



Hexagonie

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Maria Rice-Jones

**A Unique Method for
Teaching French in Primary
Schools**



Brilliant Publications

About the author

Maria Rice-Jones is a French national with a Masters Degree in Modern Languages from the Sorbonne University in Paris. Since 1990, she has taught French to students of primary level and above in Paris, Milan and London.

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From the author

Hexagonie is designed for non-specialist and specialist teachers of French in primary schools. It offers a fresh and creative approach to teaching French and is presented in a logical, easy-to-follow format. Whatever their experience with the French language, *Hexagonie* will enable teachers to achieve material results in the classroom. The fast-paced lessons, with an emphasis on learning and using language structures, enable pupils to rapidly demonstrate the ability to communicate and converse with confidence.

I have been developing, trialing and testing the *Hexagonie* method over many years for use in my own classroom. It has now been formalized as a book at the encouragement of my pupils and colleagues. *Hexagonie* is guided by my own personal quest to challenge the “difficulties” of the French language head-on with a bold and imaginative teaching style that makes learning French easier and more accessible than is typically possible with many French schemes or textbooks. A key principle of the *Hexagonie* method is that parrot-style learning of grammatical rules and vocabulary lists should be avoided because it is laborious, and what is learned is often quickly forgotten. Instead, my approach to learning makes learning French enjoyable. It encourages children to play with words and language structures and to create their own memory techniques, which in turn help them to internalize the language, making them more efficient learners.

Hexagonie is a highly systematic “synthetic” approach to teaching French. Elements of language are carefully introduced, one step at a time, so that each unit builds on what has been learned before. So, for example, children are introduced to only the indefinite article (“a”) in Unit 1. With this building block and the introduction of “c’est” in Unit 2 they can then start to build their own sentences and enjoy the rewards of being able to communicate in a foreign language. Each unit builds on the pupils’ cumulative knowledge, thus building a firm foundation.

Hexagonie integrates a wide range of interesting facts about French and the French way of life so that pupils will gain a rich insight into the culture and diversity of the country.

Hexagonie will make you see French in a different light and help you to teach more creatively and efficiently. This is what *Hexagonie* is all about.

Enjoy!



Maria Rice-Jones

Teaching using the Hexagonie method

The *Hexagonie* scheme is divided into four parts, one for each year of Key Stage 2. However, this book, the first in the series, can be used to start teaching French from any year of Key Stage 2.

Hexagonie 1 consists of:

- Book containing lesson plans and photocopiable sheets
- Flashcards
- Audio CD

Structure of the units

There are 15 units in *Hexagonie 1*. As each unit builds on the preceding one, the units need to be taught in order. However, it is up to you, the teacher, to decide how many lessons to split the units into. The units are subdivided so there are convenient breaking points. We haven't provided rigid lesson plans as the time available and pace in which pupils can work will differ from class to class. Each unit provides a detailed lesson plan and related photocopiable pupil sheets.

Bonjour and au revoir

We recommend that you begin each lesson with “Bonjour” and end with “Au revoir”. Greeting people politely is a very important part of French culture, and taking the time to greet the children at the start of the lesson and say a formal goodbye at the end will reinforce this.

Hexagonie story

In each unit you will find a story, written in English, about the imaginary land of “Hexagonie”. These stories are designed to be read aloud, either by you or by pupils, and then discussed. The imaginary land of Hexagonie gets its name from the shape of France. In fact, many French people refer to France as “l'hexagone”. The inhabitants of Hexagonie are parts of speech: nouns, verbs, etc. These fun stories reinforce key teaching points. They work in much the same way as the “memory tricks”, helping to engage pupils' imaginations and encourage learning. Pupils could be encouraged to keep their copies of the stories and make them into a little booklet.

Recap on previous units

Each unit (after Unit 1) starts with a recap on what has been learned in the preceding lesson. If you split up the units into smaller segments, we recommend that you begin each lesson with a quick oral recap of what you did the lesson before.

Essential words and phrases

Each unit has a list of essential words and phrases that can be photocopied and given to children. As with the Hexagonie stories, these could be collated and made into a small booklet.

Vocabulary lists and materials needed

The vocabulary and materials needed are listed in boxes to the side of each section, so it is easy to see at a glance what vocabulary will be introduced, and what materials are needed. A full list of the vocabulary introduced in each unit is on pages 194–197.

Logos used in lesson plans

Each unit contains a wide variety of activities, ranging from role plays and games through to Mexican waves and listening activities. You do not need to do all the activities and you should use your professional judgement to decide which to include. Other suggestions for introducing vocabulary appear on page 9.

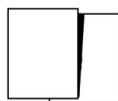
The following logos have been used to make the lesson plans easy to navigate:



Role play is an excellent way of giving children the opportunity to practise speaking French.



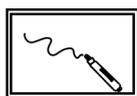
This logo is used to indicate that the colour flashcards are to be used. A full list of the flashcards appears on page 217.



This logo refers to the photocopyable pupil sheets. The number of the sheet is indicated on the logo. For more information on the pupil sheets, please see page 8.



This logo indicates that a track on the CD is required. The appropriate track number appears on the logo.



On the board – this logo indicates when it would be beneficial to illustrate the key points being taught on the board.



Game – this logo is used to indicate a variety of games – some paper-based, others more active.



Memory tricks are an important part of the *Hexagonie* approach. I provide a wide range of tried and tested “memory tricks” based on sound and idea associations. They enliven and facilitate the learning process by helping pupils to learn and remember what is being taught. Wherever memory tricks are used to master tricky grammatical points or vocabulary, experience shows that what is learnt once usually sticks for good. So, whenever a teacher or pupil faces a difficulty in French, the best solution is to use or devise a memory trick – what was difficult before will suddenly seem much easier and is less likely to be forgotten.

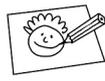
Throughout the scheme, pupils (and teachers!) are encouraged to construct their own memory tricks. Creating memory tricks is all about playing with words: it is an imaginative “game” which makes learning fun and also teaches pupils how to learn more efficiently. That means not just learning something for today, but knowing how to learn something so that you remember it for life.

Pupil pages

A variety of pupil pages has been included, so that you can choose the sheet most appropriate for your pupils. The pupil pages use the following logos, to help give pupils independence and instil confidence when reading instructions.



Lis (read)



Dessine (draw)



Regarde (look)



Écris (write)



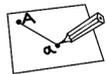
Réponds (answer)



Complète (fill)



Trouve (find)



Relie (join)



Colorie (colour in)

Answers to the pupil sheets are given on pages 220–223.

Audio CD

The CD contains 41 tracks. A full transcript appears on pages 208–216. The oral activities on the CD model the language introduced in the scheme and provide listening activities, which gradually grow in length and complexity. Some of the listening activities are linked to specific worksheets. In addition there are four songs, as well as instrumental versions of the tunes to allow children to try singing on their own. After listening to the tracks, you could ask questions to test the pupils' comprehension and give them more opportunities for speaking.

Four characters are introduced in the CD tracks:

- Le Roi Être, King Être, the king of the imaginary land of Hexagonie
- Monsieur Grand (Mr Tall)
- Madame Petite (Mrs Short)
- Mademoiselle Jolie (Miss Pretty)

You could make stick puppets for these characters using the pictures on pages 204–207. Either you or your pupils could colour in the characters (photocopied onto card), then cut them out and glue lolly sticks to the back for handles. The puppets can then be used to practise conversations.

Flashcards

Hexagonie 1 contains 120 flashcards. A full list appears on page 217. We recommend that after you have guillotined them to the correct size that you laminate them to increase their durability. On the reverse side of the flashcards, female nouns appear in red type and male nouns in blue type.

How Hexagonie relates to KS2 Framework for Languages

Hexagonie addresses all of the learning objectives for Year 3 for Oracy and Literacy, and many of those for Intercultural Understanding. The chart below shows which objectives are addressed in each unit. As you will see, most of the learning objectives are addressed in each unit, so that pupils are given many opportunities to practise both their oral and written skills. Through doing the activities suggested in *Hexagonie*, pupils will also develop knowledge about the French language, and develop effective learning strategies for learning languages. Indeed, developing effective strategies for learning French is what *Hexagonie* is all about.

	O3.1	O3.2	O3.2	O3.3	O3.4	L3.1	L3.2	L3.3	IU3.1	IU3.2	IU3.3	IU3.4
1		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	*	**
2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				*	**
3		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●*	**
4		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**
5	●	●	●	●	●						●*	**
6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**
7		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	*	**
8		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	*	**
9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**
10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**
11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**
12		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●*	**
13		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●*	**
14		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●*	**
15		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			*	**

* *Greeting people politely is a very important part of French culture and throughout Hexagonie the importance of being polite and identifying to whom one is speaking is emphasized.*

** *The CD provides opportunities for pupils to hear French spoken and sung in a variety of contexts. Pupils would obviously benefit from having contact with native speakers, either in person or via video or the Internet.*

Suggestions for introducing new vocabulary

Throughout *Hexagonie 1*, the vocabulary is introduced using visual material: items from the classroom, miniatures and flashcards. The vocabulary is given as a suggestion and it is up to you, the teacher, to decide if you introduce it all.

Experience shows that pupils learn in different ways, which is why I have included a variety of learning styles – from ‘engaging’ activities (role play, games) through to oral and written activities. Using the vocabulary in many different ways will help pupils to remember it.

Hexagonie is primarily an oral approach to learning French. Photocopiable sheets are included to enable the children to practise what they have learned in class or at home. They contain a variety of activities ranging from drawing and matching activities through to reading and writing practise. It is intended that they should be given out only at the end of the lesson, and that you go over the language on the sheet first with the children. However, it is up to you, the teacher, to decide which sheets to give out and when, as you are the one who knows your pupils best. Remember, it is important for children to have lots of practise pronouncing words orally before seeing them in the written form.

Praising pupils

The more French your pupils hear using the language structures introduced in *Hexagonie*, the better. Here are some simple phrases using "c'est" you can use when praising children:

C'est amusant!
(It is funny!)

Ce n'est pas difficile!
(It isn't difficult!)

C'est correct!
(It is correct!)

C'est beau!
(It is beautiful!)

C'est magnifique!
(It is magnificent!)

C'est excellent!
(It is excellent!)

C'est intéressant!
(It is interesting!)

C'est simple!
(It is simple!)

C'est très bien!
(It is very well done!)

Other useful French phrases

Ce n'est pas clair!
(It isn't clear!)

C'est difficile!
(It is difficult!)

C'est dangereux!
(It is dangerous!)

C'est impossible!
(It is impossible!)

Ce n'est pas normal!
(It isn't normal!)

C'est incorrect!
(It is incorrect!)

C'est délicieux!
(It is delicious!)