

**EASY STANDARD FRENCH.  
EDITED WITH ENGLISH  
EXERCISES, NOTES AND  
VOCABULARY**

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Easy Standard French. Edited with English Exercises, Notes and Vocabulary by Victor E. François

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**VICTOR E. FRANÇOIS**

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EASY  
STANDARD FRENCH

*EDITED WITH ENGLISH EXERCISES, NOTES  
AND VOCABULARY*

BY

VICTOR E. FRANÇOIS, PH. D.

OFFICIER D'ACADÉMIE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FRENCH IN THE  
COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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BEGINNER'S FRENCH

INTRODUCTORY FRENCH PROSE COMPOSITION

ADVANCED FRENCH PROSE COMPOSITION

L'ABBÉ CONSTANTIN

LA POUDRE AUX YEUX

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## PREFACE

My apology for offering my fellow teachers a new easy reading book rests on my belief that there is a dearth of such books suited to beginners, and on the justified objections of many teachers to them because they are not representative of the best kind of prose and lack variety and proper gradation.

So my aim has been to fill this double want and to prepare a collection of short stories, simple, representative, national in character, varied and properly graded.

A mere glance at the Table of Contents will satisfy the most exacting teacher as to the choice of authors. The names are typical of the best French prose ever written. The selections are grouped by centuries, but are not placed in a strictly chronological order. The seventeenth century prose is illustrated by seven stories, that of the eighteenth by six, that of the nineteenth by fifteen, and the living authors number four. The division of the book into two parts has allowed me to grade the selections more systematically than it would have been possible otherwise.

Out of the twenty-eight authors now no longer alive, who, including Chatrian, are represented within the covers of this book, sixteen were members of the French Academy. Five were debarred—Molière on account of his profession, Jean-Jacques

Rousseau because he was a foreigner, Mme de Sévigné, Mme de Staël, and George Sand because they were women. Others, like Lesage, Beaumarchais, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, were not elected for various reasons, but not because they lacked talent or genius. Daudet steadfastly declined to become an academician. Of the four living writers, two belong to the French Academy, the other two (Paul and Victor Margueritte) to the Academy of the Goncourts, founded a few years ago.

Each selection is prefaced by a short biography of the author. As many pupils take French only one or two years, they fail to get a regular course in the history of French literature; and it is hoped that this feature of the book may help them at least to become acquainted with some of the greatest French literary names.

Each selection forms a short story by itself. The text has not been changed except at the beginning in one or two places where it has been modernized. There are omissions here and there because of the necessarily restricted scope of the book, but the greatest care has been taken that they should not at all impair the perfect understanding of the story in which they occur.

English exercises, based on the French text and suited to beginners, will offer them a chance to test their mastery of the vocabulary they have just acquired. The notes are plentiful, especially at the beginning, in order to facilitate the work for teachers who wish to commence reading at an early stage. The vocabulary is supposed to contain all the words



found in the texts, including the irregular verbal forms.

Of course it is not claimed that this is an exhaustive anthology or that it is even an anthology. Many famous names have been left out. All the stories have been selected with the view of entertaining and instructing at the same time. The greatest possible variety has been aimed at. There are descriptions of travel, of deeds of courage, of the soldier's life, of animal life, of national customs; hunting stories, oratorical and historical selections, dialogues, scenes from famous plays, literary criticism, etc. The selections run the whole gamut of feeling: sentimental, heroic, common, sad, funny, pathetic, bucolic, bantering, and dramatic. Most of the styles are met with—simple, high-flown, epistolary, colloquial. Every important literary school is represented—idealists and realists, classicists and romanticists, playwrights and novelists, historians and philosophers. But the chief aim has been to bring out a book without a dull line, a book full of action, of spirit, of interest.

The superiority of such selections over those generally found in early reading books is obvious, and there is no doubt that better results will be obtained with the same effort on the part of both teachers and students.

Inexperienced teachers of languages should be admonished in regard to the way a foreign text should be rendered into the mother tongue of the scholars. Without going so far as La Bruyère, who claimed that "among all the different modes in which a single thought may be expressed only one is correct,"

teachers should be satisfied only with the best possible translation. In my opinion, a foreign language, beside the cultural side of the question, is first taught to improve the student's native tongue, and a slipshod, half-hearted translation is detrimental rather than beneficial (see Report of the Committee of Twelve).

A good way is to have the student read a short paragraph, then close his book and express the thought contained therein in the way he would if talking to a member of his family or to a friend.

When the text lends itself to it, for instance in easy plays, another good way is to have the scholars close their books, listen and translate as fast as the teacher reads clause after clause.

Both ways will prevent the student from being unduly influenced by the French words, forms, idioms, and constructions, and will bring out a translation which will be satisfactory to teacher and scholars alike.

V. E. F.

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