

The World Speaks French

Top Ten Reasons to Study French

With French, you can. . .

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**Communicate with French
speakers around the world**

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- French is spoken by over 200 million people on 5 continents as a first or second language.
- French is the only language with English taught as a foreign language in every country.
- French has the status of official language in 32 countries and governments world-wide.

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- About 2 million people in the US speak French or French Creole in the home.
- 9.6 million people speak French in Canada, where French is one of two official languages.
- French is among the top five languages in terms of number of web pages used on the Internet.

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- Six million people in America speak French fluently as a second or foreign language. (Some estimate this number to be as high as 11 million people.)
- New York, California, Texas, and Florida have joined Louisiana, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire as the main centers of French in the US.

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Think French is only spoken in France?
How cliché!

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**Boost your academic
skills**

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- The richest source of vocabulary in English actually derives, not directly from Latin, but from French.
- French has been valued for its words with precise definitions. It was this reason that the founding member countries of the United Nations found it useful to work both in English and in French.

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- Since at least one out of three words in English has been borrowed from French, students studying French will improve their scores on comprehension of reading texts and vocabulary on standardized tests, such as SAT, ACT, GRE, and LSAT.

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The standardized test scores of
students who study French are

Magnifique

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- Knowing French enriches language usage in English in many domains, e.g., legal, administrative, political, architectural, artistic, culinary, aeronautical, and engineering terms.

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- Knowledge of French, with its imbedded Cartesian logic, can improve creative and critical thinking and problem solving in English speakers. It also stimulates brain function and memory.

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**Become proficient more
quickly than with most world
languages**

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- French is among the languages that require the least amount of instructional hours in order for an English speaker to reach a high level of speaking proficiency, according to the Defense Language Institute.

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- It requires approximately 720 hours (5 contact hours a day) for a mature learner to reach an advanced level of speaking proficiency in French; whereas, after 1,000 hours a student of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean may only reach a low level of speaking proficiency.

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- Having studied French, the learner can more easily develop proficiency in other languages.
- French is a natural choice for speakers of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese because of their common roots in the Latin language.

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**Increase options for
undergraduate and graduate
studies**

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- Many students of French opt to complement or complete their studies in a variety of disciplines in a French-speaking country.

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**Connect your future to
cutting-edge fields in
science and technology**

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- French-speaking countries have been at the forefront in field such as, HIV virus research, medical genetics (the Human Genome Project), and reconstructive surgery.

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- French-speaking countries are on the cutting edge of scientific discoveries and technological innovations. These include:
 - microchips
 - video gaming
 - commercial satellites

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- nanotechnology
- nuclear energy
- aerospace technology
- voice compression
- high-speed rail services
- fiber optics

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Think French is passé?
Au contraire!

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- Researchers, particularly in science, technology, medicine, and business, have an edge on their competitors when they can read studies in the original language, i.e., French, without having to wait for a translation. Not all research is translated into English.

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- Most graduate schools require knowledge of at least one foreign language, and French is a common choice for many fields of study.

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- The *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* networks 630 French-language universities and more than 350 French faculties worldwide.

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Invest in your career

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- French speakers are in demand in banking and finance, international market analysis, diplomacy, hotel management, international trade, journalism and media, aviation, national security, education, translation and interpretation, health care, customer service, tourism, and law enforcement.

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- Knowing French can help one gain a valuable understanding of cultural and business practices in other places.
- Knowing French can be a plus in getting a job or advancing in one's field.

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- French can provide opportunities for networking globally.
- Well-known French-owned companies in the US include Michelin, L'Oréal, BIC, Atari, Louis Dreyfus Property Group, and Air Liquide.

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- French is an official language of our largest bilateral trading partner, Canada. Quebec alone is the 6th largest trading partner of the US.

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- The US is the leading investor in France. Over 3,700 American companies operate in France.
- France is the second largest investor in the US.

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- Among foreign countries doing business in the US, France employs the 3rd largest number of Americans.
- France is the world's 8th largest economy and Europe's 2nd largest market.

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**Enjoy special leisure-time
activities**

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- In the US, half of the foreign films watched and 30% of the foreign books published are in French.

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- French and Quebec films have experienced international recognition and are shown in the US. French film production (500 films a year) ranks number 2 in the world.

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- French is always an official language used to announce events and winners at the Olympic Games.

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- Sports enthusiasts can follow their favorite events and athletes in a number of sports popular in the French-speaking world.

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For example:

- cycling in the Tour de France and Paris-Brest-Paris
- tennis in the French Open
- horseracing at Longchamps
- motorcycle racing
- Formula 1 automobile racing

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- 24 Heures du Mans
- Monaco's Grand Prix
- off-road racing in the Rallye Le Dakar
- baseball and hockey matches against Canadian teams

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**Benefit more from travel
experiences**

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- French is an influential language spoken and understood in this hemisphere. Over 33 million people in the Americas know French. Some destinations include Quebec, New Brunswick, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, St. Martin, French Guyana, Maine, and Louisiana.

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- Every continent offers French-speaking destinations, which are enjoyed more when the traveler can interact with the local residents in their language.

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- Most major American cities, including New York, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston, have an active French community, which organizes numerous Francophone and Francophile programs and events.

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- The largest French cultural network, the Federation of the Alliances Françaises, has 130 active chapters in the US and Puerto Rico. (There are over 1,135 chapters found in 138 countries around the world.)

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- France is the most visited country in the world, with 75 million tourists each year.

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**Enrich your appreciation of
influential cultural
contributions of the French-
speaking world**

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- The impact on literature, philosophy, and the arts (music, painting, sculpture, film, photography, theatre, dance, cuisine, fashion, and architecture) is particularly noteworthy. A small sample includes:

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- Literature: Albert Camus (France), Antonine Maillet (New Brunswick), Aimé Césaire (Martinique), Jean-Marie Le Clézio (France)
- Comics: Tintin (Hergé, Belgium), Astérix (René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, France)

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- Philosophy: Jean-Paul Sartre (France), Simone de Beauvoir (France), Ferdinand de Saussure (Switzerland); Michel Foucault (France), Jacques Derrida (Algeria/France)

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- Painting: René Magritte (Belgium), Pierre Auguste Renoir (France)
- Sculpture: Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel (France), Yves Trudeau (Quebec)

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- Film: François Truffaut (*La Nuit américaine* (*Day for Night*) France), Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (*La Promesse*, Belgium) ; Denys Arcand (*Les Invasions barbares*, Quebec) ; Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Amélie*, France)

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- Theatre: *Le Médecin malgré lui* (*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, Molière, France); *Comme Deux Frères*, Maryse Condé, Guadeloupe)
- Musical Theatre: *Les Misérables*, (Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, France), *Notre Dame de Paris* (Richard Cocciante and Luc Plamondon, Quebec)

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- Vocal Music: Jean-Jacques Goldman (France), Natalie Dessay (France), BeauSoleil (USA), Céline Dion (Quebec), Isabelle Boulay (Quebec) ; Les Cowboys Fringants (Quebec)

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- Dance: Ballet Folklorique d'Haïti, Le Ballet Jazz de Montréal, Béjart Ballet Lausanne (Maurice Béjart (France/Switzerland))
- Cuisine: Normand Laprise (Québec), Paul Bocuse (France)

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- Photography: Robert Doisneau (France), Léonard Misonne (Belgium)
- Fashion: Jean-Paul Gautier (France), Jean-Claude Poitras (Quebec)
- Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, Le Corbusier (Switzerland/France), Gustave Eiffel (France)

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- American history is replete with allusions to the presence of the French and French-Canadians on this continent and across our country. These references to people and events have been imbedded in the local, regional, and national culture of the US.

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- The French came first to the New World as explorers in the 16th century. Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, they undertook hunting and trading with Native Americans as *coureurs des bois*, (runners of the woods) and *voyageurs* (travelers and explorers).

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- The names of Champlain, Cartier, La Salle, Marquette, and Jolliet (a French-Canadian trader) are readily identified with the period of exploration of North America. The French established successful settlements in North America (New France) and the Caribbean, and added to the cultural life of the American colonies as they evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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- Known as le Grand Dérangement or Great Expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia by the British in 1755, the deportation of the French-Canadian population brought many refugees to New England and to the Louisiana Territory.

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- The American Revolution is also remembered for the contributions and military exploits of the French, such as Lafayette, Fleury, Rochambeau, and De Grasse.

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**Understand a variety of
world perspectives**

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- French is spoken in more than 56 countries in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

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- Knowing French enables one to understand cultural diversity which will not only enhance one's competitive advantage abroad and help maintain political and security interests, but also promote a better understanding of cultural diversity within the US.

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- With a knowledge of French one will be able to work toward global consensus and peace and participate in humanitarian efforts, since French is an official language or a working language in many international agencies and organizations, including:

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- United Nations
- NATO
- European Union
- Doctors without Borders
- International Olympic Committee
- Universal Postal Union
- Union of International Associations
- Amnesty International
- African Union

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- UNESCO
- Organization for Economic Cooperation Development
- International Red Cross
- Council of Europe
- Press Room at the European Commission
- World Health Organization

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- Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie
- European Court of Justice
- European Tribunal of First Instance
- International Labor Bureau

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Parlez-vous
the language of
200 million people?

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