

Lesson 7

Today, we're going to learn the numbers in Guernsey French, and also to how to say "to have" in the present tense.

Let's start by just saying the numbers up to twenty:

one is iun two is daeux three is treis

four is quatre five is chinq six is six

seven is saept eight is huit nine is neuf

ten is dix eleven is aonze twelve is douze

thirteen is treize fourteen is quatorze fifteen is tchinze

sixteen is seize seventeen is dix-saept eighteen is dix-huit

nineteen is dix-neuf twenty is vingt

Tchiqu'est "seven" en Guernésiais? (What is seven in Guernsey French?) saept

Tchiqu'est "thirteen" en Guernésiais? (What is thirteen in Guernsey French?) treize

Tchiqu'est "nineteen" en Guernésiais? (What is nineteen in Guernsey French?) dix-neuf

The numbers need to be practised, perhaps by starting from a random point in the sequence, or saying them backwards, until they become very familiar.

Let's use the numbers that we've learnt so far to describe how much money we have in front of us. For this we will be using the following words:

Keywords: bille (pound --- the unit of money, not the weight); combian (how many [*the "b" is not pronounced*]); an (year); j'ai (I have); tu as (you have); il a (he has); alle a (she has); nous a (we have); vous avaïz (you have --- where you refers to more than one person); il aont (they have).

Alan: Combin d'billes? (How many pounds?)

Alex/Julie: [gives the appropriate number: 2, 11, 13] (daeux, aonze, treize).

The number one is a special case, since it has a feminine form --- iun is the masculine form. Since "bille" is a feminine word, if there is a single pound here we need to say ieune --- the feminine form of the number one.

Now instead of saying just the number, let's say the number followed by "pounds".

Alan: Combian d'billes? (How many pounds?)

Alex/Julie: [gives the appropriate number: 4, 10, 12] billes (quatre, dix, douze).

Putting in the "billes" isn't an empty exercise, since some of the numbers are pronounced differently if they are used in isolation or at the end of the sentence, compared to if they are used before a word starting with a non-vowel sound.

The numbers behaving in this way are 7, 8 and 9 (and as a consequence 17, 18 and 19 etc).

Alan: J'ai saept billes (I have seven pounds).

Alex/Julie: Tu as saept billes (You have seven pounds).

Alan: La Julie a huit billes (Julie has eight pounds).

Julie: J'ai huit billes (I have eight pounds).

Alex: Alle a huit billes (She has eight pounds).

Alan: L'Alex a neuf billes (Alex has nine pounds).

Alex: J'ai neuf billes (I have nine pounds).

Julie: Alle a neuf billes (She has nine pounds).

Alan: Nous a quatorze billes (We have fourteen pounds).

Alex/Julie: Nous a quatorze billes (We have fourteen pounds).

Alan: Vous avaiz aonze billes (You have eleven pounds).

Alex/Julie: Nous a aonze billes (We have eleven pounds).

By the way, if you have just one pound, you would say "J'ai éenne bille" (I have a pound), just as in English you would usually simply say "I have a pound", rather than "I have one pound".

Now let's look at some more numbers:

thirty is trente forty is tchérànte fifty is cinquànte

sixty is sésànte seventy is septànte eighty is quatervingt

ninety is nonànte hundred is chent thousand is mille

Let's try out a few of these:

tchérànte-daeux is forty-two trente-treis is thirty three quatervingt-six is eighty-six
chent-dix-neuf is hundred and nineteen.

One thing to be careful of is that twenty-one is vingt-iun, not vingt et iun, as you might guess, if you know standard French.

We can now say how old someone is in Guernsey French. Remember that in the third video I said that we say that someone has ten years, rather than someone is ten years old. Here are some examples:

Il a aonze ans (He is eleven years old).

Alle a douze ans (She is twelve years old).

Ils aont tchinze ans (They are fifteen years old).

There is one final slight complication --- just as some of the numbers changed their form before a non-vowel sound, some also change their sound before a vowel sound. We can illustrate this when talking about someone's age, since "ans" starts with a vowel. The numbers we've used so far --- 11, 12 and 15 --- don't change. Here are the ones that change.

Two is daeux but we say "Alle a daeux ans".

Three is treis but we say "Il a treis ans".

This is just the "z" sound that was put on the end of "les" and "des" to produce "lez" and "desz" before a vowel sound.

Four is quatre but we say "Alle a quatre ans".

Five is chinq but we say "Il a chinq ans".

Six is six but we say "Alle a six ans".

Seven is saept but we say "Il a saept ans".

Eight is huit but we say "Alle a huit ans".

Nine is neuf but we say "Il a neuf ans".

Ten is dix but we say "Alle a dix ans".

Twenty is vingt but we say "Il a vingt ans".

In all cases an "r", "t" or "z" sound is added to make the whole thing easier to say. If you don't add these, people will still know what you mean, so to begin with it's not vital that you use these endings, but certainly the "z" ending should become automatic after a while.

CHAT ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF NUMBERS IN GUERNSEY FRENCH

For those of you who know standard French, it differs from Guernsey French in a couple of details. We've already seen that twenty-one is vingt-iun, not vingt et iun. Another difference is that seventy is septànte, not sésànte-dix and ninety is nonànte, not quatervingt-dix. In this regard, Guernsey French is not unusual --- the French spoken in Belgium, Switzerland, Quebec, and other French speaking regions also use terms like septànte and nonànte for seventy and ninety.

Let's end with a short discussion about how we say year-dates in Guernsey French. Two thousand and twelve would be daeux mille douze (without no "and") and nineteen seventy-two would be dix neuf cent septànte-daeux. Notice that "neuf" is followed by a word "cent" which doesn't start with a vowel sound, so nine is pronounced as neuf".

What are the following dates in Guernsey French?

1843 (dix huit cent tchérànte-treis).

1204 (douze cent quatre).

1569 (tchinze cent sésànte-neuf).

People also say "J'fus naï en septànte-daeux" (I was born in seventy-two), since it's clear that the year must have been 1972, and so there's no need to say the hundred part.

