

Why learn French

Why learn French when there are more than 4000 languages spoken on this planet? After all, English is the world's leading language.

In this article, Nageeb Gounjaria gives 7 good reasons for learning French, showing the relevance of the language of Moliere in areas such as holidays, arts, culture, technology and business.

1 Meaningful Holidays in France

Unlike many other countries where the inhabitants are impressed if you speak ten words in their language, the French tend to think it is normal that everyone speaks French. If you have ever been on a holiday in France you know what we are talking about.

Your trip to France will be greatly enhanced in both ease of communication and friendliness if you speak the language.

2 Better insights into Western culture

Much of the creative thinking that has shaped the western tradition has been done in French. Impressionist painters like Monet, musicians like Ravel and Boulez, novelists like Flaubert, Camus and Sartre have had an influence on world culture.

Jean Calvin helped define Protestantism; Enlightenment writers like Voltaire championed human rights; Simone de Beauvoir was a prominent feminist, and Michel Foucault was a founder of postmodernism.

3 Enhanced career prospects

When deciding on a foreign language for work or school, remember that French is the language that will give you the most choices later on in your career. Being able to speak French is an asset for anyone interested in working in international organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, NATO, OEDC, International Olympic Committee, the European Community, and International Red Cross.

Also, think of French company names that you often come across, such as:

Carrefour	JC Decaux	Michelin
Christian Dior	Lafarge	Peugeot
Danone	L'Oreal	Pierre Cardin
Gillette	Louis Vuitton	Renault

4 Language of technology and medicine

Students and researchers who know French have access to these works for several years before they are translated into English. Many significant works are never translated and remain accessible only to those who know the language.

French universities are highly sought after by students wishing to pursue higher degrees in the field of engineering, physics, medical research and medical genetics.

5 *International friendship*

French is the second most commonly taught second language in the world (after English). During your international trips, it is very likely that your knowledge of French can help you communicate and make friends with people who may also speak French as a second or third language.

6 *The language of arts and culture*

French is the lingua franca of culture, including art, cuisine, dance, fashion and design. France has won more Nobel Prizes for literature than any other country in the world and is one of the top producers of international films

7 *A better understanding of English*

Strange as it may sound, studying French will enhance your knowledge of English. More than a third of all English words are derived directly or indirectly from French. It's estimated that English speakers who have never studied French already know 15,000 French words. It has been claimed that 60% of the English language is nothing but mispronounced French.

The two languages, in fact, share a lot of cognate words. In fact, English has borrowed more words from French than any other languages. Here are some examples:

<i>curieux</i>	(curious)	<i>hôte</i>	(host)	<i>papier</i>	(paper)
<i>mariage</i>	(marriage)	<i>biologie</i>	(biology)	<i>artificiel</i>	(artificial)
<i>capitaine</i>	(captain)	<i>bébé</i>	(baby)	<i>anniversaire</i>	(anniversary)
<i>forêt</i>	(forest)	<i>dangereux</i>	(dangerous)	<i>couleur</i>	(color)

In fact, you may be surprised by the amount of French you already speak or know!

Chic
Bon Voyage
Touché
A la carte

Bon appétit
C'est la vie
crème caramel
cuisine

déjà vu
eau de toilette
encore
femme fatale

About the author



Born in Mauritius (Ile Maurice) and growing up internationally, Nageeb Gounjaria has native bilingual proficiency in French and English. He has a Masters degree in Philosophy (specialising in Language and Culture) from the National University of Singapore, and he is also a Global Mobility Specialist, advising expatriates from Fortune 500 companies on the best learning methods. He regularly conducts teacher training in Europe, Asia and Africa. Nageeb is currently the Director of French Faster, an online French language school that specialises in Accelerated Learning and helps hundreds of students everyday to learn French faster, smarter and cheaper through blended e-learning.