

Introduction

Brilliant French Information Books are a series of graded non-fiction readers in simple French. There are three levels of difficulty: 1, 2 and 3, all aimed at beginners or pupils with a basic knowledge of the language.

At each level, there are six short, attractive, highly-illustrated books that pupils can read easily and quickly for a sense of enjoyment and achievement. They can be used to introduce children to reading in French and help them to improve their reading skills.

What makes this series different is that, rather than featuring generic non-fiction themes, it strongly supports Intercultural Understanding. It does this by making a point of revealing, via the texts and the pictures, various cultural aspects of life in France or French-speaking countries.

There are six books in Level 1. As each of the books is short, they are ideal for children's short attention spans and for limited lesson time. The simple texts contain high-frequency vocabulary. They consolidate familiar language pupils have probably already met and also extend their vocabulary in a natural way.

There are e-pdf versions of all the books on the CD-Rom, enabling them to be displayed on an interactive whiteboard for large groups/whole-class reading.

Key features

- ★ Because of the wealth of information and pictures relating to French-speaking countries and culture, these books are an excellent starting point for cultural or cross-curricular studies. Pupils will improve their general knowledge and their confidence, their motivation will grow and they will broaden their perceptions of their own society, as well as of another culture.

- ★ Each book focuses on specific core vocabulary. The amount of unfamiliar language is controlled. This allows learners to start reading 'books' in French straight away without feeling daunted.
- ★ The books have been written to include a certain amount of repetition in order to reinforce language and patterns.
- ★ The photos that accompany the texts are an important visual support which help pupils to understand and provide them with a context so they can develop reading fluency without the need for a dictionary.
- ★ We hope reading with *Brilliant French Information Books* will make children aware of the value of reading in order to find out information and to build their vocabulary, as well as encourage them to become independent readers.
- ★ The inclusion of an audio version of each text on the CD-Rom allows pupils to hear correct French pronunciation by a native-speaker and to make correct sound-spelling links.
- ★ Page 9 of each book is a brief memory test to check understanding. Of course, in order to do the quiz, pupils will need to read elements of the core language again!
- ★ As well as involving pupils actively in what they are reading by including a quiz, there are often questions at the end of a text to encourage discussion and opinions.
- ★ The *Brilliant French Information Books* series is suitable for both individual and class reading programmes. In both cases, *Brilliant French Information Books* will make reading in French motivating and enjoyable.

Why information books?

Teachers often use fiction to improve pupils' reading skills but information texts are equally valuable. Information (or non-fiction) books appeal to:

- ◆ those who are not too keen on reading fiction
- ◆ those who want to boost their general knowledge.

Different ways to use the books

Pupils can read silently in class or you could let them listen as they read. For example, you read the text aloud while pupils follow the images and words on the board. Or you might let pupils listen to the audio as they follow the words on the board or in the book.

Individual reading

If you want pupils to read individually, introduce the key vocabulary first so that not too many of the words and phrases they will meet are unfamiliar. Individual reading will help pupils to become more independent in their learning.

You might also ask pupils to do the activity page in pairs or in small groups once they have read the text.

Class/teacher-led reading

The texts in the *Brilliant French Information Books* are ideal for class and teacher working together as they provide an opportunity to discuss and comment on the information learned.

Think carefully before asking pupils to read aloud to the class as it can be stressful and demotivating. Many children don't like 'performing' and worry they won't be able to pronounce the words correctly. Many do like to read aloud when they know what they are reading, ie when the text has been explored. If you expect pupils to read aloud, use the audio first to provide a model.

If you want to ask questions about the texts, remember to go from:

- ◆ yes/no questions
- ◆ either/or questions
- ◆ questions which require original answers.

Audio

The recorded version of each text supports learners who have a more auditory memory/style of learning. It can be used in various ways:

- ◆ before reading – for gist/to guess the topic of the book
- ◆ as pupils read, to support sound-spelling links
- ◆ after pupils have read, as a listening/revision exercise, eg write up on the board three or four of the titles pupils have previously read (maybe in a previous lesson). Play extracts from one or two different texts and ask pupils to say which book each is from. Or, if each pupil has a copy of the same book, play an extract and ask them to show the page it corresponds to.

Titles at each level

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
La France en couleurs	Inventés en France	Un tour de France
Un, deux, trois ... soleil !	C'est la fête !	Jeunes francophones
Des animaux importants	J'aime lire	Des parcs d'attractions
Les jours de la semaine	Bon appétit !	Pourquoi la France ?
Bonjour, tout le monde !	Une journée à l'école	Petite histoire des transports
C'est ça, Paris !	Vive le sport !	Des Français célèbres

Titles in Level 1

Title	Topic	Language
La France en couleurs	Colours	<i>C'est</i> (+ colour adjective)
Un, deux, trois ... soleil !	Holidays	Numbers 1– 6, <i>Il y a</i> (+ noun)
Des animaux importants	Animals and countries	<i>Le/la, en/au/aux</i> (+ name of country)
Les jours de la semaine	Days of the week	<i>C'est le jour de ...</i> (+ day)
Bonjour, tout le monde !	Greetings around the world	<i>On</i> (+ verb) and parts of the body
C'est ça, Paris !	Paris landmarks	<i>C'est</i> (+ adjective)

La France en couleurs

This book introduces colours via typical French places or things. The photos show the Côte d'Azur (French riviera); Mont-Blanc, the highest point in the Alps; strawberries, olives and sunflower fields, usually associated with the region of Provence and the south of France (as well as the purple of lavender); grapes from the wine-making region of Bordeaux; and the grey slate roofs north of the Loire river.

Pupils could be encouraged to write similar comparisons with colours and places and things in their own country.

Answers to quiz on page 9: 1d, 2b, 3 a/b/d, 4a



English translation

Colourful France

- p2 blue It's blue like the Mediterranean sea.
p3 white It's white like the mountains in the Alps.
p4 red It's red like the strawberries at the market.
p5 black It's black like olives from Provence.
p6 green It's green like the grapes from Bordeaux.
p7 yellow It's yellow like the sunflower fields.
p8 grey It's grey like the roofs in Paris.
p9 Do you have a good memory?
1. Grapes are ... a) red b) yellow c) black d) green
2. Sunflowers are ... a) blue b) yellow c) green d) red
3. Which colours can you see? a) white b) blue c) green d) red
4. In Normandy, the roofs are grey like in Paris. a) true b) false

What is your favourite colour? Blue? White? Red?

Un, deux, trois ... soleil !

The focus of this book is summer holidays, with photographs from the seaside and the countryside. According to the results of a survey published by the organisation Protourisme in March 2015, 63% of French families go away on holiday, most of them in the summer. Most travel by car and choose a destination in France, with only 27% travelling abroad. It is common to stay with friends or family.

The linguistic focus here is numbers 1–6. Pupils who are familiar with counting orally may be surprised that the written forms of these numbers are very different from what they might have imagined. It is useful to establish the correct sound-spelling links early on.

