

# Notice for teachers (updated March 2006)

## Introduction

France Virtuelle is a set of internet worksheets created for use in conjunction with the [www.realfrench.net](http://www.realfrench.net) website. The worksheets, which are designed to be answered in **English**, are intended primarily for directed self-study and informal extra work. However, they can also be used during class time, both as part of whole-class or differentiated teaching, if the appropriate technical facilities are available. They are also intended to be usable in conjunction with one another, so as to form the basis for project or group work. The sheets are probably best suited for advanced French learners (e.g. UK AS / A level onwards).

The worksheets are divided into 2 types:

- **Pathway-specific worksheets** (intended for single use), which ask students to find information from specific areas of a given website. Owing to the changing nature of webpage content, navigation information on these sheets is of needs thematic, and students are for the most part asked to work out the path to the relevant information by themselves.
- **Generic worksheets** (intended for multiple use), which ask students to exploit in a given manner information sources of their choice.

The worksheets are intended to be as much an exercise in cultural assimilation as in language comprehension. In taking students to French sites the aim is both to familiarize them with aspects of French society and to enable students to discover specific similarities and differences between France and Britain. The language element is picked up at the end of each worksheet through a list of vocabulary in context drawn both from the visited websites and from exam board vocabulary lists. This vocabulary is only intended as a pedagogical focus, and teachers might encourage students to note down any other vocabulary they come across when doing a worksheet.

## Photocopying

Current subscribers to RealFrench.net are permitted to photocopy the materials according to reasonable educational need.

## Updating

In order to ensure the validity of the hyperlinks and websites included in the internet activities, we will carry out regular reviews and updates of the worksheets. Teachers are advised, therefore, to update their copies of France Virtuelle worksheets on a regular basis and furthermore to visit the relevant sites prior to setting a worksheet as an assignment. We will endeavour to inform users of the most recent changes via the [realfrench.net](http://www.realfrench.net) site.

## Printing note

These worksheets are in Portable Document Format (PDF) and require you to have access to Adobe Acrobat Reader. This software can be freely downloaded from the Adobe website (<http://www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/readstep.html>).

## **Network running speed**

Although a slow network running speed is part and parcel of the internet at the current stage of technology, there are certain ways in which users can alleviate this problem:

- 1 Using the internet at quieter times (early / mid morning or in the evening), with small numbers of students on the internet at a given time.
- 2 Immediately prior to use, visit the relevant sites. This serves to store the web pages in part of the computer's temporary memory called the cache. Thereafter the web pages will be rapidly accessible for the remainder of the browser session, that is, until you close down the browser. Some PC networks are set up with a low cache setting, meaning that the computer will not store many web pages temporarily. If this is the case, ask your Information Systems manager if this can be changed. This technique may not work however on some types of page connected to databases.
- 3 In Internet Explorer it is possible to view bookmarked files offline. Go to Favorites > Add to favorites. Then check the "Make available offline" box, if desired select a folder to save the file in or select new folder, and click on "OK".
- 4 A common trait with websites when dealing with hyperlinks outside of their own site is to make the browser open up another window rather than simply to access the site in the same window. This is a technique designed to keep you from clicking out of a site. The problem, however, is that this can lead to users having a number of browser windows running at the same time, and this can cause a computer to work more slowly. The simple solution is close down all unwanted browser windows.

## **Plug-ins**

Some of the webpages included in the materials will require that you have access to an extra piece of software called a "plug-in" in order to run a function. The most common of these are RealPlayer (for watching video clips), RealAudio (for hearing sound files), and Acrobat Reader (see Printing note above). Although it is very possible that you will already have access to such plug-ins on your computer or network, it is possible that you will not have access to the most up-to-date versions (this is especially the case with RealPlayer and RealAudio). As such it is worth asking your IT manager to have the latest versions of these plug-ins installed. As for home computers, these plug-ins can be freely downloaded from the relevant sites (a hyperlink to the site is included on webpages containing function requiring plug-ins). However, as the downloading process can be slow and confusing, it might be worth asking the college IT manager to advise as to the easiest way of acquiring these plug-ins.