

INTERMEDIATE. LESSON #38. SUR LA GRAND PLACE

- Nous nous moquons beaucoup des Belges, en France, mais c'est ridicule.
- C'est vrai que nous nous ressemblons beaucoup.
- Bon. Ils ont un petit accent.
- Qu'on exagère souvent. Quand on veut imiter un Belge, on dit : « Ah, je voudrais bien des frites, une fois ! ».
- C'est comme toutes les histoires belges. Je ne suis pas sûr qu'ils les apprécient beaucoup ici. Elles sont un peu vaches !
- Et nous voilà sur la grand place. Mais nous ne sommes pas les seuls à avoir eu l'idée de venir ici. C'est noir de monde ! Espérons qu'il reste un peu de place en terrasse pour boire un coup. On crève de chaud.

TRANSLATION

- French people make a lot of fun about Belgian people but it's ridiculous.
- It's true we have a lot in common.
- OK, they've got a little accent.
- We often exaggerate it. Every time we want to imitate a Belgian, we use to say : « Ah, je voudrais bien des frites, une fois ! » (I'd like some fries).
- It's the same with all these Belgian jokes. I'm not sure they really like them, here. They're a little bit mean !
- And we're now on the Grand Place. But we're not the only ones who had the idea to come here. It's swarming with people ! Let's hope we'll find a place at a table outside a café to have a drink. We're boiling.



Une fois is a real expression and it's really used by Belgian but ... they use it wisely and not as often as French people accuse them to !



Se moquer : to make fun.
Ridicule : ridiculous.
Ressembler : to be like, to look like, to resemble.
Accent (masc.) : accent.
Exagérer : to exaggerate.
Imiter : to imitate.
Terrasse (fém.) : a table outside a café.

In this lesson we have a lot of familiar expressions :

- *Etre vache* : to be mean, nasty.
- *C'est noir de monde* : it's swarming with people.
- *On crève de chaud* : we're boiling.

A *vache* is literally a cow.

The verb *crever* means literally *to die (like an animal)*.



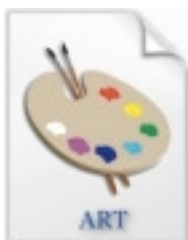
Belgium is a state in Western Europe.

Belgium is divided into two main regions : the Flanders (North of the Belgium) where people speak mainly Dutch and the Wallonia (South of the Belgium) where people speak mainly French.

So, as well as Switzerland or Luxembourg, Belgium is a French speaking European country.

Of course even if all these countries speak French, they also have their own accent and specific words and expressions. And that's why French people often make fun of the Belgian. But Belgian do exactly the same with the French !

Belgium is very famous for its French fries, its chocolates, its beers.



Brussels is the capital of Belgium and of the European Union.

It's a magnificent town with a various architecture : you can see medieval buildings as well as postmodern constructions.

It's also a town famous for its cultural wealth. Lots of artists have lived and painted in Belgium for years and there are now lots of museums in Brussels.

The Grand Place (UNESCO world heritage site since 1988) is very

famous, it's maybe the most beautiful square in Europe with its typical buildings (palaces, museums, brasseries, restaurants, stores).

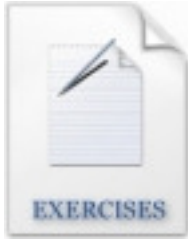
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruxelles>



La Grand Place by day



La Grand Place by night



And what about discovering a French joke about Belgian ?
You'll quick understand that French are not really nice with Belgian people and make fools of them.

Un Belge, sur la glace... Il sort sa scie et sa canne à pêche et commence à découper un trou dans la glace. A ce moment là, une voix d'outre-tombe résonne : « Il n'y a pas de poisson ici... »

Le Belge, stupéfait, s'arrête. Il regarde autour de lui, ne voit personne et continue. « Il n'y a pas de poisson ici ! » Encore une fois, il s'arrête et tend l'oreille... Inquiet, il reprend son travail « Il n'y a PAS de poisson ici ! »

Et le Belge

- Mais qui parle, une fois ?
- Le Directeur de la patinoire !

What did you understand ? Here is the vocabulary of this joke to help you a little.

Glace (fém.) : ice.

Scie (fém.) : saw.

Canne à pêche (fém.) : fishing rod.

Trou (masc.) : hole.

Voix d'outre-tombe (fém.) : a voice from beyond the grave.

Résonner : to resonate, to ring.

Stupéfait : astounded.

Inquiet : worried, anxious.

Patinoire (fém.) : ice rink.