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Memorizing French for English Speakers

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Abstract

What The 'Memorize' Method Is And Does

The Memorize method simply gives tips and hints on how to remember thousands of words in a foreign language with the same roots. The Memorize principles can best be applied to any language in the Romance or Germanic subsets of the Indo-European family which have common roots with English (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian; German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, for instance).

The book *Memorize French!* published on Amazon in summer 2025 is an exemplar of the method, with over 3000 words given for memorization.

The words covered and embodied in the book have been chosen to be useful to travellers, shoppers, business people, culture lovers, nature lovers, sports fans, school students and others. Learning these words can help create friendships with French-speaking locals, enjoyable times while travelling, successful business relationships and excellent exam results.

In this example, the Memorize method helps users to learn French words by pointing up the links between English and French. Many English and French words are like cousins or siblings, known as 'cognates'. They are words that share the same roots or origins.

In the English-French case, the words may spring from the same root because both the English word and the French one started out as Latin or Greek. Or it may be because the French ones were absorbed into English, especially after the landmark year 1066, when the French-speaking Normans first came to Britain. For more than 300 years after that, English kings and queens spoke French as their first language, which made it very influential. Over time, more than 10,000 French-based words became embedded in English on a large range of subjects. These included fashion (mirror, jewel), defence (soldier, pistol), politics (mayor, parliament), the law (judge, jury), music (melody, trumpet), art (paint, canvas), architecture (arch, buttress), cars (chassis, limousine), home life (curtain, blanket), cooking (pudding, sausage), colours (orange, scarlet), and more.

The method for remembering these words depends quite often on the history of the word, or its etymology. Many learners of languages, indeed educated people generally, find word histories intriguing

and entertaining, and many are given here.

How close French and English words are to each other can be thought of in terms of 'friendship'. They may be 'true friends', 'false friends', maybe no more than 'just friends', even 'fair-weather friends' who are sometimes faithful, sometimes not. Here are the main relationships of this type, with the icons used to flag them up in the book.

True friends. Words spelt exactly the same in English and French e.g. six six, table table

Just friends. Words spelt nearly the same in English and French e.g. March mars, May mai, autumn automne

False friends. French words that look or sound like English words, but actually mean something different. So, surnom does not mean 'surname' but 'nickname'. Sensible does not mean 'sensible' but 'sensitive'. The term false friends (les faux amis) was invented by French translators in 1928. Such words are also known as 'treacherous twins', or 'beautiful, unfaithful women' (les belles infidèles).

Fair-weather friends. This is when the French word looks or sounds like an English word, and sometimes means the same - but sometimes doesn't. For example, arriver can mean 'arrive', but also 'happen'; and 'parent' can mean 'parent', but also 'relative'. So these are words which can be either 'false friends' or 'real friends', depending on the context.

Gift from France! This is a word or phrase lifted straight, mostly without any change, from French into English. They're also called 'loan word(s)'. Examples are: avant-garde, faux pas, bête noire.

A clue! This is a light-hearted clue or mnemonic (memory-jogger) to help with remembering a French word. For example, a clue for 'snail' (escargot) could be 'Snails carry cargoes on their backs - their shells!'. Or for 'drugs' (drogue): 'Only rogues sell drugs!'. Your own 'home-made' mnemonic or clue may be better still. It's known that the 'memory-joggers' you think up yourself are the 'stickiest' and work the best.

If you've struggled with traditional language courses or feel overwhelmed by French vocabulary, the Memorize method is a valuable shortcut. It is a powerful, personal method designed to help you (in this case) to learn French fast by focusing on what arguably matters most - memorizing words efficiently and effectively. Perfect for English speakers learning French, this book skips the fluff and gets straight to language hacks that actually work. Say goodbye to overwhelm and hello to confidence through the book "Memorize French!". The method is applicable to English in conjunction with many languages in the European are, notably Romance and Germanic languages.

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