

Politeness & Register

Languages

Tu and vous, and the formulas that are genuinely expected.

French formality is more codified than English.

Essential

Bonjour – say it before anything else

Merci / Merci beaucoup

S'il vous plaît

Excusez-moi

Au revoir

Tu or vous

vous – strangers, older people, work

tu – friends, family, children, peers

Plural you is always vous

Wait to be invited to tu

Softening

Je voudrais rather than je veux

Pourriez-vous... ?

Est-ce que je pourrais... ?

Omitting **bonjour** before a request reads as genuinely rude in France, in a way it does not in English.