

QUICK FACTS FOR FRENCH TEACHERS

Quick Responses to Common Misconceptions

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Americans don't need to learn another language – Everyone speaks English!
In today's global marketplace, this attitude is “très démodé”.

- ✦ After 9/11, President Bush allocated substantial funding to the study of foreign languages, study abroad programs, and the training of foreign language teachers.
- ✦ President Obama has spoken publicly about the importance of speaking foreign languages
- ✦ Familiarity with the diversity of culture in other countries is a major advantage for careers in today's global economy.
- ✦ Candidates with proficiency in a language other than English earn higher salaries
- ✦ In a listing of international jobs distributed by the U.S. State Department on August 25, 2008: 78 required or preferred French, 27 a UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), 17 Spanish, 10 Arabic, 5 Russian, 3 German, and 1 Chinese

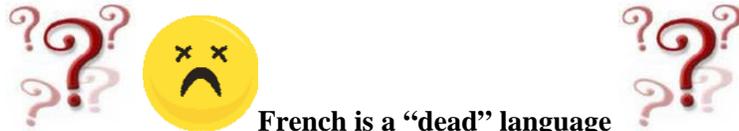


French is difficult
Sometimes only French can provide the “mot juste”!

- ✦ The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center has established the following classification of languages according to their level of difficulty for English-speaking learners to reach a high level of speaking proficiency; the lower the category, the easier for English-speakers to master:
 - Category I level of difficulty: French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.
 - Category II level of difficulty: German.
 - Category III level of difficulty: Greek, Hebrew, Moro, Persian-Farsi, Persian-Afghan, Pushtu-Afghan, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Uzbek, and Vietnamese.
 - Category IV level of difficulty: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.
- ✦ FRENCH (and the other Romance languages) requires approximately 720 hours of instruction to enable a learner to reach an **advanced** level of speaking proficiency. By contrast, it requires approximately 1000 hours of instruction to reach a **low** level of speaking proficiency in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.
 - Therefore, it is more likely that American students will reach communicative, linguistic proficiency in Category I or II languages within the academic time period of grades 7-12 (approximately 857 hours of 40-minute instruction over 180 days for 5 years of study). The study of Category III or IV languages for the same time period would lead to minimal linguistic proficiency at best.
- ✦ It is estimated that someone who has never studied French already knows approximately 15,000 words and expressions in the language. This is due to the fact that the Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror, landed in England in 1066 and became king after defeating the Saxons. The Anglo-Norman dynasty, followed by the French House of Plantagenets (Henry II, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard the Lion-Hearted), reigned over England for centuries and approximately 10,000 French words were incorporated into English.
- ✦ French provides the base for more than 35% of modern English vocabulary.
- ✦ French is the second foreign language taught in the U.S., behind Spanish, and the only language other than English taught in all countries
- ✦ Students who have studied French earn higher scores on standardized tests (SAT/ACT/GRE/LSAT).
- ✦ A recent survey conducted by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) showed that French enrollment at U.S. institutions of higher education had increased by 2.3% between 2002 and 2006. According to another national survey conducted in 2007-2008 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

(ACTFL), French was listed as the favorite language by high school students nationwide, followed by Italian and then Spanish.

- ✦ Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges lists some 1,100 U.S. institutions which offer programs in French or related to French. These figures clearly show that French is considered not only as an important language, but also as an important discipline in college curricula nationwide.
- ✦ Since studies have shown that students tend to continue study of the language begun in high school in college, the elimination of French study in secondary schools deprives students of exposure to a language of global status, and one that is integral for initial training in international careers.



The study of French is “de rigueur” on 5 continents!

- ✦ French is the official language of 32 countries.
- ✦ French is the only other language, besides English, to be spoken on 5 of the world’s continents.
- ✦ With French, students will be understood in more than 56 countries by more than 200 million people who use French in their daily lives.
- ✦ French, along with English, is an official working language of the United Nations, UNESCO, NATO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labor Bureau, the International Olympic Committee, the 31-member Council of Europe, the European Community, the Universal Postal Union, the International Red Cross, and the Union of International Associations (UIA).
- ✦ French is an official or shared language of the 56 countries that comprise the International Organization of French-Speaking Countries (la Francophonie).
- ✦ French is the dominant working language at the European Court of Justice, the European Tribunal of First Instance, and the Press Room at the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium.
- ✦ A list of languages deemed as critical was developed by the U.S. Department of Defense, and French was among them because it is spoken in countries which have a strategic importance.
- ✦ French is among the top five languages in terms of web pages used on the Internet.
- ✦ Montreal is the second largest city of native French-speakers in the world (after Paris) and is located only 1 hour from New York City by plane.
- ✦ In the 2000 U.S. Federal census 10,659,350 people claimed French (8,309,666) or French Canadian (2,349,684) ancestry. According to the same census 628,810 New Yorkers reported either first or second generation French or French Canadian ancestry.



**France is a country whose time has passed; she is without importance in today’s world
Au contraire!**



- ✦ France is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with veto power
- ✦ France has the 6th largest economy in the world
- ✦ France is the leading nation in clean, safe, and efficient nuclear power. Nuclear energy "provides more than three quarters of the nation's electricity". U.S. News and World Report quotes Luis E. Echavarri as saying: "France has become one of the leading countries capable of exporting technology around the world".
- ✦ According to a 2009 poll conducted by Gallup, France is viewed favorably by 64% of Americans and Canada is viewed favorably by 94% of Americans.
- ✦ Électricité de France (EDF) bought **British Energy Group** (operator of 8 nuclear power stations) and invested in the United States acquiring just under 50% of the shares in **Constellation Energy Nuclear Group**.
- ✦ The President of the European Central Bank was born, raised, and educated in France.
- ✦ France is a European leader in aerospace (Aérospatiale, Arianespace, Airbus)
- ✦ Most commercial satellites are put into space on French Ariane rockets

- ✳ The fastest train in the world (the TGV) is French
- ✳ France has the world's third military power (after the U.S. and Russia), and has the world's second largest defense industry.
- ✳ France is the site chosen by an international consortium for the building of the world's first nuclear fusion reactor, the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor.
- ✳ France is also a world leader in medical research and genetics; the Pasteur Institute in Paris is world renowned.
- ✳ Fiber optics and the microchip were invented by French scientists
- ✳ The AIDS virus was discovered by a team of French researchers.
- ✳ The tickets that each spectator had to carry with him or her to enter any of the events at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 were designed by ASK, a business based in the south of France. ASK has become the world leader in contactless smart cards, contactless paper tickets and RFID labels with over 70 million products in circulation worldwide. (Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) is used in enterprise supply chain management to improve the efficiency of inventory tracking and management.)



French is important in France, but of no use in the United States

“Voilà” some of the ways that French touches our lives in the USA!

- ✳ The list of French schools in the United States published every year by France-Amérique, is eight pages long
 - ✳ French companies alone have created more than 550,000 jobs for Americans while U.S. companies employ 750,000 people in France
 - ✳ On September 10, 2006, a statue of The Little Prince, the first of its kind in the United States, was inaugurated in the courtyard of The Northport Public Library, commemorating the world famous story written by Antoine de Saint Exupéry while residing in Northport, New York.
 - ✳ Louisiana lists French as an official language
 - ✳ Cajun culture is Francophone and an integral part of American culture
 - ✳ The judicial system of Louisiana uses the Napoleonic Code
 - ✳ New York City, among others, has several highly successful bilingual **French** schools .
 - ✳ Canada is an officially bilingual country
 - ✳ The number one trading partner of the United States is Canada
 - ✳ The number one trading partner of many states, including New York, is Quebec. Here are the 2008 trade figures (listed in millions) for New York and major Francophone countries:
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Canada: \$26,149,800 | France: \$29,665,300 |
| Switzerland: \$22,023,600 | Belgium: \$28,903,500 |
- Total trade with 4 Francophone countries: \$341,742,200,000**
- In contrast, total trade with China: \$69,732,000,000**
- ✳ Quebec, the largest province in Canada, and across the border from New York State, is French-speaking and a rich source of Francophone culture
 - ✳ Hydro-Quebec’s power helps to provide electricity to New York State and parts of New England
 - ✳ New York State is the primary international market for Quebec, which ships over \$7.6 billion worth of goods yearly to the state — 14.1% of its total exports to the United States.
 - ✳ The Quebec — New York Trade Corridor has been the chief commercial and industrial region of North America for four centuries.
 - ✳ One-third of New York City’s subway cars were built in Québec and in Plattsburgh, New York, by Bombardier. Bombardier is also the main constructor of Amtrak’s new Acela high speed trains that serve the Washington-New York City-Boston corridor.
 - ✳ The first New York – Québec Summit was organized in May 2002 to develop bi-national links in transportation, tourism, science and technology. The Summit’s first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by Robert L. King, Chancellor of the State University of New York, and Michel Pigeon, Rector of the Université Laval in Québec City, to increase academic and research cooperation in such fields as security, photonics, and bioterrorism.



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