BREAKTHROUGH

FRENCH 3

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MAKING THE MOST OF THIS COURSE

Welcome to *Breakthrough French 3*

Breakthrough French 3 is intended both for self-study learners and for classroom use. If you are learning in a group, your teacher will guide you through the course. If you are using *Breakthrough* on your own (or you want to do some extra studies outside a class), take time to read through this introduction. You'll get more out of the course if you understand how it has been structured and what is expected of you.

Breakthrough French 3 is for those who already have a working knowledge of the language, perhaps because they have studied *Breakthrough 2* or a similar second-level course. Before deciding on the content and the approach, we consulted hundreds of language learners and teachers about what they need at this level, and the course has been built on their advice.

The result is a course which takes carefully selected examples of real French, both spoken and written, and then uses these examples as the base to develop your ability to take part in conversations, to understand what is said to you or what you read and to set down your thoughts in written French.

There are ten units, each based on a theme which reinforces and extends your knowledge of real French. The emphasis is on the language used to understand and communicate effectively in a range of common situations. Each unit has the same basic structure.

1 The introductory page

This sets the scene, tells you what you will learn, gives you useful tips for the new unit and gives you guidance on how to learn and what to watch out for.

2 Dialogues

In each unit there are three core dialogues in which new vocabulary and structures are introduced. Most of them have been specially recorded on location in France or taken from French radio and they cover different aspects of the unit theme. Please *do not* expect to understand them immediately. By their nature, each one is introducing new vocabulary and structures. Try playing each dialogue through once or twice (reading the transcript at the same time if it helps). Then go through it using your PAUSE button and consulting the linked notes, which explain things you

may not yet have come across. Don't be afraid to make your own notes in the book or to underline things which are important to you. Finally, listen to the dialogue once or twice straight through without looking at the book before you move on to the practice section.

3 Travaux pratiques

Each core dialogue has a number of exercises attached to it. These pick up the main points and give you practice in reading, listening, speaking and writing. Instructions on how to do each exercise are given in the book, with answers, where appropriate, listed at the end of each unit. You will probably need to go through these exercises several times, particularly the speaking practice, before you feel you have mastered them. It's wise to spend as much time as you need here so that you really do learn the main words and structures.

4 Grammaire

This is not primarily a grammar course. Each dialogue has been selected on the basis of the topic and the vocabulary it introduces. However, it is often valuable, and indeed interesting, to see how the language works. This can increase your confidence in generating language of your own. Each unit explains a few important aspects of grammar that should help you develop a firmer foundation. Interspersed are exercises to practise the points that have been introduced. If you can't get on with grammar, look at this section more for reference rather than feeling you need to have mastered everything before moving on.

5 Expressions importantes

To help you pull together the most important points, each unit has a page listing key words and phrases. Read these through, checking back to the notes linked to the dialogues if you need to refresh your memory. Then work through the list, first covering up the French translation to see if you can remember the matching phrase in English, then covering up the English to see if you can remember the French.

6 A vous de parler

At the end of each unit are one or two speaking activities. If you are able to work with a partner, there are suggestions on how to tackle them together. They have, however, been designed so that you can also work on them alone. The aim is to reinforce key points that have cropped up during the unit.

7 Radio

Most of the units conclude with this section. These authentic excerpts from French radio are, of course, spoken at normal speed. The first time you hear them you may not understand very much at all. But this is a useful way of sharpening your listening skills. If you persevere you will find that, by the time you get to the later units, you will be able to tune in to real French much more easily. This section includes a listening task, and often a list of vocabulary. Working on these will help you to understand what is said.

There are also transcripts of the recordings (p. 216). Depending on how difficult you find the excerpts, you can use the transcripts in different ways. If you do understand fairly easily then it is probably best not to look at the transcripts until after you have done the exercises. To make it easier you could, however, read the transcripts through before listening and/or listen and read at the same time. You will have to decide what suits you best. In later units try to reduce your reliance on the transcripts.

At the end of the book, in addition to the radio transcripts, you will find: a grammar summary, including a glossary of grammatical terms and a table of irregular verbs; a vocabulary list; a list of grammar contents by unit; and a grammar index.

A few final words

Be patient with yourself ... above all, don't get discouraged. Everybody comes across sticky patches when they feel they are not getting anywhere. Try looking back to some earlier dialogues to see just how much you have learned.

If you can, practise regularly. Thirty to forty minutes a day is usually better than a block of four hours once a week.

It helps to speak out loud in French as much as possible. This may seem strange at first but actually using the words, with a friend or to yourself, is a good way of practising and remembering.

There is a lot of material to take on board. Have confidence in us. Real language is quite complex and the course has been designed to build up your knowledge slowly, selecting what is important at each stage.

Bon courage!

Brian Hill