

French civic exam: trick questions that are easy to confuse

In 68 official questions, one of the wrong options is the right answer to another question. Prime Minister or President? Strasbourg or Brussels? Alps or Pyrenees? Here is every trap, with a rule so you stop mixing them up.

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CSP = multi-year residence card · CR = resident card · NAT = naturalisation

President or Prime Minister: who does what?

The President of the Republic ≠ The Prime Minister ≠ The President of the Senate

The President is elected and appoints the Prime Minister; the Prime Minister runs the Government; the President of the Senate stands in if the President dies.

Députés ≠ Municipal councillors ≠ The President of the Republic

Each election has its own winners: legislative → députés, municipal → councillors, presidential → the President. And it is the voters who vote.

Parliament ≠ The President and the Government

Legislative = passing laws (Parliament). Executive = enforcing them and running the country (the President and the Government). The police enforce the law; they do not pass it.

The people ≠ The President of the Republic

Sovereignty belongs to the people, not to the person they elect.

The prefect (préfet) ≠ The mayor

The prefect represents the State in the département; the mayor is elected by the town council.

Commune, département or région: who runs what?

The municipality (commune) ≠ The department ≠ The region

From smallest to largest: primary school → commune, collège → département, regional transport → région.

Strasbourg or Brussels: which city, which country, which symbol?

Strasbourg ≠ Brussels ≠ Frankfurt

Parliament in Strasbourg, Commission in Brussels, Central Bank in Frankfurt.

Italy ≠ The United Kingdom

Italy is one of the six founding countries; the United Kingdom left the European Union in 2020.

“United in diversity” · Ode to Joy ≠ “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” · La Marseillaise

The European Union has its own motto and anthem, and so does France. When the question is about the European Union, don't pick the French ones.

Declaration, Civil Code, Marseillaise: texts and symbols

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen ≠ The Civil Code ≠ The Constitution of the Fifth Republic

Revolution → the Declaration; Napoleon I → the Civil Code; today → the Constitution of the Fifth Republic.

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights” ≠ “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” ≠ “United in diversity”

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights” is Article 1 of the 1789 Declaration. “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” is France's motto; “United in diversity” is the European Union's.

“citoyens” (citizens) ≠ “Français”

The chorus goes “Aux armes, citoyens !” (To arms, citizens!); the word “Français” is not in that line.

The flag ≠ La Marseillaise ≠ The Gallic rooster

Tricolour means “three colours”: that is the blue, white and red flag. La Marseillaise is the anthem; the rooster is an emblem seen on sports shirts.

Réunion or Martinique? Overseas France and regions

Réunion ≠ Martinique

Réunion: Indian Ocean. Martinique: the Antilles.

French Guiana (la Guyane) ≠ Mayotte	French Guiana borders Brazil, in South America. Mayotte, in the Indian Ocean, has been the 101st department since 2011.
Île-de-France ≠ Corsica	Most populous: Île-de-France. Corsica is an island.
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes ≠ Normandy	The Alps are in the name: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes means skiing. Normandy means the D-Day landings.

Alps or Pyrenees? Cities, seas and mountains

The Mediterranean Sea ≠ The English Channel (la Manche)	To the south, the Mediterranean; towards England, the Channel.
The Alps ≠ The Pyrenees	The Alps face Italy; the Pyrenees face Spain.
Nice ≠ Marseille ≠ Bordeaux	Nice is on the Mediterranean, but the regional capital is Marseille.
Rennes ≠ Nantes	Rennes is the capital of Brittany; Nantes was the slave-trade port in the 18th century.
Reims ≠ Lyon	Coronation of the kings: Reims. Lyon is a regional capital.
Kourou ≠ Bordeaux	The Ariane rocket takes off from Kourou, in French Guiana, near the equator.

Delacroix or Monet, de Gaulle or Mitterrand?

Jules Ferry ≠ Victor Schœlcher ≠ Victor Hugo	Ferry → school; Schœlcher → the end of slavery; Hugo → books.
Charles de Gaulle ≠ François Mitterrand ≠ Georges Pompidou	De Gaulle opens the Fifth Republic; the death penalty is abolished under Mitterrand.
Eugène Delacroix ≠ Claude Monet	Delacroix painted Liberty; Monet painted the Water Lilies.
Simone de Beauvoir ≠ Édith Piaf	Beauvoir wrote, Piaf sang.
Claude Debussy ≠ Ludwig van Beethoven	Debussy was a French composer; Beethoven composed the Ode to Joy, the European Union's anthem.

Crime or délit, brevet or bac? Law and daily life

Crime ≠ Misdemeanour (délit)	Murder is a crime; shoplifting is a délit.
The brevet ≠ The baccalauréat	First the brevet, at the end of collège; then the bac, at the end of lycée.
Being a French national ≠ Driving test, unemployment benefit	French nationality is for the identity card; it is not a condition for the driving test or unemployment benefit.
National health insurance, your regular doctor ≠ The town hall	For health: national health insurance and your regular doctor. The town hall is where you register to vote.

Questions: official lists of the French Ministry of the Interior. Answers checked against the texts cited on [recitecitizen.com](https://www.recitecitizen.com).

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