

Use the “Write” Word

Small guide to help you avoid the common trap
of the “Faux Amis”

Use the “Write” Word: Faux Amis and More



What are “**Faux Amis**” ?

Words in different languages that look alike but
have different meanings

Why is knowing Faux Amis so important?

- 80% of misunderstandings are a result of vocabulary errors
- Increase Accuracy
- Avoid Common Errors



“Action”

French: a share in a company

English: a lawsuit

- *The plaintiff is bringing **an action** for libel against the defendant.*
- *Janice holds 500 **shares** in IBM.*

Agréer v. Agree

French: to recognize, to register

English: to grant consent

- *IBM **agreed** to the terms of the contract.*

Bénéfices v. Benefits

French: Profits

English: an advantage

- *What are the **benefits** of eating a healthy diet and joining a sports club?*
- *How much **profit** did the company earn this quarter?*

Audience

French: Hearing

English: The group of spectators at a public event.

- *The **audience** laughed at the clown.*
- *The lawyers spoke to the judge at the **hearing**.*

“Bail”

French: is a lease; the plural is baux.

English: property or money given as surety that a person released from custody will return at an appointed time (**sous caution**).

- *DSK was released from prison on **bail**.*
- *The **lease** for the apartment was signed yesterday.*

Delai v. Delay

French: deadline, performance date, period

English: to postpone; to put off

- *We do not want to **delay** the meeting for fear the investors will change their mind.*

“Execution (du contrat)”

French: performance of a contract

English: the signing of a contract

- *We need to **execute** the contract on January 1st.*
- *We need to **sign** the contract on January 1st.*

“Préjudice”

French: damage, loss

English: an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason

- *He has a **prejudice** against Americans.*
- *Her **damages** were in the amount of \$50,000.*
- *She suffered an **injury** in the amount of \$50,000.*

“Caution”

French: is a financial term; it can mean guarantee, security, bail, or backing

English: indicates prudence, circumspection, or warning.

- *We need to use **caution** when talking with the defendant’s counsel. We do not want her to know our strategy in court.*

“Défaut v. Default”

French: is a flaw, fault, drawback, or lack

English: is un défaut in judiciary proceedings. To default = manquer à ses engagements or prendre une valeur par défaut.

- *We do not want Greece to **default** in its loan obligations because the entire EU economy will be at risk.*

“Engager v. Engage”

French: to employ

English: to occupy the attention or efforts of (a person or persons): to secure for aid, employment, use, etc.; hire: to engage a worker; to engage a room.

- *He **engaged** her in conversation.*
- *We **hired** Anne today as our new intellectual property lawyer.*

“Évidence v. Evidence”

French: refers to obviousness, an obvious fact, or prominence

English: means proof

*-The prosecutor did not have enough reliable **evidence** to prosecute DSK.*

“Procès v. Process”

French: refers to legal proceedings, a lawsuit, or a trial.

English: is a very general term: un processus or une procédure

- *What is the **process** for becoming a lawyer in France?*
- *At which stage of the **legal proceeding** is the bail hearing for DSK?*

“Râpe/Râper v. Rape”

French: Râpe is the tool to grate cheese.
Râper is the verb.

English: Rape is the noun “viol” or the verb “violer”.

- *The hotel maid claims that she was **raped** by DSK.*

“Rentable”

French: means profitable or financially viable.

English: is not, as far as I know, an English word, but if it were what it looks like (an adjective that means "able to be rented"), it would be the equivalent of louable

- *No sentence for **Rentable** in English because it does not exist.*

What about the difference between
American and English legal words?



“Company Law (B) v. Corporate Law (A)”

Body of law dealing with incorporated businesses.

- *I practice **corporate** law.*
- *He practices **company** law.*

“**Competition Law (B) v. Antitrust Law (A)**”

Acts and laws enacted to restrict or prohibit monopolistic business practices.

- *Is Microsoft or Google breaking any **antitrust laws**?*

“Stocks (B) v. Inventory(A)”

An accounting of all merchandize and goods available.

- *How much Hello Kitty **inventory** do you have in the store today?*

“**Land and buildings (B) v. Real Estate (A)**”

Physical land and the structures and/or landscape on that property.

- *I need a lawyer to help me purchase some **real estate** in New York City.*

“Barrister/Solicitor (B) v. Lawyer/Attorney (at law)”

A professional officially recognized by the appropriate authorities within the legal system to provide legal services and advice.

- *I am a US **lawyer** so I can practice law in the courts, in a law firm or in a company like Microsoft.*

Words frequently misused in French

- Informations v. Information
 - Can you give me the *information*?
- Vacations v. Vacation
 - How was your *vacation*?
- Advices v. Advice
 - I need your *advice*.

Bonus Faux Amis

Abus (F) vs Abuse (E)

Acompte (F) vs Account (E)

Affaire (F) vs Affair (E)

Habit (F) vs Habit (E)

Licencier (F) vs License/Licence (E)



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