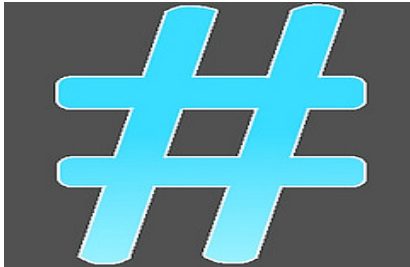


## France shuns use of Twitter "hashtag"

30<sup>th</sup> January, 2013



French authorities have declared war on the English word "hashtag" in its continuing drive to keep its language as free as possible from English loan

words. France's government has a special department that oversees the purity of its language and issues recommendations regarding outside influences. The General Commission for Terminology and Neologisms has decided that "hashtag" will no longer be used in government documents and public statements. Instead, it will use the new, French term "mot- dièse," which is translated as "sharp word". The Commission also encouraged users of social media, especially people on Twitter, to use the new word.

"Hashtag" is the latest English word to fall foul of the French authorities. Officials recently released a list of words and terms they want removed. These include "e-mail", "blog", "supermodel", "take-away", "chewing gum", "parking", "weekend" and "low-cost airline". Schoolteachers in France have been urged to discourage students from using them. Many Twitter users pointed out that "mot-dièse" refers to the wrong symbol as the word "dièse" denotes the sharp symbol from music, which looks similar to the hashtag symbol. One comment on the Huffington Post website suggested France needed to accept new words. It said: "Many languages use loan words and society hasn't fallen apart because of it."

Sources: *Huffington Post* / *Daily Mail*

### Writing

*A language should reject all new words to keep its purity. The use of English in other languages is not good. Discuss.*

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*authorities / declared war / purity / influences / government documents / social media / fall foul of / supermodel / schoolteachers / symbol / loan word / fallen apart*

### True / False

- France has launched an attack on the word "hashtag". T / F
- The French has a special department that protects its language. T / F
- France has banned all French people from using the word "hashtag". T / F
- France will block French Twitter accounts that use the word "hashtag". T / F
- France's government made a list of English words it wants removed. T / F
- France has banned schoolteachers from using the word "hashtag". T / F
- France's new term for "hashtag" does not refer to the hashtag symbol. T / F
- A Huffington Post reader sympathized with the French government. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. drive         | a. made available  |
| 2. oversees      | b. talks about     |
| 3. issues        | c. encouraged      |
| 4. neologisms    | d. matters         |
| 5. translated    | e. campaign        |
| 6. released      | f. stands for      |
| 7. urged         | g. interpreted     |
| 8. refers to     | h. keeps an eye on |
| 9. denotes       | i. disintegrated   |
| 10. fallen apart | j. new words       |

### Discussion – Student A

- When do you use hashtags?
- Do you agree with France shunning the English word 'hashtag'?
- What do you think of English words entering your language?
- How much do you like your language?
- What loan words from your language are part of the English language?
- Is English a good world language?
- Will there only be one language in the world one day?
- What neologisms (new words) in your language do you like?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. declared                              | a. social media            |
| 2. keep its language as free as possible | b. of its language         |
| 3. the purity                            | c. terms they want removed |
| 4. used in government documents          | d. war on the English word |
| 5. users of                              | e. apart because of it     |
| 6. a list of words and                   | f. from English loan words |
| 7. urged to discourage                   | g. symbol from music       |
| 8. refers                                | h. students                |
| 9. the word "dièse" denotes the sharp    | i. and public statements   |
| 10. society hasn't fallen                | j. to the wrong symbol     |

## Discussion – Student B

- Would French be better with or without English words?
- What English words do you dislike?
- Do you think each language should have its own word for computer terms, like "mouse"?
- Would you tell your children to keep English words out of their native language?
- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'hashtag'?
- Do you agree with the comment from the Huffington Post reader?
- How different would your language be without loan words?
- When do you think Chinese loan words will enter the world's languages?

## Spelling

- French utshrteiaio have declared war
- the uirytp of its language
- nnmsciroeadmote
- terminology and oensiomslg
- ereagdncuo users of social media
- pclesyiela people on Twitter
- fall fluo of
- letynecr released
- edugicsora students
- stondee the sharp symbol
- One tmeconm on the Huffington Post
- tyeocsi hasn't fallen apart

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. d	4. j	5. g
6. a	7. c	8. f	9. f	10. i

## Role Play

**French linguist** - You want to maintain the purity of the French language. Tell the others three reasons why. You think French is superior to English. Tell the others three reasons why. You disagree with everything anyone says. Tell them all they are uncultured. Tell them English will kill all languages one day.

**British Prime Minister** - You are very proud of the English language. Tell the others three reasons why. You think it's fantastic English is full of loan words. Tell the French linguist a language becomes richer with loan words. Also tell him/her that Shakespeare is greater than any French writer.

**Twitter boss** - You think the French linguist is very strange. Tell him the new French word for "hashtag" is very bad for French Twitter users. Tell him English loan words are very important for social media and that France will go backwards if it keeps blocking loan words.

**French teenager** - You think the linguist is totally wrong. You love using English words when you speak French. You think English is cool. Tell the others three reasons why. You disagree with the Twitter boss that English is important for social media. Tell the British Prime Minister Shakespeare is dead and out of date.

## Speaking – English Words

Which of these English words do you like best? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner(s). Put the best at the top.

- weekend
- success
- chocolate
- I
- love
- international
- money
- yes

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.