

## BEFORE THE VISIT / STUDENT

At Parc Astérix Theme Park, you walk through sets of a Gallic village, streets from the Middle Ages and a Paris street at the end of the 19th century (the "Belle Époque"). Here are some key dates to help you prepare your visit.



### Were the Gauls the ancestors of the French?

At the start of the 20th century, French schoolchildren learnt that their ancestors were the Gauls. This may be true for some French people, but certainly not for all! Gaul (Galli) is the name Julius Caesar gave to the Celts who lived in the area which more or less corresponds to modern-day France, in 58 BC. After 52 BC, many other peoples settled there in turn: Romans, but also Bretons, Normans, Franks, Visigoths and Moors. Like all European countries, France is the result of intermingling of populations, which continues today.

### Game

Find the author of each of these works and write the number which corresponds to him in the box:

- ☐ a. Scapin's Deceits
- ☐ b. The Three Musketeers
- ☐ c. Les Misérables
- ☐ d. The Drunken Boat
- ☐ e. The Ladies' Paradise
- ☐ f. The Flowers of Evil

Baudelaire ①, Alexandre Dumas ②,  
Victor Hugo ③, Molière ④,  
Arthur Rimbaud ⑤, Emile Zola ⑥.

Answers : ⑥-⑤-③-④-②-①



### The French Revolution

Every year, on the 14th of July, the French celebrate their national day with fireworks, firecrackers and dancing. This holiday commemorates the start of the French Revolution and the storming of the Bastille on the 14th of July 1789. The French Revolution lasted 10 years and brought about major changes: the end of the King's absolute power, the birth of the Republic, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the start of universal suffrage. It also gave rise to the symbols of France: the red, white and blue flag, the motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and the song "La Marseillaise", which became the French national anthem.

### The Middle Ages

In France, the Middle Ages lasted 1,000 years, from the 6th century until the 15th century. The period started after the fall of the Roman Empire. During this time, Christianity spread throughout the country. Society was divided into three categories: the clergy, which consisted of clerics, the nobility who owned the land, and the workers who were under the authority of a noble, whose land they lived on. This period is when fortified castles and cathedrals were built, but it is also remembered for the Crusades and epidemics of the plague.



### The Mona Lisa is stolen!

The portrait of Mona Lisa, painted by Leonardo da Vinci between 1503 and 1506 is undoubtedly the most famous painting in the world. It was acquired by King François 1st in the 16th century and has been on display at The Louvre since the 18th century. But did you know it was stolen on 22nd August 1911? Despite the efforts of the police, its disappearance remained a mystery for two years. The thief was finally discovered to be an Italian carpenter, Vincenzo Perrugia. He thought that Napoléon had stolen the painting from Italy and wanted to return it to its home. He was working at the museum on a day when it was closed and simply unhooked the painting, rolled it up and hid it under his jacket. The painting spent two years under Perrugia's bed, two kilometres from the museum.

### The "Belle Époque"

The end of the 19th century until 1914 was a time of social, economic, technical and cultural progress in France. The French discovered the cinematograph, the first Renault cars, electric lights, elevators and record players. Great artists emerged: painters Renoir, Monet, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Picasso; writers Emile Zola and Victor Hugo; poets Baudelaire, Verlaine and Rimbaud.

It was also a time when people went out and enjoyed themselves: Parisian cabarets like the Chat Noir and the Moulin Rouge attracted large audiences. People went there to see women dance the Can-can, a dance where they showed their legs. The Can-can star la Goulue (her real name was Louise Weber) sat for Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec.



## DURING THE VISIT / STUDENT

During your visit, you'll see a Parisian street in the Middle Ages and at the end of the 19th century. You can also drive along the Nationale 7 road in an old banger. Keep your eyes wide open and listen carefully to find the answers to this treasure hunt.



### Parisian Street 1871

#### The Doll's House

1. The character who presents the doll's house is playing an instrument that was often heard in the streets of Paris at the end of the 19th century. What is the instrument?

- ☐ a piano organ ☐ a barrel organ

2. On the ground floor of the building, a famous poet is about to have a glass of absinth. Who is he?

- ☐ Paul Verlaine ☐ Jacques Prévert

3. In his apartment, another famous French writer is doing table-turning with his friends. He is the author of "Les Misérables". What is his name?

- ☐ Emile Zola ☐ Victor Hugo

4. Which painter chose opera dancers as his models?

- ☐ Edgar Degas ☐ Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

5. Who painted dancers doing the Can-can?

- ☐ Edgar Degas ☐ Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec



6. Did elevators exist at this time?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Which other invention enabled people to listen to music?

- ☐ the tape recorder ☐ the phonograph

#### "Place du 14 juillet" set

8. On the 14th of July, flags are flown to celebrate the national day. Which event do the French commemorate on that day?

#### Street names, posters and shops

9. There were many shops in the 19th century Paris. Find what is sold in each shop and complete the sentences.

Mercerie (Haberdashery) which sells:

Chapelier (Hatter) which sells:

Herboriste (Herbalist) which sells:

Bonneterie (Hosiery) which sells:

10. A locksmith's shop is called "Rossignol". Do you know what this word means in French except "nightingale"?

11. The cul-de-sac "Poubelle" is named after a famous Prefect of Paris. What did he do?

12. In the 19th century, posters advertised plays and cabaret shows. Which artist painted famous posters in Art Nouveau style?

- ☐ Le douanier Rousseau ☐ Alfons Mucha

13. The "Chat Noir" is the name of a famous place in Paris at the end of the 19th century. What sort of place was it?

- ☐ a cabaret ☐ a restaurant

### Middle Ages Set

#### Knights' stopping place

14. Look at the shields that decorate the tents. On one of them a hand is strangling:

- ☐ an eagle ☐ a chicken

15. On another shield, a hen is carrying:

- ☐ a brush ☐ a helmet

16. On a third shield, you can see a rabbit and:

- ☐ a tortoise ☐ carrots

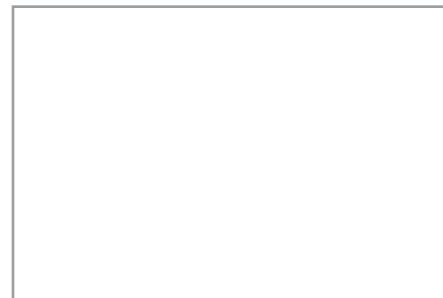
#### A castle and houses in the Middle Ages

17. Tick the 3 anachronisms, or oddities, you see in the set.

- ☐ a television aerial  
☐ a satellite dish  
☐ a weather vane with the shape of a roast chicken  
☐ a heart-shaped weather vane  
☐ a romper suit hung out to dry  
☐ a tutu hung out to dry

#### The King's Horses merry-go-round

18. Look at the shields that decorate the merry-go-round and draw the one you like best.



### The Nationale 7

19. The "Nationale 7" was the name of the longest road in France in the 20th century. It was also the road French people took to go on holiday. Where does it go from Paris?

- ☐ towards the South of France  
☐ towards the West of France

20. Which 20th century French singer wrote a song about this road?

- ☐ Edith Piaf ☐ Charles Trénet

## DURING THE VISIT / TEACHER

During your visit to the park, take your students on a trip down memory lane. They'll see a Parisian street in the Middle Ages and at the end of the 19th century (the "Belle Époque"), and they can drive down the famous Nationale 7 road. Here are some activities you can do during your visit.



### Treasure Hunt

- Send them down Rue de Paris, the Middle Ages set and the Nationale 7 road to investigate and answer the questionnaire.
- The questions will encourage them to look closely at the sets and listen to the comments. Help them to find the characters of the doll's house if they have difficulty understanding the French voice.
- Suggest they form small groups to work in.
- They will need: a pencil to write the answers, a notebook to draw in.



### Investigation: answers

1. A barrel organ
2. Verlaine
3. Victor Hugo
4. Edgar Degas
5. The painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
6. Yes
7. The phonograph
8. The storming of the Bastille, during the French Revolution
9. Sewing materials, hats, medicinal plants, hats and stockings
10. A hook used by thieves to open all sorts of locks
11. Eugène Poubelle made it compulsory to have a dustbin. In 1883, he made it compulsory for landlords to provide dustbins where their tenants could dispose of their rubbish
12. Alfons Mucha
13. A cabaret
14. An eagle
15. A helmet
16. Carrots
17. A television aerial – a weather vane with the shape of a roast chicken – a romper suit drying at a window
19. Towards the South of France (the "Côte d'azur"), as far as the town of Menton
20. Charles Trenet

### Activity ideas

#### Middle Ages Vocabulary

Some shops sell replicas of articles from the Crusades. Use these articles to test your students' vocabulary. How do you say the following words in French: king, princess, knight, sword, shield, helmet, crown, diadem, coat of mail, armour?



#### A show (almost) without words

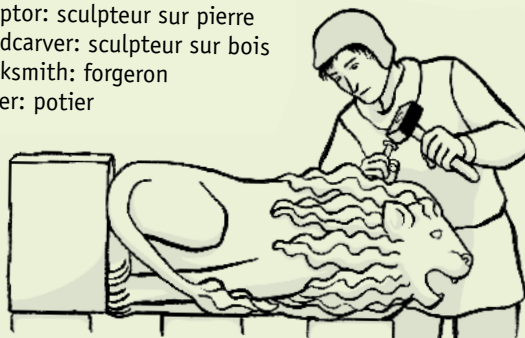
Tell your students to watch the show *Main basse sur la Joconde*: they will discover the atmosphere of the "Belle Époque" and a car chase between policemen and thieves with many stunts.

#### Do a drawing

The King's horses merry-go-round is decorated with fancy coats of armour. Ask your students to invent a coat of armour and do a drawing of it.

#### Find the trades

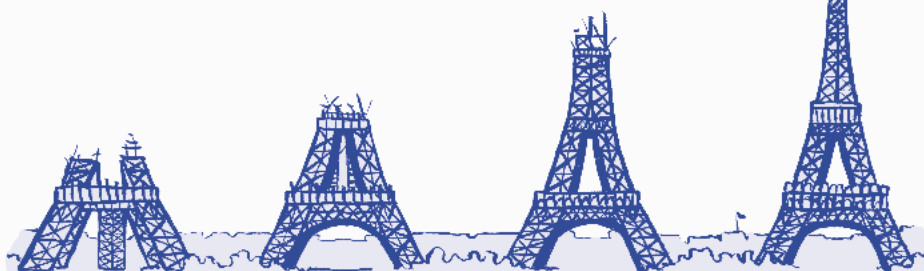
In the Middle Ages street, many tradesmen are ready to do business. Ask your students to find their names:  
Glassblower: verrier  
Sculptor: sculpteur sur pierre  
Woodcarver: sculpteur sur bois  
Blacksmith: forgeron  
Potter: potier



After visiting Parc Astérix Theme Park, discover the story of France's most famous monument. Use this document to help you prepare a class presentation in French.



## The Amazing Story of the Eiffel Tower



### Who built it?

The engineer Gustave Eiffel. He also built more than 50 bridges and the framework of the Statue of Liberty.

He was 50 years old when he took on the job of building the Eiffel Tower. The plans were drawn by Maurice Koechlin and Emile Nouguier, two engineers who worked in Eiffel's company.

### Why?

In 1886, the French government organized a competition. Participants were required to design a 300-metre high tower which was to be built on the Champs de Mars, in Paris. The winning tower was to be the entrance to the 1889 Universal Exhibition. There were a hundred entries in the competition. Gustave Eiffel's project was the winner.

### Did you know?

The tip of the Eiffel Tower tilts when it's windy. It moves a few centimetres.  
The tower has to be painted every 7 years.  
This requires 60 tonnes of paint.

### How?

Building began on 28th January 1887. Workers spent five months digging the foundations of the four feet of the tower. They started assembling the feet on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Gradually, the four feet came together to form the first floor.

The tower was built like a giant game of Meccano, using wooden scaffolding and small steam-powered cranes. The metallic beams were made in Gustave Eiffel's workshops. When they arrived at the building site, the workers assembled them with rivets, of which there are 2,500,000 in total.

250 men worked on the site. They worked 12 hours per day in the cold and the wind, on the edge of a sheer drop. On several occasions, they went on strike to ask for a pay rise.

The Eiffel Tower was completed on 31st May 1889. It had taken only 2 years, 2 months and 5 days to build, which was a huge achievement. Gustave Eiffel hoisted the French flag to the top. Including the flag, the tower measured 312m.

### Records at the Eiffel Tower

With 1,710 steps, the Eiffel Tower has inspired many sporting achievements: sportsmen and women have hopped up the stairs, climbed up on stilts, cycled up on a mountain bike, and come down on a motorbike and in a wheelchair. The record time for climbing the tower is 8 minutes and 51 seconds.

### Anecdotes

In 1912, the "bird-man", a tailor called Reichelt, jumped off the tower with a parachute he had made. He crashed to the ground while journalists looked on.

In 1948, Bouglione Circus took its oldest member, an 85-year-old elephant, on a tour of the tower. She climbed up to the first floor.

In 1960, French television announced that the Eiffel Tower was going to be moved to span the River Seine, with two feet on one bank and two feet on the other. It was an April fool.

### A scientific purpose

In 1889, Gustave Eiffel gave his tower a scientific purpose. He had lightning conductors installed, and also a meteorological laboratory to measure wind speed, temperature and air humidity. The tower was also used as a transmitter for the first French trials of wireless telegraphy (1898), radio programmes (1921) and television programmes (1935). Today, its antennas are used as transmitters by 32 radio stations and 41 television channels.

### The tower in figures

324 metres high (including antennas)  
7,300 tonnes of metal  
18,000 metallic parts  
2,500 000 rivets  
1,710 steps  
3 floors  
5 elevators  
7 million visitors every year

## Prepare a class presentation

Use this document to prepare a class presentation in French on another topic. Here are some suggestions:

- The Palace of Versailles: how it was built, who lived there during the reign of Louis XIV, the gardens.
- The Louvre: its origins, how it became a museum, its most famous works of art.

## AFTER THE VISIT / TEACHER

Continue your visit to Parc Astérix Theme Park by introducing your students to some of the monuments that recount the history of France. This document suggests some key places and activity ideas.



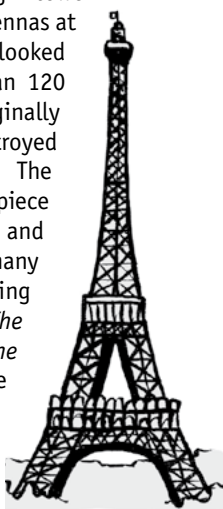
### A subject for discussion in class

#### Paris monuments

##### The Eiffel Tower

The "Iron Lady" was built by the engineer Gustave Eiffel as a symbol of French expertise for the 1889 Universal Exhibition, which was held in Paris.

The 324-metre-high tower (including the antennas at the top) has overlooked Paris for more than 120 years. But, originally it was to be destroyed after 20 years. The tower is a masterpiece of mechanical art and has inspired many painters including Marc Chagall (*The Bridal Pair with the Eiffel Tower*). The painter Robert Delaunay alone painted it 30 times.



With gargoyles, a spire, towers and bells, it served as the backdrop for the novel *Notre Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo and was home to the novel's main protagonist, Quasimodo. In France, road distances to and from Paris are calculated from the "zero point" located on the square in front of the cathedral.

##### The Natural History Museum

The site of the Jardin des Plantes was a botanical garden that Louis XIII created in 1635 to grow medicinal plants. Then the garden was turned into a museum. Today, it is home to a menagerie, a gallery of palentology and the Gallery of Evolution, which retraces the steps of evolution by means of a spectacular procession of stuffed animals. These animals represent a very small part of the museum's collection, which was built up from scientific journeys in the 18th and 19th centuries.

##### The Palace of Versailles

The Palace of Versailles was built from 1662 at the request of Louis XIV, who wanted to gather the nobility around him, away from Paris. The Sun King lived there amongst his court, which comprised 3,000 people. The palace gardens became the first formal French garden. The King's gardener, André Le Nôtre, made straight paths interspersed with many surprising features: fountains, ponds and waterfalls, statues, caves, labyrinths and an orangery. There was also a vegetable garden where pineapples and coffee beans were grown, and a menagerie full of exotic animals. The King held sumptuous receptions there with ballets and theatrical productions. Sometimes he himself performed or danced, in disguise.

##### Notre Dame de Paris

The first stone of the cathedral of Paris was laid on l'île de la Cité, in 1163. The cathedral was built during the Middle Ages and took almost two centuries to complete. It is one of the finest accomplishments of French Gothic architecture.

##### The Louvre

Originally, The Louvre was a fort, built in 1190 by Philippe-Auguste to protect Paris from Anglo-Norman invasions. It then became the residence of French Kings, who gradually transformed it until it became an enormous palace. During the French Revolution, it became part of France's national heritage and the large gallery was turned into a museum which was opened to the public. It possesses 350,000 works of art, but only one tenth of these are on display. Today, the entrance is via the glass pyramid designed by the architect Ieoh Ming Pei.

##### The Pont Neuf

The Pont Neuf is the oldest bridge in Paris. Building began in 1578 and was completed in 1604 under Henri IV. It was the first bridge without houses on it, but which had pavements. It became a walkway and a showground: people on foot walked past fire eaters, bear tamers, tooth pullers and cabaret artists. In 1985, the American Artist Christo wrapped the bridge in fabric.

### Activity Ideas

#### Discover French Gastronomy

Ask your pupils to find the ingredients of these typical French dishes. Tick the correct answer:

**Sauerkraut** is a dish of pork meats and:

☐ peas ☐ cabbage

**Cassoulet** is a dish of pork meats and:

☐ white beans ☐ green beans

A **truffle** is:

☐ shellfish ☐ a mushroom

**Bouillabaisse** is a soup made with leftover:

☐ meat ☐ fish

When you eat **fondue savoyarde** you dip bread in:

☐ wine ☐ cheese

**Foie gras** is made by force-feeding:

☐ ducks ☐ geese ☐ pigs ☐ chickens

**Camembert** is a cheese made with:

☐ cow's milk ☐ sheep's milk ☐ goat's milk

fish, cheese, ducks and geese, cow's milk.  
Answers: cabbage, white beans, a mushroom,

### Films

• *Small Change*, by François Truffaut (1978): life at school and on summer camp for a group of children in France in the 1970s.

• *Au revoir les enfants*, by Louis Malle (1987): in 1943, in occupied France, 12-year-old Julien makes friends with a new pupil at his school. But the day comes when the new pupil is taken away by the Gestapo.

• *Mon oncle*, a French film by Jacques Tati (1958): discover France and French technological gadgets in the 1950s ... through the eyes of absent-minded Mr. Hulot.

• *The Aristocats* (1970) and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), two animated Disney films set in Paris.

• *The King and the Mockingbird* (1980). This French cartoon by Paul Grimault (1980) with texts by Jacques Prévert is the masterpiece of French animation.

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