

# French Accent

The Magazine of Learn French at Home

The Bilingual and Audio Online Magazine for Expatriates in France, French Students and Francophiles

**Meet Shelley,  
an Expat who  
has Created  
a Successful  
Life in France**

**Food Language  
The French Mayors  
At the Hairdresser's**

**Resolutions for 2007:  
Try to appreciate  
France better**

## From the Editors

*“Bonne Année” everyone!!*

**W**

e're excited about this new start of the year at *French Accent Magazine* as we strive to continue to provide you with interesting and resourceful articles on topics which will help you to understand and appreciate French life and culture as well as to give you opportunities to improve your French in the process. So far, the feed-back on the first issue of *French Accent* has been very positive and encouraging! The readers find it useful, interesting and resourceful. Since we've received comments for one issue only, we are looking forward to getting more comments and suggestions with this current January issue. Feed-back is extremely important to us as we want to continue to serve as best we can the expatriate community in France and anyone learning French wherever they may be. Again, if you would like additional information on any given topic, please send us an email. We will take all requests or comments seriously and will respond as soon as we can.

At the beginning of December, we made the decision to make *French Accent Magazine* free and readily accessible either on line or in pdf format in order to make it available to anyone around the world! You might ask, "How will you get any compensation for all the work involved in putting the magazine together?" We would like to offer advertising space in the magazine and websites to companies and individuals who cater to expatriates. Since *French Accent* is free, do not hesitate to send a copy to your friends and suggest that they sign up for it on the website.

The underlying theme for the January issue has been to encourage and motivate the expatriates in France to make more meaningful contact with the French locals and to provide some helpful suggestions on how to go about it. Some expatriates, disappointed because they were not able to make friends or develop an active social life in France, end up moving back to their former countries of residence. Depending on where you live or visit, the French can at first seem to be rather reserved. Actually, they are either a bit shy about approaching foreigners or simply not used to doing so. Usually, taking the first step and inviting your neighbours or other locals to your home is all it takes to break the ice and begin a more enjoyable and satisfying interaction with them. The French love to be invited and will nearly always invite you back!! Most of us want to feel integrated and have a social life, so just take the initiative and act! You won't regret it. That's our message and our hope for this issue!

Discover, enjoy and learn....

*Please send us your comments, criticisms and suggestions. The main purpose of this magazine is to help you adapt better to life in France... Help us to help you!*

*And as of the 2nd issue, we will be pleased to publish your letters. Don't hesitate to write to us!*

*editor@frenchaccentmagazine.com*

## French Accent Magazine

**E-magazine, printable. Educational purposes.**

**Editorial team:** Céline and Vincent Anthonioz, Annick and Roger Stevenson.

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**a full column, without colours and pictures.**



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**click on it to access the web page with the audio file**



*Cover photo: Le marché d'Uzès (Gard).*

*©Office de tourisme d'Uzès.*

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## Interactive French — Scenario of the Month: Food Language

Organising a meal and eating are real leisure activities, at times almost an art form in France. It is exciting and fun to invite someone for a meal as you will spend many hours around the table eating, drinking and talking. Preparing a meal is an exciting project and it should be a positive experience, especially with the wonderful possibilities of food shopping in France – there is nothing like the experience of an open-air market where everything looks so beautiful and tasty – and let's remember about using every opportunity to speak French!

When you have invited guests, don't forget to always offer an aperitif or "apéro" before the meal. Make the meal last by not moving too quickly from

one course to the next and have fun conversing about all kinds of topics. With the exception of personal financial situations, there are not many taboos in France, and you can discuss almost anything: religion, politics, immigration, love, etc... The guests might disagree with you on a position you've taken about a particular theme such as politics and they might express themselves strongly, but don't worry, it does not mean they feel insulted or don't appreciate you anymore – they're just simply expressing themselves. If they liked the meal and had some good laughs then you can count on them inviting you to their house for the next meal. Socialising around a delicious dinner is most important to them. As Oscar Wilde said: "After a good

dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relatives". During the dinner, don't be surprised if the French begin planning their next meal; it is normal for them to discuss food while they're eating.

### "Oui" for a second serving

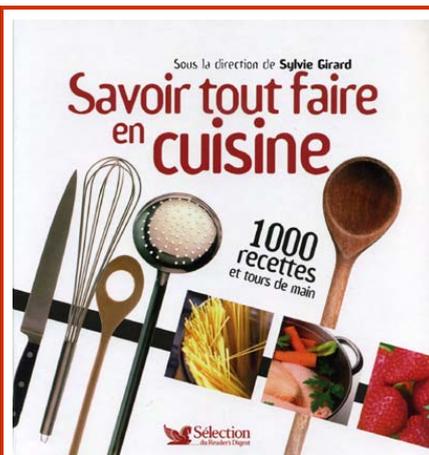
At the end of a meal, it is also customary to offer a "liqueur" which is usually justified as a mean of helping digestion! Depending on the region you live in, you will sample probably something strong made from regional fruits or perhaps a Brandy (Cognac). Most French people will spend time and put a lot of effort into making a successful meal – the best



During the dinner, don't be surprised if the French begin planning their next meal; it is normal for them to discuss food while they're eating.

thing you can do to thank the chef is to tell him or her how wonderful the meal is and even better is to finish your plate and say "oui" if the chef offers you a second serving! The French love to clean their plate with small bits of bread, which is quite acceptable in France as well as being another sign for the chef that you are truly enjoying it.

Céline and Vincent Anthonioz

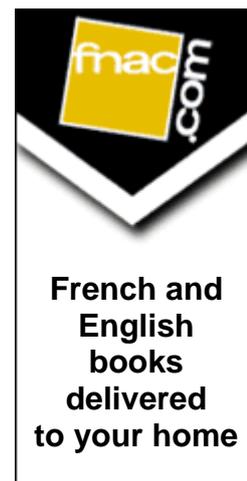


### A Very Useful Book

"Savoir tout faire en cuisine" (How to do everything in your kitchen) is a book which could help you pick up a few great culinary expressions as well as some helpful cooking tips. And you can try your first recipe in French! You can choose from more than 1,000 recipes, traditional or modern ("nouvelle cuisine"), gathered by the author Sylvie Girard, most of which are very well explained with pictures and drawings.

Or, you can simply find out which wine would be best for a particular recipe, the difference between the various types of cream (such as "crème fraîche, liquide, légère ou fouettée"), and much, much more.

Editions du Reader's Digest, 29,95 €



Learn French at Home...but not alone!  
www.learnfrenchat home.com

## A role play

### Organiser un repas

Un couple doit préparer la liste de courses pour un repas :

**Claire :** Il faut faire la liste des courses pour le repas de ce soir.

**Stéphane :** Ah oui, c'est vrai, nous invitons les voisins. Quel type de cuisine on va faire ?

**Claire :** Je pensais faire une cuisine typiquement française avec une salade Niçoise pour le hors d'œuvre, des truites meunière avec du riz et des haricots verts pour le plat principal et une tarte aux pommes pour le dessert. Moi, je peux cuisiner les légumes si tu veux bien t'occuper du poisson. Il faut faire attention de ne pas trop le faire cuire ! La dernière fois il était presque brûlé !

**Stéphane :** Oui, c'est très bien. Alors, faisons la liste. Au marché, il faut acheter un kilo de petites tomates grappes, un concombre, des haricots verts, un poivron vert, quelques feuilles de basilic, des petits oignons blancs et des olives. Et aussi un kilo de pommes pour la tarte. Est-ce qu'il nous reste des œufs ?

**Claire :** Non, il faut en prendre aussi. Il y a une dame qui vend des œufs fermiers au marché, on les prendra là-bas. Et il ne faut surtout pas oublier de passer chez le fromager du marché.

**Stéphane :** Ah oui, il nous faut un beau plateau de fromages. Je m'en occupe. Et au supermarché, qu'est ce qu'on achète ?

**Claire :** Il faut du riz et du thon en boîte et aussi de la farine, du beurre et du sucre. Et il faudra aussi aller chez le poissonnier acheter quatre belles truites.

**Stéphane :** Qu'est-ce qu'on fait pour l'apéro ?

**Claire :** On pourrait prendre quelques amuse-gueule, on verra.

**Stéphane :** Il ne faut pas oublier d'acheter du vin et du pain !

**Claire :** Les voisins ont dit qu'ils apporteraient du vin, mais on va quand même acheter deux bouteilles de Bourgogne chez le marchand.

**Stéphane :** Je crois que c'est bon comme ça.

**Claire :** C'est tout ?

**Stéphane :** Oui, allons-y.



### Organising a meal

A couple has to prepare the shopping list for a meal:

**Claire :** We have to do the shopping list for tonight's meal.

**Stéphane :** Ah yes, that's right, we've invited the neighbours. What type of food should we fix?

**Claire :** I was thinking of making a typical French meal with a salad "Niçoise" for starters, trout with a sauce "meunière" with rice and with green beans for the main course and an apple pie for dessert. I can cook the vegetables if you would take care of the fish. We have to be careful and not cook the fish too much! Last time, it was almost burnt.

**Stéphane :** Yes, that's very good. So, let's do the list. At the market, we have to buy a bunch of small tomatoes, a cucumber, some green beans, one green pepper, a few basil leaves, some white onions and some olives. And also a kilo of apples for the pie. Do we have any eggs left?

**Claire :** No, we must get some also. There is a woman who sells eggs from the farm at the market, we'll get some over there. And we must not forget to get some cheese at the market.

**Stéphane :** Oh yes! We need a beautiful cheese plate. I'll take care of it. And at the supermarket, what should we buy?

**Claire :** We must get some rice and a few tins of canned tuna and also some flour, butter, and some sugar. It's also necessary to go to the fish market to buy some nice trout.

**Stéphane :** What should we do for the "apéritif"?

**Claire :** We could get some snacks.

**Stéphane :** We must not forget to buy some wine and bread !

**Claire :** The neighbours said they will bring some wine, but we're going to buy two bottles of red Burgundy at the wine shop anyway.

**Stéphane :** I think that should do it.

**Claire :** That's all?

**Stéphane :** Yes, let's go.



## A Few Indispensable Words

The French language is richly endowed with culinary expressions, so here is some vocabulary which could be useful for your next meal with your French neighbours.

**La cuisine :** cooking (ex : *la cuisine italienne*)

**La cuisine** (2<sup>nd</sup> meaning) : the kitchen

**Cuisiner** = to cook

**Faire cuire** = to cook one specific item on the stove

**Cuire à point** = medium cooked

**Saignant** = rare (bloody)

**Brûlé** = burnt

**Faire les courses** = to go food shopping

**Faire les magasins** = to shop

**Faire les achats** = to do

some shopping

**Le marché** = the open-air market

**Le supermarché** = the super-market

**Le marchand** = the shop or shopkeeper

**Le petit-déjeuner** = breakfast

**Le déjeuner** = lunch

**Le dîner** = dinner

**Le repas** = meal

**Les plats** = various courses of a meal

**Une assiette de fromages** = cheese plate

**Les hors-d'œuvre** = starters

**Le plat principal** = the main dish

**Le dessert** = dessert

**L'apéritif ou l'apéro** = drink before meal

**L'alimentation** = food

**La nourriture** = food

**La bouffe** = slang word for food

**Bouffer** = slang verb 'to eat'

**Amuse-gueule** = snacks for the aperitif (see: *Le coin des branchés*)



## Sms Talk

Decode the following SMS messages and write them in standard French:

- Slt Lulu ca va ? mer6 pr tn mess pr mn aniv
- Pa 2 koi jve te voir d ke possib pr prendr un ver
- Pe etre samdi soir on pouré alé o 6né
- Ok g nial mé j doi etre 2 retour aven 00h kar je ve d je né ché gran-mèr pr dimanch
- Ok samdi 20h a la méson
- Ok biz

Check your results [HERE](#) or go to page 30....



## The "dictée" of the month

Click on the links below to listen to the "dictée". Try and write the "dictée" without making any mistakes. You can compare it to the original text on page 30.



## Le coin des branchés

The French language has some extremely colourful expressions that give added flavour to any conversation. However, they often make for some embarrassing misunderstandings. Getting a leg up on the more common idioms will enable you to understand better what your French friends are saying and at the same time make your own French much more like that of the native speakers. The human body is the basis for a good number of interesting expressions. Next month, the column will be entirely devoted to the hand and the nose...



### La gueule

literally the mouth or jaw of an animal, but it is often used for humans in a somewhat derogatory manner.

*Il a une sale gueule* = I don't like his looks.

*(Ferme) ta gueule!* = shut your trap!

*Se saouler la gueule* = to get really pissed (prendre une cuite).

*Avoir la gueule de bois* = to have a hangover.

*Casser la gueule à quelqu'un* = to smash someone's face.

*Faire la gueule* = to be in a bad mood.

### La jambe

*Avoir les jambes en coton* = one's legs feel like jelly.

*Ça me fait une belle jambe* = I don't give a damn about that.

### L'œil

*Mon œil!* = my eye! I don't believe you!

*Jeter un coup d'œil* = To glance at.

*Je n'a pas fermé l'œil de la nuit* = I didn't sleep at all.

*Avoir un œil au beurre noir* = to have a black eye.

*Il me fait de l'œil* = he is interested in me; and gave me one of those looks.

### Le pied

*Un pied-à-terre* = a temporary or secondary housing.

*Garder les pieds sur terre* = to keep your feet on the ground, to remain realistic.

*Casser les pieds de quelqu'un* = to bother, irritate someone.

*Se casser les pieds* = to go to a lot of trouble.

*Un casse-pieds* = someone who gets on your nerves (Il me casse les pieds, celui-là!).

*Faire du pied (genou) à quelqu'un* = to play footsy with someone.

*Prendre son pied* = to get a kick out of something.

*C'est le pied!* = That's really great, wonderful.

*Tu m'as enlevé une sacrée épine du pied!* = You got me out of a sticky/difficult situation!

### Le poil

literally, body hair on a human or an animal.

*Etre de bon (mauvais) poil* = to be in a good (bad) mood.

*À poil* = stark naked.

*Au poil* = perfect, great (Ca me va au poil).

Be careful not to confuse these two:

*Il n'a pas un poil de bon sens* = He hasn't one iota of good sense.

*Avoir un poil dans la main* = to be lazy, idle.

### La tête

*Ça (ne) va pas la tête?* = Are you crazy? (*Ça va pas, non?*)

*Tu es tombé sur la tête?* = Are you nuts, crazy?

*Avoir la tête dans les nuages* = to be distracted.

*Avoir la grosse tête* = to be full of oneself.



*Avoir la tête dans les nuages.*

Illustrations extraites du livre "Ma maîtresse a dit qu'il fallait bien posséder la langue française", par Alain LeSauc, publié aux Editions Rivages.

## Interview of the Month: Shelley Rudock

**S**helley Rudock, one of Céline's students at "Learn French at Home", is a striking example of someone who has created a successful life in France. Shelley's upbeat attitude, hard work and determination are the key factors of her positive integration. As a result, she has been able to establish excellent working relationships with large French companies and continuously creates opportunities for herself to meet and speak with the locals. Read on...

**Céline Anthonioz:** Where are you originally from and where did you live before moving to France?

**Shelley Rudock:** I was born in the UK in a village called Old Windsor just a few miles from the famous Royal Windsor Castle and town of Windsor. Prior to moving to France in October 2003, I lived in a pretty South Oxfordshire village called North Moreton.

**C.A:** What motivated you to move to France?

**S.R.:** Mainly it was to give ourselves a new challenge. For me personally, having worked in IT Sales selling to

ber dropping my tube ticket as I was about to go through the turnstiles, and it felt like a million people were pushing me from behind! It was the busy treadmill that I suppose you get in any large city. I adore the countryside and at those times felt I just wanted to sit in the middle of a field with no one around! Certain events led us firstly to seek a holiday home in the South of France, in particular the Lot et Garonne region, as 11 years previously we had spent the first of our many holidays in France in Tournon D'Agenais. Certain stresses and unfortunate personal events in the UK led us to the idea of moving to live and work in France permanently. We asked ourselves, could we do it? With just the idea and book in hand – Jinny Ditzler 'Your Best Year Yet', we both set off 2 months later to spend a week at a French Retreat in the Cévennes National Park\*. The isolation was just perfect and enabled us to discover for real the motivations for moving to France and what we hoped to achieve from it. So at the end of that week we had planned everything from month to month concerning how we were going to move and the date was set! And in stone it stayed! So that year, 6 months later, car packed to



*"I enjoy the traditional French markets which are so rich with colour, sitting outside a café watching the world go by, making the most of the lovely long summer evenings, the outdoor theatre, and fantastic food ..."*

the roof, stuffed with our 2 cats, and towing a trailer, we set-off on our 11-hour journey down to our rented accommodation. We chose to rent out our home in the UK and to rent a familiar holiday home for 6 months in our chosen area. We chose to do this over the winter months, as it is so easy to fall in love with any of the beautiful villages/areas in France, but what is important is that you find one that you will love whatever the weather brings, rain or shine, so when the spring arrives it's an added bonus. It also gave us the opportunity to really test the water as to whether we wanted

to live here permanently before we took the big plunge and sold up in the UK.

**C.A.:** Why did you choose Monflanquin? How do you like living in the area?

**S.R.:** Monflanquin is a beautiful Bastide village which during the summer has numerous activities going on to please all age groups. My partner and I live between Monflanquin and the Bastide town of Ville-neuve-sur-Lot, which is a bustling place, full of all the normal essentials, plus heaps of character, chic shops, theatre, cinema, music festivals and

*"We wanted to test the water as to whether we wanted to live here permanently before we took the big plunge and sold up in the UK".*

organisations in London for a number of years, I knew back in 2002 that a change needed to happen since I had a general feeling of discontentment in my job and living in the UK – a mixture of the politics, crime rates, over population, traffic and a sense of over crowdedness. I remem-

## Interview of the Month (con'td)

markets. It is one of the main reasons we chose to live in the location. I have always been used to going to cultural activities in the UK and felt this was important to me to have these within easy reach and a suitable driving distance. You can get too overwhelmed by the mass expanse of beautiful countryside here which can sometimes cloud your views when searching for your property but obviously the choice of location depends on each individual's personal likes and dislikes.

Since living in this area, I have got used to the seasons and what comes and goes as we progress through the months.

My favourite time has got to be from April until June time; it is just wonderful how many wild flowers still exist here. This region is famous for its agriculture, and it's difficult not to mistake the hum of a distant tractor, they work so hard here. I always hope they would plant just sunflowers and that they could stay with us all summer! I'm still getting used to some of the other traditional French ways such as *la chasse*. In this region it is very active and the hunting season is from Mid September until March. I still don't feel very comfortable seeing farmers walking around with their guns! They are always very pleasant when I ask them not to shoot my cats! But still, I can't get used to the noise that comes from hunting! My love for all animals I suppose!

**C.A.: What obstacles did you encounter when you moved to France?**

**S.R.:** When registering my business with the Chamber of Commerce, they made a mistake on the date that my business started, which created 6 months of problems with URSSAF and the other social organisations who assumed I owed social payments for the previous year. It was, to say the least, a little scary as we had heard how URSSAF charge you for late payment and deliver the bailiffs out like sweets! Thankfully, after plenty of letter writing (in French) and help from friends, the problem was rectified, but it was worrying at the time as everything still felt very new. The positive thing from this, however, was that it gave me invaluable experience in writ-

ing official letters in French, which has since helped me in other things such as my emails for work.

**C.A.: What other difficulties/challenges have you encountered in France?**

**S.R.:** We made a concerted effort always to use local trade people for any work that we have had done. This brought its own challenge of managing to deal with everything in French. However, I feel proud that, in most cases, the trade people we have used have been very patient and understanding, and we have always got there in the end. We feel that being incomers, we want to contribute to the local community by using local trade people to carry out any work we need.

## Oh la la la la ! ! ! ... Unbelievable but True Stories of France...

**MUMMIES** — In France, a postman, the son of an archeologist who had worked on the Ramses II mummy, has been indicted by French officials because he tried to sell a few strands of hair from the mummy on an internet auction site. While in New York, another mummy brought back from Egypt (stolen at that time, to be clear) in the US by a publisher from Ohio, was sold for \$1.1 million by Christie's. A double standard?

**DEMONSTRATIONS** — Following on the heels of the street demonstrations by firemen, teachers and school administrators, in December it was judges and lawyers who took to the streets of Paris to complain about their lack of financial means and working conditions. It's enough to make one weep.

**MOMIES** — En France, un facteur, fils d'un archéologue qui avait travaillé sur la momie de Ramsès II, est poursuivi en justice pour avoir mis en vente sur Internet quelques mèches de cheveux de la momie. Pendant ce temps à New York une autre momie ramenée d'Egypte (disons plutôt, pour être précis, volée à l'époque) aux Etats-Unis par un éditeur de l'Ohio, était vendue 1,1 million de \$ chez Christie's. Deux poids, deux mesures ?

**MANIFS** — Dans la foulée des manifestations par les pompiers, enseignants et directeurs d'école, c'était au tour des juges et avocats de marcher dans les rues de Paris en décembre pour se plaindre de leur manque de moyens financiers et de leurs conditions de travail. Ils nous feraient pleurer...

**OYSTERS** — After they were prevented for several months by official government decree from selling their oysters because of totally unfounded fears of bacterial contamination, oyster producers from the Arcachon Basin near Bordeaux were invited to serve their oysters to all the elected representatives at the National Assembly in Paris. Only in France...

**PLAYING TRUANT** — Things are getting more difficult for school children who want to skip class and play truant: several schools in France have begun using a new high-tech system for keeping track of students' attendance. If a student is absent, the teacher scans a bar code for the student with a scanner, which then automatically sends a phone message to the student's parents.

**HUITRES** — Après qu'un décret gouvernemental ait empêché pendant des mois les éleveurs d'huîtres du bassin d'Arcachon près de Bordeaux de vendre leur production, par crainte totalement infondée de contamination bactérienne, les éleveurs ont été invités à servir leurs huîtres à tous les députés de l'Assemblée nationale à Paris. Seulement en France...

**ECOLE BUISSONNIERE** — Les choses se compliquent pour les écoliers qui veulent discrètement prendre un jour de congé: plusieurs écoles en France ont instauré un nouveau système de contrôle. Si l'élève est absent, le prof enregistre son nom à l'aide d'un appareil informatique avec un code barres qui déclenche automatiquement un appel sur le téléphone portable d'un des parents.

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## Interview of the Month(con'td)

The biggest challenge with the language really has been dealing with people on the phone, but as time has gone on and after speaking to many French customers myself with my work, it has become easier and I no longer worry about contacting someone by phone. I just always try to make sure I have prepared myself well before I make the call.

I think like moving anywhere, whether it is within your own country or to another, getting to know people and making friends can be a slow process especially if you do not have children (parents will often meet other parents at school) or a particular hobby which enables you to meet others more easily. A slight challenge in France to making friends is the cultural differences which are hard to quantify, but often when meeting the French it is difficult to know whether you are being too familiar or forward or doing things in the way that the French would do. Therefore, making friends can be a little harder, as the language is one challenge and trying to adapt to the way things are done here is the second. I have come to realise that in some cases making friends may take longer here, but it will be worth it in the end.

**C.A.:** And what are the fun and positive aspects of living in France? What do you do with your spare time in Monflanquin?

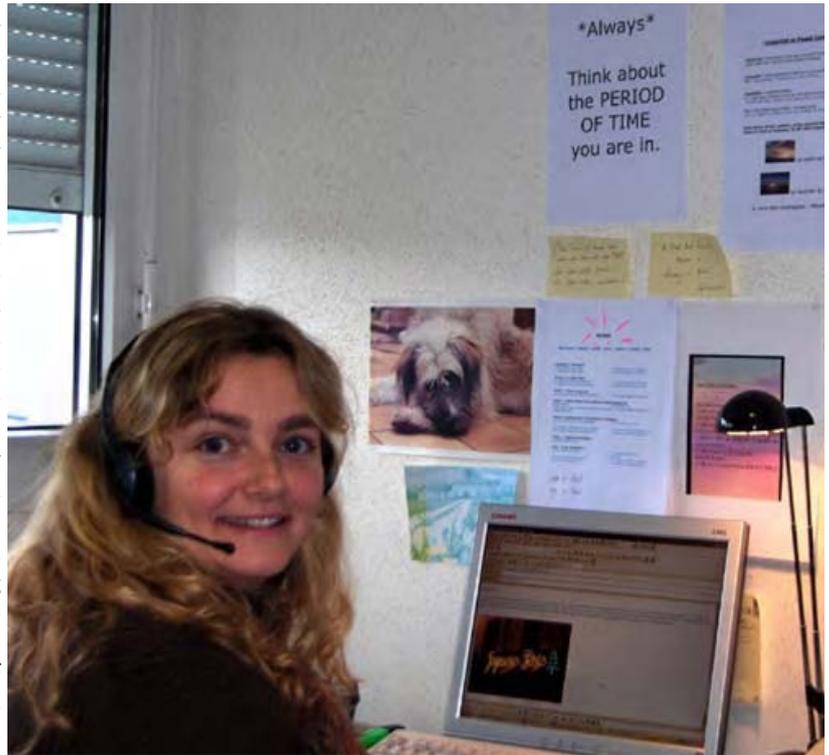
**S.R.:** Well, there are lots of things. The weather is a huge bonus in France, which always lifts my spirits. The summers seem to last longer

here with another little spring in October when the flowers push out their very last bit of energy before they sleep over the winter! This means that combined with my passion for flowers and gardening you will find me almost permanently in the garden during the summer months. I enjoy the traditional French markets which are so rich with colour, sitting outside a café watching the world go by, making the most of the lovely long summer evenings, the outdoor theatre, and fantastic food (one of my passions).

I find a general air of calmness (which partly comes from not living in an overcrowded city) and tranquillity but obviously, it would be very different, I imagine, if I

*"Often when meeting the French it is difficult to know whether you are being too familiar or forward or doing things in the way that the French would do".*

lived in one of France's large cities that would be akin to any English city. I am still awed by the vastness of France compared to the UK and find this a huge benefit that I have my own small bit of tranquillity here. I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to be able to move to France and experience its culture etc.



*"The biggest challenge with the language has been dealing with people on the phone".*

**C.A.:** Do you feel that you've integrated well in the French society?

**S.R.:** Last year I joined a local *Randonnée* club, which I suppose is the equivalent of the Ramblers in the UK. This was great for me as I love walking and learning about new places and the history of places. The big bonus, of course, was being able to practise my French with some of my fellow walkers. It's surprising as you find all age groups on the walks, and it's something the whole family seemed to do, so for those that have a passion for walking, it is a great way to meet people and improve your French and learn about the surrounding area you live in.

This year, however, I thought I would set myself a new challenge and try and retrieve some of my artistic talent long left behind at school and join a local painting class. To my delight, I discovered a small group of 8 people and a patient

teacher who's very considerate. I felt I needed to expand my knowledge and stretch my comfort zone. I have been several times now and am so pleased I'm doing it. I was nervous to begin with, but everyone made me so very welcome. We laugh a lot and joke about the differences in our languages. I always come away buzzing having learnt new phrases and new words which I will always remember.

We watch French TV at home and have resisted getting English Sky TV, since I know that if I had English TV we would, no doubt, always lean towards watching the English channels. It is an important part of learning French for us, as we do not mix enough with the French and we need to hear it every day. I feel I have learnt so much just watching French TV. I prefer to watch things that are not dubbed, just French serials, chat shows and of course the News which we

## Interview of the Month(con'td)

probably watch twice a day. We watched a recent six-part serial on France 2 called "David Nolande". Most of the time we use the subtitles, as this helps our understanding. We have also got hooked on "Nouvelle Star" and "Star Academy", as the language used is generally very easy to follow, and we have been told they are good for learning up-to-date phrases, etc. We feel now we are quite up-to-date with the French music scene here, probably more so now than for the English pop groups!

I also listen to French radio everyday in the car and at home. Since living here I've discovered that I like lots of French music for example people like; Anais, Zazie, Olivier Ruiz (Great Album!), Louise Attaque, to name a few!

**C.A:** Do you speak French on a daily basis? If yes, mostly in what situations?

**S.R.:** Generally, I speak a little everyday as the bare minimum with either the neighbours or when shopping. I always try and speak to people wherever I go and when I least expect it people start talking to me which is always nice. I love the days when I'm calling French companies as it gives me such a buzz to try out some new words or phrases.

**C.A.:** What is your profession?

**S.R.:** I'm self employed working as an Independent Sales Consultant in IT Networking. Generally, I work on long term contracts for organisations looking to expand their business into

Europe. Presently I'm working for companies that involve me contacting French, Dutch and UK organisations. My role is to target selected companies, mainly the top 50 in each of the regions. I am tasked with profiling each company, gaining contacts and scheduling appointments for the local representatives. So, within the French region I am using both my written and verbal skills!

**C.A:** I understand you regularly telephone French companies in order to offer your services. Can you please share your experiences with regards to trying to set up appointments and speaking with them in French? How are you received by them, how do they respond to you?

**S.R.:** This has been a great opportunity for me, having

*"My advice: do your homework, plan if you can your first year there and predict what things might come up... And learn from other people's experiences that are recent and current to the region".*

previously worked for the company when I lived in the UK; they contracted with me to find opportunities for them in France. At first it was a little challenging getting to know the ways in which I should ask to speak to people, as in any language there can be several different ways of saying the same thing! It has been a pleasurable experience since the people have always been very friendly, patient

and understanding. I remember arranging one appointment with one of the French banks; it felt tricky at the time asking the client various questions, checking that he was the correct person and explaining to him what the company could offer, then asking him the ultimate question: was he interested in a meeting with us? He said yes in English to me! All that time he had listened to me patiently and could in fact speak English very well. I thanked him for giving me the opportunity to speak in French, when it would have been easier for him (and quicker) if he had spoken in English. It turned out to be a great opportunity for my client! I believe all the people I have spoken to have appreciated the fact that I have made the effort to speak French, and when I say to them, "Pardon for my poor French", they always say, "Please don't be, because I can understand you!" Generally, I always try things out even if I think I cannot quite remember the sentence perfectly, because once I have said it once I can always go back and improve it for next time!

**C.A.:** Have you acquired any new habits since you've been living in France?

**S.R.:** Oh my! Yes, lots of new habits: eating more lovely puddings, in particular *fondant au chocolat* and *crème brûlée*. I've found that I eat 'out' a lot more than I used to in the UK, especially at lunchtimes. I have always preferred to eat my main meal of the day during the lunchtime period, and living here has enabled me to do this! When we acquired the house we also acquired a lovely garden and veggie patch, which I've been maintaining, and am getting quite famous for growing enormous sized cauliflowerers!

**C.A:** Is there an aspect of French life you are having difficulty adapting to?

**S.R.:** I think the main thing I find challenging is improving my French. My spoken French has progressed greatly within the last year as well as my understanding. When speaking to new people, I still feel very conscious of making mistakes and perhaps giving people the wrong impression of myself. This doesn't ever stop me from speaking to people, but at times I think "Oh no, did I say that in the right way?!" or "Oh no, they are looking at me rather oddly now!"

Often I have found myself asking you, Céline, about some of the little things like icebreakers and certain phrases to help me in certain situations! The main thing is confidence, and being able to remind myself of all those high moments when at times you begin to feel a little frustrated. Learning a language isn't easy. We have to remind ourselves that people do look at you admirably and that most people won't learn another language.

I used to avoid bumping into our local farmer because I was embarrassed about making a fool of myself; he speaks with a strong local accent, very hard to understand at times. But now when I see him we stop and chat for a while, exchange news and weather reports! And often come away having learnt a new word or two!

**C.A.:** What suggestions or advice would you give to someone who is contemplating moving to France?

**S.R.:** Do your homework, plan if you can your first year there and predict what things might come up so as to prepare yourself. Learn from other people's experiences that are recent and current to that region or sub-

## Interview of the Month (con'td)

ject, as regulations and areas all work differently here in France. If you find out a bit

*"Take up learning French as soon as you can... However, a foreign language and a country's culture cannot be learnt overnight, so don't be too hard on yourself".*

of information from one region, don't assume it applies to a different region. Take up learning French as soon as you can. From my experience it is best from someone who is a native French speaker. I believe the importance of learning with a native French speaker is you not only learn the language but you also learn the 'ways' and 'etiquette' of the French and their language. When I first came here I felt very frustrated not being able to express myself in the normal way I did when I was in the UK. Being a very open person I found this very challenging. However, I know I am in it for the long term, so I'm taking one step at a time. A foreign language and a country's culture cannot be learnt overnight, so don't be too hard on yourself.

I think ultimately moving to another country is not moving to Utopia, and we should never fool ourselves that it is. You tend to swap one set of problems for another different set, since life is a rollercoaster wherever you live. If you accept that there can be huge benefits to living in France, but that some things

may be more difficult or frustrating, then you are more likely to settle in more comfortably.

**C.A: Anything you would like to add?**

**S.R.:** At the end of the day, since our first move to France, we have always taken each day as it comes. Many people ask us if we will stay here – the answer is always the same. We would love to. However, you never know what is round the corner and you have to appreciate what you have today in the present moment and take what comes. I find living where I do that the French people are very friendly and kind. Most children that you encounter are more polite and respectful than many of their English counterparts. Most of the time I feel very safe here, but am not naive enough to fool myself that crime doesn't happen here. There is an overall general feeling of greater safety than I have felt during the last 4 years I was in the UK.



*"Monflanquin is a beautiful Bastide village which during the summer has numerous activities going on to please all age groups." Monflanquin, in the department of "Lot et Garonne", is located 50 km from Agen. This village was established in 1252, upon the return of Alphonse de Poitiers from a crusade. It is an excellent example of a "bastide", a typical construction in this part of France (where it is estimated that a total of 350 to 400 existed at one time). These "bastides" are the "new cities" of the Middle Ages, which began to appear as feudalism started in medieval France. All of them have a grid layout and a central market square with a covered weighing and measuring area.*

Finally, I do hope in the future I will be one of those little old ladies that you see wearing a 'pinafore', sitting on the village park bench watching the world go by with her little dog! Hopefully, people might stop

and chat and say "Oh I didn't realise you were originally from England!"

\*www.thesuncentre.net



*"Villeneuve-sur-Lot is a bustling place, full of all the normal essentials, plus heaps of character, chic shops, theatre, cinema, music festivals and markets". Villeneuve-sur-Lot was founded in 1254 by the Count Alphonse de Poitiers, who was the brother of King Louis IX, called "Saint-Louis". This "bastide" (see below) was built on the site of the city of Gajac, which had been deserted during the Albigensian Crusade. With some 7,000 inhabitants, Villeneuve is an important agricultural centre with a very large trade in plums – the specialty of the whole region being the "pruneaux d'Agen" (Agen prunes) – and in the produce from the market gardens which surround it. It is also a very lively city, with a lot of charm.*





## Real Life — *Chez le coiffeur* : At the Hairdresser's

**W**hether you're living in France or passing through, going to the hairdresser is an enjoyable experience and a great opportunity to practice your French through making requests and small talk. Of course, you need some of the basic vocabulary to first make an appointment and to express your wishes at the hairdresser's. Read the following scenarios which will give you the overall language to facilitate that first or subsequent experience at the *'coiffeur'*.

### Role Plays

*Amy passe un coup de fil pour prendre rendez-vous chez "Coiffure Mode". C'est sa première fois chez un coiffeur en France et elle aimerait se faire couper les pointes et avoir des mèches.*

*Le téléphone sonne, le coiffeur répond :*

*Coiffure Mode, bonjour !*

**Amy** : Bonjour Monsieur, j'aimerais prendre rendez vous s'il vous plaît pour samedi matin.

**Le coiffeur** : Oui, je ne sais pas si nous avons encore de la place. C'est pour quoi ?

**Amy** : Je voudrais que l'on me coupe les pointes et j'aimerais des mèches.

**Le coiffeur** : Ah, alors il faut bien deux heures de temps – nous pourrons vous prendre samedi mais pas avant 11h 30. Est-ce que ça ira ?

**Amy** : Oui, si vous ne pouvez pas avant, alors d'accord pour 11h 30.

**Le coiffeur** : Quel est votre nom ?

**Amy** : Je m'appelle Amy Cuninghams.

**Le coiffeur** : Comment vous écrivez votre nom de famille ?

**Amy** : C-U-N-I-N-G-H-A-M.

**Le coiffeur** : Très bien ! Alors à samedi à 11h 30!

**Amy** : Merci et au revoir !



*Amy is placing a phone call to make an appointment at "Coiffure Mode". This will be her first experience with a hairdresser in France, and she would like to have her hair trimmed and some highlights added.*

*The telephone rings, the hairdresser answers:*

*Hello, Coiffure Mode!*

**Amy** : Hello Sir, I would like to make an appointment for Saturday morning please.

**The hairdresser** : Yes, I don't know if we still have a slot available. What is it for?

**Amy** : I would like to have my hair trimmed and some highlights.

**The hairdresser** : Ah, that takes a good 2 hours – we can take you on Saturday, but not before 11:30. Will that be alright?

**Amy** : Yes, if you cannot take me before, then it's alright for 11:30.

**The hairdresser** : What is your name?

**Amy** : My name is Amy Cuninghams.

**The hairdresser** : How do you spell your last name?

**Amy** : C-U-N-I-N-G-H-A-M.

**The hairdresser** : Very well then, see you on Saturday at 11:30!

**Amy** : Thank you and good bye!

*C'est samedi et Amy arrive à son rendez-vous :*

**Amy** : Bonjour, j'ai rendez-vous à 11h 30. Je suis Amy Cuningham.

**Le coiffeur** : Bonjour ! Je suis à vous dans 5 minutes.

**Le coiffeur** : Voilà Madame, suivez moi ! Asseyez-vous ici. Dites-moi – qu'est ce qu'on vous fait aujourd'hui ?

**Amy** : Pourriez-vous couper juste les pointes et faire des mèches aujourd'hui ?

**Le coiffeur** : Quelle couleur désirez-vous pour les mèches ?

**Amy** : J'aimerais un blond foncé, presque couleur miel.

**Le coiffeur** : Je vais vous montrer des échantillons. Aussi, si vous êtes d'accord, j'aimerais vous montrer une photo d'une coupe qui vous irait très bien. Je peux ?

**Amy** : Pourquoi pas !

**Le coiffeur** : Voici la coupe ! Je pensais vous suggérer un dégradé sur les côtés.

**Amy** : Ah oui, si vous pouvez me faire aussi belle qu'elle, alors je veux bien !!

**Le coiffeur** : Allons-y, je vais vous donner un look de grande actrice !!



**NOTE**: Ça vous va bien? = does it suit you well? 'aller bien' is used to express 'to suit well' for haircuts, clothing, hats, etc...

*It's Saturday. Amy arrives at her appointment :*

**Amy** : Hello, I have an appointment for 11:30. I'm Amy Cuningham.

**The hairdresser** : Hello! I'll be with you in 5 minutes.

**The hairdresser** : OK, Madam, follow me! Have a seat here. Tell me – what are we going to do on you today?

**Amy** : Could you just trim my hair a bit and do some highlights today?

**The hairdresser** : Which colour would you like for the highlights?

**Amy** : I would like a dark blond, almost like a honey colour.

**The hairdresser** : I'm going to show you some samples. Also, if it's OK with you, I would like to show you a photo of a cut that you would suit you very well. May I?

**Amy** : Why not!

**The hairdresser** : Here is the cut ! I was thinking of suggesting that we layer the sides.

**Amy** : Ah yes, if you can make me as beautiful as she is, then I would like that!!

**The hairdresser** : Then let's do it ! I'm going to give you the look of a great actress!!

### Un peu de vocabulaire

**Vos cheveux** = Your hair

**Cheveux courts ou longs** = short or long hair

**Mèches** = highlights

**Cheveux colorés** = dyed hair

**Le shampoing** = shampoo

**La permanente** = Perm

**Les soins** = Haircare

**Le brushing** = blow-dry

**Cheveux fins** = fine hair

**Cheveux épais** = thick hair

**Cheveux gras** = oily hair

**Cheveux bouclés** : curly hair

**Cheveux lisses** : smooth hair

**Cheveux abîmés** = damaged hair

**Les pellicules** = dandruff

**En dégradé** = layered

**Look naturel, un peu désordonné** = natural/scruffy look

**Balayage** = hair weaving

**Les pointes** = hair ends

**La frange** = bangs

**La raie** = part

**La nuque** = nape of the neck

**Sèche-cheveux** = hairdryer

**Après-shampoing** =

hair conditioner



**NOTE**: In France, we say 'take an appointment' (prendre un rendez-vous) not 'make an appointment'! To ask how to spell a word, there are two possibilities: "Comment écrivez-vous?" (how do you write) or 'comment épelez-vous'? (how do you spell?).

## Tips & Traps

### Protect yourself against questionable insurance company practices

In France, nearly 150 million insurance contracts are signed every year – an average of 3 per inhabitant! To sign on the dotted line for an insurance policy is as easy as filling up your grocery cart at the supermarket, and the insurance agents are very persuasive. However, when it comes to filing a claim for a reimbursement for an accident or loss, they are much slower to react, and will always try to use any possible justification to declare that the “options” that you signed for don’t cover the type of accident or problem you have. Or, they will find other reasons not to reimburse you: your car has been stolen? You must certainly have left the keys inside. Your cell-phone has been stolen from the pocket of your coat by a pickpocket? You cannot be reimbursed because you have not been physically aggressed by the person who stole it from you (the same is true of car hijackings – if you are forced from your car, even at

gun point, and your car is stolen in this way, most insurance companies will not cover the loss). There is a flood in your apartment from a leaky roof? You should have taken better care of the roof. Your cat has damaged the wallpaper? This is your responsibility, you could certainly have avoided it. We could go on and on with examples.

Therefore, before signing an insurance policy contract, you should first of all determine if the insurance is compulsory, or if it can be of any use. It is difficult to generalize, but sometimes you will be asked to buy insurance for damages which are already covered by another agency, your credit card insurance for example in the case of a travel insurance. And take all the time necessary to read the nearly illegible small print at the bottom of the contract and the list of *clauses* attached to the main document to see in which cases you may not be covered. For example many travel cancellation policies (*assurances annulation*) for a trip will work only if you have a serious medical or professional reason to cancel, and not if you just changed your mind or were prevented

by a traffic jam from reaching the airport in time for your flight. Apart from the basic car insurance (*tierce collision*) and the insurance for your housing,



very few are compulsory. Learn to protect yourself against questionable insurance company practices!...

### Insurance: questions to ask before signing (Assurance: les questions à poser avant de signer)

**Est-ce que cette assurance est absolument obligatoire ?** = Is this insurance absolutely compulsory?

**Donnez-moi le détail de ce que couvre l'assurance** = Give me the details of the insurance coverage.

**Donnez-moi toute la documentation, et je vais prendre le temps de réfléchir** = Give me all documentation needed, and I'll take the time to think about it.

**Si ma maison est totalement détruite par un incendie (une inondation, une tempête, une catastrophe naturelle, une coulée de boue, des actes criminels...) est-ce que l'assurance couvrira entièrement les dépenses de reconstruction ?** = If my house is totally destroyed by fire (flood, storm, natural disaster, mudslide, criminal act...), will the insurance cover the entire cost of rebuilding?

**Comment fait-on concrètement une demande de remboursement, et quel est le délai après l'incident ?** = How exactly do we file a claim, and what is the time limit after the incident?

**Dans quelle situation l'assurance ne me remboursera pas ?** = In which situation won't the insurance reimburse me?

**Dans quelle situation l'assurance ne rembourse que partiellement ?** = In which situation will the insurance only reimburse partially?

**Quel est le montant de la franchise ?** = What is the amount of the deductible?

**Cela prend combien de temps pour rembourser ?** = How long does it take to get reimbursed?

**Quelles sont les conditions de résiliation de l'assurance ?** = what are the conditions in order to cancel my policy?

**Si j'ai un accrochage en voiture, est-ce que je dois immédiatement remplir un constat à l'amiable, et est-ce que je dois appeler la police ?** = If I am involved in a car accident, do I have to fill out the accident report immediately, and do I have to call the police?



## A QUESTION? A REPLY!

Each issue of French Accent Magazine will have an interactive question and answer department where you can ask questions or present your individual problems. The magazine staff will attempt to provide answers and advice concerning the problems encountered by expatriates living in France. Readers are also encouraged to send in their suggestions, solutions and personal experiences. Don't hesitate to write to us with your specific questions\*! We will try our best to reply in the following issue.

This UNIQUE SERVICE OFFERED BY FRENCH ACCENT is geared to help all our readers faced with the same kinds of problems! All questions and replies will be compiled in a FAQ that will thereafter be accessible through a link on our website.

\*[editor@frenchaccentmagazine.com](mailto:editor@frenchaccentmagazine.com)

## Travelling by train: Finding the best deals online

France is a wonderful country to travel in by train; most large cities, and even many of the out of the way places, are accessible by train, the TGV lines are very fast, and it can be very cheap if you organize yourself well in advance in order to benefit from special fares. However, there are a few drawbacks: it is not easy to find good information on connections on the SNCF website, or to identify the best ticket formula – and getting help is not always very easy. A few suggestions.

### Searching for the right train and schedule

It is not very easy to find the proper website among the

series of SNCF sites. There is an English version for the purchase of tickets\* but the information is very limited. If you feel comfortable in French, the best way to access the time & fare schedules is to go to [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com) (a travel agency belonging to the SNCF where you can also buy plane tickets, book hotels, etc.), and then click on “Train”. Then you can try something on the page “Rechercher votre billet” (Look for your ticket) – which is almost the same, even if the title of the page is not translated, in the English website, but not as complete as the French one. However, if your trip will involve changing trains more than twice, or if you want to travel to a neighbouring country, the website is unable to provide further information. For such cases we suggest another website which is much easier to use when there are a number of connec-

tions, and which gives all routing details about the stations you would go through, etc. This is... the German railroad website! And there is even an English version [www.deutsche-bahn.co.uk](http://www.deutsche-bahn.co.uk)

Getting back to the SNCF website, that you have to use to purchase your ticket, on this “Rechercher votre billet” page you will be asked at Nr. 3 “Qui participe à ce voyage?” (Who will travel on this trip?). There you are asked for your age, and what kind of travel card (carte senior, etc.) you have. We suggest that you not reply at all to these questions and just indicate the number of passengers. Then, when the various schedules



appear on the next page, you will see the price of the tickets. At this point, you can try to look for cheap fares (see below). Only if you don't find any reduced fares, you can go back to those Nr. 3 questions and indicate your age – and, of course, if you have one of the travel cards.

### Several kinds of lower-priced tickets

If you plan a trip by train, it is always advisable to book far in advance (but not earlier than 3 months) to get the best price. There are two very

## Tips & Traps (cont'd)

good fares, on both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class: the “Prem’s”, and the “Piccolo”, even cheaper, and its various forms such as “Piccolissimo”: with these tickets the prices can be as low as 30 to 50% of the full fare. To find the train which will allow you to get this price, you need to check the various trains and hours possible – contrary to easy-Jet’s website, the SNCF website doesn’t display several possible trains at the same time, not to mention several days, and will certainly not direct you to the cheapest price straight away! One more detail: “Prem’s” and “Piccolos” are often cheaper than a reduced ticket for seniors or children. And this is why we advised you above not to mention the age of the passenger at first: the ticket offered for a 6-year-old child might be more expensive than a “Prem’s”...

It may also happen, not so often though, that tickets are sold at a reduced price at the last minute, “*Dernière minute*”. It is always worth checking.

### Tuesday's Discount

Another way to get a good price ticket is to check the availability on Tuesdays. On that date, some unsold tickets are sold at half price. However, to find them on the web is quite difficult. Forget about the English version where they don't appear at all. On the French one, click first on “*Voyages-sncf.com*”, then on “*Promos*” (the yellow button, top right). Then, in the “*Train*” box of this new page, click on the third

button:  
Here  
they are!



**Note:** all “Prem’s”, “Piccolos” and Tuesday’s tickets are non-refundable and you cannot change the date – except if you have subscribed to a cancellation option (2,50 € per passenger per trip), but be careful, it only works under specific conditions that are indicated on the website (“*En savoir plus*”). “*Dernière minute*” tickets cannot be reimbursed at all. And for any other full fare ticket, you should always try and cancel your trip before the time of departure of the train in order to get a refund. Look carefully at the cancellation conditions on the webpage – they appear even on the English version!

### Reservations: some are compulsory

They are only compulsory for the TGVs. If you want to change a reservation at the last minute, you can do it before getting on the train at the ticket windows of the “*gare*”, on electronic “*bornes*” called “*Echange Minute TGV*” when they are available – and when they work. If you want to take an earlier train and you just don't have the time to change your ticket, you can always (but don't tell anyone that we gave you this advice!) get on the train, you won't be kicked off, and manage to see the “*contrôleur*” before he comes to your seat to explain to him, with your most serious and sincere voice, that you had to change trains and just couldn't make the change of ticket in advance.

The most important thing for the SNCF is that you don't forget to “*composter*” your

ticket in one of these orange or yellow “*bornes*” in the station. If you fail to do so you will have to pay a fine – unless you manage to convince the conductor by using your most sincere voice, etc. etc...

### Finalizing the purchase on the web

Assuming that you finally found the right ticket at a decent price, now you need to purchase it. For TER (Transports express régional) forget it, they are not sold on line, and you have to get them at the station – any station, though. For the TGVs they can be purchased on line, but the SNCF website, on the page “*Comment retirer votre billet*” (How to get your ticket), will propose as a first option for some ticket purchases (but, strangely enough, not for all), that you print your ticket yourself. That might be a good thing to do if

you are sure to travel yourself, but such a ticket is not transferable and must be used by the person whose name is on the ticket. The only advantage is that you don't need to “*composter*” before getting on the train. However you need to have your ID card, with the exact name that is on the ticket, with you when you are checked by the conductor. This is why we suggest that you ask to have the ticket sent to your home by mail. This is a quick and free service, and then you can always give the ticket to someone else if you cannot make the trip yourself.

Good luck!... and enjoy the beautiful countryside of France once you manage to get on the train – and if there aren't any strikes at that time...

\* To access this page, go to: [www.voyages-sncf](http://www.voyages-sncf) and click on the UK flag at the bottom.

### IDTGV: a new formula

A new formula was launched a few years ago by the SNCF, on four lines from Paris only: the “IDTGV”. It is a good way to get excellent fares on special trains, from as low as 19 € for a one-way ticket on these lines. Another advantage is that there is a special website, easily accessible, and with a totally identical English version: [www.idtgv.com](http://www.idtgv.com)

The four lines link Paris to Bordeaux, Marseille, Montpellier and Nice, with stopovers, depending on the line, at Aix-en-Provence, Avignon, Cannes, Nîmes, Saint-Raphaël, Toulon and Toulouse.

As you will see on the website, these tickets can only be purchased on line, and have to be printed out by, and can only be used by the purchaser. You don't, however, have to “*composter*” these tickets.



To subscribe, click here

## Le bricolage pour tous — Do it Yourself: Wall fasteners

**W**hether you're a confirmed and experienced do-it-yourselfer or an occasional amateur, you will undoubtedly have occasion to attach something to a wall or other surface. Since construction techniques and materials differ quite widely between France, England and North America, we thought it would be useful to discuss the various systems of wall and ceiling anchors, their use and the essential vocabulary in French for buying them at your local DIY outlet. Even the best of the books on *bricolage* published in France don't have complete discussions with easy-to-follow instructions. There are few things more discouraging than to have a recently installed mirror or bookshelf fall to the floor because of poorly chosen fasteners.

### An exploration hole

The first thing to consider when choosing an anchor is the construction used in building the wall or ceiling in question. Some older homes may have solid stone walls, especially on exterior and load-bearing walls, while new constructions methods combine cement blocks or solid concrete for the exterior walls and interior walls of either plaster blocks (*carreaux de plâtre*) or dry wall/sheet rock/gypsum board (*plaque de plâtre* or *placoplâtre* or simply "*placo*") fastened to either wood or metal studs. You may have to drill an exploratory hole in your wall to determine the type of construction material that has been used in your dwelling.

1) FOR HOLLOW WALLS made with *placoplâtre*, you will need to use anchors designed for such walls (*chevilles pour matériaux creux*) such as:

Expanding or deforming plastic sleeves = "*chevilles à expansion/déformation*" —



by far the most commonly used and easiest to install. Simply drill a pilot hole of

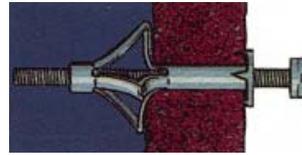
the proper dimension, insert the sleeve, often with the help of a hammer, and the action of screwing in the accompanying screw causes the anchor to expand or to deform inside the hollow space. These plastic anchors can be used for most light loads, and there is an amazing variety of sizes, shapes, and systems.

Spring-loaded toggle bolts = "*chevilles à basculement*" or "*chevilles à ressort*" — for



heavier loads, these spring-loaded anchors work very well. A

pilot hole the diameter of the entire mechanism should be drilled first. Then the fairly long accompanying bolt is inserted in the item you want to hang on the wall, then into the spring-loaded toggle before finally inserting the anchor into the pilot hole. Once placed in the pilot hole, the ends of the anchor unfold and are drawn firmly up against the backside of the gypsum board when the bolt is tightened. These anchors are also quite easy to remove, should you ever need to.



Molly bolts = "*chevilles [métalliques à expansion] Molly*" — another excellent anchor for heavier loads and one that requires a smaller pilot hole than the toggle bolts described above. The sides of the metal anchor are designed to collapse when pressure is exerted by tightening the bolt and they fold out along the inside if the wall board. It is important to drill the pilot hole the specified diameter of the anchor, especially if you use a screwdriver to set the anchor. Once the hole has been drilled and the Molly bolt inserted, you have to tighten the screw to collapse and fold out the sides of the bolt. Once this is done, you have to remove the screw from the anchor before you can put it through the item you want to fasten to the wall. At that point, you re-insert the screw and tighten. An easier way of installing Molly bolts is to use a specific tool (*une pince à expansion*) that puts sufficient pressure on the head of the screw to quickly and easily collapse the part of the bolt inside the wall. Using this tool will also avoid the problem of the entire Molly bolt turning in the pilot hole when you use a screwdriver to set the anchor. An inexpensive version of this tool can be purchased at most DIY stores for under 20 euros. Fischer makes a more elaborate Molly bolt setter, but it is considerably more expensive.

*NB: Molly bolts cannot be used on walls with a double layer of drywall, which would be too thick. You would have to use a toggle bolt in such situations.*

2) FOR SOLID MASONRY WALLS, the choice is equally great:

Non-expanding plastic sleeves = "*chevilles en plastique*" — the cheapest and easiest to install of all the solid wall (*murs à matériaux pleins*) anchors. A hole of the same diameter as the sleeve is drilled into the wall, after which a screw,



a normal wood screw will do, is used to attach your item to the wall. Only for fairly light loads. These non-expanding sleeves should not be used on hollow walls since they can be pulled out of drywall fairly easily.

Masonry bolts = "*chevilles métalliques*" ("*métal*") — used for heavier loads. A hole of the same diameter is drilled and the bolt is inserted, just as in the case of the plastic sleeves

above. However, when the bolt is tightened, after first

attaching whatever you want to fix to the wall, the end of the bolt expands and anchors it firmly in the hole you have drilled. These anchors are excellent for use in solid concrete walls.

Nail-in plugs = "*chevilles à col long*" — similar to the expanding plastic sleeves described above for hollow wall

fasteners, but they are extremely handy for fastening flat items, such as



strips of wood on which you would nail wall panelling. They are, in essence, a long plastic sleeve anchor with a screw already in place. A hole is drilled through the item to attach and into the wall; then the anchor is driven into the item and subsequently into the wall with a hammer until

the head of the plastic sleeve is flush with the surface of the item you are hanging. The screw is then tightened firmly with a screwdriver. They can also be used to shore up something already in place, since you don't have to remove the item first before installing.

A tip on drilling holes in solid masonry walls. You will need a percussion drill (*une perceuse à percussion*) for most drilling jobs, especially in concrete and stone, and you should use carbide tipped drill bits (*mèches*). If you have a hole of 8 or 10 mm to drill, it is often easier to drill an initial hole of

6 mm and then redrill it to the larger diameter. Purchasing high quality drill bits is an investment you will appreciate in the long run.

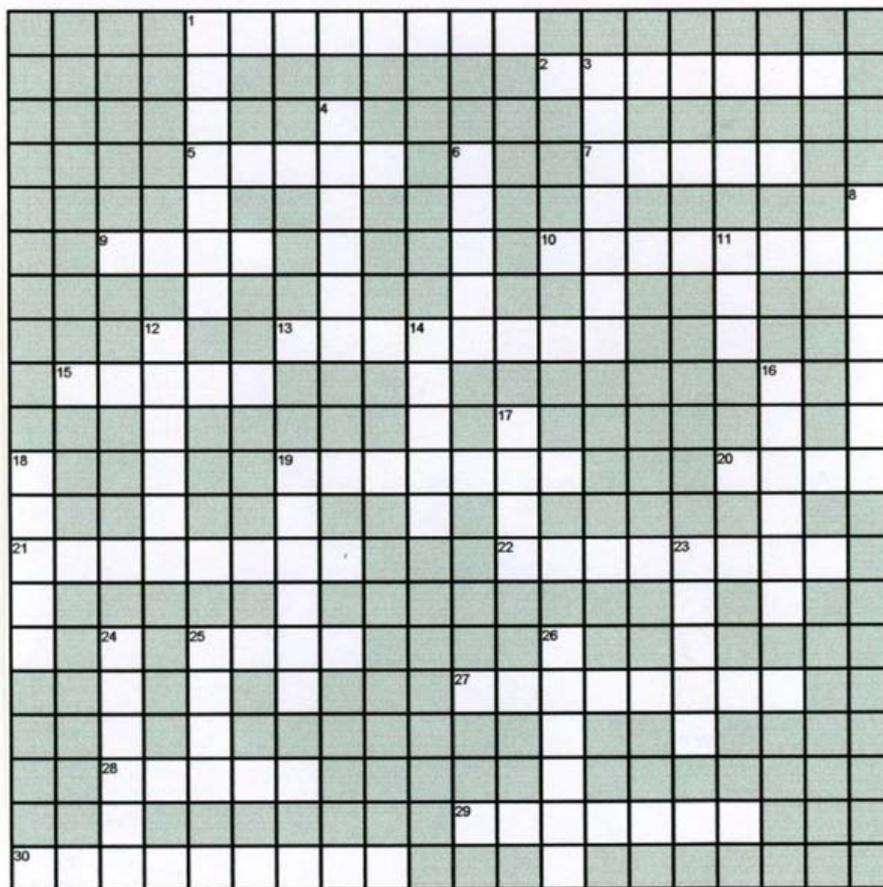
Happy fastening!

Roger Stevenson

## Mots croisés



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com



### Vertical

1. groupe d'élus
3. donne de la lumière
4. devenir liquide
6. personnalité la plus importante de la ville
8. action de laver son linge
11. nom d'un chien
12. essayer
14. matière première pour des vêtements
16. un fruit de mer
17. figurine en porcelaine
18. utilisé dans une perceuse pour percer un trou
19. journal satirique
23. animateur de Taratata
24. autorisation
25. billet à prix réduit
26. bouche

### Horizontal

1. remplit un trou
2. distribue le courrier
5. pièce dans une maison
7. matériau utilisé pour construire une cloison
9. comme un cheveu mais plus court
10. acte de voter
13. outil pour faire des trous
15. On \_\_\_\_\_ un rendez-vous
19. habitant officiel
20. un journal
21. sorte de chapeau pour un roi
22. contraire d'allumer
25. une portion
27. une chaise avec des accoudoirs
28. corps bien préservé dans l'antiquité
29. gâteau pour tirer les rois
30. récipient dans lequel on fait cuire des aliments



## This is France — New Year's Resolutions: How Best to Appreciate France

**L**ike people the world over, many French people make New Year's Resolutions at the beginning of January for the coming year: stop smoking, reduce one's consumption of wine or coffee, eat preferably organic food, get better organized in one's professional life or try to find a new job, practice yoga or a new sport, start a cultural activity, prepare a long distance trip or begin new remodelling projects on one's house or garden, give more time to an elderly parent or a child, or one's husband or wife, stop a bad habit such as driving the car for small trips, etc., etc. The ideas are as diverse as individuals are, but generally they are all based on the same positive attitude that is conducive to improving oneself or one's life. And it's okay if most New Year's resolutions melt like snow in the sun as soon as spring starts! Perhaps something positive will persist anyway. And at least in the process we will have achieved a keener awareness of what needs to be changed, and we will have tried to evolve a little...

Making New Year's resolutions is a very personal choice, but we thought we might suggest a very special resolution to you, English-speaking persons who are trying to adapt to this country of France which is so different from yours and not always welcoming. The resolution to try to immerse yourself more fully in the culture and to improve your comprehension of the language and of the customs will make your life so much better and pleasant! In many cases, that can be accomplished, or at least started, by some very easy steps. For example, simply invite the French into your home to share a tea or a drink, or to "tirer les rois" as we do in France in January (see page 20). Or to take up the habit of reading a newspaper or watching an easy TV programme, etc. Another idea is to participate in group games, such as "belote", lotto or tarot, which are played all over France. Other similar suggestion will be the focus of the cover article of the February issue.

All the best for tackling your New Year's resolutions, and good luck in your attempt to get better integrated! We will try, in each issue, as much as we can, to accompany you in this effort. Don't hesitate to ask questions of us, or to share your experiences with us – as *French Accent* is, by definition, a "participative" magazine!



## Les bonnes résolutions du Nouvel An: Comment mieux apprécier la France

**C**omme d'autres dans le monde, de nombreux Français se font pour eux-mêmes, début janvier, une liste de bonnes résolutions à prendre pour l'année qui commence. Arrêter de fumer, réduire sa consommation de vin ou de café, manger bio de préférence, mieux s'organiser dans sa vie professionnelle ou essayer de changer de travail, faire du yoga, ou un nouveau sport, commencer une activité culturelle, préparer un grand voyage ou se lancer dans des travaux de bricolage ou de jardinage, consacrer davantage de temps à un parent âgé, à un enfant, ou à son mari ou femme, perdre l'une de ses mauvaises habitudes comme de prendre systématiquement sa voiture pour un court trajet, etc. etc. Les idées sont aussi diverses que le sont les individus, mais partent généralement toutes d'une volonté positive visant à une amélioration de soi-même et de sa vie. Et tant pis si les bonnes résolutions fondent comme neige au soleil dès les premiers jours du printemps! Peut-être en restera-t-il quelque chose. Et au moins on aura pris conscience de ce qu'il fallait changer, et essayé d'évoluer quelque peu...

Prendre ses bonnes résolutions est un choix très personnel, mais nous avons pensé vous suggérer, à vous anglo-saxons qui tentez de vous intégrer dans ce pays si différent et pas toujours accueillant qu'est la France, une résolution toute particulière. Celle de tenter de parvenir à une meilleure immersion, d'améliorer votre compréhension de la langue et des coutumes, ce qui vous rendra la vie tellement plus facile et agréable! Pour cela il suffit parfois de peu de chose. Par exemple tout simplement d'inviter des Français chez vous prendre un goûter ou un apéritif, ou de « tirer les rois » comme on le fait en janvier. Ou bien de prendre l'habitude de lire un journal, de regarder une émission de TV facile, etc. Une autre idée est de participer à des jeux collectifs : belote, loto ou tarot, très pratiqués en France. Mais nous y consacrerons tout un dossier en février.

Bon courage pour vos bonnes résolutions, et bonne chance dans vos tentatives de meilleure insertion! Nous tenterons toute l'année, le mieux possible, de vous accompagner dans cet effort. N'hésitez pas à nous poser des questions, ou nous faire part de vos expériences – car *French Accent* est, par définition, un magazine "participatif"!

*Annick Stevenson*

## Inviting the French to your home

If you've just moved into a new home in France and you don't know anyone in the area, a good way to meet your neighbours or other locals is to organise a "goûter" (an afternoon tea) or an "apéritif" (a drink with snacks before dinner). The French always respond favourably to invitations. When you're preparing an "apéritif" or a "goûter", I would suggest that you serve a typical small dish from your country! Your neighbours will be delighted to try something "exotic". As you may already know, English cooking does not always enjoy the most positive image in France, and serving something delicious to your new neighbours would go a long way towards changing that unfortunate stereotypical attitude!!

You could try something similar to what Jill did. She is an English expat who lives in the South of France who succeeded in impressing all the ladies at her local gym by introducing them to a tasty English dessert. Jill had been going to her gym one morning per week and had a difficult time getting to know the other women in her class because everyone arrived just in time for the gym class and they only had a couple of minutes to say "Bonjour" to each other. So one day, she decided to make mince pies for everyone and she served them at the end of the last class before Christmas. It turned out to be a big hit as every woman at the gym truly enjoyed them, thanked her for the treat and made general small talk with her. Jill was thrilled, as she had been trying for weeks to start a conversation!!

In France, many French people have a "goûter" around 4 p.m. and usually they have "une pâtisserie", a small piece of pastry, along with some tea, coffee, fruit juice or a "sirop" (a fruit flavoured syrup diluted with water). As for the "apéritif", they will either plan some elaborate snacks, such as "charcuterie" (cold cuts), pizzas or even more sophisticated dishes, and it can go on for 2 or 3 hours. However, most "apéritifs" usually only last for an hour or so with just a few snacks like Chips, nuts, etc... The French will usually offer their guests a choice from a variety of drinks such as a *Kir* (white wine and blackcurrant (or other fruit) liqueur), a *Kir Royal* (the same as a normal *Kir* but with champagne instead), a *Pineau des Charentes* (a speciality of the Southwest of France), a *Pastis* (a liquorice liquor served with water (a very popular drink in the South of France), Champagne, a Martini and other less popular drinks...

If a French person invites you for an "apéritif", it is not expected that you bring a gift. Nevertheless, if you're being invited for dinner, then it is appropriate to bring either flowers or a bottle of any type of alcohol (wine, champagne, liqueur...) - they will not always open the bottle you brought for dinner, as they most likely will have planned the wine for the meal.

If you're the one inviting, don't hesitate to impose your cultural habits! The French will be amused, delighted and most probably charmed by trying something different.

Céline Anthonioz

## Inviter des Français à la maison



Si vous venez juste d'aménager dans votre nouvelle maison en France et ne connaissez encore personne dans la région, un bon moyen de rencontrer ses voisins et autres habitants locaux est d'organiser un goûter, ou un apéritif. Les Français répondent toujours favorablement aux invitations. Lorsque vous préparez un apéritif ou un goûter, je suggère que vous serviez une spécialité de votre pays ! Vos voisins seront enchantés d'essayer quelque chose d'exotique. Comme vous le savez peut-être, les cookies anglais n'ont pas toujours une très bonne réputation en France, alors servir quelque chose de délicieux à vos nouveaux voisins pourrait faire beaucoup pour changer ce stéréotype regrettable !

Vous pourriez suivre l'exemple de Jill, une expatriée britannique vivant dans le sud de la France, qui est arrivée à impressionner toutes les dames au cours de gym local en leur faisant découvrir un savoureux dessert anglais. Jill allait à la gym une matinée par semaine et avait du mal à connaître les autres femmes suivant le même cours car chacune arrivait juste à l'heure et avait à peine le temps de dire bonjour aux autres. Un jour, elle a donc décidé de préparer des tartellettes pour tout le monde, qu'elle a servies à la fin du cours, juste avant Noël. Ce qui a été un grand succès. Les participantes au cours de gym ont trouvé ces tartellettes délicieuses, et l'ont longuement remerciée, prenant toutes le temps de bavarder un peu avec elle. Jill était aux anges, car elle avait tenté depuis des

semaines de commencer une conversation !

En France, bon nombre de gens prennent un goûter vers 16 heures, consistant généralement en une pâtisserie ou des biscuits servis avec un peu de thé ou de café, un jus de fruits ou un sirop. Quant à l'apéritif, il consiste souvent en des amuse-gueule variés, comme des petites quiches, des toasts avec un peu de charcuterie, des mini-pizzas ou autres plats encore plus élaborés. Il arrive que l'apéritif se prolonge sur 2 ou 3 heures, mais la plupart du temps il ne dure qu'une heure, et les amuse-gueule sont plus simples, tels des chips ou des cacahuètes grillées... Les Français offrent généralement à leurs invités un choix de boissons variées : Kir, Kir royal, Pineau des Charentes, pastis, Champagne, Martini, et d'autres moins courantes.

Si un Français ou une Française vous invite à prendre l'apéritif, il/elle n'attend pas de vous que vous apportiez quelque chose. Mais si vous êtes invité(e) à dîner, il est d'usage d'apporter des fleurs ou une bouteille de vin, ou à la rigueur du champagne ou une liqueur - mais la bouteille ne sera pas toujours ouverte lors du dîner, car vos hôtes auront probablement déjà prévu le vin accompagnant le repas.

Et si c'est vous qui invitez, n'hésitez pas à imposer vos habitudes culturelles ! Les Français seront amusés et ravis d'essayer quelque chose de différent, et vont très certainement adorer.

## In January: Let's share the "galette des rois"!

**E**n janvier, une excellente occasion de se faire des contacts est d'inviter ses voisins à partager la galette des rois. Dans la tradition française ancestrale, le 6 janvier, date de l'épiphanie (fête célébrant l'arrivée des trois rois mages auprès de l'enfant Jésus), il était de coutume de déguster un gâteau, ou galette des rois. Aujourd'hui, cette origine religieuse est très secondaire, et la galette des rois, qui se consomme en dessert, ou l'après-midi, est devenue bien davantage un moyen de célébrer la nouvelle année en famille, avec des amis, des voisins, ou des collègues de travail. Et la fête s'étire pratiquement du 1<sup>er</sup> au 31 janvier. Il existe plusieurs formes et types de galettes dans les pâtisseries de tout le pays, mais celles qui sont peut-être les plus appréciées sont farcies à la frangipane (crème à l'amande).

Tirer les rois est un moment très festif, surtout parce que dans chaque galette est cachée au moins une fève (une figurine en porcelaine). La personne qui découvre la fève dans sa part de galette devient le roi, ou la reine, du groupe. Il/elle doit alors po-

ser sur sa tête la couronne en papier doré fournie par le pâtissier avec la galette, et tout le monde s'exclame : Vive le roi ! ou Vive la reine !...

AS



### Le roi et la reine

*[...] Je suis la galette, la galette,  
Je suis faite avec le blé ramassé dans le grenier.  
On m'a mise à refroidir mais j'ai mieux aimé  
Courir.  
Attrape moi si tu peux !*

*La galette est préparée, cuite à point et bien dorée.  
Près de la table dressée les enfants sont là.  
Qui sera la reine ?  
Qui sera le roi ?  
Est-ce toi ?  
Est-ce moi ?*

*La galette est partagée, les convives désignés,  
Mais la fève est bien cachée ! Qui la trouvera ?*

*Extraits d'une comptine française, lus par Alexandra*



secondary, and the "galette", which is eaten as a dessert, or in the afternoon, has mostly become a way to celebrate the New Year with one's family, friends, neighbours or colleagues at work. And the celebration lasts almost from January 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. One can find several forms and types of "galettes" in pastry shops all over France, but the ones that are probably the most sought after are filled with "frangipane" (a sort of almond cream).

"Tirer les rois" (literally to "draw the kings", is the highlight of the event, especially since inside each cake is hidden at least one "fève" (a small porcelain figure). The person who finds the "fève" in his/her piece of "galette" becomes the king, or the queen, of the party. He/She must then put on his/her head the crown made of gilded paper which the "pâtissier" provides with the cake, and everybody exclaims: "Vive le roi!" or "Vive la reine!" ("Long live the king/queen!").

## A few TV Programmes

Watching TV is well-known for being a good way to learn a little French, and especially to understand better the pronunciation. Here are a few suggestions for TV programmes which may be more suitable for this purpose.

### "Télématin"

This cool and relaxed broadcast, which means "Tele Morning" and shown on *France 2*, is "on" every weekday morning from 6:30 to 8:45. It is composed of a short news report every half hour, weather forecasts, with the rest of the time devoted to other short stories often grouped around a particular theme: gardening, cooking, books, consumer news, travel, movies, and several items presented by differ-

ent journalists who take their turn talking about each subject. The graphics and visual aids used makes it much easier to understand.

### "Des chiffres et des lettres"

This is probably the most popular and the oldest (it was created in 1972) televised game. As its title suggests, "Des chiffres et des lettres" (numbers and letters) consists of two parts: making

easy mental calculations, and composing words from a selection of letters. The latter is by far the most interesting as a language learning tool. It is broadcast on *France 3* every working day (Monday through Friday) at 17:30, and is also reproduced by TV5Monde.

### "France 24"

This is a new 24-hour International TV news channel which is designed to compete with CNN and BBC International News but also to present a French perspective on world news. What is interesting for Anglophones willing to learn French is that it is broadcast on two different channels, one in English and the other in

French. As the same stories are shown simultaneously on both channels and at several times during the day, it might be useful to watch them in both languages, one after the other, to make sure you understand the content and pick up some tips on pronunciation. As this channel is geared to an international audience, it is accessible in France only by satellite, cable (in some cities) or through some internet ADSL providers. You can find explicit information about receiving the two channels on the *France 24* website: [www.france24.com](http://www.france24.com). Click on *Comment recevoir la chaîne* at the bottom of the home page.

## The French Press

While there are several excellent English language newspapers published in France for expats, reading a French newspaper or magazine on a regular basis can be an invaluable help in acquiring new vocabulary and in keeping abreast of what is happening in France. A quick visit to your local newsstand will confirm the tremendous variety and number of publications available – an indication, to say the least, of the role the press plays in France. Consequently, the non-francophone is faced with the seemingly overwhelming dilemma of where to start in choosing a newspaper or news-magazine to read. A short annotated review together with a few suggestions may be of some help.

**E**ach of the daily newspapers in France, just as in England and to a lesser extent in the States, has its own particular political bias. There is an almost total absence of sensationalist tabloid press among the dailies, that role being assumed somewhat by a few of the glossy weekly magazines (known in French as “*la presse people*”) such as *Gala*, *Voici*, or *Ici Paris*. The three major national newspapers of reference are *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*.

### Le Monde

*Le Monde*: generally accepted as the most respected of the national newspapers for its serious and in-depth coverage, the newspaper is to the centre left of the political spectrum. If you want substantive articles on political issues and culture, you can't go wrong. Reading *Le Monde* requires a certain political sophistication and competence with the language. It has an excellent web site ([www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr)) and subscribers to the print edition can also access the electronic version of the print edition in either a Flash version or in PDF. One can also subscribe to the electronic version only for just 6 € per month.

### LE FIGARO

*Le Figaro*: a large broadsheet format daily that tends to be more on the right politically and covers economic issues more thoroughly than does *Le Monde*. The language difficulty is similar to that of *Le Monde*. Its web site is not quite as well organized, but one can access most of the articles in the print edition ([www.lefigaro.fr](http://www.lefigaro.fr)), including a PDF version. *Le Figaro* covers sports better than do *Le Monde* or *Libération* (see below for more on sports), and its cultural column is of good quality.



*Libération*: the only truly national daily on the left. *Libé*, as it is usually called, is published in a smaller, tabloid-like format that makes it very easy to read on a train or at



© Les Pages de Paris

## La presse française

Bien qu'il existe plusieurs excellents journaux en anglais en France pour les expats, lire de manière régulière un journal ou un magazine peut considérablement aider à acquérir un nouveau vocabulaire et à se tenir à jour. Une rapide visite à votre kiosque à journaux vous confirmera l'immense variété et la quantité de publications existantes – une indication, pour le moins, du rôle que la presse joue en France. La conséquence, pour le non francophone, est qu'il se retrouve devant le dilemme apparemment insurmontable de savoir par quoi commencer lorsqu'il s'agit de choisir son journal ou son magazine d'informations. Voici une rapide présentation, et quelques suggestions, pour aider dans ce choix.

**C**haque des quotidiens français en France, tout comme en Angleterre et, dans une moindre mesure, aux Etats-Unis, a sa propre orientation politique. Mais parmi ces quotidiens, on ne trouve pratiquement pas de journaux à sensation de format tabloïd, cette approche étant plus ou moins celle de plusieurs magazines en couleur (appelés en français “*la presse people*”) tels que *Gala*, *Voici*, ou *Ici Paris*. Les trois principaux quotidiens nationaux de référence en France sont *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* et *Libération*.

*Le Monde*: généralement reconnu comme le plus respecté pour sa couverture sérieuse et approfondie des événements, ce quotidien se situe au centre gauche de la sphère politique.

Si vous recherchez des articles de fond sur des questions politiques ou culturelles, vous ne serez pas déçu. Lire *Le Monde* nécessite toutefois une certaine connaissance politique et une bonne maîtrise de la langue. Le journal a un excellent site web ([www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr)) les abonnés à l'édition imprimée peuvent aussi accéder à la version électronique en format Flash ou Pdf. On peut aussi s'abonner uniquement à l'édition électronique, pour 6 € par mois.

*Le Figaro*: ce quotidien à grand format a tendance à être politiquement de droite et traite des sujets économiques de manière plus approfondie que *Le Monde*. Les difficultés de compréhension dues au langage sont les mêmes. Son site web ([www.lefigaro.fr](http://www.lefigaro.fr)) n'est pas aussi bien organisé, mais on peut accéder à la plupart des articles de l'édition imprimée, y compris à une version Pdf. *Le Figaro* couvre mieux les sujets sportifs que le font *Le Monde* ou *Libération* (voir ci-dessous pour les informations sportives), et sa rubrique culturelle est de bon niveau.

*Libération*: seul journal national vraiment à gauche, *Libé*, comme on l'appelle habituellement, est publié dans un format plus réduit, presque comme un tabloïd, ce qui le

## Read a Newspaper (cont'd)

your favourite café. It's circulation is much smaller than either *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*, but it plays an important balancing role on the political media landscape in France. However, it lends a little less importance to certain subjects than to others, and, therefore, gives only part of the information. The daily's website ([www.liberation.fr](http://www.liberation.fr)) is quite good and you can download any daily print version of the newspaper in PDF format through a scheme of buying "unités" for approximately 1 € each.

None of the above mentioned dailies is published on Sunday, contrary to the custom in the States and in England, but there are two Sunday newspapers, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, which appears only on Sundays, and *Le Parisien*, another daily, but of considerably less journalistic integrity. There are, of course, free dailies, such as *24 Heures* and *Métro*, that are available in Paris and some of the larger cities in France. They are easier to read for a non francophone, but their content consists largely of AFP wire dispatches with no attempt at more in-depth, serious journalism. You can also find several glossy, weekly newsmagazines, such as *L'Express*, *Le Point*, *Marianne* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*. And then there are the regional dailies that give much better coverage to local and regional matters. The largest of these is *Ouest France* with the greatest circulation figures of any newspaper in France. You are undoubtedly aware of the most important regional dailies in your own particular area, which you can also find at the bakery or grocery — a good way to keep abreast of what's happening in your area.

## L'ÉQUIPE

*L'Équipe*: a sports newspaper that is published 7 days a week and covers just about anything you would want to know about the world of sports. It is one of the few newspapers in France that continues to operate in the black and constantly increase its circulation. It has excellent coverage of football in France and Europe in general. The articles are very well written and at the same time quite accessible. If you're a sports fan, reading *L'Équipe* is an excellent way to improve your vocabulary. However, it tends to be rather macho and pays far less attention to women's sports.

Website: [www.lequipe.fr](http://www.lequipe.fr)

## Le Canard enchaîné

*Le Canard Enchaîné*: We can't end a review of the press in France without mentioning the most notorious and independent of France's newspapers. It is a weekly, highly satirical newspaper that mainly covers the behind the scenes of French politics and cultural life. It is fiercely independent, does not have a website version where you can read its articles and carries absolutely no advertisements. It is one of the few newspapers in France that does anything at all like investigative journalism, and its pages frequently embarrass the government. The result, unfortunately, is that it requires a high level of both linguistic and political sophistication to understand the articles. But its many cartoons are easier to get, and sometimes very funny. If you really want to know what goes on *dans les coulisses* in France, it is a must read every Weds.

Bonne lecture !

Roger Stevenson

## Lire un journal (suite)

rend plus facile à lire dans le train ou au bistrot. Sa distribution est bien plus réduite que celle du *Monde* ou du *Figaro*, mais il joue un rôle important en apportant un équilibre sur le terrain des journaux politiques en France. Il attache toutefois une moindre importance à certains sujets qu'à d'autres, et offre donc une information partielle. Le site Internet du journal ([www.liberation.fr](http://www.liberation.fr)) est assez bien fait, et vous pouvez télécharger n'importe quelle version du journal en Pdf par un système d'achat d'unités d'environ 1 € chacune.

Aucun des quotidiens mentionnés ci-dessous n'est publié le dimanche, contrairement à ce qui est la tradition aux Etats-Unis et en Angleterre, mais il existe deux autres journaux paraissant le dimanche, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, qui ne paraît que ce jour-là, et un autre quotidien, *Le Parisien*, de qualité journaliste discutable. Et on trouve évidemment, à Paris, et dans les plus grandes villes de France, des quotidiens gratuits, tels *24 Heures* et *Métro*. Ils sont plus faciles à lire pour un non francophone, mais leur contenu est essentiellement constitué de dépêches AFP sans aucune tentative de moindre analyse journalistique. Vous pouvez aussi trouver plusieurs magazines d'informations, tels que *L'Express*, *Le Point*, *Marianne* et *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Et il y a aussi tous les quotidiens régionaux, qui donnent de bien meilleures informations sur toute l'actualité locale et régionale. Le plus important est *Ouest France*, le journal le plus largement distribué en France. Vous connaissez sans nul doute les plus importants de votre région, que vous trouvez aussi chez le boulanger ou l'épicer

— un bon moyen de vous tenir au courant de ce qui se passe dans votre région.

*L'Équipe*: ce quotidien sportif, publié 7 jours par semaine, couvre presque tout ce que vous voulez savoir dans le monde du sport. C'est l'un des rares journaux qui continue de prospérer et qui augmente constamment son chiffre de distribution. Il offre une excellente couverture du football en France et en Europe en général. Les articles sont bien rédigés, tout en restant très accessibles. Si vous êtes passionné de sport, lire *L'Équipe* peut-être un excellent moyen d'améliorer votre vocabulaire. Toutefois, il a tendance à être un peu macho et à attacher bien moins d'importance au sport féminin. Site: [www.lequipe.fr](http://www.lequipe.fr)

*Le Canard Enchaîné*: Nous ne pouvons pas terminer une chronique sur la presse en France sans mentionner le plus renommé des journaux français. Cet hebdo, fortement satirique, relate essentiellement ce qui se passe derrière la scène du monde politique et culturel français. Féroce et indépendant, n'a pas de site Internet où l'on peut lire ses articles et ne passe aucune publicité. Il est l'un des rares journaux en France qui fasse véritablement du journalisme d'investigation, et ses articles embarrassent régulièrement le gouvernement. Malheureusement, le résultat est qu'il nécessite un très bon niveau de connaissance linguistique et politique pour comprendre ses articles, mais les nombreux dessins sont plus faciles à saisir, et souvent très drôles. Et si vous voulez vraiment savoir ce qui se passe dans les coulisses en France, le lire chaque mercredi est un *must*.

Bonne lecture !

To subscribe, click here



## French Politics — The Mayor

**E**ach of the 37,000 communes in France has its own mayor and elected city council. Your local mayor is definitely someone you should get to know and you should try your very best to remain on his good side, especially as an expatriate living in a French city or village. We thought a few facts about a mayor's responsibilities and function would be helpful in understanding the somewhat complicated administrative structure of the French government and especially how a mayor could have a major impact on your own situation.

France has a four-tiered administrative structure that is more complicated than that of most of its European neighbours: State, Region, Department & Commune. Since Napoleon totally reorganized the country following the Revolution, Paris and the administrative bodies of the central government have held most of the power and influence in the country. A law passed in March of 1982 began the slow process of decentralizing the power and administrative functions within the country with more responsibility and decision making leeway given to the regions, departments and cities.

There are nearly 37,000 communes in France, far more than in any other European country, and each one is eligible to elect its own municipal council and mayor, although some smaller communities have opted to merge into "urban communities". The municipal councillors are



*Williams Méric, the mayor of Marseillan (34), a picturesque village of Languedoc.*

elected by direct universal suffrage in the municipal elections to terms of six years. The mayor is then elected by the members of the council, of which he or she is a member. The responsibilities of the council and the mayor include: adopting a budget, administering community assets, i.e. primary schools and buildings, determining administrative policy, being responsible for security and public health, issuing local building permits and serving as registrar of births, deaths, and marriages – the mayor or one of his adjuncts performs the civil marriage ceremony in the city hall.

The mayor serves as both the community's elected official but also as the state's representative, for which he is directly answerable to the prefect of the department. And because of the seemingly strange system of multiple mandates (*cumul des mandats*) in France, a mayor may also be a member of the National Assembly or hold another political office in the region or department. The mayor

## Le maire de votre ville ou village

**E**n France, chacune des 37.000 communes a son propre maire et conseil municipal élus. Votre maire est quelqu'un que vous devez vraiment connaître, et avec lequel vous devez être en bons termes, surtout en tant qu'expatrié vivant dans une petite ville ou un village. Nous avons pensé que de connaître ses responsabilités et son rôle seraient utiles pour vous permettre de comprendre la structure administrative assez compliquée du système gouvernemental français, et en particulier en quoi un maire peut influencer de manière importante sur votre propre situation.

### Un système administratif très complexe

La France a une structure administrative à quatre niveaux, plus complexe que celle de la plupart de ses voisins européens : l'Etat, la Région, le département et la commune. Depuis que Napoléon a totalement réorganisé le pays après la Révolution, la plus grande partie du pouvoir et de l'influence sont entre les mains de Paris et des organes administratifs du gouvernement central. Une loi adoptée en mars 1982 a entamé un lent processus de décentralisation du pouvoir et des fonctions administratives, en donnant davantage de responsabilité et de capacité de décision aux régions, aux départements et aux villes.

On compte donc près de 37.000 communes en France, bien davantage que dans n'im-

porte quel autre pays européen, et chacune d'entre elles élit son propre conseil municipal et son maire, bien que certaines plus petites communautés aient choisi de se rassembler en "communautés urbaines". Les trois plus grandes villes françaises, Paris, Marseille et Lyon, n'ont pas seulement un maire pour l'ensemble de la commune, mais un autre maire pour chacun de leurs "arrondissements". Les conseillers municipaux sont élus par suffrage universel direct lors des élections municipales, qui se tiennent tous les six ans, puis le maire, choisi dans la liste des conseillers municipaux venant d'être élus, est désigné à son tour par un vote des membres du conseil eux-mêmes. Les responsabilités du conseil municipal et du maire comprennent notamment : l'adoption du budget, l'administration des biens de la communauté, par exemple les écoles primaires et leurs bâtiments, la détermination de la politique administrative, la responsabilité en matière de sécurité et de santé publique, la délivrance de permis de construire locaux, et l'enregistrement des naissances, des décès et des mariages – le maire ou l'un de ses adjoints procède d'ailleurs lui-même aux mariages civils dans les locaux de la mairie.

Le maire est non seulement un officiel élu par la communauté mais aussi un représentant de l'Etat, et à ce titre doit rendre des comptes au préfet du département. Et du fait du système apparemment étrange de cumul des mandats en France, un maire peut aussi être député à l'Assemblée nationale, ou tenir une charge politique dans la région ou le département. Le

## The Mayor (cont'd)

of Lyon Gérard Collomb, for example, is both the mayor and a deputy in the National Assembly, and current president Jacques Chirac was famous for holding multiple mandates while he was mayor of Paris, a deputy and the first secretary of the RPR political party. Recent legislation has, fortunately, curbed the number of mandates one single person may hold

There are also those mayors who are seemingly permanent fixtures on France's political landscape and serve for 15 or 20 years. One of the longest-serving mayors in France was the Socialist Gaston Defferre, who was mayor of Marseille from 1953 until his death in 1986. Defferre also served as a minister in five different national governments during his tenure as mayor.

To be a candidate for the municipal council, one must be at least 18, be a citizen of France or of the European Union, be a registered voter in the city in question and not have a criminal record.

The next municipal elections in France are scheduled to be held in March of 2008, but even if you presently might not be able to vote, you will undoubtedly have occasion to meet your mayor or other employees of the *hôtel de ville*, especially when it is time to request a building permit for your next rebuilding project. There is

considerable debate about allowing citizens of the European Union who have lived legally in France for a certain period of time to be able to vote in municipal elections. Nicolas Sarkozy proposed just such a measure in 2005, but it was vetoed by the Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. Perhaps by 2008 you will be able to cast your vote for this important elected official. Even if you presently might not be able to vote, you should definitely try and attend any occasion or event where you could meet and get to know your mayor. Not only will you feel more a part of the community, but many French mayors are particularly appreciative of the local foreign populations and the contributions they make to their communities. The mayor of Chamonix, for example, is very complementary about the many non-French inhabitants, especially the Brits, who live in his city. You never know when your mayor's good will might come in handy, but when it's time to request a building permit for your next remodeling project, it would definitely be in your best interests to have him or her as a friend.

*Roger Stevenson*

## Le maire (suite)

Le maire de Lyon Gérard Collomb, par exemple, est également un député, et l'actuel président de la République Jacques Chirac a été bien connu pour avoir cumulé plusieurs mandats lorsqu'il était le maire de Paris : il était aussi député et premier secrétaire du parti politique RPR. Heureusement, une législation récente a limité à deux le nombre de mandats exercés par la même personne.

On trouve aussi des maires qui semblent être de véritables piliers du paysage politique français, occupant cette fonction pendant 15 ou 20 ans. L'un de ceux qui fut en exercice le plus longtemps fut le socialiste Gaston Defferre, maire de Marseille de 1953 à sa mort en 1986. Et tout en restant maire, Gaston Defferre fut aussi ministre de cinq différents gouvernements français.

Pour être candidat à un conseil municipal, il faut avoir au moins 18 ans, être citoyen français ou de l'Union européenne, avoir une carte d'électeur dans la ville en question, et ne pas avoir de casier judiciaire.

Les prochaines élections municipales en France se tiendront en mars 2008. Toute une discussion se tient actuellement dans les cercles politiques et les groupes de défense des immigrants sur la question d'autoriser ou non les résidents non Français, qui ont vécu légalement en France durant un certain temps, à voter pour les élections municipales. Nicolas Sarkozy a proposé une telle mesure en 2005, mais celle-ci s'opposa à un veto du Premier ministre Dominique de Villepin.

## Le maire de Chamonix apprécie beaucoup ses habitants anglais

Peut-être en 2008 aurez-vous la possibilité de voter pour participer directement à l'élection de cet important officiel. Non seulement vous sentirez encore davantage que vous êtes un membre à part entière de votre commune, mais bon nombre de maires français apprécient tout particulièrement les populations locales étrangères, et les contributions qu'elles apportent à leurs communautés. Le maire de Chamonix, par exemple, n'est pas avare de compliments au sujet des nombreux habitants non Français, surtout les Bri-

tanniques, qui vivent dans sa ville. Vous ne savez jamais quand vous aurez besoin d'avoir de bonnes relations avec votre maire, mais lorsqu'il sera temps, par exemple, de demander un permis de construire pour retaper votre maison, il sera certainement dans votre intérêt d'avoir fait d'elle ou de lui votre ami.



*Mairie de Grilly (Ain). © www.viagex.com*



## Our Planet — About Cotton: Think Organic

For many of us, the last thing to cross our minds when looking in a three-way mirror at a pair of flattering jeans is how they were actually made or who made them. Most of us wear cotton everyday, it's comfortable and it's affordable, BUT, we don't realise how toxic it is to produce it, to process it and to wear it.

Cotton processing is a very resource-consuming, polluting and unhealthy industry. For every pound of cotton, two-thirds of a pound of insecticides and pesticides are used to grow it, and it takes 1740 gallons (6587 litres) of water to produce 1 cotton T-shirt. The consequences of depleting our water resources can be serious – the Aral Sea (located in Central Asia), for example, has completely dried out! The reliance on chemical compounds in the bleaching, refining and dying of cotton have been blamed for a range of problems, from water contamination to unusually high cancer rates and skin diseases. The World Health Organiza-

tion estimates that 20,000 deaths and 3 million nonfatal poisonings result from accidental pesticide poisonings every year. Large amounts of water, energy and chemicals are used in the different processing stages. The additives required for processing usually find their way into the local waste water systems,

*The excessive use of pesticides is the main motivation for many people to seek changes in current production patterns.*

resulting in highly contaminated effluents. Most effluents from cotton processing are produced during the finishing stage and are characterized by their highly polluting load, high solid content and high temperature.

Chemicals also remain in the final product, which can cause health problems. The excessive use of pesticides is perhaps the most serious and the main motivation for many

people and organizations to seek changes in current production patterns. Cotton is also very prone to insect infestation, which means that it cannot be sustained without high levels of fertilizers and pesticides. In the user or consumer phase, environmental problems arise from the use of energy, water and chemicals for washing, drying and ironing.

Once we've realised the negative impacts of the growing and production of cotton and we want to participate in protecting our increasingly scarce water resources and the workers who take part in this very hazardous process, then what could we do? What should we buy?

One option is to buy clothing, bed linens and other products made from other fabrics, such as wool, angora, cashmere, hemp, ramie, silk, linen and flax.

The other solution is to buy these same products made from organic cotton. If it's grown organically with minimal impact on the earth's environment, then it becomes an eco-friendly garment. Here is a list of shops on the Internet that propose some organic alternatives:

### French websites

[www.modetic.com](http://www.modetic.com)

You have the possibility of buying their products online. The shipping of the goods is free if you purchase for a minimum of 150 euros. The cost of these products, how-



ever, doesn't fit everyone's pocketbook.

[www.somewhere.fr/vente-en-ligne/default.aspx](http://www.somewhere.fr/vente-en-ligne/default.aspx)

This is a subsidiary of *La Redoute* — inexpensive organic clothes but a very limited choice. Nevertheless, go back to it often as it probably will expand its offerings...

[www.planetecoton.com](http://www.planetecoton.com)

Another website dedicated to making clothes out of organic cotton – website available in English and German.

[www.ethnica.com](http://www.ethnica.com)

A website which has a nice selection of T-shirts. Many shops available in many cities in France.

<http://cestcoton.com>

They have a nice selection of undergarments for children, women and men. You can also find towels...

[www.poetik.org](http://www.poetik.org)

Fun ! T-shirts with poems in Japanese, French and Spanish. Limited Edition

### English websites

[www.hug.co.uk](http://www.hug.co.uk)

[www.indigoclothing.com](http://www.indigoclothing.com)

[www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com)

[www.biocoton.com](http://www.biocoton.com)

[www.rawganique.com](http://www.rawganique.com)

[www.timberland.com](http://www.timberland.com)



*Cotton producing is a very resource-consuming, polluting and unhealthy industry. ©David Nance.*

## About Cotton (cont'd)

### Lexique des tissus (vocabulary of fabrics)

**Le tissu** = cloth  
**Le lin** = linen  
**La laine** = wool  
**La laine mohair** = mohair wool  
**L'angora** = angora  
**Le cashmere** = cashmer  
**La soie** = silk  
**Le synthétique** = synthetic  
**Le velours** = velvet or also corderoy  
**Le satin** = satin  
**La toile** = linen  
**La flanelle** = flanel  
**Le cuir** = leather  
**Bio** = organic

**L'approche naturelle** = the natural way  
**Fait main** = hand made  
**Envoyé à l'usine** = sent to the factory  
**La couture** = sewing



### Vêtements et accessoires (Clothes and accessories)

**Une veste** = a jacket  
**Un manteau** = a coat  
**Un pull (ou pull-over)** = a pullover, a sweater  
**Une chemise d'homme** = a man's dress shirt  
**Une chemise de nuit** = a nightgown/dress  
**Un t-shirt (ou tee-shirt)** = a t-shirt  
**Un pantalon** = a pair of pants

**Un short** = a pair of shorts  
**Une cravate** = a tie  
**Un costume** = a suit (with a tie)  
**Un smoking** = a tuxedo  
**Une robe** = a dress  
**Une jupe** = a skirt  
**Un haut** = a top  
**Un survêtement** = a training suit  
**Un maillot de bain** = a bathing suit  
**Les chaussures** = shoes  
**Les bottes** = boots  
**Un foulard** = a scarf  
**Un châle** = a shawl  
**Une écharpe** = a scarf (usually thicker for outside)  
**Des gants** = gloves  
**Un sac à main** = a handbag  
**Un sac à dos** = a backpack



## The Environment in Our Daily Life

### Better light, increased energy savings

The low-energy, economical, long-lasting electric light bulbs (*ampoules*, or *lampes à basse consommation*) are increasingly available on the shelves of super markets and DIY outlets, lighting shops and furniture stores in France.

These relatively new products offer several advantages: they consume five times less electricity and last up to ten times longer. While more expensive initially than conventional incandescent bulbs – the prices range from 4.60

to over 20 € per bulb depending on the manufacturer and the guaranteed longevity – they will be far cheaper in the long run. Replacing 4 normal 60 watt bulbs with 4 low consumption bulbs of 11 watts with the same lighting capacity as 60 watt incandescent bulbs, you can save nearly 200 kilowatts per year. Your up-front investment will be paid back in 2 year's time, and the bulbs are guaranteed for up to 9 years, again depending on the manufacturer.

On the other hand, you should definitely avoid using the nearly omnipresent halo-

gen lamps (*lampes halogène*). They are not only very energy hungry, but also produce high temperatures that are potentially dangerous. A single halogen lamp with a 350 watt ele-

ment used just 3 hours per day will gobble up a total of 380 kilowatts per year, which is the equivalent of 23 low-energy lamps!

### Des mots à connaître

**Additif alimentaire** = additive, often chemical molecules, added to processed food  
**Alimentation bio** = organic food  
**Amiante** = asbestos  
**Bactérie** = bacteria  
**Biodégradable** = biodegradable  
**Chlore** = chlorine  
**Déchets** = waste, garbage  
**Déchetterie** = waste collection centre  
**Dioxyde d'azote** = nitrogen dioxide  
**Eau potable** = drinking water  
**Eaux usées** = waste (grey) water  
**Emballages** = packaging  
**Gaz toxique** = toxic gas  
**Incinération** = incineration  
**Monoxyde de carbone** = carbon monoxide  
**OGM (organismes génétiquement modifiés)** = GMO (genetically modified organisms)  
**Pesticides** = pesticides  
**Produits chimiques** = chemical products  
**Produits toxiques** = toxic products  
**Récupération des déchets** = recovery of recyclable waste material  
**Recyclage** = recycling  
**Tri sélectif** = sorting of recyclable items prior to depositing them in the appropriate recycling bins



Deux types d'ampoules à basse consommation.

## *In the Next Issue of French Accent*

- **Scenario of the Month. Do I have to, or should I?** The essential usage of "falloir" and "devoir".
- **Interview of the Month.** Find out how James and Elma have adapted so well to retirement in France.
- **Real Life. Going to the Doctor:** Find a Doctor in your area, and learn how to explain to him about your health situation.
- **Tips & Traps. The jungle of Internet providers** And more typical French bureaucratic boondoggles.
- **This is France. Typical organized recreational games for get-togethers and fund raising purposes.** Many French people spend the Sunday afternoon at their local community centre playing lotto, "belote", tarot... A great way to socialize, improve your French, and win exciting prizes.
- **French Politics. The Political Parties.** Why so many? How are they organized? What role do they play overall in French politics?
- **Our Planet: Recycling of electrical appliances and electronic equipment.** What to do when you don't want them anymore? Who to call?
- **The French Scene. Yannick Noah:** Currently the most popular public figure in France. Known primarily as a tennisman, and now as a singer and human rights activist.

### Le saviez-vous ?

- Laver sa lessive à froid plutôt qu'à 40 degrés permet d'économiser 50% d'électricité consommée lors d'un lavage, et dans la plupart des cas suffit pour obtenir un linge très propre.
- Couvrir ses casseroles en faisant bouillir de l'eau ou cuire des légumes permet d'économiser jusqu'à 25% d'énergie consommée lors de la cuisson.
- Fermer les volets (un geste bien français!), ou des rideaux épais, permet de garder davantage de chaleur à l'intérieur durant l'hiver. On estime que 25% de la chaleur d'une pièce s'échappe par les vitrages.
- Un dépôt de 1 mm de suie dans une chaudière augmente de 7% sa consommation d'énergie. Il faut donc penser à la vérifier et à la nettoyer régulièrement.
- Eteindre ses appareils audiovisuels et informatiques au lieu de les laisser en veille lorsqu'on ne s'en sert pas permet de diminuer de 10% leur consommation en électricité.
- Un robinet qui goutte, même très lentement, risque de faire perdre 4 litres d'eau par heure, soit 35.000 litres par an.
- Fermer le robinet pendant que l'on se brosse les dents, et se rincer au moyen d'un verre à dents, fait économiser 10.000 litres d'eau par an par personne au rythme de trois brossages par jour.
- Conduire sa voiture en souplesse et sans à-coups en ville permet d'économiser entre 20 et 40% de carburant par rapport à ce que l'on dépense lorsqu'on conduit nerveusement... Mais on dépense encore beaucoup moins en prenant un transport en commun ou en se déplaçant en bus ou à vélo : en France, 40% des trajets ne dépassent pas les 2 km !

### Did you know that?

- Washing your laundry in cold water can save up to 50% of the electricity used when washing it at 40 degrees Celsius. In most cases your clothes will be just as clean.
- Putting a lid on your pots while bringing water to a boil or when cooking vegetables can save up to 25% of the energy usually used while cooking.
- Closing your shutters (something that is very French!), or drawing heavy curtains, retains more of the heat inside a room in winter time. It is estimated that 25% of the heat escapes through the window panes.
- A deposit of as little as 1 mm of soot inside a furnace increases its energy consumption by 7%. You should really have them checked and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Turning off your audiovisual or other electronic equipment instead of leaving them on stand by while you aren't using them will save 10% of their electricity consumption.
- A dripping faucet, even a very slow drip, can waste up to 4 litres of water per hour, or 35.000 litres per year.
- Turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth, and rinsing your mouth from a glass, can save 10,000 litres of water per year per person, at a rhythm of 3 brushings a day.
- Driving your car smoothly and avoiding quick starts and stops, can save 20 to 40% of petrol compared to what one might use by driving aggressively... However, much less energy would be consumed if we used a public transportation system, or walked or rode a bike: in France, 40% of the trips are under 2 km!

## ■ The French Scene —



### Taratata...

### *Not Just a TV Broadcast*

If you're looking for something to watch on French TV other than the typical, run-of-the-mill variety shows, **Taratata** is a notable exception to the often bland music shows of television's "wasteland." The show premiered in 1993 on France 2 and is hosted by the French-Egyptian producer known simply as Nagui. The 45 year-old TV and radio host consistently features truly talented musicians, both newcomers to the French



*Nagai.*

music industry and seasoned and well-known artists. His invited guests include French, English, American and other European Rock or Folk music bands and singers. Nagui's sense of humour makes for some exceptional interviews, interspersed with live renditions of his guests' music, and his show, which has made Nagui a very popular personality in the French entertainment industry, continues to enjoy excellent ratings. In fact, *Taratata* was taken off the air in 2000, but because both the public and musical artists clamoured for its return, the show was revived in April 2005.

#### **His interviews are personable and intelligent**

Nagai's, and the show's, success is due largely to his ability to establish a warm and intimate rapport with the singers and the public. His

personable and intelligent interviews allow the audience to discover, for the first time, very talented artists and to be up-to-date with the current French and international music scene. Many English singers who were not well known by the French public became popular thanks to *Taratata*. Each week, the show features a special guest and the program focuses on his or her career. In addition to his featured artist, you will see special guests, many of whom are more popular at that moment than the guest. One of the great joys of *Taratata* is when the various guests join each other on stage for truly unusual performances.

The show has great live music and unexpected duets, along with short interviews. Since the show is recorded in advance, the interviews with the English musicians are subtitled in French!

### Taratata...

### *Plus qu'une émission de télé*

une personnalité très populaire du monde du divertissement en France, continue de jouir d'un taux élevé d'audimat. En fait, l'émission de Nagui fut interrompue en 2000, mais devant la pression du public et des artistes pour le faire revenir, elle a repris en avril 2005.

#### **Un rapport chaleureux et intime avec le public et les chanteurs**

Le succès de Nagui, et de son émission, est dû en grande partie à sa capacité à établir un rapport chaleureux et intime tant avec les chanteurs qu'avec le public. Ses interviews intelligentes et menées sur un ton très personnel permettent aux téléspectateurs de découvrir, pour la première fois, des artistes très talentueux, et d'être au fait de l'état actuel de la scène musicale française et internationale. De nombreux chanteurs anglais qui n'étaient pas très connus du public français sont devenus très populaires grâce à Nagui. Chaque semaine, l'émission met en avant un invité spécial, présentant aussi bien l'individu que sa carrière. Et vous verrez en outre bien d'autres invités, dont beaucoup sont encore plus populaires au moment de l'émission. L'un des temps forts de *Taratata* est lorsque les divers invités se rejoignent sur scène pour des performances tout à fait inhabituelles. L'émission offre ainsi de grands moments de musique en direct, et des duos inattendus, assortis de courtes interviews. Et puisqu'elle est enregistrée en avance, les interviews de musi-

Si vous recherchez quelque chose d'autre à regarder sur les chaînes de télévision française que les émissions de variétés typiques, de qualité très moyenne, *Taratata* est une exception notable dans la jungle des programmes musicaux plutôt fades. Cette émission, qui a été créée en 1993 sur France 2, est animée par le producteur franco-égyptien connu sous le seul nom de Nagui. Ce présentateur-vedette de la radio et de la télévision, âgé de 45 ans, invite constamment des musiciens de vrai talent, aussi bien des nouveaux venus dans le monde de la musique que des artistes célèbres et chevronnés. Parmi eux, des musiciens et chanteurs de rock ou folk français, anglais, américains et d'autres pays d'Europe. Le sens de l'humour de Nagui génère quelques interviews exceptionnelles, entrecoupées par des interprétations en direct de ses invités, et son émission, qui a fait de Nagui

On the show, you can discover various singers such as Simple Minds, Alain Souchon, Hubert Félix Thiéfaine, Zazie, Cali, Devendra Banhart, Ben Ricour, Katie Melua, Sean Paul, Jane Birkin (ex wife of Serge Gainsbourg) and many others...

The show lasts for about an hour and a half followed by a "bonus" where you can see behind the scene rehearsals as well as the preparations for the show.

The show is aired every Friday at 8:50 p.m. on *France 4*, one Friday a month on *France 2* and also on *TV5*, the French International Channel. Check your TV listings for the exact time and dates for the show.

You can also watch all the previously broadcast shows on the internet on the official website of the TV broadcast: [www.taratata.net](http://www.taratata.net)

*Céline and Vincent Anthonioz*

ciens anglais sont sous-titrées en français !

Cette émission permet ainsi de découvrir des artistes tels que Simple Minds, Alain Souchon, Hubert Félix Thiéfaine, Zazie, Cali, Devendra Banhart, Ben Ricour, Katie Melua, Sean Paul, Jane Birkin (ex épouse de Serge Gainsbourg), et bien d'autres...

Elle dure environ une heure et demie et est suivie par un "bonus" vous permettant d'as-

sister à quelques répétitions, et à des préparations de l'émission en coulisses. Taratata est diffusée chaque vendredi à 20h 50 sur *France 4*, un vendredi par mois sur *France 2*, et également sur *TV5*, chaîne internationale en langue française. Les jours et heures sont indiqués sur les programmes de télévision.

On peut aussi visionner toutes les anciennes émissions sur le site web: [www.taratata.net](http://www.taratata.net)

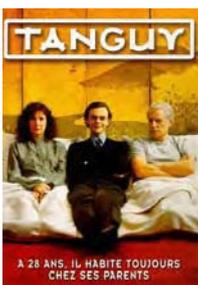
## A Selection of DVDs

Improve your language skills and enjoy French movies at the same time with some French DVDs.

Watching French films on DVD is an excellent way to improve your understanding of spoken French. Most of them have subtitles in French for the hearing impaired (sous-titres "sourds et malentendants") which are great because you get, of course, the actual texts for all the dialogues, but also for all the sounds (such as doors opening, cars passing by, etc.). And, of course, you can also pause and rewind when you haven't quite understood a part of the film.

It's a great way to improve your French, and last but not least, there are a lot of great French movies!

Here are some of our recommendations:



### "Tanguy"

Nowadays, more and more young French people continue to live with their parents until they are as old as 30. This film by Etienne Chatiliez (2001) is an example of this new phenomenon: Tanguy, 28, is very reluctant to move out and find a place of his own. His parents, two very good actors, André Dussolier and Sabine Azéma, are increasingly fed up with this kid who refuses

to become an adult and resort to using subtle ways to convince him to leave. Very funny, and full of great and useful vocabulary...



### "Le promeneur du Champ de Mars"

This film by Robert Guédiguian, released in 2005, is about former French President François Mitterrand, played by the excellent actor Michel Bouquet. The film covers Mitterrand's final years while he was fighting against the prostate cancer that took his life on 8 January 1996.

### "Je vous trouve très beau"



This movie by Isabelle Mergault, released in early 2006, is about a French peasant who has just lost his wife and is looking for another woman who could help him out on his farm. As he cannot find one in France, he travels to Romania where many girls dream of a better life in Western Europe. His new helpmate provides for some intriguing surprises. Funny and moving.

### Where to buy or rent DVDs?

#### Buying

You can buy DVDs in the large stores such as Carrefour, Leclerc, Auchan, etc; or in music stores such as Fnac, Virgin, etc.

There are also a lot of online stores such as:

[www.fnac.com](http://www.fnac.com)

[www.amazon.fr](http://www.amazon.fr)

[www.virginmega.fr](http://www.virginmega.fr)

[www.dvdpascher.net](http://www.dvdpascher.net)

[www.priceminister.com/video-dvd-vhs](http://www.priceminister.com/video-dvd-vhs)

#### Renting

You can always take out a subscription in a video rental store close to your home. Another way of renting is to find one of the automated video distributors that are conveniently located in many cities; (like the "24 self video"). You just need your credit card to rent your DVDs. The choice can be somewhat limited in both of these outlets, however.

An additional convenient and comfortable way to rent DVDs is to rent them online. There is a vastly greater selection of good films, depending on the site, and you have the choice of either paying for a monthly subscription with an exchange system (you get 1, 2 or more DVDs at a time depending on your choice and once you send them back, you get 1, 2 or more, etc.). You can also choose not to subscribe monthly but just pay up front for a certain number of DVDs. You receive your movies in the mail along with a pre-paid envelop to send them back in. Here are some online DVD rental sites:

[www.glowria.fr](http://www.glowria.fr)

[www.locafilm.com](http://www.locafilm.com)

[www.cinehome.com](http://www.cinehome.com)





Renan Luce.  
© www.volubilis.net



La couverture  
de son dernier CD.

## A New French Song: "Les voisines" By Renan Luce

**J'**ai toujours préféré aux voisins les voisines  
Dont les ombres chinoises ondulent sur les volets.  
Je me suis inventé un amour pantomime  
Où glissent en or et noir des bas sur tes mollets.  
De ma fenêtre en face, j'caresse le plexiglas,  
J'maudis les techniciens dont les stores vénitiens  
Découpent en tranches la moindre pervenche.

*J'ai toujours préféré aux voisins les voisines  
Qui sèchent leurs dentelles au vent sur les balcons.  
C'est un peu toi qui danse quand danse la mousseline  
Invité au grand bal de tes slips en coton.  
De ma fenêtre en face, j'caresse le plexiglas,  
Je maudis les ménages inventeurs du sèche-linge  
Plus de lèche vitrine à ces cache-poitrine.*

*J'ai toujours préféré aux voisins les voisines  
Qui voient leurs armoires en quête d'une décision.  
Dans une heure environ, tu choisiras le jean,  
Tu l'enfileras bien sur dans mon champ de vision.  
De ma fenêtre en face, j'caresse le plexiglas.  
Concurrence déloyale de ton chauffage central,*

*Une buée dense interrompt ma transe,  
Puis des effets rideaux et c'est la goutte d'eau.  
Un ravalement de façade me cache ta palissade  
Une maison de retraite, construite devant ma  
fenêtre.  
Sur un fil, par centaines, sèchent d'immenses gai-  
nes.*

Renan Luce is a young new rising talent. He is an excellent author-composer, his lyrics are full of humour and poetry. In this song, he tells the story of a young man who watches a pretty girl who lives across the street, his young "voisine" (neighbour), whom he sees from the window. In the end, she disappears as construction work starts on the house, which turns out to be a retirement home.

His first CD has just been issued. To order it, and to listen to a few excerpts from the CD, click [HERE](#).



And to find out more about him:  
<http://renanluce.artistes.universalmusic.fr>

### Sms talk — How to say it in "real French" (Solutions from page 6)

- Salut Lulu, ça va ? Merci pour ton message pour mon anniversaire.
- Il n'y a pas de quoi (ou: de rien). Je veux (ou: je voudrais) te voir dès que possible pour prendre un verre.
- Peut-être samedi soir? On pourrait aller au cinéma.
- OK (ou: d'accord), c'est génial! Mais je dois être de retour avant minuit car je vais déjeuner chez grand-mère dimanche.
- Super (ou: très bien)! A samedi 20 heures à la maison.
- Entendu (ou: ça marche!); Bises (ou: je t'embrasse).

## La dictée du mois

Marie-Paule, une jeune femme d'une trentaine d'années, n'était pas du tout satisfaite de sa coupe de cheveux. Elle la trouvait moche et démodée. Sa copine lui a suggéré qu'elle aille chez le coiffeur pour se relooker un peu, mais Marie-Paule n'avait ni le temps ni l'argent de s'offrir une nouvelle coiffure. Elle devait toujours se casser la tête pour joindre les deux bouts, car son salaire (tout juste le SMIC) et ses allocations familiales suffisaient tout juste à payer les factures et à faire manger ses deux gosses. Elle en avait vraiment marre et n'en pouvait plus. C'est alors, sorte de miracle tout à fait inattendu, qu'elle a découvert un billet de cent euros que ses parents avaient glissé dans la carte de vœux qu'ils lui avaient envoyée. Elle n'a même pas réfléchi, et a décroché le téléphone pour prendre rendez-vous.

To subscribe, click here



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# Learn French at Home... but not alone!

**No one can fully enjoy life in a foreign country without speaking and understanding the language!**

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From the comfort of your home, we offer "one-to-one lessons" with a French teacher, a real person on the Internet via Skype or on the telephone!  
An extremely efficient and comfortable way of learning!

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-  **Results** - Personalised French lessons and homework will get you positive results on a weekly basis! Read what the students are saying.
-  **Credibility** - Our French teachers are experienced, patient and friendly. Every lesson is backed up with notes and homework. The teacher communicates with the student closely at all time and gives continuous feed-back.
-  **Motivation** - The homework deadlines, the corrections of the teacher and the "question du jour" in our forum will continuously motivate you to learn French and to progress outside of your French classes!
-  **Commitment** - We ask you to commit to only 4 weeks of French lessons at one time! The time and financial risks are minimal.
-  **Recording** - For a small fee, you are able to download a recorder which enables you to record the entire lesson on Skype and to listen to it as many times as you wish. You can also download your lesson on a mp3 file or copy it onto a CD.

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## TESTIMONIALS

*"I like the flexibility of learning this way because I can have weekly lessons regardless of where I am in the world. I am also learning French quicker than other methods or lessons."*  
Paul in Daglan, Dordogne, France.

*"I really enjoy the lessons and my neighbours and friends in my village comment on my progress, so it's great."*  
Alana in Aude, France.

*"Learning French at home, is a brilliant concept... Every time I visit France now my friends and relations remark on how my French is improving and I am amazed at myself sometimes just how much I have learnt."*  
Marian in Backhurst Hill Essex, UK.

*"Since starting with Learn French at Home last March 06, my confidence on the phone and face to face conversation has increased incredibly..."*  
Shelley in Lot et Garonne, France.

*"...When I visited France this summer I was very confident to speak French and found that I was well understood, and didn't revert to english at all."*  
Joanne in Birmingham, UK.

*"The teacher's answers to my questions and explanations of concepts are very clear and I feel like I'm getting a good vocabulary in each lesson."*  
Julie in New York, USA.

*"...Tailored to suit my own needs, it is fun, interesting and, most of all, it's working!!..."*  
Tricia in Dordogne, France.