Look out for the following icons throughout the book:

- ‘Shortcut’ Phrase
  Easy-to-remember alternative to the full phrase

- Q&A Pair
  Question-and-answer pair – we suggest a response to the question asked

- Look For
  Phrases you may see on signs, menus etc

- Listen For
  Phrases you may hear from officials, locals etc

- Language Tip
  An insight into the foreign language

- Culture Tip
  An insight into the local culture

How to read the phrases:
• Coloured words and phrases throughout the book are phonetic guides to help you pronounce the foreign language.
• Lists of phrases with tinted background are options you can choose to complete the phrase above them.

These abbreviations will help you choose the right words and phrases in this book:

- a adjective
- f feminine
- inf informal
- lit literal
- m masculine
- n noun
- pl plural
- pol polite
- sg singular
- v verb
ABOUT THIS BOOK

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Quick reference vocabulary guide – 3500 words to help you communicate.

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Why Bother

You may be told of a cosy vineyard way off the tourist track, or discover that there’s little merit in the stereotype about the French being rude.

Distinctive Sounds

Throaty r, silent h, nasal vowels (pronounced as if you’re trying to force the sound ‘through the nose’).

French in the World

French is the official language of a number of international organisations (including the UN and the International Olympic Committee). French films are
Internationally renowned, and France has won the Nobel Prize in Literature more times than any other country.

**French in France**

Speaking a language other than their own is an emotional affair for the French, as attested by the online Musée des Horreurs (Museum of Horrors) of the Paris-based Défense de la Langue Française (DLF; Defence of the French Language; www.langue-francaise.org, in French).

**False Friends**

Warning: many French words look like English words but have a different meaning altogether, eg *menu* (which is *carte* in French).

**Language Family**

Romance (developed from the Latin spoken by the Romans during their conquest of the 1st century BC). Close relatives include Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian.

**Must-Know Grammar**

French has a formal and informal word for ‘you’ (*vous* and *tu* respectively); it distinguishes between masculine and feminine forms of words, eg *beau/belle bo/bel* m/f (beautiful).

**Donations to English**

Numerous – thanks to the Norman invasion of England in the 11th century, some estimate that three-fifths of everyday English vocabulary arrived via French. You may recognise *café, déjà vu, bon vivant, cliché...*
## Understanding

### KEY PHRASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>Parlez-vous anglais?</td>
<td>par·lay·voo ong·glay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
<td>Je ne comprends pas.</td>
<td>zher ner kom·pron pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does … mean?</td>
<td>Que veut dire …?</td>
<td>ker ver deer ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Do you speak English?**
  - **Parlez-vous anglais?**
  - **par·lay·voo ong·glay**

- **I speak a little.**
  - **Je parle un peu.**
  - **zher parl um per**

- **Do you understand?**
  - **Comprennez-vous?**
  - **kom·prer·nay·voo**

- **I understand.**
  - **Je comprends.**
  - **zher kom·pron**

- **I don’t understand.**
  - **Je ne comprends pas.**
  - **zher ner kom·pron pa**

- **I need an interpreter who speaks English.**
  - **J’ai besoin d’un interprète de langue anglaise.**
  - **zhay ber·zwun dun nun·tair·pret der long ong·glay·zer**

- **I’d like to practise French.**
  - **Je voudrais parler en français.**
  - **zher voo·dray par·lay on fron·say**

- **What does ... mean?**
  - **Que veut dire ...?**
  - **ker ver deer ...**

- **How do you pronounce this?**
  - **Comment le prononcez-vous?**
  - **ko·mon ler pro·non·say voo**
### False Friends

Many French words look like English words but have a different meaning altogether – beware!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coach/bus</td>
<td>voiture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information</td>
<td>un·for·ma·syon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news</td>
<td>renseignement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introduire</td>
<td>un·tro·dweer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert</td>
<td>présenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>librairie</td>
<td>lee·bray·ree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book shop</td>
<td>bibliothèque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menu</td>
<td>me·new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>set menu</td>
<td>carte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prune</td>
<td>prewn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plum</td>
<td>pruneau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vacance</td>
<td>va·kons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holidays</td>
<td>poste vacant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you write ...?</th>
<th>Comment est-ce qu’on écrit ...?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Could you please repeat that?</th>
<th>Pourriez-vous répéter, s’il vous plaît?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>poo·ree·yay·voo ray·pay·tay seel voo play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Could you please write it down?</th>
<th>Pourriez-vous l’écrire, s’il vous plaît?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>poo·ree·yay·voo lay·kreer seel voo play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Could you please speak more slowly?  
Pourriez-vous parler plus lentement, s'il vous plaît?

Slowly, please!  
Lentement, s'il vous plaît!

Reading French
In written French, you’ll often see an ’l’ in front of a word beginning with a vowel or a silent h: this replaces a le or a la (the) and is pronounced as a single word starting with an l, eg, l’orange lo-ronzh.

Generally, you don’t pronounce a consonant at the end of a word, eg faux fo. There’s one exception – final ‘c’, eg sec sek. Also, you do pronounce a final consonant if the next word starts with a vowel or an h, eg faux ami fo zami.