

French shorts

These short films cover a range of themes and are at different levels of language. They are authentic films from France with teenage, or young adult, presenters speaking in the way they speak.

Captions and subtitles are used where appropriate to facilitate access.

Some of the films will be most useful for 13-14 Year olds (e.g. Year 9 in National Curriculum, S2 in Scotland) while some may be more relevant to 14-16 year olds (Key stage 4, Standard Grade) depending on the age they begin to learn French and their achievement.

To follow any of the films students will need to have a basic knowledge of French, and some require more confidence in dealing with authentic spoken language.

Several of the films have content selected specifically to **motivate** pupils at the time they make their options for continuing study.

Other films focus specifically on relevant **cultural** information, or on illustrating the language in use in a **vocational** context.

The French language content is rich, and so are the pictures! Often the images within the film create in themselves interesting subjects for conversation and for learners to ask questions about.

An initial viewing activity can usefully focus on the

- People
- Places
- Contexts
- Backgrounds

.. within the film, rather than an immediate engagement with the audio content, which can form the focus for a subsequent viewing.

For each film the following notes describe the **content** and suggest specific **teaching points** or **learning outcomes**.

Generic strategies

Additionally, any of the films can be used

- to engage students in responding to images (by encouraging them to describe, to offer opinions, to make comparisons, or by raising awareness of pronunciation and intonation)
- to encourage students to rebuild spoken text by re-playing the clip several times
- for listening discrimination (by selecting key words or phrases for them to spot while viewing)

- for gist comprehension (by asking them to identify the general theme of a film or provide a subtitle for a film)
- to encourage speculation on what will happen next, what the consequence will be, etc.
- to expose students to a longer piece of language, with support of pictures
- to encourage spontaneous interaction, through questions or comments in French

The more detailed suggestions are for teachers aiming to use the films to give the class a stimulus for **using** French themselves, or for **learning** from the French in the film.

BON APPETIT!

'La cuisine française est très célèbre'

In this film the young presenters Lucie and Constance show students how to make some archetypal French dishes :

Escargots

Salade composée

Croque-monsieur

Crêpes

Cultural comparisons are rich in the many images we see of cooks at work, of the preparation of ingredients, of people dining and, of course, of food!

Learning outcomes within the language could include : how to talk about the **immediate future**, **sequencing** ideas, expressing **opinions**, using the pronoun **'on'**.

Keywords: maintenant, je vais + verb, on va + verb, il faut + verb, on y met ..., d'abord, puis, voilà, pour finir, pour + verb.

Students may need some preparation for the joke about locating and preparing snails! Some research will soon identify the lengthy process actually used for getting edible snails ready to eat. Students are sure though to have opinions to express about the idea of snails as a dish though!

For each course, students could note the sequence for the recipes, or pick out the key verbs: je mélange, je mets, etc. in order to write a version of the recipe out. (The ingredients are labelled on screen for reference.)

In order to make use of this language they could then write instructions for a recipe they know how to make (or invent one, of course.)

With a focus on viewing and acquiring French from the film, they could observe a recipe and identify from context the meanings of such words as:

Laitue

Avocat

Concombre

Carottes

Moutarde

Huile

Vinaigre

Farine

.. all of which are seen on screen.

POURQUOI VIVRE A PARIS?

This film explores the experiences of 'foreigners' living in Paris. As non-native speakers, they do make errors in their French which students can look out for. This could be the basis of a listening activity for more acute listeners:
Vous remarquez des erreurs? And/or Vous avez remarqué des erreurs ?

The interviewees talk about using French for their work, as well as explaining what they learn as people by travelling and working abroad, and what choices people have nowadays about where they study, work and live.

Language points: giving **reasons**, expressing **opinions**.

Keywords: parce que + phrase, pour + verb phrase, incroyable, pas mal, formidable, joli, intéressant, je trouve que .. étranger, la qualité de vie, les différences ,la culture

As well as using the interviews the visuals in the film are powerful and interesting. We see some of the sights of Paris, fashion shows and some street, river and park scenes which give a good visual stimulus for language work on description, or comparison, or simply for spotting things students recognise or are curious about.

Students might watch the interviews and begin to extract key points they learn about the young adults, in order to produce an information file about them afterwards. As usual in viewing a foreign language film, they will need to view the film more than once to extract the detail they need.

They give details such as:

How long they have been in Paris

What they do

Where they come from

Why they chose Paris

Firstly we meet a Canadian fashion designer, then a British actress who works in a bookshop, and finally a young diplomat.

The section on *Les avantages de vivre à Paris* offers rich listening stimulus, and ideas of language for students to use themselves when preparing a similar topic. Comparisons can be made on *la qualité de vie*.

The section on *erreurs de grammaire* aims to be reassuring ! You can survive even if you do make mistakes !

Students can look out for the errors the interviewees claim to make most often, and compare with their own linguistic worries.

Les Français aiment bien quand les Anglais essayent de parler français. C'est charmant !

The final section : *Pourquoi vivre à Paris ?* opens the opportunity for students to produce a parallel piece of writing / speaking about why people live in this country / region.

MA PASSION: LA DANSE

Laura is a talented dancer who introduces us to the style of dance which has taken over her free time: hiphop.

As well as linking to the topic of Free Time and Hobbies, particular learning outcomes in this film are how to **talk about the past and the present** .

Keywords: j'ai commencé ... , j'ai aimé ... , j'ai fait plusieurs cours etc.
depuis l'age de 6 ans
j'aime pratiquer, je fais 3 heures, je m'amuse

Laura speaks in detail of her beginnings in dance; students will need to view this section several times to pick out the key details of her progress before meeting her current teacher, P Fly.

Laura and P Fly use many words students would recognise if they see them written down, because they are (semi-)cognates with English.
Allowing for French pronunciation they should listen carefully to spot these words (appearing in this order):

moderne
Old School
New Style
choréographe
professionnel
fluide
style
feeling
motivé
talent

As well as picking out biographical details students should watch put for Laura's definitions of:

Le lock
Le bob
New Style

Laura's description of her week provides a framework (and some key language) for students to speak or write about their own activity, with a structure of days of the week.

QUI EST-CE?

This is a quiz film, featuring famous French people from the past, and from a range of walks of life.

It could be used as part of a topic to create a display about famous people, maybe as part of a special event, such as a July 14th. celebration, or for the European Day of Languages, or a Parents' evening.

Research into other famous people would allow students to create further questions and clues, as Corto does, with images findable on relevant websites.

As well as this important cultural information about iconic names from French culture, a key language point is how to **describe famous people**.

Cognates (or near cognates) are a source of interest and can help steer students through the quiz, as they spot words like:

personnalité

célèbre

styliste

célébrité

général

empereur

bataille

héroïne

football

capitaine

Before each quiz item students can prepare certain things:

They are likely to hear dates (of birth, of major events, of death) and should check they know the numbers used in saying years. (NB On screen text at the end of each question gives a further opportunity for reading these dates.)

They may hear vocabulary of professions, and can usefully do some dictionary research into words such as politician, writer, novelist, painter, etc. which they think may come up.

Sound effects as well as images of the Grévin sculptures will give clues!

Corto's quiz is an excellent opening for students to generate their own quiz about famous historical people from France, or their own country, following the same sort of model and using some of his keywords:

Il est né, Il a écrit, Il a créé, Il était connu

Il s'habille .., il porte ... , il a présenté ...

C'était, il a été, il a gagné

Elle est née... , elle a entendu..., c'est ...

Il joue .., il a marqué... , il a donné un coup de tête

JE SUIS ECOLOGISTE

Marie starts from the point of view: *Il faut être écologiste de nos jours. Nos grands-parents, nos parents ont détruit la planète.*

She is a passionate ecologist and her passion spills over into her speaking style, for which students need to be prepared. She takes no prisoners (and has a curious taste in vegetables!)

Learning outcome: How to give **advice**

Keywords: il faut savoir / ... , il nous revient .., comment éviter ? en faisant des petits gestes, N'oublie jamais .. , Ne fais pas couler l'eau, on peut recycler, il est plus pratique de .., mets ton pull, enlève ton pull, on peut faire pousser des légumes, il faut marcher, je préfère prendre les transports en commun

Many of the themes Marie addresses use language which is very similar in French and English and a useful pre-viewing activity would be to brainstorm with the class what that specialized language might be.

They will though still need to watch the film several times to pick out the gist of her advice.

The subtitles within the film structure the commentary:

Sauver la planète

L'eau

Le recyclage

L'électricité

Le chauffage

Au jardin

A l'épicerie

Le transport

As so often it may be helpful to begin exploitation of the film from the pictures. The images within the film illustrate ecological issues very well, and could provide in themselves a background to which students could put their own commentary in French, or ask their own questions. They might do this after the brainstorm and before listening to Marie's own commentary, in order to get into the swing.

They could also be : viewing the film with the volume turned down and suggesting in their own words what Marie might be saying; this is a valuable pre-listening task in any case.

COMPRENEZ-VOUS LES FRANCAIS?

Elie investigates some of the more risky stereotypes about the French, namely their attitude to frogs' legs, bathing, driving, romance and the English.

Learning outcomes: asking **personal questions**, **asking someone out**

Keywords: est-ce que les Français se lavent? est-ce qu'ils conduisent ? ... mangent ? ... vous pensez ? vous avez pris une douche ?
Que pensent les Français ? vous avez goûté aux cuisses de grenouille ?

Comment ... ? sortir avec moi, Pour le weekend ? envie de + verb, rencontre, tu fais quoi ce soir ?

The images of Paris intercut with the interviews can be used for students to create captions or soundbites, as if preparing an advertising campaign. This would fit well after the section describing romantic meeting places in Paris! *'Visitez Paris! Cherchez l'amour!'*

Clearly the interview questions are fairly impertinent! It is interesting for students to focus on the reaction they get from the passers-by. This is an opportunity to introduce language of mood description, as well as to listen to the detail of the replies. *How do people react? Are they patient? Irritated? Amused? etc.*

In particular the advice on asking someone out could form the basis for other ideas on how to carry out this significant sort of language transaction.
What does the girl recommend?
Would you recommend the same thing?

Just as Elie interviews Parisians on these themes, students could invent questions to ask a British public about similar stereotypes. What do 'foreigners' think of the British? Is there an equivalent to *cuisses de grenouille*?

LES DEVOIRS

Félix has weekend homework to do on the statues and sculptures of Paris; he's not enjoying it! The film introduces us to these mini-monuments, as well as to the Métro, through the intervention of a mysterious telephone voice leaving messages and clues for a Treasure Hunt around the capital.

As well as the cultural information gleaned from this expedition, the key language functions of the film include giving **instructions** and making **hypotheses**.

Keywords: Cherchez ..., Tu dois trouver ... , Il faut que je trouve ... Trouve ... , Tu vas + verb,
Peut-être ..., qu'est-ce qui se passe ? Si tu veux ..., Je crois que c'est ...

Starting with the pictures there are opportunities to understand language from context :

e.g. the mobile phone shows a call from 'Inconnu' – what could it mean?

Félix has terse exchanges with his mother: these could be a basis for role playing activities, asking students to perform the scenes again, or create new scenes in similar tense mood, involving discussion, argument or contradiction, on daily topics which create friction.

The telephone voice is treated to sound mysterious; this adds challenge to the task of interpreting the messages. Some hints to understanding come from the emphasis, e.g. *exactement*.

The clues are to locate:

Une dame avec une torche (Statue de la Liberté)

Deux amants qui s'embrassent éternellement (Le baiser, musée Rodin)

Une montre qui a fondu (espace Dali)

Students can record the journey that Félix makes in note form, for subsequent writing up in continuous text.

In a class with access to reference resources, some student research may be possible prior to viewing, and/or further public sculptures be researched afterwards.

Students could consequently design a Hunt around Paris based on maps and photos they find in such research.

UN TOUR DE FRANCE

This documentary from the France Miniature tourist attraction takes the viewer on a rapid Tour de France of some of the famous sites:

Saint-Tropez

Arles

Carcassonne

Lourdes

Limoges

Chenonceaux

Le Mont Saint-Michel

Lyon

Versailles

Paris

The film is principally useful as a collection of images to stimulate interest and questions, but there are also examples of **describing a place**.

However, alongside the 'postcard' images, we hear some factual information and anecdotal tales. Some of the stories are also supported by sound effects. In thinking ahead before they view students should be asked to consider what sort of language they might hear describing monuments, towns and cities.

The sights are introduced by a graphic map of France ; students could have such an outline map to hand in order to track whereabouts the sites are on the map, and make brief accompanying notes of what they are like.

Alternatively a key piece of language (which is supported visually by the film) could be identified for each site, and students challenged to extract what they think the meaning is from the film, e.g.

Arles: corrida

Carcassonne: fortifiée

Lourdes: grotte

Limoges: couverte

Keywords: Nous sommes ici + exemples, pour passer des vacances, les arènes ont servi à ..., elles servent à ..., une jolie histoire, connais-tu l'histoire de ... ? la première ..., nous voyons ..., autrefois, site touristique, il a été construit, il est célèbre pour ..., tu dois reconnaître ...

Students could select one of the places to do further research on, or write a postcard from that place saying what they have visited, or plan the journey there using maps and timetables.

Having seen the 10 examples of presenting a tourist sight students can pick a sight of their own, In France or in the UK about which to produce a similar presentation.

C'EST MOI A LA TELE!

At the Cité des Sciences, Flore and Violaine play at being TV presenters in the simulated TV studio.

As we see their mishaps in dealing with equipment ,being prepared and the weather we also meet a lot of language to do with giving **advice**.

Students can look and listen out for the disagreements and accidents that occur, and try to explain what they are in French:

Who will read the weather?

Why wasn't the newsreader told her hair was a mess?

How do you control the camera?

Why is the prompter going so fast?

Why does noone pick up the phone?

Which way is North?

Why can't you just hold on to the weather icons?

The simulated newscast sketch includes humorous points which students should expect – it's not just mistakes!

The news stories are illustrated by photos, and students could work in pairs to work out what the significance is

- of boxers in a story about politics
- of a fridge in a story about global warming
- of pâté in a story about Prince William
- of Zidane in a story about ping pong

The weather report includes useful weather language, of course, illustrated with **extreme** weather conditions.

This sketch could be the inspiration for groups of students to create a script, or performance, of a news programme of their own in French.

Keywords: conseils importants, n'oubliez pas ..., ne perdez pas patience, faites attention, il faut bien se concentrer, il ne faut pas oublier,

VIDEO-BLOG

Jules and Julie present their video blog of a week in their life, complete with subtitles in English for those who like or want them (principally fans of Julie who speaks very fast!) and other images to illustrate their tales.

The principal language topic for both of them is how to talk about **everyday problems**; they both use examples of various **tenses**.

Keywords: aujourd'hui, je me suis battu, nous nous sommes disputés, j'ai une audition de piano, je suis stressée ; il y a eu un éclair, je me suis levé à midi, désastre, dégoûtant, je me suis évanouie, ça fait mal, enflé, il fallait que je ne bouge pas, c'est difficile, ils me manquent, mes parents m'ont accusé..., je suis un peu déçue, j'ai eu des problèmes.

The advantage of the English subtitles is that students can compare the spoken French with an English version; they can view the film several times and each time recognise more of the equivalences, pick up on intonation and on pronunciation.

Jules tells the stories of his fighting with his sister, getting up late, overeating, losing at football and being punished for graffiti.

Students could listen out for his imaginative explanations and excuses:

What was the fight about?

Why was he late?

What was his total food and drink consumption?

Who was to blame for the football match?

Julie by contrast is stressed by her forthcoming piano exam and by a biology lesson. She explains with a great deal of drama, and very rich detail language, which able pupils should explore.

Jules and Julie ask for an email giving details of the viewer's week. This could be written as a factual, real text, or in character as a more exotic person! and could take the form of a blog as well, of course.

LA VIE SANS VUE

This documentary features the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles (INJA) and the story of Louis Braille who was a student there.

It provides points of **comparison** for students to make both with another school system and with the life and aspirations of blind students.

We see some images of the school itself, which allows contrast with familiar school buildings, opportunity for using adjectives and asking questions.

We meet Sophie-Victoire and Gaëlle, who give us not only the usual **personal identification** information, but also reflect on how they use their senses to deal with everyday life and study. Examples of specially made resources are visible in the school.

The history of Louis Braille is, of course, rich in examples of the **Perfect** and other Past tenses, but it is also fascinating in its own right to discover how he refined the reading / writing system pertaining at the time into what we now know as Braille.

Gaëlle reads some of the details of Braille's life from a Braille text.

We are also introduced to the rules of Torball, played by blind and sighted students.

Finally the students tell us of their **future plans**.

This film could be the springboard for students to review their own experiences and achievements at school and begin to explore their own plans for the future. They could be using comparators and other connectives to build contrasts with the French students.

PARIS A 10€

Léah's challenge – to purchase something she wants in Paris with just 10 Euros to spend.

Before viewing students could brainstorm: what sort of shops might she go to? What sort of thing might be affordable? Some revision of numbers will be useful also.

She actually begins in a clothes shop but then moves on to the florist, the *boulangerie-pâtisserie*, and the pet shop, each with its own charm.

The main focus of the film is clearly on cost, with **prices** in prime position. Teachers may wish to play these sections of the film with the sound off at first to encourage students to say the numbers aloud before they hear them spoken. Also using the visual input, students can collect the names and logos of famous shops they see at the start of the film.

In the cheaper clothes shop which Leah visits with her 10 Euros there are plentiful examples of price labels for practice with numbers, as well as other signs.

(And students can of course offer opinions on Léah's taste!)

Before beginning the scenes in the *boulangerie-pâtisserie* and *animalerie* students could brainstorm what they expect to see there (which cakes / animals) and what they expect them to cost.

The scene in the *boulangerie-pâtisserie* could also stimulate some choosing of things to eat, while the pet shop is sure to stimulate some strong opinions from teenagers.