



WHY FRENCH FRIES AREN'T FRENCH

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Quick Partner Chat

Before You Read: Brainstorming - Work with a partner and answer these quick questions before looking at the lesson below:

- Name three different fast-food restaurants where you can buy fries. Who has the best ones?
- If a tourist visited your country, what is a famous local snack or street food you would tell them to try?



Why French Fries Aren't French

Have you ever ordered French fries at a restaurant? Most people think they came from France. But here's the surprise—French fries were most likely born in Belgium! Long ago, in the 1600s, people in a small town near the Meuse River loved to fry small fish. When the river froze in winter, they needed something else to fry. So, they cut potatoes into sticks, fried them, and—delicious! Belgium even has a name for these fried potatoes: “frites.” The French-speaking people in Belgium started calling them “frites françaises” (French fries) because it sounded fancy. Later, American soldiers came to Belgium during World War I. They loved the fries and asked for “French fries,” thinking they were from France.

The name stuck! Today, French fries are famous all over the world. But in Belgium, people still believe they invented them—and they are proud of it!

So next time you enjoy a plate of French fries, remember: they might not be French, but they are definitely fantastic!

Vocabulary Match

Match the words (1–10) with their meanings (A–J).

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|--|
| 1. surprise | _____ | A. a piece of wood or food that is long and thin |
| 2. born | _____ | B. to cook in hot oil |
| 3. river | _____ | C. a natural stream of water |
| 4. fry (v.) | _____ | D. a strong feeling that something is true |
| 5. stick (n.) | _____ | E. a person who is in an army |
| 6. fancy | _____ | F. to stay in a place or situation |
| 7. soldier | _____ | G. very pleased with something |
| 8. stuck | _____ | H. to come into life |
| 9. believe | _____ | I. a pleasant or elegant |
| 10. proud | _____ | J. something unexpected |

Reading Comprehension

Answer the questions.

- Where did French fries most likely come from?
a) France b) Belgium c) America
- What did people in the small town fry when the river froze?
- What is the Belgian name for French fries?
- Why did American soldiers call them “French fries”?
- What does the word “stuck” mean in the story?
a) moved b) stayed c) fell
- What do the people in Belgium think about French fries?
- Have you ever eaten French fries? Where? What do you think are the best fries?

Did You Know?

Belgium takes fries so seriously that UNESCO added the art of traditional Belgian fry cooking to their list of cultural heritage!



Teacher's Key

Vocabulary Match Answers

1. **J** (something unexpected)
2. **H** (to come into life)
3. **C** (a natural stream of water)
4. **B** (to cook in hot oil)
5. **A** (a piece of wood or food that is long and thin)
6. **I** (a pleasant or elegant)
7. **E** (a person who is in an army)
8. **F** (to stay in a place or situation)
9. **D** (a strong feeling that something is true)
10. **G** (very pleased with something)

Reading Comprehension Answers

1. b) Belgium
2. They fried potatoes (cut into sticks).
3. Frites (or frites françaises).
4. Because the people in Belgium spoke French, and the soldiers thought they were in France / thought the fries were from France.
5. b) stayed
6. They believe they invented them, and they are very proud of it.
7. (Student's own answers)