

## WHY FRENCH IS AWESOME!

*(updated Aug. 2017, emprunté au site de l'AATF Connecticut)*

- French is the **most learned** (and most popular) second language in the world after English.\* \* \*

900 million people are currently learning French around the world.\*

- Different studies show that **French is now the 3rd\* or 5th\* most spoken language in the world!**

(by native and secondary speakers).

- By 2050, **French is expected to be the 3rd most spoken language in the world!\***

*(following Mandarin and Spanish or English)*

- French is the only language other than English that is taught and spoken on five continents.\*\*
- French is the 2nd most widely spoken mother tongue AND foreign language in the European Union.
- French is the 2nd most commonly taught language in American schools after Spanish.
- French is the 3rd most spoken language in Connecticut after English and Spanish (2015 census).
- French is the 2nd most frequently used language for international information in the media.
- French is the 3rd most widely used language on the Internet\*.
- French is the 2nd most useful language for business after English.\* (*Top 3: Mandarin, French, Arabic*)
- There are 37 'francophone' countries (23 in Africa) where French is either an official language

(33 countries) or is spoken by at least one in five of the population.

*(The most common languages proclaimed as "official" throughout the world are English, French, Arabic, and Spanish.\*)*

The number of French speakers **has increased by 25%** from about 220 million in 2010 to **274 million in 2017**.\* The number of French speakers in the world has **tripled over the last fifty years**.

French is the means of communication of over a quarter of a **billion** people in Africa, where it is the official language of 18 countries. By 2060, it is expected that partially thanks to the rising of the population of French-speaking Africa, the world's francophone population will rise dramatically to **767,000,000 people**, or 8% of the world's population.\* In Asia and Africa, enrollments in French programs are growing at a rate of 50%.\* French president Emmanuel Macron proclaimed in 2017 that "French will be the first language of Africa - and perhaps the world."\*

### **French (including French creole) is the 4th most spoken language in the United States**

after English, Spanish, and Mandarin.\*

French is the most spoken language after English in 4 US states, and after Spanish in 7 more.\*

Over 11 million Americans speak French and 13 million claim French ancestry.\*

The number of French-speakers in the US has increased by over 25% since 1980.

The French-heritage population of the US has increased by 35% over the past 15 years. (2015)

About 1,100 US colleges and universities offer programs in French or related to French.

In 2014, France was the fourth-most-popular study abroad destination for US college students.

There are over 100 million students in the world learning French (2014).

ALSO: [In 2014, foreign language majors earned the highest average starting salary of all](#)

[liberal arts](#) majors.

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For Connecticut, **France is the number one country for total exports\*** and has held that position for years. **25% of all 2015 export revenues** came from countries where French is an important official language, and nearly 5800 Connecticut companies are involved in exporting. France, Canada, and Belgium account for \$5 billion of purchases of CT manufactured goods.\*

**French is considered by many to be the Romance language most similar to English;** over 50% of all English words can be traced to French,\* so learning French will surely improve your English-language skills, too.

It is estimated that someone who has never studied French already knows approximately **15,000 words** and expressions in the French language.

Studies show that **learning French improves standardized test scores**, enhances critical thinking and problem solving skills, thus helping learners in other subjects like English, Math and Science.

Since 2010, the numbers of those learning French as a foreign language is GOING UP!

**UP 6% on average around the world!**

UP 7% in North Africa and the Middle East

UP 44% in sub-Saharan Africa

UP 4% in Asian and Oceania

UP 2% in America and the Caribbean

## **French is one of the easiest languages for English-speakers to master:**

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (USA) has established the following classification of languages according to their level of difficulty for English-speaking learners to reach a high level of speaking proficiency; the lower the category, the easier for English-speakers to master:

Category I level of difficulty: **French**, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Category II level of difficulty: German

Category III level of difficulty: Greek, Hebrew, Moro, Persian-Farsi, Persian-Afghan,

Turkish,

Uzbek, and Vietnamese.

Category IV level of difficulty: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

French is in the easiest category, and it takes **2-3 times** the instruction hours in Category IV languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean) to reach the same level of proficiency in French.

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In 2017, **France was ranked as having the 2nd best reputation globally** (after Germany...USA was 6th) by the Nation Brands Index,<sup>\*</sup> which measures 50 nations in multiple categories, including governance, exports, culture, people, tourism and immigration/investment.

**France has the 5th/6th largest economy in the world.**<sup>\*\*</sup>

The French-speaking world accounts for **19% of world trade** in goods.\*

In 2017, **France rose to #1 globally for “soft power.”** Soft power combines the use of political values, culture, and foreign policy rather than coercion to influence the world stage.\*

[France](#) possesses the **2nd largest exclusive economic zone** to the world just after the [USA](#).

French is the 2nd business language of the European Zone after English. \*

French is listed as a **language in demand** by the U.S. Departments of Energy and Health and Human Services.

French is required or preferred by **over 50% of international jobs** listed by the U.S. State Department.

Online job listings seeking **bilingualism with French almost tripled** from 2010 to 2015.\*

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics has billed translation and interpretation among the **20 areas of highest need** in the country between 2014 and 2024.

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There are over **20 million French speakers nearby**—within Canada, the Caribbean, South

America, and in the US. French-speaking Canada is the primary consumer of U.S. exports.

**France is one of the top 5 investors in the United States.\*** Over 1200 French companies in the US alone have created more than **500,000 jobs for Americans** while U.S. companies employ 750,000 people in France. There are more **French companies in the Fortune 500** than any other European country.

The Organization for International Investment shows that out of 7 main-investor countries, major roles are played by three countries where French is a major official language.

France has the **world's 6th military power** and has one of the world's largest defense industries.

France is the leading nation in clean, safe, and efficient **nuclear power**. Nuclear energy « provides more than three quarters of the nation's electricity ».

U.S.News and World Report quotes Luis E. Echavarri as saying: « France has become one of the leading countries capable of exporting **technology** around the world ». France is also the second largest producer of **video games** in the world\*

France is a European **leader in aerospace** (Aérospatiale, Arianespace, Airbus). Most commercial satellites are put into space on French Ariane rockets

France is also a **world leader in medical research and genetics**; the Pasteur Institute in Paris is world renowned. Fiber optics and the microchip were invented by French scientists. The AIDS virus was discovered by a team of French researchers.

France has won more **Nobel Prizes** for literature than any other country.\*

For books, French is the most translated language in the US, before German and Spanish, and the second most translated language in the world, after English.\*

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France has been voted “**best place to live in the world**” many times in the past decade by an annual index created by *International Living* magazine that ranks 194 countries.

France’s high ranking is due to an unsurpassable quality of life, one of the highest rated health care systems in the world, generous vacation time, extensive family care/leave benefits, infrastructure, safety, and other lifestyle issues (Food! Wine! Cheese!).

**France is the world’s top tourist destination\*** and **Paris is the most visited tourist destination city in the world\***. France has been the most visited country in the world many times.\*

French is ranked 2nd of the **world’s diplomatic languages**.\*

**80 governments** use French formally as a means of international communication.\*

French is among the 6 official languages of the United Nations, UNESCO, the International Monetary Fund, the International Labor Organization, the International Olympic

Committee, the 31-member Council of Europe, the European Community, the

International Red Cross, postal services around the world, the Organization for African

Unity, and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (to name just a few large organizations).

French vocabulary is highly present in the worlds of art, government, food, literature, architecture, science, medicine, technology, music, diplomacy, fashion, dance, and cinema.

Thousands of places in the world (and in the USA) have names derived from French.

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Check out Tennessee Bob Peckham's list of French rankings in the world [HERE](#) and the AATF Advocacy Depot [HERE](#).

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**VIVE le FRANÇAIS!**

***Do you have some corrections or additions to this document? Email [aatfct@gmail.com](mailto:aatfct@gmail.com).***

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*Some of the above was compiled by Madeline Turan (found on AATF webpage)*

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