



The Cambridge French-English Thesaurus

By Marie-Noklle Lamy

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Editorial Review

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Students of French learn the basics of grammar and vocabulary, but, unless they spend time in France or have other opportunities to immerse themselves in the language, they do not pick up the nuances of native speakers. This volume offers students at an intermediate or advanced level a guide to more sophisticated French usage.

Unlike most thesauri, this one is organized thematically. Fifteen major categories such as Position, Movement, and Travel; The Natural Environment; and Emotions, Feelings, and Attitudes are further divided into 142 more precise subdivisions: Direction and Distance; Animals; Positive and Negative Feelings; etc. Each subcategory is numbered. The section Knowledge and Thought Processes serves as an example. It begins with a sidebar explaining the difference between the verbs *savoir* and *connaitre*, and a list of idioms using each one. This is followed by related expressions, explaining which are ironic, slang, or informal. The section is then divided into categories such as Ways of Knowing and Finding Out, Thinking, and Differentiating and Identifying, with several more specific topics listed under each. All words, phrases, and examples are translated. Information provided for each headword may include synonyms, idioms, quotations, glosses, grammatical information, "false friends," pitfalls for English speakers, and differences between American and British English. Sidebars and even the occasional illustration are used to further clarify meanings.

Specific information on commonly used slang and vulgarisms appears throughout the book. An explanation of the routine informal use of the verb *emmerder* and its components to indicate boredom, and variations of *foutre* and its less vulgar substitute *ficher* to indicate irritation will help users who wish to use colloquial French correctly. The section on communicating electronically contains important vocabulary relating to computers, fax machines, and telephones.

The book concludes with a section called Conversational Gambits which provides common expressions needed to introduce people, ask for things, conduct routine business, and write both personal and business letters. A verb conjugation chart and alphabetical English and French word indexes complete the volume. *The Cambridge French-English Thesaurus*, a bridge between the classroom and real life, is a useful source for all libraries where there is interest in the French language. The paperback version is inexpensive enough for the personal libraries of serious students.

Review

"This volume offers students at an intermediate or advanced level a guide to more sophisticated French usage." *Booklist*

"..this exciting new work is strongly recommended for all reference collections. It is not just a list of words but a rich network of interconnected ideas in both languages." *American Reference Book Annual*

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Text: English, French

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