

French and Francophone databases: an overview

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November 2025

The [Cambridge A-Z databases](#) (general) and the [A-Z Francophone Area Studies](#) give you long lists of resources available on Open Access or by subscription (their links, along with those in [iDiscover](#), will be more reliable than trying to login directly via publishers' websites. Other thematic groupings may be of interest: [African Studies](#), [Linguistics](#), [Film](#), [History](#), [Arts and Humanities](#), [Modern and Medieval Languages](#), [Amplifying voices](#)...

This list is not exhaustive but based on the resources that we are aware of. If you come across additional Open Access resources that you would like us to add to the online lists of databases, please let us know!

1. Primary sources, corpora

➤ Press

❖ National press

- [Europresse](#) : over 1,500 French and international newspapers and magazines; [blogpost](#)
- [Le Monde, 1944-2000](#) : archive only, see Europresse for current Le Monde issues; [blogpost](#)
- [Retronews](#) : the press site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF); gives access to more than 2000 press titles published between 1631 and 1952, adding to the resources present on Gallica; works as a digital space for consulting newspapers archives, a research tool and a magazine; [blogpost](#)
- [BelgicaPress](#) : 155 national Belgian newspapers, mainly dailies published between 1811-1989
- [Revue culturelles suisses](#) : list of Swiss cultural publications

❖ Historical and local press

- [Archives Historiques](#) : archives de la Gazette de Lausanne et du Journal de Genève
- [La France pendant la guerre 1939-1945: Résistance et journaux de Vichy \(Voices from Wartime France 1939-1945: Clandestine Resistance and Vichy Newspapers\)](#) : Gale thematic resource
- [Presse locale ancienne](#) : BnF, local journals published in France from their beginnings up to 1944

➤ Literature

❖ Manuscripts

- [Gallica](#) : Digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Hundreds of thousands of volumes from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century. Includes history, literature, science, philosophy, law, economics, and political science. Contains dictionaries and encyclopaedias; journals, newspapers; pamphlets; theatre; poetry; novels and other prose texts; manuscripts; recordings; and images.
- [Calames](#) : online catalogue of archives and manuscripts in French University and Research libraries
- [Beckett Digital Manuscript Project](#) : brings together digital facsimiles of documents that are now dispersed over several holding libraries and adds transcriptions of Beckett's manuscripts as a research tool to study the genesis of his works

❖ Printed sources

General

- [FRANTEXT](#) : textual database of French texts, literary and scientific, from 9th to 20th c.
- [Gallica](#): see above
- [ARTFL Public databases \(University of Chicago\)](#): offers several publicly available digital collections in different languages
- [Literature Online \(LION\)](#) : mainly Anglophone works of poetry, drama and prose with critical resources; includes some French authors and secondary criticism
- [Classiques Garnier Numérique](#) : Gateway to French literature and humanities databases (dictionaries, grammar...)
- [Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek - e-Helvetica Access](#) : online resources for digitised materials from Swiss National Library (BL) and to Web Archive Switzerland
- [Internet Archive](#) : non-profit library of millions of free texts, movies, software, music, websites; including digitised out-of-copyright books (primary sources and critical works)

By period

- [Corpus de la littérature médiévale des origines au 15e siècle](#)
(Classiques Garnier Numérique)
- [Base de Français Médiéval](#) : 219 textes intégraux (IXe - XVe siècle) avec métadonnées externes et annotation linguistique interne.

- [Early European Books](#) : Provides digital access to continental printed texts before 1701, offering full-colour, high-resolution facsimile images of rare and hard-to-access printed sources
- [Corpus Montaigne](#) (also accessible via Classiques Garnier Numérique)
- [Bibliothèque Bleue de Troyes](#) : online collection of 252 chapbooks from 16th to 18th centuries
- [Théâtre classique / Théâtre classique at ARTFL](#) : full text searchable French classical plays
- [Eighteenth Century Collections Online](#): comprehensive digital edition of the world's largest library on microfilm of 18th century printed books.
- [Rousseau Online](#) : Collection complète des œuvres de Rousseau based on the 17 vol., in-4°, Genève edition, 1780–1788 (ARTFL)
- [TOUT VOLTAIRE](#) : plain text version of the Complete works of Voltaire published by the Voltaire Foundation (ARTFL)
- [ARTFL Encyclopédie](#) (*Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société de Gens de lettres* published under the direction of Diderot and d'Alembert, 1751-1772)
- [Electronic Enlightenment](#) : full-text database of 18th-century primary sources from key figures of the Enlightenment; contains texts from nearly 6,000 correspondents, 53,000 letters and documents, and nearly 230,000 critical annotations taken from major printed editions of correspondence from academic presses worldwide
- [Correspondance complète de Rousseau](#) : Ralph Leigh's 52-volume edition of Rousseau's correspondence in the original French language as an ebook collection; 8,000+ letters
- [Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique de Grimm et de Diderot](#) : full text high-quality OCR edition of the 18th-century cultural newsletter, with page images

Francophone resources

- [DLOC \(Digital Library of the Caribbean\)](#) : cooperative digital library for resources from and about the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean; provides access to digitised versions of Caribbean cultural, historical and research materials currently held in archives, libraries, and private collections; 162 collections and partners
- [Manioc](#) : Francophone Digital library specializing in the Caribbean, the Amazon, the Guyana Plateau and the regions or centres of interest linked to these territories
- [Bibliothèque francophone numérique / Bibliothèque du Réseau Francophone Numérique](#) : resources on Francophonie more generally; digitised materials from national and major libraries from the Francophone world; supported and managed by the BnF
- [Ile en île](#) : literary portal from French-speaking islands across the world: Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Ocean
- [Black Lives Matter and decolonisation in the Francophone world](#): bibliography of e-resources available through Cambridge University Library

➤ History, sociology, politics, etc.

- [L'Affaire Dreyfus: son influence dans la création de la France moderne \(The Dreyfus Affair in the Making of Modern France\)](#) : Gale thematic resource

- [European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century: French Colonialism in Africa: From Algeria to Madagascar; 1910-1930](#) : Gale thematic resource
- [French Mandate in The Lebanon; Christian-Muslim Relations; and the U.S. Consulate at Beirut; 1920-1941](#) : Gale thematic resource
- [La France pendant la guerre 1939-1945: Résistance et journaux de Vichy \(Voices from Wartime France 1939-1945: Clandestine Resistance and Vichy Newspapers\)](#) : Gale thematic resource
- [Legifrance](#) (Service public de la diffusion du droit français) : French government website relating to French laws
- [Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques \(INSEE\)](#) : National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies; collects, analyses and disseminates information on the French economy and society.

➤ Iconography

- [Joconde](#) (on POP, Plateforme ouverte du patrimoine) : collective catalogue of the collections of the museums of France on an open heritage platform which brings together digital content from French heritage to make it accessible and available to the widest possible audience.
- [Paris Musées](#) : online collections of the museums of Paris
- [Mandragore](#) (BnF) : database of the 200,000+ digitised medieval illuminations from the BnF collections
- [Enluminures](#) (on POP): database of 120,000+ images of illuminations and of 5,000+ manuscripts held in the public libraries of France
- [Ulysse](#) : picture library of the digitised images of the Archives nationales d'outre-mer

2. Critical works

- [ATILF \(Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française\)](#) : portal of French language resources from a research institute working on language, accents, sociolinguistics; has podcasts and radio interviews
- [SUDOC](#) : French union catalogue for 3,000 libraries, mainly University Libraries and Research Libraries (includes location of PhD theses in print)
- [Theses.fr](#) : catalogue of past and current PhD theses defended in France since 1985, some full text
- [L'Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses \(ANRT\)](#) : sells print outs of French PhD theses.

- [Open Edition ebooks](#) : platform for books in the Humanities and Social Sciences; more than half of them are available Open Access ; non-profit public initiative promoting Open Access academic publishing supported by French universities
- [Open Edition journals](#) : platform of 667 journals published in Open Access ; non-profit public initiative promoting Open Access academic publishing supported by French universities
- [CAIRN French Studies Collection](#) : CAIRN is the most comprehensive collection of recent issues of French and Belgian journals in the humanities and social sciences available online ; [blogpost](#)
- [Erudit](#) : publishing platform for scholarly and cultural journals, books, proceedings, theses, documents, and data; archival runs of journal publications on open access, the remainder available through subscription
- [PERSEE - Portail de revues scientifiques en sciences humaines et sociales](#) : portal promoting documentary heritage for the benefit of research; collections of digital scientific publications
- [Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment Online](#) : 700+ volumes (as of 2025) from a series devoted to Enlightenment studies including history, cultural studies, literature, biography, religious studies, philosophy, and gender studies
- [Modern Languages Open](#) : peer-reviewed platform for the open access publication of research from across the modern languages to a global audience; published by Liverpool University Press
- [Pascal and Francis Bibliographic Databases](#) : archive of the PASCAL and FRANCIS bibliographic databases in exact, human and social sciences, produced by the Inist-CNRS from 1972 to 2015
- [Fabula / Colloques en ligne](#) : hosts the online proceedings of academic literary conferences, symposia, study days and round tables, focusing especially on issues of literary theory and epistemology
- [Patrimoine Numérique](#) : website on the digital preservation and dissemination of French heritage and knowledge

3. Dictionaries and encyclopedias

- [Dictionnaire du Moyen Français \(1330-1500\)](#) (ATILF database)
- [Edmond Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du 16e siècle](#) (Classiques Garnier)
- [Dictionnaires des XVIe et XVIIe siècles](#) (Classiques Garnier)
- [Corpus des dictionnaires de l'Académie française](#) (Classiques Garnier)
- [TLFi \(Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé\)](#) : online version of a 19th-20th century dictionary
- [Lexilogos](#) : multilingual Open Access online dictionaries of languages and dialects, including historical dictionaries

4. Portals

- [H-France Digital Humanities Database](#) : portal of French and Francophone Digital Humanities projects
- [FSLG: French Studies Library Guides in the UK](#) : portal of French and Francophone library resources, curated by librarians responsible for French collections across the UK
- [Francophone and French Studies](#), by Deb Raftus, in [Handbook for European Studies Librarians](#), ed. Brian Vetruba and Heidi Madden (2024)

5. Other

- [CESAR](#) (Calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l’Ancien Régime et sous la Révolution) : database and bank of images relating to theatre in 17th and 18th century France
- [Culturethèque – The Digital Library of the Institut français](#): multimedia library of the Institut Français; includes ebooks, podcasts and themed resources
- [AODL \(African Online Digital Library\)](#) : open access digital library of African cultural heritage materials created by Michigan State University in collaboration with museums, archives, scholars, and communities around the world; multimedia, including recordings
- [Africultures](#) : Francophone African arts and culture online magazine and news outlet (multimedia, including TV)

Cambridge resources:

- [French collections at Cambridge University Library](#)
- [Modern and Medieval Languages: French](#)
- [Online resources for Cambridge French papers](#)
- [Recommend an item for our collections \(online form\)](#)
- [Languages across Borders](#): Blog of Language collections at Cambridge University Libraries