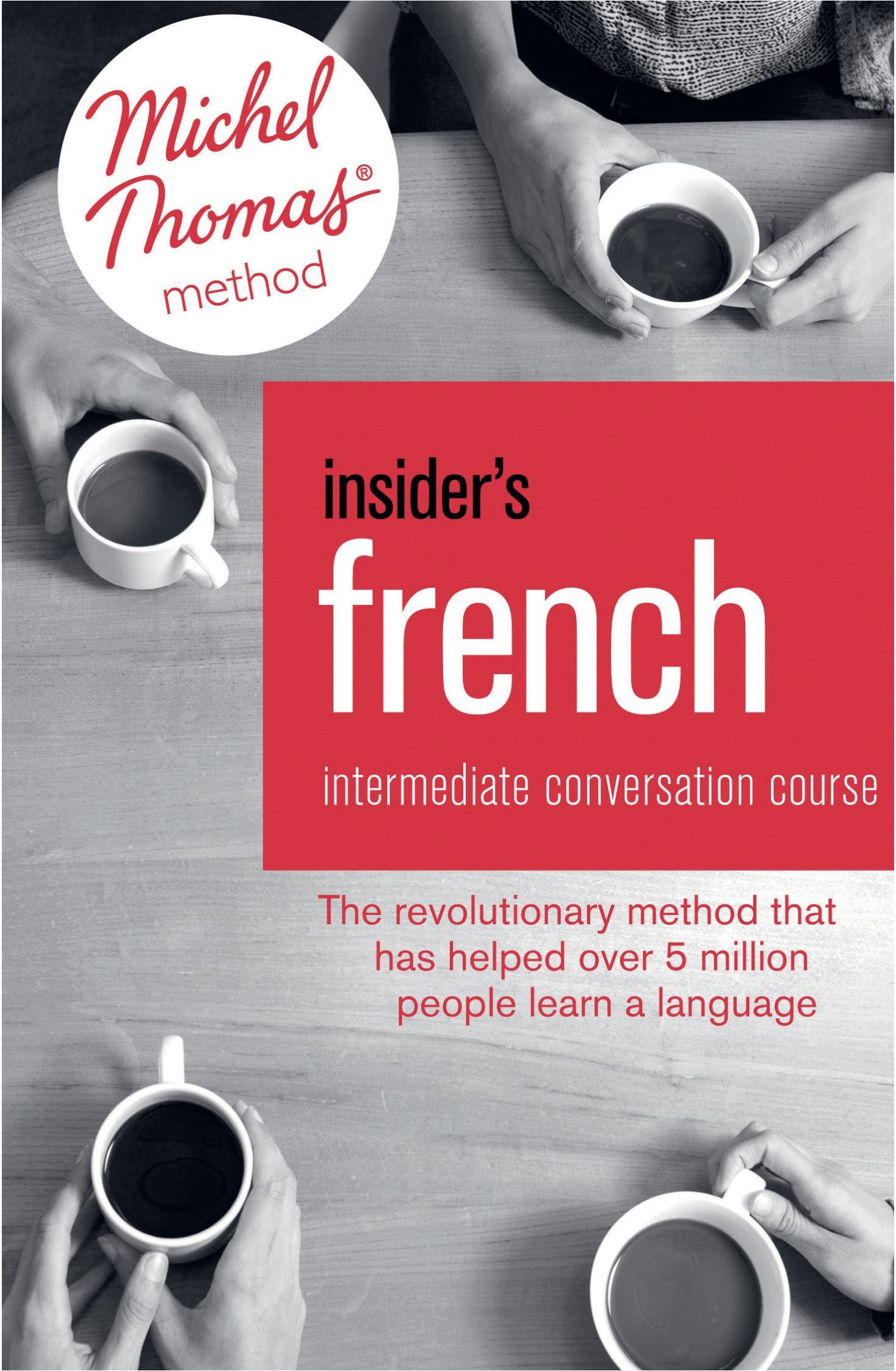
Michel Thomas® method
insider's
french
intermediate conversation course
The revolutionary method that has helped over 5 million people learn a language

To Tahnee, who has been more than a muse

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Introduction

Welcome to *Insider's French: Intermediate Conversation Course with the Michel Thomas Method*. This conversation course is designed to offer you, the intermediate learner, an opportunity to advance your fluency, listening comprehension and conversation skills, expand your vocabulary (words and expressions) and improve your grammar. It is based around authentic conversations that provide examples of French and a view of the culture of the people who speak it. By the end of the course you will be able to communicate more naturally by employing **conversation strategies** used by native speakers, and to discuss current topics with confidence and **fluency**.

With this course you'll acquire insider knowledge about the culture and the native use of the language. You will gain cultural insight through the conversation topics and opinions of the speakers, as well as through what the teacher adds. With the conversation strategies, you will learn ways of managing and **maintaining** conversations naturally and appropriately. By using expressions to 'show your interest', 'change a topic', etc. you will sound polite and feel more confident when having conversations.

Course summary

- Intermediate-level audio conversation course with an emphasis on conversation strategies, fluency and insider knowledge
- Michel Thomas's 'second phase', following on from his *Foundation, Intermediate and Language Builder* courses, incorporating listening and conversation
- Appropriate for all learners at an intermediate level, not just those who have completed the Michel Thomas courses
- Real, inherently interesting conversations between friends that give an insider's view of a 'hot topic'
- The author's voice guides you through the language and the target culture, also offering an Insider's view. This includes not only teaching the language but also guiding you through the appropriate use of language in the cultural context, helping you avoid embarrassment and misunderstanding
- New, more colloquial vocabulary
- Useful intermediate-level conversation strategies to help learners sound more natural and fluent, as well as polite and appropriate
- 'Language plus': listen in on a Michel Thomas Method lesson with teacher and students covering language structures
- 'Sounds of the language' section, with models provided by native speakers, including individual sounds, fluency and intonation
- Over 6 hours of recorded material

***Please note there are no track numbers on the app course, but you can use the headings in the phrase list as a guide to follow the booklet.**

Abbreviations

* placed before a word or phrase, indicates an incorrect form

adj. adjective

lit. literally

n. noun

1 Vivre ensemble

Living together

By the end of this chapter you will have learned to:

- ***discuss French identity and culture.***
- ***be confident using conversation strategies to:***
  - ***express indignation, irritation, emphasis.***
  - ***express your views with irony and humour.***
- ***be aware of the dropping of the 'double negation' in spoken French.***
- ***use idiomatic structures such as* c'est *for* ce sont*;* pas que*;* se mettre à*;* ça me regarde*;* dit / soi-disant*;* venir de …**
- ***use the verb* manquer*.***
- ***be confident with the present subjunctive.***
- ***understand the relative importance of fluency and accuracy.***

1.1 Key vocabulary

track 01.01

tout fout le camp !	*it's all going to the dogs!*
il n'y en a que pour les étrangers !	*there's only anything for the foreigners (they get everything)*
ça te regarde	*it's your business*
se mettre à … (faire quelque chose)	*to begin to … (do something)*
on se croirait au …	*you'd think you were in …*
à ce que je sache …	*as far as I know …*
et toc !	*there!*
nation dite laïque, soi-disant laïque	*supposedly secular country*
perdre ses repères	*to lose one's bearings*
il n'y a pas que (l'immigration) !	*it's not only (immigration)!*
et j'en passe et des meilleurs !	*and so on and so forth!*
se retrancher	*to seek refuge*

1.2 Conversation 1: **Tout fout le camp !**
It's all going to the dogs!

Over the past decades, with all kinds of borders giving way, the face of French society has changed fast, putting under stress French historical identity and culture, particularly the **laïcité** principle, which since 1905 firmly confines religious concerns to the private sphere, keeping them out of state-financed schools, workplaces, hospitals, sport facilities, etc.

I spoke to a couple of friends, Michel and Marie-Thérèse, about whether an authentic French culture was threatened by new waves of change – European government, the internet culture, immigration, radical Islam. The first time you listen to our conversation, try to work out what Marie-Thérèse's reaction is to Michel's fears.

⊙ track 01.02

Michel	Non mais, tout fout le camp ! Je reconnais plus la France ! Déjà ça me manquait, nos belles pièces de francs français, avec notre devise « Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité » … remplacées par ces Euros sans élégance. Mais là, quand je vois ça …
Marie-Thérèse	Ça y est ! Il va encore nous dire qu'on est envahi, qu'il y en a que pour les étrangers, qu'on égorge des moutons dans nos baignoires, que déguster un bon vin français est un acte de résistance contre le régime halal …
Michel	Euh … Tu me laisses finir ? Je parlais absolument pas de ça ! Ce que tu fais dans ta vie privée, ça te regarde. Mais il faut que les grands principes de la République soient respectés ! Comme la laïcité, dans les institutions publiques !
AB	À ce que je sache, en France, on reste ferme sur la séparation de l'Église et de l'État. Dans les écoles publiques, le port de signes religieux est toujours interdit – pas de calotte ni de hijab sur la tête, pas de croix autour du cou. Alors, c'est quoi la dernière ? On vient d'interdire le porc dans les cantines ?
Michel	Lis ça, plutôt ! Encore une association religieuse qui a obtenu des heures de piscine municipale réservées aux femmes! On se croirait au hammam ! Bientôt, à l'hôpital,

on cèdera devant ceux qui refusent que les femmes soient soignées par un médecin homme, et puis …

Marie-Thérèse Attends, c'est vrai que les religieux me fatiguent tous, mais l'exemple de la piscine est plutôt mal choisi. Moi, qui suis non-croyante, j'aimerais bien une petite heure de piscine où je pourrais être tranquille, sans subir le regard des hommes. Je te signale que les toilettes des hommes et des femmes sont bien séparées ! C'est ni un Ayatollah ni un Grand Rabbin qui a décrété ça. Franchement, ces obsessions de laïcistes militants aussi, ça me fatigue !

AB Tiens ! Il y a une vingtaine d'années, un ami sikh était à Paris pour un stage. Sur sa carte de séjour, impossible de reconnaître le type, la photo ressemblait plutôt à Jésus. Le pauvre me dit : « Non, c'est la règle : tête nue sans chapeau, foulard, ou autre objet décoratif. » Et toc ! Le but d'une photo d'identité c'est d'y mettre une tête identique, non?

Michel Mais on sortait de batailles spectaculaires autour du voile islamique à l'école ! On ne pensait pas aux sikhs, aux bonnes sœurs ! À notre époque, il faut bien l'avouer, c'est plus ceux-là qui nous inquiètent, c'est surtout les barbus !

Marie-Thérèse Ah oui, parce que les autres, ils sont pas barbus peut-être … ! Ni Jésus, d'ailleurs ? En France, nation dite laïque, c'est un calendrier catholique que l'État suit toujours ! On a des vacances à Noël, à Pâques et à la Toussaint, pas pour le Ramadan !

AB Donc tu crois que cette peur, cette impression dont parle Michel, d'avoir perdu les repères culturels, c'est une exagération ?

Marie-Thérèse C'est vrai que le changement est plus radical aujourd'hui, avec la destruction des frontières par la finance, par la culture de l'internet, il n'y a pas que l'immigration … Mais les enquêtes révèlent que la plus grande peur aujourd'hui, c'est celle de se retrouver au chômage ! S'il y a une peur fondée, c'est bien celle-là, plutôt que la peur de se faire attaquer par des terroristes !