L’Auberge : Researching a Region and Opening a Bed and Breakfast in France
A Case Study for Second-Semester French
by Lori A. Willard, PhD

Cas Pratique

Il y a 25 ans, Madame Carole Thompson a étudié le français à l’université, et a passé sa troisième année d’études au sein d’une famille dans les environs de Rouen, au nord de la France. Son français reste assez bon, malgré les évènements de sa vie qui ont empêché son retour en France depuis ses années à l’université.

Depuis la mort de son mari il y a 15 ans, Mme Thompson est responsable d’une auberge de huit chambres (dont la propriétaire et sa meilleure amie) à Stamford, dans le Connecticut. La réussite de l’auberge est due largement à ses talents interpersonnels, et au fait que Mme Thompson a une bonne compréhension intuitive des affaires. Mme Thompson a très bien géré les investissements qu’elle avait fait avec son mari, et maintenant possède un million de dollars, ce qui lui permettra la réalisation d’un rêve de longue date: être propriétaire d’une auberge ou d’un gîte rural à la campagne en France.

Elle a promis à sa chère amie d’embaucher et de former son/sa remplaçant(e) (ce qui pourrait durer assez longtemps), mais elle est impatiente de rendre concret son rêve romantique. Pour ce faire, elle a recruté un groupe d’étudiants (y compris ses enfants, leurs cousins, des amis et vous) pour faire des recherches dans des régions diverses en France, et ensuite de faire des recommandations en ce qui concerne les meilleurs endroits pour son “Bed and Breakfast.”

Case Summary

25 years ago Carole Thompson minored in French in college and spent her junior year living with a family outside the northern city of Rouen. Her French remains fairly strong in spite of the fact that her life’s events have prevented her from returning to France since she was an undergraduate.

Since her husband’s death 15 years ago, Carole has been running an eight-bedroom bed and breakfast, owned by her best friend, in Stamford, CT. The inn’s great success is due in large part to Carole’s interpersonal skills and intuitive business sense. Carole has managed the investments she and her husband made very wisely, and she now has $1,000,000, enough to realize a longtime dream: to open an auberge or a gîte rural somewhere in the French countryside.

She has promised her dear friend that she will find and train her replacement (a potentially lengthy process), yet is also anxious to start making her romantic dream a practical reality. To that end, she has hired a group of college students (including her children, their cousins, and various friends including you) to research the various regions of France, then make recommendations about where she should open her Bed and Breakfast.
Student Learning Outcomes
- Improved understanding and oral and written use of the grammatical elements listed below.
- Improved ability to work effectively in a team setting.
- Understanding of basic business principles and cultural practices involved in buying real estate in France.
- Familiarity with the regions of France: geography, history, economics, cultural practices, etc.
- Increased ability to work effectively in a team setting.

Schedule

Wednesday, November 8:
Students will divide into groups of 2 or 3. Students will brainstorm in English to generate a list of information necessary to the presentation.

Thursday, November 9:
Before 10:00 p.m. groups will submit electronically their top three choices for a region of France to research and present to the class – Dr. Willard will respond electronically with assigned regions by 10:00 a.m. Friday, November 10. Regions of France from which to choose:

Wednesday, November 15:
Each group will submit a 1-page typed report (in French) describing the chosen region’s history, economy, geography, politics, and culture, with special emphasis on socio-economic or other factors that may affect the project. This report will be submitted to the professor, and distributed to their classmates that same day. The class will brainstorm in English about what they need to keep in mind as they research actual properties on the internet.

Monday, November 27:
Each group will find an appropriate property for Carole Thompson through sites such as http://www.frenchentree.com/, http://www.france-property-and-information.com/, http://www.1st-for-french-property.co.uk/, and using the vocabulary and grammatical elements below, each group will submit a typed, one-page argument, in French, in favor of the property, along with any available photos, to the professor.

Monday, December 4:
After review and corrections, groups will distribute copies of their reports to the other groups in the class. Each group will share its findings and final choice to the class in a 5-minute oral presentation, in French (each member of the group must speak). The presentation will be supplemented by visuals in the form of overheads, power points, handouts, etc.

Elements from Entre Amis to be incorporated in this case study
chapter 9
vocabulary dealing with money; acheter
chapter 10
verbs vouloir, pouvoir; ordinal numbers
chapter 11
comparative; superlative
chapter 12
simple future; future with si and quand
chapter 13
pronominal verbs; subjunctive
chapter 14
voir, croire; pronoun en