

Tips and Tricks for Maintaining French-Language Skills When You Don't Live in France



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Eve Lindemuth Bodeux



Speaker Background

- Studying French since I was 12!
- Professional FR to EN translator
- Lived in France as an undergrad, grad degree from French univ
- Most recently spent 5 months in France with my family
- Married to a Frenchman
- Obsessed with raising my kids bilingually



What About You?

- Personal reasons for maintaining French?
- Professional reasons for maintaining French?





Say what?



- Hear / understand others (verbal input)
- Read / understand others (written input)
- Speak / make oneself understood (verbal output)
- Write / make oneself understood (written output)



Just do it!

- Tired after translating all day?
- Incorporate wide variety of French input: make it fun, not just professional!
- Exposure, exposure, exposure!
- Practice builds confidence, practice makes perfect.

Hearing / Understanding Others

- Listen to wide variety of inputs, for professional and pleasure!

News, music, talk shows, cultural, movies, sports, subject matter areas...

- Podcasts – free, plentiful, levels from beginning to native: listen on MP3 player, online, stream to phone



- RFI's Le journal en français facile + transcripts
- Europe1 podcasts: La revue de presse, On va s'gêner, etc.
- Radio France: cultural, infos, etc.
- BFM radio for French business
- FranceInfo Jr (for kids or the rest of us)
- Feuilleton – books read aloud
- Political commentary podcasts abound.
- **TuneIn Radio website or app:** Location > Continent > choose city in your favorite French-speaking country


A note about audio books...

- Audiobooks not a “thing” in France
- Some available through audible.fr, amazon.fr, amazon.ca, www.lalibrairiesonore.com, Spotify.com
- Tiny selection compared to US
- Nothing like selection in US:
 - Cultural reasons?
 - US driving culture?
 - Not a popular pastime.


Learning with *CLOM*

- cours en ligne ouverts et massifs: *CLOM* = *MOOC* – *massive open online course*
- French govt initiative: France université numérique (FUN) - www.france-universite-numerique.fr/
- Sign up for free, online courses from major French universities!
- Also: www.coursera.org and click on courses in French


Music

- Learn new vocabulary, get a cultural boost, and relax or shake your booty!
 - CDs
 -  – iTunes
 - YouTube to discover new music
 - Spotify (originated in Europe) to stream it in your car – follow French playlists!


Videos/Film

- YouTube
 - French TV shows
 - Cooking Shows
 -  – Fashion Shows
 - Search topics of interest to *you* (in French)
 - Try “series télévisées françaises”
 - Be wary of searching the word “French”

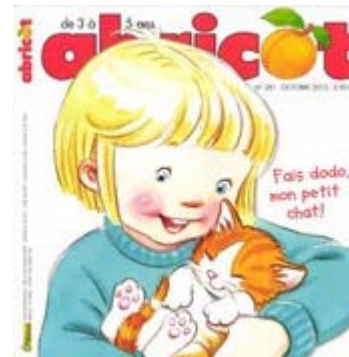
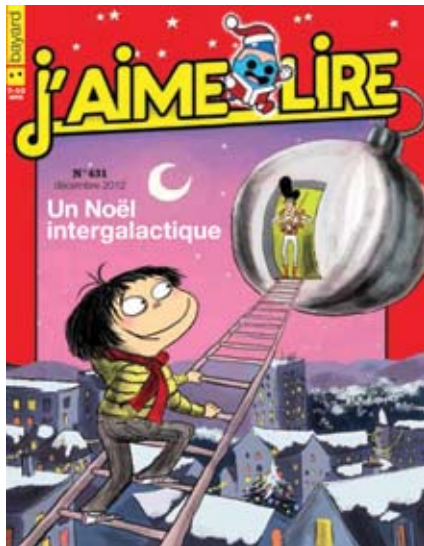
Videos/Film

- DVDs
 - French track
 - *French* subtitles
 -  Your local library
- NetFlix Streaming
- iTunes
- French TV online: VPN to watch French TV on the Internet outside France

Read / Understanding Others

- The 21st Century Book!
 - Order hard copy from France / Canada
 - Try ordering in US
 - Interlibrary loans
 -  Kindle / iPad – French / Canadian / US accounts
 - Google search: “livres gratuits” + pdf or other
 - Project Gutenberg: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks (free, many languages)
 - Monolingual dictionaries (think in French!)
 - Read a book and write a review (for yourself or to share)
 - French language book club (virtual or in person)

Magazines / News



LE FIGARO · fr ACTUALITÉ ▾ ECONOMIE ▾ SPORT ▾ CULTURE ▾



Si la manifestation bretonne devait dégénérer samedi à Quimper, c'est le ministre de l'Intérieur qui se retrouverait en accusation.
» **Ayrault met en garde contre la spirale de la violence**

Quimper en ébullition se prépare à accueillir le rassemblement breton

🗨 Réactions (141)

VIDÉO - Des milliers de manifestants bretons sont attendus samedi dans les rues de Quimper, entre appel au calme et tentative de violence.

Poetry

- Poetry and poets are important to France's cultural identity.
- Reading/studying poetry is a true exercise in understanding.
- Read compilations to identify poets you like.
- Check out: <http://poesie.webnet.fr>
- Order a book!

Blogs

- Professional and Subject Matter Specific/Fun
- Translation Blogs (in French):
 - <http://www.encathymini.fr/duboutdeslettres/>
 - <http://lespilesintermediaires.blogspot.com/>
 - <http://mavoisinemillionnaire.com/>
 - <http://www.trematranslations.com/fran%C3%A7ais/blog/>
 - <http://www.nakedtranslations.com/fr/blog>
- Example Topic of Interest (French and Food!)
 - <http://chocolateandzucchini.com/vf/>
 - <http://www.leconfitcestpasgras.com/>
 - <http://www.mercotte.fr/>
 - <http://www.lesgourmandisesdisa.com/>

Written Expression

- Prepare for an exam aimed at native speakers (subject area)
- Keep contact with your friends in French-speaking lands...and actually write to them!
- Follow Twitter accounts focused on grammar/language use:
 - @1fauteparjour
 - @Magistrad_Plus
- Take a French writing or poetry class (online or in person)
- Create a study group (online or in person)
- Participate in French discussion lists (professional or subject interest)
- Practice writing to clients

Or, go back to school!

Study for the Bac - for free

- <http://www.kartable.fr/>

- Math

- Physics

- History

- French grammar

- Geography

- Or, learn Spanish or German via French!

Social Media

- Twitter
 - Translation related
 - Actors, Journalists, Musicians, Public Figures, etc.
- Facebook
 - Translation Related
 - Shops, News Outlets, Musicians, etc.
- Read and React (Write)



Teach it!

- Teach your kids/grandkids/someone else's kid French (or use that as your excuse).
- French picture books are gorgeous.
- You will learn vocabulary (and cultural references) you may otherwise miss.
- Folk songs (nursery rhymes) are rich with vocabulary and history.

Vocabulary Fun

- Audio Flash Cards

Julie Sellers' article in [The ATA Chronicle](#) - June 2012, pp 24 – 28


- Frayer Vocabulary Model



Frayer Vocabulary Model

<p><i>Definition</i></p> <p>Heureux résultat; caractère favorable de ce qui arrive. Fait, pour quelqu'un, de parvenir à un résultat souhaité. Évènement particulier qui constitue un résultat très heureux pour quelqu'un.</p>	<p><i>Characteristics</i></p> <p>Réussite Triomphe Victoire Prosperité Bonheur</p>
<p>Succès</p>	
<p>Le fait d'accomplir ses objectifs. Être reconnu dans sa profession. Être reconnu par le grand public. Être satisfait d'un travail accompli.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p>	<p>Échec Malchance Faillite Naufrage</p> <p><i>Antonyms</i></p>

Speaking

- Facility in understanding/writing does not necessarily equal fluid speaking skills.
- Practice, practice, practice!
 - Read out loud!
 -  – Maintain relationships (Skype, Phone)
 - Practice speaking to clients (and then call them!)
 - Audio/video tape yourself and playback.
 - “Shadow” media (podcasts/youtube) to practice pronunciation, intonation, phrasing
 - Attend professional events in France/Canada
 - Travel / short, medium or long-term immersion

Thank you!

Eve Lindemuth Bodeux



go-global@bodeuxinternational.com

eve@adventuretranslators.com

bodeuxinternational.com
speakingoftranslation.com