

# bright ideas

## Bonjour, Guten Tag, Ciao, N'i H'ao, Hola, Ave et Yia Sou

### Many languages, one greeting

**As a nation** the British are famous for not speaking foreign languages, not a label to be proud of. But according to a survey published by the European Commission, this bad reputation is totally justified. The results of the survey show that the British are the worst language learners in Europe. The figures show that 38% of Britons speak at least one foreign language compared with 56% of people from other EU countries. A huge difference. Interestingly, the survey also showed that English was the most widely-spoken foreign language

with 51% of EU citizens being able to have a conversation in English.

Learning a different language is easier the earlier you begin. Over the years there has been much debate and disagreement about the role of languages in pre and primary schools and with the UK government stepping into the arena once again, this is going to be a hot topic for a while yet.

Currently most young people start to learn a foreign language in secondary school. Leaving it so late makes it harder to get into the new language. It's a time when teenagers are becoming

more self-conscious and unsure of speaking in class in case they make a mistake. From 2014 onwards, children aged 7 to 11 will have to reach a high written and spoken standard in one of seven languages, including French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, Latin and Greek. They will have to be able to:

- Speak in sentences with appropriate pronunciation
- Express simple ideas with clarity
- Write phrases and short sentences from memory
- Develop an understanding of basic grammar

• Learn songs and poems in the language studied.

Having access to real world resources such as traditional foods from the supermarket, musical instruments, CDs, films, newspapers or online sources are a tremendous help when teaching a foreign language. There is a variety of teaching aids that can help enrich your Montessori classroom, from sandpaper letters to labels and charts, which can help your children be confident in speaking and writing in a foreign language. French tends to be a speciality but other languages are also catered for.

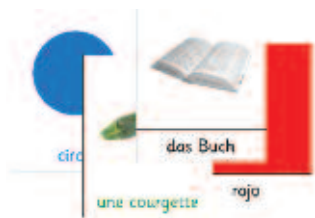
### Greek Moveable Alphabet



These painted wooden letters for the Greek alphabet (10 of each blue vowel and 10 of each red consonant) are used for word building. The letters are stored alphabetically in a box with a lid. These letters are also used extensively in mathematical and scientific work in later school years so are important for a child to recognise.

The Moveable Alphabets are also available in German, French, Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish from Absorbent Minds and are priced at £38.99 plus VAT.

### 100+ French Work and Picture Cards

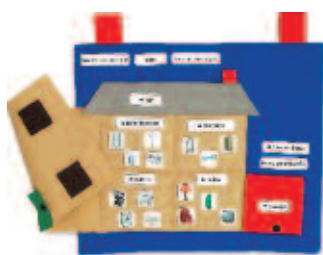


A pdf file with over one hundred picture cards with French words

for colours, numbers, shapes, fruit, vegetables, everyday objects, selected Montessori equipment, transport and animals. These cards are perfect for language teaching, sorting and classifying, and vocabulary.

This is the French version however the file is also available in English, German and Spanish from Absorbent Minds and is priced at £4.99 plus VAT.

### French Labels for the Fabric House



For use with the fabric house, this unique classroom resource is ideal for introducing new French vocabulary related to the parts of the house, both inside and out. It includes nineteen labels in French, including useful vocabulary and simple conversational language, together with teacher's notes.

The fabric house and the French labels are available from Absorbent Minds and are priced at £49.99 and £7.99 plus VAT respectively.

### French Map and Labels



This is a superb resource for using in French lessons to teach English children about the different shops and places found in a typical French town. It is also ideal for introducing directional language, using the changeable road layouts, and for developing conversational language to describe how to get from A to B and activities based on shopping. There are eighteen labels corresponding to the features of the fabric map and useful teacher's notes.

The Map and Labels are available from Absorbent Minds and are priced at £49.99 plus VAT.

### French Weather Chart

This attractive fold-out weather chart is ideal for recording the days of the week and weather in French. A valuable resource that provides useful conversational

structure, together with a useful selection of vocabulary. The display includes eight symbols, seven days of the week, 12 weather labels and a few useful words.

The Weather Chart is available from Absorbent Minds and is priced at £39.99 plus VAT.

### My Body with French Labels

A French version of My Body, this is an ideal introduction to French vocabulary on parts of the body. This visual activity is also great for singing "heads, shoulders, knees and toes." – in French of course. Also available



separately is a set of useful attachable clothes designed to extend My Body by offering a choice of 14 different clothes to Velcro to the display.

This is available from Absorbent Minds and is priced at £39.99 plus VAT.

[www.absorbentminds.co.uk](http://www.absorbentminds.co.uk)

You could also give simple instructions and conversations around the classroom in a foreign language, for example:

Snack time - *Tomar un tentempié*  
It's cold today - *Il fait froid aujourd'hui*

Choose an activity - *Epiléxte mia drastirióti ta*

Children gain a great sense of accomplishment from learning to say something in a foreign language – it's like learning to crack a code. Learning to perform before an audience of peers helps nurture self-esteem, confidence and interpersonal skills. Help crack these codes with some of the ideas above. An unexpected bonus of studying a foreign language is that children can improve their English language grammar as they use what they learn in one language to reinforce another – it can be useful on holiday as well.

## Other Ideas

### Tactile Balls – set of six

Toddlers and young children will have a wonderful time exploring these tactile balls. They come in six different colours and are made from soft plastic. Each ball gives a satisfying squeak as you squeeze it and has its own distinctive textured surface. They can be used to make patterns in sand or with paint on paper and are easy to wash clean.



### Giant Sensory Ooze

Simple but great fun – this has been incredibly popular since we introduced it recently. Simply turn the tube over and watch the jelly ooze to the bottom. It's a great starting point to talk about why it oozes rather than flows or it can be used as a novel alternative to a sand timer.

The Tactile Balls are available from Artful Dodgers and are priced at £23.99 (inc VAT).

The Giant Sensory Ooze is available from Artful Dodgers and is priced at £11.99 (inc VAT).

[www.artfuldodgers.co.uk](http://www.artfuldodgers.co.uk)



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