

BELL'S FRENCH COURSE. PART I

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Bell's French Course. Part I by R. P. Atherton

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R. P. ATHERTON

**BELL'S FRENCH
COURSE. PART I**

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PART I

* * * *A Key to the less obvious Exercises and to the English Sentences at the end of the book may be had by teachers only, price 6d.*

BELL'S FRENCH COURSE

PART I

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON: GEORGE BELL & SONS
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1903

P R E F A C E

THE broad principle on which the present course is based is that of Moderate Reform. The old method of Modern Language teaching undoubtedly lost much by its refusal to attach any importance to the spoken language. The new method as it is practised in Germany also loses much, as recent results there tend to prove, by its refusal to admit the claims of translation from the mother into the foreign tongue. The teaching of a Modern Language in a school is required to serve two ends: it must secure a knowledge of the language, and it must also provide a medium for general mental training.

The first part of this Course is the result of a series of attempts to select what is best in both the newer and the older methods for use in an English Public School. And so far this, at least, seems clear: That an accurate pronunciation should be taught from the beginning; that as much of the lesson, as possible should be taught in the foreign language; that the class should be encouraged to cultivate fluency of speech; that grammar should be regarded as the 'handmaid rather than the mistress'; that as a means of mental training translation from English into the foreign tongue and a strict discipline in grammatical structure are indispensable.

The three immediate objects aimed at in the First Part are, firstly, to accustom the ear to hear and the mouth to utter the hitherto unknown sounds; secondly, to train the class to repeat a short story and then to make and answer short questions upon it; thirdly, to provide a thorough and systematic drill in the simple tenses and one compound tense of the regular verb and a few of the commoner irregular verbs. Instead of attacking the first conjugation as a whole before proceeding to the second, the present tense is taken of each of the four conjugations and of *avoir* and *être*; then all the six imperfect tenses, and so on. It is important that special attention should be paid to the formation of the various tenses of a verb from its five principal parts, and a scheme has been suggested by which this formation may be clearly demonstrated. This plan should be constantly practised on paper and on the blackboard.

Constant repetition will be found vitally necessary throughout. The rapidity of future progress depends entirely on the care which is taken in the earliest stage; and the work is arranged in twelve lessons, not with the idea that each lesson can be learnt in an hour, but with the idea of dividing the book into convenient portions for revision. The time that each lesson will take to learn the first time will be found to vary very much with different classes. In any case it will take two or three hours rather than one. No hints are given in the text as to translation, but it is taken for granted that masters will see, in all

cases, that the meaning of each sentence is known accurately.

Each lesson should be done first with the books shut. The class should listen and repeat each sentence after the master, so as to acquire and reproduce the sound. Then the sentences may be read and written down by the boys, and, as a final test, the master may give the English, and the class reproduce the French both orally and in writing. A number of exercises are provided on each lesson for work out of school, but, if possible, each exercise should first be done orally in school, and then again worked through orally, after the exercise has been written in preparation time.

The difficulty of making all the members of a large class talk is certainly a serious one, but the author has found the difficulty considerably minimised by dividing the class up into two or three groups and making each group repeat a sentence in chorus.

It is astonishing how speedily work of this kind repays the trouble taken with it; and, though progress is very slow at first, it soon begins to increase rapidly.

A thorough knowledge of the lessons contained in the book will result in the possession of a vocabulary of from five to six hundred useful words, and the pupil will already have some idea of expressing simple ideas correctly.

The material throughout is taken from French sources, and the proofs have been revised in France.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
LA PREMIÈRE LEÇON	1
LA DEUXIÈME LEÇON	11
LA TROISIÈME LEÇON	19
LA QUATRIÈME LEÇON	28
LA CINQUIÈME LEÇON	33
LA SIXIÈME LEÇON	41
LA SEPTIÈME LEÇON	47
LA HUITIÈME LEÇON	53
LA NEUVIÈME LEÇON	61
LA DIXIÈME LEÇON	67
LA ONZIÈME LEÇON	75
LA DOUZIÈME LEÇON	82
ADDITIONAL PIECES	93
SUMMARY OF GRAMMAR	99
ENGLISH SENTENCES FOR TRANSLATION INTO	
FRENCH	123
VOCABULARY	133
MUSIC	145