superlexa.

FREE FRENCH READER · LEVEL ONE

Flight MH370

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 58 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

leur Their, theirs

ce This, that (demonstrative)

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

cet This (used before a vowel sound)

cette This, that (feminine)

ces These, those

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

toute All, every, everything

toutes All, every, everything

jusqu' until, up to (before a vowel)

Flight MH370

Le 8 mars 2014, un avion de la compagnie Malaysia Airlines a décollé de l'aéroport de Kuala Lumpur. Sa destination était Beijing, la capitale de la Chine. Le vol a reçu le numéro MH370. À bord, il y avait 227 passagers et 12 membres d'équipage, donc 239 personnes au total. L'avion était un Boeing 777, un modèle moderne, spacieux et très fiable, utilisé par des compagnies aériennes partout dans le monde.

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

décollé *to take off (a plane); to come unstuck.* Décoller is coller, "to stick, to glue," with dé-, "undo," so a plane that décolle "comes unstuck" from the ground.

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."

reçu (recevoir) *received; a receipt.* Recevoir comes from Latin recipere, "to take back, to receive," from re- and capere, "to take," and English "receive" is the same word.

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

fiable *reliable, trustworthy.* Fiable comes from se fier, "to trust," from Latin fidere, "to trust," a relative of fides, "faith," the root of English "fidelity" and "confide."

partout *everywhere.* Partout is par, "by, through," plus tout, "all," from Latin totus, "whole," the root of English "total."

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

Le capitaine s'appelait Zaharie Ahmad Shah. Il avait 53 ans et une longue expérience: plus de 18 000 heures de vol. Le copilote, Fariq Abdul Hamid, avait 27 ans. Les passagers venaient de différentes nationalités. La majorité était chinoise. Il y avait aussi des Malaisiens, des Indonésiens, des Australiens, des Indiens, des Américains, des Français et d'autres.

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

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

venaient (venir) *were coming (imperfect plural of venir).* Venir comes from Latin venire, "to come," the root of English "venue," "advent," "convene," and "prevent."

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

Le décollage a eu lieu à 00h41, pendant la nuit. Les premières minutes ont été normales. L'avion est monté à son altitude de croisière, environ 10 000 mètres. Le ciel était calme. La distance jusqu'à Beijing demandait un trajet d'à peu près six heures de vol.

décollage *takeoff, as of an aircraft.* Décollage comes from décoller, "to unstick," dé- plus coller, "to glue," so a plane taking off unglues itself from the runway.

eu (avoir) *had (the past form of avoir, "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.

lieu *place, spot.* Lieu comes from Latin locus, "place," the root of English "local" and "location."

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."

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

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

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

trajet *a route, a journey.* Trajet came from Italian tragetto, from Latin traiectus, "a crossing over," from traicere, "to throw across."

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

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

À 01h19, le capitaine a parlé avec le contrôle aérien de la Malaisie. Son dernier message radio a été simple: « Good night, Malaysian three seven zero. » Quelques minutes après, l'avion a quitté l'espace aérien malaisien et a dû passer sous le contrôle du Vietnam. Mais l'avion n'a jamais contacté le Vietnam.

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.

quelques (quelque) *some, a few.* Quelque is quel, "which, what kind," plus que, and quel comes from Latin qualis, "of what kind," the root of English "quality."

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

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

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

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

À 01h21, le transpondeur de l'avion a arrêté d'émettre. Le transpondeur est le système qui transmet la position, l'altitude et l'identité de l'appareil aux radars civils. Sans ce signal, l'avion est devenu presque invisible pour le contrôle aérien normal. Sur les écrans, le point MH370 a simplement disparu.

arrêté (arrêter) *stopped; also a formal decree or order.* Arrêter comes from Vulgar Latin arrestare, "to stop, to hold back," built on restare, "to stay behind," and English "arrest" is the same word.

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

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

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

écrans *a screen.* Écran comes from Old French escran, from Middle Dutch scherm, "screen, shield," with the r and the vowel swapping places.

disparu (disparaître) *vanished, missing; the deceased.* Disparaître is dis-, "un-," plus paraître, "to appear," from Latin parere, "to appear, to be visible," the root of English "apparent" and "apparition."

L'avion avait aussi un système appelé ACARS, qui envoie des messages techniques sur l'état des moteurs et de l'appareil. Ce système a arrêté de transmettre entre 01h07 et 01h37. La connexion satellite de l'avion, elle, a toutefois continué à échanger de brefs signaux automatiques avec un satellite pendant encore plusieurs heures.

appelé *to call.*

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

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

toutefois *however, nevertheless.* Toutefois was once written toutes fois, "all times," from tout, "all," and fois, "time, occasion."

encore *still, yet, again.* Encore probably comes from Latin in hanc horam, "until this hour," that is, "up to now."

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."

Pendant longtemps cette nuit-là, personne n'a compris la situation. Les contrôleurs ont pensé à un problème de communication. Ils ont essayé de contacter l'avion par radio et par d'autres canaux. Sans résultat. Les autorités ont commencé à comprendre qu'un avion moderne, avec 239 personnes, avait totalement disparu.

longtemps *a long time, for a long while.* Longtemps joins long, "long," from Latin longus, the root of English "longitude," and temps, "time," from Latin tempus, the root of "tempo" and "temporary."

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

pensé *to think.* Penser comes from Latin pensare, "to weigh," so thinking is weighing something in the mind.

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

Les premières recherches ont commencé dans la mer de Chine du Sud, sur la route normale entre la Malaisie et le Vietnam. Des bateaux et des avions de plusieurs pays ont exploré cette zone. Ils n'ont rien trouvé: pas de débris, pas de fragments, pas de traces de carburant sur l'eau.

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

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

avions *to have.*

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

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

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

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

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."

Puis les militaires malaisiens ont révélé une information importante. Leur radar militaire, différent du radar civil, avait détecté un avion non identifié après 01h21. Cet avion a fait demi-tour. Au lieu de continuer vers le nord-est, il est revenu vers l'ouest, il a traversé la péninsule malaisienne, et il a continué au-dessus du détroit de Malacca. Ensuite, le radar militaire a perdu le contact aussi. Pendant que l'avion passait près de l'île de Penang, le téléphone du copilote s'est connecté une seconde à une antenne au sol, mais il n'y a eu aucun appel et aucun message.

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

non *no.* Non comes straight from Latin non, "not," the "non-" of English "nonsense" and "nonstop."

fait (faire) *fact; also "done," the past form of faire.* Faire comes from Latin facere, "to do, to make," the root of English "fact," "factory," and "manufacture," literally "made by hand."

demi *half.* Demi comes from Latin dimidius, "half," built on medius, "middle," the root of English "medium."

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."

revenu *to come back.* Revenir is re-, "back," plus venir, "to come," from Latin venire.

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

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

détroit *a strait (a narrow sea passage).* Détroit comes from Latin districtus, from distringere, dis- plus stringere, "to draw tight," the root of English "strict" and "district."

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."

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

sol *ground, soil.* Sol comes from Latin solum, "ground, base, bottom."

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

appel *call.* Appel comes from appeler, "to call," from Latin appellare, "to address, to call upon," the source of English "appeal" and "appellation," a name.

À ce moment, l'histoire est devenue un vrai mystère. Pourquoi l'avion a-t-il changé de direction? Qui a programmé ce changement? Le système de pilotage automatique a suivi une nouvelle route précise, ce qui indique une action humaine dans le cockpit, mais les experts n'ont pas pu dire qui et pourquoi.

devenue (devenir) *become (feminine past participle of devenir).*

vrai *true, real.* Vrai comes from Latin verus, "true," the root of English "verify," "veracity," and "verdict," a "true saying."

pourquoi *why.* Pourquoi is pour, "for," plus quoi, "what," literally "for what."

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

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

pu (pouvoir) *been able to (past participle of pouvoir).* Pouvoir comes from Latin posse, "to be able," the posse of posse comitatus, "the power of the county," the men a sheriff could call out, shortened in English to a "posse."

dire *to say, to tell.* Dire comes from Latin dicere, "to say," the root of English "diction," "dictate," "predict," and "verdict," a "true saying."

Au début de l'enquête, un autre détail a attiré l'attention. Deux passagers avaient utilisé des passeports volés, un autrichien et un italien. La police a d'abord pensé à un acte terroriste. Mais l'enquête a montré que ces deux hommes étaient des Iraniens qui voulaient émigrer en Europe. Ils n'avaient aucun lien avec la disparition de l'avion.

autre *other.*

attiré *to attract, to draw in.* Attirer is a-, "toward," plus tirer, "to pull, to draw," a verb of uncertain origin.

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

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

abord *approach; (as "d'abord") at first.* Abord is à, "to," plus bord, "edge, side," a Frankish word of the same family as English "board," as in "on board" (French à bord).

montré *to show.* Montrer comes from Latin monstrare, "to point out, to show," the root of English "demonstrate."

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

voulaient (vouloir) *they 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."

lien *a tie, a bond, a link.* Lien comes from Latin ligamen, "a band, a tie," from ligare, "to bind."

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."

Il restait un dernier indice. Le Boeing 777 possède un système qui communique automatiquement avec un satellite de la compagnie Inmarsat. Toutes les heures environ, le satellite et l'avion ont échangé un signal automatique, un contact technique très court. Ces signaux ne donnaient pas la position exacte, mais ils donnaient la distance entre l'avion et le satellite. Le dernier signal complet a eu lieu à 08h11, presque sept heures après le décollage.

court (courir) *short.* Courir comes from Latin currere, "to run," the root of English "current," "course," and "courier," a running messenger.

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

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

Des experts en mathématiques et en communication ont analysé ces signaux pendant des semaines. Leur conclusion: après le détroit de Malacca, l'avion a tourné vers le sud et il a volé pendant des heures au-dessus de l'océan Indien, très loin de toute terre, dans une direction opposée à sa destination. Le carburant s'est terminé vers 08h19. L'avion est probablement tombé dans une région isolée de l'océan Indien du sud, à l'ouest de l'Australie.

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

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

volé *to fly; to steal.*

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

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

tombé *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."

Cette zone est une des plus difficiles de la planète. L'eau y est très profonde, souvent plus de 4 000 mètres. Le fond de l'océan est montagneux, avec des volcans sous-marins et des canyons. Les tempêtes sont fréquentes. Aucun port n'est proche. Chaque bateau devait naviguer plusieurs jours seulement pour arriver dans la zone de recherche.

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

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."

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."

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

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."

bateau *boat.*

devait (devoir) *had to, owed (imperfect of devoir).*

jours *day.* Jour comes from Latin diurnum, "daily," the root of English "journal," a daily record, and "journey," originally a day's travel.

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

Pendant les premiers jours, les recherches ont été dispersées. Une partie des équipes cherchait encore dans la mer de Chine du Sud, à l'est. Une autre partie commençait dans le détroit de Malacca, à l'ouest. Cette confusion a coûté du temps précieux, parce que les autorités ont communiqué les informations du radar militaire avec beaucoup de retard.

premiers *first.* Premier comes from Latin primarius, "of the first rank," from primus, "first," the root of English "prime" and "primary."

partie (partir) *part; game, match.* Partir comes from Latin partiri, "to divide," built on pars, "part": to leave is to part from a place or group.

cherchait *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.

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."

parce *because (used in "parce que").* Parce is par, "by," plus ce, "that," and it appears only in parce que, "because," literally "by that which."

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

retard *a delay.* Retard comes from the verb retarder, "to delay," from Latin retardare, "to hold back," built on tardus, "slow," the root of English "tardy."

En avril 2014, un navire australien, l'Ocean Shield, a détecté des signaux acoustiques réguliers sous l'eau. Beaucoup de personnes ont pensé aux boîtes noires, parce que ces boîtes émettent un signal pendant environ un mois après un accident. Les recherches se sont concentrées sur cette zone. Après plusieurs semaines, la conclusion a été négative: ces sons ne venaient pas de l'avion. Les vraies boîtes noires n'ont jamais été localisées.

navire *ship.* Navire comes from Latin navigium, "vessel," from navis, "ship," the root of English "navy," "naval," and "navigate."

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

noires *black.* Noir comes from Latin niger, nigrum, "black," the root of English "denigrate," literally "to blacken."

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

sons *his, her, or its, used before a masculine or vowel-starting noun.* Son comes from a shortened form of Latin suum, from suus, "his own, her own," a relative of se, "oneself," as in "per se."

vraies *true, real.*

L'Australie a coordonné les opérations. Des navires spécialisés ont utilisé des sonars pour créer des cartes du fond marin. Des robots sous-marins ont examiné les zones les plus intéressantes. Des avions ont observé la surface chaque jour. Plusieurs fois, des images satellite ont montré des objets qui flottaient, mais après vérification, ce n'était pas l'avion: c'étaient des conteneurs, des filets de pêche ou d'autres objets.

navires *ship.*

cartes *card, map, menu.* Carte comes from Latin charta, "sheet of papyrus, paper," the source of English "card," "chart," and "cartoon," first a drawing on heavy paper.

jour *day.*

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

filets *net; fillet (strip of meat or fish); thin thread.* Filet is a diminutive of fil, "thread," from Latin filum, so it first meant a fine thread, then a mesh of threads, a net.

pêche (pêcher) *peach; fishing.* Pêcher comes from Latin piscari, "to fish," from piscis, "fish," the root of the star sign Pisces.

Les mois ont passé. Les familles des passagers ont attendu des informations, souvent en colère contre les autorités et contre la compagnie. Les explications changeaient, les communications étaient confuses, et pendant longtemps il n'y a eu aucune preuve physique.

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."

colère *anger.* Colère comes from Latin cholera, "bile," from Greek khole, "bile," because ancient medicine blamed anger on an excess of yellow bile.

aucune *no, none, not any.*

preuve *proof, evidence.* Preuve comes from Latin proba, "a test, a proof," from probare, "to test, to approve," the root of English "proof," "prove," "probe," and "probable."

La première preuve est arrivée en juillet 2015. Sur une plage de l'île de la Réunion, dans l'océan Indien, un homme a trouvé un grand morceau d'aile. Les experts ont identifié un flaperon, une partie mobile de l'aile du Boeing 777. Un numéro de série a confirmé l'origine: cette pièce venait bien du vol MH370. La distance entre la Réunion et la zone de recherche est énorme, mais les courants de l'océan Indien vont dans cette direction, donc le résultat était logique.

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

plage *beach.* Plage comes from Medieval Latin plagia, "slope, shore," partly through Italian piaggia, so a beach was first the sloping ground down to the water.

homme *man, human being.*

morceau *a piece, a bit, a morsel of something.* Morceau comes from Old French morsel, from Latin morsus, "a bite," from mordere, "to bite."

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

venait (venir) *was coming (imperfect of venir).*

bien *well, good.* Bien comes from Latin bene, "well," the bene of nota bene, "note well," abbreviated N.B.

courants *current; common, running.* Courant is the present participle of courir, "to run," from Latin currere, "to run," and it is the same word as English "current," a running stream.

vont (aller) *they go.* 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."

Après ce flaperon, d'autres débris ont été trouvés sur les côtes du Mozambique, de la Tanzanie, de Madagascar et de l'Afrique du Sud. Plusieurs pièces ont été confirmées ou considérées comme très probables. La position de ces débris a confirmé l'idée générale: l'avion a fini sa route dans l'océan Indien du sud. Mais aucun de ces objets n'a donné la position précise de l'appareil.

trouvés *to find.*

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."

donné *to give.*

La police a aussi analysé le simulateur de vol personnel du capitaine, installé chez lui. Sur cet ordinateur, les experts ont trouvé les traces d'une route vers le sud de l'océan Indien, proche de la trajectoire finale supposée de l'avion. Pour certains, c'est un signe important. Pour d'autres, un pilote passionné teste beaucoup de routes différentes, et un seul fichier ne prouve pas une intention.

chez *at the home of, at the place of.* Chez comes from Latin casa, "hut, house," the casa of Spanish and Italian, and of "casino," literally "little house."

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.

ordinateur *computer.* Ordinateur comes from Latin ordinator, "one who puts in order," from ordinare, "to arrange," built on ordo, "order," the root of English "order" and "ordinary."

seul *alone, only, single.*

fichier *file (computer or paper).* Fichier is fiche, "index card, slip," plus -ier, so it is at heart a set of index cards.

La grande recherche sous-marine officielle a exploré environ 120 000 kilomètres carrés du fond de l'océan. Elle a coûté plus de 150 millions de dollars, partagés entre la Malaisie, l'Australie et la Chine. Des scientifiques australiens ont étudié les courants pendant des années. Ils ont mis dans l'eau des objets similaires à des débris d'avion et ils ont observé leur mouvement, pour définir les zones probables. En janvier 2017, après presque trois ans, les trois gouvernements ont suspendu l'opération. Ils n'avaient pas trouvé l'avion.

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

partagés *shared, divided (past participle of partager).* Partagé is the past participle of partager, "to share," made from partage, "a sharing," on Latin pars, partis, "part," the root of English "part" and "partition."

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

mis (mettre) *put, placed (the past form of mettre).* Mettre comes from Latin mittere, "to send, to let go," the root of English "mission," "transmit," "commit," and "permit."

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

En 2018, une entreprise privée américaine, Ocean Infinity, a proposé un nouveau contrat: paiement seulement en cas de succès. Ses navires modernes ont utilisé une flotte de robots sous-marins autonomes, capables d'explorer une grande surface en peu de temps. Cette recherche a couvert une zone additionnelle très étendue. Le résultat a été le même: rien.

nouveau *new.*

même *same, self.* Même comes from Vulgar Latin metipsimus, "the very self," built on ipse, "self," the ipse of "ipso facto," "by the fact itself."

L'enquête officielle finale de la Malaisie est sortie en juillet 2018. Elle a admis une réalité simple: sans l'avion et sans les boîtes noires, l'équipe ne pouvait pas déterminer la cause de la disparition. Elle a critiqué le contrôle aérien, trop lent à donner l'alarme cette nuit-là. Mais elle n'a pas accusé une personne précise et elle n'a pas confirmé une théorie unique.

sortie (sortir) *exit; an outing.* Sortir comes from Latin sortiri, "to draw lots, to choose," from sors, "lot, fate," the root of English "sort," probably colored by Latin surrectus, "risen up."

pouvait (pouvoir) *he/she was able to.*

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

lent *slow.* Lent comes from Latin lentus, "pliant, slow, sluggish," which also lies behind English "relent," to soften and give way.

donner *to give.*

Plusieurs hypothèses existent. Certains experts pensent à une action délibérée d'une personne dans le cockpit, à cause de la route précise vers le sud, dans une région sans aéroport et sans témoins. D'autres imaginent un incendie ou une panne technique, avec un équipage inconscient à cause d'un problème d'oxygène, et un avion en pilotage automatique jusqu'à la fin du carburant. Aucune de ces versions n'a de preuve directe. La police a examiné la vie du capitaine, du copilote et des passagers, sans trouver une raison claire.

pensent *to think.*

témoins *witness.* Témoin comes from Latin testimonium, "evidence," built on testis, "a witness," the root of English "testimony," "testify," and "attest."

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.

vie *life.* Vie comes from Latin vita, "life," the root of English "vital" and "vitamin" and the "vita" of "curriculum vitae."

trouver *to find.*

La disparition du MH370 a eu des conséquences concrètes pour l'aviation. Les autorités internationales ont demandé un meilleur système de suivi des avions au-dessus des océans, avec une position transmise plus souvent. Aujourd'hui, un avion de ligne moderne est plus difficile à perdre complètement.

meilleur *better.* Meilleur comes from Latin melior, "better," the root of English "ameliorate," to make better.

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."

perdre *to lose.*

En 2025, la Malaisie a signé un nouveau contrat avec Ocean Infinity pour reprendre les recherches dans une nouvelle zone, définie par des analyses récentes des signaux satellite, des courants et des débris. Le principe est resté le même: paiement seulement en cas de découverte de l'avion.

reprendre *to take back, to resume, to reply sharply.* Reprendre is re-, "again," plus prendre, "to take," from Latin prehendere, "to seize," the root of English "apprehend" and "comprehend."

Plus de dix ans après la nuit du 8 mars 2014, la position exacte de l'avion et la raison de sa route vers le sud sont toujours inconnues. 239 personnes sont montées dans un avion normal pour un vol de nuit normal, et cet avion n'est jamais arrivé.

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

toujours *always.* Toujours is tous jours, "all days," from tout, "all," and jour, "day."

inconnues *unknown, unfamiliar.* Inconnu is in-, "not," plus connu, past participle of connaître, "to know," from Latin cognoscere, "to get to know."

Words from this story

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

abord Approach; (as "d'abord") at first
aile Wing
aller To go
an Year
année Year
appel Call
appeler To call
après After
arrêter To stop, to arrest
attendre To wait
attirer To attract, to draw in
aucun No, none, not any
aujourd'hui Today
autre Other
avion Airplane
avoir To have
bateau Boat
beaucoup A lot, much
bien Well, good
boîte Box
carburant Fuel
carré square
carte Card, map, menu
chaque Each, every
chercher To search, to look for
chez At the home of, at the place of
ciel Sky, heaven
colère Anger
comme As, like, how
courant Current; common, running
courir to run
décollage Takeoff, as of an aircraft
décoller to take off (a plane); to come unstuck
demi Half
dernier Last
dessus Above, on top
détroit A strait (a narrow sea passage)
deux Two
devenir to become
devoir to have to, must; also a noun meaning duty or homework
dire To say, to tell
disparaître To disappear
disparition Disappearance
dix Ten
donc So, therefore
donner To give
eau Water
écran A screen
encore Still, yet, again
ensuite Then, next, afterward
entrer To enter
environ About, around, approximately
envoyer To send
essayer To try
faire To do, to make
fiable Reliable, trustworthy
fichier File (computer or paper)
filet net; fillet (strip of meat or fish); thin thread
fois Time, occasion (as in "once," "twice")
fond Bottom; background; fund
homme Man, human being
inconnu unknown, unfamiliar
jamais Never; ever
jour Day
juillet July
là There
lent Slow
lien A tie, a bond, a link
lieu Place, spot
loin Far
longtemps A long time, for a long while
lui Him, to him, her, to her
marin Sailor; also of the sea
meilleur Better
même Same, self
mer Sea
mettre To put, to place
mois Month
monde World
montrer to show
morceau A piece, a bit, a morsel of something
navire Ship
noir Black
non No
nouveau New
nuit Night
ordinateur Computer
ouest West

panne Breakdown, malfunction
parce Because (used in "parce que")
partagé shared, divided (past participle of partager)
partir To leave, depart
partout Everywhere
pays Country
pêcher To fish
pendant During; a pendant (hanging ornament)
penser To think
perdre To lose
peu Few, little
plage Beach
plusieurs Several
pourquoi Why
pouvoir To be able, can; power
premier First
près Near, close
presque Almost, nearly
preuve Proof, evidence
proche Near, close
puis Then, next, afterward
quelque Some
recevoir To receive
reprendre To take back, to resume, to reply sharply
retard A delay
revenir To come back
rien Nothing
sans Without
semaine Week
sept Seven
seul Alone, only, single
sol Ground, soil
son His, her, or its, used before a masculine or vowel-starting noun
sortir To go out, to exit
sous Under, below
souvent Often
sud South
suivre To follow
témoin Witness
temps Time; weather
terre Earth, land, ground
tomber To fall
toujours Always
toutefois However, nevertheless
trajet A route, a journey
trois Three
trop Too much, too
trouver To find
venir To come
vers Toward; also, a line of verse
vie Life
vol Flight; also theft
voler To fly; to steal
vouloir To want, to wish
vrai True, real

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