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)
More information?

Contact: info@legallingua.com
Or check our other online documents here: https://legallingua.fr/pour-commencer-immédiatement/