

SOLT French Module 2 Lesson 1

Student Manual



Personal and Biographical Information

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to request personal and biographical information.

Exchange personal information

- Ask and answer questions about someone's residence
- Ask and answer questions about someone's age
- Ask and answer questions about the marital status of someone
- Provide personal information

Exchange biographical information

- Report autobiographical information
- Extract biographical data
- Request personal history

Tip of the day: Talking about Age

Even though an important parameter in an individual's social status in most societies, age is also a topic that most Africans do not feel comfortable talking about, at least not directly. The question "how old are you?" is not very much appreciated, and might take the addressee off-guard. However, one might hear, in the course of a single conversation, the same individual telling others countless times that he or she is older than them. What matters the most for the majority of Africans is knowing who is older and who is younger (for social interaction purposes). Knowing *how much* older someone is is not as important.

Exchange Personal Information

Read the dialogue below as Amadou answers some questions to fill out forms at the doctor's office. Your instructor will ask two students to role-play the short scene.

Réceptionniste: Quel est votre nom de famille?

Amadou: Niane.

*What is your
last name?*

Réceptionniste: Quel est votre prénom?

Amadou: Amadou.

Réceptionniste: Quel est votre grade militaire?

Amadou: Sergent.

Military rank

Réceptionniste: Quel âge avez-vous?

Amadou: J'ai trente-six ans.

Réceptionniste: Quels sont votre *date* et votre *lieu de naissance*?

Amadou: Le 2 octobre 1963 à Kanel, département de Matam, région du Fleuve.

*Date and place of
birth?*

Réceptionniste: Quelle est votre situation de famille?

Amadou: Je suis marié. J'ai deux enfants.

Marital status

Réceptionniste: Quelle est votre adresse?

Amadou: Parcelles Assainies, Villa no. 252, Dakar.

Vrai ou Faux?

1. Amadou is 36 years old. V / F
2. He was born in Dakar. V / F
3. He is divorced with 2 children. V / F

Exercice 1 (Pair Work)

You are applying for a new position and have a lot of paperwork to complete. Before you learn different ways to ask specific personal information, fill out the address form and then the form about your marital status and family situation. Work with your partner and take turns asking each other the different sections of each form below and use your vocabulary list to help you with new words.

Adresse où vous souhaitez recevoir le courrier :

Numéro et voie :

Code postal : Commune :

Téléphone fixe : Téléphone Portable :

Adresse e-mail :

SITUATION DE FAMILLE

Célibataire Marié Concubin Veuf Divorcé

Profession du conjoint éventuel :

Nombre d'enfants :

Nombre de frères et sœurs (âges) :

Adresse des parents

Numéro et voie :

Commune :

Code postal :

La réponse aux questions suivantes est facultative :

<u>Père</u>		<u>Mère</u>	
Sans activité professionnelle <input type="checkbox"/>		Sans activité professionnelle <input type="checkbox"/>	
En activité <input type="checkbox"/>		En activité <input type="checkbox"/>	
Profession :		Profession :	
Décédé <input type="checkbox"/>		Décédée <input type="checkbox"/>	
Autres cas (préciser) <input type="checkbox"/>		Autres cas (préciser) <input type="checkbox"/>	

Exercise 6 (Pair Work)

Work with someone you do not know very well. Collect personal information from your partner by taking turns asking these questions. Write down your partner's answer. Feel free to add more questions as needed.

Exchange Biographical Information

Read the following conversation between Amadou and John. They are both on the same bus, going from Dakar to Thiès—about an hour's drive. Answer the true / false questions that follow.

Amadou: Depuis combien de temps es-tu dans les commandos?

How long have you been in the SOF?

John: Depuis dix ans.

Amadou: Depuis combien de temps es-tu au Sénégal?

John: Depuis un mois.

Amadou: Pendant combien de temps vas-tu rester au Sénégal?

How long are you going to stay in Senegal?

John: Pendant deux ans.

Vrai ou Faux?

1. John est dans les commandos depuis 10 ans.
2. Il est au Sénégal depuis 3 mois.
3. Il va rester en Afrique pendant 2 ans.

Exercise 8 (follow-up)

Discuss with your classmates how long you *have been here* and how long you *plan to be here*. Your instructor will ask a few students to provide their answers.

Sample Answers:

Je suis [...] depuis et je vais rester à / au [...] pendant (pour)

Exercise 9

Below is an example of a classified ad by someone who is looking for a friend. Your instructor will ask someone to read the ad and discuss meaning. Write some information about yourself (and the person you are searching for) using this example and read it in front of the group. It does not need to be an ad looking for a friend; you can look for a long lost sibling, an old friend of yours, or a new roommate.

Re: recherche personne

Auteur: **Carama** (IP enregistrée)

Date: 21 avril 2005, 02:09

Bonjour,

Je recherche Amina Sylla qui était une très bonne copine d'école. Nous nous sommes connues au collège Sainte Marie de Dakar aux environs de 1985.

Son papa travaillait pour Le CICES et je crois que sa maman était à la maison.

Nous nous sommes perdues de vue car ses parents se sont séparés.

Si quelqu'un la connaît, pourriez-vous lui donner mon e-mail car j'aimerais bien la retrouver.

A l'époque, je m'appelais Carama Sarr.

D'avance, merci.

Exercise 10 (Pair Work)

Your instructor will provide you with fictitious information about a person. One student plays the role of him/herself and one student plays the invented person. Follow the scenario below.

You are sitting at a restaurant and saw someone who looks like your old friend, Binata. You are very curious as to whether Binata has a twin or whether it's just her relative. You want to know about the person, so you walk up to her and start asking questions. Ask her about her background, where she lives, her address, phone number, date of birth, and marital status. She will also ask you the same questions.

Exercise 11 (Group Work)

You are assigned to do a 3-month project with a Senegalese soldier. In English, discuss with your group the type of biographical information you would want to know about this person. As a group, create a dialogue in French between you and his captain asking for some information about your future partner. Think of all of the questions (at least 10) that could be asked. Topics to begin with:

- Enfance
- Adolescence et jeune adulte
- Mariage
- Carrière
- Après la carrière

PRESENTATION (what to include for the dialogue)

- Présentation (nom, prénom, âge et qualités)

- En quelques mots, votre parcours ? (études, rencontres, formations, intérêts, expos, activités)

- Vos expériences professionnelles

- Langues étrangères

Exchange Biographical Information (cont.)

Read this short passage where Amadou tells us about himself. Your instructor will ask a student to read the passage aloud and discuss new information such as prepositions with place names. Be prepared to answer the true / false questions orally.

Amadou:

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes le 10 décembre 1999. J'habite au Sénégal. Je suis dans les commandos depuis dix ans, et je suis sergent depuis 2 ans. Je viens de Saint-Louis, mais j'habite à Dakar depuis vingt ans. Je suis marié depuis 5 ans, et père de famille depuis quatre ans.

Vrai ou Faux?

1. Amadou joined the Special Forces in 1989.
He became a sergeant in 1998.
3. He moved to Dakar in 1979.
He got married in 1995.
5. His first child was born in 1996.

Exercise 12

Tell the class some information about yourself. Follow Amadou's model above and limit your biography to 5 sentences. Use this outline as a guide:

J'habite

Je suis (profession)

Je viens de

Je suis (situation de famille)

Exercise 13

Research online and write a short biography of the highest-ranked military person in Senegal pictured below.



Le Chef d'Etat Major général des Armées (CEMGA) actuel est le général de corps d'armée **Papa Khalilou FALL**

Indefinite plural article and negation

Remember that the **indefinite** article *des* becomes *de* in a negative sentence. *De* becomes *d'* when the noun that follows starts with a vowel. This is not the case with the verb être → C'est un stylo. Ce n'est pas un stylo.

Example: J'ai des enfants. *I have children.*
 Je n'ai pas d'enfants. *I don't have (any) children.*

Exercise 1

Negate the following sentences. Pay attention to the articles.

1. Il y a des étudiants canadiens dans la classe.
 Tu as des amis sympathiques.
 Vous avez des enfants.
4. Il y a des hommes dans la classe.
 Il y a des Américains dans la classe.

Exercise 2

Prepare oral responses to make these sentences negative. Pay attention to the verb and what follows the verb.

1. Il est avocat.
2. Tu achètes de la viande.
3. Nous faisons nos devoirs.
4. Il a une pomme.
5. Je mange des cerises.
6. On prend des vacances au soleil.
7. Il y a des enfants dans la classe.
8. Je fais la cuisine.
9. Vous vendez votre voiture.
10. Vous avez des devoirs à faire.

The interrogative adjective *quel*

Quel (what, which) is used to ask more specific information about someone or something. Like all adjectives, it agrees in gender and number with the noun it refers to, even when the noun does not follow *quel* immediately. Unless there is linking, all forms of *quel* are pronounced the same. Note:

- ⇒ There is *liaison* after *quels* or *quelles* before a word beginning with a vowel sound: *quel* / *ami* BUT *quels* [z] *amis*.
- ⇒ The forms of *quel* may come before the verb *être*. In this case, *quel* agrees with the noun after *être*:
 - Quel* (*Quelle*) + singular noun → *Quelle est la capitale du pays?*
 - Quels* (*Quelles*) + plural noun → *Quels sont les continents?*

	MASCULINE	FEMININE
SINGULAR	<i>Quel étudiant?</i> <i>Which student?</i>	<i>Quelle étudiante? Which female student?</i>
PLURAL	<i>Quels étudiants?</i> <i>Which students?</i>	<i>Quelles étudiantes? Which female students?</i>

Exercise 3

Fill in the blanks with the right form of *quel*. Indicate any necessary linking.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. livre? | 6. cahiers? |
| 2. table? | 7. amies? |
| 3. professeurs? | 8. restaurant? |
| 4. femme? | 9. cafétéria? |
| 5. homme? | 10. enfants? |

Exercise 4

Fill in the blanks with the right forms of *quel*. Be prepared to make *la liaison* when necessary.

1. films aimes-tu?
2. est ta nationalité?
3. étudiantes sont américaines?
4. livre as-tu?
5. est votre prénom?

The verb venir (to come over, move toward, occur)

Venir has an irregular conjugation:

Je viens	nous venons
Tu viens	vous venez
Il/elle vient	ils/elles viennent

Venir (de) can be used as a substitute for the verb *être* to indicate where one is from:

Je suis de Paris.	<i>I am from Paris.</i>
Je viens de Paris.	<i>I come from Paris.</i>

The verbs *devenir* (to become) and *revenir* (to come back) have the same verbal base and are conjugated like *venir*:

Vous devenez fort en français. Ma copine revient de Wilmington demain.

Venir is also used for the **recent past** (versus the *futur proche*). To talk about what one has just done, use *venir* in the present + de + infinitive:

Je viens de rencontrer Marc.
I've just met (literally, I'm coming from meeting) Marc.

Exercise 5

Where do these people *come from*? Fill in the blanks with the appropriate forms of *venir*.

1. Ma mère de France.
2. Tes parents de Russie.
3. Nous de la bibliothèque.
4. Tu des Etats-Unis.
5. Je de Paris.
6. -vous du Sénégal?

Exercise 6

Class activity. You instructor will start a chain by asking a student: *D'où viens-tu?* The student will answer and ask the same question to another student.

Exercise 7

Tell where the following people are coming from and where they are going.

Model: Vous / restaurant / maison

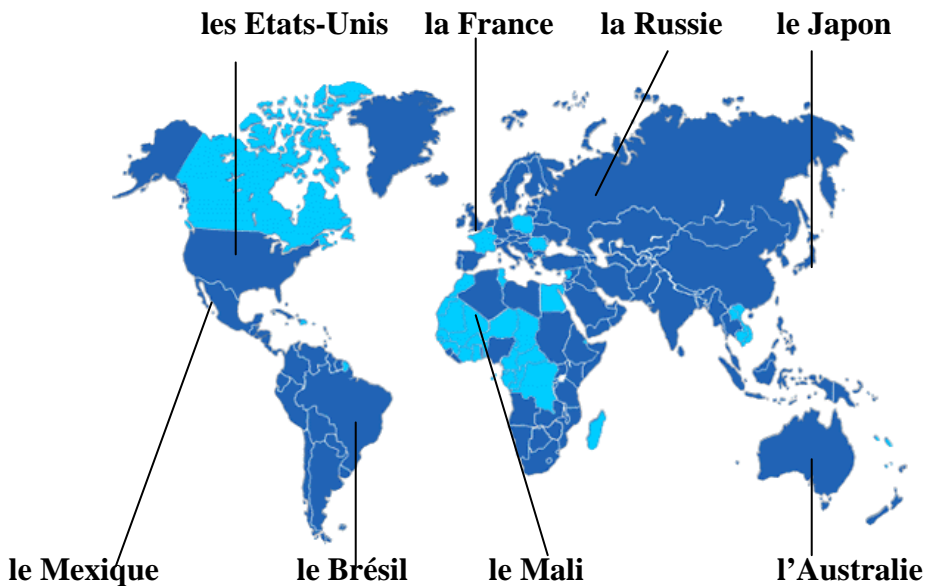
Vous venez du restaurant et vous allez à la maison

1. Patricia / La Nouvelle Orléans / Détroit
2. Vos parents / concert / café
3. Je / bibliothèque / restaurant
4. Nous / bar / maison
5. Tu / café / discothèque
6. Vous / Madagascar / Dakar

Prepositions and Countries

In French, *most* countries that end in *e* are feminine. There are exceptions such as, le Mozambique, le Zaïre and le Mexique. Below is a table explaining which preposition to use with names of countries. Contraction rules for **à** and **de** still apply; au, aux, à la, à l' / du, des, de la, de l'.

	Masculine singular	Feminine singular AND Masculine countries starting with a vowel	Plural
To/in a country	au / à l' Je vais au Sénégal <i>I go to Senegal</i> Je vais à l' Irak.	en Je vais en France <i>I go to France</i>	aux Je vais aux Etats-Unis <i>I go to the US</i>
From a country	du / de l' Je viens du Sénégal <i>I come from Senegal</i>	de / d' Je viens de France <i>I come from France</i>	des Je viens des Etats-Unis <i>I come from the US</i>



Exercise 9

Here are athletes competing in an international competition. Fill in the blanks with the right preposition and article to indicate where they are from.

1. Bindo Mukombo Kenya.
2. Sékou Diarra Guinée.
3. Manu Akono Cameroun.
4. Kwasi Ampadu Ghana.
5. Mahmoud Younis Egypte.
6. Edouardo Roberto Angola.
7. Abdoulaye Diop Sénégal.
8. André Boganda République Centrafricaine.
9. Désiré M’Ba Gabon.

Afrique (n.f.)	<i>Africa</i>
Carte (n.f.)	<i>Card/Map</i>
Caserne (n.f.)	<i>Barracks</i>
Classe (n.f.)	<i>Class (rank, status or group; of students)</i>
Commandos (n.m.)	<i>Commandos/Special forces</i>
Connu (e) adj.	<i>Well-known, famous</i>
D'abord	<i>First/In the first place</i>
Départ (n.m.)	<i>Departure</i>
Département (n.m.)	<i>Department</i>
Depuis	<i>For/Since</i>
Devenir (verb)	<i>To become</i>
Écrivain (e) n.m.f.	<i>Writer</i>
Ensuite	<i>Then</i>
Étudier (verb)	<i>To study</i>
Femme (n.f.)	<i>Woman</i>
Fleuve (n.m.)	<i>River</i>
Grade militaire (n.m.)	<i>Military rank</i>
Homme (n.m.)	<i>Man</i>
Hôtel (n.m.)	<i>Hotel</i>
Intéressant (e) adj.	<i>Interesting</i>
Intérieur (n.m.)	<i>Interior</i>
Maison (n.f.)	<i>House/Home</i>
Mariage (n.m.)	<i>Marriage/Wedding</i>
Martyr (n.m.)	<i>Martyr</i>
Même (adj.)	<i>Same, Even</i>
Naître (verb)	<i>To be born</i>
Nationalité (n.f.)	<i>Nationality</i>
Où	<i>Where</i>
Pendant	<i>During</i>
Penser (à)	<i>To think (about)</i>
Prochain (e) adj.	<i>Next</i>
Quel (s) (Quelle) (s)	<i>What? Which?</i>
Réceptionniste (n.m.f.)	<i>Receptionist</i>
Région (n.f.)	<i>Region</i>
Rencontre (n.f.)	<i>Meeting, date</i>
Résident (n.m.)	<i>Resident</i>
Rester (verb)	<i>To stay, to remain</i>
Revenir (verb)	<i>To go back, to come back</i>
Semaine (n.f.)	<i>Week</i>
Situation de famille (n.f.)	<i>Marital status</i>
Soleil (n.m.)	<i>Sun</i>
Vacances (n.f.pl.)	<i>Vacation</i>
Venir (verb)	<i>To come</i>
Vie (n.f.)	<i>Life</i>
Voyage (n.m.)	<i>Trip</i>

Personal Questions

Asking personal questions is a common practice in Africa. In most cases, the need to know about a person's private life is not motivated by simple curiosity. Rather, it is governed by the fact that people take personal interest in the emotional and material well-being of a family member, relative or friend. They go to great lengths to find out how they can best help. In addition, because an individual is inescapably linked to a family, lineage or ethnic group, it becomes important, sometimes, to know what he or she is doing since his or her actions might reflect on the whole community. Most people, therefore, ask personal questions so that they can give advice and remind the individual of his or her responsibilities. An implicit assumption in most African societies is that human beings are very prone to make mistakes, thus constant, reciprocal reminders and advice are always beneficial.

Africans are very open with questions about their lives. At times, they would gladly volunteer information in the hope of receiving counsel. However, what kind of personal questions one should ask, to whom and under what circumstances, varies greatly from one society to another. In general, one should avoid questions related to sex and income revenue. For most people, these are taboo topics. Furthermore, personal questions are more appropriate for peers and younger people than for older persons.



Social Security Numbers

Note that in West Africa, there is no equivalent to the Social Security number one has in the United States. The ID card (*la carte d'identité*) is the important document that one is frequently asked to present for identification purposes. Military personnel also have a *numéro d'immatriculation* that identifies them.

Activity 1

Fill in the blanks with the verbs *venir* and *aller*, as appropriate.

1. Paul de Bruxelles.
2. Emilie à l'opéra ce soir.
3. Je du café et je vais à la bibliothèque.
4. Nous au cinéma ce week-end.
5. Vous du Canada?

Activity 2

Match the following descriptions with the right officers. (We are in 2004).

1. Abdoulaye Sembène

2. Boubacar Fall

3. Mohammadou Kane

Soldat: 1984
Caporal: 1987
Sergent: 1989
Mariage: 1985
Dakar: 1984

Soldat: 1971
Caporal: 1975
Sergent: 1978
Mariage: 1976
Dakar: 1970

Soldat: 1988
Caporal: 1990
Sergent: 1992
Mariage: 1996
Dakar: 1991

A. Il est sergent depuis douze ans. Il est marié depuis huit ans. Il est à Dakar depuis treize ans.

B. Il est sergent depuis quinze ans. Il est marié depuis dix-neuf ans. Il est à Dakar depuis vingt ans.

C. Il est sergent depuis vingt-six ans. Il est marié depuis vingt-huit ans. Il est à Dakar depuis trente-quatre ans.

Activity 3

Write which country the following people come from.

Model: Abdoulaye est sénégalais.

1. Mariama est ivoirienne.
2. Sonia et Boris sont russes.
3. Nous sommes françaises.
4. Vous êtes américains.
5. Tu es mexicain.
6. Je suis brésilienne.
7. Harrison est australien.

Activity 4

Write where the following people are going for a vacation.

Model: Abdoulaye / France

1. Sonia et Boris / Sénégal
2. Nous / Côte d'Ivoire
3. Vous / Mexique
4. Tu / US
5. Harrison / Brésil
6. Je / Russie
7. Mariama / Australie

Activity 5

Here is the itinerary of an African tour. Fill in the blanks with *en* or *au*.

1. 6 jours Mozambique
2. 2 semaines Zimbabwe
3. 15 jours Zambie
4. 8 jours Congo
5. 2 semaines Cameroun
6. 2 jours Nigeria
7. 1 jour Niger
8. 1 semaine Mali
9. 3 jours Mauritanie
10. 10 jours Maroc

Activity 6

Pair activity. Below are the names of people and cities where they live. With your partner, take turns asking and answering questions about the countries where they are from. Use the places given to help you name the country indicated.

Example: *D'où vient Mamadou? Il vient du Mali*

John / New York

Sophie / Paris

Olga / Moscow

Ernesto / Mexico City

Kyoko / Tokyo

Luciano / Rio de Janeiro

Mamadou / Bamako

Lisa / Sydney

Activity 7

You are applying for a visa to go to Senegal. Fill out the following form.

Nom: Prénom: Age: Numéro de Sécurité Sociale: Adresse: Tél:	Date de naissance: Lieu de naissance: Situation de famille: Nationalité:
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Activity 8

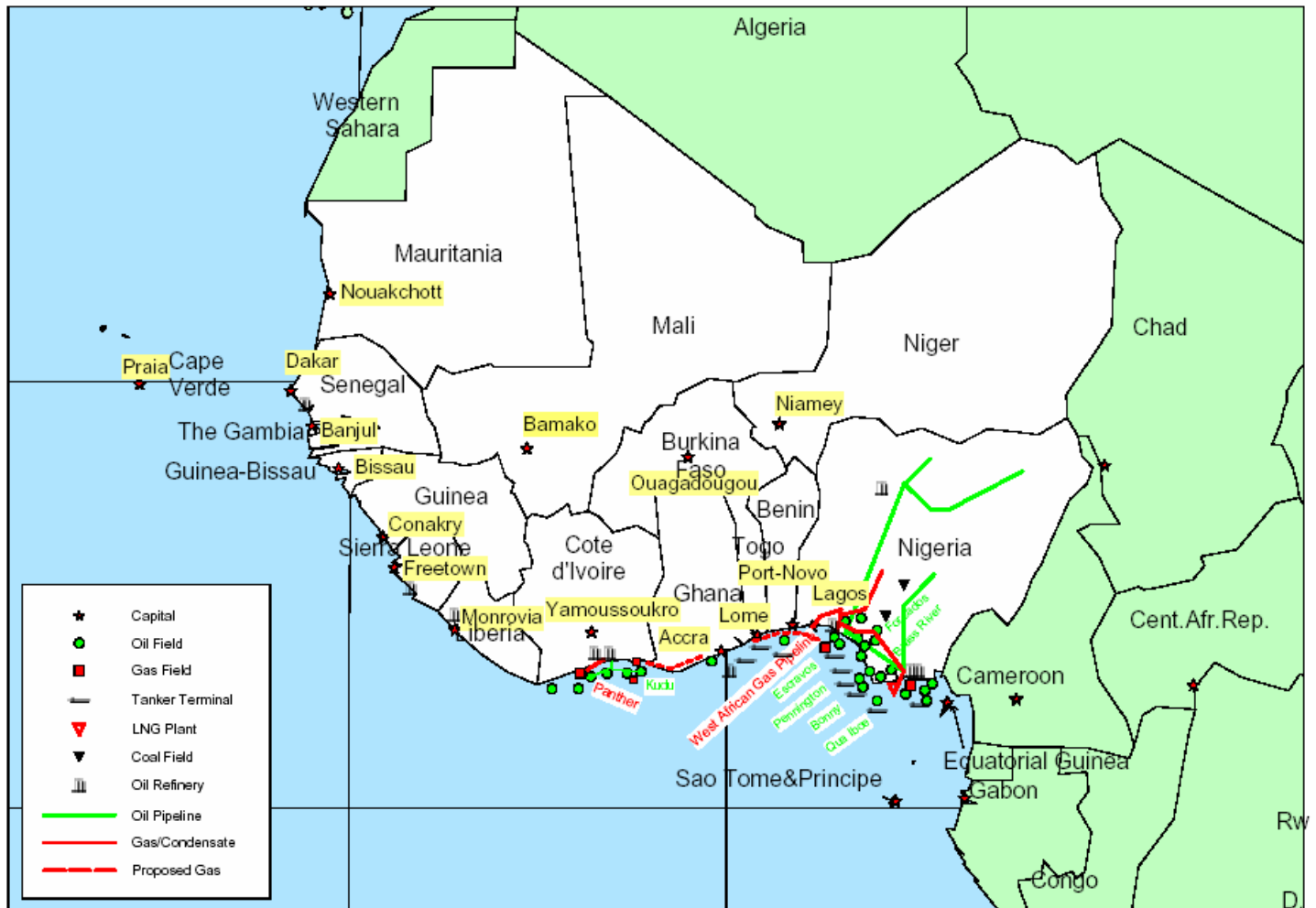
Listen to this piece of news that contains personal information and select the appropriate answer for each statement.

1. The woman killed was born in
 - a. 1970
 - b. 1969
 - c. 1959
2. Her son was born in
 - a. 1990
 - b. 1985
 - c. 1994

Activity 1

Pair activity. Use different forms of prepositions (à + le, la, les) and take turns asking each other about the cities (countries) in Western Africa. Use the legend for specific information.

Example: Où est Dakar?
Au Sénégal.



Pair Activities, Student A

Activity 2

You look at chart A while your partner looks at chart B. Ask questions to get the information that is missing from your chart: *D'où vient...? Où va...?*

A

NOM	PROVENANCE	DESTINATION
Myriam		Japon
John	Etats-Unis	
Ousmane		Mali
Luciano	Brésil	
Akiko		Etats-Unis
Sonia	Russie	

Activity 3

Re-create the identity of the person. Take turns with your partner in asking questions to get the information you are missing.

Nom: Dupuis

Prénom:

Age: 35 ans

Lieu de naissance:

Date de naissance: 20/4/1964

Numéro de Sécurité sociale:

Adresse: 6, place Danton 69003 Lyon France

Grade:

Situation de famille: divorcé. Quatre enfants

Pair Activities, Student B

Activity 2

You look at chart B while your partner looks at chart A. Ask questions to get the information that is missing from your chart: *D'où vient...? Où va...?*

B

NOM	PROVENANCE	DESTINATION
Myriam	France	
John		France
Ousmane	Sénégal	
Luciano		Australie
Akiko	Japon	
Sonia		Mexique

Activity 3

Recreate the identity of the person. Take turns with your partner in asking questions to get the information you are missing

Nom:

Prénom: Pierre

Age:

Lieu de naissance: Grenoble

Date de naissance:

Numéro de Sécurité sociale: 768-35-0923

Adresse:

Grade: Adjudant

Situation de famille:

Activity 1

Read the following personal ad and circle the correct statements.

DIRECTEUR entreprise, quarantaine, veuf, 2 jeunes enfants, désire refaire sa vie avec femme 30-40 ans, sympa, équilibrée, gaie, sincère, enfant accepté

1. The person who wrote this ad is
 - a. a man
 - b. a woman
2. This person ('s)
 - a. is divorced
 - b. spouse is deceased

Activity 2 Track 21

CD. Listen to the questions and write down your answers.

Activity 3 Track 22

CD. Listen as Sophie tells you about her coming trip around the world. Listen closely to the prepositions and check the countries she will be visiting.

La France
La Belgique
Le Brésil

Le Canada
Le Mexique
La Côte d'Ivoire

Le Cameroun
Le Sénégal
Les Etats-Unis

Le Japon
Le Kenya
La Russie

Activity 4

Prepare the following questions to ask your classmates. After you prepare the questions, practice your responses.

1. son nom
2. son adresse
3. son numéro de téléphone
4. sa voiture préférée
5. sa saison préférée
6. son jour préféré

Activity 5

Read the following text written by the famous poet and former president of Senegal, and answer the questions. Next find some biographical information about the author. Prepare written and oral answers to share with the class.

“Allez au Sénégal, porte de l'Afrique Noire, à moins de 5 heures de vol de l'Europe, 700 kilomètres de plages de sable fin. De décembre à mai, c'est la Californie de l'Afrique. Mer tiède sous l'influence du courant marin qui descend des Canaries, air frais, balayé par les alizés, soleil éclatant, dans un ciel sans nuages, qui réchauffe, tonifie et donne aux peaux blanches le velours des peaux noires. Vous visiterez la plage de Kayar où débarquent des pêches miraculeuses, le parc du Niokolo-Koba, où vivent librement lions et éléphants, hippopotames et buffles.”

Léopold Sédar Senghor
www.senegal-online.com

1. Why does Senghor mention the months December and May?
2. List the adjectives that describe the beach scene painted by the author.
3. Who are the likely visitors to Kayar? How do you know?
4. Why would someone visit Niokolo-Koba?

Activity 6

The verb *venir*. Tell what the people from column **A** just did (column **B**) and then what they are going to do (column **C**). You must rearrange the order of activities given in column C to match B.

A	B	C
Moi, je	*mettre (set) la table	regarder la télé
Toi, tu	faire les courses	dîner
Nous	avoir un accident	parler avec ses amis
Vous	faire les devoirs	rentrer à la maison
Mes copains, ils	dîner	téléphoner à la police

*mettre is an irregular verb

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.