

Unit 32 - Demonstratives

1 Definitions

Demonstratives are words serving to point out a particular thing or things. **Demonstrative adjectives**, like all adjectives, serve to describe a noun :

Cette voiture est italienne

This car is Italian

Demonstrative pronouns, like all pronouns, take the place of a noun :

Voici deux voitures de sport : celle-ci est italienne et celle-là est allemande

Here are two sports cars : this one is Italian and that one is German

2 Demonstrative adjectives

2.1 Forms

	<i>Masc sing</i>	<i>Fem sing</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>before consonant</i>	ce	cette	ces
<i>before vowel</i>	cet	cette	ces

Important note : the word **cettes* does not exist.

2.2 Words beginning with *h*

Cet is used with masculine nouns beginning with an **unaspirated** or **mute *h*** (that is where *h* is treated like a vowel) : *cet hiver*. But *ce* is used with masculine nouns beginning with an **aspirated *h*** (where *h* is pronounced as in English, only without an audible release of breath) : *ce handicap*.

2.3 In order to emphasize or distinguish a noun, *-ci* is added to the end of the noun to convey the idea of *this*, and *-là* is added to the end of the noun to convey the idea of *that* :

C'est par cette porte-ci et non cette porte-là qu'on est entrés

We entered by this door (here) and not by that door (there)

2.4 Demonstrative adjectives normally precede each noun to which they apply :

A qui sont ces chapeaux, ces pardessus et ces parapluies ?

Whose are these hats, overcoats and umbrellas ?

3 Demonstrative pronouns

3.1 Forms

	<i>sing</i>	<i>pl</i>
<i>masc</i>	celui	ceux
<i>fem</i>	celle	celles

Other demonstrative pronouns are : *ceci, cela, ce* and *il*

3.2 *Celui* and derivatives

These are used before describing structures beginning with :

- a relative pronoun (actual or implied) :
Quel étudiant ? Celui qui arrive toujours en retard
Which student ? The one who always arrives late
Les accidents les plus fréquents sont ceux [qui sont] causés par le sommeil
The most frequent accidents are those caused by tiredness
- the preposition *de* :
Ce n'est pas mon livre, c'est celui de Pierre
It's not my book, it's Peter's

3.3 *Celui-ci / celui-là* and derivatives

The suffixes *-ci* and *-là* are used with *celui*, *celle*, *ceux* and *celles* where there is no describing structure :

Il y a plusieurs modèles disponibles, mais celui-ci est le plus populaire
There are several models available, but this one is the most popular

They are often used to express a distinction :

Voici deux livres. Celui-ci est bon marché, celui-là est plus cher
Here are two books. This one is cheap, that one is more expensive

Celui-ci, *celle-ci* etc. can also mean "the latter", and *celui-là*, *celle-là* etc. "the former". This can be remembered by an inverted mnemonic, i.e. *celui-là* means "the former" and **not** "the latter".

Le professeur regarda le garçon fixement ; celui-ci resta figé sur sa place
The teacher stared at the boy ; the latter stood frozen to the spot

3.4 *Tous ceux / toutes celles* followed by a relative pronoun refer to specific people and things, and have the sense of "everyone", "all those" etc. :

Toutes celles qui s'y intéressent sont priées d'assister à la soirée
All those who are interested are welcome to attend the evening

Tout ce followed by a relative pronoun refers to things, ideas etc., and has the sense of "everything" or "all" :

Tout ce qui se trouvait dans la maison a été confisqué
Everything that was found in the house was confiscated

3.5 *Cela* is used when referring to a statement or idea rather than to a specific noun, or to something, either an object or an idea, which has not yet been mentioned or defined :

Cela est le plus grand danger - *That's the biggest danger*
Ça n'a pas de sens que d'arriver deux jours à l'avance
It doesn't make sense to arrive two days early

Note that *ça* replaces *cela* in spoken or more informal written French.