

FRENCH - A FEW FACTS

document prepared by Dr David ELDER Edith Cowan University

There are more than **100** good reasons to study French

- It is not limited to one or two continents.
- French is spoken in **two** of the **G7** countries (and the Francophone group in the European Union will be the largest in 2007 with the entrance of Bulgaria and Romania).
- France is the world's major tourist destination (**77 million** tourists a year). (An industry worth 34.5 billion euros in 2002).
- France is Europe's foremost investor abroad.
- France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany have the lowest rates of inflation in the European Union.
- (This is an indicator of the health of these countries.)
- France: one of the world's biggest economies.
- L'Île-de-France (the region around Paris) is the richest region in the European Union (with less than 3% of the inhabitants of the 15 member states and yet it produces 4.5% of its wealth. *Le Monde* 17.09.03 *Statistics (Insee)* (A positive sign for joint projects, business and scientific co-operation.)
- France is renowned for the quality of its high tech. (The TGV is the fastest train in the world - 515 kph)
- French is the official language of the International Red Cross.
- France is one of the two official languages at the Olympic Games.
- French-speaking Africa represents an area larger than the USA.
- French is the most widely taught second language after English.
- French is one of the official languages of the United Nations.
- French is a major language of high tech and business in the world.
- French: a major language for classical and contemporary European music from opera, musical comedies to rap with its strong Franco-African influences.
- French: a major source of literary theory.
- French: a major source of contemporary philosophy.
- French: a major source of communication theory.
- French: a major source of education theory.
- French: a major source of sociology theory.
- France: a key contributor to world of fashion and design.
- France: a key contributor to high technology, industrial innovations, medical research and creativity.
- France: a key contributor to world of *haute cuisine*.
- France: a key contributor to the development of democracy.
- Paris had 1,100 congresses in 1993 (including 400 international congresses) - a world record.
- France has the world's greatest number of Nobel Prize winners in literature (12).
- Montréal is the second largest French-speaking city in the world.
- *Le Courier Australien*, founded in 1892, is the oldest ethnic newspaper in Australia.
- PARIS is considered the capital of the world in terms of quality of life (Healey and Baker 1991.)

- « From 1999 to 2005, France's exports to Australia doubled, increasing from 1.2 billion to 2.4 billion euros (+ 3.7% from 2004 to 2005).
- From 2001 to 2004, France's trade surplus (excluding defence) more than doubled, increasing from 0.8 billion to 1.4 billion euros in 2004, with the same figure again in 2005.
- If defence equipment (helicopters, etc) export figures are included, total exports from France to Australia reached 3.1 billion euros in 2005, an increase of 18.1% on 2004.
- Approximately 270 French companies have subsidiaries in Australia.
- French companies employ approximately 85,000 Australians. »

French Embassy in Australia

http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=601

Note that the figures quoted above do not include those from Canada, Belgium, Switzerland...

- Australia's biggest defence company, ADI is to become 100% French. It will be owned by military and aerospace giant THALES. *Thales Australia* will have a turnover of about A\$1 billion and it currently employs 3,500 people. (See *The Australian* Oct. 2, 2006. p. 4)

- **See also the importance of French in the USA**
- ("**French: The Most Practical Foreign Language**" by Richard Shylock at
- [<http://www.fl.vt.edu/French/whyfrench.html>] (consulted Oct 3, 2006) This site is regularly updated.)

REMEMBER THAT:

- Learning French will improve the skills you bring to your international career.
- It is also the most widely taught TEE LEVEL LANGUAGE subject in schools in Western Australia.
- There are also possibilities for work with a Trade Commission.
- the United Nations.
- the diplomatic service.
- French research institutes.

AND REMEMBER THE OTHER 51 GOOD REASONS:

51 member states and governments belong to the *Francophone* International Organisation. Of these, **28** have French as an official language.

SÉLECTION DES PAYS OÙ L'ON PARLE FRANÇAIS
SELECTION OF COUNTRIES WHERE FRENCH IS SPOKEN

Algeria
Belgium
Benin
Bulgaria
Burkina
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Cote d'Ivoire
Djibouti
Dominica
Egypt
France
Gabon
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Haiti
Laos
Luxembourg
Madagascar Republic
Mali
Mauritania
Moldova
Monaco
Morocco
Niger
Romania
Rwanda
Senegal
Seychelles
St. Lucia
Switzerland
Togo
Tunisia
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Zaire

Note also:

Pondichéry, India

U.S. : In the United States, French speakers number 1.5 million. They are located in the New England States and in Louisiana where both French and English are the legal, official languages.

Canada: The official languages of Canada are both French and English.

Native speakers total 5 million. Montréal is the second largest Francophone city in the world! Québec came very close to forming its own country on October 30, 1995. It was close - it was defeated only by a small margin.

NOTE ALSO THE FOLLOWING FRENCH RECORDS.

FRENCH AND HIGH TECH

The fastest train in the world - the TGV = 515 kph
Airbus (with Germany) - a major money earner and an example of outstanding technology.
Concorde (with Great Britain) was a major revolution in aviation engineering.
Not to mention the important contributions of the Pasteur Institute.

TOURISM

The world's main tourist destination: **77 million tourists**
The world's two biggest sailing ships are:
Club Med 1 and *Club Med 2* (187 metres long and 5 masts each 50 metres tall)

CONGRESSES in PARIS

1,100 in 1993 (including 400 international congresses) a world record

QUALITY OF LIFE

PARIS is the capital of the world in terms of quality of life (Healey and Baker 1991)

SIZE OF COUNTRY

The largest country in Europe = 549,000 square kilometres
• France has over **15 million hectares of forests** – **more that a quarter of the country.**
• The land under forest has doubled since 1850, and is increasing by about 30,000 hectares a year.
http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr/spip/ressources.themes.foretbois_r36.html

LITERATURE

France has the world's greatest number of Nobel Prize winners in literature (12)

DEMOCRACY

A major protagonist in the defence of human rights

AUSTRALIA

Le Courrier Australien, founded in 1892, is the oldest ethnic newspaper in Australia.
The *Alliance française* was founded in 1883 and the Melbourne branch was created in 1890.
In Perth, the *Alliance française* was created in 1911 thanks to the initiative of Mr Georges Psister.

BY THE WAY, DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- France has over... **400 varieties of cheese!**