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Learning about Others while Talking about Self: Role-Playing around the Francophone World, Using Passports and "Fauxbook" Profiles

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Introduction and Rationale

Who do middle schoolers like talking about more – themselves, or others? I'd say it's a pretty close call. Developmentally, they are just transitioning from an extreme focus on self–identity to the bare beginnings of an awareness of humanity writ large. Their world is in the process of growing past a simplistic realm revolving merely around the self, but hasn't quite expanded to include everyone else, beyond their immediate circle of friends, family, and acquaintances. They are becoming much more social and establishing their own personalities, often in relationship to those of the people around them. In this respect, a feeling of kinship and similarity is extremely important to this age group, even more so than to others. Alternatively, a propensity to contrast as well as compare can result, if untended, in a splintering effect, as students establish who they are by who they consider themselves to be *un–like* , who they deem themselves to be *different than* .

Since our students are naturally employing these skills of comparison and contrast on a daily basis in their personal lives, it only makes sense to arrange our lessons around the same structures, so that we are speaking the same proverbial language. By guiding our focus to the similarities among people from the United States and those from French-speaking countries around the world, I can help students develop their worldview into one of sameness as opposed to difference or opposition. And within that context, we can address the idea of difference in a way that will guide students to equate it not with division but with variety and uniqueness.

I teach French at an arts magnet middle school in New Haven, to students in grades five through eight. The curriculum for grades seven and eight in middle school is the same as the ninth grade/First Year curriculum in high school. It comes with a faster pace, more academic demands in the form of district–wide testing, and a stronger focus on writing than the fifth and sixth grade curriculum, which is more exploratory in nature, stressing oral communication and vocabulary–building.

We spend the first marking period in seventh grade exploring how to introduce ourselves, by giving our name, age, nationality, and where we live. We also identify other people in very simple terms – this is a man, woman, student, friend, teacher. These language components are expanded over the course of the second marking period as students go from talking about themselves to talking more specifically about others, ultimately

describing family members and friends.

Concurrently, the first marking period introduces students to the French-speaking world: Francophone countries and notable French speakers from France and elsewhere. The idea is to excite and perhaps surprise students with the knowledge of a French presence not just in France, but in so many places around the world, and to make that tangible by introducing a wide variety of historically–recognizable and modern–day people who speak French.

Traditionally, these two strands of our first marking period curriculum have been addressed somewhat separately, the linguistic component revolving around introducing oneself and the conversational conventions necessary to do so, the cultural component around identification of places French is spoken and well–known speakers of French. Of course there is overlap, as language skills are indeed practiced when French-speakers are presented. But it isn't until the second marking period that we formally introduce ways of talking about others beyond simply identifying them, as in **Voilà Madame X. C'est une femme** . So it has been challenging to make this aspect of the curriculum as exciting as I think it can and should be.

In the past, we have had students learn about famous French-speakers by researching them, but I have found that to be a largely inefficient undertaking. They are so (understandably) accustomed to viewing research as an information–gathering endeavor that they have great difficulty approaching it as a linguistic practice, limiting their search efforts to what can be understood and communicated with their level of French language knowledge. So they gravitate toward English language sources rather than parse through the French resources provided, and then work to translate the information into French (inevitably with online translation tools!) Our communication and comprehension goals are so quickly lost in this scenario.

Getting students out of the mindset by which they start with an English thought and then translate it to French words is long–term work. Bypassing English is tough to sell, as students at this level are often not yet familiar enough with the complexities of the English language to conceptualize the linguistic challenges inherent in translation. And when it is a matter of getting to know about actual people, curiosity can't help but get the better of our students. What a fortunate problem to have! So rather than continue to fight that natural inclination to find out about people, I have decided to go with it and celebrate it for the gift it is.

I can cull and sort the information; they don't need to. There will be plenty of time to guide my students in the use of French resources for research, and to explore the corresponding pitfalls inherent to the task. But first marking period needs to reel students in and frankly, in my opinion the research project as it has been framed thus far just doesn't do it.

So I will do the research on a variety of French–speakers; in this unit, I will provide that information for a small sampling of people as a model of the process. It is a starting point and a structure for gathering and presenting the people as well as practicing the complementary language skills. Each year I intend to add more personalities, developing a strong bank of interesting French-speakers over time.

Our French-speakers will be introduced through two vehicles, facsimiles of passports as well as sample Facebook profile pages, which I will be referring to as "Fauxbook," profiles because it's fun and it will help me reinforce the meaning of the word *faux* as an example of a French word we have adopted into English language usage. Consistently using these two formats of information delivery will allow students to more readily access *and* use the pertinent information in linguistically significant ways. When they don't have to repeatedly figure out the particulars of the presentation format, they can focus on what is being presented, and will feel more confident to take the risks necessary to practice this new language learning.

After students introduce and create both passports and Fauxbook profile pages for themselves, they will then be introduced to a variety of French-speakers, through *their* passports and profile pages. Students will assume these characters, speaking from their point of view, in role–playing activities. This will allow students to continue practicing the *I* forms of our phrases without getting bored (yes, even seventh graders will eventually tire of speaking of themselves, especially when the topics are so relatively narrow!) It will also help students become more familiar with our French-speakers than they have previously been. I hope that heavily incorporating role–playing at the start of the seventh grade year will help to maintain the atmosphere of creativity and imagination that sometimes is lost as students transition to the more exacting curriculum of seventh grade.

Role–playing can be a fun and engaging way for students to practice language skills. But truthfully, sometimes it ends up feeling a bit contrived. The passports and Fauxbook pages will allow us to circumvent any sense of the stale or proscribed. And they can be used during the next marking period's unit, laying a solid foundation for a seamless transition to talking about others in the third person.

In the Yale–New Haven Teachers Institute seminar, *The Art of Biography* , we have addressed important elements of biography, and the tension between discrete facts and the more complicated bits of information that make up a life. To stay linguistically appropriate in this unit, we must stick to some very basic information; however we will address this tension, albeit on a fairly surface level. Personalities will be introduced first through their passports, and the factual biographical information contained therein. But even here, these facts of a person will only tell part of the story. Then we *will* "view" created Fauxbook pages as a way to explore some other details that help make up who a person is, their likes, dislikes, interests. Although those details are still relatively superficial, they will allow us to hint at the idea of what personal information does or does not define a person.

Topics for Discussion via Question and Response

During this unit, students will be discussing the following categories of information as they pertain to themselves as well as our French-speakers: Name, age, gender, nationality, birthplace, place of residence, language(s) spoken, occupation, activities and interests. See **The Passport** and **Fauxbook Profile Pages** for more information. See also **Appendix B – Passport Template** and **Appendix C – Fauxbook Profile Template** for context.

The following sections are broken down by topic. The sections begin with an indication of which resources – passports, Fauxbook profiles, or both – will be used to share this information, and the particulars of how that will happen. Next there will be a set of question and response formats for each category, followed by important topics to address during instruction. I list the response before the question because we generally introduce statements first and then reinforce them through questioning. In some cases, I have listed variations on questions and/or responses that may be used. The French phrases are written in bold italics and the English in regular italics.

Phrases are introduced as templates with blanks, and our language practice consists of filling in those blanks in as many ways as possible. This allows students the time and space to develop fluency with the phrases, creating a solid foundation for communication. I think it is important to be obvious about this patterning as it

can help students develop the skill of combining what they already know with new learning, in new situations. One way I emphasize this process is by saying *blah blah blah* for the blank in our phrases. For example, ***J'ai blah blah blah ans*** . When I am speaking as myself, the **blah blah blah** gets replaced with ***trente-six*** , but when my students speak for themselves, it gets replaced with **onze** or **douze** . Students get a kick out of hearing a teacher say *blah blah blah* , and because of that I think it helps them to remember the phrases as well as the ways information, or words, can be substituted to change meaning.

In French, the easiest way to form a question is to make a statement but replace the information word with a question word. For example, to ask someone's name, you could start the question with ***Tu t'appelles*** / *Your name* is and instead of completing the sentence with a name, insert the appropriate question word, in this case **comment** *? / what?* ***(Tu t'appelles comment?)*** A more sophisticated way of questioning uses the technique of inversion. With this method, you start with the question word, in this case again it is **Comment** . Next you invert, or "flip–flop," the subject and the verb (linking them with a hyphen), so that **tu t'appelles** becomes ***t'appelles-tu*** . ***(Comment t'appelles-tu?)*** I will list both question forms here, as the first method is much more comfortable for some students, but those who are ready can start experimenting with inversion at their own pace. In class I use both forms, for variety, exposure, and differentiation.

Also, especially when first introducing phrases, I will ask students "guess" questions. This entails following the instructions for the easy questioning technique, but replacing the information word with another information word instead of a question word. Using the example above, I would ask ***Tu t'appelles Simone*** ? or some other name. Sometimes I will use the accurate information word, so that a student named Simone could respond ***Oui, je m'appelle Simone*** . Other times I will use the wrong information word, so that the student can substitute the correct information, as in ***Non! Je m'appelle Julie!*** (1) These guess questions are very useful as students are just learning phrases because it lets you see whether or not they comprehend in a simple, non–threatening exercise. And students love when they understand that you've said something silly, something that is obviously not true (like using someone else's name in the class, a name of the opposite gender, or someone well known to the students.)

In a few instances, I have given a variation on the guess question, called a "choice" question. These questions offer two choices from which students may choose, for example, ***Tu t'appelles Simone ou Julie?*** / *Your name is Simone or Julie?* These questions offer students another opportunity to comprehend, with slightly different parameters. Additionally, there are some categories whose questions are more complex than what I would like to introduce here; in those cases, the choice questions give another questioning option without getting too complex. In other instances, there are several different ways of asking the question that I find it fruitful to explore, and so they are all listed. When an entirely different question phrasing is used, I will simply call it a question without describing what kind of question it is.

NB: Although there are differing theories for what is appropriate, I choose not to stress the more formal ***vous*** form of the subject pronoun *you* just yet, focusing instead on the more casual ***tu*** form at this stage of our language practice. It is more important to me right now that students develop comfort and fluency with the ***tu*** form as that is more conversationally used. In my opinion, adding ***vous*** into the mix exponentially increases the number of forms and variations students need to think about and remember. As a middle school language teacher I am looking to build an interest and, dare I hope love, of language in my students. Keeping it simple helps students to get comfortable and confident that they can learn a new language. Those who are ready for the extra challenge will get it in small group work, but the exercises as explained here will revolve exclusively around the ***tu*** form.

Name

Names can be discussed from both the passport and the Fauxbook profile page. The passport presents the information as **Nom** / *Last Name* and **Prénoms** / *Given Names (First Name, Middle Name)* . On the actual Facebook profile page, the word **Nom** is used to indicate full name. Although I will follow that pattern for the French-speaker Fauxbook pages, I have chosen to break the name category down on student Fauxbook pages into the following categories, to give students more practice with each distinct name component vocabulary: **Prénom** / *First Name*, **Deuxième prénom** / *Middle Name*, **Nom de famille** / *Last Name (Family Name)*, and **Surnom(s)** / *Nickname(s).*

Response: **Je m'appelle [name].** / *My name is....*
Guess Question: **Tu t'appelles [name]?** / *Your name is...?*
Simple Question: **Tu t'appelles comment?** / *Your name is what?*
Inversion Question: **Comment t'appelles–tu?** / *What is your name?*

When students learn that **Je m'appelle** means *My name is* , they often erroneously conclude that **Je** means *My* and **m'appelle** means *name is* . This is an opportunity to introduce a confusing concept to students, that different languages sometimes employ different sentence structures and grammar rules. It is often difficult for students to wrap their brains around this idea, so I try to point out the logic in this alternate way of doing things, thereby honoring difference while also recognizing sameness.

For example, when introducing in future lessons that in French, adjectives generally come after the noun described rather than before (as in English), I will talk about how much sense it makes to first identify the item or person being described and to then describe it. In regards to naming, I spell out that **Je m'appelle** functions as *My name is* even though literally it means *I call myself* . It is important here to have the phrase written down, so that I can point to the pieces as I say them, and students can see the different structure in action – the correlation between **appelle** and *call* and **m'** and *myself* , rather than connecting **m'** with *call* and **appelle** with *myself* as would happen if the English sentence structure were followed. We can visually communicate the additional structure difference of placing the object before the verb rather than after, without spending unnecessary time explaining a grammar point that will only be used in isolated instances in middle school.

Age

Age can be discussed from both the passport and the profile page. The passport gives the **Date de naissance** / *Date of Birth* , from which the age can be calculated. The profile page indicates **&ACIRC;ge** / *Age* as well as **Date de naissance** . For deceased French-speakers, the category will read **&ACIRC;ge au moment du décès** / *Age at Death* .

Students will need to be reminded that, when writing the date in numeric form, the date comes before the month, contrary to the American way of putting the month first. Since this is a confusing concept for students to remember, although both formats are acceptable I always use periods to separate the terms of the date

rather than slashes, so that the date looks different enough to trigger memory of the different format.

> Response: **J'ai [#] ans.** / *I am … years old.*
> Guess Question: **Tu as [#] ans?** / *You are … years old?*
> Simple Question: **Tu as quel âge?** / *You are how old?*
> Inversion Question: **Quel âge as-tu?** / *How old are you?*

Here again is a difficult concept for students, that in French we talk about *having* years or *having* an age as opposed to being a certain age. Although this concept occurs in Spanish as well, even my Spanish speakers struggle with consistent application of this difference. I try to make a joke about it using clichés they may have heard adults say (in life or on television), that I am "more than my age," and that "age is just a number." I stress that I just happen to *have* this many years under my proverbial belt. Yet still students are heavily drawn to saying **Je suis # ans** / *I am # years old* instead of **J'ai** / *I have* . Sometimes I will try to convey making my body into the shape of numbers as I say **Je ne suis pas trente-six! Je suis une femme, prof, américaine, mais je ne suis pas trente-six!** / *I am not thirty–six! I am a woman, (a) teacher, American, but I am not thirty–six!*

Gender

Gender can be discussed from the passport, in the section labeled **Sexe** / *Sex* .

> Response: **Je suis [gender identifier, with indefinite article].** / *I am a….*
> Guess Question: **Tu es [gender identifier, with indefinite article]?** / *You are a…?*
> Choice Question: **Tu es [g-i, w/indef. art.] ou [g-i, w/i.a.]?** / *You are a… or a…?*

Rather than get into more complex question formats or questions with too many options for answers, I decided here to keep the questioning simple, by asking if the person is a man or a woman **(un homme, une femme)** , or a boy or a girl **(un garçon, une fille)** . This will set us up for discussing occupation with the Fauxbook pages, as well as the instruction that will occur immediately after this unit, in which students will start talking about others by asking the question **Qui est-ce?** / *Who is this?* and will answer in basic terms like **C'est un homme / une prof / un ami / une copine** . *This is a man / female teacher / male friend / female friend.*

The instruction that has occurred prior to this unit will dictate how much or in what way you will need to address the use here of indefinite articles (**un, une** / *a)* rather than definite articles (**le, la** / *the)* . Be prepared for the introduction of occupations later, as the indefinite article is retained when combined with

C'est , as in **C'est une artiste** but not when used with other conjugated forms of the verb **être** , as in **Je suis artiste** .

Nationality

Nationality can be discussed from the passport, presented quite simply as **Nationalité** / Nationality .

> Response: **Je suis [nationality, gender-specific].** / I am....
> Guess Question: **Tu es [nationality, gender-specific]?** / You are ...?
> Simple Question: **Tu es de quelle nationalité?** / You are (of) what nationality?
> Inversion Question: **De quelle nationalité es-tu?** / What nationality are you?

Here we need to address the idea that adjectives must match the noun they are describing in gender (and number, but that will not matter here, as we are focusing on only one person.) (2) I like to provide a list of lots of nationality adjectives, in columns for masculine and feminine. Then students can start to make observations, like that the feminine form is a variation of the masculine, that it is longer than the masculine (meaning that something was added to the masculine to make it feminine), that there are certain patterns followed (sometimes you just add an **e** for the feminine version, sometimes you double the final **n** and then add an **e** , etc.).

Students will want to say **Je suis de américaine** because the question now has a **de** in it. I suggest practicing this phrase in conjunction with the phrase from the following section concerning where we are from , so that they can see the connections between **Je suis américaine** . and **Je suis d'Amérique** .

Birthplace/Where One is From

Birthplace/Where one is from can be discussed from the passport as well as the profile page. The passport presents the information by **Lieu de naissance** / Place of birth and the Fauxbook page refers to **Originaire de** / Originally From (Native To) . You could just as easily change the Fauxbook entry to **Lieu de naissance** if it seems that it will be too confusing for your students. **Ville natale** / City of birth is also an option. Although the passport sample I provided just gives a city, when you make (or have the students make, if you prefer) the student passports, you may want to include the state as well. Even though the French-speaker passports will indicate country on the front cover, you may want to add the country here as well for clarity.

> Response: **Je suis de [country/state/city].** / I am from....
> Guess Question: **Tu es de [country/state/city]?** / You are from ...?
> Simple Question: **Tu es d'où?** / You are from where?
> Inversion Question: **D'où es-tu?** / Where are you from?
> Simple Question: **Tu es de quel pays?** / You are from what country?
> Inversion Question: **De quel pays es-tu?** / What country are you from?
> Simple Question: **Tu es de quel état?** / You are from what state?

Inversion Question: *De quel état es–tu?* / *What state are you from?*
Simple Question: *Tu es de quelle ville?* / *You are from what town/city?*
Inversion Question: *De quelle ville es–tu?* / *What town/city are you from?*
Guess Question: *Tu viens de [country/state/city]?* / *You come from ...?*
Simple Question: *Tu viens d'où?* / *You come from where?*
Inversion Question: *D'où viens –tu?* / *Where do you come from?*
Simple Question: *Tu viens de quel pays?* / *You come from what country?*
Inversion Question: *De quel pays viens –tu?* / *What country do you come from?*
Simple Question: *Tu viens de quel état?* / *You come from what state?*
Inversion Question: *De quel état viens –tu?* / *What state do you come from?*
Simple Question: *Tu viens de quelle ville?* / *You come from what town/city?*
Inversion Question: *De quelle ville viens –tu?* / *What town/city do you come from?*

There are clearly lots of options for this line of questioning, depending on how detailed you are getting with the geography and how linguistically ready your students are for more complex phrasing and new verbs. If you get into asking about *which city* and *which country* / *quelle ville* and *quel pays* , you will want to make a connection between masculine and feminine nationality adjectives and these masculine and feminine interrogative adjectives. If you choose to add the questions using the form of the verb *venir* you will need to explain the idea of *being from* / *être de* versus *coming from* / *venir de* .

Place of Residence/Where One Lives Now

Place of residence/Where one lives now can be discussed from the Fauxbook profile page, indicated by **Ville actuelle** / *Current City* . The term **actuelle** can be explained with what I call a stepping stone. Although the word looks like the English word *actual* , here *actual* is a stepping stone to the meaning, because you need to take another step to arrive at the true meaning. If we are talking about the *actual* town you live in, it is the town you *currently* live in, or your *current* town. So **actuelle** here means *current* .

As suggested in the previous section, you may want to include state or country here for clarity. Since the category requests a city only, you can just put that state or country in parentheses.

Response: **J'habite à [city].** / *I live in....*
Guess Question: **Tu habites à [city]?** / *You live in ...?*
Simple Question: **Tu habites où?** / *You live where?*
Inversion Question: **Où habites-tu?** / *Where do you live?*
Response: **J'habite en [feminine country (3)].** / *I live in....*
Guess Question: **Tu habites en [feminine country]?** / *You live in ...?*
Response: **J'habite au [masculine country (4)].** / *I live in....*
Guess Question: **Tu habites au [masculine country]?** / *You live in ...?*
Response: **J'habite aux [plural countries or islands].** / *I live in....*
Guess Question: **Tu habites aux [plural countries or islands]?** / *You live in ...?*
Response: **J'habite à [singular island].** / *I live in....*
Guess Question: **Tu habites à [singular island]?** / *You live in ...?*
Simple Question: **Tu habites en quel pays?** / *You live in which country?*
Inversion Question: **En quel pays habites-tu?** / *In what country do you live?*

This topic of questioning is complicated because there are different prepositional formats depending on where we are saying one lives. Below is a more concise breakdown of when to use each phrase:

&AGRAVE; + city; singular island
AU + masculine country starting with a consonant
AUX + plural countries; plural islands
EN + feminine country; masculine country starting with a vowel

I suggest having students make their own chart categorizing when to use each prepositional format, with examples. A fun way to practice this concept is to either pick prepositional phrases out of a hat or else make your own dice with them. Pick/roll and have pairs of students go back and forth and list as many ways to complete a sentence using that phrase as possible. Or pick a "place" card out of a pile and have students, again in pairs, use white boards to complete a sentence with that place, then compare/correct.

Language(s) Spoken

Language(s) spoken can be discussed from the profile page, indicated by **Langue(s)** / *Language(s)* .

Response: **Je parle [language]** . / *I speak... .*
Guess Question: **Tu parles [language]?** / *You speak ...?*
Simple Question: **Tu parles quelle(s) langue(s)?** / *You speak what language(s)?*
Inversion Question: **Quelle(s) langue(s) parles–tu?** / *What lang.(s) do you speak?*

As with nationalities, I like to give an extensive list of languages spoken. I find it beneficial for students to start comparing categories at this point. I give students a grid with columns for country name, language name, masculine nationality, and feminine nationality, so they can see the similarities among word roots as well as the differences, in spelling as well as capitalization. You can start adding follow–up questions as well. For example:

A: Tu parles français?
B: Oui, je parle français.
A: Tu es français?
B: Non, je suis marocain.

Occupation

Occupation can be discussed from the profile page, indicated by **Profession** / Occupation.

> Response: **Je suis [occupation, without indefinite article].** / I am (a) ....
> Guess Question: **Tu es [occupation, without indefinite article]?** / You are (a) ...?
> Question: **Qu'est-ce que tu fais comme travail?** / What do you do (for a job)?

The best question for this category involves an entirely different phrasing than the response, so I have decided to limit the other methods of questioning here. You will need to address the idea that in French, you don't say you are "a" so–and–so, you simply say that you are so–and–so. **Je suis professeur** and not **Je suis un professeur** . Be sure to note that you do, however, use the indefinite article when identifying people, as in **C'est un professeur** . See the next section, "Activities and Interests," for a discussion of gathering/supplying vocabulary for this category. The student entry in this category will be **étudiant(e)** or **élève** (student.) On the student Fauxbook page I have also added the category of **Collège** / Middle school so that they may get used to the idea that **collège** does not actually mean college **(université.)** (5)

Activities and Interests

All the information on activities, interests, and likes will be found on the Fauxbook profile page. I will have students fill in every category on their own pages, or as many as are fitting, from the following categories: **Musique** / Music, **Films** / Films, **Télévision** / Television, **Livres** / Books, **Sports** / Sports, **Autres intérêts** / Other Interests.

> Response: **J'aime [x].** / I like... .
> Guess Question: **Tu aimes [x]?** / You like...?

Question: **Qu'est-ce que tu aimes comme [musique / musiciens / films / émissions à la télé / livres / sports]?** / What do you like in/as/for music / musicians / films / t.v. shows / books / sports?

There are so many different types of questions that can get at the given information. As stated previously, I want to keep things as simple as possible at this stage of language learning, teaching patterns that can be used for many different scenarios by substituting vocabulary. So I have decided to introduce only the one additional question format here. As students advance, you will want to offer more question options.

Vocabulary words, like types of music, films, television programs, and books, as well as sports and activities, will be indicated in French. You will either want to provide vocabulary lists or create a structure for looking up needed vocabulary, in dictionaries or online. Whichever method you choose, be sure to provide appropriate explanation and support. For example, selecting the best dictionary entry based on part of speech or usage is not something that comes easily to most students, so it must be taught if you are going to have them find

their own vocabulary. Film, television program, and book titles, as well as band names, will be listed in English (or whatever language they are known in). Otherwise this will turn into a translation exercise, which is not the intent. As students explore the language options, it is helpful to have students classify vocabulary according to nouns and verbs. Be sure that nouns are accompanied with the corresponding definite article, and that verbs are in infinitive form.

For our French–speaker pages, only those categories that obviously apply will be completed. When you are doing research in your personalities, you may discover surprising information that can be introduced here. For example, French basketball player Tony Parker also released a rap CD, so in the **Musique** section it could be indicated that he likes **le rap** and under **Autres intérêts** could be listed **faire du rap** .

The Passport

You can get as authentic as you like in creating the passport. I suggest doing a Google search for passport templates and seeing what has already been made that you can tweak to suit your needs. Wikipedia entries for the passports of whatever country you are looking for will give examples of what the cover looks like, as well as the identity information page. Although many passports are in French and English, for our purposes we will limit our passports to French. I have included an example that can be used for a starting point or photocopied and whited out for classroom use. It is completed for a fictional French man named John–Louis Christophe Ricard, born March 29 th , 1981 in Avignon. See **Appendix B – Passport Template** .

Although many language teachers have their students adopt names and identities from the studied language, I prefer to have students keep their own identities. I think it is important that they get very comfortable with discussing their own true information, for practicality as well as for a strong sense of self–identity. For this reason, I want our role–playing to be intentional, done with many different identities, so that it is very obviously a tool we use, to reinforce rather than confuse our language practice. Truth be told, I also find the idea of remembering 80–100 students' French names in addition to their real names quite daunting! In any event, I want their passports to be French, but to reflect their actual place of birth. So I will be asking students to pretend that we are in an alternate reality in which the United States is a part of France, that when the French were exploring the New World in the sixteenth century, they were actually quite successful in their endeavors and as such, the United States is now a large overseas department of France.

See **Lesson Plan 1 – Introductions** . As indicated, students will ultimately "submit" a passport application form and photograph. I will type the information up and create a faux passport. It will include pages for stamps, but those pages will be modified so that each two–page spread will be dedicated to a particular Francophone area of the world. As we learn about each place, students will add some details about the place on one side (country and city names, vocabulary for nationalities and languages) and as they don the personality of different people they will "sign" those peoples' names on the other page, including an identifying sentence and/or image. For example **Céline Dion – Elle aime chanter** / *She likes to sing.*

In the next section, I give information about the French passport that I culled from a Google image search. As suggested previously, to make each passport as authentic as possible, you will want to do this for each country introduced.

French Passport

The color of the cover is Bordeaux red. At the top it says **Union europ&eacute** ;enne and then **République française** . Below that is an image of the emblem of the French Republic, and at the bottom it says **PASSEPORT** . The **Passport Template** in **Appendix B** is French.

Fauxbook Profile Pages

There are many different ways to construct your own Fauxbook profile. In creating mine I set my own Facebook page to "French" and did a Google search for different templates to get a sense of how people adapted the information to suit the needs of their classrooms. A link to two solid versions is included in the **Resources** section.

See **Appendix C– Fauxbook Profile Template** for my version. See the "Activities and Interests" section of **Topics for Discussion via Question and Response** for more information on the Fauxbook pages.

French–Speaking Places and Mapping

French-Speaking Places

The following is a list of countries where French is spoken to varying degrees. Names in brackets are islands (as are of course the places listed under "Islands" headings.

En Europe (In Europe)

La Belgique */Belgium* , [**la Corse** */Corsica &ndash* ; although an island, use **en** when speaking about living there], la **France/** *France* , le **Luxembourg** */Luxembourg* , **le Monaco** */Monaco* (use **à** when speaking about living there), **la Suisse** */Switzerland*

En Afrique (In Africa)

L'Algérie (f) */Algeria*, **le Bénin** */Benin*, **le Burkina Faso** */Burkina Faso* **, le Burundi** */Burundi*, **le Cameroun** */Cameroon*, **la République centrafricaine** */Central African Republic*, **le Tchad** */Chad*, **la République démocratique du Congo** */Democratic Republic of Congo*, **la République du Congo** */Republic of Congo*, **la Côte d'Ivoire** */Ivory Coast*, **la République de Djibouti** */Djibouti*, **la Guinée équatoriale** */Equatorial Guinea*, **le Gabon** */Gabon*, **la Guinée** */Guinea*, [**le Madagascar** */Madagascar*], **le Mali** */Mali*, **la Mauritanie** */Mauritania*, [**l'île Maurice** */Mauritius,*] **Le Maroc** */Morocco*, **le Niger** */Niger*, **le Rwanda** */Rwanda*, **le Sénégal** */Senegal*, **le Togo** */Togo*, **la Tunisie** */Tunisia*

Les &ICIRC;les des Antilles (The Caribbean Islands)

La Guadeloupe */Guadeloupe*, **le Haïti** */ Haiti*, **la Martinique** */Martinique*

En Amérique du Nord (In North America)

Le Québec, au Canada */Quebec, in Canada),* **la Louisiane** *,* **aux &EACUTE;tats–Unis** */Louisiana, in the U.S.,* **Le Maine, aux &EACUTE;tats–Unis** */Maine, in the U.S., [* **le Saint–Pierre–et–Miquelon** */Saint Pierre and Miquelon]*

En Amérique du Sud (In South America)

La Guyane française/ *French Guyana*

Les &ICIRC;les de l'Océan Indien (The Islands of the Indian Ocean)

Les &ICIRC;les Comores */Comoros,* **la Réunion** */Réunion, les* **Seychelles** */Seychelles*

Les &ICIRC;les de l'Océan Pacifique (The Islands of the Pacific Ocean)

La Nouvelle Calédonie */New Caledonia,* **La Polynésie française** */French Polynesia – most notably,* **le Tahiti/** *Tahiti,* **Le Vanuatu** */Vanuatu*

En Asie (In Asia)

Le Cambodge */Cambodia,* **le Laos** */Laos,* **le Viêt Nam** */Vietnam*

Mapping

By linking the people studied to places on a map, the intention is that students will start developing that sense of the larger world around them, as well as the prevalence of French across continents. Up until now, students will have seen maps that indicate that French is spoken in many different places throughout the world; we will have made a fairly superficial mention of how much French is spoken in many countries in Africa, in parts of Canada, in European countries outside of France, in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean islands. A few students will have mentioned having and/or visiting family or vacationing in some of these places, and one or two will have a pre–existing interest in geography. But most will have little familiarity with the world outside of the United States; some will have never left the Greater New Haven area, while others may have traveled to visit family as far away as South Carolina, Chicago, or Puerto Rico. The seventh grade Social Studies curriculum will introduce students to world civilizations, so students will have the opportunity to build this global understanding across disciplines. However, that work will be done after we explore geography in our world languages classes, so we must take care to help pave the way for our students to continue developing a more connected understanding of world geography.

As we "meet" new people, we will have posters on the walls of different regions of the world, and we will place a picture of each person along with a symbol or image representing who they are in the appropriate locations. We will also put small pictures of them on a larger classroom map of the whole world, which we will revisit and refer to over the course of the unit as well as the year. This will help students internalize the learning.

French-Speakers

I endeavor to include a balance of men and women in our discussions, as the linguistic skills are different when describing a male and a female. The greater range of personalities I can include, the likelier it will be that each of my students will connect to someone. Like most good lessons, each year I will add more people, take out others, always looking to introduce the most interesting characters to my students. For the purposes of demonstrating some of the ways you will want to vary your French-speakers, I have included a small selection of artists, athletes, and cartoon characters, as a model and starting point.

Artists

Claude Monet

Nom: Claude Monet
Profession: Un artiste
&ACIRC;ge au moment du décès: 86 ans
Ville Actuelle: Giverny (France)
Originaire de: Paris (France)
Nationalité: Français
Anniversaire: le 14 novembre, 1840
Sexe: Homme
Langue(s): Français
Autres Intérêts: peindre, les jardins.

Amelie Chabannes

Nom: Amelie Chabannes
Profession: Une artiste
&ACIRC;ge: 38 ans
Ville Actuelle: Brooklyn (U.S.)
Originaire de: Paris (France)
Nationalité: Française

Anniversaire: 1974
Sexe: Femme
Langue(s): Français, anglais
Autres Intérêts: l'art

Frédéric Bruly Bouabré

Nom: Frédéric Bruly Bouabré / Cheik Nadro
Profession: Un artiste
&ACIRC;ge: 89 ans
Ville Actuelle: Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)
Originaire de: Zéprégühé (Côte d'Ivoire)
Nationalité: Ivoirien (africain)
Anniversaire: 1923
Sexe: Homme
Langue(s): Français, bété
Autres Intérêts: l'art, l'alphabet

Athletes

Tony Parker

Nom: William Anthony Parker II, connu comme Tony Parker
Surnom: TP (prononcé comme en anglais)
Profession: Un athlète/un joueur de basketball/un basketballeur avec les San Antonio Spurs; un rappeur
&ACIRC;ge: 30 ans
Ville Actuelle: San Antonio (Texas, Etats–Unis)
Originaire de: Bruges (Belgique), Paris (France) (6)
Nationalité: Français
Anniversaire: le 17 mai, 1982
Sexe: Homme
Langue(s): Français, anglais
Autres Intérêts: jouer au basket/le basket, faire du rap / le rap/ être divorcé d'actrice américaine Eva Longoria

Surya Bonaly

Nom: Surya Varuna Claudine Bonaly (7)
Profession: Une athlète/une patineuse artistique (à la retraite)
&ACIRC;ge: 38 ans
Ville Actuelle: Las Vegas (Nevada, &EACUTE;tats–Unis)
Originaire de: Nice (France) – Sa mère biologique était de Réunion
Nationalité: Française, américaine
Anniversaire: le 15 décembre, 1973
Sexe: Femme
Langue(s): Français, anglais, russe
Autres Intérêts: patiner, la gymnastique, être végétarienne

Amélie Mauresmo

     Nom: Amélie Simone Mauresmo
     Profession: Une athlète/une joueuse de tennis (à la retraite)
     &ACIRC;ge: 33 ans
     Ville Actuelle: Génève (Suisse)
     Originaire de: Saint–Germain–en–Laye (France)
     Nationalité: Française
     Anniversaire: le 5 juillet, 1979
     Sexe: Femme
     Langue(s): Français, anglais, un peu d'allemand
     Autres Intérêts: jouer au tennis, jouer aux sports avec les enfants

Cartoon Characters

Tintin

     Nom: Tintin
     Profession: Un journaliste d'investigation / Un journaliste d'enquête
     &ACIRC;ge de caractère: 15 –18 ans
     &ACIRC;ge Actuel: 83 ans!
     Ville Actuelle: Bruxelles (Belgique) – mais il voyage partout!
     Originaire de: Bruxelles (Belgique)
     Nationalité: Belge
     Anniversaire: le 10 janvier, 1929
     Sexe: Homme (Garçon)
     Langue(s): Français, Anglais, Espagnol (8)
     Autres Intérêts: voyager, les mystères, les aventures, écrire

Lesson Plan 1– Introductions

To present the basic sentences involved in all the discussions to come, I will model them by introducing myself to the class. Students have discussed names and ages extensively in fifth and sixth grades, so that will provide a portal of familiarity through which students can access the new phrases.

After I introduce myself, I will put pictures over my face, like a makeshift mask, of other familiar faces within our building (our principal, assistant principal, arts director, teachers they had in previous years, this year's teachers), pretending that I am each of those people. (Of course this requires the willingness of these colleagues to let themselves be photographed for classroom use.) I will hesitate during parts of my introductions for students to fill in the blanks. For example, while holding up a picture of our principal, I will say *Je m'appelle…* and let students fill in his name. This should help to build enthusiasm and draw students out. Students will easily be able to supply names and nationalities in this scenario. For ages, I can hold up a card with a number and students can use the numbers chart on the wall to help recall that vocabulary to fill in the required age as I say *J'ai … ans* .

Then, using one of the many stuffed animals on hand for such purposes, I will ask myself the questions that correspond to the information already given. For example, I will have the animal ask me *Comment t'appelles-tu?* and I will respond *Je m'appelle Madame Cipriano* . Then I will flip it around and ask the same questions of the animal, and have the animal answer. This gives students a model from which to draw, without having to rely on seeing things in writing just yet.

Next I (or the stuffed animal) will ask individual students questions, gauging comprehension so that I ask each student the question he or she is most likely to answer correctly. This is the first practice point of the lesson, so I am primarily looking to build confidence and comprehension. Since I will have had most of my seventh graders for either one or two years already, I will know who can more comfortably handle the discomfort of not being sure of the correct answer, of taking that risk anyway, and who needs the security of answering a question with confidence. Each student gets asked one question. If a student still gets stuck, I will repeat the question and answer between the animal and myself, stressing necessary components. That should help the struggler to understand what is being asked.

Then I will split students into pairs. (9) I will ask a question, and partner A will answer it. Partner A will then "kick it over" to Partner B, using the multi–purpose *Et toi? / And you?* Then Partner B will answer. This allows students to get more confident with the statements without focusing yet on the question format.

Next, I will pass out the pictures of familiar people in the school. On the back I will have the pertinent information about each person listed. Each pair will get a personality, and students will take turns being that personality and themselves as they ask and answer these beginning questions.

This will lead in to an explanation of the Passport. I will put up an overhead transparency of my own faux passport and speak about myself as I point to each piece of information. I will hand out to students a sheet that has my passport data page on one side, and a blank on the other. As I say my own information, I will then ask the applicable questions to individual students, who can then answer for themselves and fill out their own information.

I will check the work overnight, and make editing notations of anything that needs to be fixed. Students will

use those marks to make a revised "application," which they will submit to me. We will take "passport" photos in class and I will present the students with their final passports another day.

Lesson Plan 2 – Introducing French-Speakers

There are so many ways to begin the discussion of our French speakers, but I have decided to introduce them first through their passports. I will put passports up on the overhead and "masks" over my face. First, I will speak my sentences, as the French-speaker. Then I will use a puppet to ask questions that I then answer, in character. At this point, students are just watching and listening. I don't ask them to write anything yet because I want them fully focused and absorbing the language structures. After a few samples like that, I will ask students to ask the questions and I will respond. Then I will ask the questions and pass around the mask, having individuals respond as the French-speakers.

Next I will pass out a graphic organizer for note–taking that includes all the passport questioning categories. Now I will go through the characters again, speaking my lines, and allowing time for students to fill in organizer. Then I will remove the overheads transparencies of the passports and just hold up the masks. I will also hold up cards that say each passport category, one at a time. In pairs, one student will ask the question the word elicits, and the partner will answer, consulting the graphic organizer.

Depending on how many French-speakers you introduce, you may want to introduce a certain number each day, grouped by either geography or what they are known for/like, or some combination thereof. I would recommend introducing around 6 personalities each day on most days. The better they get, the more you will increase challenge by making the questions you ask more complex.

Lesson Plan 3 – Transition to Fauxbook

Before viewing Fauxbook profile pages for our French-speakers, assemble groups of three personalities. Put their passport pages up to view. Make three statements regarding information from the Activities and Interests section of their Fauxbook profile (which students HAVE NOT YET SEEN.) For example, show the passports of Céline Dion, Claude Monet, and Tony Parker. Then say the following sentences: ***J'aime jouer au basket. J'aime peindre. J'aime chanter.*** */ I like to play basketball. I like to paint. I like to sing.* Based only on the information in the passports (unless students have background information that they will of course use) have students guess who said which statement. Varying your groupings will produce different results; you want to exploit the groupings for what will surprise students the most.

Keep tally of which figures people guessed correctly and incorrectly. Observe and briefly discuss (in English) why figures who stumped students did so. The conversation should head toward the idea that sometimes the basic information may be misleading, as we learn not to judge books by their covers.

Now we are ready to explore our personalities further through explicit introduction of the Fauxbook pages.

Annotated Resources

General Resources

Ados.Fr http://musique.ados.fr/Zazie/Je–Suis–Un–Homme–t144044.html A music video with lyrics to a song called "**Je suis un homme** /I am a man** " sung by a woman. This can help liven up the practice of identifying gender, as she is addressing gender roles between man and woman as well as the idea of man as humankind compared to animal–kind and perhaps how we all are related.

Bertrand Boutin. http://www.bertrandboutin.ca/Folder_151_Grammaire/E_c_noms_geo.htm#_%CELES_ET_ARCHIPELS Exhaustive list of French vocabulary for geographical terms, including countries, islands, states, and bodies of water

CIA World Factbook. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the–world–factbook/index.html Resource for background information on countries

Facebook. www.facebook.com. I went to the Facebook page of living people to look for information about them. For example, I figured out that Tony Parker was probably a spokesperson for Kinder Bueno chocolates when I saw he "liked" them on his page. From there I went to Youtube and found a link to a commercial he did for Kinder Bueno, which can be used in class. Also, I set my Facebook profile to French to make the vocabulary for my Fauxbook template as close as possible to the original, except where it fit my needs better to change it.

Google (French). www.google.fr. Doing an image search here is a good source for pictures for the celebrity masks. In general, searching on the French version will yield more useful results for information searches as well.

ibiblio: The Public's Library and Digital Archive. http://www.ibiblio.org/. I used ibiblio as an English language starting point for research. For artists, I used the WebMuseum at ibiblio for access to images of paintings.

Le français avec Madame Brown. http://lefrancaisavecmadamebrown.com/index.html. This French teacher's website has links to French-speaker project assignments (as well as many other great French teacher resources). But what proved indispensable to the selection of French-speakers in this unit is the list of names accompanying each of the projects, in the following categories: Writers, Artists, Scientists and Engineers, Athletes, Entertainers, and Fashion. Merci mille fois, Madame Brown!

International Organisation of Francophony. http://www.francophonie.org/English.html. Comprehensive resource for current information on Francophony

Monsieur–Biographie. http://www.monsieur–biographie.com/. This website is powered by Wikipedia. Although I generally insist on using primary resources for factual research, in this case I have chosen to start my research with this source. We aren't going deep with what we need, but we are going wide, and this site gives us consistent resources, in clear and reliable French. Plus it gives people the option of submitting comments about the people you are researching. Although online comments aren't the best example of perfect French, if you share the site with motivated students, it will give them some real context for exploring the language. Visually, this site looks more modern and interesting than the Wikipedia site, which will hook students if used with them.

TES. The largest network of teachers in the world. Username: pelaperine. http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching–resource/talking–about–yourself–facebook–template–French–6043939/. Links to two templates for Facebook pages. You must register to view the pages, but registration is free.

Youtube. www.youtube.com. Searching for a person's name + en français can result in videos that can be used to bring the

personalities to life. I like the idea of showing clips of Surya Bonaly's 1994 Olympics ice-skating routines and then some of the interviews with her from this year, that really showcase her transformation from child to grown woman.

Targeted Resources

Resources are listed by the French-speaker to whom they refer.

Bonaly, Surya

http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surya_Bonaly. Surya links to the English-language version of this wikipedia site from her Facebook page.

http://skatinginc.com/Skaters/Bonaly/. Although the page has not been updated in a very long time, there is some information under the "Fun Facts" section that could be used; I found out that she used to do gymnastics there.

http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/article/2010/02/09/1932548_la-ferme-celebrite-adline-blondieau-et-suya-bonaly-combattantes-antifourrure.html. Article about her anti-fur campaign with PETA, including pictures.

Bouabré, Frédéric Bruly

http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/frederic-bruly-bouabre/. Background information

http://icarusfilms.com/new2005/brul.html. Information about the alphabet system he created.

Chabannes, Amelie

http://ameliechabannes.com/work/. English resource for information and images of art. NB: I will focus on her installation art, as many of her sculptures are inappropriate for the middle school classroom.

Mauresmo, Amélie

www.ameliemauresmo.fr/. Site for all things Mauresmo.

http://www.sport-for-life.ch/fr.php. This foundation teaches children the power and benefits of sports and the values one learns in participating in them. Amélie is the Ambassador. There are lots of links to pictures and videos!

http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2006/nov/26/tennis.features1. Good background information on Mauresmo. Includes information on her sexuality, which you may or may not want to incorporate into your unit.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBX7kf_kVfo. Video with 10 golden rules of working out, that I think kids would enjoy.

Monet, Claude

http://www.fondation-monet.fr/fr/. There is so much great information on this French website, including video clips of his house and

gardens. Site also available in English.

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14056/14056–h/14056–h.htm. English eBook on French Impressionism, with links to images and discussions of artwork Mauclair, Camille. The French Impressionists (1860–1900). Translated by P.G. Konady. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1903. ebook.

http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/monet/. English source, with links to good quality images of paintings

http://www.monsieur–biographie.com/celebrite/biographie/claude_monet–1289.php. French source for biographical information

Parker, Tony

http://www.metrolyrics.com/tony–parker–albums–list.html. The site is English, but the lyrics to his 2007 songs/raps are in the original language, a mix of French and English.

http://www.monsieur–biographie.com/celebrite/biographie/tony_parker–7519.php. French source for biographical information

http://www.nba.com/playerfile/tony_parker/bio.html. English source for sports statistics

Tintin

http://www.tintinologist.org/. English website with lots of information on Tintin

http://www.tintin.com/index2.php. French source full of information on Tintin (includes English language link)

Notes

1) We don't formally introduce negation until the fourth marking period, so in most cases we express negation through substitution (as in this example). With well–used topics, such as likes, I will introduce the whole negative phrase (***Je n'aime pas***) without explicitly teaching the steps of negation.

2) Orally I may ask questions about more than one person, but only when the forms sound the same for singular and plural. For example, I might ask ***Qui habite en France?*** */ Who lives in France?* because orally, the answer sounds the same. When you make ***habite*** plural it turns into ***habitent*** which, because of the silent final consonants, sounds just like the singular ***habite*** . But I wouldn't ask ***Qui est français?*** */Who is French?* because the plural response verb ***sont*** obviously does not sound the same as ***est*** .

3) Or masculine country starting with a vowel.

4) Except masculine countries starting with a vowel, which use ***en*** as the preposition.

5) I have an ulterior motive here, as students often transpose two letters in our school's name, which I am hoping to alleviate via editing and repeated exposure!

6) Although Parker was born in Belgium, he was raised in Paris.

7) *Surya* means *sun*/ **soleil** in Hindi.

8) What languages Tintin may have spoken come from this forum discussion, based on the "Adventures" in which Tintin participates: http://www.tintinologist.org/forums/index.php?action=vthread&forum=8&topic=875

9) I have tables rather than desks in my classroom, and we have cross-table pairs and side-by-side pairs. Seating is arranged so that one set of pairs is more homogeneous and the other more heterogeneous. This allows me to have students practice differently based on my particular classroom goals. Today I would probably have students practice first with one pair then the other. The work, though new, is still basic, so my goal today would be for more practice regardless of general skill level.

Appendix A – Implementing District Standards

This unit primarily addresses two standards delineated in the **5 C's of Foreign Language Education: Communication Standard 1.1** , that students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions; and **Comparisons Standard 4.1** , that students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Appendix B – Passport Template

FAUXBOOK

JOHN-LOUIS CHRISTOPHE RICARD

(Photo)

Informations générales

Prénom: John-Louis
Deuxième prénom: Christophe
Nom de famille: Ricard
Surnom(s): J-L, Jean-Jean
Age: 31 ans
Date de naissance: 29.03.81
Ville actuelle: Paris (FRANCE)
Originaire de: Avignon (FRANCE)
Langue(s): Français, Anglais, Espagnol
Profession: un politicien

Intérêts

Musique:
Films:
Télévision:
Livres:
Sports:
Autres Intérêts:

Appendix C - Fauxbook Profile Template

Union Européenne
République française

PASSEPORT

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

PASSEPORT

Type	Code du pays	Passport n°
P	FRA	123456789

Nom
Ricard

Prénoms
Jean-Louis Christophe

Nationalité
Français

Signature du titulaire
(Signature)

Sexe
M

Date de délivrance
02.07.12

Date de naissance
29.03.81

Date d'expiration
01.07.22

Lieu de naissance
AVIGNON

RÉPUBLIQUEFRANÇAISERÉPUBLIQUEFRANÇAISERÉPUBLIQUEFRANÇAISERÉPUBLIQUEFRANÇAISERÉP

P<FRARICARD<<JEAN-LOUIS<<CHRISTOPHE<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<