

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week

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Q & A of the Week: French Words 英语里的法文外来语

Jo: Hello, I'm Jo and you're listening to Question and Answer of the Week from BBC Learning English. Or maybe I should say *bonjour* today Jean...

Jean: Eh? What was that word you said Jo? *Bonjour*?

Jo: Yes, it's French for hello.

Jean: And why are we speaking French today?

Jo: Well, we've had a question from Justina. She says she has heard there are a lot of French words in English.

Jean: **Justina** 这个问题提得非常好。确实，正如她所说，英语里确实有不少法文的外来语，这样的例子我们可以真的是举出来不少。

Jo: Now I spoke to Erica Gatland, who works for a RWS Translations. French is just one of the many languages they work with.

Jean: Translations 翻译。

Insert

Well there are a lot of French words in English and I'm led to believe that actually 30% of our vocabulary is based on French words. A lot of this is because in 1066 the Battle of Hastings took place. That was when our king was defeated by William the Conqueror of France. He came over and ruled England and brought his words with him and a lot of those words still stay in our vocabulary today.

Some of the words we use are the same as French and are still used in French today and others are words that came from French but have become more English more anglicised over the years.

Jo: So Erica tells us there are a lot of French words in English and she says I am led to believe...

Jean: Erica 说她相信，英语里有30%的单词都是由法语词演变而来的。**Vocabulary** 就是“词汇”的意思，**based on** 就是“基于”。**Wow 30% - that is a lot!**

Jo: She says a lot of it is because in the year 1066 the Battle of Hastings took place. To take place.

- Jean: 发生。原来在 **1066** 年的时候，一场名叫海斯汀斯战役的时间发生了。当时英王哈罗德二世在这一战役中被一位名叫法国征服者威廉的人打败了。一场战役就是 **a battle. The king of England was defeated** 被击败了。我们还听到了一个词 **conqueror**。去征服就是 **to conquer**。威廉是一个法国人，不过他当时把英国打败，并成为了国王，所以他的称号就是 **William the conqueror**。
- Jo: **Yes, he came over and ruled England. To rule.**
- Jean: 就是去统治。威廉当时把一些法语带到了英国，而我们现在用到的很多英语里的法文外来语就是那时候传过来的。
- Jo: **And she said there are two types of French words in English. Ones that are the same as French and are still used in French today and others are words that came from French but have become more English, more anglicised over the years.**
- Jean: **Anglicised** 英国化了。
- Jo: **Today on this BBC Learning English Question and Answer of the Week, we are answering Justina's question about French words in English.**
- Jean: 而且 **Erica** 告诉我们说，很多这样英语里的法文外来语在法语里依然沿用至今。 **So does Erica have some examples for us?**

Insert

*Yes, well one of the main ones that comes to mind is **en suite**. That's a word we use to describe a bathroom that's attached to your bedroom and I can't think of an English word that explains what that is.*

*RSVP, that's an interesting one. That's what we write at the bottom of invitations. People put RSVP at the bottom and it means please reply. In French it's **repondez s'il vous plait**.*

*Fiancé. When you've got engaged to someone that person becomes your **fiancé**.*

*And a **souvenir** – when you go on holiday, something that you bring back with you is a **souvenir**. It comes from the French verb that means to remember.*

- Jo: So a few examples there of many that exist in the English language. Erica said one of the main ones that comes to mind.
- Jean: 就是一下子能想得起来的。
- Jo: **An en suite describes a bathroom that's attached to your bedroom.**
- Jean: **Attached** 附加上的。所以 **en suite** 这个英语里的法文外来语的意思就是内含洗浴间的卧室。而英语里除了这个词就没有其它词来表示这个意思了。
- Jo: **Another common French term we use is RSVP. It's usually written at the bottom of invitations.**
- Jean: **Invitations** 邀请函。一般我们会在邀请函的下端看到 **RSVP** 这个字眼，它的意思就是“请答复”。

Jo: In French repondez s'il vous plait – RSVP please reply. Another French word we use in English is fiancé.

Jean: 就是说，在你订婚的 **engaged** 时候，你未来的丈夫或者妻子，如果是未婚夫，在英语里就叫做 **fiancé**，拼出来就是：**F.I.A.N.C.E**；如果是未婚妻就叫 **Fiancée**，单词最后多加一个**é**。还有最后一个英语里法文外来语的例子就是 **souvenir**。

Jo: Yes, she said when you go on holiday, something that you bring back from your trip is called a souvenir.

Jean: A souvenir 一件纪念品。其实在法语里 **souvenir** 的意思就是“去记住”，不过当它在英语里出现的时候，它的意思就是我们为记住游历过的一个地方而买的一件纪念品。
Now, Erica also talked about French words that came from French but became anglicised over the years? 记得我们刚才提到的表示英国化了的词吗，没错，那就是 **anglicised**. What can she tell us about those?

Insert

All of these words had an old English version that we used before William the Conqueror came over from France but when he brought his people with him the words evolved over time and have now taken on a more French form. For example, the word letter comes from letter, treasure from trésor, and cup comes from coupe although you wouldn't necessarily think that any of those are French words.

Jean: 所以当初来自法国的征服者威廉一世在英国作上国王以后把法语就带到了英国，从此把传统的英语改变了不少。我们现在用的很多英语词都是从法语演变而来的。“演变”就是 **evolve**。

Jo: So the English word letter actually comes from the French word lettre. The word treasure comes from the French trésor and the word cup comes from the French coupe.

Jean: Treasure 宝藏。其实这些单词如果 Jo 不说的话，我还真的以为它们都是纯粹的英语词呢。

Jo: So a very interesting subject. We could only give you a few examples today but there are thousands. We hope that's given you a bit of knowledge about French words in English though.

Jean: 如果你也有关于英国文化或者语言的问题想探询答案的话，你可以给我们发邮件过来，我们的电子邮箱是 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk。你也可以登录我们的网站来看到更多有关英国文化和英语学习的节目和内容，我们的网址是 www.bbcchina.com.cn – 点击 **Learning English** 英语教学就可以了。

Jo: So, thanks for your interesting question, Justina. We'll see you again for another BBC Learning English Question and Answer of the Week. Thanks Jean.

Jean: You're welcome. Bye.