

Look out for the following icons throughout the book:



'Shortcut' Phrase

Easy-to-remember alternative to the full phrase



Q&A Pair

Question-and-answer pair – we suggest a response to the question asked



Look For

Phrases you may see on signs, menus etc



Listen For

Phrases you may hear from officials, locals etc

LANGUAGE TIP

Language Tip

An insight into the foreign language

CULTURE TIP

Culture Tip

An insight into the local culture

How to read the phrases:

- Coloured words and phrases throughout the book are phonetic guides to help you pronounce the foreign language.
- Lists of phrases with tinted background are options you can choose to complete the phrase above them.

These abbreviations will help you choose the right words and phrases in this book:

a adjective
f feminine
inf informal
lit literal

m masculine
n noun
pl plural

pol polite
sg singular
v verb

Contents

PAGE

6



About French

Learn about French, build your own sentences and pronounce words correctly.

Introduction	6
Top Phrases	8
Pronunciation	10
Grammar	14

PAGE

27

Travel Phrases

Ready-made phrases for every situation – buy a ticket, book a hotel and much more.



Basics

27

Understanding	28
Numbers & Amounts	31
Time & Dates	33



Practical

37

Transport	38
Border Crossing	50
Directions	52
Accommodation	55
Shopping	67
Communications	76
Money & Banking	83
Business	86

Sightseeing	88
Senior & Disabled Travellers.....	93
Travel with Children.....	95



Social **97**

Meeting People.....	98
Interests	108
Feelings & Opinions.....	112
Going Out	117
Romance	124
Beliefs & Culture.....	130
Sports.....	132
Outdoors	137



Safe Travel **141**

Emergencies	142
Police	144
Health	146



Food **155**

Eating Out	156
Self-Catering.....	169
Vegetarian & Special Meals.....	174

PAGE

178



Menu Decoder

Dishes and ingredients explained – order with confidence and try new foods.

PAGE

196



Two-Way Dictionary

Quick reference vocabulary guide – 3500 words to help you communicate.

English–French Dictionary	196
French–English Dictionary	233

Index	268
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INTRO

French

français fron·say

Who Speaks French?

Official Language

CARIBBEAN

FRENCH GUIANA
GUADELOUPE
MARTINIQUE
HAITI

EUROPE

FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
LUXEMBOURG
BELGIUM
MONACOSOUTH
PACIFICFRENCH POLYNESIA
NEW CALEDONIA
WALLIS & FUTUNA
VANUATUCANADA
(QUEBEC)

AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
CONGO • GABON • CENTRAL
AFRICAN REPUBLIC • CHAD
NIGER • MALI • BURKINA FASO
CÔTE D'IVOIRE • TOGO • BENIN
CAMEROON • CONGO • RWANDA
BURUNDI • SENEGAL • GUINEA
COMOROS • MAYOTTE
MADAGASCAR • RÉUNION
SEYCHELLES • DJIBOUTI
GABON**Widely Understood** Algeria – Andorra – Egypt
Lebanon – Mauritania – Mauritius – Morocco – Tunisia**Why Bother**

You may be told of a cosy vineyard way off the tourist track, or discover that there's little merit in the stereotype about the French being rude.

Distinctive Sounds

Throaty **r**, silent **h**, nasal vowels (pronounced as if

you're trying to force the sound 'through the nose').

French in the World

French is the official language of a number of international organisations (including the UN and the International Olympic Committee). French films are

80 MILLION

speak French as their first language

50 MILLION

speak French as their second language

internationally renowned, and France has won the Nobel Prize in Literature more times than any other country.

French in France

Speaking a language other than their own is an emotional affair for the French, as attested by the online Musée des Horreurs (Museum of Horrors) of the Paris-based Défense de la Langue Française (DLF; Defence of the French Language; www.langue-francaise.org, in French).

False Friends

Warning: many French words look like English words but have a different

meaning altogether, eg *menu me·new* is a set lunch, not a menu (which is *carte kart* in French).

Language Family

Romance (developed from the Latin spoken by the Romans during their conquest of the 1st century BC). Close relatives include Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian.

Must-Know Grammar

French has a formal and informal word for 'you' (*vous voo* and *tu tew* respectively); it distinguishes between masculine and feminine forms of words, eg *beau/belle bo/bel m/f* (beautiful).

Donations to English

Numerous – thanks to the Norman invasion of England in the 11th century, some estimate that three-fifths of everyday English vocabulary arrived via French. You may recognise *café, déjà vu, bon vivant, cliché...*

5 Phrases to Learn Before You Go

- 1** **What are the opening hours?**
Quelles sont les heures d'ouverture?
kel son lay zer doo·vair·tewr

French business hours are governed by a maze of regulations, so it's a good idea to check before you make plans.

- 2** **I'd like the set menu, please.**
Je voudrais le menu, s'il vous plait.
zher voo·dray ler mer·new seel voo play

The best-value dining in France is the two- or three-course meal at a fixed price. Most restaurants have one on the chalkboard.

- 3** **Which wine would you recommend?**
Quel vin vous conseillez?
kel vun voo kon·say·yay

Who better to ask for advice on wine than the French?

- 4** **Can I address you with 'tu'?**
Est-ce que je peux vous tutoyer?
es ker zher per voo tew·twa·yay

Before you start addressing someone with the informal 'you' form, it's polite to ask permission first.

- 5** **Do you have plans for tonight/tomorrow?**
Vous avez prévu quelque chose ce soir/demain?
voo za·vay pray·vew kel·ker shoz ser swar/der·mun

To arrange to meet up without sounding pushy, ask friends if they're available rather than inviting them directly.

Understanding

KEY PHRASES

Do you speak English?

Parlez-vous anglais?

par·lay·voo ong·glay

I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas.

zher ner kom·pron pa

What does ... mean?

Que veut dire ...?

ker ver deer ...

Q Do you speak English?

Parlez-vous anglais?
par·lay·voo ong·glay

A I speak a little.

Je parle un peu.
zher parl um per

Q Do you understand?

Comprenez-vous?
kom·prer·nay·voo

A I understand.

Je comprends.
zher kom·pron

A I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas.
zher ner kom·pron pa

I need an interpreter who speaks English.

J'ai besoin d'un interprète de langue anglaise.
zhay ber·zwun dun nun·tair·pret der long ong·glay·zer

I'd like to practise French.

Je voudrais parler en français.
zher voo·dray par·lay on fron·say

What does ... mean?

Que veut dire ...?
ker ver deer ...

How do you pronounce this?

Comment le prononcez-vous?
ko·mon ler pro·non·say voo