Unlock Your Word Hoard

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn some new descriptive words. Discuss the origin of words.
Learn about the history of English literature.. Comprehension.

Activity One

Ask and answer the questions with your partner or teacher.

1. Why do you think people say that French people are no good and speaking English?
2. Do you enjoy learning new words?
3. Do you enjoy telling stories, or reading stories?

Activity Two

Read the article and answer the questions.

I've been teaching English to French people for thirty years now and I have constantly been impressed by how quickly my students learn and improve. I've also sent hundreds of French people on exchange programmes to English speaking countries and again, the speed of their progression is remarkable. So I can say with conviction that, despite what people say, French people are not bad at learning English!



It's also very logical that French people should improve quickly when using the right method. Here's why:

1/ French and Latin make up the largest portion of English core vocabulary. 58% of English words then, both in studies of all words and in studies of frequently used words, are of French or Latin origin. This means that French people can understand English well if they trust their sense of logical deduction. It also means that they can quickly learn new words from the cognates they recognize and remember easily.

2/ Thanks to the huge influence of French and Latin in the areas of law, religion and education, government and administration absorbed into the English language during two centuries of French rule, many formal, erudite words are of French origin. So when French people speak English they sound really intelligent as they will naturally use these words! Words of old English origin are often the more basic and direct ones.

3/ Traditionally in the French national education system English has been taught with an emphasis on '*traduction grammaticale*'. Good grammatical structure has been drummed into French people as kids, they have learned all the irregular verbs and the tenses and modals… That information is learned in the French classroom in a rather passive way. It's often lying dormant ready to be woken up when a French person starts to regularly practice speaking English. So as a result, French people tend to

progress quickly and speak correctly. Furthermore a majority of French people are taught English as a second language in school.

4/ Thanks to the popularity of streaming, which has quickly taken over from traditional French TV channels, more and more French people watch TV in English. (It's comparatively rare for English native speakers to watch TV in French). A high proportion of popular music performed and played in France is also in English. So, English is all around.

5/ French people have the sexiest accent in the world. So they can be confident that we love it when they speak English to us!

All in all French people - you are not 'nul' in English!!!

1. What kind of French and Latin words were absorbed into Old English and why?
2. How were you taught English at school, what kind of method was used?
3. How can streaming help you to improve your English and do you watch TV in English?
4. Why do English speakers particularly appreciate French people speaking in English?
5. Resume the article and give your opinion on it.

Activity Three

Adjectives of English origin

Here is an alphabetic list of adjectives of Anglo-Saxon origin. These words don't have cognates in French, they are similar to their Scandinavian or German equivalents in some cases. Find out what they mean and with a partner, or in preparation, try to use each one in a sentence. Just for fun, try to use as many as possible also in one sentence!



Amazing	Mellow
Bruised	Narrow
Cool	Old
Dinky	peaked
Edgy	quick
Fair	rusty
Glowing	Strong
Hard	Tame
Idle	Uncouth
Jumbled	Vain
Keen	Warm
Luscious	

Can you find some adjectives of French or Latin origin?

Activity Four

Unlock your Word Hoard - Story telling

The experience of listening or telling a story helps us to learn new words. Using our imagination really helps us to picture a scene, feel an emotion. Story telling is a tradition which is at the root of the English language. The first poem known to exist in English was more of a story which was memorized and repeated. It was full of action and very descriptive. It was called Beowulf. The story is set in Scandinavia. Beowulf, a hero comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall in Heorot has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. After Beowulf slays him, Grendel's mother attacks the hall and is then also defeated. It's an epic tale told around winter fires on long evenings in Britain in the Dark Ages. The story was first told in the eighth century and was probably written down in the eleventh century by a scribe. It was written in old English. The language is evocative, the images vivid and the descriptions life like. Words from this poem had a great impact on the English language. A word hoard is a traditional term for the stock of words which a story teller uses regularly. You also have your own word hoard! To unlock it is to start to tell a story…. to improve it is to make your stories come alive! Story telling is a great way to learn and to share.



Activity Five

The Canterbury Tales. Read the text, watch the video and answer the questions …



This is one of the best loved works in the history of English literature. Written in Middle English, the story follows a group of pilgrims who are travelling the long journey from London to Canterbury Cathedral. Setting off from a London inn, the innkeeper suggests that during the journey each pilgrim should tell two tales to help pass the time. The best storyteller, he says, will be rewarded with a free supper on his return. Chaucer introduces us to a vivid cast of characters, including a carpenter, a cook, a knight, a monk, a prioress, a haberdasher, a dyer, a clerk, a merchant and a very bawdy miller. These characters come from all corners of 14th century society, and give Chaucer the chance to speak in many different voices. Some of the characters' tales are humorous, rude and naughty, while others are moral and reflective. One of the reasons Chaucer is so important is that he made the decision to write in English and not French. In the centuries following the Norman invasion, French was the language spoken by those in power. The Canterbury Tales was one of the first major works in literature written in English. Chaucer began the tales in 1387 and continued until his death in 1400. No text in his own hand still exists, but a surprising number of copies survive from the 1500s - more than 80. This suggests the tales were enormously popular in medieval England. (Source British Library).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0ZrBr9DOwA
Everything you need to know to read "The Canterbury Tales" - Iseult Gillespie

Questions:

1. How was the Miller described?
2. What tricks did the scholar and the wife get up to?
3. Who else lusts after the wife?
4. What did the clark do with the poker?
5. How many stories are in the tales?
6. What are the tales written in?
7. When was middle English used?
8. What happened in 1066?
9. Where do the cast of the tales first meet?
10. Where are they going to?
11. The host proposes a competition - what is the prize?
12. What did Chaucer do as a profession?
13. What kind of variations are in his story?
14. Why is there something for everything in the tales?
15. Why do we think that it is unfinished?



With your partner finish the story you saw at the beginning of the video - and act it out (if you are in a group) !!!

Activity Five

Describe yourself, or your teacher, or other people in the class or your friends and family. Take a few minutes to use adjectives to describe some people you know.. Here are some ideas for inspiration:

Bossy, Shy, Talkative, Frivolous, Attractive, Girly, Masculine, Uptight, Down to earth, Sociable, Fussy, Well-dressed, elegant, graceful, impolite, grumpy, kind, generous, tall, small, neat, untidy, scruffy, average height, trendy, old fashioned, voluptuous, skinny, slim, sporty, fit, youthful.

Activity Six

With your partner, or as homework in preparation for the class if you are not in a group,(or on the spot if you can), invent a story about a person with a lot of character who goes on a journey. Use as many descriptive adjectives as possible.

