

The French Mistress (Amstrad CPC)

This language learning aid contains a powerful control program and a series of self-contained lessons. Each lesson covers a different topic, a full list of which appears in section 14.

1. Loading and Starting the Program

After switching on the computer the first task is to load the control program. Cassette users should insert the cassette into the tape player and rewind if necessary to the start of side 1. Disc users should simply insert the disc into drive A.

Both cassette and disc users should then type in the command CHAIN "FRENCH" and the control program will start to load. When the program has loaded the screen will show the control program's command menu. Cassette users should STOP the tape player at this point. At the bottom of the screen the message LESSON STORE EMPTY will be seen. The lesson store is actually the part of the computer's memory in which a lesson is stored while it is being used. Only one lesson may occupy the lesson store at any time.

2. Program Facilities

The facilities listed in sections 3 to 11 are available whenever the screen shows the command menu. Individual facilities are requested simply by pressing the key indicated. Your first command will probably be to load a lesson into the lesson store.

3. Loading a Lesson (Key L)

The program requests the filename of the lesson you wish to use. Key in a filename from the list given in section 14, end with the ENTER key. Cassette users may omit the filename and press ENTER to load the next sequential lesson from the tape. Cassette loading may be aborted at any time as described in section 12.

4. Running a Lesson (Key R)

Lessons may be run in a variety of ways according to your personal preference. The words and phrases which make up a lesson are presented on the screen first in one language, then the other, at a speed which you select. By running each lesson a number of times and pronouncing the words as they are displayed, you will soon find you know the translations before they appear. To help you learn genders, masculine words are displayed in blue, feminine in magenta.

To run the lesson, answers to four simple questions must be provided. End each answer with the ENTER key. The first two questions request display times for the lesson material. For the first lesson tried it is suggested that display times of 3 seconds are used, other values (0.1 to 99) may be tried later. The third question allows you to specify which language appears first on the screen; the fourth question enables you to request automatic repetition of a lesson or just a single run through.

You may pause at any time during a lesson simply by pressing the SPACE key. This enables a particular entry to be studied for as long as you like before proceeding to the next. Whilst the lesson is in the "paused" state the screen display also shows your position in the lesson, i.e. the "entry" number. (You only need be aware of entry numbers for editing purposes, described later)

To check your progress with a lesson, try running it with one of the language display times set to 0 seconds. This will suppress display in that language altogether.

5. Test Lesson (Key T)

The test facility provides a means of thoroughly testing your knowledge of a lesson. The computer displays each word or phrase in one language only and you must key in the translation. Each time you press a wrong key, the computer will emit a "beep". If you need help press the TAB key to display the next letter of the translation.

Note: It is not considered appropriate to use the test facility for lessons containing six line verb conjugations, but you can if you wish.

6. Creating a New Lesson (Key C)

You can create a new lesson of your own by successively keying in words or phrases together with their translations in the spaces provided.

The program needs to know the gender of each word entered in order to display it in the correct colour. If the program cannot deduce a word's gender from the definite or indefinite article, you will be asked to key M or F (ENTER) to specify it. If the word has no particular gender simply press ENTER.

The English and foreign texts should be terminated using the ENTER key and you can at any time use the TAB key to move down to the next line. Accents should be entered in the text immediately after (and on the same line as) the character to which they apply using the keys listed in section 13. They will automatically appear in the correct position during lesson displays.

It is also permissible to enter foreign language text in the English text position; this is very useful for entering verb conjugations where six lines are required.

Mistakes in entering text can be corrected with the delete key provided the ENTER key has not been pressed, or by keying X (ENTER) as the first character of the English text or as the gender.

Entries can be repeatedly keyed into the lesson store up to a maximum of 200; you can terminate creation at any time however by keying END (ENTER) as the final entry.

Having created a new lesson it may be run in the learning or test modes as many times as you like and saved if required on cassette or disc (section 7).

7. Saving a Lesson (Key S)

The Save command is only used when a permanent copy is required of a newly created lesson or a previous lesson which has been modified.

Insert a blank cassette or formatted disc; enter a filename for the lesson (up to 7 characters). Enter a title for the lesson (up to 24 characters). When the lesson has been saved the verify facility should be requested (section 8).

8. Verify a Saved Lesson (Key V)

This facility should always be used to check that a newly saved lesson has been correctly recorded. Cassette users should rewind the tape to the point where saving began. Enter the filename of the lesson to be verified; the computer confirms that all is well by displaying "Lesson Verified OK". If verification fails it may be necessary to stop and restart the program (section 12) before saving the lesson again.

9. Add to Current Lesson (Key A)

This facility may be used to add further entries to a lesson occupying the Lesson Store. Instructions for using the Add facility are identical to those for the Create facility (section 6).

10. Delete Entry from Lesson (Key D)

To delete a particular entry you will need to know its position within the Lesson Store, i.e. its Entry Number. Entry numbers are displayed whilst running a lesson whenever the pause facility is used (section 4).

11. Insert New Entry (Key I)

This facility allows you to insert a new entry at a particular point in a lesson. You must first specify the point of insertion required, the entry currently occupying that position will be displayed. After confirming that this is the correct place, the new text can be entered.

12. Stopping and Restarting the Program

It may sometimes be necessary to stop the program to recover from awkward situations, e.g. you may have keyed in the wrong filename of a lesson to be loaded, or the verification procedure may not find the lesson you have just saved, etc.

In such cases the program can be stopped by pressing the escape key and restarted by pressing the small ENTER key.

13. Accents & Special Characters

The following keys are used for entering accents and special characters. Accents should be entered immediately after (and on the same line as) the character to which they apply.

character	key
/ acute	/ or →
^ circumflex	↑
cedilla	@ or ↓
\ grave	\ or ←

14. Lesson Filenames

Level A		Level B	
File-name	Title	File-name	Title
L1	Family	L17	Colours
L2	The Dwelling	L18	Pastimes
L3	Furniture	L19	Tools
L4	Household items	L20	Countries
L5	Foods	L21	Medical
L6	Vegetables and fruits	L22	Verb infinitives
L7	Shops and trading	L23	Adverbs and prepositions
L8	Living Creatures	L24	Adjectives
L9	Vehicles	L25	More adjectives
L10	Clothes	L26	Conjunctions
L11	Parts of the body	L27	Phrases
L12	Substances	L28	Verbs (Present tense)
L13	Countryside	L29	Verbs (Perfect tense)
L14	Weather	L30	Verbs (Future tense)
L15	Numbers	L31	Verbs (Imperfect tense)
L16	Days, months and seasons	L32	Verbs (Conditional tense)