

# How to be a successful French student!



A middle school French student once wrote a short piece on the topic,  
“How to be a successful French student.” Here’s what she said:

“I thought it was going to be hard to learn French before I started it this year. I thought, how could I learn to speak another language? I was going to have to learn how to spell it, write it, learn where all the accents were supposed to be, and even more! Well, I was wrong. **French is really not that hard if you do what you are supposed to do.**

In my opinion, in order to be a successful French student, it is necessary **to study for at least 15-20 minutes everyday, participate all the time in class, and do all of your homework.** When a quiz or a test is coming up, you might want to consider studying a little longer. By **studying a little bit everyday**, you will not have to cram everything into your head the night before a quiz or test, because you will have already been studying since before you knew it was coming up. Another benefit of studying is that you will most likely get good grades on your quizzes or tests. You will also have learned more French, so just by studying you are already becoming successful. Imagine how much more successful you can be by doing your homework and participating in class!

**Be prepared to learn different things.** When reading, you will learn to use different intonation. Also, you do not usually read what you see. Sometimes you do not say the letter “s” and you will pronounce words differently depending on what letter the next word begins with. When writing, be prepared to use accent marks on letters. You speak differently when you are talking to an adult or to someone you have never met before, too, as opposed to when you are talking to a friend. These are only a few of the things you will want to prepare yourself for.

**There is a difference between getting a good grade and really learning French!” - Mandy A.**

**This student was right on track! Here are some further suggestions for learning French:**

- French spelling is not phonetic. It may take a while to get used this. Be sure to say the words aloud while looking at them so you learn to associate the new sounds with the letters that you see.
- Listen carefully and try to imitate the teacher. The more you speak in class, the more comfortable it will feel.
- Be prepared every day! Have your homework with you in class, and be ready to go over it or hand it in. Remember, your teacher has planned a lesson assuming that you did the homework. If you didn’t, you may feel lost.
- Speak French randomly at home and with your friends. **Be enthusiastic, speak French as much as possible, and have fun! The more you speak, the better you will speak; it’s as easy as that!**
- Use the website associated with your books:

French 1: [http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/french\\_1/book\\_home.htm?state=GA](http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/french_1/book_home.htm?state=GA)

Check my website nightly to see if you have the right assignment written down:

[www.BonjourMadame.weebly.com](http://www.BonjourMadame.weebly.com)

**TURN THE  
PAGE FOR  
STUDY  
TIPS!!!!**

# So now it's time to study. What should you do?

**Study out loud!** In reading over material silently, you only use your visual memory. Studying out loud doubles your efficiency by adding auditory memory. Motor memory (i.e. flashcards) quadruples your efficiency! Enlist your parents' or brothers' and sisters' help!

**Make flashcards!** Once you've gone through them, you can sort them into piles: words that you already know really well, words that you don't know at all, and words that you still need to study a little bit (for spelling or gender). Then you will know how to spend your studying time wisely.

**Write, write, write!** Once you figure out which words you don't know, practice writing them. Repetition helps you remember!

**Learn the gender of nouns as you go!** All nouns in French have a gender. If you think of the gender as part of the word, it will be much easier to recall later.

**Divide the material into small units!** Don't try to memorize a large body of material at once. Break it up! If you have a test in a week, study a little bit each night.

**Use your time wisely!** Figure out what you already know, and then focus on what you *really* need to study. See the note about flash cards above. The same could be accomplished by making lists divided in three columns: I know / I don't know / I *kind of* know.

**Do not fall behind!** Language learning is cumulative, and we will build a large repertoire of vocabulary and grammar by the end of the year. You will have to know ALL OF IT! If you fall behind, the material you are responsible for will snowball.

**Go back over corrected work!** If your teacher graded your homework, she will assume that you have looked at it and learned from the corrections. The same is true for old quizzes.

**Go above and beyond!** If you want to know how to say something that you haven't learned, write your teacher a note and ask for the information. Use the free *WordReference* app or website to look up cool new vocabulary. Learning things that are important to you will keep you interested!

**Use the *Discovering French* website!** The website has practice quizzes, so you can get an idea of what you are expected to know for each unit. It can also help you with pronunciation.

**Ask your teacher for help when you need it!** DO NOT BE SHY ABOUT YOUR NEEDS! Come to extra help sessions! Sometimes it is hard to study grammar on your own. An extra help session could be just the boost you need to go from "I don't get it" to "This makes sense!"

**Set goals for yourself!** Think about why you are studying French. Do you want to go to France? To Canada? To Africa? Do you want to become a chef? Do you want to meet French-speaking teens, or be an exchange student? Do you want to help others? If you set meaningful goals, you will work hard to achieve them.

**Do French-related things that interest you!** See a French movie. Get a penpal. Find French music and apps online. The more excited you are about French, the more you won't mind putting in the time to learn ☺.

## I am so happy to be your teacher this year!