

# Countries Around the World™

## France

### Program Summary

Meet 12-year-old Arthur. He and his family live in Paris, the capital of France. Join Arthur as he and his family head to the countryside to enjoy a hike through the woods and the beautiful grounds of Château de Breteuil, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century manor. Once back in Paris, Arthur strolls along the Champs-Élysées, one of France's most famous avenues, where he views some prototype automobiles, browses among some boutiques and meets his mother at a café. Discover the importance of food to the French identity when Arthur and his family buy a baguette at a boulangerie before hunting for the perfect cheese and wine at the market. Next, Arthur visits the Notre Dame de Paris, the cathedral that served as the setting for Victor Hugo's famous novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Finally, Arthur reveals aspects of France's history when he walks along the banks of the Seine and arrives at the Place de la Bastille, the location of the revolt that began the French Revolution.

### Country Information

- **location:** Western Europe, bordering the Bay of Biscay, the English Channel and the Mediterranean Sea; bordered by Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland; France also consists of the following territories: French Guiana (South America), Guadeloupe (Caribbean), Martinique (Caribbean) and Reunion (island in the Indian Ocean)
- **capital:** Paris
- **official language:** French
- **type of government:** republic
- **total area:** approximately 643,427 sq km
- **climate:** generally cool winters and mild summers, except for mild winters and hot summers along the Mediterranean; occasional strong, cold, dry, north-to-northwesterly wind
- **terrain:** mostly flat plains or gently rolling hills in the North and West; remainder is mountainous, especially the Pyrenees in the South and the Alps in the East
- **major bodies of water:** English Channel, Bay of Biscay, Mediterranean Sea, Seine River and Rhine River
- **natural resources:** includes coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, uranium, antimony, arsenic, potash, feldspar, fluor spar, gypsum, timber, fish
- **industries:** includes machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, textiles, food processing and tourism
- **agricultural products:** includes wheat, cereals, sugar beets, potatoes, wine grapes, beef, dairy products and fish

### Vocabulary

**prototype** — An original, full-scale and, usually, working model of a new product or new version of an existing product.

**European Union (EU)** — A family of democratic European countries that are committed to working together for peace and prosperity. France is a member of the European Union. (Continued)

**euro** — The currency of France and several other member nations of the European Union.

**boutique** — A small retail shop that specializes in one type of merchandise, such as fashionable clothes or food.

**café** — A small restaurant that often has an enclosed or outdoor section that extends onto the sidewalk.

**baguette** — A long, narrow loaf of French bread.

**boulangerie** — French for "bakery."

**pain au chocolat** — A French pastry that features a flaky crust surrounding chocolate.

**Camembert** — A creamy, mold-ripened cheese that softens on the inside as it matures.

**Bleu d'Auvergne** — A type of blue cheese that comes from the Auvergne region of France.

**Comté** — A pale, creamy-yellow cheese that comes from the Franche-Comté region of France.

**Brie** — A mold-ripened, whole-milk cheese with a whitish rind and a soft, light-yellow center.

**Tomme de Savoie** — A mild, semi-soft cheese with a beige interior and a thick brownish-grey rind that comes from the Savoie region in the French Alps.

**Champagne** — The sparkling, dry, white wine from the region of Champagne in France.

**Bordeaux** — A red or white wine produced in the region around Bordeaux in France.

**Burgundy** — A red or white wine produced in Burgundy in France.

**gargoyle** — From *gargouille*, the French word for throat. A grotesque, ornamental figure that is often portrayed as a bird or beast sitting on its haunches. Originally designed to drain water from rooftops, gargoyles were thought to frighten away evil spirits.

**nave** — The central part of a church.

**quay** — A wharf or reinforced bank where ships are loaded or unloaded.

### Pre-viewing Discussion

- Lead a discussion about identity. Begin by asking students to share information about people, places and things with which they identify. How do these things represent you? What do they say about you? If you had to describe who you are as a person, what would you say? How is being a part of your community a part of your identity? How is being a resident of your state and of the United States part of your identity? Students can then brainstorm a list of things that they think constitute a national identity and make predictions about what they will see in the program about France. After viewing, have students compare their pre-viewing list of criteria with what was shown in the show.
- Ask students about their favorite foods. Questions to ask include: What is it about your favorite food that makes you like it so much? From where does your favorite food originate? Is your favorite food synonymous with a particular place, state or country? Is there any type of cultural significance to your favorite food? Why do we eat certain foods on certain occasions, like Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July? As they prepare to watch the program, instruct students to watch for examples of French food and their significance to the French people.
- Distribute outline maps of France to the class. Have them find and label the capital, other major cities, bodies of water and neighboring countries. Ask questions, such as how many countries border France? Which country shares the longest border with France? Which one shares the shortest? Based on France's location, what do you think the climate is like? How might the climate in Marseille differ from the climate in Orléans? Why?

## Follow-up Activities

- France is world-famous for its cheese, and there are over 200 different types of French cheese, each with its own distinctive flavor and history. Students will have fun hunting for different types of French cheeses, like Camembert, Brie, Comté and Tome de Savoie, and bringing samples of them to class for a cheese tasting. Students can share information about the cheeses that they brought. At the end of the tasting, poll the students as to their favorite cheeses and turn the results into percentages to rate the popularity of the cheeses.
- *Bonjour!* Students can learn some basic French words and phrases, which deal with topics such as ordering food at a restaurant and talking about the weather, by visiting [www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/lj/menu.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/lj/menu.shtml). Have students pair up and write and perform short skits in French. After each performance, students can translate what they were saying into English. *Adieu!*
- French author Victor Hugo is known for writing many distinguished works, but perhaps his most famous is the classic novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Using the *Bullseye Step into Classic Series* version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1996), have students read the book and retell or write about their favorite parts of the story. Then, have students work in pairs and complete story maps for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by visiting [www.readwritethink.org/materials/storymap/index.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/storymap/index.html). As an extension, students can pick their favorite parts of the book and create illustrations that feature a caption explaining the scene depicted. Hang the students' illustrations in the classroom.
- Found on many buildings all over the world, from the Notre Dame de Paris cathedral in France to the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., gargoyles are eerie, grotesque and sometimes downright scary statues that were often designed to ward off evil spirits. Using various craft materials, students can design and build their own gargoyles. Students can even name their gargoyles and write backstories about them. Display the students' gargoyles in the classroom.
- Bastille Day is one of France's most important holidays. Have students investigate this special holiday and encourage them to explore the connections between Bastille Day and the Fourth of July. Students can create Venn diagrams to show the similarities and differences between the French and American independence days.
- Students can pretend that they are young entrepreneurs about to open a café in Paris by creating menus for their new establishments. Begin by dividing the class into small groups. Have each group devise a list of French foods and beverages, French names for their cafés and price lists that feature prices in both euros, France's currency, and U.S. dollars. Each group's menu can feature descriptions and pictures or illustrations of the foods and beverages. Encourage each group to draw a picture or build a model of its café.
- France is one of the most visited countries in the world, and thousands of tourists flock to Paris each year to see the City of Light's most famous landmarks. Have students create brochures about visiting Paris. For a searchable directory of tourist attractions in Paris, visit [www.paris.org/](http://www.paris.org/). The brochures can include facts about the various landmarks and buildings, maps and pictures or illustrations. For an interactive tool for making brochures, visit [interactives.mped.org/ppress110.aspx](http://interactives.mped.org/ppress110.aspx).
- Have students create a classroom atlas that features the 22 French provinces. Assign each student a province and have him or her find information about it. Then, students can draw maps of their assigned provinces and design accompanying pages that contain information about the provinces, such as the population, capital, total area, climate and landforms. Information about the French provinces can be found at [www.discoverfrance.net/France/Provinces/prov\\_intro2.shtml](http://www.discoverfrance.net/France/Provinces/prov_intro2.shtml).

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- Students can investigate and find facts about famous French historical figures, like Louis XIV, Napoleon Bonaparte, Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette, and create biographical booklets about them. Begin by brainstorming a list of names of French historical figures and assign each student a figure. Then, students can visit [readwritethink.org/materials/bio\\_cube/](http://readwritethink.org/materials/bio_cube/) to create a "bio-cube" — a fun, foldable, 3-D graphic organizer for their biographical information. Using the information from their bio-cubes, students can complete their booklets. Once students have finished making their booklets, have them share their work with the class. For an interactive booklet maker, visit [www.readwritethink.org/materials/stapleless/index.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/stapleless/index.html).
- The Louvre Museum in Paris is home to some of the world's most renowned works of art, housing such treasures as the *Mona Lisa* and the *Venus de Milo*. Create an art gallery in the classroom that features students' recreations of paintings and sculptures from the Louvre Museum. Begin by selecting a series of paintings and sculptures to show to the class by visiting [www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp](http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp). Students can choose their favorite pieces and create their own interpretations of them by using crayons, paint, markers, clay, salt dough, etc. Using index cards, students can also create informational plaques to accompany their recreations, which tell the names of the works, the original artists and the dates they were created. Students can also include a line that tells why they chose the artwork that they did and what they like about it.
- Students can work in pairs to create crossword puzzles about France. Have each pair come up with a list of words related to France, such as "baguette," "beret" and "bonjour." Once they have finished making their puzzles, have students exchange and complete each other's puzzles. An online, interactive crossword puzzle maker can be found at: [www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/create.html](http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/create.html).

## Suggested Internet Resources

- [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/online/explore/journey/france/frindex.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/online/explore/journey/france/frindex.htm)  
Discover France and learn what it is like to live there! This child-friendly site provides basic information about France's culture.
- [www.ambafrance-us.org/kids/](http://www.ambafrance-us.org/kids/)  
The Embassy of France offers a web page for children, with topics ranging from the economy and culture to games.
- [library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/france.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/france.html)  
Learn about the culture and customs of France from the perspective of a child who lives there! The students of Roosevelt School in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin present this award-winning site to teach people about different cultures.
- [www.tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk/](http://www.tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk/)  
The official site of the Eiffel Tower! Includes photos, facts, figures and a fun page just for kids.
- [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on France and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *The Eiffel Tower*. KidHaven Press, Farmington Hills, MI; 2005.
- Fisher, Teresa. *France*. Cherrytree Books, Weybridge, VT; 2005.
- Landau, Elaine. *France*. Children's Press, Danbury, CT; 2000.
- Locricchio, Matthew. *The Cooking of France*. Marshall Cavendish, Tarrytown, NY; 2002.
- Stacey, Gill. *Paris*. World Almanac Library, Strongsville, OH; 2004.

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