

START YOUR JOURNEY TO FRENCH FLUENCY ON THE RIGHT FOOT

FACTS, LEVELS, TIPS, & RESOURCES



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DO YOU WONDER...

- ⇒ What is your level in French or what each level involves?
- ⇒ How long time will it take you to become fluent in French?
- ⇒ What level do you need to transfer to a French university or to work in France?
- ⇒ What are the main differences between French & English languages?
- ⇒ how to achieve mastery of French more quickly?
- ⇒ how to study the right and smart way?

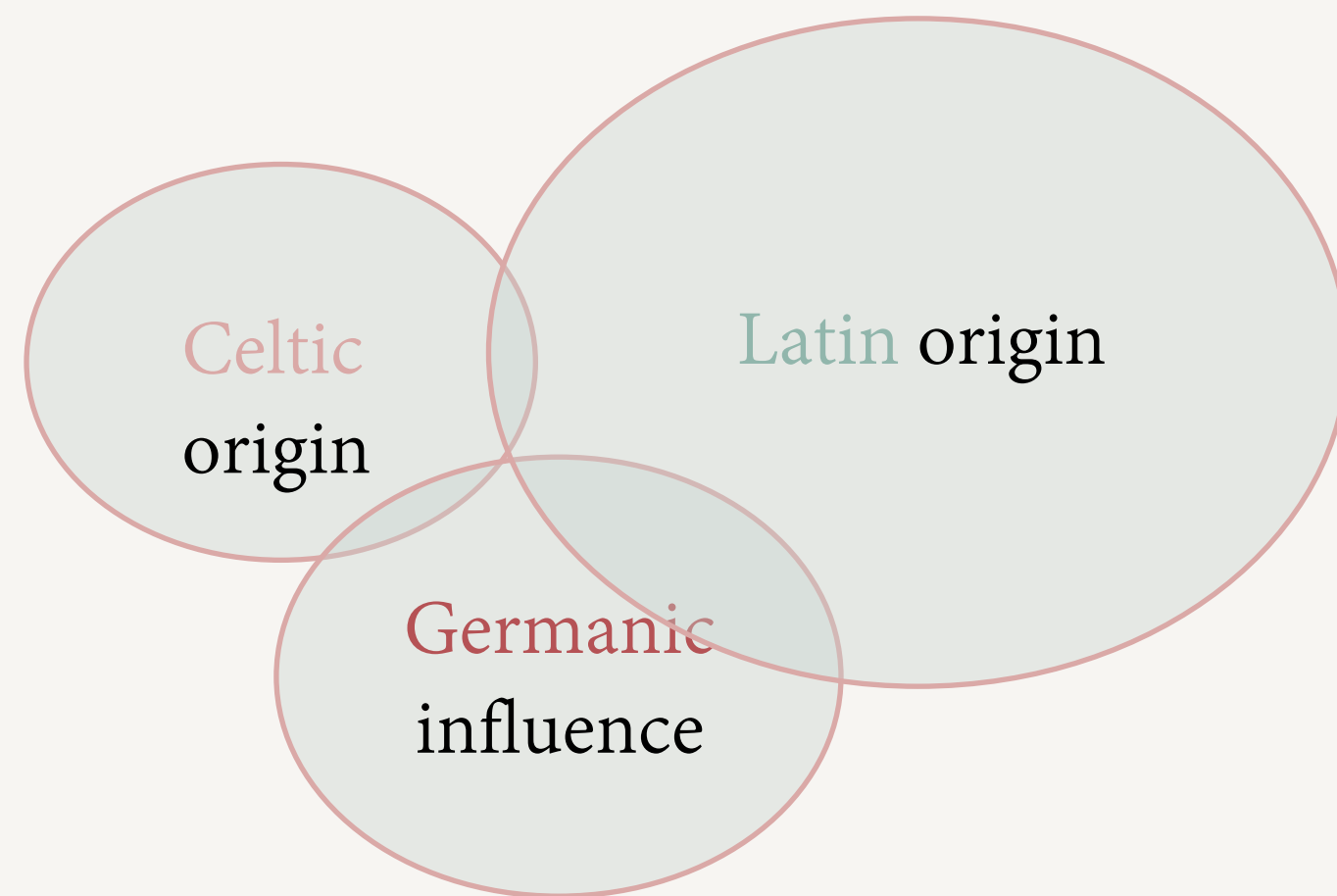
THEN, KEEP READING...

01 - Origins & Influences

FRENCH

Romance Language

100,000 WORDS

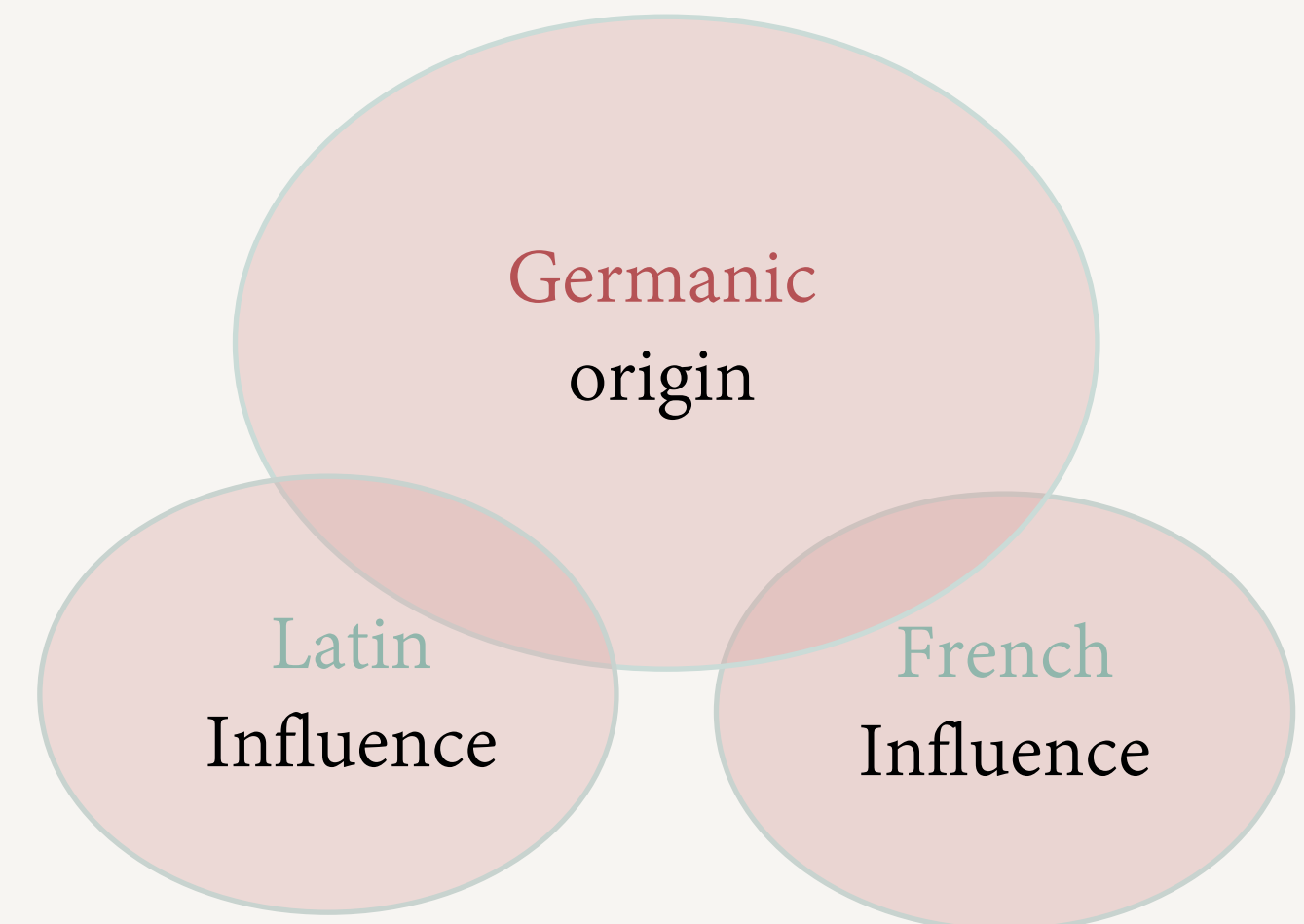


French language has less words than English language, but most words have at least three meanings. Only contextual clues can help you deduce the meaning.

ENGLISH

Germanic Language

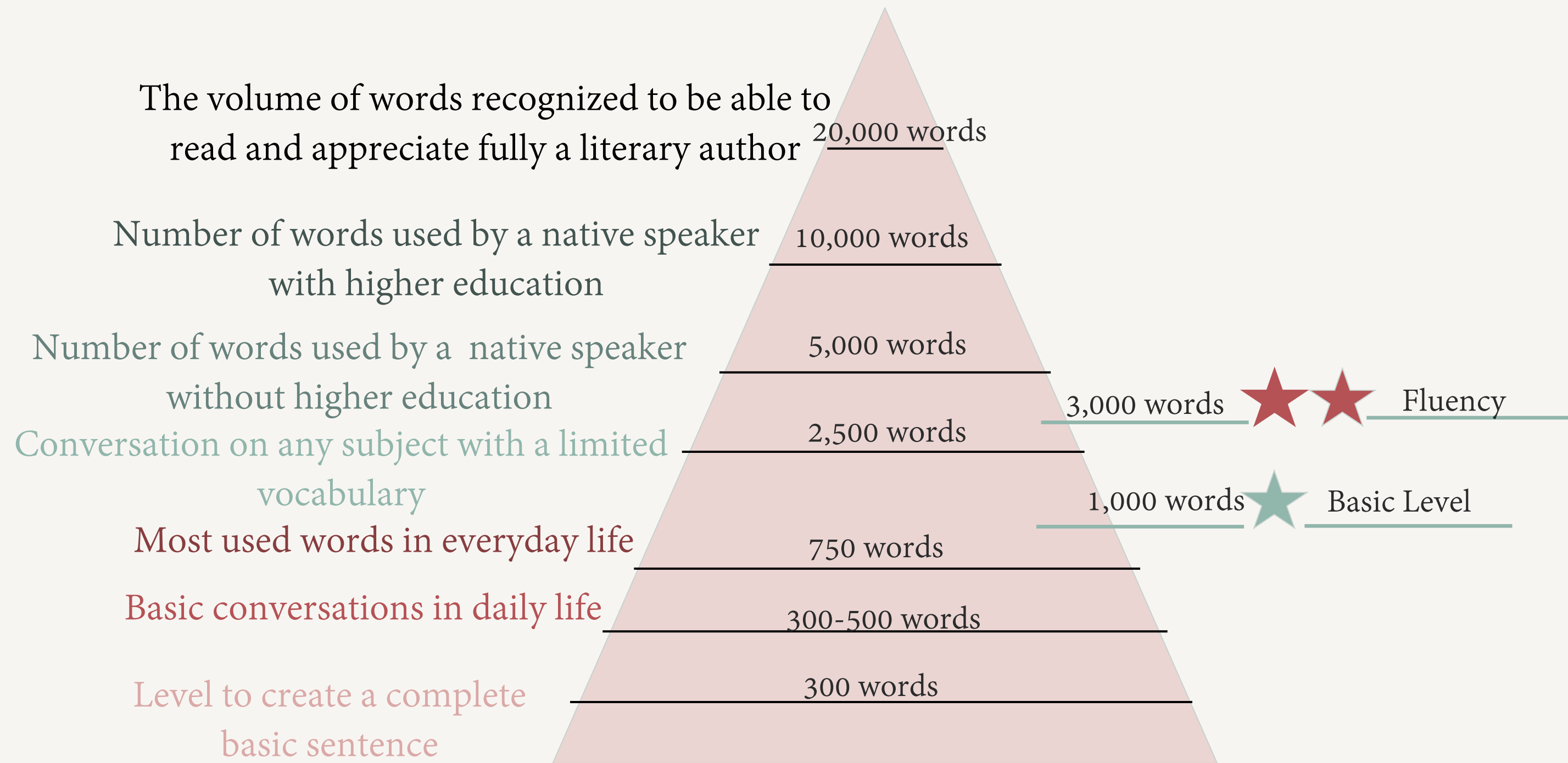
170,000 WORDS

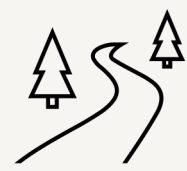




02 – Journey Towards Fluency

HOW MANY WORDS SHOULD YOU KNOW?





ROADMAP TO REACH FLUENCY

The CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) determines **6 levels of French**.

The hours of study required to reach a level are approximate, but give you an idea of what each level may involve.

TOTAL OF STUDY HOURS TO REACH A LEVEL

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| A1 - Beginner | 90 to 100 hours. |
| A2 - Advanced Beginner | 180 to 200 hours. |
| B1 - Intermediary | 350 to 400 hours. |
| B2 - Advanced Intermediary* | 600 to 850 hours. |
| C1 – Advanced * * | 850 to 900 hours. |
| C2 – Proficiency | Beyond 900 hours |

What does it mean if I study 2 hours a week?

With a total of **8 hours** a month, you will reach level **A1** in 1 year.

If you study an average of 3 hours a week, you will reach A2 in one year and 4 months.

How to Speed Up the Process?

You need to use and immerse yourself in the language *outside academic learning*.

To know more, consult the slide ‘*Tips for Learning French Efficiently*’

* To enter a *french university* you must demonstrate a CEFR level **B2** (undergrad) or **C1** (Masters and PostGrad).

* * To get a “white collar” *job* in a french company you would need a high **C1** to **C2** equivalent.

DETERMINE YOUR LEVEL WITH THE EUROPEAN LEVELS – SELF-ASSESSMENT GRID

| | A1 – 90-100 hours | A2 - 180 to 200 hours | B1 -- 350 to 400 hours. | B2 - 600 to 850 hours | C1 - 850 to 900 hours | C2 – Beyond 900 hours |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| U.N.D.E.R.S.T.A.N.D.I.N.G. Listening | I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family, and immediate surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly | I can understand phrases and the highest frequency related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcement. | I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. | I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect. | I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort. | I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided. I have some time to get familiar with the accent. |
| U.N.D.E.R.S.T.A.N.D.I.N.G. Reading | I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues | I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters. | I can understand texts that consist mainly of high-frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings, and wishes in personal letters. | I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose. | I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field. | I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works. |
| S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. Spoken Interaction | I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask & answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics | I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself. | I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events). | I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussions in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views. | I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers. | I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it. |
| S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. Spoken Production | I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know | I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job. | I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions | I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. | I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. | I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. |
| W.R.I.T.I.N.G. Writing | I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality, and address on a hotel registration form. | I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something. | I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions. | I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences. | I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay, or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind. | I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports, or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works. |

SAMPLES OF TEXT BASED ON LEVELS *

A1 – “Pour votre sécurité, dès que vous entendrez le signal sonore annonçant le départ du train, ne montez plus dans le train.”

➔ *daily life, simple instructions, descriptions. Only concrete terms and simple sentences.*

A2– ‘Un nouveau service de la police municipale.

Sur un simple appel, tout habitant de 60 ans et plus, peut demander à être accompagné d’un agent municipal pour se rendre à un distributeur de billets ou à une banque afin d’effectuer un dépôt ou un retrait d’argent en toute sécurité. A un horaire convenu en fonction de ses disponibilités, le policier viendra chercher la personne à son domicile et la ramènera après l’opération.”

➔ *narrative, informative, descriptive texts. Mostly concrete terms. Only common words. Simple sentences.*

B1 – *Malgré le chômage, certains secteurs ont des difficultés pour trouver des candidats, en particulier s’agissant des entreprises de moins de vingt salariés. En tête, le bâtiment où les recruteurs se plaignent du petit nombre de professionnels qualifiés : maçons, charpentiers, plombiers, etc. Mais la santé et le social ne sont pas en reste. Plus de 70% des établissements ont des difficultés à recruter des infirmières, des sages-femmes. Mêmes problèmes pour l’hôtellerie-restauration.*

➔ *daily life, work, free time. Descriptive & narrative texts. Mostly simple sentences and common words.*

* Based on the CIEP evaluation. The CIEP organizes outside France the examinations instituted by the French Ministry of Education and Higher education to evaluate the teaching of French as a foreign language. Their knowledge tests (TCF) allow any non-French speaker who wishes to validate his or her knowledge of French for professional or personal reasons to do so in a simple and reliable way. The TCR is compulsory for all undergraduate registrations in French higher education institutions.

B2 – Depuis 1982, les élections prud’homales ont lieu tous les cinq ans, et donnent lieu à une vive compétition syndicale. Comme il s’agit de désigner les juges employeurs et salariés des conseils de prud’hommes, le corps électoral est large. Les employeurs et les salariés âgés de 16 ans accomplis, actifs ou chômeurs, sont électeurs. Les fonctionnaires ne votent pas mais les contractuels de droit privé de la fonction publique ont ce droit. En théorie, on pourrait attendre d’un tel corps électoral qu’il détermine la représentativité des syndicats, dans une élection non réservée aux cinq centrales représentatives. Mais, depuis vingt ans, l’abstention n’a fait que croître dans des proportions abyssales : jusqu’à 65,6 % en 1997...

➔ *Narrative and descriptive texts. Numerous abstract terms & rather extensive vocabulary. Common complex sentences.*

C1 – Toutes les enquêtes menées auprès des jeunes Français montrent qu’après le métier de chercheur, c’est celui de “grand reporter” qui les fascine le plus. Le reporter photographe est toujours présent là où il le faut, appuyant sur le bouton au bon moment. Mais rien n’est jamais sûr, il doit compter avec la chance et son métier est très dur. Sa vie de famille passe au second plan, tandis qu’il reçoit le coup de fil qui lui offrira un contrat à l’autre bout du monde à un moment qui ne lui convient pas forcément. Mais partir n’est rien, il lui faut aussi revenir et surtout avec la photo qui fera le tour du monde. Savoir la faire implique toutes les qualités humaines : physiques, intellectuelles, instinctives...

➔ *Argumentative and professional texts. Extensive vocabulary and mostly complex sentences.*

C2 – Le sens ancien de placebo est :

“médicament prescrit à un malade pour lui faire plaisir.” Cette définition est toujours valable : le placebo pur est une substance neutre, sans la moindre molécule de médicament active, donnée afin de susciter un effet psychologique. Toutes les cultures, toutes les époques ont mis à profit cet effet. Les chamans, les sorciers, les médecins délivrent un objet, un breuvage, censé détenir un pouvoir thérapeutique. Celui-ci va provoquer un soulagement, voire une guérison. Sur le plan psychologique, il se passe donc quelque chose de notable.

Pourtant, par ces temps de supertechnologie et de rationalité, le placebo n’est pas en odeur de sainteté. Celui qui délivre le placebo est considéré comme un truqueur qui abuse de la confiance d’une personne crédule (parce qu’elle le croit) ou hystérique (parce qu’elle répond positivement à son traitement). Or, le placebo agit positivement sur tout le monde, avec une intensité variable. Au lieu de le considérer comme un leurre, il faut voir en lui le révélateur de la puissance du psychisme de chacun. Le placebo est un pouvoir pas une faiblesse.

L’effet placebo repose sur des bases biologiques. La volonté de guérison du malade et la puissance du thérapeute entraînent la production de substances naturelles proches de la morphine.

➔ *All types of texts. Large lexical repertoire, idiomatic expressions. All types of sentences & very common idiomatic expressions. Fine understanding.*

03 - Comparison of Characteristics

FRENCH

ENGLISH

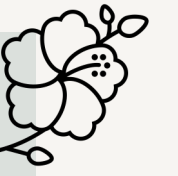
| | FRENCH | ENGLISH |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Diacritical marks | Five marks on 16 letters é, è, ê, ë, à, â, î, ï, ô, ù, û, ü, ÿ, æ, œ ç | only in foreign words |
| Agreement | Yes (in gender & number with articles, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs) | Rare |
| Articles | Nearly always | Less common |
| Conjugations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different for each grammatical person • 16 tenses • 4 moods (indicative, conditional, imperative, subjunctive) • No progressive tense • 300 irregular verbs (3rd group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different only for third-person singular • 16 tenses • 5 moods (indicative, conditional, imperative, interrogative, subjunctive) • 200 irregular verbs |
| Pronunciation | French words follow usually the pronunciation of their graphemes | English is not a phonetic language. As a result, it's extremely challenging to learn the pronunciation of a word simply from its spelling. |
| Contractions | Required | Optional & Informal |
| Gender | For all nouns & most pronouns | Only for personal pronouns |

FRENCH

ENGLISH

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Flow | Because of all the liaisons and glidings, silent letters, the French words flow into each other. | English is more clipped in comparison to French even if some words glide into each other like “what’s going on”. Yet there’s much less gliding than in spoken French. |
| Negation | Two words | One word |
| Rhythm | Stress at the end of each rhythmic group. | Stressed syllable in each word, plus stress on the important word. |
| Subjunctive | Common | Rare |
| Sounds/Vowels | 38 phonetic sounds 16 vowels | 44 phonetic sounds 21 vowels (American English) |
| Silent letters | Many | Some |
| Singular/plural | For all nouns & most pronouns | Only for personal pronouns |

04 - 12 Tips For Learning French Efficiently



1 - Immerse in the language & use your French in your daily life

- ➔ Switch the language of your smartphone to French
- ➔ Switch the language of one video game you know well to French
- ➔ Create one or two social media accounts where you post only in French
- ➔ Subscribe to YouTube channels about topics you enjoy with content in French
- ➔ Watch series & movies in their original versions with French subtitles
- ➔ Read children's books, young adult books, manga, comics out loud.
- ➔ Listen to audiobooks in French
- ➔ Text message someone who is learning French only in French
- ➔ Learn one new hobby by looking only at French resources



2 - Use headphones to listen to videos, audiobooks, podcasts, series or French music.

- ➔ they reduce/isolate background noise increasing your ability to distinguish unfamiliar foreign sounds.



3 - 15 minutes of daily study sessions are much more efficient than one single weekly long session

"A little, often, & regularly" is the way to learn and master a foreign language.



4 - Don't learn lists of vocabulary but instead discover & use words in context.*

➔ read French short texts at *a comfortable level*, where you only need to translate some keywords and expressions (1 out of 45 words). You can start with stories/books for children and little by little increase the level.

➔ read audiobooks or audio stories with their English translation.

➔ list 5 to 10 words or expressions you would like to know and use actively, and write a small story using them in context. If you are a beginner, use a sentence from a dictionary where the words are in context. Read this story every day for a week.

* Recommendations supported by *Alexander Arguelles*, an American linguist and polyglot, in his video "*Inefficient Language Learning Practices to Avoid or Change*."

He wrote "*Memorizing vocabulary lists with flashcards or programs such as Anki, and using dictionaries extensively and intensively, are two common carry-overs from school learning to self-teaching of foreign languages. While these may feel productive, they are relatively ineffective means of learning.*"



5 - Learn well your conjugations and grammar rules with an app

- ➔ Quizlet and Anki are two good apps that can help you
- ➔ Learn too the present & past participles of irregular verbs along with their meaning



6 - Learn about the French-speaking cultures behind the language to better

understand it because “*learning a foreign language is about learning a new culture, lifestyle, attitudes, ways of thinking, a new and different logic.*” (Janine Courtilon -La notion de progression appliquée à l’enseignement de la civilisation).

- ➔ Watch documentaries on YouTube (Arté, Le Monde for instance), French movies, or series.




7 - Learn to use ‘*tu*’ as much as ‘*vous*’ when you speak because French people use

both, just not for the same situations and relations.




8 - Don’t worry about your accent because...


- ➔ English accents sound lovely and even sexy in French...*et oui!*
- ➔ Everyone has an accent, including Parisians. It's just their accent has become the standard accent.
- ➔ Accents don’t say anything about linguistic skills.
- ➔ It’s easy to reduce greatly your accent if you learn French phonetics and key French pronunciation rules with a French native tutor.

 # 9 - Learn the basics of grammar terminology to understand French grammar more easily. In academic-style French courses, you will hear a whole bunch of jargon: articles, past participles, infinitives, pronouns, adverbs, tenses, moods!

➔ Learning the jargon will help you greatly in French, but also in your native language.

 # 10 - Practice the shadowing technique to accelerate new language and accent acquisition with audiobooks, or in watching a movie or series with subtitles. Shadowing* is a technique whereby you listen and simultaneously force yourself to speak along with the voice immediately as you hear it. It prevents fears and inhibitions from building up and gives you some sort of feedback against the sound you're hearing. You need to speak at the same resonance or frequency with the voice, you'll hear when you are out of tone.

* technique developed by dr. Alexander Arguelles

 # 11 - Start by learning the basics of French pronunciation.
➔ Unlike English, most of the time, the pronunciation of French corresponds to its writing. This means that once you know the different phonemes and the key pronunciation rules of French, you can deduce how to pronounce new words.



1 2 - Memorize the article along with new nouns to know their gender.

In French, all nouns are either masculine or feminine. Gender can change the meaning of the same word.

Examples: le livre (book) / la livre (pound), le mode (method) / la mode (fashion)

You cannot rely on a rule, but it can help greatly to know that the majority of words:

- ➔ ending in *-e* or *-ion* are feminine (except words ending in *-age*, *-ege*, *-é*, or *-isme*).
- ➔ Most words with other endings are **masculine**.
- ➔ Pay attention to the genders when you watch, read, and listen to French content
- ➔ in a dictionary, check the gender of nouns: 'm.' stands for **masculine** nouns, while 'f.' stands for **feminine** nouns.

05 – Resources

GRAMMAR TEXTBOOKS

- ➔ Grammaire Progressive du Français – CLE International Débutant – A1 or A1-1
frencholistic.com/french-tutoring
- ➔ Grammaire Progressive du Français – CLE International – Intermédiaire– A2-B1
frencholistic.com/french-tutoring
- ➔ Grammaire Progressive du Français - Avancé – B1-B2
frencholistic.com/french-tutoring
- ➔ Bescherelle Conjugaison – Complete Guide to Conjugating 12 000 French Verbs (English Edition)
frencholistic.com/french-tutoring

FREE FRENCH STORIES & AUDIOBOOKS

Vintage Comics

- ➔ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/litteratures/popeye?mode=desktop>

Audio stories

- ➔ <https://www.frencholistic.com/french-tutoring>



Disclosure: The textbooks I recommend are based on my own experience as I use them for years. I recommend them only because I believe they are genuinely helpful and useful. You are not obligated to click on any link or buy any products.

TOOLS & REFERENCES

Dictionaries

Wordreference ➔ <https://www.wordreference.com/>

Linguee ➔ <https://www.linguee.com/>

Conjugations

Conjugator (for learning) ➔ <https://la-conjugaison.nouvelobs.com/du/verbe/aimer.php>

Verb practice drills ➔ <https://www.linguasorb.com/french/verbs/quiz/>

Verb quizzes ➔ https://www.sporcle.com/games/ElanMorin/100_French_Verb

Tools to learn vocabulary and rules

Anki ➔ <https://apps.ankiweb.net/>

Quizlet ➔ <https://quizlet.com/>

Apps to take notes

Keep It for Mac (notebook) ➔ <https://reinventedsoftware.com/keepit/>

Notion ➔ <https://notion.so/>

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