20. GRAMMAR: Talking about the recent past and the near future: use of *futur proche* and *passé récent*.

1. Talking about the near future.

In French, we have different tenses to talk about the future: the *futur proche* and the *futur simple*. We will discuss the *futur simple* in another chapter, but now we will focus on the *futur proche*.
We usually use the *futur proche* in French to talk about future events that will happen very soon (e.g., within a few moments). However, you can also use this tense for events that will take place much further in the future (just add a time expression), and here the *futur proche* becomes a strong competitor of the *futur simple*.

This tense is formed by taking the verb "aller" and following it with an infinitive. In English, we can usually translate this tense with the expression "...going to..." Some examples:

- *Vite, éteins ta cigarette, le prof va venir* !
  [near future : The teacher is going to come in a few moments...]

- *Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire cet aprèm* ?
  [near future : What are you going to do...?]

- *Je vais faire un tour en vélo. Tu viens avec* ?
  [near future : I'm going to take a ride...]

- *Dans 200 ans, nous n'allons plus nous déplacer en voiture* !
  ['far' future : In 200 years, we wil no longer travel by cars...]

The formation is very simple: you take the verb ***aller*** and place the *infinitive* of the event after it:

- *Je vais nager*

- *Tu vas manger au resto ?*

- *Elle va rentrer tard ce soir.*

- *Nous allons partir dans quelques minutes .*

- *Vous allez sortir sans parapluie ?*

- *Ils vont arriver d'un instant à l'autre.*

If there are **pronouns** in your sentence, you place them directly before the infinitive:

- *Je vais **lui** donner un coup de main.*

- *Je vais **y** aller pedant les vacances.*

- *Elle va **me les** rendre .*

The negations (*ne pas, ne plus, ne jamais, ne rien*) are placed around the verb ***aller***, but with the negations (*ne personne, ne aucun*), the negation is placed around both ***aller*** and the infinitive:

- *Je **ne** vais **pas** y aller tout seul !*

- *Elle **ne** va **rien** dire.*

- *Nous **n'**allons **plus** partager nos photos.*

- *Je **ne** vais voir **personne.***

- *Elle **ne** va manger **aucun** sandwich.*

2. Talking about the recent past: the *passé récent*

French has several tenses to talk about past events; the most commonly used are the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*. The usage of these tenses will be discussed in other chapters. If you want to talk about an event that just happened in the **recent past**, you can use the *passé récent* instead of the more traditional *passé composé*.
Unfortunately, we cannot translate this literally into English, but we must use adverbs like « just » combined with past tenses.

For the formation, we use the construction ***venir de*** followed by **an infinitive**:

- *Je **viens de** laver mon vélo. [*I just washed my bike.*]*

- *Elle **vient de** parler au médecin.[*I just spoke to the doctor.*]*

- *Nous **venons de** prendre un café. [*We just drank a cup of coffee.*]*

- *Ils **viennent de** rentrer. [*They just came home.*]*

For the position of pronouns, the same rules apply as for the *futur proche*:

- E*lle vient de **le** frapper.*

- *Nous venons d'**en** parler*

The use of a negation with this construction sounds awkward and is not often used; in that case, we use the *passé composé*!