

## INTRODUCTION

This dictionary has been specially written for students who are in their first years of learning French all the way through to preparing for exams. We have paid particular attention to making the dictionary user-friendly. With the help of colour headwords, alphabet tabs, easy-to-follow signposts and examples, the right translation can quickly be found. French verbs on both sides of the dictionary are numbered to direct the student to the appropriate verb table in the centre pages.

Throughout the writing of this dictionary we have worked in close consultation with students, teachers, inspectors, and examining boards. We gratefully acknowledge the examining boards AQA (formerly NEAB and SEG), OCR, and EDEXCEL, who have read and commented on the dictionary text.

Since the first edition of this dictionary there have been many changes in French life. Not least has been the introduction of the euro. This new edition takes full account of these changes and many new words and examples have been included in order to provide the best possible learner's dictionary of French.

## HOW A BILINGUAL DICTIONARY WORKS

A bilingual dictionary has two languages in it. When you look up a word in one of the languages, it gives the translation for that word in the other language. This dictionary is divided into two halves separated by a section of blue-edged pages. In the first half you look up French words, which are in alphabetical order, to find out what they mean in English and in the second half you look up English words, also in alphabetical order, to find out how to say them in French. The blue-edged pages are verb tables and you can see how to use these further on in this section.

At the entry you will find **translations** but also other information that will help you get the right translation and use the word correctly. Here is a guide to the different things you will find in an entry:

<b>headword</b>	a word you look up in the dictionary
translation	translations are the only things that are in 'ordinary' type in the dictionary. They are always typed like this, and something which is typed in a different way can never be a translation
<i>noun</i>	word class (part of speech): tells you whether the word you are looking up is a noun, a verb, an adjective, or another part of speech. One headword can be more than one part of speech. For instance, book can be a noun (she was reading a book) or a verb (I've booked the seats)

(*signpost*) helpful information: to guide you to the right translation, to show you how to use the translation, or to give you extra information about either the headword or the translation

**example**

a phrase or sentence using the word you have looked up. You should read through them carefully to see if they are close to what you want to understand or say

*Masc.*

gender: after a French noun, to tell you that it is masculine

*Fem.*

gender: after a French noun, to tell you that it is feminine

●

indicates a phrasal verb such as to carry on

★

shows an idiomatic expression such as over the moon

[27]

verb number – tells you which verb pattern to look at in the blue-edged of the dictionary

## USING THE DICTIONARY

### To find out what a French word means

Suppose you want to find out what the French word **bouton** means. You need to use the first half of the dictionary to find the French words that you are looking for. To help you do this, the guide words at the top of each page show the alphabetical range of words on the pages you have open. Notice that hyphens, spaces between words, and accents on letters in French words make no difference to the alphabetical order.

When you find the entry for **bouton** you will find the translation. But you will also see that **bouton** is a *noun* and because all nouns are either masculine or feminine in French, you are given the gender *Masc.* (*Masc.* = masculine gender, *Fem.* = feminine gender).

However, it often happens that a French word has more than one English translation so you will see that the translation for **bouton** is divided into sections numbered **1** and **2**.

**bouton** *noun Masc.* **1** button;

**2** spot, pimple.

The first translation is **button** and the second is **spot** or **pimple**. You will need to look at both translations to work out which one fits the French sentence you are trying to understand. So:

**il y a quatre boutons sur ma veste** *means* there are four buttons on my jacket

BUT

**j'ai un bouton sur le nez** *means* I've got a spot on my nose

The plurals of most French nouns are formed by adding an *-s*, as in **boutons** in the first sentence. Exceptional plural forms can be found after the headword:

**animal** *noun* animal *Masc. (plural animaux)*.

French like English has certain words that you would use when chatting with friends but not in more formal situations. French words like this are marked *informal* in the dictionary, like **bouquin**

here:

**bouquin** *noun Masc. (informal)*  
book.

Note that the usual word for **book** is **livre**.

## To find an English word and how to say it in French

You can see that it is quite easy once you know how the dictionary works to look up a French word and find out what it means. Students usually find it harder to use the dictionary to find out how to say something in French. This dictionary is written specially to help you do this and to make it easy to find the right way of saying things in French.

Suppose you want to know how to say **garden** in French. Look up the word in the second part of the dictionary. If you follow the same method of going through the alphabetical order of the headwords as you did when you were looking up a French word, you will find **garden** on page 414.

**garden** *noun* jardin *Masc.*

Now you can see that the French word for **garden** is **jardin**. But if you want to make a sentence using a noun like **jardin** you need to know whether it is masculine or feminine. The *Masc.* after **jardin** tells you that it is masculine so *in the garden* is **dans le jardin**. It is not always as easy as this to know which French word you need. Sometimes there will be more than one French word for the English word you are looking up. When the dictionary entry gives you more than just one translation, it is very important to take the time to read through the whole entry. If you look up **plug** the entry looks like this:

**plug** *noun* **1** (*electrical*) prise *Fem.*;  
**2** (*in a bath or sink*) bonde *Fem.*; **to**  
**pull out the plug** retirer la bonde.

You can see that **1** tells you that the French word for an electrical plug is **prise** and **2** tells you that the word for a bath plug or a sink plug is **bonde**.

Remember that information which is either in brackets or italics or both is there to help you, but it *will never be* the translation itself. Wherever there is more than one translation, depending on what meaning of the English word you are looking for, the dictionary will always help you to choose the right one. Often it is not enough to find the translation of one word. In the case of more common words the dictionary also gives you a selection of common phrases you will often want to use. In the entry for **hair** below you can find out how to use the translation in different expressions:

**hair** *noun* **1** cheveux *Masc. plural*; **to have short hair** avoir les cheveux courts; **to brush your hair** se brosser les cheveux; **to wash your hair** se laver les cheveux; **to have your hair cut** se faire couper les cheveux; **she's had her hair cut** elle s'est fait couper les cheveux; **2a hair** (*from the head*) un cheveu; (*from the body*) un poil.

## HOW TO USE THE VERB TABLE NUMBERS

On the French side of the dictionary all the headwords which are verbs look like this: **faire** *verb* [10]. On the English side of the dictionary all the verbs given as translations of English verbs look like this: **frighten** *verb* effrayer [59].

If you look at the pages edged in blue in the centre of the dictionary, you will find tables showing you how to use the different types of French verbs.

The verb **faire** above has the number 10. If you look at number 10 in the verb tables, you will see that because **faire** is a very common and very irregular verb it has a whole page to itself giving you all the tenses you will need. The verb **effrayer** has number 59 after it. When you look up verb table number 59, you will see the verb **payer**. This means that the verb endings given for **payer** will also be the endings for **effrayer**. So **payer** is there to show you the pattern that other verbs like it, such as **effrayer**, will follow.

With practice you will soon be able to find your way easily around the dictionary and identify what you are looking for in an entry. Some entries may seem long and complicated at first glance. Reading carefully through the signposts and examples will lead you to the translation you need.