Frankish word for "enclosure," a relative of English "yard."

comme *as, like, how.* Comme comes from Latin quomodo, "in what way," built from quo, "what," and modo, "way," the modus of "modus operandi," a "way of working."

vues *to see.* Voir comes from Latin videre, "to see," the root of English "video," literally "I see," "vision," and "evident."

fête *party, holiday, festival.* Fête comes from Latin festa, "feast days," and its circumflex marks the s that English kept in "feast" and "festival."

vitesse *speed.* Vitesse is built from vite, "quickly," plus the noun ending -esse, and vite itself is of uncertain origin.

boîte *box.* Boîte comes from Late Latin buxida, from Greek pyxis, "a box," named for the boxwood it was carved from.

tombée *to fall.* Tomber first meant "to tumble, to do somersaults," and probably comes from a Frankish verb meaning "to turn, to reel," a Germanic word of the same family as English "tumble."

presque *almost, nearly.* Presque is près, "near," plus que, "as," so "nearly as."

vol *flight; also theft.* Vol is the noun of voler, which comes from Latin volare, "to fly," the root of English "volatile," something that flies off, and "volley."

En 1908, à une foire dans l'État de l'Iowa, Amelia a vu un avion pour la première fois. L'objet ne l'a pas impressionnée. Des années plus tard, elle a dit que c'était une construction en fil métallique et en bois, sans aucun intérêt.

foire *fair; market, trade show.* Foire comes from Latin feria, "holiday, feast day," which in later Latin also came to mean a market day.

vu (voir) *seen (past participle of "to see").*

avion *airplane.* Avion was coined by the French aviation pioneer Clément Ader from Latin avis, "bird," the root of English "aviation" and "avian."

fois *time, occasion (as in "once," "twice").* Fois comes from Latin vices, "turns," the root of "vice versa," "with the turns reversed."

années *year.* Année comes from Vulgar Latin annata, from annus, "year," the root of English "annual" and "anniversary," the year turning round again.

tard *late.* Tard comes from Latin tardus, "slow," the root of English "tardy."

dit (dire) *said (the past participle of dire).* Dire comes from Latin dicere, "to say," the root of English "diction," "dictate," "predict," and "verdict," a "true saying."

fil *thread, wire.* Fil comes from Latin filum, "thread," the root of English "filament" and of "file" in "single file," a line of people like a thread.

sans *without.* Sans comes from Latin sine, "without," the sine of "sine qua non," "without which not," an essential condition.

aucun *no, none, not any.* Aucun comes from Latin aliquis unus, "some one," fused into a single word.

La famille Earhart a déménagé plusieurs fois. Le père d'Amelia avait un problème d'alcool et perdait ses emplois les uns après les autres. La situation financière est devenue instable et Amelia a changé d'école souvent. Pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, elle a travaillé comme aide-infirmière volontaire dans un hôpital militaire à Toronto, au Canada. Elle s'est occupée de soldats blessés qui rentraient d'Europe. Juste à côté de l'hôpital, il y avait un terrain d'aviation militaire, et Amelia allait souvent regarder les avions. Après la guerre, elle a suivi des cours de médecine à New York pendant environ un an, puis elle a abandonné cette idée.

déménagé *to move house.* Déménager is ménage, "household," with dé-, "out of," so to move house is to take the household out.

plusieurs *several.* Plusieurs comes from a spoken Latin form built on plus, "more," the plus of English arithmetic and the root of "plural," "more than one."

père *father.* Père comes from Latin pater, "father," the root of English "paternal," "patriarch," and "patriot."

perdait (perdre) *was losing.* Perdre comes from Latin perdere, "to destroy, to lose," from per-, "thoroughly," and dare, "to give," so "to give away completely."

uns *a, an, one.* Un comes from Latin unus, "one," the root of English "unit," "unite," "union," and "unique," "one of a kind."

après *after.* Après comes from Latin ad pressum, "pressed close to," from premere, "to press," the root of English "press" and "pressure."

autres *other.* Autre comes from Latin alter, "the other of two," the root of English "alter," "alternate," and "alter ego," "other self."

devenue (devenir) *become (feminine past participle of devenir).* Devenir comes from Latin devenire, de- plus venire, "to come," so to become is to "come to be" something.

souvent *often.* Souvent comes from Latin subinde, "immediately after, again and again," built from sub, "under, close after," and inde, "from there."

pendant *during; a pendant (hanging ornament).* Pendant is the present participle of pendre, "to hang," from Latin pendere, the root of English "pendulum," "suspend," and "pending."

mondiale *worldwide, global.* Mondial is monde, "world," plus the adjective ending -ial, from Latin mundus, "world," the root of English "mundane," "worldly."

travaillé *to work.* Travailler is traditionally traced to Latin tripalium, a three-staked device used for torture, and in Old French it meant "to suffer, to toil."

infirmière *nurse (a woman).*

blessés *wounded, injured.* Blessé is the past participle of blesser, "to wound," from a Frankish word meaning "to bruise."

côté *side.* Côté comes from Latin costa, "rib," and so "side," the root of English "coast," the side of the land.

allait (aller) *"il allait," he was going, imperfect of aller.* Aller is built from three Latin verbs: vadere, "to go," gives je vais, "I go," and ire, "to go," gives the future j'irai, "I will go."

regarder *to look at, to watch.* Regarder is re- plus garder, "to watch over, to keep," a verb taken from Frankish, the Germanic language of the Franks, that is related to English "ward."

avions *to have.* Avoir comes from Latin habere, "to hold, to have," and the habeas of habeas corpus, "you shall have the body," the writ that brings a prisoner before a judge, is another form of the same verb.

guerre *war.* Guerre comes from Frankish werra, "strife, confusion," and English "war" comes from the same Germanic word through Norman French werre.

suivi (suivre) *followed (past participle of suivre, "to follow").* Suivre comes from Latin sequi, "to follow," the root of English "sequel," "sequence," and "consequence."

environ *about, around, approximately.* Environ is en, "in," plus viron, "a turn," from virer, "to turn," the source of English "veer."

an *year.*

puis *then, next, afterward.* Puis comes from Latin post, "after," the "post-" of "postpone" and the P.S. of a "postscript."

En décembre 1920, à Long Beach, en Californie, Amelia a accompagné son père à une démonstration aérienne. Elle a payé dix dollars pour un vol de dix minutes avec un pilote, Frank Hawks. L'avion est monté à deux ou trois cents pieds, et à cet instant précis Amelia a décidé qu'elle devait apprendre à piloter.

dix *ten.* Dix comes from Latin decem, "ten," the root of English "decimal" and "decade."

trois *three.* Trois comes from Latin tres, "three," the root of "trio" and "tri-," and English "three" is a Germanic relative of it.

cents *hundred.* Cent comes from Latin centum, "hundred," the root of English "cent," "century," and "percent," from per centum, "by the hundred."

pieds *foot.* Pied comes from Latin pes, pedis, "foot," the root of English "pedal" and "pedestrian."

devait (devoir) *had to, owed (imperfect of devoir).* Devoir comes from Latin debere, "to owe," the root of English "debt," "debit," and "due."

apprendre *to learn; also to teach.* Apprendre comes from Latin apprehendere, "to seize," the root of English "apprehend," taking hold of something with the mind.

Elle a commencé des leçons avec une instructrice, Neta Snook. Pour payer, elle a accepté toutes sortes de petits emplois: employée dans une compagnie de téléphone, photographe, conductrice de camion. Sa famille a aussi participé. En 1921, elle a acheté un petit avion jaune, un Kinner Airster, qu'elle a appelé « le Canari ». En octobre 1922, elle est montée avec cet avion à environ 4 300 mètres, une altitude record pour une femme à cette époque.

camion *truck.* Camion is of unknown origin, possibly from chemin, "road."

acheté *to buy.* Acheter comes from Latin accaptare, "to try to get," built on captare, "to grab," from capere, "to take," the root of English "capture" and "captive."

jaune *yellow.* Jaune comes from Latin galbinus, "yellowish," which wore down to jalne and then jaune in Old French.

appelé *to call.* Appeler comes from Latin appellare, "to address, to call upon," the root of English "appeal" and "appellation," a name.

femme *woman, wife.* Femme comes from Latin femina, "woman," the root of English "feminine" and "female."

En 1924, ses parents ont divorcé. Amelia a vendu l'avion, a acheté une automobile et a traversé le continent en voiture avec sa mère, de la Californie jusqu'à Boston. Là, elle a travaillé dans un centre social pour familles immigrées. Elle continuait à voler quand elle avait de l'argent et du temps, et elle participait aux activités d'un club d'aviation de la région.

voiture *car, vehicle.* Voiture comes from Latin vectura, "a carrying, transport," from vehere, "to carry," the root of English "vehicle" and "vector," a carrier.

mère *mother.* Mère comes from Latin mater, "mother," the root of English "maternal," "matron," and "matrix," and of "alma mater," "nourishing mother," a graduate's school.

là *there.* Là comes from Latin illac, "that way, there," a form of ille, "that."

voler *to fly; to steal.* Voler comes from Latin volare, "to fly," the root of English "volatile" and "volley."

quand *when.* Quand comes from Latin quando, "when."

argent *money; also silver.* Argent comes from Latin argentum, "silver," the source of the chemical symbol Ag and of the name Argentina, "land of silver."

En avril 1928, le téléphone a sonné. Une femme riche, Amy Guest, avait acheté un grand avion et voulait qu'une Américaine traverse l'océan Atlantique à bord. Sa propre famille avait refusé de la laisser partir. Les organisateurs cherchaient donc une autre personne. Un éditeur de New York, George Putnam, a rencontré Amelia et a proposé son nom. Amelia a accepté. Elle ne serait pas le pilote: le pilote était Wilmer Stultz, et Louis Gordon était le mécanicien.

sonné *to ring, to sound.* Sonner comes from Latin sonare, "to sound," from sonus, "sound," the root of English "sonic," "sonnet," and "resonate."

voulait (vouloir) *he/she wanted.* Vouloir comes from Latin velle, "to want," reshaped after its form volo, "I want," the root of English "voluntary," "volition," and "benevolent," "wishing well."

traverse (traverser) *crossbar, crosspiece; a crossing.* Traverser comes from Latin transversare, "to cross," from transversus, "turned across," trans-, "across," plus vertere, "to turn."

laisser *to let, to leave.* Laisser comes from Latin laxare, "to loosen," from laxus, "loose," the root of English "lax," "relax," and "release."

partir *to leave, depart.* Partir comes from Latin partiri, "to divide," built on pars, "part": to leave is to part from a place or group.

cherchaient *to search, to look for.* Chercher comes from Latin circare, "to go around," from circus, "circle," and English "search" is the same word, borrowed from Anglo-French sercher.

donc *so, therefore.* Donc comes from late Latin dunc, probably a blend of dum, "while," and tunc, "then."

autre *other.*

nom *name.* Nom comes from Latin nomen, "name," the root of English "noun," "nominate," and "nominal."

serait (être) *would be (he/she).* Être comes from Latin esse, "to be," the root of English "essence" and "essential," with some forms borrowed from stare, "to stand."

L'avion, un Fokker à trois moteurs baptisé « Friendship », a attendu presque deux semaines à Terre-Neuve à cause du mauvais temps. Il est parti le 17 juin 1928. Pendant le vol, Amelia a tenu le journal de bord. Le ciel restait couvert et les trois passagers ont volé des heures dans le brouillard, sans presque aucune visibilité. À la fin, il restait très peu de carburant. Après environ vingt heures, l'avion s'est posé sur l'eau près de Burry Port, au Pays de Galles. Amelia est devenue la première femme à traverser l'Atlantique en avion.

attendu (attendre) *waited for; also used to mean "given" or "considering.".* Attendre comes from Latin attendere, "to stretch toward," ad-, "to," plus tendere, "to stretch," the same verb as English "attend."

semaines *week.* Semaine comes from Latin septimana, "a period of seven," built on septem, "seven."

mauvais *bad.* Mauvais comes from Late Latin malifatius, "ill-fated," from malus, "bad," and fatum, "fate."

parti (partir) *(political) party; departed (past participle of partir).*

tenu (tenir) *held.* Tenir comes from Latin tenere, "to hold," the root of English "tenant," the one who holds a property, "tenacious," and "contain," "maintain," and "obtain."

ciel *sky, heaven.* Ciel comes from Latin caelum, "sky, heaven," the root of English "celestial."

volé *to fly; to steal.*

brouillard *fog.* Brouillard comes from brouiller, "to mix up, to blur," which goes back to Late Latin brodium, "broth," a word Latin took from Germanic, the source of English "broth."

aucune *no, none, not any.*

peu *few, little.* Peu comes from Latin paucus, "few," the root of English "paucity," a scarcity.

carburant *fuel.* Carburant comes from carbure, "carbide," built on Latin carbo, "charcoal," the root of English "carbon."

vingt *twenty.* Vingt comes from Latin viginti, "twenty," worn down in speech; the g is silent, put back in the spelling to recall the Latin.

posé (poser) *calm, composed, level-headed; also, the past participle of poser, "placed, set down.".* Poser comes from Late Latin pausare, "to stop, to rest," the root of English "pause," which took on the sense "to place" from Latin ponere, "to put."

eau *water.* Eau comes from Latin aqua, "water," the root of English "aquarium" and "aqueduct," worn down over the centuries through Old French eve into a word pronounced simply "o."

À New York, une immense réception l'attendait. Amelia a répété aux journalistes qu'elle avait seulement été une passagère, « comme un sac de pommes de terre », mais le public a continué à l'applaudir. Avec Putnam, elle a publié un livre sur le vol, puis a donné des conférences dans tout le pays et a écrit des articles pour un magazine. Amelia et George Putnam se sont mariés en février 1931.

attendait (attendre) *was waiting.*

seulement (seul) *only.* Seul comes from Latin solus, "alone," the root of English "sole," "solo," and "solitude."

pommes *apple.* Pomme comes from Latin poma, plural of pomum, "fruit," which French narrowed to "apple."

terre *earth, land, ground.* Terre comes from Latin terra, "earth," the root of English "terrestrial," "territory," "terrace," and "terrain."

livre *book (and, as a different word, the pound, both in weight and currency).* Le livre, "book," comes from Latin liber, "book," the root of English "library."

donné *to give.* Donner comes from Latin donare, "to give as a gift," from donum, "gift," the root of English "donate," "donor," and "donation."

pays *country.* Pays comes from Latin pagensis, "of the district," from pagus, "rural district."

écrit (écrire) *written; a written document.* Écrire comes from Latin scribere, "to write," the root of English "scribe," "script," and "describe."

Amelia voulait maintenant traverser l'Atlantique seule, aux commandes. Un pilote norvégien, Bernt Balchen, a préparé un avion Lockheed Vega rouge et a aidé à garder le projet secret. Le 20 mai 1932, exactement cinq ans après la traversée de Charles Lindbergh, Amelia est partie de Harbour Grace, à Terre-Neuve, en direction de l'Europe. Son plan était d'arriver à Paris.

maintenant *now.* Maintenant is the present participle of maintenir, "to maintain," from Latin manu tenere, "to hold in the hand."

seule *alone, only, single.*

rouge *red.* Rouge comes from Latin rubeus, "reddish," from the same root as "ruby" and "rubric," headings once written in red.

cinq *five.* Cinq comes from Latin quinque, "five," the root of English "quintet" and "quintuplets."

partie (partir) *part; game, match.*

La nuit a été très dure. Amelia est entrée dans une tempête longue et violente, avec de la pluie et un vent fort. À cause du froid, de la glace s'est formée sur les ailes et l'avion a perdu de l'altitude vers l'océan. L'altimètre est tombé en panne. Un tube d'échappement s'est fissuré et une petite flamme est restée visible sur le moteur pendant des heures. Amelia a continué. Sa seule nourriture pendant le vol a été une bouteille de jus de tomate. Après presque quinze heures, elle a vu la côte de l'Irlande. Les problèmes mécaniques l'ont forcée à s'arrêter là, loin de Paris. Elle a posé l'avion dans un champ près de Derry. Un homme qui travaillait dans le champ l'a regardée descendre, très surpris. Amelia était la première personne à refaire seule la traversée de l'Atlantique après Lindbergh.

nuit *night.* Nuit comes from Latin noctem, "night," the root of English "nocturnal" and "nocturne," and English "night" is a Germanic relative of it.

dure *to last, to endure.* Durer comes from Latin durare, "to harden, to last," from durus, "hard."

pluie *rain.* Pluie comes from Latin pluvia, "rain," from pluere, "to rain," the root of English "pluvial," "of rain."

vent *wind.* Vent comes from Latin ventus, "wind," the root of English "ventilate," to let the wind through.

froid *cold.* Froid comes from Latin frigidus, "cold," the source of English "frigid."

ailes *wing.* Aile comes from Latin ala, "wing."

perdu (perdre) *lost.*

tombé *to fall.*

panne *breakdown, malfunction.* Panne comes from the sailors' phrase mettre en panne, "to heave to," to stop a ship by setting its sails against the wind, though the source of panne there is uncertain.

bouteille *bottle.* Bouteille comes from Medieval Latin butticula, "small cask," from buttis, "cask," and English "bottle" comes from the same Old French word.

jus *juice.* Jus comes from Latin ius, "broth, sauce," and English "juice" comes from the same Old French word.

quinze *fifteen.* Quinze comes from Latin quindecim, "fifteen," from quinque, "five," as in "quintet," and decem, "ten," as in "decimal."

arrêter *to stop, to arrest.* Arrêter comes from Vulgar Latin arrestare, "to stop, to hold back," built on restare, "to stay behind," and English "arrest" is the same word.

loin *far.* Loin comes from Latin longe, "far off," from longus, "long," the root of English "longitude" and "prolong."

champ *field.* Champ comes from Latin campus, "open field," the root of English "camp," "campus," and "champion," a fighter in the field.

homme *man, human being.* Homme comes from Latin homo, "human being," as in Homo sapiens, "wise human."

travaillait *to work.*

regardée *to look at, to watch.*

refaire *to redo, to remake.* Refaire is re-, "again," plus faire, "to do, to make," from Latin facere, the root of English "fact" and "factory."

Ensuite, plusieurs pays lui ont remis des médailles et elle a établi d'autres records. En janvier 1935, elle est devenue la première personne à voler seule de Hawaï jusqu'à la côte de la Californie, plus de 3 800 kilomètres au-dessus du Pacifique. Plusieurs pilotes étaient morts en essayant cette route avant elle. Peu après, elle a volé seule de Los Angeles à Mexico, puis de Mexico à New York.

ensuite *then, next, afterward.* Ensuite is en, "in," plus suite, "what follows," from suivre, "to follow," from Latin sequi, the root of English "sequel" and "sequence."

lui *him, to him, her, to her.* Lui comes from Late Latin illui, "to that one," a form of ille, "that," the same word that gave le and il.

remis (remettre) *put back, handed over (past participle of remettre).* Remettre is re- plus mettre, "to put," from Latin remittere, "to send back," the source of English "remit."

dessus *above, on top.* Dessus is de, "from," plus sus, "up," from Latin sursum, "upward," as in "sursum corda," "lift up your hearts."

essayant *to try.* Essayer comes from essai, "attempt," from Late Latin exagium, "a weighing, a test."

avant *before, in front of.* Avant comes from Latin ab ante, "from before," built on ante, "before," the root of "anterior" and "ante meridiem," a.m.

L'université Purdue, dans l'Indiana, lui a offert un rôle de conseillère pour les étudiants intéressés par l'aviation. La fondation de l'université a financé un nouvel avion: un Lockheed Electra à deux moteurs, capable de parcourir de très longues distances. Amelia l'a appelé son « laboratoire volant ».

nouvel *new.* Nouveau comes from Latin novellus, "new, young," a diminutive of novus, "new," the root of English "novel," "novelty," and "innovate."

parcourir *to travel through; to skim (a text).* Parcourir is par-, "through," plus courir, "to run," from Latin percurrere, "to run through."

volant (voler) *steering wheel; also flying.*

Avec cet avion, elle a préparé un projet immense: faire le tour du monde en suivant une ligne proche de l'équateur. D'autres personnes avaient déjà fait le tour de la planète en avion, mais par des routes courtes, plus au nord. La route d'Amelia mesurait environ 47 000 kilomètres, la plus longue possible.

faire *to do, to make.*

monde *world.* Monde comes from Latin mundus, "world," the root of English "mundane," worldly, ordinary.

suivant (suivre) *following, next.*

proche *near, close.* Proche comes from Latin propius, "nearer," from prope, "near," the root of English "approach" and "approximate."

déjà *already.* Déjà is dès, "since," plus jà, "already," from Latin iam, "now, already."

fait (faire) *fact; also "done," the past form of faire.*

courtes *short.* Court comes from Latin curtus, "cut short," the root of English "curt" and "curtail."

La première tentative a commencé en mars 1937. Amelia est partie de Californie vers l'ouest et a atteint Hawaï sans problème. Mais au moment de quitter Hawaï, pendant l'accélération sur la piste, l'avion a dévié sur le côté, une partie du train d'atterrissage a cédé et l'appareil a glissé sur le ventre. Personne n'a été blessé, mais il a fallu renvoyer l'avion en bateau vers la Californie pour de longues réparations.

tentative *an attempt.* Tentative comes from Medieval Latin tentativus, "trying," from tentare, "to try, to test," the root of English "tempt" and "attempt."

ouest *west.* Ouest was borrowed from Old English west, and is the same word as English "west."

atteint (atteindre) *reached, affected, hit.* Atteindre comes from Latin attingere, "to touch, to reach," from ad-, "to," and tangere, "to touch."

piste *trail, track, runway; ski slope.* Piste came from Italian pista, "beaten track," from pistare, "to pound," a path pressed flat by feet or hooves.

atterrissage *a landing, as of an aircraft.* Atterrissage is the noun from atterrir, "to land," a- plus terre, "earth," so it is literally a "coming to earth."

cédé *to give way, to yield, to cede.* Céder comes from Latin cedere, "to go, to withdraw, to yield," the root of English "cede," "concede," "proceed," and "recede."

glissé (glisser) *slid (past participle); also a dance step borrowed into English as "glissé."*. Glisser comes from Frankish glidan, "to glide," a Germanic relative of English "glide."

ventre *belly, stomach.* Ventre comes from Latin venter, ventris, "belly," the root of English "ventral."

blessé (blesser) *wounded, injured.* Blesser comes from Old French blecier, "to bruise, to injure," from a Frankish verb of the same sense.

fallu (falloir) *had to, was necessary (past participle of falloir).* Falloir comes from Latin fallere, "to deceive, to fall short," the root of English "fail," "fault," and "false."

renvoyer *to send back, to dismiss.* Renvoyer is re-, "back," plus envoyer, "to send," from Latin inviare, "to put on the road," built on via, "way."

bateau *boat.* Bateau comes from Old French batel, a diminutive of a word taken from Old English bat, "boat," probably through Norman seafaring contact.

Pour la seconde tentative, Amelia a choisi la direction opposée, vers l'est, à cause des saisons et des vents. Elle a pris un seul compagnon, le navigateur Fred Noonan, un professionnel qui avait tracé des routes aériennes à travers le Pacifique pour une compagnie américaine.

vents *wind.*

pris (prendre) *taken (past participle of prendre).* Prendre comes from Latin prehendere, "to seize," the root of English "comprehend," "apprehend," and "prehensile," able to grasp.

seul *alone, only, single.*

Le 1er juin 1937, Amelia et Noonan sont partis de Miami, en Floride. Ils ont descendu la côte de l'Amérique du Sud, ont traversé l'Atlantique jusqu'au Sénégal, puis ont continué à travers l'Afrique, la mer Rouge, l'Inde et l'Asie du Sud-Est: Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Singapour. La mousson, la chaleur et la fatigue ont rendu les étapes très longues. À chaque arrêt, des mécaniciens examinaient les moteurs et Amelia envoyait un article à un journal de New York. Le 29 juin, ils sont arrivés à Lae, en Nouvelle-Guinée. Ils avaient déjà parcouru environ 35 000 kilomètres.

partis *to leave, depart.*

mer *sea.* Mer comes from Latin mare, "sea," the root of English "marine," "maritime," and "submarine."

chaleur *heat, warmth.* Chaleur comes from Latin calor, "heat," from calere, "to be warm," the root of English "calorie" and "cauldron," showing the shift of Latin ca- to French cha-.

rendu (rendre) *given back, rendered; exhausted (past participle of rendre).* Rendre comes from Latin reddere, "to give back," reshaped under the influence of prendere, "to take," and English "render" is the same word.

étapes *a stage, a leg of a journey.* Étape is the same word as English "staple," from Middle Dutch stapel, "a storage place, a market."

chaque *each, every.* Chaque was shortened from chacun, "each one," which blends Latin quisque unus, "each one," with a late Latin cata unum, "one by one," built on Greek kata, "by."

arrêt *stop.* Arrêt comes from arrêter, "to stop," from Latin ad- plus restare, "to stay back, to remain."

envoyait *to send.* Envoyer comes from Late Latin inviare, "to put on the way," built on via, "road," as in English "via" and "voyage."

parcouru (parcourir) *traveled through, covered (past participle of parcourir).*

Il restait la partie la plus difficile: le Pacifique. La destination suivante était Howland, une île minuscule et presque plate, longue de moins de trois kilomètres, à peine visible au-dessus de l'eau. Elle se trouvait à environ 4 100 kilomètres de Lae. Le gouvernement américain avait fait construire des pistes sur Howland spécialement pour ce vol. Pour aider Amelia à localiser l'île, un bateau des garde-côtes américains, l'Itasca, a pris position juste à côté. Le bateau devait rester en contact radio avec l'avion et produire une longue colonne de fumée comme signal visuel.

suivante *following, next.* Suivant is the present participle of suivre, "to follow": le jour suivant, "the next day."

minuscule *tiny; also lowercase.* Minuscule comes from Latin minusculus, "rather small," a diminutive of minus, "less," the minus of arithmetic.

moins *less, fewer; minus.* Moins comes from Latin minus, "less," borrowed whole by English as "minus," with relatives in "minor" and "diminish."

peine *pain, sorrow; difficulty, trouble.* Peine comes from Latin poena, "penalty, punishment," and English "pain" is the same word taken from Old French.

trouvait *to find.* Trouver probably comes from Latin tropare, "to compose a poem," from tropus, "figure of speech," the root of English "trope."

pistes *trail, track, runway; ski slope.*

Le 2 juillet 1937, l'avion a quitté Lae, très lourd à cause du carburant. Pendant les premières heures, Amelia a transmis des messages normaux sur sa position, son altitude et le temps.

juillet *july.* Juillet takes its name, like English "July," from Julius Caesar, who was born in this month.

lourd *heavy; also clumsy or dull.* Lourd comes from Late Latin lurdus, "dull-witted," probably from Latin luridus, "sallow, pale yellow," the source of English "lurid."

Ensuite, la communication a mal fonctionné. L'Itasca captait la voix d'Amelia, de plus en plus forte, donc de plus en plus proche, mais Amelia n'entendait pas les réponses du bateau. Ses messages disaient qu'elle approchait de la zone mais ne voyait pas l'île. Puis elle a annoncé que le carburant devenait bas. Ses transmissions étaient trop courtes pour permettre à l'Itasca de calculer sa direction exacte. Dans son dernier message clair, elle a donné une ligne de position orientée nord-sud et a dit qu'elle volait le long de cette ligne, dans les deux sens. Après ça, plus rien. L'avion n'est jamais arrivé à Howland.

mal *badly; also evil, harm.* Mal comes from Latin male, "badly," from malus, "bad," the root of English "malice" and "malady."

entendait (entendre) *was hearing, used to hear (imperfect of entendre).* Entendre comes from Latin intendere, "to stretch toward, to direct one's mind," the root of English "intend."

disaient (dire) *they were saying (imperfect of dire).*

voyait (voir) *he/she was seeing.*

devenait (devenir) *he/she was becoming (imperfect of devenir).*

bas *low.* Bas comes from late Latin bassus, "low, squat," and English "base," "low, mean," and "bass," the low voice, came through French.

trop *too much, too.* Trop comes from a Frankish word meaning "a cluster, a crowd," which in French came to mean "more than enough."

dernier *last.* Dernier comes from a spoken Latin word built on de retro, "from behind," the retro of English "retro" and "retroactive," so the last is the one at the back.

sud *south.* Sud is one of few French words taken from English: it comes from Old English suth, "south," carried into French by sailors.

volait *to fly; to steal.*

ça *that; this (informal).* Ça is the spoken short form of cela, "that," which is ce, "this," plus là, "there."

rien *nothing.* Rien comes from Latin rem, "a thing," the res of "res publica," the "public thing" behind English "republic."

jamais *never; ever.* Jamais is ja, "already, now," from Latin iam, plus mais, "more," from Latin magis, so it first meant "ever more, ever."

La marine et les garde-côtes des États-Unis ont lancé des recherches immédiates. Pendant environ deux semaines, des bateaux et des avions ont examiné des milliers de kilomètres carrés d'océan et plusieurs îles de la région. C'était l'opération de recherche la plus coûteuse de l'histoire américaine jusque-là. Les équipes n'ont trouvé ni l'avion, ni Amelia, ni Fred Noonan. George Putnam a payé des recherches privées supplémentaires pendant des mois, sans résultat. Le 5 janvier 1939, un tribunal de Los Angeles a officiellement déclaré Amelia Earhart morte.

bateaux *boat.*

milliers (millier) *thousands.* Millier is built on mille, "thousand," from Latin mille, the root of English "mile," first the Roman measure of a thousand paces.

carrés *square.* Carré comes from Latin quadratus, "made square," from quattuor, "four," the root of English "quadrant" and "quarter."

jusque *until, as far as, up to.* Jusque comes from Latin inde usque, "from there all the way," built on usque, "all the way, continuously."

trouvé *to find.*

ni *nor, neither.* Ni comes from Latin nec, "and not," built on ne, "not."

mois *month.* Mois comes from Latin mensis, "month," the root of English "menstrual" and "semester," a period of six months.

Depuis, beaucoup d'explications ont circulé. La plus simple: l'avion a manqué de carburant, est tombé dans le Pacifique et a coulé dans une zone très profonde. Une autre hypothèse: Amelia et Noonan ont atterri sur une île déserte au sud de Howland, appelée Gardner, aujourd'hui Nikumaroro, et sont morts là peu après. Des expéditions ont exploré cette île et le fond de l'océan autour de Howland avec des sonars et des robots sous-marins. Jusqu'à présent, personne n'a présenté un objet ou une photographie qui identifie l'avion avec certitude.

depuis *since, from (a point in time).* Depuis is de, "from," plus puis, "then, afterward," which comes from Latin post, "after," the "post-" of "postpone" and "post-war."

coulé (couler) *flowed, run (past participle of couler).* Couler comes from Latin colare, "to strain, to filter," from colum, "sieve," the root of English "colander" and "percolate."

atterri *to land (an aircraft or, historically, a ship).* Atterrir is a- plus terre, "earth, land," turned into a verb, so it means "to come to earth."

appelée *to call.*

aujourd'hui *today.* Aujourd'hui is au jour d'hui, "on the day of today," where hui comes from Latin hodie, "today," itself a contraction of hoc die, "on this day."

fond *bottom; background; fund.* Fond comes from Latin fundus, "bottom, base, piece of land," the root of English "fund," "foundation," and "profound," "deep to the bottom."

autour *around.* Autour is au tour, "at the turn," from tour, "a circuit," the same word as English "tour."

sous *under, below.* Sous comes from Latin subtus, "beneath," built on sub, "under," the "sub-" of "submarine" and "subway."

marins *sailor; also of the sea.* Marin comes from Latin marinus, "of the sea," from mare, "sea," the source of English "marine," "maritime," and "mariner."

présent *present, current; a gift.* Présent comes from Latin praesens, "being in front, at hand," from prae-, "before," and esse, "to be," and English "present" carries both the same senses.

Amelia Earhart avait trente-neuf ans au moment de sa disparition. Elle avait piloté pendant dix-sept ans, au-dessus d'océans et de continents, à une époque sans radar, avec des moteurs fragiles et des instruments de navigation simples. Son nom reste attaché à une zone d'eau vide du Pacifique central, entre la Nouvelle-Guinée et la petite île plate que son avion n'a jamais atteinte.

trente *thirty.* Trente comes from Latin triginta, "thirty," built on tres, "three," the root of English "trio" and "triple."

neuf *nine; also, as a separate word, new.* Neuf, "nine," comes from Latin novem, the root of "November," the ninth month of the old Roman year.

disparition *disappearance.* Disparition is the noun of disparaître, "to disappear," which is dis- plus paraître, "to appear," from Latin parere, the root of English "appear" and "apparition."

vide (vider) *empty; a void.* Vider is built on vide, "empty," which goes back to the Latin family of vacuus, "empty," the source of English "vacuum" and "vacant."

entre (entrer) *between, among.* Entrer comes from Latin intrare, "to go in," from intra, "within," the source of English "enter."

Words from this story

Every explained word, by its dictionary form. Cover the right side and test yourself.

acheter To buy
aile Wing
aller To go
an Year
année Year
appeler To call
apprendre To learn; also to teach
après After
argent Money; also silver
arrêt Stop
arrêter To stop, to arrest
atteindre To reach, to attain
attendre To wait
atterrir to land (an aircraft or, historically, a ship)
atterrissage A landing, as of an aircraft
aucun No, none, not any
aujourd'hui Today
autour Around
autre Other
avant Before, in front of
avion Airplane
avoir To have
bas Low
bateau Boat
beaucoup A lot, much
blessé Wounded, injured
blesser to injure, hurt
boire To drink
boîte Box
bouteille Bottle
brouillard Fog
ça That; this (informal)
camion Truck
carburant Fuel
carré square
céder to give way, to yield, to cede
cent Hundred
chaleur Heat, warmth
champ Field
chaque Each, every
chercher To search, to look for
chose Thing
ciel Sky, heaven
cinq Five
colline hill
comme As, like, how
côté Side
couler To flow; to sink
court Short
dehors Outside
déjà Already
déménager to move house
depuis Since, from (a point in time)
dernier Last
dessus Above, on top
deux Two
devenir to become
devoir to have to, must; also a noun meaning duty or homework
dire To say, to tell
disparition Disappearance
dix Ten
donc So, therefore
donner To give
durer To last, to endure
eau Water
écrire To write
ensuite Then, next, afterward
entendre to hear, to understand
entrer To enter
environ About, around, approximately
envoyer To send
essayer To try
étape a stage, a leg of a journey
être To be
faire To do, to make
falloir to be necessary
femme Woman, wife
fête Party, holiday, festival
fil Thread, wire
fille Girl, daughter
foire Fair; market, trade show
fois Time, occasion (as in "once," "twice")
fond Bottom; background; fund
froid Cold
glisser to slide, to slip
guerre War
homme Man, human being
infirmière nurse (a woman)

inhabituel not usual or customary
jamais Never; ever
jardin Garden
jaune Yellow
juillet July
jus Juice
jusque until, as far as, up to
là There
laisser To let, to leave
livre Book (and, as a different word, the pound, both in weight and currency)
loin Far
lourd Heavy; also clumsy or dull
lui Him, to him, her, to her
maintenant Now
maison House
mal Badly; also evil, harm
marin Sailor; also of the sea
mauvais Bad
mer Sea
mère Mother
millier a thousand, thousands of
minuscule Tiny; also lowercase
moins Less, fewer; minus
mois Month
monde World
mondial Worldwide, global
né Born
neuf Nine; also, as a separate word, new
ni Nor, neither
nom Name
nouveau New
nuit Night
ouest West
panne Breakdown, malfunction
parcourir To travel through; to skim (a text)
partir To leave, depart
pays Country
peine Pain, sorrow; difficulty, trouble
pendant During; a pendant (hanging ornament)
perdre To lose
père Father
peu Few, little
pied Foot
piste Trail, track, runway; ski slope
pluie Rain
plusieurs Several
pomme Apple
poser To put, to place, to pose
prendre To take
près Near, close
présent Present, current; a gift
presque Almost, nearly
proche Near, close
puis Then, next, afterward
quand When
quinze Fifteen
refaire To redo, to remake
regarder To look at, to watch
remettre To put back, to hand over, to postpone
rendre To give back, to render, to make someone or something a certain way
renvoyer To send back, to dismiss
rien Nothing
rouge Red
sans Without
semaine Week
sept Seven
seul Alone, only, single
sonner to ring, to sound
sous Under, below
souvent Often
sud South
suivant following, next
suivre To follow
sœur Sister
tard Late
temps Time; weather
tenir To hold
tentative An attempt
terre Earth, land, ground
toit Roof
tomber To fall
travailler To work
traverser To cross, to go through
trente Thirty
trois Three
trop Too much, too
trouver To find
un A, an, one
vent Wind
ventre Belly, stomach
vers Toward; also, a line of verse
vider To empty
ville City, town
vingt Twenty

vitesse Speed
voir To see
voiture Car, vehicle
vol Flight; also theft
voler To fly; to steal
vouloir To want, to wish

Keep reading in the Superlexa app

More true stories in French and Spanish, written with words you already know.

Tap any word to see its meaning and where it comes from, so new words stick without flashcards.

superlexa.com/app

More free story PDFs: **superlexa.com/french-stories-for-beginners-pdf**