Short Assignment for
Intermediate French I
French 221

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Introduction for Faculty Colleagues

French 221 is Intermediate French I, a third semester French course. At this point, students have been exposed to most of the necessary grammar to communicate in French, orally and in writing, but are far from having mastered it. The assignment below asks students to compose an email to French students who are coming to study at Elon in the spring semester (a real audience, since exchange students in Business from Lyon come to study at Elon every spring). Students will complete this assignment early in the course, as the first chapter of the book deals with “Studies”—mostly higher education in France, and the second chapter deals with young adults like them.

This assignment aims to start the students out on the path of recognizing their own cultural assumptions even as they learn about French ones from the very beginning of the semester. For specific aims, see below. I have incorporated pre-writing and guidelines for the types of language the students should be using into the assignment, because my course goals are to improve students’ linguistic accuracy in French while helping them to move towards intercultural competency via critical thinking about culture. While the “Brainstorming” questions below are in English for your benefit, they will be distributed to the students in French. At this level, it is important that students have time to formulate their answers in French in a comfortable environment (at home) before they are asked to talk about them in class. Otherwise, it is easy to end up with a mute room as students struggle to verbalize their complex thoughts in French under pressure. This type of exercise can make class discussion more fruitful and serves as useful pre-writing work.

The Assignment I Distribute to Students

FRE 221 – Intermediate French I
Writing Task I

Qu’est-ce qu’il faut savoir sur Elon ?
In this course, we will always attempt to learn the French language while making cross-cultural comparisons that allow us better to understand both ourselves and others. In Chapter 1, we studied university education; in Chapter 2, we have looked
at the lives of young people like you. The chapter readings have underlined some fundamental characteristics of the French university system and French college students. In this assignment, you will write an email to the students from Lyon, France, who will be studying at Elon next semester. In the email, you will explain to the students from Lyon a few aspects of the American university system that are essential for them to know before they arrive at Elon. Once they are polished, we will send the emails to the incoming students. The overarching goal of this assignment is to help you examine your own educational experience from the perspective of an outsider in order to come to a deeper understanding of how cultural differences help determine our perceptions of life experiences (like college).

Upon completing this assignment, students will be able to:

- Explain key differences between the French and American university experiences for the benefit of a French student.
- Use appropriate vocabulary to talk about education in French with linguistic accuracy.

**Brainstorming**

On September X, your homework will be to come to class with written answers to the following questions.

1. What surprised you in the readings about the French university system? Why?

2. What are some concrete differences between the French public university system and our system? (Specifically, how is housing different? How are the costs different? How are the selection criteria different? How is the coursework different? Any other differences?)

3. What are some of the internal differences that occur in our university system? (Between public and private universities? 2- and 4-year institutions, community colleges, etc.?) Do these differences exist within the French system?

4. What differences between the two systems do you think a French person might find most surprising or disconcerting? Why?

5. You will discuss your answers with a partner or small group and report back to the whole class. You will then have time to write your first draft of the letter in class according to the guidelines below. Feel free to discuss your letter with your partner and Madame Choplin as you write.

**Writing**

Using some of the information you discussed in class both with your partner and the whole group, compose a short email (200-250 words) to the students from Lyon in which you describe two things about the American university system (and
particularly Elon) that they should know before they arrive in order to prepare them for the differences they will encounter. Explain to the students why these things are important and might be surprising to them at first. Use the present tense and appropriate vocabulary from the chapter. Due Friday Sept. X

You will be Evaluated on the Following

1. Clarity and relevance of the differences you describe;

2. Clarity of your explanation of why these differences are important/might be surprising to them;

3. Linguistic accuracy and use of appropriate vocabulary;

4. Attention to your audience of a French university student.
## Evaluation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Déficient/Inacceptable</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student chooses interesting and relevant differences between the two university systems and describes them clearly. (10 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The differences are unclear or factually inaccurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explains clearly and compellingly why these differences are important and might be surprising. (10 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student explanation of why the differences are important is unclear and unconvincing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student writes with linguistic accuracy, avoiding careless errors and incorporating appropriate vocabulary from the chapters. (10 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student writing contains many errors in grammar and/or vocabulary which frequently impede comprehension of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student pays careful attention to audience and clearly writes for the benefit of a French university student. (10 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The student ignores audience and writes in the tone of a “report” for the professor.</td>
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