

# 1

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE NOVEL?

What is your favorite novel? Describe it and say why it is your favorite.

### 1. Key words

<b>a novel (by) / a novelist</b>	un roman (de) / un romancier
<b>Russian / English literature</b>	la littérature russe / anglaise
<b>fiction / non-fiction</b>	le romanesque / non romanesque
<b>a book (about / which deals with)</b>	un livre (qui parle de)
<b>to recount / to narrate / a narration</b>	raconter / un récit
<b>to keep engaged / entertained</b>	occuper l'attention / distraire
<b>a love story / a romance</b>	un roman d'amour
<b>a psychological novel</b>	un roman d'analyse
<b>a swashbuckling historical romance</b>	un roman de cape et d'épée
<b>fantasy / science fiction</b>	le fantastique / la science fiction
<b>crime fiction / a thriller</b>	la littérature policière / un roman à suspense
<b>a mystery / a crime story / a whodunnit</b>	un roman policier
<b>a fairy tale / a literary classic</b>	un conte de fées / un classique
<b>an airport novel</b>	un roman de gare
<b>an author / the style</b>	un auteur / le style
<b>reading / a reader</b>	la lecture / un lecteur
<b>the narrative / the plot / a twist</b>	le récit / l'intrigue / un rebondissement
<b>a (main) character / a hero</b>	un personnage principal / un protagoniste
<b>to be set (during) / the setting</b>	se dérouler (en) / le décor
<b>a backdrop</b>	une toile de fond
<b>a historical event</b>	un événement historique
<b>a page turner / entertaining</b>	un livre captivant / distrayant
<b>that you can't put down</b>	qu'on lit d'une traite
<b>to hold sb spellbound</b>	tenir qn en haleine
<b>to hold in thrall / enthralled (by)</b>	passionner / captivé (par)
<b>to shed light (on) / food for thought</b>	éclairer / matière à réflexion
<b>to appeal (to sb) / appealing</b>	plaire (à qn) / attirant
<b>to draw in / to lure / alluring</b>	attirer / séduisant
<b>to change one's life</b>	changer sa vie
<b>to connect (with)</b>	associer / parler (à)
<b>to be hooked (on)</b>	être mordu (de)
<b>to catch sb's attention (on)</b>	attirer l'attention de qn (sur)

## 2. Possible answers

**1.** I read at least one novel a week, so it's hard to nail down my favorite ever. But the book that started it all out for me, the book that made me realize the boundless possibilities offered by reading was the one my mother brought me from the library when I was stuck in bed with German measles (I was in 8th grade) and bored to tears. It was Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, a novel that tells the story of Holden Caulfield, a run-away teenager trying to find a meaning to life. More generally, it defines the angst of growing up according to one's own rules in the face of bland cultural norms. In this tale of individual alienation in a heartless world, the author taps into the emotions of readers while capturing the atmosphere of New York in an original way. I will never forget its impact, and how it opened the door for a lifetime of reading for pleasure.

**2.** My favorite book ever is John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. I enjoyed reading the book for three reasons. First, it is a good story well told, that of the Joads, a poor family of sharecroppers, forced to leave Oklahoma following their eviction from their farm by agribusiness and banking interests. One epic scene pits a tractor driver who has come to destroy the shack the Joads have lived in all their lives and the helpless, hapless family watching the little house being wrenched from its foundations. The Joads set out west for California following Route 66, seeking jobs, land, dignity, a future and hoping to find their Promised Land. Second, the novel has a historical backdrop, the America of the 1930s, the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. In that regard, it speaks volumes about the hardscrabble life farmers had to endure way back then. Three, the author's uncommon social and political views give the lie to enduring American myths and shed light on a different, cruel and suffering people. Reading the novel changed the way I viewed the society of plenty in the roaring 1920s, as depicted in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, for example.

**3.** *Under the Volcano*, a semi-autobiographical novel by Malcolm Lowry is top of my list of favorite books. It narrates the story of the slow descent into mescal-soaked purgatory of Geoffrey Firmin, a British consul in Mexico, who hankers after the lost love of his life. More than an insightful story into the human psyche, or just a love story, it is a mythical journey into self-destructiveness which reflects a spiritual struggle born of abnegation and passivity. It is also a depressed, existential acknowledgement to the futility of positive action written in a highly symbolic and allusive way, reflecting the complexity of man's soul. Clearly, it is a novel that needs reading and rereading to be fully grasped and understood.

## 2

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DAY OF THE YEAR?

What is your favorite day of the year? Give details and use reasons to support your answer.

### 1. Key words

<b>a day to remember</b>	un jour mémorable
<b>a red-letter day</b>	un jour à marquer d'une pierre blanche
<b>to celebrate / a celebration</b>	fêter / une fête
<b>to observe a holiday</b>	respecter un jour férié
<b>to relish a day</b>	apprécier une journée
<b>to look forward (to)</b>	se réjouir d'avance (de)
<b>to make a present</b>	faire un cadeau
<b>to unwrap presents</b>	déballer les cadeaux
<b>to get together (with)</b>	se réunir (avec / en compagnie de)
<b>to take stock (of)</b>	faire l'inventaire (de)
<b>to celebrate a birthday</b>	fêter un anniversaire
<b>a birthday party</b>	une fête d'anniversaire
<b>an anniversary</b>	un anniversaire (événement commémoratif)
<b>a wedding anniversary</b>	un anniversaire de mariage
<b>a fireworks display</b>	un feu d'artifice
<b>Christmas Day / Eve</b>	le jour de Noël / la veille de Noël
<b>to go to the Midnight Mass</b>	aller à la Messe de Minuit
<b>New Year's Day</b>	le Nouvel An
<b>(the) Chinese New Year / Spring Festival</b>	le Nouvel An chinois
<b>Halloween</b>	Halloween
<b>All Saints' Day</b>	la Toussaint
<b>Mardi Gras</b>	Mardi Gras
<b>a carnival</b>	un carnaval
<b>Independence Day</b>	la Fête nationale
<b>Bastille Day</b>	le 14 juillet
<b>(Saint) Valentine's Day</b>	la Saint-Valentin
<b>Passover / Easter</b>	la Pâques juive / chrétienne
<b>Mother's Day / Father's Day</b>	la Fête des Mères / des Pères
<b>the first day of summer vacation</b>	le premier jour des grandes vacances
<b>to get off from school</b>	finir l'année scolaire
<b>to get engaged / married</b>	se fiancer / se marier

## 2. Possible answers

**1.** My favorite day of the year is the last day of the year, December 31. This is due to many reasons. On a personal level, December 31 is full of hope and promise for the year ahead. It heralds a new dawn, a new era, so to speak. Like many people, I love to make resolutions to improve myself in the coming year. On that day, everything seems possible. Socially, it is a time when people get together to rejoice and party. In Paris, we count the seconds until midnight and then watch the fireworks display. Professionally, as I have my own firm, December 31 enables me to take stock of my business. It forces me to make better plans for the next year. Of course there are plenty of other meaningful days for me, but on Dec 31, I feel optimistic, confident and grateful.

**2.** Chinese New Year (or Spring Festival), a traditional festival, is my favorite day of the year for several reasons. First, as it marks the end of the winter season it is a symbol of renewal. Second, it is a day when Chinese families gather together for their annual reunion dinner or supper. On the menu you can have fish, duck, chicken and sweet delicacies. The family usually end the night with firecrackers. Early the next morning, children greet their parents by wishing them a healthy and happy new year, and receive money in red paper envelopes. It is also traditional for families to thoroughly clean the house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for good incoming luck. Some people even give their homes a new coat of red paint. Windows and doors are decorated with red color paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness", "wealth", and "long life". And finally, the Chinese New Year tradition is to reconcile, forget grudges and sincerely wish peace and happiness for everyone. I love that day because it is a symbol of renewal, goodwill and peace for all.

**3.** My favorite day of the year is Valentine's Day. It falls on February 14. This day is traditionally associated with romantic love, going back to a tradition in the High Middle Ages. Today, it is a day on which lovers express their love for each other. They send greeting cards (called valentines), present flowers or offer confectionery to their beloved ones. It is a special day for me for three reasons. It was the day when I declared my love to my sweetheart whom I had invited to a posh restaurant. Second, it was the day when, one year later I proposed to her (and she accepted). I presented her with a diamond ring at the end of dinner and I remember vividly how happy she was with the present. And finally, it was on that same day that we got married the following year. Ever since, we have celebrated that day which has three particular meanings for us, from a declaration of love to a pledge to never be apart.

### 3

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY?

Describe your favorite hobby, and explain why you enjoy it. Give details and reasons to justify your answer.

### 1. Key words

<b>a hobby / a pastime</b>	un hobby / un passe-temps
<b>to have a hobby / a pastime</b>	avoir un passe-temps
<b>to enjoy / to follow / to pursue a hobby</b>	cultiver un passe-temps
<b>to indulge in a hobby</b>	se livrer à un passe-temps
<b>to start / to take up a hobby</b>	se mettre à un passe-temps
<b>to develop / to take an interest (for)</b>	s'intéresser (à)
<b>to pursue an interest (for)</b>	se consacrer (à)
<b>to have a liking (for)</b>	aimer bien
<b>to ride one's hobby-horse</b>	s'adonner à son dada
<b>to spend one's time (+ ING)</b>	passer son temps (à)
<b>to be interested (in)</b>	être intéressé (par)
<b>to relax / to unwind</b>	se détendre
<b>photography / gardening</b>	la photographie / le jardinage
<b>to take photos / pictures</b>	prendre des photos
<b>to collect / a collection</b>	collectionner / une collection
<b>to start / to build a collection</b>	commencer / monter une collection
<b>stamps / marbles / butterflies</b>	des timbres / billes / papillons
<b>to collect baseball cards</b>	collectionner les cartes de baseball
<b>a board game / a parlor game</b>	un jeu de société
<b>a computer game</b>	un jeu d'ordinateur
<b>to play chess / draughts</b>	jouer aux échecs / dames
<b>a crossword puzzle</b>	les mots-croisés
<b>arrowwords / pointers / tipwords</b>	les mots fléchés
<b>to play cards</b>	jouer aux cartes
<b>to practice sport</b>	faire du sport
<b>paragliding / hang gliding</b>	le parapente / le deltaplane
<b>to fuel self-confidence</b>	renforcer la confiance en soi
<b>to take one's mind off (problems)</b>	arrêter de penser à (des problèmes)
<b>to reduce / to relieve stress</b>	réduire le stress
<b>to expand one's network of friends</b>	élargir son réseau d'amis
<b>a sense of achievement</b>	un sentiment d'accomplissement

## 2. Possible answers

**1.** One of my favorite hobbies is photography. I have two digital cameras: one small pocket-sized camera that I carry around with me, and one bigger, more expensive camera that I use on special occasions. I take photos, mostly portraits but also landscapes, so that I have a record of the things I've seen or done. A camera is a sort of diary which enables me to keep track of the places I have been to, the people I have met and the countries I have visited. So, a camera is like a second memory to me. Most of my photos are of friends and family, but I also take pictures of interesting buildings, street scenes or landscapes that I see. Also, taking pictures allows me to express my creativity. Sharing them with people is an added benefit to a wonderful art.

**2.** I enjoy painting because it's a creative hobby. Painting outdoors makes you notice the world around you. I love being out in the open air and capturing special moments, unusual or beautiful scenes. It is a great feeling to be able to look back through my paintings and revisit the countries or places I have been to, the people I have loved, those who have deceased. Yet, painting people is another type of activity. It requires concentration and focus while the model sits still, but allows me to reveal a person's character through the brushstrokes. I share this passion with other people too. Every once in a while, we exhibit our works at a local gallery, which is still another way of meeting new faces.

**3.** One of my preferred hobbies is gardening. I have a small plot in the backyard, which I look after. There are several reasons why I enjoy gardening: first, because it is relaxing and it brings me peace of mind. I love the beauty and serenity offered by a garden. But gardening also enables me to express my creativity: I can grow any fruits, flowers or vegetables I like and lay out my garden any way I want. Above all, gardening reflects the person I am, meticulous, caring but also full of imagination while living close to nature.

**4.** My favorite hobby is paragliding. When I go up in the mountains or trudge up a sand dune in search of a soaring spot, I feel I am another woman. Paragliding is a sure way of escaping everyday life to experience freedom. What I enjoy most is not so much the rush of adrenaline before launching and leaving the ground but the sensation of feeling like a bird while free-flying up in the air. Paragliding also requires discipline: by skillfully exploiting the sources of lift to control the wing, I can gain height. Thus I often climb up to a few thousand meters and let the winds carry me off while I gaze at the surrounding countryside.

What is your favorite movie? Describe it and say why it is your favorite.

### 1. Key words

**a film (UK) / a movie (US)**

**American / British cinema**

**to go to the movies / a film**

**to watch a movie**

**a masterpiece**

**a film director / maker**

**the cast / a cast list**

**an all-star / star-studded cast**

**an actor / an actress**

**the leading role / title role**

**a plot / a plot twist**

**a blockbuster / a flop**

**a full-length film / a feature**

**a biopic / a western film**

**a cartoon / a comedy**

**a period movie**

**a classic movie**

**a gangster / detective film**

**a thriller**

**gripping / compelling**

**to feature (in)**

**to act / the acting**

**to play in a film / to be in a film**

**to capture the mood of the times**

**to contain / to include scenes (of)**

**to depict / to present / to show**

**to tell the story (of) / to chronicle**

**a historical background**

**to be set (in)**

**to feature / to star**

**special effects**

**a stunt / a stuntman**

un film

le cinéma américain / britannique

aller au cinéma / voir un film

regarder un film

un chef d'œuvre

un metteur en scène

la distribution / la liste des rôles

une distribution de rêve

un acteur / une actrice

le premier rôle / rôle titre

une intrigue / un rebondissement

une superproduction / un navet

un long métrage

un film biographique / un western

un dessin animé / une comédie

un film historique

un classique du cinéma

un film policier

un film à suspense

prenant / fascinant

figurer dans, jouer (dans)

jouer / le jeu

jouer dans un film

rendre l'esprit d'une époque

comporter (des scènes de)

montrer

raconter l'histoire (de)

une toile de fond historique

se dérouler (dans / à)

avoir pour vedette

les effets spéciaux

une cascade / un cascadeur

## 2. Possible answers

**1.** *Gone with the Wind* is by all means one of my all-time favorite classics. It tells the story of a star-crossed lover, Scarlett O'Hara, the spoiled daughter of a well-to-do plantation owner, who falls for Rhett Butler, a man who has a reputation as a rogue. It is adapted from Margaret Mitchell's eponymous novel. It is my favorite movie for several reasons. First, because it deals with a momentous period of history, the Civil War, that tore America apart in the 1860s. By recreating the world of a cotton plantation, Tara, in Georgia, we understand the atmosphere prevailing at that time from a southern point of view, and the havoc the war wreaked on the Old South during the war and Reconstruction. Second, it is also a romantic tale, a love story, or rather the story of unrequited love between Scarlett and Rhett. And finally, the actors' outstanding performances make it a compelling film to watch. That is why *Gone with the Wind* is my favorite.

**2.** I love the novelty and creativity of American cinema. That is why I was dazzled by *Avatar*, a film that is a cross between myth and reality but encompasses many of the standards of American history. It is a 2009 American epic science fiction movie written and directed by James Cameron. First, the science fiction: *Avatar* is set in the mid-22nd century, when humans are mining a precious mineral called unobtainium on Pandora, a lush habitable moon of a gas giant in the Alpha Centauri star system. Second, the film director uses modern techniques to seamlessly translate actor performances into computer-generated characters. The technology isn't about replacing or marginalizing actors. It's about allowing actors to be as creative as they want to be. Finally, the film recreates an entirely new language, the Na'vi language, which is quite an achievement. For all its creativity and originality, *Avatar* is my favorite movie.

**3.** My all-time favorite movie is *The Godfather*. It is a 1972 epic crime film directed by Francis Ford Coppola. There are two sequels. First, it has a compelling plot. The story, spanning the years 1945 to 1955, chronicles the experiences of the Italian-American Corleone family. Second, the film has a dazzling cast of characters, among whom Marlon Brando and Al Pacino. Also, it is more than just another movie about the Mafia and gangsters: you don't normally think of the mob as being "family" men, but there is a huge emphasis on family (wives, kids, siblings, parents). And finally, the story slowly builds with each scene adding more and more layers until the final climax. That's why I think *The Godfather* is so unique.