

A French Exercise for English Language and Literature

Help your classmates celebrate National French Week by completing this exercise. Here are a few French words that are now in current usage in English, although some of the meanings have changed. See what you already know and check your answers. Have fun!

Did you know? After William the Conqueror (from Normandy, on the English Channel) defeated King Harold on October 14, 1066, French became the language of England for almost 200 years. William was crowned King of England on December 25, 1066, at Westminster Abbey. During his reign, he built the first Tower of London and had the “Doomsday Book” prepared in 1085. This book is an inventory of men and their worth so that the king would know what resources were available to him.

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|---------------|-------|-------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. ballet | _____ | 8. faux pas | _____ | 15. naïve | _____ |
| 2. bon voyage | _____ | 9. fiancé | _____ | 16. premier | _____ |
| 3. château | _____ | 10. gourmet | _____ | 17. R.S.V.P. | _____ |
| 4. cuisine | _____ | 11. gourmand | _____ | 18. résumé | _____ |
| 5. cul-de-sac | _____ | 12. laissez-faire | _____ | 19. souvenir | _____ |
| 6. déjà vu | _____ | 13. mardi gras | _____ | 20. valet | _____ |
| 7. encore | _____ | 14. carnaval | _____ | | |

Definitions:

- A dance presentation, the music which accompanies the dance, or the company itself.
- A fortified dwelling (Middle Ages) or a castle; a noble dwelling with gardens.
- A group of parades and parties which celebrate Mardi Gras; literally, “Removal of meat.”
- A person or agency used to park cars. In French, a domestic servant. Valet also refers to the Jack in a deck of cards.
- A person who appreciates good food and wine.
- A person who is engaged to be married.
- A person who likes to eat good food, perhaps too much!
- Act or attitude of not interfering in an action or project.
- Again, as in “Play it again, Sam!” or after a musical presentation, “More! Do it again.”
- An expression meaning “Have a good trip!”
- An object which recalls a certain memory, or which one purchases to remember a thing or a place, e.g., from a vacation. From the French “to remember.”
- Literally, “fat Tuesday,” meaning that it is the last day one can eat meat before observing Lent, which begins on a Wednesday; also indicates a party to celebrate.
- Literally, a false step; an error or mistake.
- Literally, a shortened version of a text or speech, a summary. In English, it now means a summary of one’s qualifications for a job or position.
- Impression of having been through the same experience at another time.
- Room in a house or dwelling where food is prepared (kitchen) or the food itself.
- Someone who shows unaffected simplicity either by inexperience or by lack of sophistication; an idea or theory which is unproved, hence unbelievable.
- Street or alley without an exit.
- Usually at the end of an invitation asking one to answer or respond: “*Répondez, s’il vous plaît.*” Literally, “Please answer.”



- t. Usually refers to the first presentation of something: a film, play, musical composition; in French, “*premier/première*” means “first.”

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Answer Key

1 a
2 j
3 b
4 p
5 r
6 o
7 i
8 m
9 f
10 e

11 g
12 h
13 l
14 c
15 q
16 t
17 s
18 n
19 k
20 d