



Amazing
Free French
Lessons ^ ^
_

Lesson 2: Ça va ? (How are you?)

Welcoming Remarks

Now that you are already just about almost nearly on the verge of starting to be virtually perfectly fluent in extremely basic French, this exciting new expression that I'm about to teach you today is going to turn you into a native speaker instantly!

Maybe.

1. New Vocabulary

Words in blue-green: invariable words.

Ça va ? [Expression]	How are you? /Are you okay?
Ça va [Expression]	I'm good/I'm fine/I am doing well.

2. Language Point

Synopsis

Ça va ? is an informal expression meaning “**how are you?**” or “**are you okay?**”

Notes

Informal Greeting & Asking if Someone is Okay

Ça va ? is one of a few informal ways to inquire about someone's current mental or physical state. I put it that broadly because it can be used outside the context of greetings. For instance, if you see someone losing his or her balance on ice (if you live in Canada, you'd know), you would use this expression to ask if they are okay!

It can be translated as:

how are you?, you okay?, how is it going?, how are things?

Or, more literally, something along the lines of “**are you doing well?**”

<https://www.facebook.com/LearnQuebecFrench>

YouTube: Learn Quebec French

Fixed Expression

Ça va ? is a fixed expression and, if broken down, would be void of meaning. It's literally just "it's going?"

How to Respond

Ça va ? is a yes-no question. As it turns out, you already know how to reply!

Oui.

(Yes.)

Non.

(No.)

Alternatively, you may also turn the question into a statement by simply changing the tone. In French, whereas you must raise your tone upon asking a question, in a declarative sentence, there is a constant, subtle, falling intonation from the beginning of the sentence till the end.



Ça va ?

(How are you?) [Are you doing well?]



Ça va.

(I am good.) [I am doing well.]

Here are some examples of the expression being used in different contexts

a) A Good Day:

A: Ça va ?

How are you? [Are you doing well?]

B: Oui !

I'm good! [Yes!]

Alternatively:

B: Ça va !

Alternatively:

B: Oui, ça va !

b) A Bad Day:

<https://www.facebook.com/LearnQuebecFrench>

YouTube: Learn Quebec French

A: Ça va ?

How are you? [Are you doing well?]

B: Non...

Not good... [No...]

c) A Bad Day but You Don't Want to Let Others Know You're Having One

A: Ça va ?

How are you? [Are you doing well?]

B: Oui... oui.

Good ... good. [Yes ... yes.]

3. Dialogue

"Time Heals"

Blue for "male".

Pink for "female".

1. **Raphaël (R)**: Izzo, ça va ?

2. **Izzo (I)**: Non...

A week later...

3. **R**: Ça va, Izzo ?

4. **P**: Oui... oui.

A week later...

3. **R**: Ça va ?

4. **P**: Oui, ça va! ^_^

How to make a friend feel better?

Today I'm going to disclose the secret that has been passed down from generation to generation in my family: buy them ice cream. It works every time! (Unless they are lactose-intolerant; then, you're doomed. I know there are lactose-free dairy products. I never tried them, though, I don't know if it still works.) Anyways! Here's the translation!

1. **Raphaël (R)** : Izzo, ça va ?

Izzo, how are you? [Are you doing well?]

<https://www.facebook.com/LearnQuebecFrench>

YouTube: Learn Quebec French

2. Izzo (I): Non...

Not good... [No...]

A week later...

3. R: Ça va, Izzo ?

How are you [Are you doing well], Izzo?

4. P: Oui... oui.

I'm good... I'm good. [Yes, yes...]

A week later...

3. R: Ça va ?

How are you? [Are you doing well?]

4. P: Oui, ça va! ^_^

I'm good! [Yes, I'm doing well!]

4. Exercises

Exercise 1: Translate from English to French

1. How are you? [Are you doing well?]
2. No.
3. I'm good. [I am doing well]
4. Yes.

5. Answers

Exercise 1

1. Ça va ?
2. Non.
3. Ça va.
4. Oui.

Extra: Literal Meaning and Origin of “ça va ?”

Breaking down “ça va ?”, we obtain “ça”(it) and “va”(goes/is going), which, by itself, would result in an incomplete expression: *it's going?*

It derives from a longer expression “comment (how) ça va ?”, “**how is it going?**” (an expression which you will learn more about in a later lesson.)

However, from what I could glean, this longer expression comes from an even longer one whose original signification refers to something substantially ... different. It

<https://www.facebook.com/LearnQuebecFrench>

YouTube: Learn Quebec French

appears that it is the shortened form of a question nobles of the royal court of France had the privilege to ask the king:

Comment ça va les selles ?

How are your stools?

Not kidding. Go ahead, look it up ^^