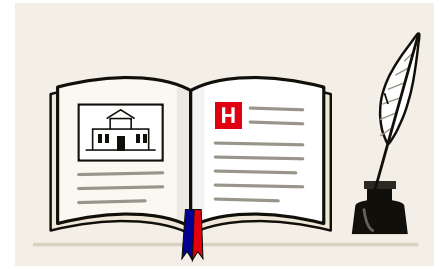


French civic exam: history, people and culture

57 official questions are about history and culture: the kings and the Revolution, Napoleon and the republics, major reforms, the Second World War, colonisation, writers and artists. For each topic: the questions, the answers, and why.



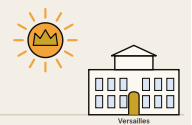
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Lists: CSP = multi-year card · CR = resident card · NAT = naturalisation

01 Who was king at the time of the Revolution?



Why? Two kings come up. Louis XVI is the king of the French Revolution: he was executed, guillotined, during the Revolution. Louis XIV is the “Sun King”; the château de Versailles, near Paris, symbolises his royal power.

Who was King of France at the time of the French Revolution?

Qui était le roi de France au moment de la Révolution française ?

→ **Louis XVI**

CSP

Which King of France was guillotined during the French Revolution?

Quel roi de France a été guillotiné pendant la Révolution française ?

→ **Louis XVI**

NAT

Which famous palace near Paris symbolises the royal power of Louis XIV?

Quel château célèbre se trouve près de Paris et symbolise le pouvoir royal de Louis XIV ?

→ **The Palace of Versailles**

Le château de Versailles

NAT

Which king of France was executed during the French Revolution?

Quel roi de France a été exécuté pendant la Révolution française ?

→ **Louis XVI**

CR

What was Louis XIV's nickname?

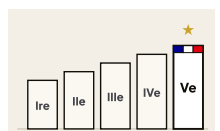
Quel était le surnom de Louis XIV ?

→ **The Sun King**

Le Roi-Soleil

CR

02 How many republics has France had?



Why? Napoleon I was an Emperor of the French, and the Code civil was adopted under his rule. France has had five republics: today it lives under the Fifth Republic. Charles de Gaulle founded it and was its first elected president. Georges Pompidou was also a president of the Fifth Republic.

Who was Napoleon I?

Qui était Napoléon Ier ?

→ **An Emperor of the French**

Un empereur des Français

CSP

Which Republic is France in today?

Dans quelle République est-on aujourd'hui ?

→ **The Fifth Republic**

La Ve République

CSP

Who founded the Fifth Republic?

Qui a fondé la Ve République ?

→ **Charles de Gaulle**

CSP

Who was a president of the Fifth Republic?

Qui a été président de la Ve République ?

→ **Georges Pompidou**

NAT

Which of these texts was adopted under Napoleon I?

Parmi ces textes, lequel a été adopté sous Napoléon Ier ?

→ **The Civil Code**

Le Code civil

NAT

How many republics has France had?

Combien y a-t-il eu de républiques en France ?

→ **Five**

Cinq

CSP

Who was the first President elected under the Fifth Republic?

Qui a été le premier Président élu sous la Ve République ?

→ **Charles de Gaulle**

CSP

Which of these historical figures is French?

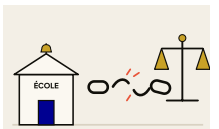
Lequel de ces personnages historiques est français ?

→ **Charles de Gaulle**

CSP

03

Who made the great reforms: school, slavery, the death penalty?



Why? Jules Ferry made school free, secular and compulsory: that is the aim of the Third Republic's school laws for primary school. Victor Schœlcher abolished slavery in France, and Montesquieu, an Enlightenment philosopher, denounced it. The death penalty was abolished during François Mitterrand's presidency.

Who made school free, secular and compulsory?

Qui a rendu l'école gratuite, laïque et obligatoire ?

→ **Jules Ferry**

CSP · NAT

What was the aim of the school laws of the Third Republic?

Quel est l'objectif des lois scolaires de la IIIe République ?

→ **To make primary school free, secular and compulsory**

Rendre l'école primaire gratuite, laïque et obligatoire

NAT

Who abolished slavery in France?

Qui a aboli l'esclavage en France ?

→ **Victor Schœlcher**

NAT

Which famous Enlightenment philosopher denounced slavery?

Quel célèbre philosophe des Lumières a dénoncé l'esclavage ?

→ **Montesquieu**

NAT

During which president's term was the death penalty abolished?

Durant le mandat de quel président la peine de mort a-t-elle été abolie ?

→ **François Mitterrand**

CR

Under which president was the death penalty abolished in France?

Sous quel président a été abolie la peine de mort en France ?

→ **François Mitterrand**

NAT

04 Why is the Shoah taught at school?



Why? The Shoah is the genocide of Europe's Jews by the Nazis. It is taught at school to remember the victims and to fight antisemitism and racism. That is the duty of remembrance: remembering past tragedies so they do not happen again. Jean Moulin is a figure of the French Resistance during the Second World War.

What is the Shoah?

Qu'est-ce que la Shoah ?

→ **The genocide of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis**

Le génocide des Juifs d'Europe par les nazis

CSP · NAT

Why is the Shoah (Holocaust) studied at school?

Pourquoi la Shoah est-elle étudiée à l'école ?

→ **To remember the victims and fight antisemitism and racism**

Pour se souvenir des victimes et lutter contre l'antisémitisme et le racisme

CR

What is the duty of remembrance (devoir de mémoire)?

Qu'est-ce que le devoir de mémoire ?

→ **Remembering the tragedies of the past so that they do not happen again**

Se souvenir des drames du passé pour qu'ils ne se reproduisent pas

NAT

Who was a figure of the French Resistance during the Second World War?

Qui était une figure de la Résistance française pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale ?

→ **Jean Moulin**

CR · NAT

05 Which countries did France colonise?



Why? Algeria and Senegal were colonised by France. After the Second World War, Africa was the continent most affected by French decolonisation.

Which country or region of the world was colonised by France?

Quel pays ou région du monde a été colonisé par la France ?

→ **Algeria**

L'Algérie

CSP

Which country was colonised by France?

Quel pays a été colonisé par la France ?

→ **Senegal**

Le Sénégal

CR

Which country was a French colony?
Quel pays a été une colonie française ?

→ **Senegal**

Le Sénégal

NAT

Which continent was most affected by French decolonisation after the Second World War?

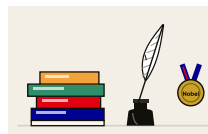
Quel continent a été le plus concerné par la décolonisation française après la Seconde Guerre mondiale ?

→ **Africa**

L'Afrique

CR

06 Which writers and scientists should you know?



Why? Molière was a 17th-century playwright and actor; Jean de La Fontaine, the poet of the Fables; Baudelaire, a 19th-century poet; George Sand, a 19th-century novelist. Victor Hugo wrote Les Misérables. Simone de Beauvoir was a feminist philosopher and writer, Albert Camus a Nobel Prize winner in literature, Marguerite Yourcenar the first woman elected to the Académie française. Marie Curie, twice a Nobel Prize winner, studied radioactivity.

Who was Molière?

Qui était Molière ?

→ **A 17th-century playwright and actor**

Un auteur de théâtre et comédien du XVIIe siècle

CSP · NAT

Who was Charles Baudelaire?

Qui était Charles Baudelaire ?

→ **A 19th-century French poet**

Un poète français du XIXe siècle

CSP · NAT

Which writer is French?

Quel écrivain est français ?

→ **Victor Hugo**

CSP

Who was Simone de Beauvoir?

Qui était Simone de Beauvoir ?

→ **A French feminist philosopher and writer**

Une philosophe et écrivaine française féministe

CSP · NAT

Who was Albert Camus?

Qui était Albert Camus ?

→ **A French writer and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature**

Un écrivain français, prix Nobel de littérature

CSP · NAT

Who was Jean de La Fontaine?

Qui était Jean de la Fontaine ?

→ **A French poet, author of the Fables**

Un poète français, auteur de Fables

CSP

Who was George Sand?

Qui était George Sand ?

→ **A 19th-century French novelist**

Une romancière française du XIXe siècle

CSP · NAT

Which work was written by Victor Hugo?

Quelle œuvre a été écrite par Victor Hugo ?

→ **Les Misérables**

NAT

Who was a famous French woman writer?

Qui était une écrivaine française célèbre ?

→ **Simone de Beauvoir**

CR

Who was Marguerite Yourcenar?

Qui était Marguerite Yourcenar ?

→ **A writer, the first woman elected to the Académie française**

Une écrivaine, première femme élue à l'Académie française

CR · NAT

Who was Marie Curie?

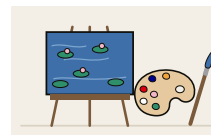
Qui était Marie Curie ?

→ **A scientist, twice a Nobel Prize winner, who studied radioactivity**

Une scientifique, deux fois prix Nobel, qui a étudié la radioactivité

NAT

07 Who painted, who sculpted? Which places to know?



Why? Claude Monet painted the Nymphéas (Water Lilies); Auguste Renoir was an Impressionist painter, Paul Cézanne a French painter, Marc Chagall a Russian-born painter who became French. Eugène Delacroix painted “Liberty Leading the People” and Auguste Rodin sculpted “The Thinker”. Claude Debussy was a composer, Édith Piaf a singer, Joséphine Baker an artist and Resistance member who became French. The Mona Lisa is in the Louvre, and the Lascaux cave in the Dordogne holds prehistoric paintings. During the European Heritage Days, cultural sites can be visited for free.

Which famous painter painted the Water Lilies (les Nymphéas)?

Quel peintre célèbre a peint les Nymphéas ?

→ **Claude Monet**

NAT

Which painter is French?

Quel peintre est français ?

→ **Claude Monet**

CR · NAT

Who was Auguste Renoir?

Qui était Auguste Renoir ?

→ **A French Impressionist painter**

Un peintre impressionniste français

CR · NAT

Who was Paul Cézanne?

Qui était Paul Cézanne ?

→ **A French painter**

Un peintre français

CSP · NAT

Who was Marc Chagall?

Qui était Marc Chagall ?

→ **A Russian-born painter who became a naturalised French citizen**

Un peintre d'origine russe, naturalisé français

CSP

Who painted “Liberty Leading the People” (La Liberté guidant le peuple)?

Qui a peint "La liberté guidant le peuple" ?

→ **Eugène Delacroix**

NAT

Who was Auguste Rodin?

Qui était Auguste Rodin ?

→ **A French sculptor, creator of “The Thinker”**

Un sculpteur français, auteur du « Penseur »

CR · NAT

Who was a famous French musician?

Qui était un célèbre musicien français ?

→ **Claude Debussy**

CR

Who was a famous French composer?

Qui était un célèbre compositeur français ?

→ **Claude Debussy**

NAT

Who was a famous French singer?

Qui était une chanteuse française célèbre ?

→ **Édith Piaf**

CSP

Who was Joséphine Baker?

Qui était Joséphine Baker ?

→ **An entertainer and Resistance member, born in the United States, who became French**

Une artiste et résistante, née aux États-Unis, devenue française

CSP

Where can you see prehistoric paintings in France?

Où peut-on voir des peintures préhistoriques en France ?

→ **In the Lascaux cave, in the Dordogne**

Dans la grotte de Lascaux, en Dordogne

NAT

On which days can you visit cultural sites in France for free?

Pendant quelles journées peut-on visiter gratuitement des lieux culturels en France ?

→ **During the European Heritage Days (Journées européennes du patrimoine)**

Pendant les Journées européennes du patrimoine

NAT

How many people speak French worldwide?

Combien de personnes parlent français dans le monde ?

→ **About 400 million people**

Environ 400 millions de personnes

CR

Which dish is a speciality of French cuisine?

Quel plat est une spécialité de la cuisine française ?

→ **Beef bourguignon (bœuf bourguignon)**

Le bœuf bourguignon

NAT

In which major Paris museum is the Mona Lisa (la Joconde) displayed?

Dans quel grand musée parisien est exposée la Joconde ?

→ **The Louvre Museum**

Le musée du Louvre

NAT

When can you visit cultural sites in France for free?

Quand peut-on visiter gratuitement des lieux culturels en France ?

→ **During the European Heritage Days (Journées européennes du patrimoine)**

Pendant les Journées européennes du patrimoine

CR

Of these countries, which one attracts the most visitors each year?

Parmi ces pays, lequel attire le plus de visiteurs chaque année ?

→ **France**

La France

CR

Where does French rank among the most widely spoken languages in the world?

Quel est le classement de la langue française parmi les langues les plus parlées dans le monde ?

→ **It ranks 4th**

Elle est au 4e rang

CR

≠ Common confusions

Louis XIV or Louis XVI?	
Louis XIV	The “Sun King”. Versailles symbolises his royal power.
Louis XVI	The king of the Revolution, guillotined during the Revolution.

Founder or president of the Fifth Republic?	
Charles de Gaulle	Founded the Fifth Republic. Its first elected president.
Georges Pompidou	A president of the Fifth Republic.

Schœlcher or Ferry?	
Victor Schœlcher	Abolished slavery in France.
Jules Ferry	Free, secular, compulsory school.

Monet or Renoir?	
Claude Monet	Painted the Nymphéas (Water Lilies).
Auguste Renoir	A French Impressionist painter.

Test yourself: 10 questions

Tick one answer per question.

1 Who was King of France at the time of the French Revolution?

- ☐ A. Louis XIV
- ☐ B. Henri IV
- ☐ C. Louis XVI
- ☐ D. François I

2 Who was Napoleon I?

- ☐ A. A medieval king of France
- ☐ B. An Emperor of the French
- ☐ C. A president of the Fifth Republic
- ☐ D. A leader of the Resistance

3 Who made school free, secular and compulsory?

- ☐ A. Jules Ferry
- ☐ B. Victor Hugo
- ☐ C. Napoleon I
- ☐ D. Louis XIV

4 What is the Shoah?

- ☐ A. A battle of the First World War
- ☐ B. A Jewish religious festival
- ☐ C. The genocide of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis
- ☐ D. A peace treaty signed in 1945

5 Which country or region of the world was colonised by France?

- ☐ A. Algeria
- ☐ B. Brazil
- ☐ C. Australia
- ☐ D. Argentina

6 Who was Molière?

- ☐ A. A 19th-century Impressionist painter
- ☐ B. A medieval king of France
- ☐ C. A 17th-century playwright and actor
- ☐ D. A general of the French Revolution

7 Which famous painter painted the Water Lilies (les Nymphéas)?

- ☐ A. Eugène Delacroix
- ☐ B. Pablo Picasso
- ☐ C. Jacques-Louis David
- ☐ D. Claude Monet

8 Which king of France was executed during the French Revolution?

- ☐ A. Louis XIV
- ☐ B. Charles X
- ☐ C. Louis-Philippe I
- ☐ D. Louis XVI

9 Which of these texts was adopted under Napoleon I?

- ☐ A. The Civil Code
- ☐ B. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
- ☐ C. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic
- ☐ D. The Edict of Nantes

10 What was the aim of the school laws of the Third Republic?

- ☐ A. To keep school for boys only
- ☐ B. To make primary school free, secular and compulsory
- ☐ C. To hand all schools over to the Church
- ☐ D. To make school fee-paying for everyone

Questions come from the official lists of the French Ministry of the Interior: formation-civique.interieur.gouv.fr (multi-year card, resident card) and immigration.interieur.gouv.fr (naturalisation). Each question page gives its own sources. The options, answers, translations, explanations and illustrations are written by Recite.

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