
Valette, Jean-Paul and Rebecca M. Valette.

À votre tour.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007. ISBN: 0-618-69315-7.

À votre tour is an intermediate college-level French text and has the following objectives: to “build and reinforce active communication skills; develop reading skills and cultural awareness; build a strong linguistic base; and stimulate students’ interest in French language and culture so that they will want to continue their study beyond the intermediate level.” Also included are a student activities manual and a Video/DVD program. In addition, the authors have incorporated three feature-length films into the text in a section titled *Interludes culturels*. They are *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Rue Cases-nègres*, and *Au revoir les enfants* and provide students with authentic French, as well as local color. The actual films are not included with the program, though, and must be purchased separately.

Each chapter is structured in the same way. There is a unit-opener followed by an Info Magazine which expands on the general theme of the unit with short readings. Next comes the grammar or linguistic functions section; it is followed by another Info Magazine and a second grammar section. The chapter ends with a reading, generally a short story or excerpt followed by some cultural information.

For those who have used a Valette text before, *À votre tour* will seem eerily familiar. Having used *Discovering French* for 6 years myself, I had a hard time overcoming the feeling of *déjà vu*. The drawings, colors, and general layout mimic those of the *DF* series. They are somewhat childish in appearance, with a lot of cartoon-like drawings and illustrations. Often the grammar lesson is presented in a colored box in columns or rows. Although middle and high school students might like this format, I wonder if college students would not be put off by this text and not take it seriously.

The activities are also similar to what one finds in the *Discovering French* series. There are little conversation starter boxes that set up a scene for students to act out and pattern drills where elements of a sentence are given to students, who then have to put them together. There is not a great variety of activities, nor are the activities that are included very challenging, even in the later chapters. All directions are given in French, as one would expect at this level, and are easy to follow.

The readings and cultural information are nicely presented. The photos of art works and historical information are well presented at an appropriate level of difficulty for intermediate students. Later chapters present important cultural fig-

ures. Also, Francophone authors and cultural information are nicely presented. The aforementioned films are presented with a fair amount of background information and could be covered whether or not you use them in class.

I have the same problems with this Valette text that I had with the other Valette text I have used. It is very simplistic, and the activities do not require much thinking or creativity on the part of students. Although the information is nicely presented, this text leaves a lot to be desired in terms of challenging practice activities. The pattern drills are a component of learning a language, I suppose, but I would really like to see the authors take them one step further and give students more opportunities to speak spontaneously, using what they have learned. With this text, students will generally learn to produce idiomatic expressions and respond to questions according to a certain pattern, but have little opportunity to use French in creative ways. Teachers who adopt this text will have to create their own supplemental activities. The cultural and literary information is nicely organized and well chosen, but I still hesitate to recommend *À votre tour*.

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