

Recognizing French-English **Cognates**

- Aim:** To help students become aware of the many helpful similarities between French and English words.
- Materials Needed:** One or more cardboard or dollar-store crowns
Student worksheets: Picture sequence, Guillaume story sheet, King's dinner role play
- Vocabulary:** cognate, arrow, bow, England, king, Normandy

Teacher's note: The story of William the Conqueror has been simplified here but the basic facts are historically accurate. Thousands of French words were borrowed into English in the years following the Norman Conquest as the Norman French rulers and their English speaking subjects attempted to understand each other. The King's Dinner role play illustrates how the borrowing is thought to have happened.

Procedure:

1. Ask students whether English is easy or hard. Make a list of why and why not. Include the idea of **cognate** vocabulary - words like *surprise* and *music* that look similar and have similar meanings in French and English.
2. Show the paper crown. Ask students about the English word for this object. Highlight the resemblance between English *crown* and French *couronne*.
3. Give out the Picture Sequence sheet (or project it as a transparency). Tell the students they are going to hear a true story about a famous king, Guillaume de Normandie (William the Conqueror). The pictures can be used to pre-teach *arrow*, *bow*, *England*, *king*, *Normandy* and other key vocabulary as needed.
4. Tell them the pictures do not follow the order of the story. They have to listen and write numbers to put the pictures in order. To illustrate, read the first paragraph of the story (see Guillaume story sheet) and show that Picture C (the angry duke) should get the number 1.

5. Read out the story. Confirm the correct picture sequence with students. Read the story again if needed.
6. Give each student a copy of the story (*Guillaume story sheet*) and ask them to read and underline all the cognates they can find. Encourage them to also look for words that *MAY* be cognates.
7. There are so many cognates (in the first paragraph alone: *duke, prince, crowned, throne, promised, decided*). Encourage them to see connections in words that may not have exact matches in French. For example, English *throne, crowned* and *battle* don't look exactly like French *trône, couronné* and *bataille* but they are still cognates.
8. Pass out the King's Dinner student handout. Students complete the animal vocabulary chart on page 1. Check for correct answers (see King's Dinner teacher sheet).
9. Students in groups of three re-enact the King's Dinner cartoon on page 2. Then they can change roles and vary the 'dinners'. The paper crowns from Step 2 above can be worn by the kings.