LESSON NOTES

THE DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS OF *PLUS*

> **NOTE:**
>
> (this lesson requires a basic understanding of grammar)

There are three different possible pronunciations:

- without the "s" sound ➔ [ply]

- with a "z" sound ➔ [plyz]

- with an "s" sound ➔ [plys]

1. How to pronounce *plus* in additions

The plus sign (+) in maths is called "plus", pronounced [plys].

2. How to pronounce *plus* in comparisons

The word *plus* also means "more" and is used for comparisons (eg. more expensive, more regularly, etc.).
There are four things we can actually compare:

- Adjectives (eg. expensive, tall, intelligent, important, etc.)
- Adverbs (eg. regularly, politely, intelligently, etc.)
- Nouns (eg. more money, more time, more questions, more examples, etc.)
- Verbs (eg. to work more, to sleep more, to drink more, etc.)

a. Comparing adjectives / adverbs

When the comparison refers to an **ad**jective or an **ad**verb, the "s" at the end of "plus"
is **silent: [ply]**.

> **NOTE:**
>
> Pronounce "plus" with a "z" sound [plyz] if the adjective/adverb starts with a vowel sound –
> simply because of the liaison!

Examples with adjectives:

- more expensive → plus cher [ply]
- taller (i.e more tall) →plus grand [ply]
- more intelligent → plus‿intelligent [ply**z**]
- more important → plus‿important [ply**z**]

Examples with adverbs:

- more regularly → plus regulièrement [ply]
- more politely : plus poliment [ply]
- more intelligently → plus‿intelligemment [ply**z**]

b. Comparing nouns / verbs

When the comparison refers to a noun or a verb, **pronounce** the "s" at the end
of **"plus": [plys]**.
Examples with nouns:

> **NOTE:**
>
> When you compare nouns, don't forget to add "de" before the noun. ("de" is the
> preposition we use for quantities.)

- more money → plus **d'**argent [plys]
- more time → plus **de** temps [plys]
- more teeth → plus **de** dents [plys]
- more examples → plus **d'**exemples [plys]

Examples with verbs:

- to work more → travailler plus [plys]
- to sleep more → dormir plus [plys]
- to drink more → boire plus [plys]

SUMMARY:

- with "AD-" words (adverbs, adjectives) → silent "s" [ply] (unless liaison: [plyz])
- with the other words (noun, verbs) → sounded "s" [plys]

3. Why are there two different pronunciation rules?

It's to make the difference with the comparative "more" and the **negation "no more"/"not anymore" ("ne … plus", with the last word pronounced [ply])**.

In spoken/informal French, we often drop the first part of the negation, i.e the "ne".
EXAMPLE:
"Je n'ai pas faim" often becomes "J'ai pas faim" (= I'm not hungry).
"Je n'ai plus faim" becomes "J'ai plus faim » (= I'm not hungry anymore).

The following sentence will therefore have a totally different meaning depending on the way it's pronounced:

1. *Je travaille plus [plys] donc je gagne plus [plys] d'argent!*
   → comparison referring to verbs
   (= I work more therefore I earn more money)
2. *Je travaille plus [ply] donc je gagne plus [ply] d'argent.*
   → negation : no more
   In full French : Je ne travaille plus donc je ne gagne plus d'argent.
   (= I don't work anymore therefore I don't earn any more money.)

Now you can see why it is important to know how to pronounce *plus* in French!