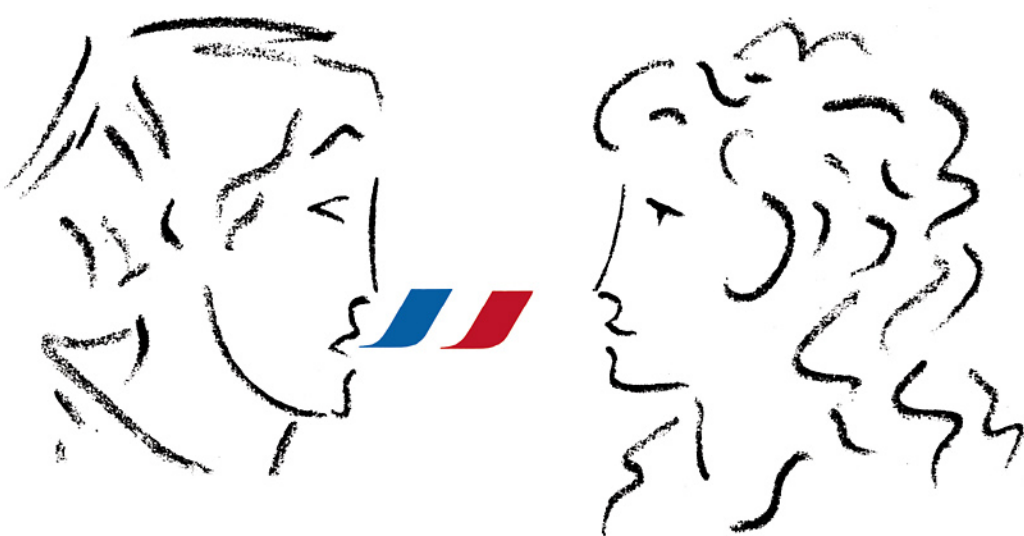


Dictionary of Modern Colloquial French

René James Hérail and Edwin A. Lovatt



ROUTLEDGE

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DICTIONARY OF MODERN COLLOQUIAL
French

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To the memory of
ERIC PARTRIDGE
whose work inspired us

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PREFACE

It is a notorious fact that prefaces in dictionaries are seldom read. To those, not-so-few we hope, who will have braved tradition and actually turned to these pages rather than plunge headlong into the 8000 or so headwords we strive to lexicalize, here are a few thoughts and perhaps also a *mode d'emploi*.

Because this bilingual dictionary is intended to assist both French and English speakers, this preface is followed by a *préface*; both introductions attempt to define how each native speaker can best make use of this volume.

Where English speakers are concerned, this dictionary was conceived in order to 'bridge the gap between the kind of standard French taught in schools, colleges and universities and the less formal language that visitors to France are likely to be confronted with in everyday life.

Since the 1930s, French literature has undergone a radical transformation and the once-clear distinction between written and spoken language has been blurred. The natural consequence of this movement has been that many hitherto shunned, taboo or outlandish words and expressions are now the common currency of every medium of communication. With the whirlwind growth of transcontinental television through cables and satellites, the English speaker is more and more frequently confronted with a bewildering range of 'new French'—the kind of 'off-the-shelf' language that many trad francophones could be forgiven for ignoring. The movement from spoken to written is swifter than ever and this book is offered as a deciphering agent for those avid listeners, viewers and readers who have hitherto felt excluded from that humorous and secret language that contributed so much to making them feel 'foreign'.

Our initial aim in this reference work is to enable the non-native speaker to 'get the drift' of what has been written or said in French and, equally important, to 'tune into' the foreign language wavelength. It is certainly necessary in language comprehension that the listener/reader, before attempting to become a speaker, should be able to weigh up the colloquiality of a word or expression through its contextualizations in both languages. Efforts at becoming a 'slangophone' should nearly always be discouraged, but in this instance, such advice is more pertinent when directed at our French readership. In any case, indiscriminate use of colloquiality can prove to be as perilous as juggling with a Doulton china tea-service. When caught out, the unwary novice can only blush

and admit failure—perhaps easier to get over in the circus ring than in a tight social situation! Our aim is to encourage understanding, but to discourage adventurous sorties into unknown territory.

The general approach to dictionaries is that they should offer instant solutions. In the field of colloquial lexicography, this is even harder to achieve than within standard language; whereas ‘tried and tested’ words, all part of the established lexis, need only be situated as to their specific usage and meanings often without the need of contextualization, colloquial language is by its very nature practically meaningless without the support of back-up phrases that help situate the degree of colloquiality. Rather than arbitrarily grade words as ‘vulgar, obscene’, etc. or resort to a ‘star-rating system’, we have endeavoured to place words within standard expressions in both languages, enabling the readers to make up their minds as to the true meaning of a particular linguistic stumbling-block.

Throughout the ten years it has taken us to compile this work, we have had to come to terms with the fact that most ‘natives’ from either culture have a surprising number of blank spots in the realm of colloquial language. ‘I didn’t know you could say that’ has probably been the most uttered reply we received when we were double-checking public response to what we thought were perfectly comprehensible words and expressions. Working knee-deep in colloquiality, it would have been easy to take it for granted that to the francophone colloquial French is everyday meat, and that to the English speaker English slang is a very frequented area of communication. Having accepted the fact that only a limited number of individuals hold a comprehensive range of ‘fringe’ words and expressions in their language bank, we resorted to what may at first seem rather condescending, namely to give lexicalized words, wherever possible, three definitions in English—the first register-keyed to the French, the second less colloquial, the third in what could be termed ‘standard English’ or phrased to explain the hitherto untranslatable. In a way, we see this as a dictionary within a dictionary. How many of us could possibly be expected to know the meaning of ‘cottage’—a word with which only male homosexuals are likely to be familiar?

It is not our intention here to embark upon a lengthy explanation of how the dictionary should be used. The method is entirely logical and, we hope, transparent. Each headword is assigned a grammatical category and an alternative spelling if one exists. When the word has several meanings these are given in a numerical sequence with ‘straight’ (i.e. literal) meanings first, followed by metaphorical extensions; any more figurative usages involving other verbs or nouns come next. Many headwords or sub-headings have added comments, anecdotes or historical information which should be of interest to the reader.

Throughout our formative years at school and university, and even at the time of writing these lines, our biggest gripe where dictionaries are concerned is the near-insolent manner in which some major works treat their readership. Our most abhorred word has always been ‘See:’, referring the word-searcher to

another entry which itself in turn seems quite willing to ‘pass the parcel’ onto another totally unexpected headword. This is, to us, a rather unethical practice that can only result in well-thumbed volumes and despondency where language students are concerned. Our own experience as teachers of French in British universities is that young people often see dictionaries as a greater source of error than their own fallible memory. At the risk of seeming repetitive and increasing the sheer bulk of this volume, we have chosen to overlap as much as is decently acceptable, particularly where expressions can be located under several keywords.

Beyond being two dictionaries in one, this work attempts to introduce the kind of anecdotic information that gives a totally new dimension to hitherto untraceable words. In some instances, we rely on standard etymological sources, in others we accept the fact that popular etymology ‘rules O.K.’. Wherever possible we have not hesitated to introduce *la petite histoire* to explain the birth or survival of words or expressions.

When asked what problems confronted us while compiling a dictionary of modern colloquial French, we have often resorted to the image of a person firing a shot from a moving train onto a target travelling on another train in motion. French and English are *langues vivantes* constantly acquiring new words and discarding redundant ones and nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of speech. In the introduction to *The Synonym Finder* (Rodale Press) Laurence Urdang says ‘there is no such thing as a true synonym.’ Paraphrasing this great linguist, we could say ‘there is no such thing as a perfect translation.’ Frequency, distribution and connotation are never really truly matching. Our efforts at offering register-keyed equivalents should therefore be seen as learned attempts rather than dogmatic assertions.

Because it is so difficult to dissociate colloquial speech from standard language, we have as often as necessary resorted to inverted commas to indicate that an English word or expression is colloquial.

To many a ‘purist’ it would have been wise to cite only literary or ‘confirmed’ sources for our material, but being basically impure we readily proclaim that ‘*les mots dans le vent*’, often merely overheard, are worthy of recording for their intrinsic linguistic value. We are providing a rich description of the language—let he who draws up a prescription from it beware! The sheer volume of work needed to ensure documented accuracy of the colloquial language would render a dictionary such as this impossible to complete—even a computer is only as willing as those who feed it are diligent.

In an age of memory banks, word processors and fifth-generation computer technology, our dictionary compiled over these ten years on 6" × 4" cards smacks more of ‘cottage industry’ than the kind of team lexicography with massive back-up and secretarial support that other projects have enjoyed. This ‘*manuel*’ was truly manually produced and only in the ultimate typesetting stage were we able to rely on twentieth-century technology through the University of Leeds Printing Service.

Lexicographers, it has to be said, must rely heavily on fellow lexicographers and existing works. It would indeed be most misleading to intimate that we set about compiling this work without referring to past and present dictionaries. If for no other reason than the constant reassurance that we were not missing any word, our 6" working table was always laden with as many as two dozen reference works and we depended on the availability of hundreds of books, magazines, tapes, etc. from which to draw substantiation through examples. Access to thousands of hours of sound material from the radio archives of several French-speaking radio stations was also a great asset. Our greatest debt of gratitude is owed to those many students of Leeds University French Department who kept us informed of noteworthy and stable linguistic arrivals. Without the newspaper cuttings, *bandes dessinées*, and sound recordings they collected for us during their 'Year Abroad', we would, indeed, have been starved of up-to-date material.

Whenever a lexicalized word was only previously to be found in a single dictionary, we have felt the need to acknowledge this 'borrowing', but not without first checking that the word was indeed known to French speakers.

The greatest problem facing lexicographers of the colloquial language relates to what to exclude and what to include. On the level of exclusion we have knowingly avoided only half a dozen extremely obscene words, the kind of terms that are both so indecent and far-fetched as to warrant a blue pencil in any manuscript. Where sexism, racialism or anti-semitism raises its ugly little head in language, we have followed Bernard Levin's precept as voiced in an article entitled 'By definition, a word to the unwise' (*The Times*, 29 January 1980) and included that mass of words that reflect society's prejudices. Mr Shloimovitz is certainly right in condemning the use of slanderous terms; to ignore them as a lexicographer is 'a sin against linguistic integrity'. In each case we have endeavoured to indicate how derogatory such appellations were and clearly dissociated standard usage from verbal abuse.

Whereas exclusion was a reasonably easy task, our great problem over the years concerned what to include. If we had followed all the advice we were given and taken each and every hint, our dictionary would have more than a fair sprinkling of regionalisms and hosts of minority-interest words. To treat a dictionary like a refuge for homeless words is, in our opinion, to abuse the good-natured credulity of the readership. Giving a fleetingly overheard expletive or a contrived neologism pride of place in a small reference work is to claim usage by a fair proportion of French-speaking society. Our aim has always been to 'let the dust settle' and only really offer lexicalization to newcomers when they have, so to speak, proven themselves. In a work spanning over fifty years, we have, wherever relevant, given some idea as to when the word or expression enjoyed its greatest vogue. To exclude words because they are no longer in current usage is, in a way, to deny the reader of contemporary literature the full comprehension he seeks. On the other hand, to preserve artificially in formaldehyde a defunct language is a practice to be avoided. We have tried carefully to strike a happy

medium by relying heavily on the advice of different generations and we generally applied market research techniques to our language quest.

Inevitably, readers in either language will find gaps in this *Dictionary of Modern Colloquial French*—our request, nay our plea, to them is that they should express their reservations, voice their criticism and contact us through our publishers with their comments and suggestions. From the day this manuscript is in the hands of the printers, we will be preparing material for an ‘augmented’ edition. Contributions are not merely welcome, they are eagerly awaited and a standard form will be available to all budding co-lexicographers who feel they can assist us in any way.

It is our sincere hope that all who dip into these pages will feel the urge to go beyond mere consultation and enjoy a casual browse, so coming to realize, as we did, that colloquial language be it French, English or Swahili is fun and endlessly fascinating.

January 1984

R.J.H. E.A.L.

PRÉFACE

Il nous semble plutôt futile d'offrir à nos lexicomanes d'expression française une simple traduction de notre *preface*. Un dictionnaire tel que celui-ci s'adresse de toute évidence à deux 'clientèles' tout à fait différentes qui se serviront de cet ouvrage pour explorer la langue étrangère parlée dans des contextes linguistiques non comparables.

Pour nos amis anglais, ce *Dictionary of Modern Colloquial French* est un outil de compréhension leur permettant de se mettre au diapason du français parlé tel qu'il apparaît de plus en plus dans la langue écrite. Ce 'français sauvage' dont les puristes se détournent avec une moue désabusée est, que nous le voulions ou non, le moyen d'expression qui fait tache d'huile à la radio, à la télévision après avoir imprégné notre vocabulaire courant. Comme le dit fort pertinemment Jacques Cellard dans *La Vie du langage*, 'l'usage engendre la règle, non l'inverse'—reconnaître l'existence du *modern colloquial French*, ce n'est pas l'accepter inconditionnellement comme correct, mais se rendre à l'évidence qu'une langue vivante telle que le français ne se censure pas, même au niveau du dictionnaire.

Un des problèmes fondamentaux qu'il nous a fallu affronter dès le début de nos travaux a été celui de savoir ce que nous pouvions inclure et ce qu'il fallait exclure d'un ouvrage qui se veut sérieux, sans se prendre au sérieux. Un des dangers qui guettent le lexicographe explorateur de la langue parlée est celui de se laisser happer inconsciemment par la vulgarité de la langue qu'il manie. Lorsque l'on côtoie une langue qui n'a pas de préjugés, il n'est que trop facile de se laisser aller à des écarts de langage et de plaider le besoin de contextualiser un mot pour mieux l'expliquer.

Comme nous l'avons déjà dit dans notre *preface*, il n'appartient pas au lexicographe de s'ériger en censeur. Nous avons dû souvent, comme bon nombre de nos prédécesseurs, réfléchir au bien-fondé d'inclure un mot dont l'obscénité ou le racisme en garantirait l'exclusion, même dans les ouvrages les plus libéraux. Si l'on veut parler de crise de conscience au niveau du dictionnaire, nous ne la voyons pas sur le plan de la grossièreté mais plutôt sur celui de l'ostracisation de certains groupes minoritaires. Quoi qu'en disent certains esprits bien-pensants, l'exclusion d'un mot dans un dictionnaire ne garantit pas sa mort, loin de là. Le lexicographe, s'il veut préserver sa crédibilité, doit être

impartial; reconnaître l'existence d'un mot, d'une expression, ce n'est pas endosser les responsabilités d'un locuteur bourré de préjugés mais plutôt mettre à l'index au moyen d'une parenthèse ceux qui s'abaissent à utiliser un tel langage.

S'il est inconcevable pour un lexicographe d'exclure un mot parce qu'il ne lui plaît pas, la véritable difficulté pour nous tout au long des dix dernières années a été de nous censurer nous-mêmes et de lutter contre le désir d'inclure une foule de 'mots dans le vent'. Vouloir être '*in the swing of things*' sur le plan linguistique, c'est prendre des risques inutiles dans le contexte d'un dictionnaire qui tente de couvrir un demi-siècle de français et d'anglais parlé. Aux dépens d'exemples pétillant d'humour, nous avons souvent dû nous contenter de contextualisations moins 'à la page' mais qui avaient l'avantage par contre de ne pas 'faire date'.

Dans le domaine des dictionnaires de la langue parlée, deux écueils semblent se dresser. Le lexicographe se voit dans l'obligation de choisir entre un glossaire riche en définitions mais pauvre en exemples et un ouvrage où l'illustration sélective de certains mots et expressions se fait aux frais des véritables objectifs d'un dictionnaire. Dans un ouvrage monolingue, il est possible de justifier la présence de nombreux mots en se référant à la littérature, qu'elle soit polissonne ou non. Au niveau des dictionnaires bilingues du langage parlé, il est pratiquement impossible de trouver un dénominateur commun. Dans celui-ci, nous avons tenté de couper la poire en deux en offrant un maximum de vocabulaire, illustré par des exemples en français comme en anglais 'de notre cru'; ces exemples reflètent un usage qui est presque règle, tout en évitant de se complaire dans la vulgarité, même lorsque le besoin s'en faisait sentir.

Si pour nos lecteurs anglais ce dictionnaire de *Modern Colloquial French* est un outil de compréhension, nous imaginons que du point de vue du francophone il faut le considérer comme la preuve vivante que l'humour français est traduisible, que la vulgarité ne connaît pas de frontière, que les jeux de mots douteux et les 'plaisanteries de garçons de bains' sont aussi fréquentes de part et d'autre de la Manche et de l'Atlantique.

Plutôt que Préface, nous aurions pu nous servir du terme moins courant 'Avertissement'; car nous nous devons de rappeler à nos lecteurs qu'il est toujours dangereux de vouloir s'exprimer argotiquement dans une langue où même le vocabulaire courant a ses difficultés.

Afin d'éviter de tomber dans le piège de l'évaluation arbitraire en utilisant des termes tels que 'vulgaire', 'obscène', etc., nous avons eu recours à des exemples contextuels dans les deux langues pour mieux 'situer' le mot ou l'expression en question. Ce qui est vulgaire aujourd'hui ne le sera peut-être pas demain, ce qui l'était hier ne l'est presque plus aujourd'hui.

Les Anglais disent '*There's method in my madness*'—il serait peut-être bon d'expliquer la méthodologie qui fut la nôtre tout au long de la rédaction de cet ouvrage. Lorsque le texte anglais est 'entre guillemets', cela veut dire qu'il s'agit d'expressions ou de mots non-courants qu'il faut éviter de prendre au pied de la lettre. La logique que nous avons tenté de suivre est celle de traductions

‘decrecendo’ où nous mettons en premier le mot le plus apte (et souvent le plus vulgaire), suivi d’un terme argotique mais moins virulent, et finalement une explication en *standard English* donnant la signification ‘pure’ du mot français. La conséquence directe de cette structuration des équivalences porte à penser que cet ouvrage est, en fait, un double dictionnaire traduisant d’une part la langue verte en ‘*slang*’ et offrant aussi à ceux qui ignorent l’anglais gouailleur, un point de repère sans ambiguïté. Dans les deux cultures nous avons souvent été surpris par l’ignorance selective qui affecte la connaissance de la langue maternelle. Il n’est pas rare de rencontrer des francophones qui éprouvent des difficultés, sinon à lire des auteurs comme Simonin, Le Breton ou San-Antonio, du moins à comprendre et à apprécier pleinement la langue qu’ils emploient. De même il n’est pas surprenant d’apprendre qu’il y a une multitude d’anglophones qui pourront toujours se passer du ‘*rhyiming slang*’. Notre but aura été d’écarter le voile qui sépare pudiquement ces indécences parallèles, et de prouver une fois pour toutes que la culture anglo-saxonne sait aussi, quand il le faut, se débarrasser du ‘faux-col à manger de la tarte’.

Avant de nous promouvoir lexicographes, nous avons longtemps été et à vrai dire le sommes encore, consommateurs de dictionnaires. Depuis notre plus tendre enfance, ces volumes ont toujours joué un rôle dans notre vie; tels des pavés dans nos cartables, ils ont souvent eu le don de nous irriter profondément.

L’écolier, le linguiste qu’il soit latiniste, germaniste, ou tout simplement ignorant de l’orthographe, de la signification d’un mot dans sa propre langue, a souvent maudit l’ouvrage qui lui refusait la réponse qu’il cherchait. De tous les défauts du dictionnaire, celui qui irrite le plus est le jeu de cache-cache dans lequel le lecteur curieux est renvoyé à d’autres entrées qui souvent, elles aussi, se dérobent judicieusement et renvoient le potache à son point de départ. Ayant souffert de ces va-et-vient qui font rapidement d’un ouvrage neuf un livre d’occasion, nous avons préféré, quitte à enfler ce volume, rappeler deux, parfois trois fois, la signification d’une expression dans son verbe et ses compléments.

Reprenant et amplifiant la citation d’un des plus grands lexicographes de tous les temps qu’un ‘dictionnaire sans exemples est un squelette’, nous avons ressenti le besoin d’élargir le débat vis-à-vis de nos lecteurs anglais en leur offrant soit l’étymologie populaire soit l’origine historique de certains mots, de certaines expressions. Inévitablement, le lecteur francophone risque de trouver ces ‘points sur les i’ quelque peu superflus mais si, comme nous l’avons dit, la langue parlée maternelle a ses mystères, qu’il nous soit pardonné d’avoir essayé de la démystifier.

Avant de conclure, nous aimerions faire appel à nos lecteurs et leur demander de bien vouloir nous signaler les mots, les expressions—il y en a certainement beaucoup—que nous avons omis. Nous nous ferons un devoir lors de la prochaine édition de cet ouvrage de considérer chaque cas sur ses mérites et de faire figurer ces absents qui, comme le dit le proverbe, ont toujours tort! Vous pourrez, par l’intermédiaire de notre éditeur, rectifier ce qui vous paraît inexact, inclure des

néologismes en voie d'expansion, bref, nous aider à compléter une tâche qui, par sa nature même, ne peut jamais être complète.

janvier 1984

R.J.H. E.A.L.

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We are deeply indebted to Mr Gwilym O.Rees of Leeds University and Miss Wendy Lee for their meticulous proofing of the manuscript.

January 1984

R.J.H. E.A.L.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>abbr.</i>	abbreviation
<i>adj.</i>	adjective
<i>adv.</i>	adverb
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction
<i>corr.</i>	corruption
<i>dem.</i>	demonstrative
<i>dim.</i>	diminutive
<i>etym.</i>	etymology
<i>exp.</i>	expression
<i>f.</i>	feminine
<i>fig.</i>	figurative
<i>imp.</i>	impersonal
<i>indef.</i>	indefinite
<i>interj.</i>	interjection
<i>interr.</i>	interrogative
<i>intrans.</i>	intransitive
<i>inv.</i>	invariable
<i>Iron.</i>	ironical
<i>joc.</i>	jocular
<i>lit.</i>	literal
<i>m.</i>	masculine
<i>mil.</i>	military
<i>n.</i>	noun
<i>num.</i>	numerical
<i>ord.</i>	ordinal
<i>past part.</i>	past participle
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative

<i>pers.</i>	personal
<i>pl.</i>	plural
<i>pol.</i>	police
<i>poss.</i>	possessive
<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>pron.</i>	pronoun
<i>pronom.</i>	pronominal
<i>reflex.</i>	reflexive
<i>rel.</i>	relative
<i>sch.</i>	schools and universities
<i>sing.</i>	singular
<i>syn.</i>	synonym
<i>th.</i>	theatre
<i>trans.</i>	transitive
<i>V.</i>	verb
<i>WW I</i>	World War I
<i>WW II</i>	World War II

A

a *n. m.* **1** *Prouver par a+b*: To prove by logical reasoning, with mathematical precision. **2** *C'est l'abc du métier*: It's one of the first things you learn. **3** *De A jusqu'à Z*: Through and through, thoroughly. (This expression is sometimes used in a jocular and ironic way describing a lax approach to a demanding task; it is worth noting that on a French typewriter A and Z are adjacent on the keyboard.)

à prep. **1** Indicates urgency. *A table!* Grub's up! —Come and get it!—Dinner is ready! **2** Substituted for *de* in popular language to mark possession. *Le manteau à ma mère*: My mum's coat.

abalober *v. trans.* To 'flabbergast', to astound. *Alors là, j'en ai été abalobé!* You could have knocked me down with a feather!

abasourdi *past part.* 'Bowled over', astounded. *T'aurais dû voir cette gueule abasourdie!* You should have seen his face!

abat-faim *n. m.* Stodge, near-indigestible food (also: *étouffe-chrétien*).

abat-jour *n. m. (joc.)*: Topee, colonial helmet.

abattage *n. m.* (also: *abatage*): **1** Talking-to, scolding. *J'ai pris un vache abattage du prof*: Teacher gave me one hell of a slating. **2** (of actor): 'Dash', brio, verve. *Il ne manque pas d'abattage, lui!* He certainly comes over well! **3** *De l'abattage* (also: *du travail d'abattage*): Artistic work of little merit (book, painting etc.) executed purely for the purpose of bringing in money. *Ce n'est pas de l'art, c'est de l'abattage!* These are just pot-boilers! **4** Winning throw at *passe-anglaise*, a popular hawkers' and market-traders' slang); Stall-dice-game with the underworld. **5** (Street-goods, merchandise displayed on an open-air stand. **6** *Maison d'abattage*: 'Cat-house', brothel.

abattis *n. m. pl.* (also: *abatis*): 'Fins and kickers', hands and feet. *Fais gaffe à tes abattis!* Watch out, I'm going to make mince-meat of you! (also: *tu peux numéroter tes abattis!*).

abattre *v. trans.* **1** *Ne pas se laisser abattre*: To 'keep one's pecker up', to remain cheerful against all odds. *A le voir jaffer, on sent bien qu'il ne se laisse pas abattre!* The way he downs his grub, you'd think he hadn't a care in the world! **2** *En abattre*: To get through a pile of work.

abbaye *n. f.* *L'abbaye de Monte-à-regret*: The guillotine.

abbesse *n. f.* 'Madam', brothel-keeper.

abéquer *v. trans.* To feed. *Et qui va nous abéquer?* And who's going to make our grub?

abîmer *v. trans.* To 'pull to pieces', to criticize severely. *Un peu qu'il aime abîmer!* He just loves cutting projects to pieces!

ablette *n. f.* *Taquiner l'ablette (joc.):* To do a spot of angling, to go fishing for relaxation.

abloquer *v. intrans.* To 'hand over the readies', to pay up. *Allez, abloque!* Come on, let's have your money!

abondance *n. f.* 'Watered-down plonk', red wine with a lot of water.

abord *D'abord. D'abord et d'une (adv. exp.):* First and foremost. *D'abord et d'une, essuie tes targettes!* For a start you can wipe your feet!

abordable *adj.* **1** (of person): Amenable, easy to approach. **2** (of prices): 'Within one's pocket', within reach. *Les fraises maintenant sont très abordables:* Strawberries are now down to a sensible price.

abouler *v. trans.* To give, to hand over. *Aboule tes fafs!* Hand over your (identity) papers!

abouler *v. pronom.* To 'roll up', to 'blow in', to come along. *Alors, tu t'aboules?!* Come on, let's be having you!

aboyeur *n. m.* **1** 'Barker', fairground or night club tout. **2** 'Rod', 'shooter', handgun.

abracadabrant *adj.* Amazing, startling. *Une histoire abracadabrante:* A cock-and-bull story. (This is a would-be grammatical extension of the hocus-pocus abracadabra incantation.)

abraquer *v. trans.* To obtain by force or deception. *Il m'a abraqué tout mon fric!* He did me out of all my money!

abreuvoir *n. m. (joc.):* 'Watering-hole', 'local', pub. (To judges, barristers, clerks of the court, etc. *l'Abreuvoir* is also the nickname of the bar in the Palais de Justice in Paris.)

abricot *n. m.* 'Fanny', 'pussy', vagina.

abrupti *n. m.* 'Dumbo', 'chump', fool.

abus *n. m. (Il) y a de l'abus!* That's a bit thick!— That's going it a bit far!

acabit *n. m.* Sort, kind. *C'est un gars d'un bon acabit:* He's a good-natured bloke. *Tous! Tous je te dis! Ils sont tous du même acabit, des truands!* They're all tarred with the same brush, crooks the lot of them!

accagnarder *v. pronom. (also: accagnarder):* To 'lie low', to hide.

accareuse *n. f.* Chest of drawers.

accolade *n. f. Aimer donner l'accolade à la bouteille (joc.):* To be fond of one's tippie.

accommoder *v. trans.* **1** (of person): To 'duff up', to bash about, to beat up. **2** (verbal violence): To 'play merry hell with someone', to give someone a sharp telling-off. **3** *Accom-moder à toutes les sauces:* To put someone or something to a variety of uses. *Ici on m'accom-mode à toutes les sauces!* I work here under a variety of hats!

accord *n. m. D'accord! O.K.!—You're on!— Agreed! (also: dac!).*

accordéon *n. m.* **1** *Pantalon en accordéon*: Creased and crumpled trousers. **2** (*pol.*): Extensive 'form', string of past convictions.

accorder *v. trans.* *Accorder ses violons*: To agree on a course of action. *Si on veut discuter d'égal à égal avec eux, va falloir qu'on accorde nos violons*: To be credible in our negotiations, we're going to have to think in tune.

accordeur *n. m.* *Accordeur de flûtes (joc.)*: J.P., Justice of the Peace.

accoucher *v. intrans.* **1** To speak up, to express one's views (after much stalling). *Alors, tu accouches?!* Well! Out with it! **2** To 'come clean', to confess. *Il a accouché mais il a fallu des forceps*: It took some 'leaning' to get him to ownup.

accoutrer *v. trans. reflex.* To 'tog up', to dress with little care.

accroc *n. m.* 'Hitch', snag. *Pour une fois on n'a pas eu d'accrocs*: We were lucky, for once, things went smoothly.

accrochage *n. m.* **1** (of cars): 'Prang', scrape. **2** (Boxing): Clinch. **3** (*mil.*): Skirmish, brief engagement. **4** (*fig.*): Set-to, argument.

accroché *past part.* **1** 'Hooked', infatuated. *Je crois que cette fois-ci il est vraiment accroché!* I think he's fallen for her in a big way! **2** (Drugs): Hooked, addicted. **3** In debt (with little prospect of clearing one's account). **4** *Avoir le cœur bien accroché*: **a** To be gutsy, to be brave. **b** To be anything but squeamish.

accroche-cœur *n. m.* Kiss-curl

accroche-pipe *n. m.* 'Kisser', gob, mouth.

accrocher *v. trans.* **1** To 'buttonhole' someone, to hold a person in conversation against his will. **2** To 'nick', to 'collar', to arrest. **3** (of motor vehicle): To 'prang', to have a collision with a stationary object or another vehicle. **4** To 'hock', to pawn. **5** *Accrocher les wagons*: To 'puke', to 'throw up', to vomit. (*Accrochez les wagons!* is the kind of phrase-excuse one utters with familiar jocularly when unable to repress a belch.) **6** *Accrocher un paletot*: To fib, to tell alie.

accrocher *v. intrans.* **1** To 'catch on', to be successful. **2** (of studies): To 'latch on', to 'cotton on', to understand and assimilate. *En math il a du mal à accrocher!* Maths are still quite a stumbling-block with him!

accrocher *v. pronom.* **1** (Cycling slang): To stick to a fellow-competitor, to hang on leech-like at all costs. **2** *S'accrocher (à quelqu'un)*: To buttonhole someone and pester him until he gives in. **3** *Se l'accrocher*: To have to do without, to miss out on something. *Alors là, mon vieux, tu peux te l'accrocher!* I'll tell you for one, you can whistle for it!

accrocher *v. trans. reflex.* **1** To 'have a barney', to have a row with someone. *'On est toujours à s'accrocher pour un rien (du tout)*: We're always at each other's throat over trifles. **2** *S'accrocher avec quelqu'un*: To have a set-to, to have a fight with someone.

accrocheur *n. m.* **1** Tenacious bore. **2** 'Hangeron', parasite.

accus *n. m. pl. (abbr. accumulateurs)*: **1** Car battery. *Mes accus sont à plat*: I've got a flat battery. **2** *Recharger ses accus (fig.)*: To take a well-deserved rest (literally to recharge one's batteries). **3** *Rechargez les accus!* (of glasses): Fill 'em up, let's have another round! (of drinks).

accuser *v. trans.* *Accuser le coup*: To flinch, to show an emotional reaction. *Et comment qu'il a accusé le coup!* You could see he was upset!

achar *D'achar (adv. exp.):* Non-stop, relentlessly. *V'là quarante-huit heures qu'il bosse d'achar*: He's been grafting like mad these last two days.

acheter *v. trans.* **1** To 'make a mug of', to make a fool of. *Tu vois pas qu'il t'achète?!* You must have noticed he's taking the mickey out of you! **2** *Acheter à lajibre d'empoigne (joc.):* To 'nick', to 'pinch', to steal. **3** *S'acheter une conduite*: To 'turn over a new leaf', to become a reformed character.

acide *n. m.* (Drugs): Lysergic acid diethylamide (better known to those who indulge in it as L.S.D.).

acompte *n. m.* *Prendre un acompte (joc.):* To have pre-marital sex (literally to take some 'nookie' on account.)

à-côtés *n. m. pl.* 'Perks', extras. *Dans ton job 'y a toujours de vaches à-côtés!* You've got great perks where you work!

acré *interj.* Watch out!—Look out! *Acré, v'là les cognes!* Watch out! Here come the fuzz! (also: *gaffe!*).

acrobate *n. m.* **1** Cat-burglar. **2** (*fig.*): Character who always lands on his feet. *Lui faire faillite?! N'y comptez pas, c'est un drôle d'acrobate!* He'll never be in Queer Street, he treads the tightrope of high finance like a real trouser!

acte *n. m.* **1** *Faire acte de présence*: To 'show up', to put in an appearance. **2** (*joc.*): *Avaler son acte de naissance*: To 'snuff' it, to 'croak', to die (also: *avalier son extrait de naissance*).

acteuse *n. f. (pej.):* Second-rate actress.

actif *n. m.* *Avoir à son actif*: To have to one's credit. *A peine quinze bergeres et il a déjà une vingtaine de pépées à son actif*: He's only fifteen and has already chalked up twenty birds.

activer *v. intrans.* (Imperative only) *Active!* Put your skates on!—Get moving!—Hurry up!

Adam *Proper name.* *Etre en costume d'Adam*: To be 'in one's birthday suit', to be 'starkers', to becompletely naked.

addition *n. f.* *Payer l'addition (fig.):* To pay for one's mistakes and sometimes other people's. *Comme de bien entendu, j'ai dû payer l'addition pour vos conneries!* At the end of the day it was muggins who had to pay for the cock-ups!

adieu *n. m.* **1** *Dire adieu à quelque chose (iron.):* To 'kiss something goodbye'. *Ton fric tu peux lui dire adieu!* That's the last you'll see of yourmoney! **2** *Ça a été adieu Berthe!* It was curtains!—That was it!—All was lost!

adjas *n. m. pl.* *Mettre les adjas*: To 'scarper', to 'skedaddle', to run off (also: *mettre les bouts*).

adji *n. m.* *J'ai pas pu le lacher, il est tout le temps à mes adjis!* I couldn't shake him off, he's always on my tail!

adjudète *n. m. (corr. adjudant):* Warrant-officer in the armed forces.

Adonis *Proper name.* *Il se prend pour un Adonis*: He thinks he's the answer to every maiden's prayer!

adresse *n. f.* *Vous vous trompez d'adresse!* Who the hell do you think I am?!—You've come to the wrong person!

adroper *v. intrans.* To 'put one's skates on', to hurry up. *Allez ouste, adrope!* Get a move on!

affaire *n. f.* **1** Case (usually a criminal one), scandal. *L'affaire des pots de vin a coulé pas mal de mecs!* The slush-fund story sank a few prominent figures, I can tell you! **2** *Avoir son affaire (iron.):* To get one's 'just deserts', to suffer appropriate punishment. **3** *Ce n'est pas une affaire!* (also: *en voilà une affaire!*): What a lot of fuss about nothing!—It's of no consequence! **4** *La belle affaire! (iron.):* Is that all?!—Well that's nothing to worry about! **5** *Tirer quelqu'un d'affaire:* To get someone out of trouble. *Il a la paluche secourante, il m'a plus d'une fois tiré d'affaire:* He's the helping kind, more than once he got me out of stuck. **6** *Faire son affaire à quelqu'un:* To 'bump off', to kill someone.

affaires *n. f. pl.* **1** Business, financial affairs. *Comment vont les affaires?* How's the trade? **2** Business, personal matters (sometimes in the singular). *Mêle-toi de tes affaires!* Mind your own business! **3** 'Traps', personal belongings. *Prends tes affaires et fous le camp!* Take your things and get lost! **4** Period, menses. *Avoir ses affaires:* To have the decorators in. **5** *Faire ses affaires:* To 'crap', to 'shit', to defecate.

affaler *v. pronom.* To 'sing', to confess. *Au plus petit passage à tabac, le v'là qui s'affale comme une gonzesse!* It didn't take much 'convincing' to get him to spill the beans!

affection *n. f.* *Etre en retard d'affection (joc.):* To have 'gone short', to be sex-starved.

affiche *n. f.* **1** 'Fairy', 'pansy', homosexual (the kind who through his mannerisms makes his 'gay status' obvious to all). **2** *Tenir l'affiche (of play):* To have a long run.

affiché *past part.* *C'est affiché!* It's a dead cert! —It's a certainty!

afficher *v. trans. reflex.* To flaunt oneself, to make oneself conspicuous. *C'est une pute qu'aime bien s'afficher au bras d'un mec qu'a du flouze!* She's the kind of hooker what likes to be seen with wealthy blokes!

affilée *D'affilée (adv. exp.):* 'At a go', 'at a stretch', continuously. *Travailler comme ça huit heures d'affilée, y a vraiment de quoi devenir cinoque!* Working eight hours on the trot is enough to drive you bonkers!

affligé *n. m.* Cripple, disabled person.

afflure *n. f.* Gain, profit.

afflurer *v. trans.* To get, to gain, to receive. (Often with ironic undertones.) *A force de faire le zigoto, tout ce qu'il a affluré c'est cinq ans de taule!* All he got by his tomfoolery was five years' porridge!

affoler *v. trans. reflex.* To 'get in a tizz', to 'be at sixes and sevens', to get flustered. *T'affole pas, ma chatte!* Keep cool, my pet!

affranchi *n. m.* (Underworld slang): One who is part of the *milieu*, or deemed within that group to be trustworthy. *Dédé c'est pas un cave, c'est un mec bien, un affranchi!* Andy's no mug. He's a great guy, one of the lads!

affranchi *adj.* 'In the know' and trustworthy (well up where the rules and ethics of the *milieu* are concerned).

affranchir *v. trans.* **1** To 'give someone the lowdown' on, to 'put someone in the picture', to familiarize someone with something. **2** To initiate in sexual matters. *Etre affranchie de la cicatrice:* To have been deflowered, to have lost one's virginity.

affréter *v. trans.* *Affréter un bahut:* To book a cab, to call a taxi.

affreux *n. m.* **1** Ugly and rather musclebound character. **2** Mercenary, professional soldier hired to fight for a foreign army. (When the Belgian Congo was torn by internal strife, the *affreux* were a regular feature of press reports.)

affure *n. f.* 'Jammy' deal, profitable enterprise.

affurer *v. trans.* **1** To make a good profit, to earn a lot of money (usually through business dealings). *Il a affuré le gros paquet:* He hit the big times. **2** To win, to get something pleasant. *Vise un peu la nana qu'il a affurée!* Feast your eyes on that new bird of his! **3** (of age): To reach, to attain. *Il va bientôt affurer ses soixante berges:* He's knocking on sixty!

affûter *v. trans.* **1** (Underworld slang): To lure, to entice. **2** To 'take for a ride', to 'con', to swindle. **3** *Affûter la forme:* To 'get into shape', to train hard for sporting purposes.

affûtiau *n. m.* **1** 'Thingummy', small object of little value. **2** (*pl.*): Trinkets, cheap jewellery. (Except when used with jocular intentions, this word belongs to the register of the country bumpkin.)

afnaf *adv.* (also: *afanaf*; *corr, abbr.* English halfand-half): Fifty-fifty. *Marcher afnaf:* To go halves.

agace-cul *n. m.* 'Joystick', 'cock', penis.

agace-machin *n. m.* **1** Itch, tingling, tickly feel ing. **2** 'Joystick', 'cock', penis.

agacer *v. trans.* **1** To 'aggravate', to irritate. **2** To titillate, to taunt sexually. **3** *Agacer le sous-préfet (joc.):* To 'pull onc's wire', to 'wank', to masturbate.

agates *n. f. pl.* 'Oglers', 'peepers', eyes. (Originally marbles were made from this semi-precious stone, hence the colloquial meaning.)

âge *n. m.* *Ne pas porter son âge:* To look young, to look younger than one really is.

agent *n. m. (abbr. agent de police):* Policeman.

agglo *n. m. (abbr. aggloméré):* Chipboard, thick board made of wood chips and resin.

agiter *v. trans.* **1** *Les agiter:* To 'skedaddle', to 'make tracks', to scarper. **2** *Se l'agiter:* To 'pull one's wire', to 'wank', to masturbate.

agobilles *n. f. pl.* **1** (Underworld slang): 'Tools of the trade', instruments for breaking and enter ing. **2** (*joc.*): 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

agoniser *v. trans.* *Se faire agoniser*: To be called all sorts of names. (*Agonir de sottises* is the correct form in standard French. *Agoniser* is the popular departure from the norm.)

agoua *n. f.* 'Adam's ale', 'corporation pop', water.

agrafer *v. trans.* **1** To 'nab', to 'collar', to arrest. *Les cognes l'ont agrafé au saut du lit*: The fuzz grabbed him at the crack of dawn. **2** To 'buttonhole', to detain someone in conversation against his/her will. **3** To 'nick', to 'pinch', to steal. *Mais où c'est que t'as agrafé ça?* Where the hell did you get that? **4** To 'tear a strip off someone', to scold. *Et comment qu'il m'a agrafé!* He gave me a right roasting!

agrafes *n. f. pl.* 'Mitts', 'paws', hands.

agreg *n. f.* (*abbr. agrégation*): Highest State qualification for teaching in lycees and universities. *Décrocher l'agreg*: To succeed in that exam.

agrément *n. m.* *Je vous souhaite bien de l'agrément! (iron.)*: The best of British! (I wish you the best of luck because you'll need it!)

agricher *v. trans.* **1** To 'collar', to grab. *Il m'a agriché par le paletot!* He grabbed me by the coat! **2** To 'nab', to 'collar', to arrest (also: *agriffer*).

agrinche *n. m.* 'Yob', yobbo, loud-mouthed lout.

agrincheur *n. m.* 'Tea-leaf', crook, thief.

agripper *v. trans. reflex.* To have a tussle, to come to blows.

aguicher *v. trans.* To 'give the glad eye', to make eyes at. *De sa guitounne où elle vendait des billets de loterie, elle aimait aussi aguicher les michetons*: From the street booth where she sold lottery tickets, she also liked to attract customers for her 'other trade'.

aguicheuse *n. f.* 'Prick-teaser', girl who leads men on.

aidé *adj.* *Ne pas être aidé (iron.)*: To have got a poor helping when Mother Nature dished 'it' out ('it' being looks, brains, etc.). *Ça on peut dire qu'elle n'est vraiment pas aidée!* There's no denying she's as ugly as sin! *Le gosse à mon frangin, il n'est vraiment pas aidé!* That nephew of mine isn't exactly bursting with O-levels!

aigle *n. m.* (*iron.*): Genius. *Ce n'est vraiment pas un aigle, il n'a pas inventé l'eau chaude!* I don't think he's got much up top! (The word is always encountered in a negative clause.)

aigre *n. m.* *Tourner à l'aigre* (of a conversation): To become acrimonious (also: *tourner au vinaigre*).

aigrefin *n. m.* **1** Con-man. **2** Crook.

aigrette *n. f.* *Avoir son aigrette*: To be a little drunk, to be slightly tipsy. *Elle s'est enfilé une demi-douzaine d'apéros, et la v'là qu'a son aigrette!* She's had six drinks and is already quite tipsy!

aiguille *n. f.* 'Pickler', key. (Always in a context of dishonest use.)

ail *n. m.* (Most expressions involving the word *ail*: garlic deal with lesbianism.) *Aimer l'ail, se taper de l'ail, bouffer de l'ail*: To be a lesbian. *C'est une drôle de gonzesse, j'ai l'impression qu'elle donne dans le gigot à l'ail!* She's a funny woman, I think she's a bit of a dike!

aile *n. f.* 1 'Fin', arm. 2 *Avoir un coup dans l'aile*: To be tipsy, to be slightly drunk. 3 *Avoir du plomb dans l'aile (fig.)*: To have been 'winged', to have suffered a serious set-back. 4 *Croquer de l'aile* (Racing cyclists' slang): To hang on to a car to avoid having to pedal.

aileron *n. m.* 1 'Fin', arm. 2 *En avoir un coup dans les ailerons*: To be tipsy, to be slightly drunk.

ailleurs *adv.* *Va te faire voir ailleurs!* Get knotted! Get lost!—Go away!

aimable *adj.* *Aimable comme une porte de prison (iron.)*: Gruff, abrupt.

aimer *v. trans. & intrans.* 1 *J'aime mieux pas!* I'd rather not! 2 *J'aime, j'aime, j'aime! (joc.)*: I like it, I like it! 3 *Va te faire aimer!* Get lost!—Go to hell!—Go away!

aïoli *n. m.* *Donner dans l'aïoli*: To have lesbian tendencies. (See *ail*. This Provence regional dish is strongly flavoured with garlic.)

air *n. m.* 1 *De l'air!* Get lost!—Go away! (literally: Give me breathing space!) 2 *Mettre en l'air*: To 'bump off', to 'do in', to kill. 3 *S'envoyer en l'air*: a To 'have it off', to have intercourse. b To get high on drugs. 4 *Foutre en l'air*: To dump, to chuck out, to throw away. 5 *Se foutre en l'air*: To 'do oneself in', to commit suicide. 6 *Ne pas manquer d'air*: a To be gutsy, to be brave. b To be as cheeky as they come. 7 *Pomper l'air à quelqu'un*: To 'get on someone's wick', to be a darned nuisance. *Ecoute, mon vieux, tu me pompes l'air!* I've just about had as much as I can take from you! 8 *Parler en l'air*: To talk without thinking. 9 *Se déguiser en courant d'air*: To make oneself scarce, to disappear in a flash. (The expression 'to vanish into thin air' does not convey the connotation of urgency that the French has.) 10 *Jouer la fille de l'air*: To escape from custody. (In a humorous context, the expression can mean 'to make a lucky escape' from a 'captive' situation, e.g. a boring committee meeting.)

ajète *v. trans.* (Second person singular, imperative only: popular mispronunciation of *achète*.) *Ajète-moi un vélo!* Go on, buy me a bike!

ajisme *n. m.* *L'ajisme*: The Youth Hostel movement (from *Auberges de la Jeunesse*). *Faire de l'ajisme*: To go youth hostelling.

ajiste *n. m. & f.* A person who belongs to the Youth Hostel Association.

alambic *n. m.* *Avoir l'alambic qui se désagrège*: To have a stomach ulcer.

alarmiste *n. m. (joc.)*: Guard-dog.

albatche *n. m.* 'Handle', name.

alboche *n. m. & adj.* 'Jerry', 'Kraut', German.

albroques *n. f. pl.* 'Scratchies', matches (also: *alloufs*).

album *n. m.* *Album de famille (pol.)*: Set of 'mug shots', photographic records of known criminals.

alcotest *n. m.* (also: *alcootest*): 'Breathalyser', device for testing the alcohol level on a motorist's breath.

alevin *n. m.* Young pimp. *Duduche, c'est un alevin, le pain de fesse, il y fait tout juste son apprentissage!* He's just a beginner as a pimp, learning the ropes!

alfa *n. f.* 1 Hair. *N'avoir plus d'alfa sur les hauts plateaux (iron.)*: To be as bald as a coot. 2 (*abbr.* *Alfa-Romeo*): Motor car of that make.

Alfort *Proper name (abbr. Maisons-Alfort)* *Il fait ses études à Alfort:* He is studying to be a vet. (One of the principal veterinary surgeon training schools is at Maisons-Alfort near Paris.)

Alfred *Proper name. Avoir le bonjour d'Alfred (iron.):* To be left in the lurch (when someone else has scarpere).

algarade *n. f.* 'Barney', quarrel. *Avoir une algarade avec quelqu'un:* To have a ding-dong row with someone.

aligner *v. trans.* *Aligner le pèze* (also: *les aligner*): To pay up. *D'entrée on lui a dit qu's'il voulait avoir ses faux fafs pronto, faudrait qu'il les aligne!* He was told straight that if he wanted phoney I.D.s quick, he'd have to cough up!

aligner *v. trans. reflex.* **1** *Tu peux toujours t'aligner! (iron.):* You don't stand a chance! **2** *S'aligner avec:* To 'have a barney with', to quarrel violently with someone.

allant *n. m.* *Avoir de l'allant:* To have plenty of drive. *Dans son job, douze heures d'affilée derrière le zinc, 'faut avoir de la santé et vachement de l'allant:* Serving drinks twelve hours at a stretch, he's got to be in good health and full of zest.

aller *v. intrans.* **1** *Se laisser aller:* **a** To take things easy and relax a little. *En vacances on se laisse un peu aller, ça fait du bien!* In the hols, we try and ease up a bit! **b** To become increasingly lax (in a variety of areas). *Depuis qu'elle est marida, elle se laisse aller!* Since she got hitched, she doesn't seem to give a damn about her appearance! **2** *Aller à:* **a** (*lit.*): To suit, to fit. *Son costar lui va comme un gant:* That suit of his fits him a treat. **b** (*fig., often iron.*): To be 'fitting', in keeping with. *Ça lui va bien de parler d'honnêteté!* He's got a nerve, talking about being honest! **3** *Aller sur* (of age): To be 'getting on'. *Il va sur ses quarante berges:* He's knocking on forty. **4** *Y aller de sa réputation:* To stake one's good name. **5** *Comme vous y allez!* That's a bit steep!—That's a bit much! **6** *Va pour!* O.K. then!—Alright! *Bon, va pour demain, alors!* Oh well, then make it tomorrow! (There is a certain 'needs must' reluctance in the expression.) **7** *Allons donc! (iron.):* Come on?!—You can't mean it?! *Lui, un doulos?! Allons donc!* Him a snitch?! You must be joking! **8** *Ça va mal, non?! (iron.):* Are you nuts or something?!—You must be joking!

aller-retour *n. m.* A double slap in the face (fore- and backhand).

allonge *n. f.* 'Sub', advance part-payment of fee.

allongé *n. m.* 'Stiff', corpse. *Le boulevard des allongés* (also: *le jardin des allongés*): The bone yard, the cemetery.

allonger *v. trans.* **1** To hand over, to give (usually money). *Pour avoir la clef de la piaule, il a pas voulu mefaire crédit, j'ai dû les allonger tout de suite!* He wouldn't let me have a room on tick and to get the key I had to cough up the money straight away! **2** To 'clout', to land a blow. *Allonger une baffe:* To slap someone in the face. **3** To 'bump off', to gun down. **4** *Se faire allonger (sch.):* To get 'ploughed', to be failed at an exam.

allonger *v. trans. reflex.* **1** To 'spill the beans', to confess. *Il y a belle lurette qu'il mange à la grande gamelle, il est toujours prêt à s'allonger pour un oui ou*

pour un non: He's been a police informer for a long time, always ready to spill the beans at the drop of a hat. **2** To topple, to fall full length. **3** *Se l'allonger*: **a** To 'pull one's wire', to 'wank', to masturbate. **b** (*iron.*): To count on, to rely on. *S'il s' imagine que je vais l'aider, il peut toujours se l'allonger!* If he thinks I'm going to help him he's got another think coming!

allonges *n. f. pl.* 'Fins and kickers', arms and legs.

alloques *n. f. pl. (abbr. allocations familiales)*: Family allowance. *Toucher des alloques*: To get family benefit.

alouf *n. f.* 'Scratchie', match (also: *alouf*).

allumage *n. m.* *Avoir du retard à l'allumage* (*iron.*, of person): To be 'slow on the uptake', to be a little dim. (The expression originates from the jargon of motor mechanics and describes an engine where the ignition is retarded.)

allumé *adj.* **1** Titillated, sexually excited. **2** 'Tiddly', 'tipsy', slightly drunk.

allumer *v. trans.* **1** To titillate, to arouse, to excite sexually. *Un rien l'allume!* Just about anything turns him on! **2** To ogle, to eye salaciously. *Allume un peu cette belle môme!* Get a load of that bird!

allumer *v. intrans.* To 'get one's skates on', to hurry up. *Allume! Faut se grouiller!* Get a move on!

allumettes *n. f. pl.* **1** *Sucer des allumettes*: To try to boost one's intelligence. (The theory that phosphorus is an ideal 'brain food' was jocularly misconstrued by a humorist who suggested that his readers suck matchstick heads to increase their intellectual potential.) **2** 'Pins', 'gambs', legs. *Avoir les allumettes en arceaux*: To be bow-legged.

allumeur *n. m.* Accomplice (of gambler/swindler). An *allumeur* (also known as *baron*) is the individual whose task it is to encourage passers-by to participate in illegal gambling by being seen to win.

allumeuse *n. f.* 'Prick-teaser', girl who leads men on for the sheer sake of it.

allure *n. f.* *Avoir de l'allure*: To look good. *Les choses prennent une mauvaise allure, ça tourne au vinaigre*: Things are turning nasty.

almanach *n. m.* **1** (*pol.*): Copious criminal record. (The word has a certain built-in jocularly when contrasted with its meaning in standard French and aptly describes a long string of convictions.) **2** *Plaisanterie d'Almanach Vermot*: Weak joke, the kind of feeble witticism on the plane of 'Why did the chicken cross the road?' (The *Almanach Vermot*, France's hardiest 'annual', has always been famous for its rather low-brow literary contents.)

alors *adv.* **1** *Et alors?* So what? *Tu veux partir? Et alors? Moi, je m'enfous!* You want to leave? So what? Go ahead! **2** *Ça alors!* Well I never!— Would you believe it?!

alouf *n. f.* 'Scratchie', match. *Gratter une alouf*: To strike a light.

alpague *n. m.* **1** Jacket, coat. **2** *L'avoir sur l'alpague*: To be blamed for a crime. **3** *Les avoir sur l'alpague*: To be on the wanted list, to be sought after by the police or a rival gang.

alpaguer *v. trans.* To 'nick', to 'collar', to arrest. *Un de ces jours tu vas te faire alpaguer si ça continue!* If you keep this up much longer, the fuzz'll do you!

alpagueur *n. m.* 'Heavy', muscle-man, mobster. (*L'alpagueur* was the title of a 1970s' film with Jean-Paul Belmondo.)

alphonse *n. m.* (Underworld slang): Pimp, ponce, procurer.

alpion *n. m.* Crooked gambler.

alsaco *n. m.* Native of Alsace.

altèque *adj.* **1** (of man): Good-looking, hand some. **2** A-1, very good.

amadouage *n. m. (joc.):* Nuptials, wedding ceremony.

amadouer *v. trans.* **1** To coax, to entice. **2** To cool down, to calm someone down. *Il est entré comme une tornade dans le café, et il a fallu lui payer au moins cinq rhums pour l'amadoué:* He came storming in, and we had to buy him five drinks to simmer him down.

amarrer *v. trans.* To grab hold of, to secure something firmly.

amarres *n. f. pl.* *Larguez les amarres! (joc.):* Come on! Let's be off! (This expression, originating from seafaring jargon, has a sort of 'Anchors aweigh!' flavour.)

amateur *n. m.* *Amateur de rosette:* 'Poufter', 'queer', homosexual. (*Rosette* is a colloquial word for the anal sphincter.)

amazone *n. f.* High-class prostitute who solicits from an expensive motor car.

ambe *n. f.* 'Gamb', 'pin', leg.

ambier *v. intrans.* To run away from someone or something.

âme *n. f.* Small red tag stapled to postal bags describing contents.

amen *n. m.* *Dire amen à tout:* To be a yes-man.

amener *v. trans. reflex.* **1** To 'roll up', to arrive. *Alors, tu t'amènes?* Come on! Get a move on! *S'amener comme une fleur:* To 'drop in', to arrive uninvited. **2** *Tu peux toujours t'amener! (iron.):* You can whistle for it! (You don't stand much chance of getting what you want.)

amer *adj.* *La trouver amère:* To find it no joke, to be cross. *Quand il a découvert que c'était lui qu'on avait balance, il l'a trouvée amère:* He didn't think it was funny when he discovered that he'd got the sack.

américain *adj.* *Avoir l'œil américain:* **a** To 'have one's eyes peeled', to have sharp eyesight. **b** To have one's wits about one (when weighing up a situation).

amerlo *n. m.* 'Yank', American (also: *amerloc*, *amerloque*).

ami *n. m.* **1** *Faire ami-ami:* To 'click', to strike up a friendship easily. **2** *Petit ami:* Boyfriend. *Petite amie:* Girlfriend. (It is worth noting that these innocuous-looking appellations refer to sexual partners, whereas *grand ami/grande amie* have no such connotation and tend, if anything, to mean the opposite, i.e. someone for whom one has little affection.)

aminche *n. m.* Pal, chum, friend (also: *amunche*).

amiral *n. m.* 'Chiv', blade, knife.

amochage *n. m.* Bashing, thrashing, beating-up.

amocher *v. trans.* To bash up, to beat up, to thrash someone. (The implication within the verb is that someone gets 'their face pushed in' and looks a sorry sight afterwards.)

amochir *v. pronom.* To grow ugly.

amorcer *v. trans.* **1** (of business transaction, usually a shady one): To 'set the ball rolling', to get something going. **2** *Amorcer un clille* (Prostitutes' slang): To 'hook a punter', to entice a customer.

amortir *v. trans.* *Amortir le coup*: **a** To hush things up, to keep matters quiet, to avoid unnecessary publicity. **b** To 'smooth things over', to make as little fuss as possible and minimize the adverse effects of an event.

amortis *n. m. pl.* *Les amortis*: The thirty- to forty-year-olds. (This teenagers' term was promoted by the 1950s' film *Les Tricheurs*.)

amortisseurs *n. m. pl. (joc.)*: 'Titties', 'boobs', breasts.

amour *n. m.* **1** *Un amour de...* (usually of object): A 'darling'..., a beautiful... *Elle s'est achetée un amour de petit bibi*: She bought herself the sweetest little hat you could imagine! **2** *Amour vache*: Torrid love affair (the kind where violent scenes alternate with passionate love-making).

amphés *n. f. pl.* (Drugs): Amphetamines.

amphi *n. m. (abbr. amphithéâtre)*: Lecture theatre. *On n'le voit pas souvent dans l'amphi, il sèche pas mal de cours!* He's not often seen at lectures, he skips a fair number of classes!

ampli *n. m. (abbr. amplificateur)*: 'Amp', hi-fi amplifier.

amurer *v. trans. reflex.* *S'amurer le bec*. To 'clam up', to shut up.

amuse-gueule *n. m. pl. (joc.)*: Cocktail snacks. (As the name suggests, the kind of titbits that alternate happily with the consumption of alcohol.)

amusement *n. m.* *Je vous souhaite bien de l'amusement (iron.)*: The best of luck! (also: *Je vous souhaite bien du plaisir!*).

amuser *v. trans.* *Amuser le tapis* (Gamblers' slang): To dither, to hesitate over what card to play.

amuser *v. trans. reflex.* *Les enfants s'amuse!* (iron.): Little things please little minds!

amusette *n. f. (iron.)*: **1** 'Kids' stuff', easy task (the kind you could literally do with your eyes closed). **2** Harmless bit of 'slap-and-tickle', flirtation of no consequence. **3** 'Small-time fiddle' (the kind of con-trick that would rouse nothing but disdain from a real villain).

amygdales *n. f. pl.* **1** *Se caler les amygdales*: To 'stuff one's face', to eat a hearty meal. **2** *S'humecter les amygdales*: To 'wet one's whistle', to have a drink. **3** *Se faire lécher les amygdales*: To get a 'smackeroo', to exchange a French kiss. **4** *Avoir les amygdales à l'air*: To have one's throat slit open. **5** *Amygdales sud (joc.)*: 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

ananas *n. m. (mil.)*: 'Pineapple', hand-grenade.

anar *n. m.* Anarchist (also: *anarcho*).

ances *n. f. pl.* (also: *anses*): 'Flappers', ears.

ancêtres *n. m. pl.* *Les ancêtres (joc.)*: The 'old folk', one's parents.

ancien *n. m.* *Faire l'ancien* (also: *faire dans l'anden*): To be in the antique trade, to sell antiques.

andosses *n. f. pl.* (also: *endosses*): Back, shoulders. *En avoir plein les andosses (fig.)*: To be fed up with something.

andouille *n. f.* **1** Fool, idiot. *Faire l'andouille*: To 'arse about', to act the fool. **2** *Andouille à col roulé*: 'Prick', 'cock', penis (also: *chauve à col roulé*).

âne *n. m.* **1** 'Nincompoop', ass, fool. *Quel âne bête!* What a nurk! **2** *Tenir l'âne par la queue* (of man): To 'have a slash', to pee, to urinate. **3** *Il y a plus d'un âne qui s'appelle Martin!* (iron.): He's not the only fool who goes by that name! **4** *Comme un âne qui pète* (joc.): Without so much as a thought. *Faut pas lui en vouloir, il a dit ça comme un âne qui pète*: I wouldn't take offence, he just said it off the top of his head.

ange *n. m.* **1** *Etre aux anges*: To be 'cock-ahoop', to be delighted. **2** *Rire aux anges*: To laugh to oneself and without apparent reason. **3** *Un ange passe!* (is said of an embarrassing silence). *'Un ange passe' pensa Michel. Il sentit bien qu'il avait fait un impair*: There was a sudden hush and he realized he'd made a boob. **4** *Faiseuse d'anges*: Back-street abortionist.

anglais *adj.* *Bonbon anglais*: Acid drop.

anglais *n. m. pl.* *Avoir ses anglais*: To 'have the decorators in', to have a menstrual period. (The more ambiguously expressed *les anglais ont débarqué* is best translated by 'rain stopped play'.)

anglaise *adj. f.* **1** *Filer à l'anglaise*: To take French leave (also: *pisser à l'anglaise*). **2** *Capote anglaise*: 'French letter', condom.

angliche *n. m. & f.* 'Brit', English person (also: *britiche*. To the French such fine distinctions as Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish are of little consequence.)

angliche *adj.* 'Brit', English.

anguille *n. f.* **1** *Il y a anguille sous roche*: 'Something's brewing'—Something's definitely about to happen. **2** *Anguille de calcif* (joc.): 'Short-arm', 'cock', penis.

anicroche *n. f.* 'Snag', hitch. *On s'est tapé des vacances sans anicroches*: We had ourselves some really trouble-free holidays.

animal *n. m.* *Bougre d'animal, va!* (joc.): You are a card!—You're a right one! (The expression is anything but sarcastic and is always uttered in a happy-go-lucky context.)

anis *n. m.* *De l'anis!* (iron.): Not on your nelly!—Not bloody likely!—Certainly not!

anisette *n. f.* *Anisette de barbillon* (joc.): 'Adam's ale', 'corporation pop', water. (Tap water, never a popular drink with the French, comes under a variety of humorous appellations, e.g. *sirop de canard*, *Château-la-pompe*.)

aniterge *n. m.* 'Snot-rag', handkerchief.

anneau *n. m.* *L'anneau*: The arse-hole, the anal sphincter. *Prendre de l'anneau*: To indulge in passive sodomy.

annif *n. m.* (corr. abbr. *anniversaire*): Birthday.

annoncer *v. trans.* *Annoncer la couleur*. To 'put one's cards on the table', to state one's intentions.

anonyme *n. m.* *Se faire plomber un polichinelle signé anonyme*: To 'get into the pudding club and not know the cook', to get pregnant and not know who the father is.

anquilleuse *n. f.* Woman shoplifter. (So called because she tries to hide the stolen goods between her legs, or *quilles*.)

anse *n. f.* 1 'Wing', arm. (The image here, as with the next meaning, reflects the loop configuration of a handle, i.e. that of a basket or a cup.) 2 (*pl.*): 'Flappers', ears. 3 *Faire sauter l'anse du panier*: To divert housekeeping funds into one's own pocket.

antichambre *n. f.* *Bagatelles de l'antichambre (joc.)*: Heavy petting, extreme foreplay preceding intercourse.

antif *n. f.* 1 Path, road. 2 *Battre l'antif*: To 'hang about', to loiter.

antifler *v. pronom.* To 'get hitched', to get married.

antigel *n. m. (joc.)*: 'Hooch', 'hard stuff', strong alcohol.

antisèche *n. f. (sch.)*: Crib. *Il est arrivé dans l'amphi bourré d'antisèches; il faut dire qu'en classe il pompait sans cesse aux exam*: He came in loaded down with cribs; mind you, he was always copying off his neighbours in exams.

aoûtien *n. m. Les aoûtiers*: That vast multitude of holidaymakers who, choosing to ignore governmental pleas for *l'étalement des vacances*, take their annual break in August.

apache *n. m.* (Underworld slang): 'Heavy', henchman, gangster. (This is a non-pejorative appellation within the *milieu*.)

apaiser *v. trans. (iron.)*: To 'do in', to murder.

apasqueline *v. pronom.* To get used to something.

apéro *n. m.* Aperitif.

aplatir *v. trans.* 1 To 'flabbergast', to astound. 2 (*fig.*): To hit back with a stinging retort. 3 *Aplatir le coup*: To forgive and forget.

aplatir *v. trans. reflex.* 1 To grovel, to be oversubservient. *Il s'est aplati devant le dirlo*: He went boot-licking to the boss. 2 To lie low and hope to be forgotten.

aplomb *n. m.* 1 'Cheek', nerve. *Tu ne manques pas d'aplomb!* You've got a nerve, mate! 2 *Etre d'aplomb* (of a person): To be 'in fine fettle', to feel in good health.

Apollon *n. m. Apollon du réverbère (joc. corr. Apollon du Belvédère)*: Street-Romeo, would-be Romeo. (Unlike the statue of that name in the Vatican an *Apollon du réverbère* is a *bellâtre*, the kind of vain 'smoothie' men and most women dislike.)

apôtre *n. m.* Finger. (The English 'pinky' is not strictly speaking accurate as it belongs to 'baby-talk'.)

appachonner *v. trans.* To lure, to entice, to attract. (This 1930s' underworld verb usually refers to illegal matters.)

appareil *n. m.* 1 *Etre dans le plus simple appareil*: To be 'in the altogether', to be 'starkers', to be naked. 2 *Remettre l'appareil*: To replace the (telephone) receiver.

appel *n. m.* 1 Wink, 'come on' nod (also a variety of facial expressions appealing to a person one fancies). 2 *Faire des appels du pied*: To 'play footsy', to reach out under a table with one's foot. 3 *Faire un appel de phares*: To flash one's headlights. 4 *Faire un appel au peuple (joc.)*: To scrounge, to ask for money.

appeler *v. trans. reflex.* *Il s'appelle 'Reviens'* (ironical remark about something one is lending): I want it back, you know!

appoint *n. m.* *Faire l'appoint*: To have the exact change. (The sign '*On est prié de faire l'appoint*' — 'Please have the exact change ready' is often displayed on French buses.)

apporter *v. trans. reflex.* To come. *Alors quoi! Tu t'apportes?* Get a move on then!—Are you coming at last?! (also: *s'amener*).

apprenti *n. m.* **1** 'Greenhorn', novice. **2** *Course d'apprentis*: Race for apprentice jockeys.

appuyer *v. trans.* **1** To insist upon, to put pressure behind. *Appuyer une demande*: To bring influence to bear on behalf of a request. **2** *Appuyer sur le champignon*: To accelerate, to get things moving. **3** *Appuyer sur la meule* (Cycling): To pedal hard.

appuyer *v. pronom.* **1** To treat oneself to something. *On s'est appuyé un sacré gueuleton*: We had ourselves a slap-up meal. **2** To have to put up with someone or something unpleasant. *Mon beau-père, ça va encore, mais ma belle-doche il faut se l'appuyer!* My father-in-law's O.K., but the mother-in-law's a pain in the neck! **3** *S'appuyer une nana*: To 'have it off with a bird', to have intercourse. (This expression has a much more literal connotation than the first two meanings.)

aprèm *n. m. & f. (abbr. après-midi)*: Afternoon. *On se voit cette aprèm?* Will I be seeing you this P.M.?

après *prep.* **1** *Attendre après*: To wait for. *Il attend après sa sœur qu'est au coiffeur*: He's waiting for his sister what's at the hairdresser's. **2** *Monter après une échelle*: To climb up a ladder.

après *adv.* **1** *Cours-lui après!* Run after him! **2** *Et (puis) après?* So what? *Alors je fais du bruit la nuit! Et après?!* So I make a lot of noise at night! You want to make something of it?!

après-ski *n. m.* Warm, fur-lined, ankle-high boots worn, as the name suggests, after skiing sessions. (It has now become fashionable to wear *après-ski* in towns and cities.)

aquarium *n. m.* (Underworld slang): Bistro, café where pimps congregate.

aquijer *v. trans.* (also: *aquiger*): **1** To 'slate', to criticize severely. **2** To bash up, to beat up, to injure.

arabe *adj.* **1** *Fourbi arabe*: 'Tricky business', a very complicated state of affairs. **2** *Téléphone arabe*: 'Grapevine', word-of-mouth transmission of news. *J'ai eu ça par le téléphone arabe*: I heard it through some chaps at work. **3** *Merde arabe!* Blast! (The adjunction of *arabe* would seem to jocularize and soften the expletive.)

aracail *n. m.* 'Sky pilot', 'padre', priest.

araignée *n. f.* **1** *Avoir une araignée au plafond*: To be 'barmy', to be 'bonkers', to be mad. **2** *Faire des pattes d'araignée*: To write in a spidery script. **3** *Faire (des) pattes d'araignée à quelqu'un*: To 'goose', to caress lightly with nails and fingertips.

aramon *n. m.* 'Plonk', cheap red wine. *Il s'est tapé un kil d'aramon*: He downed a litre of vino.

arbalète *n. f.* **1** (*joc.*): Gun, firearm. **2** Erect cross on tombstone. (These cemetery memorials are indeed reminiscent of a crossbow.) **3** 'Prick', 'cock', penis. *Filer un coup d'arbalète*: To have a bang.

arbi *n. m.* (*abbr. arabicot*): Arab, native of North Africa. (This pejorative appellation is equatable with the English 'wog', 'coon'. Also: *bicot*.)

arbif *n. m.* 'Verbal aggro'. *Un méchant coup d'arbif*: A right angry outburst.

arbre *n. m.* **1** Carcass, the human body. **2** *Faire monter* (or *faire grimper*) *quelqu'un à l'arbre*: To 'have someone on', to kid, to hoax.

arcane *n. m.* (*pol.*): 'Tea-leaf', crook, thief.

arcat *n. m.* Elaborate con-trick often perpetrated by means of a letter. *Monter un arcat*: To set someone up.

arche *n. m.* **1** Trick (at cards). *Prendre l'arche*: To take a trick, to win a round. **2** *Aller à l'arche*: To 'collect some lolly', to fetch some money. **3** *Se fendre l'arche*: To be bored to tears.

archer *n. m.* 'Cop', 'copper', policeman.

archevêché *n. m.* (*pol.*) *L'archevêché*: The Marseilles Police Headquarters (because they are situated close to the Cathedral).

archi This superlative intensifier is often compounded with nouns, adjectives or past participles. *Archicon*: 'As thick as they come'. *Un archipaumé*: A real nobody. *Archisaoul*: 'Blotto', blind drunk.

archicube *n. m.* Former student of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* or *Ecole Centrale*.

arcpincer *v. trans.* (also: *arquepincer*): To 'nick', to 'collar', to arrest.

ardoise *n. f.* **1** 'Tick', credit. *Mets ça sur mon ardoise!* Put it on the slate for me, will you! *Poser une ardoise*: To eat in a restaurant without any intention of paying the bill. (The technical term for this act which is a criminal offence in France is *grivèlerie*.) *Liquider une ardoise*: To settle a debt. **2** *Prendre une ardoise*: To use a *pissotière*, to go to a street urinal. (Before vitreous enamel, such public conveniences made extensive use of slate.)

arêtes *nj. pl.* **1** Shoulder blades. **2** Ribs.

areu-areu *n. m.* (Child's language) *Faire areu areu*: To go goo-goo, to gurgle.

argagnasses *n. f. pl.* Menstrual period. *Avoir ses argagnasses*: To have the decorators in.

argasses *n. f. pl.* 'Plates of meat', (large) feet. *Il avait aux argasses la plus mahousse paire de croquenots imaginable*: You should have seen the pair of beetle-crushers he was wearing!

argenté *adj.* *Etre argenté comme une cuiller de bois (iron.)*: To be flat broke (also: *être raide comme un passe-lacet*).

argomuche *n. m.* Slang. *Il jaspine l'argomuche comme un vrai arcane*: He speaks slang as if he'd been a wide-boy all his life.

argoter *v. intrans.* To talk argot, to speak slang.

argougner *v. trans.* (also: *argougnier*): To 'collar', to grab hold of. *Il l'argougna par la cravetouse*: He grabbed him by the tie.

argousin *n. m.* **1** 'Copper', 'cop', policeman. **2** 'Screw', prison-warder. **3** 'Gaffer', foreman.

arguche *adj.* 'Thick', 'dumb', stupid.

arguincer *v. trans.* To 'nick', to 'collar', to arrest.

Argus *Proper name.* *Etre coté à l'Argus (fig.)*: To have made a name for oneself. (*L'Argus*, a motor magazine catering mostly to the trade, gives a year-by-year run-down of second-hand car prices.)

aria *n. m.* Fuss, bother. *Non mais, quel aria!* What a song-and-dance (over nothing)!

aristo *n. m. (abbr. aristocrate)*: Toff', 'nob', upper-class person.

arlequin *n. m.* **1** 'Bubble-and-squeak', warmed-up left-overs. **2** (*pl.*): Left-overs from expensive restaurants sold cheaply to down-and-outs.

arlos *n. m. pl.* 'Seconds', rejects, rejected goods.

arme *n. f.* **1** *Etre sous les armes* (also: *être sous les drapeaux*): To be in the army. **2** *Passer (quelqu'un) par les armes*: To execute someone sentenced by a military court. **3** *Passer l'arme à gauche*: To 'croak', to 'snuff it', to die. *Cette garce de vie ne lui a pas fait de cadeaux et on a tous été soulagés d'apprendre qu'il avait passé l'arme à gauche*: Life hadn't been kind to him and it was with some relief that we heard the news that he had passed away. **4** *Il est parti avec armes et bagages!* He cleared off taking everything with him bar the kitchen sink!

armé *past part.* *Etre armé (joc.)*: To have 'the big stick', to have an erection.

Arménouche *n. m. & f.* Armenian.

armoire *n. f.* *Armoire à glace* (also: *armoire normande*): 'Heavy', powerful-looking individual (the kind that would not worry too much about being built like a wardrobe).

arnac *n. m.* 'Copper', 'cop', policeman.

arnaque *n. f.* **1** Con-trick, swindle. *Monter une arnaque*: To set someone (or several people) up. **2** *Un coup d'arnaque*: An underhand blow, a treacherous action.

arnaquer *v. trans.* **1** To 'con', to 'diddle', to swindle. **2** (Gambling slang): To 'fix' a game, to cheat. **3** To grass on, to betray. **4** To 'bash up', to beat up. *Il l'a drôlement arnaqué*: He bashed him up good and proper. **5** To 'collar', to 'nick', to arrest. *Il s'est fait arnaquer à la sortie du guinche*: He got nabbed as he came out of the dance-hall.

arnaqueur *n. m.* Con-man, swindler.

arnau *n. m.* (also: *amo*) *Etre en arnau*: To be in a foul temper (also: *être en renaud*).

arnoucher *v. trans.* To eye, to ogle, to look at with envy.

Aronde *Proper name.* Family saloon car manufactured by Simca between the early 50s and mid-60s.

arpèges *nj. pl. (pol.)*: 'Dabs', set of finger-prints. (There is a certain jocularity stemming from the straight musical meaning.)

arpenreuse *n. f.* 'Hooker', 'prozzy', prostitute.

arpète *n. f.* (also: *arpette*): Apprentice, errandgirl.

arpinche *n. m.* 'Scrooge', mean character.

arpinche *adj.* Tight-fisted', mean.

arpion *n. m.* *L'arpion*: The slang spoken in the rag-and-bone trade.

arpions *n. m. pl.* 'Plates of meat', 'hoofs', feet.

arquepince *n. f.* *La maison-je-t'arquepince (joc.)*: 'The fuzz', the police.

arquepincer *v. trans.* (also: *arcpincer*): To 'nab', to 'collar', to arrest.

arquer *v. intrans.* **1** To walk. *Il était tellement schlass qu'il n'pouvait plus arquer*: He was so drunk he couldn't walk. **2** To 'get the big stick', to have an erection.

arquain *n. m.* 'Chubb-buster', safe-cracker.

arquince *adj.* (also: *arquiche*): 'Tight-fisted', mean.

arquincer *v. trans.* To 'nab', to 'collar', to arrest.

arraché *n. m.* *Avoir quelque chose à l'arraché*: To get something by an all-out effort. (This expression originates from the language of weight-lifters.)

arracher *v. trans.* **1** *Arracher du chiendent*: To be 'stood up' by a date, to wait in vain at a rendez-vous. **2** *Arracher les côtes* (Racing cyclists' slang): To keep up speed on a gradient.

arracher *v. intrans.* To 'pull away', to accelerate violently. *Il démarra sur les chapeaux de roues, arracha comme un dingue!* He took off like a streak of lightning, pulling away like a madman!

arracher *v. trans. reflex.* To 'go over the wall', to make a break and escape from prison.

arrangemané *adj.* Infected with V.D., suffer ing from venereal disease (also: *poivré*).

arrangemaner *v. trans.* **1** To 'con', to 'diddle', to swindle someone. **2** To 'bash', to beat up, to thrash. **3** To give someone 'clap', to infect with V.D.

arranger *v. trans.* **1** *Arranger quelqu'un*: To get the better of someone either through brute strength, by means of a swindle or ultimately by killing him. **2** (of culinary preparation): To do a 'Cordon Bleu' job, to spend hours in the kitchen (not here the connotation of 'rustling something up'). **3** *Arranger quelque chose aux petits oignons (fig.)*: To take meticulous care over a task (literally to be as conscious of fine detail as with a delicate recipe).

arranger *v. trans. reflex.* **1** To 'settle a score'. *Qu'ils s'arrangent, après tout c'est leur affaire!* Let them sort it out, it's their business, after all! **2** *Ça s'arrangera!* Things will sort themselves out! **3** *S'arranger de*: To have to be content with. *Il faudra que tu l'arranges de ce que j'ai là, je suis vraiment fauché!* You'll have to make do with this money, I'm really broke!

arrêter *v. trans.* **1** *Arrêter les frais*: To give something up as a bad job, to stop wasting one's time. **2** *Arrête ton char, Ben Hur! (joc.)*: Give over!— Stop bragging!

arrière-saison *n. f.* *Sentir l'arrière-saison (joc.)*: To be getting on in years, to feel old age creeping up on one.

arrière-train *n. m.* ‘Bum’, ‘arse’, posterior. *Mon père m’a élevé à coups de pompes dans l’arrière-train:* My dad believed in the old saying ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’.

arrimer *v. trans.* To ‘corner’, to ‘buttonhole’, to grab.

arrivé *n. m.* Self-made man (the kind who is not back ward in telling you he’s made it).

arrivé *past part.* *Croire que* (also: *s’imaginer que*) *c’est arrivé:* **a** To ‘fancy oneself’, to hold oneself in high esteem. *Depuis qu’il a décroché ses galons de caporal, il s’imagine que c’est arrivé:* Since they made him corporal, he thinks he’s it. **b** To be very gullible, to be credulous. *On peut lui vendre n’importe quoi, il croit que c’est arrivé. Il tombe toujours dans le panneau:* You can sell him any thing. He’s so gullible, he’ll always fall for it!

arriver *v. intrans.* **1** *Arriver pile:* To ‘just make it’, to arrive in the nick of time. **2** *Arriver dans un fauteuil* (Horse-racing slang): To come in an easy winner, to win with practically no opposition.

arriviste *n. m. & f.* ‘Go-getter’, ruthless career minded person.

arrondir. *v. trans.* **1** *Arrondir les angles:* To ‘smooth things over’, to be conciliatory. **2** *Arrondir ses fins de mois:* To do a few oddjobs to make ends meet.

arrondir *v. trans. reflex.* *Se l’arrondir:* To ‘go without’, to have to do without. *Si tu t’imagines qu’on va te faire crédit, tu peux toujours te l’arrondir!* If you hope we’re going to lend you money, you’ve got another think coming!

arrosage *n. m. (joc.):* ‘Booze-up’, celebration where a lot of alcohol is consumed.

arroser *v. trans.* **1** To stand drinks on the occasion of a happy event. *On a arrosé ses galons:* We christened his stripes with a few bevies. **2** To strafe, to spray with a burst of automatic fire. **3** To bribe (literally to pour money in someone’s direction).

arrosoir *n. m.* *Se parfumer avec un arrosoir (iron.):* To douse oneself in (usually cheap) perfume.

arsonner *v. trans. (pol):* To ‘frisk’, to do a body search on someone.

arsouille *n. m.* ‘Rogue of a fellow’, caddish character. (Originally a pejorative appellation, it has with time and with the advent of the character *Milord l’Arsouille* got the flavour of ‘lovable rogue’.)

arsouiller *v. trans. reflex.* To frequent the ‘milieu’ (underworld).

Arthur *Proper name.* **1** *Se faire appeler Arthur:* To get told off, to be reprimanded. **2** *Madame Arthur:* Parisian night-club famous for its ‘drag’ clientèle.

artichaut *n. m.* **1** Wallet, purse. (The word is deemed to have a built-in pun in that it keeps *l’artiche au chaud.*) **2** *Avoir un cœur d’artichaut:* To be flighty and flirtatious (the inference here is that the heart of the person concerned is as difficult to reach as that of a globe artichoke).

artiche *n. f.* **1** 'Brass', 'loot', money. **2** Alibi. *Saler l'artiche*: To 'fix', to cook up an alibi. **3** 'Arse', 'bum', behind. *Se faire botter l'artiche*: To get kicked up the jacksey.

article *n. m.* **1** *Faire l'article*: To do some 'hard sell', to plug one's wares tenaciously. **2** *Etre porté sur l'article (joc.)*: To be a randy soand-so, to be highly-sexed. **3** *Etre à l'article de la mort*: To be 'not long for this world', to be at death's door. (In contrast to the standard meaning, colloquial French sometimes gives this expression a less serious connotation.)

artiflo *n. m.* (also: *artiflot*): Artilleryman.

artiller *v. trans. & intrans.* **1** To 'have a bang', to 'have it off', to have intercourse. **2** To 'gun' for high profits, to aim for a high return on one's money.

artillerie *n. f.* **1** (*joc.*): 'Rod', 'shooter', handgun. **2** (Gambling slang): Loaded dice. **3** (*joc.*): 'Cannonball grub', stodgy food. **4** *La grosse artillerie (joc.)*: 'Big ones', large denomination banknotes. *Sortir la grosse artillerie*: To come out with the heavy readies. (A totally different meaning for this expression sometimes encountered is 'to take strong measures' in order to get one's way.)

artis *n. m.* Slang. (The standard usage is *causer artis*.)

artisse *n. m.* Popular mispronunciation of *artiste*.

artiste *n. m.* (*pej.*): 'Geezer', 'bloke', person. *Il me fait suer, cet artiste!* That burk gets on my wick!

artoupan *n. m.* 'Screw', prison-warder.

artous *n. m. pl.* 'Plates of meat', 'hoofs', feet.

as *n. m.* **1** 'Ace', top guy, expert. *Un as de l'aviation*: A crack pilot. *Dans le monde des ordinateurs, c'est un as!* He's the top wallah where computers are concerned! **2** (Waiters' slang): Table number one. (Calls such as '*Une choucroute à l'as!*' answered by '*Ça roule!*' can often be heard in restaurant kitchens in France.) **3** (*pol.*): Alibi. *Il avait un carré d'as*: He'd fixed himself up with four good alibis. **4** *Aller à l'as (fig.)*: To 'come a cropper', to 'come unstuck', to suffer a setback (also: *aller a dame*). **5** *Bouffer à l'as*: To go hungry, to miss a meal, to go without food. **6** *Passer à l'as*: **a** To vanish into thin air, to disappear. *Dès qu'il flaira lafaiiite, il décida de passer à l'as*: As soon as bankruptcy loomed, he did a moonlight. **b** *Passer quelqu'un à l'as*: To by-pass someone in a share-out. **c** *Passer quelque chose à l'as*: To 'pinch', to filch, to spirit something away. **7** *Veiller à l'as*: To 'keep one's eyes peeled', to keep a sharp look-out. **8** *Etre plein aux as*: To be 'rolling in it', to be extremely wealthy. **9** *As de pique*: **a** Nonentity, highly forgettable person. **b** 'Parson's nose' (that part of a fowl indeed looks like an ace of spades upside down). **c** Arse-hole, anal sphincter. **d** *Etre fichu* (also: *foutu*) *comme l'as de pique* (of person): To be dressed like a guy, to be as scruffy as they come. (of job): To be bungled, to be badly executed.

ascenseur *n. m.* *Renvoyer l'ascenseur (joc.)*: To return a favour.

asmoche *n. f.* Absinth. (Although this alcoholic beverage is now illegal, frequent nostalgic references are made to it.)

asperge *n. f.* **1** *Asperge du pauvre*: Leek. **2** *Une grande asperge* (also: *une asperge montée en graine*): ‘Bean-pole’, tall lanky person. **3** Penis. *Aller aux asperges* (of prostitute): To go soliciting.

asphyxier *v. trans.* **1** To ‘flabbergast’, to astonish (literally to take the wind out of someone). **2** To ‘pull the wool over someone’s eyes’, to fool. **3** *Etre asphyxié*: To be ‘pissed’, ‘blotto’, to be drunk.

aspi *n. m.* (abbr. *aspirant*): ‘Middy’, midshipman.

aspic *adj. inv.* Acid-tongued, back-biting, maligning.

aspine *n. f.* ‘Loot’, ‘brass’, money.

aspiquer *v. trans. & intrans.* To indulge in back biting, to go scandal-mongering.

aspiranche *n. m.* ‘Vac’, Hoover, vacuum-cleaner.

Aspirateur Proper name. *L’Aspirateur* (joc.): Nick name given to the *Ministère des Finances*.

aspirateur *n. m.* *Aspirateur à pépées* (joc.): ‘Sexmobile’, flashy sports car used to ‘pull the birds’.

aspirine *n. f.* *Avoir un teint cachet d’aspirine* (also: *être bronzé comme un cachet d’aspirine*; joc.): To have a complexion as if one had crawled out from under a slab, to be very pale-skinned.

assabouir *v. trans.* **1** To knock down, to bowl over. *Si tu mets les pieds ici, tu risques de te faire assabouir!* If you so much as come round here, you’re likely to get thumped! **2** (fig.): To stun, to astound. *Il a été assaboui par la nouvelle*: He was shattered by the news.

assaisonner *v. trans.* **1** To ‘bash up’, to beat up, to thrash. **2** To ‘tear a strip off someone’, to tell off in no uncertain manner. *Un peu que je l’ai assaisonné ton Jules de te ramener si tard!* I certainly told that no-good boyfriend of yours what I thought...bringing a young girl home so late! **3** To give a dose of ‘clap’, to pass on V.D. **4** *Se faire assaisonner*: To get sent down for a long stretch, to cop a heavy sentence.

assassiner *v. trans.* **1** To overcharge, to ask exorbitant prices. *C’est un restau où on se fait drôlement assassiner; cinq étoiles, trois fusils, tu vois le genre!* It’s one of those eating-places where you get taken for a ride, five stars and all that! **2** To bore someone to death.

asseoir *v. trans. reflex.* **1** *S’asseoir sur*: To ‘squash’ someone, to put all one’s weight in silencing someone. **2** *Je m’assieds dessus!* I don’t give a fig! —I couldn’t bloody well care less! **3** *Va t’asseoir!* Go to blazes!—Get knotted!—Go away!

assiette *n. f.* **1** *Je ne suis pas dans mon assiette*: I don’t feel too bright—I don’t feel too good. **2** *Les Assiettes*: The Assizes Court. **2** *L’assiette au beurre*: A cushy job. *Taper l’assiette au beurre*: To ride the gravy train.

assis *past part.* *En rester assis*: To be too stunned to answer.

assommer *v. trans.* To bore. *Quand il raconte ses souvenirs de guerre, il m’assomme*: When he gets going on his war stories, he bores the pants off me.

assommoir *n. m.* **1** ‘Grotty pub’, down-market drinking establishment. (Zola’s novel is probably the originator of this colloquial appellation.) **2** Bore, boring person.

Assottes *n. f. pl.* *Les Assottes*: The Assizes, the Assizes Court.

astap *adj. inv.* (*abbr. à se taper le cul par terre*) *C’est astap!* **a** It’s too ridiculous for words! **b** It’s bloody hilarious! (also: *c’est à faire pipi dans un chapeau de paille troué!*).

astibloc *n. m.* Maggot, larva of the blow-fly.

astic *n. m.* (also: *astique n.f.*): Wax polish. *Passer l’astic*: To polish.

asticot *n. m.* **1** Larva of the blow-fly. **2** (*pej.*): ‘Bloke’, ‘geezer’, fellow. *C’est un drôle d’asticot*: He’s a bit of an odd-ball. **3** *Engraisser les asticots*: To ‘be pushing up daisies’, to be dead. **4** *Avoir un asticot dans la noisette*: To be ‘soft in the head’, to be ‘bonkers’, to be mad.

asticotage *n. m.* **1** Nagging. **2** Teasing.

asticoter *v. trans.* **1** To nag, to pester. *A force de l’asticoter sans cesse, sa femme va le rendre dingue*: With her non-stop bickering, she’ll drive him bonkers. **2** To make fun of, to tease.

asticoter *v. trans. reflex.* To squabble, to quarrel. *Ils s’asticotent à longueur de journée, de vrais chiffonniers!* They’re constantly at each other’s throats.

asting *n. m.* (Algerian *pieds-noirs* slang): ‘Biff’, blow, punch.

astiquer *v. trans.* **1** To ‘bash up’, to beat up, to thrash. *Il la drôlement astiqué!* He gave him one hell of a pasting! **2** To nag, to pester. **3** To tease.

astiquer *v. trans. reflex.* **1** To ‘doll oneself up’, to dress up. **2** To row, to quarrel. **3** To ‘pull one’s wire’, to masturbate.

astre *n. m.* *Etre beau comme un astre (iron.)*: To be incredibly good-looking. (The expression is nearly always uttered within a tongue-in-cheek context.)

astuce *n. f.* Joke, pun, witticism.

Athénien *n. m.* *C’est ici que les Athéniens s’atteignirent! (joc.)*: This is where the crunch comes!—This is the crucial (and funny) bit! (This nonsensical utterance usually occurs within the narration of an interesting or amusing episode.)

atouser *v. trans.* To lead on, to encourage. (This verb originates from the world of card games where the meaning of *atout* is ‘trump’.) *S’il ne m’avait pas atousé, j’aurais pas pu le faire*: If he hadn’t spurred me on, I’d never have done it.

atout *n. m.* **1** ‘Blow’, wound. *Il a reçu un méchant atout sur le crâne*: He got a nasty biff on the head. **2** ‘Guts’, courage. **3** Strength. **4** *Et pan! Atout!* Interjection accompanying a series of well-landed blows. *Et pan! Prends ça! Atout! Atout! Et ratatout!* Take this!...and that! **5** *Avoir tous les atouts dans son jeu*: To be ‘on a winning wicket’, to be in a strong position.

attacher *v. trans.* *Attacher un bidon* (or *attacher une gamelle*): To ‘squeal’ on someone, to ‘give someone away’, to betray someone.

attaque *n. f.* **1** *Etre d'attaque*: To be 'full of beans', full of pep, to be raring to go. **2** *Travailler d'attaque*: To work with enthusiasm. **3** *C'est d'attaque*: It's 'ace', it's A-1, it's very good.

attaquer *v. intrans.* To lead (at cards).

atteler *v. trans & intrans.* (of pimp): To live off women. *Il attelle (à) plus de huit gonzeuses*: He's got over eight girls in his 'stable'.

atteler *v. trans. reflex.* **1** (of couple): To 'shack up', to go and live together. **2** *S'atteler à*: To 'tackle', to set about (a task).

attendri *adj.* 'Tiddly', 'tipsy', slightly drunk.

attention *interj.* *Attention aux épiluchures! (joc. & iron.):* Beware of the consequences!

attifer *v. trans. reflex.* To 'dress like a guy', to take no pride in one's attire.

attigé *adj.* (also: *atigé*): Infected with venereal disease. *Planque aux attigés*: Hospital treating V.D. cases.

attiger *v. trans.* (also: *atiger*): **1** To wound. **2** To overcharge. **3** To 'overdo it', to exaggerate. *N'attige pas la cabane!* Pull the other one! Do you think I'm that stupid?! **4** To infect with venereal disease.

attrapade *n. f.* (also: *attrapage n. m.*): Telling-off, severe scolding.

attrape *n. f.* Trick, practical joke. *Magasin de farces et attrapes*: Joke shop.

attrape-couillons *n. m.* Confidence trick, swindle.

attrape-pognon *n. m.* (Gambling slang): 'Fixed' dice or card game.

attraper *v. trans.* **1** To 'haul over the coals', to 'tear a strip off someone', to reprimand. *Un peu que je me suis fait attraper!* I got a right rollicking from her! **2** To 'cop' a prison sentence, to get a term of imprisonment. *Il en a attrapé pour dix ans*: He got sent down for a ten-year stretch.

attributs *n. m. pl.* 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles (also: *bijoux de famille*).

attrimer *v. trans.* To 'nick', to 'pinch', to steal.

attriquer *v. trans.* To 'fence', to buy stolen goods knowingly.

attriquer *v. trans. reflex.* To 'treat oneself' to something. *On s'est attriqué une bouteille de roteux*: We had ourselves a bottle of champers.

aubier *n. m.* 'Dough', 'lolly', moncy.

auberge *n. m.* *On n'est pas sorti de l'auberge! (joc.):* We're not out of the woods yet!—We're not yet out of trouble!

aubergine *n. f.* **1** 'Conk', 'hooter', bulbous nose (the kind of highly-coloured proboscis heralding the heavy drinker). **2** 'Meter-maid', traffic warden. (Until 1980, their uniform was aubergine-coloured.)

auge *n. f.* (joc.): 'Trough', plate.

Auguste *Proper name.* *Tout juste, Auguste!* (Rhyming catch-phrase): Right-on! You've said it mate!

aumonières *n. f. pl.* 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

aussi *adv.* *Aussi sec*: Quick as a flash, suddenly. *Il m'a giflé et aussi sec je lui ai rendu sa baffe*: He slapped me and no messing I landed one on his mush!

autiche *n. f.* *Faire de l'autiche*: To grumble, to moan, to complain.

auticher *v. trans.* To arouse, to excite sexually.

autobus *n. m.* Part-time prostitute, usually a near-penniless housewife who has to resort to soliciting to make ends meet.

autor *D'author (adv. exp.):* **1** 'Off one's own bat', of one's own accord. **2** *Travailler d'autor et d'achar:* To 'graft' non-stop, to work relentlessly, without letting up.

autre *adj. & pron.* **1** *A d'autres! (iron.):* Pull the other one!—Do you think I'm that stupid? *On ne me le fait pas, mon vieux!... A d'autres!* I don't fall for that one! **2** *L'un dans l'autre:* All things being considered—On average. *L'un dans l'autre, on n'en est pas mal sorti!* It was a case of swings-and-roundabouts, and we came out even! **3** *Etre l'autre:* To be the 'fall-guy', to be the 'mug', to get the worst of the deal. **4** *Comme dit l'autre (joc.):* As the saying goes. (The expression has a jocular connotation because no-one has the faintest idea who *l'autre* is.) **5** *En avoir vu d'autres (iron.):* **a** To have been through worse, to feel undeterred by what one is currently experiencing. **b** (Usually of object): To have 'seen better days', to have considerably deteriorated.

Auverpin *n. m.* Native of the Auvergne.

avachi *adj.* (of person): 'Run-to-seed', fat and flabby.

avachir *v. pronom.* **1** To 'plonk oneself' down any-old-how on a piece of furniture (literally to slump in a position reminiscent of a recumbent cow). **2** To lapse into a 'couldn't-care-less' state of mind. **3** To 'go to seed', to let oneself become fat and flabby.

avaler *v. trans.* **1** *Avaler son extrait de naissance (joc.):* To 'croak', to 'snuff it', to die (also: *avaler sa chique/le goujon/sa fourchette*). **2** *Avaler une histoire:* To 'fall for something hook, line and sinker', to show oneself to be over-gullible in believing a rather unlikely tale. **3** *Avaler la consigne:* To forget to carry out one's orders. (Some sources suggest that this omission might be intentional.) **4** *Avaler des coulevres:* To 'swallow one's pride', to have to take abuse in silence. **5** *Avoir avalé le pépin:* To be 'in the pudding club', to be 'preggers', to be pregnant.

avaloir *n. m.* Gullet, throat. *S'arroser l'avaloir:* To 'wet one's whistle', to have a drink (also: *se rincer la gargane*).

avance *n. f.* *Avoir de l'avance à l'allumage* (of person): To be slightly 'off one's rocker', to be slightly mad.

avantage *n. m.* *Faire un avantage:* **a** To do someone a good turn, a favour. **b** (*joc. & iron.*): To give someone orgasmic pleasure.

avantages *n. m. pl.* Tits', 'boobs', breasts.

avant-scène *n. f.* *Il y a du monde à l'avant-scène (joc.):* She's got a smashing pair of knockers— She's got big breasts (also: *Il y a du monde au balcon*).

avarié *adj. (joc.):* 'Clapped', infected with venereal disease.

avaro *n. m.* **1** 'Snag', 'hitch', setback. **2** Run of bad luck.

avec *prep. & adv.* **1** *Il y a des pommes de terre avec:* You get spuds with it. (The colloquiality stems from the absence of the complement.) **2** (*iron.*): *Et avec ça! Un petit coup sur le manche, faut-il vous l'envelopper?* You want jam on it, don't you?!—What more do you want?! (The expression is said to have

originated in its non-ironic form in butchers' shops where a client purchasing a leg of lamb is being treated with old-fashioned business courtesy.)

aveuglette *n. f.* *Agir à l'aveuglette*: To go about one's business in a hit-or-miss fashion.

aveux *n. m. pl.* *Passer à la chambre des aveux spontanés (iron.)*: To be 'put through the third degree', to be given a 'grilling', to undergo forceful police interrogation.

avirons *n. m. pl.* *Les avirons (joc.)*: A knife and fork set. *Lâcher les avirons*: To lay down the shovellers.

avis *n. m.* *M'est avis que*: 'Methinks' (if you ask me my opinion, I think that...).

aviser *v. trans.* To 'have a butcher's at', a look at. *Avise un peu cette nana!* Take a dekko at this bird!

avocat *n. m.* **1** (Gambling slang): Card player who carries on for a tired friend at the tables. **2** *Faire l'avocat*: To assist someone in a cardtrick routine. **3** *L'avocat bâcheur*: The public prosecutor (in a trial).

avoine *n. f.* **1** 'Grub', 'eats', food. *Prendre son avoine*: To sit down and tuck into a meal. **2** *Avoine de curé (joc.)*: Pepper. (The humour stems from the assumption that the only spice in life a priest is likely to enjoy is dispensed in the form of a condiment.) **3** *Filer (also: refiler) une avoine à quelqu'un*: To 'bash up', to beat up (literally to give someone the kind of thrashing that separates corn from the sheaf).

avoiner *v. intrans.* (of car): To 'belt along', to go at a fair pace. *On a drôlement avoiné sur l'auto-route!* We were going flat-out on the motorway!

avoir *v. trans.* **1** To 'take in', to fool. *Eh bien, vous m'avez drôlement eu!* You've certainly put one across me! **2** To 'beat hollow', to dismiss through victory. **3** To 'screw', to 'have it off' with someone. **4** To 'reach' someone, to make contact with someone. *J'ai pas pu l'avoir au bigophone*: I couldn't reach him on the blower. **5** *En avoir*: To be 'gutsy', plucky, to be brave. (En can refer either to *courage* or *couilles* according to the colloquial emphasis within the expression.) **6** *En avoir jusque-là*: To be 'fed up to the back teeth', to be sick and tired of someone or something. *J'en ai jusque-là de ces histoires à la con!* I've just about had it up to here with these pointless arguments! **7** *En avoir contre quelqu'un*: To bear someone a grudge. **8** *Avoir quelqu'un aux sentiments*: To get what one wants by playing on someone's feelings. **9** *J'en ai pour deux jours!* It'll keep me busy for two days!

azimut *n. m.* **1** *Dans tous les azimuts*: 'Left, right and centre', in all directions. **2** *Il y a de la schtoumoune dans l'azimut* (also: *Il y a de l'entour-loupe dans l'azimut*): 'There's aggro brewing'—I can sense trouble ahead.

azimuté *adj.* 'Bonkers', 'nuts', mad.

azor *n. m.* **1** 'Rod', 'shooter', handgun. **2** *Appeler Azor (joc.)*: To whistle for someone, to call for someone's attention with little tact. (Azor, like *Médor*, is the archetypal name for dogs in children's stories and twee novels, and is equatable with 'Fido'. The expression *Pas de ça, Azor!* is the nearest witty equivalent to 'Not tonight, Josephine!')

B

B.A. *n. f.* (abbr. *bonne action*) *Faire sa B.A. (joc. & iron.):* To do one's daily good deed. (The expression originates from the language of Scouting; in colloquial speech, the good deed can have a variety of tongue-in-cheek meanings.)

B.A.—ba *n. m.* *C'est le B.A.-ba de la réussite dans les affaires:* It's the ABC of success in business.

baba *n. m.* **1** 'Pussy', 'fanny', vagina. **2** Arsehole, anal sphincter. **3** *L'avoir dans le baba:* To 'have been had', 'diddled', to have been conned.

baba *adj. inv.* 'Bowled over', 'flabbergasted', speechless. *J'en suis resté baba!* I just couldn't say a word! (The image here is of one who is *bouche bée*.)

babafier *v. trans. (joc.):* To 'bowl over', to 'flab bergast', to dumbfound.

babanquer *v. intrans.* To 'whoop it up', to lead a fast and furious life (also: *bambocher*).

babillard *n. m.* **1** 'Mouthpiece', solicitor. **2** 'Rag', 'sheet', newspaper.

babillarde *n. f.* Letter, item of correspondence. *Il nefait que lui pondre des babillardes!* He just never seems to stop writing to her! (also: *babille*).

babin *n. m.* 'Gob', 'trap', mouth.

babines *n. f. pl.* (also: *babouines*): 'Chops', lips. *C'était un gâteau fantastique à s'en poulécher les babines!* It was a right mouth-watering cake! *Se caler les babines* (also: *s'en mettre plein les babines*): To 'stuff one's face', to eat a lot.

babiole *n. f.* **1** 'Knick-knack', thing of little value. **2** Small ailment, minor (health) disorder. (Expressions such as *avoir une babiole au cœur* relate to a serious health disorder where the gravity of the ailment is being played down.)

babyfoot *n. m.* (also: *baby-foot*): Miniature football (the kind of bar game where two or four players operate a number of handles controlling wooden swivelling football players. The standard expression is *faire un babyfoot*).

bac *n. m.* **1** (abbr. *baccalauréat*): The exam of that name. *Il n'a jamais passé son bac:* He never did get his A-levels. **2** (abbr. *baccarat*): Casino card-game of that name.

baccara *n. m.* Spot of bad luck, misfortune. *Etre en plein baccara:* To have a really bad run.

bacchantes *n. f. pl.* 'Tash', whiskers, moustache. (The type referred to here is the long, drooping moustache. The stage production *Ah, les belles bacchantes!* has kept this dated word in the public eye.)

bâche *n. f.* 1 Bed-sheet. *Se mettre dans les bâches*: To 'hit the sack', to go to bed. 2 'Pancake', flat cap.

bâcher *v. trans. reflex.* To 'hit the sack', to go to bed (literally to get between the sheets).

bâcheur *n. m.* Keeper/proprietor of a low-class hotel.

bâcheuse *n. f.* Landlady, keeper of a lodging house.

bachot *n. m. (abbr. baccalauréat)*: The exam of that name. *Une boîte à bachot (sch.)*: A 'crammer's', a 'cramming shop' (the kind of establishment where backward pupils get some 'force-fed' education).

bachotage *n. m. (sch.)*: Cramming for the *baccalauréat* or (by extension) for any important exam.

bachoter *v. intrans. (sch.)*: To cram, to prepare oneself for an examination (originally the *baccalauréat*).

bachoteur *n. m. (sch.)*: 'Swot', pupil who through need or inclination does a lot of cramming.

bâcler *v. trans.* To 'botch', to skimp, to make a hash of something through haste.

bacon *n. m.* Pig meat, pork.

bacreuse *n. f.* 'Bin', 'poke', pocket.

bada *n. m.* 1 Man's hat. (A woman's hat is known as a *bibi*.) 2 *Porter le bada: a* To be suspected of being a police informer. **b** To be made the scapegoat. 3 *Porter le bada de...* To have a reputation for... (The expression is hardly ever used with a favourable connotation.)

badaboum *n. m.* 1 'Free-for-all', 'rough-house', brawl. 2 Scandal (the kind that one is unable to hush).

badaf *n. m. (mil. abbr. Bataillon d'Afrique)*: The *badafs* were a disciplinary unit stationed in North Africa, and a *badaf* is a soldier who has served in that regiment (also: *Bat'd'Af*).

bader *v. intrans.* To 'throw up', to puke, to vomit.

baderne *n. f.* 1 *Une vieille bademe*: A fuddy-duddy, a silly old fool. 2 *Etre baderne-baderne*: To do everything 'by the book', to have a military-type approach to quite day-to-day matters.

badigeon *n. m.* 1 (*joc.*): 'Warpaint', make-up. *Elle avait un sacré coup de badigeon sur la frime!* She seemed to have been made-up care of Polyfilla! 2 *Donner un coup de badigeon (fig.)*: To do a whitewash job on an embarrassing event.

badigeonner *v. pronom.* *S'en badigeonner*: 'Not to give a fuck', to not care a damn about something (also: *s'en tamponner*).

badigeonneur *n. m. (pej.)*: 'Dauber', untalented painter.

badigoinces *n. f. pl.* 'Smackers', lips. *Activer des badigoinces*: To 'stuff one's face', to eat im moderately.

badour *adj. m.* Good-looking, handsome.

baffe *n. f.* **1** Blow, slap in the face. *Il a chopé une mechante baffe*: He got a right slap across the kisser. **2** ‘Tash’, moustache.

baffer *v. trans.* To slap someone across the face.

baffi *n. f.* ‘Tash’, moustache.

baffles *n. f. pl.* ‘Lugs’, ‘lug-holes’, ears. *Il était là, baffles et tout*: He was there with his ears flapping.

bafouille *n. f.* Letter, item of correspondence. *Torcher une bafouille*: To dash off a few hasty lines. *Bafouille de chiotte*: Poison-pen letter.

bâfre *n. f. (abbr. bâfrerie)*: ‘Good nosh’, slap-up meal. (The word has low-brow connotations in that it suggests the kind of meal where one makes a pig of oneself.)

bâfrer *v. intrans. (pej.)*: To eat greedily and in a messy manner. (Expressions such as ‘to eat like a pig’ or ‘to wolf one’s food’ are not strictly accurate equivalents on their own.)

bâfrer *v. trans. reflex. (pej.)*: To ‘stuff one’s face’, to consume vast quantities of food. (The image that comes to mind here is of near-indecent gluttony.)

bagaf *n. m.* ‘Rod’, ‘shooter’, handgun.

bagage *n. m.* **1** *Plier bagage*: To ‘pop one’s clogs’, to ‘snuff it’, to die. **2** *Avoir un sacré bagage*: To have what it takes ‘up top’, to be brainy. **3** *Trimbalier des bagages*: To have ‘bags under one’s eyes’, to look worn out through lack of sleep.

bagarrer *v. trans. reflex.* *Se bagarrer avec*: **a** To have a punch-up, to exchange blows with someone. **b** To have a ‘barney’ with, to row with someone.

bagarreur *n. m.* **1** Brawler, one who doesn’t like to miss out on a good punch-up. **2** ‘Neversay-die’ character, one who fights every inch of the way to get what he wants.

bagatelle *n. f.* **1** *Etre porté sur la bagatelle*: To be a randy so-and-so, to have more than a passing interest in sex. (The expression can refer equally to men and women.) **2** *Les bagatelles de l’antichambre*: ‘Heavy petting’, sexual foreplay.

bagnard *n. m.* *De la graine de bagnard*: ‘Prison fodder’, young person likely to end up in jail.

bagnole *n. f.* ‘Wheels’, car, motorcar. (Excepting a gently ironic context, the vehicle in question is more likely to be a ‘banger’ than something fresh out of a showroom.)

bagof *n. m.* ‘Rod’, ‘shooter’, handgun.

bagos *n. m. pl. (also: bagots; corr. abbr. bagages)*: ‘Traps’, bags, luggage.

bagoter *v. intrans.* **1** To ‘loaf’, to ‘loll about’, to loiter with no intent. **2** (*pol.*): To ‘pound the beat’, to police an area. **3** To ‘put one’s skates on’, to move niftily. *Il a dû drôlement bagoter pour ne pas manquer son bus*: He had to get cracking to catch the bus.

bagou *n. m. (also: bagout)* *Avoir du bagou*: To have the gift of the gab, to have a glib tongue.

bagouler *v. intrans.* To ‘natter away’, to ‘jabber away’, to talk endlessly. *Elle bagoulait, mon vieux, impossible d’en placer une!* Crikey, she did go on. I couldn’t get a word in edgeways!

bagouse *n. f.* **1** (Jewellery): Ring. **2** Arse-hole, anal sphincter. *Prendre de la bagouse*: To engage in sodomy. **3** *L’avoir dans la bagouse*: To have been ‘conned’, ‘diddled’, to have been fooled. **4** *Avoir de la bagouse*: To be a ‘jammy bugger’, to be a lucky so-and-so. (References to sodomous intercourse are often equated in modern colloquial French with good fortune.)

baguenaude *n. f.* ‘Bin’, ‘poke’, pocket.

baguenauder *v. pronom.* To ‘loaf about’, to wander aimlessly.

baguer *v. trans. reflex.* *Se baguer le naeud* (of man): To ‘have a screw’, to ‘have it off’, to have intercourse.

baguette *n. f.* **1** French loaf (the crusty long bread, the pride of all *boulangeries*). **2** (*pl.*): ‘Pins’, ‘gambs’, legs. *Avoir des baguettes style fauteuil Louis XV*: To be bow-legged. (To understand the image, one must picture a chair of that period.) *Mettre les baguettes*: To ‘scarper’, to ‘skedaddle’, to go away in haste. **3** ‘Prick’, ‘cock’, penis. *Filer un coup de baguette*: To ‘have a bang’, to ‘screw’, to have coition with.

bahut *n. m.* **1** One’s place of work. (Like the bulky item of furniture the word originally refers to, the faceless employer’s large premises lack charisma. *Dans quelle sorte de bahut est-ce que tu bosses?* And where do you earn your crust?) **2** (*sch.*) *Mon bahut*: My lycée, my school. **3** ‘Motor’, motor car. *Il s’est payé un lampadaire avec son bahut*: He pranged his car on a lamppost. **4** ‘Cab’, taxi. (The current expression for to flag down a taxi is *fréter un bahut*.)

bahuter *v. trans.* **1** (*sch.*): To ‘rag’, to tease (also: *chahuter*). **2** To turn a place into a shambles by acting rough.

bahuter *v. trans. reflex.* To ‘pull one’s wire’, to wank, to masturbate.

baigner *v. intrans.* *Ça baigne dans l’huile*: Things are running smoothly.

baigneur *n. m.* **1** Bum, bottom, posterior. (Expressions such as *mettre la main au baigneur* are sexist and reveal the strong sexual connotation of the word.) **2** *L’avoir dans le baigneur (fig.)*: To have been ‘conned’, ‘diddled’, to have been duped.

baignoire *n. f.* **1** Small theatre box at the back of the stalls. (Tristan Bernard, the famous humorist and crossword addict, gave this definition to the word *entracte*: ‘*Vide les baignoires et remplit les lavabos*’.) **2** Form of torture by immersion of the head in water.

bail *n. m.* *Ça fait un mechant bail qu’on s’est pas vus!* It’s a hell of a long time since we met! (also: *Ça fait une paye qu’on s’est pas vus*).

baille *n. f.* **1** Water, any expanse of water (sea, river, etc.). *Ils l’ont filé a la baille*: They tossed him in the soup. **2** Rain. *Il nous est tombé une de ces bailles!* It poured buckets! **3** Water, drinking water. *Etre de corvée de baille*: To be on water-fatigue. **4** (*pej.*): ‘Crate’, ‘tub’, aged sea-going vessel.

bain *n. m.* **1** *Etre dans le bain*: **a** To ‘know the ropes’, to be ‘in the know’, to be well-informed about the workings of something. *Maintenant que t’es dans le*

bain, j'te laisse te débrouiller! Now you know what's what, I'll let you get on with it! **b** To be implicated, to be involved in something unpleasant. *Une sale histoire...Il est vraiment dans le bain!* That's a nasty piece of work and he's up to his neck in it! (The expression *mettre quelqu'un dans le bain* can either mean to 'show someone the ropes' or to land someone in trouble—the latter is the more common.) **2** *Envoyer quelqu'un au bain:* To 'send someone packing', to send someone away in a summary manner. **3** *Bain de pieds:* 'Slops', saucerful of spilt tea or coffee. **4** *Le Grand Bain (pol.):* The Central Criminal Archives in Paris.

baïonnette *n. f.* 'Prong', 'prick', penis. *Filer un coup de baïonnette:* To 'have a bang', to have intercourse.

baise-en-ville *n. m. (joc.):* Small overnight bag. (In spite of its obvious vulgarity, the word is steadily drifting into everyday parlance.)

baiser *v. trans.* **1** To fuck, to 'screw', to have coition with. **2** To 'con', to deceive. *Il m'a drôlement baisé avec son histoire à dormir debout!* I was really taken in by his cock-and-bull story! **3** To 'nick', to 'pinch', to steal. *Elle lui a baisé son crapaud:* She lifted his wallet. **4** To 'nick', to 'collar', to arrest. *Il s'est fait baiser à la douane:* He got nabbed at the Customs.

baisette *n. f.* 'Prick', 'cock', penis.

baiseur *n. m.* 'Randy so-and-so', highly-sexed man. (The feminine *baiseuse* in our sexist society refers to an 'easy-lay', a loose woman.)

baiseuses *n. f. pl.* 'Smackers', lips.

baisodrome *n. m. (joc.):* Any location where sexual intercourse is likely to take place frequently.

baisouiller *v. intrans. (iron.):* To make love in a rather unsatisfactory manner. (The connotation here is of the kind of intercourse that leaves one of the partners totally dissatisfied.)

baisse-froc *n. m.* 'Funk', 'yellow-belly', coward.

bakshich *n. m.* **1** 'Backhander', bribe. *Il a toujours eu sa petite caisse à bakshich pour le tirer d'affaire:* He's always had the possibility of dipping into the old slush-fund kitty to steer clear of trouble. **2** (Waiters' slang): 'Tip', gratuity.

bal *n. m.* **1** 'Clink', 'nick', prison. *Etre au bal:* To be doing porridge. **2** *Etre de bal (mil.):* To be in the punishment squad and marching round and round the barrack square. **3** *Donner le bal à quelqu'un:* To 'give someone a dressing-down', to tell someone off in no uncertain manner. **4** *Le bal des 4 z'arts:* Rowdy art students' dance held annually in Paris.

balade *n. f.* **1** Ramble, stroll. **2** 'Spin', short drive in a motor car. **3** *La balade* (Underworld slang): 'The short ride to nowhere' (that ultimate car trip in gangland from which there is no return). **4** *Etre en balade:* a To be on the run from prison. b To be 'high' (through drugs or alcohol abuse). c To be 'out of one's mind', to be in a demented state.

balader *v. trans.* **1** To 'traipse around' with someone, to reluctantly accompany someone (sightseeing, house-hunting, etc.). **2** (of sick person): To go round very obviously ill. *Il balade une méchante grippe:* He's sporting one hell of a cold! **3**

Envoyer balader quelqu'un: To 'tell someone where to get off', to 'send someone packing', to tell someone off in no uncertain manner. *Quand je lui ai demandé du fric, il m'a envoyé balader*: When I asked him for a loan, he told me to get knotted. **4** *Envoyer balader quelque chose*: To 'chuck something away'. *Il a pris un coup de sang et a tout envoyé balader*: In a fit of anger he turfed the lot out.

balader *v. trans. reflex.* To go for a stroll.

baladeuse *adj.* *Avoir les pognes baladeuses*: To be 'all hands', to have a tendency to let one's hands wander lecherously.

baladeuse *n. f.* Mains-powered inspection lamp used by mechanics to examine the underside of cars.

balai *n. m.* **1** Last bus or train to run before the nightly closedown. **2** 'Meat-wagon', hearse. **3** *Voiture balai* (Racing cyclists' slang): Ambulance whose job it is to pick up the stragglers too exhausted to finish the race. **4** *Donner un coup de balai (fig.)*: To have a good clear-out. **5** *Du balai!* Hop it!—Get lost!—Go away! **6** *Rôtir le balai*: To lead a fast and furious life. **7** *Con comme un balai*: 'Daft as a brush', silly and stupid.

balaise *n. m.* 'Heavy', muscleman, muscular and stocky figure of a man. (The kind of person who naturally finds work as a bouncer or bodyguard.)

balaise *adj.* **1** (of person): Hefty, muscular. **2** (of object): 'Ginormous', very large. *Elle nous sert toujours des portions balaises!* When she serves us, we get real heaped platefuls!

Balajo *Proper name.* *Le Balajo* (corr. *le Bal-à-Jo*): This famous Paris dance-hall took its name from its original owner.

balançage *n. m.* (Underworld slang): 'Squealing', 'ratting', denunciation (by former accomplice turned informer).

balance *n. f.* 'Sacking', dismissal. *Il est bon pour la balance!* He's just about ready for the push!

balancé *adj.* **1** *Etre bien balancé*: **a** (of man): To be well-built and handsome. **b** (of woman): To be shapely and attractive. **2** *Une vanne bien balancée*: A crisp and witty riposte.

balancement *n. m.* Conviction, prison sentence.

balancer *v. trans.* **1** To 'chuck out', to throw away. *Il y a belle lurette qu'il a balancé ses journaux pornos*: He got rid of his dirty mags ages ago. **2** To 'fire', to 'give the sack', to dismiss. **3** To 'shop', to 'grass' (on someone), to denounce. **4** *Balancer un parpaing* (also: *balancer un coup*): To strike a heavy blow. **5** To answer, to reply. *Et moi aussi sec, je lui ai balancé cette vacherie pour lui clouer le bec!* I didn't let him get away with his nasty crack, and quick as a flash I gave him as good as I'd got. **6** To jilt. *Balancer sa largue*: To jilt one's mistress. **7** *Balancer une bafouille*: To send a letter. **8** *Balancer un pet*: To fart, to break wind. **9** *Balancer ses châsses* (also: *balancer les châssis*): To be on the look-out, to glance briefly left and right. **10** *Balancer le chiffon rouge*: To 'natter', to talk on and on.

balancer *v. pronom.* *S'en balancer*: Not to give a damn, to not care 'two hoots' about some thing, to be totally indifferent to events.

balanceur *n. m.* 'Snitch', 'grass', informer.

balancier *n. m.* 'Fin', arm. (Unlike *brandillon* which is nearly always encountered in the plural, *balancier*, because of its standard French meaning of pendulum, is nearly always in the singular.)

balançoire *n. f.* **1** (*pl.*) *Des balançoires*: 'Poppycock', 'balderdash', nonsense-talk. *Moi, je ne coupe pas dans toutes ces balançoires!* I'm not falling for all those cock-and-bull stories. **2** *Balançoire à Mickey*: 'Jam-rag', sanitary towel.

balandrin *n. m.* 'Bundle', small item of baggage.

balanstiquer *v. trans.* **1** To 'chuck out', to throw away. **2** To 'fire', to 'give the sack', to dismiss. **3** To 'shop', to 'grass' (on someone), to denounce.

balayer *v. trans.* To 'turf someone out of a job', to sack someone.

balayette *n. f.* **1** 'Cock', penis. (Unlike most appellations that refer to the erect organ, *balayette*, in keeping with the standard French meaning, evokes the image of the organ at rest.) **2** *Une moustache en balayette de chiottes* (*pej.*): A small, bristly 'Hitler-type' moustache.

balcon *n. m.* **1** *Il y a du monde au balcon!* (Sexist remark): What a pair of knockers!—What big breasts! **2** *Les cocus au balcon!*: This humorous jeer is often heard at student marches and its immediate effect is to get the *bons bourgeois* at their windows.

baleine *n. f.* **1** 'Big fat biddy', corpulent woman. **2** *Se tordre* (also: *rigoler*) *comme une baleine*: To 'laugh oneself silly', to double up with laughter. **3** *Gueuler comme une baleine*: To 'kick up a fuss', to voice disapproval vociferously.

balèze *n. m.* 'Heavy', muscleman, muscular and stocky figure of a man. (The kind of person who naturally finds work as a bouncer or bodyguard.)

balèze *adj.* **1** (of person): Hefty, muscular. **2** (of object): 'Ginormous', very large.

ballade *n. f.* **1** 'Bin', 'poke', pocket. *Faire les ballades à quelqu'un*: To 'frisk', to go through someone's pockets.

balle *n. f.* **1** 'Dial', face. (Like *bille* and unlike *gueule*, the word has no pejorative connotation whatsoever. *Fais-lui confiance, il a une bonne balle!* Go on! You can trust him, he's got a kind face!) **2** Monetary unit of French francs. (The word is never used in relation to amounts less than 10 francs, irrespective of the 1958 remonetization.) **3** Bargain, good buy. **4** *Le trou de balle*: The arse-hole, the anus, the anal sphincter. **5** *Un vieux trou de balle*: An old 'fuddy-duddy'. (Unlike *un trou du cul*, which is downright pejorative, this appellation has gentle jocularly.) **6** *Raide comme balle* (*adv. exp.*): Quick as a flash, straight away. **7** *C'est ma balle!* That's my business! **8** *Ça fait ma balle!* That suits me down to a T!—That's fine by me!

baller *v. intrans.* *Envoyer baller quelqu'un*: To 'send someone packing', to 'send someone away with a flea in their ear', to dismiss someone in no uncertain manner.

ballets *n. m. pl.* **1** *Ballets roses*: Sexual orgy involving under-age girls. **2** *Ballets bleus*: Sexual orgy involving under-age boys. (*L'affaire des ballets roses*—a famous scandal involving high-ranking politicians and business people got its name through the fact that one of the participants was involved in show-business; the media coined this expression in 1959.)

ballochards *n. m. pl.* 'Tits', 'boobs', breasts.

balloches *n. f. pl.* 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

ballon *n. m.* **1** 'Bum', buttocks, behind. *Enlever le ballon à quelqu'un*: To kick someone up the backside. **2** Belly, stomach. *Se bourrer le ballon*: To 'stuff one's face', to eat vast amounts of food. **3** (*pl.*): 'Titties', 'boobs', breasts. *Elle a une gentille petite paire de ballons*: She's got a pert set of knockers. **4** Balloon-glass (the kind used for wine in cafés throughout France. The request for *un ballon de rouge* is almost a cliché). **5** *Faire du ballon*: To 'do porridge', to serve a term of imprisonment. **6** *Ballon d'essai* (*fig.*): 'Feeler', cautious inquisitive remark. **7** *Avoir le ballon*: To 'have a bun in the oven', to be 'preggers', to be pregnant. **8** *Faire ballon*: To miss out on something and suffer disappointment.

ballot *n. m.* 'Nincompoop', fool. (The word has no real pejorative connotation; in fact, it is often uttered as in *bougre de ballot!* You silly boy! with jocular affection. *Mais oui, jet'aime, gros ballot!* Of course I love you, you silly-billy!)

balloté *adj.* *Bien balloté*: **a** (of man): Handsome and well-built. **b** (of woman): Shapely and attractive.

ballustrines *n. f. pl.* 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

balmuche *n. m.* *Balmuche!* Fuck-all!—Not a sausage!—Nothing! (also: *balpeau!*).

balocher *v. intrans.* To 'mooch about and do bugger-all', to wander about in an aimless and idle manner.

baloches *nj. pl.* **1** 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles. **2** *En avoir dans les baloches*: To be 'spunky', 'gutsy', to be full of courage.

balocheur *n. m.* 'Slack-arse', 'slacker', idle person.

balourd *adj.* Phoney, fake, false.

balourds *n. m. pl.* **1** Fake I.D.s, forged identity papers. (The expression *marcher sous des balourds*: to go around with false documents, is the most common.) **2** Counterfeit money. *Taper des balourds*: To print falsies.

balpeau *n. m.* (also: *ballepeau*): **1** *Balpeau!* Fuck-all!—Not a sausage!—Nothing! *J'ai cru qu'il allait me donner un pourboire, mais balpeau!* I thought he was going to give me a tip, but I didn't get a bean! **2** *Faire balpeau*: To 'miss out on something' and suffer disappointment. (*Balpeau* is a corrupt *verlen ofpeau de balle*.)

balthasar *n. m.* (also: *balthazar*): **1** 'Blow-out', slap-up meal. **2** Large bottle of champagne equivalent to sixteen standard ones.

baltringue *n. m.* 'Useless git', inefficient person.

baltringue *adj.* Useless, hopeless, inefficient.

baluchard *n. m.* 'Twit', 'nurk', imbecile (also: *baluche*).

baluchon *n. m.* 'Bundle', small item of baggage. *Faire son baluchon*: To pack one's gear, to pack up one's belongings.

baluchonner *v. trans.* To 'nick', to 'filch', to steal items of little value.

baluchonneur *n. m.* **1** Small-time crook. **2** (Prison slang): Friend of incarcerated person who takes him provisions.

balustrades *n. f. pl.* *Envoyer quelqu'un dans les balustrades*: To squeeze someone out, to force someone out of business. (Originally this cycling expression from the heyday of six-day racing literally meant to send another competitor into the side railings and deprive him of a chance of winning.)

bambochade *n. f.* 'Night out on the tiles', drinking spree (also: *bamboche*).

bambochard *n. m.* One who likes to 'whoop it up', reveller.

bamboche *n. f.* 'Night out on the tiles', drinking spree. *La bamboche, il ne connaît que ça!* His idea of fun is to paint the town red!

bambocher *v. intrans.* To 'whoop it up', to 'have a night out on the tiles', to go on a spree.

bambocheur *n. m.* One who likes to 'whoop it up', reveller.

bambou *n. m.* **1** Leg. *Mettre les bambous* (also: *mettre les bouts*): To 'beat it', to run away. **2** *Prendre un coup de bambou*: a To get sunstroke. b To 'go off one's rocker', to go suddenly mad. **3** *Avoir le coup de bambou*: To be 'knackered', to be very tired. **4** *Tirer sur le bambou*: To smoke opium.

bamboula *n. m.* 'Darkie', coloured person. (Definitely a racist appellation, it is sometimes uttered without animosity in a 'good old Bwana' patronising spirit.)

bamboula *n. f.* 'Slap-up do', party where a lot of food and drink is consumed.

bambouter *v. trans.* **1** To shatter someone's peace of mind by breaking some bad news to him. **2** To 'give someone the cold shoulder', to deliberately avoid someone. **3** (*sch.*): To give someone a poor grade.

ban *n. m.* Rhythmical round of applause. (Whereas in Great Britain slow hand-clapping indicates audience dissatisfaction, in France it denotes acclaim. *Fermez le ban!* That's enough praise!)

banal *adj.* *Ça, c'est pas banal! (iron.)*: That's a turn-up for the book!—This is quite extraordinary!

banane *n. f.* **1** Override on motor car bumper. **2** 'Gong', medal, decoration. **3** *Peau de banane (fig.)*: Booby-trap, intentionally-laid difficulty aimed at delaying someone's progress.

banc *n. m.* *Etre sur le banc*: To be a down-and-out, to be a vagrant. (*Sur le banc* is the title of a French film with Raymond Souplex and Jeanne Sourza which humorously depicts the colourful life of tramps in Paris.)

banco *n. m.* **1** *Banco!* You're on!—O.K., that's fine by me! '*Tu veux faire une virée en bagnole?!*' '*Banco!*' 'You want to go for a spin in the car?!' 'Count me in!' **2** Till, cash register. *Faire le banco*: To nick the takings.

bandaïson *n. f.* Erection. *Avoir une mechante bandaïson*: To have 'the big stick'. (The word has built-in witticism in relation to *pendaïson*.)

bandant *adj.* **1** Titillating, sexually exciting. **2** 'Side-splitting', hilarious. *C'est un truc vraiment pas bandant!* It's what I'd call a pain in the arse!

bandatif *adj.* Titillating, sexually exciting (also: *bandatoire*).

bande *n. f.* *Par la bande*: In a roundabout way, indirectly. *Et comme ça, par la bande, je lui ai demandé où ce qu'elle habitait*: And without seeming to be nosey, I asked her where she lived.

bander *v. intrans.* **1** To 'get the big stick', to have an erection. **2** (*fig.*): To be thrilled to bits, to be very happy. *Il bandait méchant à l'idée de partir en vacances*: He was drooling at the thought of going on holiday. *Ça ne me fait pas bander tout ce boulot!* I'm not too keen on all that extra work!

bander *v. trans.* *Bander la caisse*: To 'do a bunk' with the takings, to disappear with the money.

bandeur *n. m.* Randy so-and-so, man whose main preoccupation is sex.

bandocheur *n. m.* 'Funk', 'yellow-belly', coward.

bannes *n. f. pl.* Bedsheets. *Se glisser dans les bannes*: To 'hit the sack', to go to bed.

bannette *n. f.* **1** 'Pinny', apron. **2** Bed. *Faire bannette*: To 'kip down', to go to bed.

bannière *n. f.* **1** *Etre en bannière*: To be in one's shirt-tails. **2** *C'est la croix et la bannière!* It's a drag!—It's ever so awkward! *C'est la croix et la bannière pour le faire se lever le matin!* Getting him up for work is one hell of a task!

banquer *v. intrans.* **1** To 'cough up', to pay up. *J'en ai marre, c'est toujours moi qui banque!* It's always muggins who foots the bill! **2** *Avoir banqué* (*fig.*): To have settled one's debt to society (through a prison sentence).

banquette *n. f.* Jaw, chin. *Il a pris un gnon sur la banquette*: He got smacked in the kisser.

banquettes *n. f. pl.* *Jouer les banquettes* (*th.*): To play to an empty house.

baptême *n. m.* (*joc.*): 'Rousting', 'rollicking', beating-up.

baptiser *v. trans.* **1** To water down spirits. (The implication here is that, as with a christening, water is a prime ingredient.) **2** *Avoir été baptisé avec une queue de morue* (*joc.*): To be overfond of one's tippie, to have a strong liking for alcoholic beverage.

Baptiste *Proper name.* *Tranquille comme Baptiste*: **a** Cool as a cucumber. **b** Quiet as a mouse.

baquer *v. trans. reflex.* To have a good soak, to take a bath.

baquet *n. m.* Belly, stomach. *Il nous en a filé plein le baquet!* We fair stuffed our faces with his good grub!

barabille *n. f.* *Mettre la barabille*: To 'stir it', to deliberately cause trouble.

baragouin *n. m.* 'Gabble', gibberish, incompre hensible talk.

baragouiner *v. intrans.* To gabble, to talk what sounds like incomprehensible gibberish.

baraka *n. f.* *Avoir la baraka*: To have the luck of the devil, to be incredibly lucky.

baraque *n. f.* **1** 'Dump', 'crummy house', hovel. **2** Firm, business. *Moi, je travaille plus pour cette baraque, j'en ai ma claque!* I'm not working for this lousy outfit any more, I'm sick up to here with it! **3** (*pl.*): 'Bollocks', 'balls', testicles.

4 Losing throw at *passee anglaise*. **5** *Faire baraque*: To fail. *Il s'est lancé dans la limonade, mais comme dans tout ce qu'il tâtait il a fait baraque!* He tried his luck running a pub, but as with all his ventures he made a cock-up of it! **6** *Casser la baraque* (*th.*): To 'bring the house down', to be a roaring success.

baraqué *adj.* *Etre bien baraqué*: To be well-built, to be very muscular.

baratin *n. m.* **1** 'Patter', smooth talking. *Arrêtez votre baratin, j'attends mon ami!* Stop chatting me up, I'm waiting for my boy-friend! **2** Sales talk. (The 1950s film *Le Baratin* with Roger Nicolas as an enthusiastic *camelot* increased this word's popularity.)

baratiner *v. trans.* **1** To 'chat someone up', to 'sweet-talk' someone. **2** To 'shoot a line', to persuade someone through glib talking (i.e. sales patter).

baratineur *n. m.* **1** 'Smooth-talker', one who is good at chatting up the birds. **2** 'Glib-talker', persuasive person.

barbant *adj.* Boring. *Ce qu'il est barbant, ce mec!* That bloke would bore the pants off anyone! *C'est barbant de vivre à la campagne!* Life in the country's pretty monotonous! (also: *rasant*).

barbaque *n. f.* (*pej.*): **1** Cheap cut of meat. **2** *De la barbaque*: Low-class prostitutes (literally in the language of the slave-trader 'meat for sale').

barbe *n. m.* Pimp, ponce, procurer.

barbe *n. f.* **1** *Barbe alors!* Damn!—Blast! **2** *C'est la barbe!* What a bore!—It's a pain in the neck! *C'est la barbe, mais il faut que je rentre!* It's a drag, but I have to go home! **3** *Vieille barbe*: Old 'fuddy-duddy', old fogey. **4** *Rire dans sa barbe*: To laugh up one's sleeve. **5** *Faire une barbe à quelqu'un*: To 'take someone for a ride', to fool someone. **6** *Barbe à papa*: Candy-floss.

barbe *adj. inv.* (of person, event or situation): Dreary, boring.

barbeau *n. m.* Pimp, ponce, procurer.

barbelouses *n. f. pl.* (also: *barbelouzes*): Barbed wire.

barber *v. trans.* To 'bore the pants off someone'. (It is interesting to note that an exact equivalent to *barber* is *raser*. See *rasant*.)

barberot *n. m.* Barber, gents' hairdresser (also: *merlan*).

barbichette *n. f.* 'Goatee', small pointed beard. (This word occurs in a child's rhyme and game where two children hold each other's chin and say: '*Je te tiens, tu me tiens par la barbichette; le premier qui rira aura une tapette!*'))

barbillon *n. m.* (*pej.*): Young pimp.

barbiquet *n. m.* (*pej.*): Small-time pimp.

barbischnock *n. m.* (*joc.*): 'Fungus-face', bearded person.

Barbiturique *Proper name.* *Le Barbiturique* is a famous café situated near the School of Pharmacy in Paris. (There is a double dose of humour in the name. See *biture*.)

barbote *n. f.* **1** Body search to which arrested persons or convicts are subjected prior to incarceration. **2** (Underworld slang): Compulsory medical check to which prostitutes have to submit regularly.

barboter *v. intrans.* To be in a muddle, to be confused. *Après que sa bonne femme ait eu mis les bouts, il barbotait en plein cafard:* After his missus left him he was so depressed and muddled he didn't know which way to turn.

barboter *v. trans.* To 'nick', to 'pinch', to steal. *Il s'est fait barboter sa toquante:* He got his watch nicked.

barboteur *n. m.* 1 Pilferer, petty thief. 2 Kleptomaniac.

barbotin *n. m.* Loot, booty, proceeds from robbery.

barbouille *n. f.* 1 (*Slightly pej.*): 'Daubing', Sunday painting. 2 *Etre dans la barbouille:* To be 'in a pickle', to be 'bunkered', to be in a difficult situation.

barbouillé *n. m.* 'Greenhorn', young inexperienced person.

barbouillé *adj.* *Se sentir barbouillé* (also: *avoir le cœur/l'estomac barbouillé*): To feel 'queasy', to feel sick. *Après la nouba d'hier soir, c'est pas étonnant si tu te sens barbouillé!* If you're feeling off-colour today, look no further than last night's binge!

barbouiller *v. trans. reflex.* 1 To put make-up on. 2 *Se barbouiller l'estomac:* To upset one's stomach. 3 *Je m'en barbouille!* I couldn't give a damn!—I couldn't care less!

barbouilleur *n. m.* 'Dauber', painter with little talent. (This derogatory appellation was and is often directed at gifted yet misunderstood artists.)

barbouse *n. f.* (also: *barbouze*): 1 'Face-fungus', beard. 2 Secret agent. (The 1960s film *Les barbouses* with Lino Ventura firmly established this word in colloquial speech.)

barbu *n. m.* 1 *Le Barbu:* God Almighty, God the Father. 2 King (in pack of cards). *Avec son carré de barbus en main, il pouvait se permettre de rigoler:* With four kings in his hand, he could well afford to laugh.

barca *interj.* (also: *barka*): Lay off!—Cut it out! Stop it!

barda *n. m.* 1 (*mil.*): Kit, pack. 2 Personal belongings. *Je l'ai mis à la porte avec tout son barda:* I kicked him out with all his clobber. 3 Banknote of small denomination.

bardane *n. f.* Bedbug. *Pas moyen de dormir, toute la nuit y a eu un congrès de bardanes sous les draps!* I didn't get a wink of sleep all night; the bedbugs were holding a rally!

barder *v. intrans.* *Ça va barder!* Things are going to get hot!—There's trouble brewing! (This expression was made popular in the early 50s as the title of a film starring Eddie Constantine.) *Ça va barder pour toi!* You're going to cop it!

barguigner *v. intrans.* To 'haggle', to bargain. *Ils ont casqué sans barguigner:* They coughed up without quibbling.

barjo *n. m.* 'Mug', 'sucker', fool. *Quel barjo, on pourrait lui faire chercher la clef des champs!* What a burk, you could ask him to fill in the cannon report and he'd try!

barlu *n. m.* 1 'Tub', steamer, steamship. 2 'Gang-bang', collective rape.

barnum *n. m.* 1 *Montrer tout son barnum:* To 'flash', to indecently expose oneself. 2 *Quel barnum!* What a cock-up!—What a shambles!

baron *n. m.* Street-hawker's associate whose enthusiastic 'buying' sets the ball rolling.

baronner *v. intrans.* (Hawkers' slang): To get the suckers buying, to act as a baron. (See that word.)

baroud *n. m.* 1 'Scrap', brawl, fight. 2 Hostilities in warfare. 3 *Un baroud d'honneur*: A facesaving last stand. (Meanings of the expression can range from the strictly literal to the figurative where no violent actions are involved.)

barouder *v. intrans.* 1 To go soldiering, to be full-time in the army. 2 To 'scrap', to fight.

barouf *n. m.* 'Hullabaloo', uproar. *Faire un barouf du diable*: To make one hell of a din.

barque *n. f.* *Mener quelqu'un en barque (fig.)*: To 'lead someone up the garden path', to deliberately deceive someone (also: *mener quelqu'un en bateau*).

barquette *n. f.* Sponge cream-cake with a short-crust base.

barrabille *n. f.* Brawl, disturbance. *Mettre la barrabille*: To cause a shindy.

barraqué *adj.* *Etre bien barraqué* (of man): To be hefty, well-built, to be very muscular. (The English 'to be built like a brick shit-house' is derogatory, the French expression is not.)

barre *n. f.* 1 *Avoir le coup de barre*: To be 'knackered', 'whacked', to feel worn out. *Quand on est de nuit, il n'est pas rare d'avoir le coup de barre vers quatre heures du mat*: When you're on nights, it's not unusual to feel all-in at around 4 a.m. 2 *A toute barre*: At full-pelt, at breakneck speed (also: *A toutes pompes*). 3 *Homme de barre*: Staunch friend. (One who, like the helmsman, can be relied upon to stick by you through thick and thin.) 4 *Zéro la barre!* No dice!—Nothing doing!—Certainly not!

barreau *n. m.* 1 *Barreau de chaise*: Fat cigar. 2 *Mener une vie de barreau de chaise*: To live it up, to lead a fast and furious life.

barrer *v. pronom.* To 'bugger off', to 'buzz off', to go away (usually in haste). *Il faut que je me barre!* I'll have to be off!

barreur *n. m.* 'Chucker-outer', bouncer.

Bar-Tabac *n. m.* *Fier comme Bar-Tabac (joc.)*: As cocky as hell, bursting with pride. (This is a jocular corruption of the 'Fier comme Artaban' saying; another witty version is 'Fier comme un petit banc'.)

bas *adj.* 1 *Les bas morceaux (iron.)*: The 'privates', the private parts. 2 *Etre bas du cul (joc.)*: To be a 'short-arse', to be exceptionally small in stature.

basane *n. f.* 1 'Hide', (human) skin. 2 'Birthday suit', 'the altogether', total nakedness. 3 *Tailler une basane*: To make an obscene gesture. (Where the English have a two-finger sign of derision, the French manage with one.)

bascule *n. f.* 1 Squealer, informant. 2 *La bascule à Charlot*: The guillotine (also: *L'abbaye de Monte-à-regret*).

basculer *v. trans.* *Basculer un godet*: To 'wet one's whistle', to have a quick drink.

basduc *n. m. (abbr. bas-du-cul)*: 'Short-arse', 'shrimp', pint-size person.