Introduction

Identité, Modernité, Texte was conceived with the overall aim of creating bridges: between Francophone and American cultures; between the study of language and that of literature; between in-depth analysis and “playful learning”; between personal experience and cultural encounter; between objectivity and subjectivity.

In this Introduction, we first outline our detailed methodological objectives. Next we suggest ways to accomplish these objectives as they relate to the concepts of Identité, Modernité, Texte. And finally we explain how the various components of the textbook (principal chapter sections, appendices, illustrations, Internet site) may be best put to use in attaining these objectives.

Methodological Objectives

We are concerned not only with students’ linguistic and literary skills, but also with their intellectual growth. Our approach will allow them to better understand the authors of the texts studied, and the cultural and societal values and personal experiences that formed them. We invite students to relate their own experiences, cultural references, and values to those of the authors studied.

To this end, we have outlined the following aims, divided into (1) pedagogical objectives and (2) wider objectives that relate to the textbook title’s themes of identity, modernity, and text.

Pedagogical Objectives

There are four pedagogical objectives: strengthen the students’ knowledge of the French language; expose students to literature; broaden their cultural knowledge; and develop research skills.

1. Strengthening the students’ knowledge of the French language
   • to facilitate mastery of reading skills;
   • to facilitate mastery of spoken French (on the conversational themes set forth and, at the same time, on the texts studied);
   • to develop ease in written expression in French (be it analytical exposition or creative writing);
   • to consolidate knowledge of the language in a general way by systematic review of grammatical concepts (structure, syntax) throughout the textbook as a whole.

2. Exposing students to literature
   • to present chosen texts from twentieth-century Francophone literature according to their literary genres;
   • to teach skills of literary analysis so that students learn to distinguish an opinion supported by objective observation and analysis from an emotional reaction to a work read (a reaction based on personal taste).
3. Broadening their cultural knowledge to develop the habit of situating a text in the life and mind of its author in the historical and cultural climate in which it was created.

4. Developing research skills
   - to find literary and general cultural information with ease and speed;
   - to teach students to think critically about literature as well as about themselves.

Wider objectives

5. Personal involvement of the students
   - to make the connection between the texts studied and personal experience in order to create a give and take between culture and our own lives (based on the premise that reflection, in advance, upon personal experience will render the reading more relevant to real life and that the content of what has been read will ultimately enrich one's view of life).

6. Reflection on the theme of identity
   - to understand one's sense of identity: how identity is formed, who we are;
   - to analyze the values that sustain us and, at the same time, develop the capacity to empathize with those of different backgrounds than our own and who were formed by different environments;
   - to increase sensitivity as well to the uniqueness of every individual.

7. Formation of an objective opinion on current societal issues
   - to make the connection between the themes presented in the textbook and the way in which they are expressed in our present era;
   - to form a reasoned personal view supported by evidence of observation and research.

IDENTITÉ, MODERNITÉ, TEXTE

We have, more or less, synthesized these different objectives in the book's title, Identité, Modernité, Texte:

Identité

We have sought to show students that literary works are not just volumes to be placed on bookshelves, but living creations which speak to us about subjects important to all human beings.

In the overall scheme of the textbook, the students approach the literary texts only after they have asked themselves questions on the work's essential theme. For example, in Chapter 1, for which the keyword is voyage, before reading the excerpt from Albert Camus's Journaux de voyage, students are invited, by means of a short questionnaire, to examine their own conception of travel. When the students subsequently read Camus's excerpt, they will be asked to compare spontaneously the author's attitude toward travel with their own.

The manner in which we have chosen to present the materials in this textbook invites two parallel levels of reading, cultural reading and personal reading.
**Cultural reading** offers the possibility of appreciating the distinctly literary value of the texts, in order to deepen and strengthen knowledge of the period during which the work was created. Also, because a foreign language is involved, students may gain a better understanding of another culture. This type of reading demands simultaneously a careful, analytical examination of the works, and an *esprit* of synthesis which will provide adequate background information related to the historical perspective influencing the works’ creation. Such reading also requires a critical sense for gauging the true value of each text, recognizing the merits of certain works that may not conform to the personal tastes of the reader.

**Personal reading**, in contrast, addresses the reader individually and directly. One of the heroes personifies his or her aspirations, an author’s reflection reinforces his or her opinions, the presentation enriches his or her personal vision, the qualities of the work are going to resonate with his or her personal sense of beauty.

As we encourage personal involvement throughout the book, certain questions confront the issue of identity: What do these literary texts reveal to us about the identity of the characters and of their creators? What do they have to teach us about our own identity?

**Modernité**

Although we have retained a traditional approach everywhere that it appeared to us to be a gauge of solidity—for example, in the presentation of grammar and, more generally, in the intellectual rigor of the exercises—on several planes we intend this textbook to be resolutely modern. We rely on recent pedagogical approaches such as *strategies of reading* (for a tactical approach to mastery of the texts) and *enseignement ludique* (“learning through play,” to show that learning can, after all, be fun).

*Internet research* exercises and a web site corresponding to the book facilitate access to modern technologies. Such a site allows for regular updating of the materials presented.

The texts studied date, for the most part, from the second half of the twentieth century. Our aim is to guide students in discovering through these texts the literary and philosophical currents that contributed to the forging of modernity. These intellectual movements and developments include surrealism, the *Nouveau Roman*, existentialism, and structuralism.

We have also included an ensemble of *quotations* dating from all periods, in order not only to demonstrate continuous connections to previous centuries, but also to give students glimpses of the most recent creations of Francophone literature.

We have sought to stimulate discussion on the great social debates of the modern world (the promises and threats coming out of scientific developments, ecological issues, the evolution of social relationships, etc.). Above all, there was a desire to encourage reflection and analysis by which students might formulate their own method of dealing with the rapidly evolving world of modernity, and a desire that their exploration might be a shared experience.

**Texte**

1. The *grouping of the texts by literary genres* encourages the development of literary analysis.
2. In the choice of texts, we progressed from the simplest to the most complex. Conscious of
the subjectivity of any choice and without any pretension of being exhaustive, we selected
texts that combined accessibility with resonance to the theme of identity.

3. We conceive of the word text in its linguistic as well as its literary sense. In other words, for
the students, a door is opened to the oral as well as the written text. On the one hand, stu-
dents have ample opportunity to engage in conversations and debates and give oral presenta-
tions; on the other hand, they are stimulated and encouraged to develop their skills in
formal composition as well as creative writing.

4. The language used in the introductory material, notes, and exercises is appropriate to an
intermediate level of study, with a regular progression in the textbook from beginning to
end: as part of the systematic linguistic study of the textbook, points of grammar are ana-
alyzed in the linguistic sections of the chapters and subsequently reemployed throughout
later chapters.

5. This textbook was principally conceived for students at the intermediate level of French
proficiency, and we presumed that students would have acquired a certain basic vocabulary.
A glossary of terms contains the words appearing in the texts studied as well as in the chap-
ters’ literary quotations; it was included as an aid to students in order to furnish them with
a reference for vocabulary words corresponding to the intermediate level of French. Words
considered nonbasic or rare are translated in the margins of the literary texts, or elsewhere
in parentheses, except in the footnotes to literary quotations, where linguistic remarks ap-
pear within brackets. Cognates, of course, are not translated or listed in the glossary; “les
faux amis,” i.e., similar words of different meaning in French and English, to the contrary,
are. Sentences and phrases of colloquial usage are indicated by (º).

• We also suggest that students use a good French-English dictionary such as the New
College French and English Dictionary (National Textbook Company). Other aids, such
as the Dictionary of Faux Amis by this same publisher, should be made available to stu-
dents, as well.

6. In order to orient students toward the best French usage, this textbook includes an intro-
duction to the use of Le Petit Robert, a standard French reference dictionary that was con-
ceived in part as an aid to foreign learners of French. We designed specific research exercises
for teaching methodological techniques in using Le Petit Robert. (A new edition of Le Petit
Robert published in 2000 contains, for certain entries, structures differing slightly from
those of the previous edition. Students who might want to acquire a French dictionary
would do well to become familiar with this new edition containing entries of the most up-
to-date French usage.)

7. We have followed the rules of French punctuation when dealing with French language text:
there are, for example, spaces preceding colons, semicolons, question marks, and exclama-
tion points. (Only the English-language preface and introduction follow the rules of Ameri-
can English punctuation.)

8. In conformity with general usage in Francophone texts of some length, and for purposes of
simplification, we employ the masculine forms “enseignant” and “étudiant” in this text-
book, rather than “enseignant(e)” and “étudiant(e).” By no means is any exclusion or
bias intended by such usage.
MAIN FEATURES OF CHAPTERS

This textbook contains a wealth of materials, and we realize that such an abundance of exercises and activities might seem intimidating. The book was designed, above all, to give the instructor many possible choices of materials in order to guide the students through the course of study according to the instructor’s chosen methodology and objectives.

1. Pour mieux lire le texte : les piliers de la langue (For a better understanding of the text: the pillars of language)

   Content: linguistic elements associated with the text studied
   Symbol: columns of Greek temple to suggest support for structure

Stratégies de lecture (Strategies for reading)

   Work proposed: reading and integration of explanations
   Content: remarks on expressions and sentences (see the list of themes for each Stratégies de lecture in the textbook’s table of contents)
   Objective: to facilitate and clarify reading
   Symbol: highway with billboard to suggest rapid reading and comprehension.

Un brin de causette (A little bit of talk)

   Work proposed: oral use of active vocabulary
   Content: elements of vocabulary taken from the text of the chapter or associated with grammatical structures studied
   Objective: to set forth a basis for in-class conversations in small groups
   Symbol: comic strip bubbles to symbolize comments of several speakers.

Éléments de grammaire (Points of grammar)

   Work proposed: grammatical integration
   Content: see the list in the textbook’s table of contents
   Objective: to increase significantly the mastery of grammar previously acquired (at the beginning level) and form a solid foundation for a more advanced study of the language
   Symbol: hammer and wrench to convey the idea of tools of learning

Mise en pratique (Practical usage)

   Work proposed: oral exercises (in class) or written exercises (outside class)
   Content: exercises related to points of grammar presented in the chapter
   Objectives: to facilitate reading by making knowledge of the language structure more active; strengthen correct usage of the spoken and written language; encourage analysis of the language
   Symbol: person with barbell to indicate strength, exercise
II. Points de départ pour la lecture (Starting points for reading)

Content: background information on the text and preparation for reading
Symbol: skier in descent to convey the idea of starting out

Biographie (Biography)

Work proposed: reading
Content: biographical outline of the author being studied, with particular attention to aspects related to the text chosen for study
Objective: to facilitate a thorough understanding of the text to broaden cultural knowledge
Symbol: man or woman to symbolize author

Le contexte de l‘œuvre (Context of the work)

Work proposed: reading
Content: information on the complete work from which the excerpted text is drawn; eventually, the precise placement of the text in the work as a whole
Objective: to facilitate a contextual understanding of the text
Symbol: book to symbolize the entire work

Perspective historique et climat culturel (Historical perspective and cultural climate)

Work proposed: reading
Content: a brief survey of famous artistic works as well as historical events and important social movements from the period of the work’s creation
Objectives:
• to deepen the level of understanding of the work
• to widen the student’s cultural knowledge
Symbol: clock to allude to passage of time

Votre préparation personelle (Personal preparation)

Work proposed: mental, oral, or written responses to questions
Content: questions stimulating students’ personal reflection on themes in the text
Objectives:
• to help students anticipate a text’s relevance to them
• to create a give-and-take between culture and personal experience
Symbol: three facial expressions to signify a variety of opinions

III. Texte (Text)

Work proposed: reading and integral comprehension
Content: various texts of Francophone literature of the twentieth century (especially from the second half) grouped according to literary genres (see complete list in the table of contents)
Objectives:

- to give insight and understanding of modern francophone literature
- to facilitate analysis and understanding of literary genres

Symbol: pages to signify an excerpt

IV. Vivre le texte (Experiencing the text)

Work proposed: questions on the text
Symbol: circled text to indicate study of a particular passage or theme
In the work proposed for this section, students prepare either written or oral answers, according to the instructor’s preference.

Parlons-en! (Let’s talk about it!)

Work proposed: oral debate in the class as a whole
Content: questions derived from the text
Objectives:
- to clarify the general idea of the text
- to stimulate exchange of ideas and opinions in the class as a whole
Symbol: megaphone to suggest widespread communication

Comprendre (Understanding)

Content: questions on the literal meaning of the text
Objective: to reassure the students that they have completely understood the literal meaning of the text
Symbol: candle to hint at the light of comprehension

Analyser (Analyzing)

Content: questions on the text as a literary creation
Objective: to offer the students approaches and techniques in literary analysis so that they might ultimately have a better appreciation for literature
Symbol: framed painting with grid to indicate specific study of particular facets

Réfléchir sur l’identité (Reflecting on identity)

Content: questions derived from the identity of the characters and their confrontation with particular situations in the text, or sometimes suggested by the identity of the author
Objectives:
- to deepen the understanding of oneself and of others
- to develop empathy
Symbol: mysterious face to allude to complexities of identity
Élargir la discussion (Expanding the discussion)

Work proposed: short written essays or oral debates
Content: choice of subjects for reflection, as varied as possible (psychological, sociological, or literary), suggested by the themes of the text; most often, these subjects stress contemporary issues
Objectives:
• to enrich the students’ perspective on the texts studied
• to draw parallels between study and personal experience
• to facilitate formulation of personal views on current issues
Symbol: God of the Winds to suggest expansion of subject

V. Aux alentours (Related subjects)

Content: readings and exercises suggested by literary and linguistic elements of the chapter
Symbol: succession of varied landscapes to signify the diversity of horizons offered

Découvertes (Discoveries)

Work proposed: reading and personal reflection
Content: sayings in which figure either linguistic elements studied in the chapter or a theme similar to the theme of the text, or quotations by the author of this text
Objectives:
• to diversify reading habits
• to open “cultural windows” and to demonstrate continuity in historical perspective (the quotations are taken from all periods and not just from the twentieth century)
Symbol: treasure chest to allude to new and valuable encounters

Le Détective (The Detective)

Work proposed: research for specific information (beyond that furnished by this textbook)
Content: questions on concrete details concerning the work or author studied or on elements of the language (research in dictionaries)
Objectives:
• to learn how to find information efficiently
• to increase factual knowledge
Symbol: detective’s silhouette to indicate investigation

Aller ailleurs (Going elsewhere)

Work proposed: research for information (more extensive than in Le Détective), and eventually, short oral presentations
Content: questions originating from the texts studied but pertaining to works by other authors of varying periods
Objectives:
• to develop interest and intellectual curiosity about diverse aspects of literature in general


• to extend the scope of research
Symbol: railroad tracks to allude to travel through time and space

📚 Apprélondir (More in-depth investigation)

Work proposed: reading, research and literary analysis, or presentation
Content: encounters with other texts by the chapter author or quotations related to the author’s works
Objectives:
• to encourage research of a literary nature
• to challenge the more advanced students and give them the opportunity to share their more extensive knowledge of the language and culture with others in the class
Symbol: pile of books to indicate additional research

✍️ C’est à vous ! (It’s your turn!)

Work proposed: creative writing
Content: beginning with a linguistic structure occurring in the chapter, the students develop their personal expression, which can be expanded upon as the semester progresses
Objective: to integrate linguistic elements, in a playful way, into the students’ French usage so that they might enter into the thought processes of the author
Symbol: pencil to allude to composition

🎉 Devinettes (Riddles, word games)

Work proposed: to find the answer!
Content: riddles related to the chapter by vocabulary, syntax, or theme; most of these games were created by celebrated authors or belong to popular tradition
Objectives:
• to develop a playful approach to the French language
• to awaken interest in various aspects of Francophone culture in a stimulating and playful way
Symbol: a hand making an enigmatic sign

📖 VI. Recherches sur Internet (Internet research)

Symbol: computer screen to indicate use of web resources
The theme of this research is analogous to that of the Aux alentours section. The rubrics of Le Détective, Aller ailleurs, and sometimes Apprélondir are again taken up here.
The methodology for research exercises on the Internet is based on that developed in Aux alentours. The research also includes specific aspects that we intend to treat more and more systematically as time goes by (see below). In the meantime, the questions are found in this textbook, whereas the sites suggested for researching them are found on the Identité, Modernité, Texte site.
One new rubric appears as well:
Actualité (Current events)

Work proposed: research and oral presentation
Content: questions concerning current events connected with the theme of the chapter
Objectives:
• to learn how to find daily and weekly information
• to relate the theme of the chapter to contemporary events
Symbol: satellite dish symbolizing speed of news transmission

RESSOURCES ANNEXES (ADDITIONAL RESOURCES)

Appendice grammatical (Grammatical appendix)

The grammar sections in the main body of the chapters present only fundamental explanations for an understanding of basic grammatical concepts related to the chapter texts. This appendix furnishes details on special situations, leading to a deeper understanding of the grammar.

Lexique (Glossary)

This glossary contains a list of the vocabulary we consider appropriate to the intermediate level of French language study (see above).

Reperes chronologiques (Chronological references)

The chronological references comprise two lists: the texts studied, arranged in chronological order; the authors cited in the book (excerpts for study and literary quotations), arranged by century (with a distinction between France and other Francophone areas).

Sources documentaires (Reference works)

Bibliographie (Bibliography)

This listing includes high-quality French-English dictionaries, literary dictionaries, encyclopedias, and works dealing with general Francophone culture (French and English).

Audio-visual documents (Discographie, Filmographie)

This list, which also appears on the textbook web site and is periodically updated, offers information on films and recordings for possible course enrichment.

Web sites

This list also appears on the textbook web site and is periodically updated.
Indices

Index thématique (Thematic index)

This index will facilitate an exploration of the various themes (literary and otherwise) treated in the textbook. It will also allow easy access to the principal French geographical, historical, and institutional references mentioned. Although it is very detailed, it is by no means exhaustive.

Index des auteurs (Index of authors)

This index can be consulted in order to find all the references to the author quoted in the book. (The first quotation by an author is accompanied by a brief biographical sketch in the footnotes.)

Index des œuvres littéraires (Index of literary works)

This index lists all literary works cited in the biographical information or in the footnotes.

Index didactique (Pedagogical index)

This index lists the elements of grammar treated in Éléments de grammaire (Points of grammar) and Stratégies de lecture (Reading strategies): it is designed as an aid for grammar review. It also lists the titles of different chapter rubrics: this will facilitate a rapid overview of the textbook.

Illustrations

We have selected the illustrations for this book in collaboration with Robert Bardavid, graphic designer, painter, and photographer; several of his original artistic creations appear on its pages (see the Crédits). The photographs have been chosen to illuminate some aspect of the texts studied, in order to evoke contemporary realities as well as the mood and flavor of the environment in which these texts were written. The illustrations also offer opportunities to reflect on the work of literary creation by presenting events, character types, and objects which perhaps formed for the author a fertile soil of creation. They encourage an interplay between the text and images, inviting readers to take cultural excursions that go beyond the purely academic use of the textbook. In addition, links to iconographically rich Internet sites (see below) will supplement the illustrations in the printed book.

Internet site

The Internet site for Identité, Modernité, Texte (yalebooks.com/identite) will include the recommended sites for the proposed exploratory exercises (Recherches sur Internet) and the most up-to-date information on the authors studied in detail or mentioned in the quotations. The site will evolve and expand over time and will be regularly updated. Future possibilities include opportunities for broad-based student interaction, virtual museum visits, and other activities amenable to multimedia resources. Students and instructors are invited to contact the textbook authors to share their comments and suggestions for future enhancements.
In conclusion, throughout this book we have sought in our methodology to combine “fun learning” with in-depth analysis, a solid construction with activities of a playful nature, and a logical chain of exercises with a lively momentum, permitting students to learn a great deal almost without realizing it. We hope that both teachers and students will find the work inspiring, and enjoyable as well.