

## INTRODUCTION

### To the Student

Our motivation in writing this book is *you*. We want you to improve your fluency in French, to sound more like a native speaker and to be better equipped to function linguistically and culturally when you go to a French-speaking country, especially to France and Quebec, two favorite destinations for study-abroad programs. To help you achieve these goals, *Tu sais quoi?!* offers vocabulary and phrases that are used in everyday life by French-speaking people, and it gives examples of real-life conversations, including slang and popular expressions.

Most importantly, this book prepares you to study abroad or get professional training in a francophone country. It introduces basic linguistic and cultural knowledge often overlooked in other books about how to prepare for your trip. It offers support and guidance throughout the process of applying for study-abroad programs; it tells you what you need when you land in a place you have never visited before, and helps you adapt and make the most of your stay. Check out the **Partir!** section in each chapter to find real testimonies of students who have studied abroad or are about to embark on this adventurous journey.

In each chapter, you will learn new expressions. Some are used more than others but they all belong to the cultural heritage of native speakers. Knowing them will give you an edge on language performance in context. You will also learn how to communicate the same idea in different ways because this is what you will be confronted with when you have a conversation with a native speaker.

To greet someone in English, one can hear or say: *How are you? How do you do? How's it going? What's up? How are you doing?* (or *How*

*you doin'?*). Why learn only one of these forms? Be open; be flexible; be eager to learn. This book won't provide all possible options for saying certain things, but it will open the door for you to a foreign language that is alive and always changing.

You will gain confidence with conversation activities, with stimulating topics that are dear to the French, the Quebecois, and the Belgians that *you* can also relate to. We also include information about places and customs in other French-speaking countries. You may find some topics more difficult than others or a bit controversial. Don't be afraid to exchange ideas. Disagreements are the best conversation starters and, trust us, if you go abroad to improve your French, you *will* find yourself in situations where debating is a necessary skill. The French, to name only one group of people, love to debate ideas and they love to disagree. Part of the purpose of this book is to prepare you for such debates.

### To the Instructor

When it came to formatting the content of *Tu sais quoi?!*, creating activities, and making sure these would constitute interesting, organized, and well-built classroom activities, we thought of *you*. Being instructors ourselves, we wanted this book to be practical in content and function.

With *Tu sais quoi?!*, you will teach French as it is spoken today. We, the authors, do not judge what constitutes good French or bad French. We would rather guide students through the maze of the complexities and the social impact of what some might call imperfections but that we shall call here common occurrences. For example, the *ne* in *ne . . . pas* is often omitted in everyday speech. Although students must be aware that the correct and complete form of negation in French demands *ne*, it seems logical, more accurate, and realistic, in a book that claims to be a conversation textbook, to omit *ne* in sample conversations between two college classmates, for example.

Here are just some of the major sections—the *rubriques*—you will find in the book:

**Expressions** Four idiomatic expressions introduce students to everyday sayings followed by short discussion questions. This is a favorite for many students who practice French with *Tu sais quoi?!*

**Révision grammaticale** This is not a grammar book, but students often need (and want) to refresh their memory on grammatical concepts in French. If more attention to grammar is needed, *Tu sais quoi?!* can easily be complemented with a grammar textbook. We advise instructors to assign grammar activities as homework to maximize class time devoted to oral production.

**Au moulin** takes students to the heart of the language. In this *rubrique*, they will learn or reinforce vocabulary. We tried to make lists as accurate and exhaustive as possible without making them overwhelming. However, our goal is also to show students that language is flexible, which is why we incorporated various language registers, structures, and some common slang.

**C'est la vie!** provides pronunciation practice as well as tips on common idiomatic errors.

**Du dire au faire** This is the “get down to it” part of *Tu sais quoi?!* where students get to speak, practice what they have learned in **Au moulin** in contextualized communicative activities, and exchange real ideas and opinions that do matter today on both sides of the Atlantic. Some conversations are semi-directed to help students practice in a specific real-life situation (ordering at a restaurant, participating in a debate, telling a story in the past); other conversations are more open to allow students to fully express themselves and develop strategies of communication.

**Vidéos** In each chapter, one thematic communicative situation is acted in a short video. All twelve videos were recorded with native speakers. Some were scripted while others were free conversations (albeit prepared) on specific topics. None of the participants were professional actors and all expressed their desire to show students what French sounds like to them. Each clip is followed by activities in the book. In addition, eight chapters also end with a cultural video that brings to life a particular aspect of francophone culture, whether it is in a city, in the countryside, or in the daily life of one individual. These constitute wonderful points of departure for more discussions and further Internet research that we hope will motivate students to become curious beyond this book and the classroom. You will find the script of each video at the end of the book.

**Partir!** This *rubrique* is no doubt the most original part of *Tu sais quoi?!* in that it assumes that in each student in your classroom, there exists the desire to travel, study, or work abroad and speak French *there*—even if they never get there. It is built as a simulation that we hope will build students' confidence to apply to study-abroad programs by giving transparent information and general, but specific enough, advice that can work for any institution. We provide concrete information about everyday life as a foreign student on food, health, and other matters that can be integrated as cultural activities if one chooses not to follow the simulation format of the **Partir!** *rubrique*.

**Culture et Histoire** While the information in **Partir!** covers practical aspects of everyday, contemporary life, this *rubrique* focuses more on critical thinking skills in French. It exposes students to cultural aspects that are useful to know to better understand the way people think, or the

history of a current debate, such as the tenets of the Republican school system in France before the twentieth century, which are interlinked with the debate on the Islamic veil today, and yet seldom explained. It also introduces students to fun and interesting personalities and stories most natives are familiar with and could mention in casual conversations. All these topics easily lend themselves to further exploration and creative projects.

**Littérature, chanson, cinéma** Although you will find plenty of interesting and varied reading material in each chapter, notably in **Partir!** and in **Culture et Histoire**, we also wanted to continue to expose students to high and popular culture. Thus, each chapter presents a text, a song, or a movie clip. We mixed classics (Flaubert, Baudelaire) with contemporary narratives (Echenoz, Dongala). This *rubrique* can easily be adapted to your teaching style by emphasizing certain comprehension, research, or discussion activities, adding your own questions, or even, once again, keeping the theme and adapting the material. Although this material is meant for conversational activities, some of it can also be transformed into written assignments, if you wish to reinforce your students' writing skills as well.

### *Icons Used in Tu sais quoi?!*



**CONVERSATION ICON:** conversational activities in **Du dire au faire** and other *rubriques* throughout a chapter (such as in **Partir!** and **Culture et Histoire**)



**COMMON ERROR ICON:** two common errors with corrections in each chapter



**PRONUNCIATION ICON:** pronunciation tips and activities



**AUDIO ICON:** recorded conversations, vocabulary lists, words and phrases for pronunciation practice, pronunciation exercises, available on the web at [yalebooks.com/dolidon](http://yalebooks.com/dolidon)



**VIDEO ICON:** activities based on the twenty videos accompanying the textbook on DVD



**MOVIE, LITERATURE, AND SONG ICONS:** cultural features and activities at the end of each chapter

The movie clips are all from feature films or shorts that are widely available on DVD or for downloading from the web.



**INTERNET ICON:** web-based activities or links for more information.

A note about our choice to focus more on France, Quebec, and to some extent, Belgium: we are aware, of course, that francophone culture is rich and varied and that the French-speaking world expands far beyond these three countries. Many first- and second-year textbooks introduce students to Guadeloupe, Senegal, and other countries. But for *Tu sais quoi?!* we made the decision to focus on places students are more likely to go to practice French, and to restrict information about other destinations to **Culture et Histoire** and **Littérature** sections. These are there for you to expand upon. Please check the *Tu sais quoi?!* website for tips and extra material.

Finally, although this textbook was designed with third-year-level students in mind, it could be used in second-year courses because it develops students' vocabulary and language skills from simple to complex phrase construction—for example, from describing to debating. In this case, *Tu sais quoi?!* can be complemented with a grammar book or the instructor's own material organized to follow the scope and sequence of *Tu sais quoi?!*