**Geographical Influences**
- Biggest country in EU. Population density low compared to other European countries - Urban 80% Rural 0.84%
- 8 large industrialised cities distributed in regions.
- Paris 7 x size of Lyon (2nd largest city)
- East industrial / West under-populated
- 20th on the UN Human Development Index
- World’s most visited country in the world
- Diverse countryside with borders onto 8 countries
- Large farming community exerts great influence over government. Since 1945 farmers declined from 6m to 657k
- Size has driven need for good communication (TGU) and AutoRoute and Minitel
- Ports in Mediterranean, Atlantic and Channel

**Primary Belief Systems**
- Influence of church strong but independent
- General mistrust of politicians
- 60-66% Roman Catholic - strong influence
- 2% Protestant
- Islamic (5m) - high levels of immigration
- Has the largest Jewish community in Europe 600k
- Influence of church diminishing - only 12% attend church
- Has the largest Jewish community in Europe 483k

**Economic & Political Conditions**
- Second largest European power
- 11th largest world economy (2016)
- Unemployment 9.7%
- High taxation and inflexible labour
- Move from agricultural to industrial economy
- Heavily subsidised primary industries
- Austerity measures implemented to reduce public debt - 96.5% of GDP
- 84 million tourists a year – world’s top tourist destination
- 29 of the 500 biggest companies of the world – 2016

**Characteristics of Society**
- Centralised administrative and legal systems - Code Napoleon (e.g. Paris - Centric)
- Regional characteristics - best selling newspapers are regional. Ouest France 800k outsells Le Figaro and Le Monde
- 25% of the work force is in the Public Sector
- Clear distinction between government and church
- Flair, style, wit, skill, intellect, open, pleasant, free - but personal freedom stops were your neighbour’s freedom starts
- Immigrants say they never really feel 'French'
- Face veil ban comes into force – 2011
- Protests against government plans to raise retirement age to 62

**Educational Structures**
- 33% of students go into Higher Education 2.2m (19% in UK)
- 300 Grandes Ecoles - with 200,000 students
- Business success can depend on which school/university attended. - 'Old school tie' system
- Education of great importance. Highly competitive at 2 levels. Bias to academic qualifications shifting to commercial values, which are gaining respectability
- 20% children go to private school

**French Mindset**
- Structured
- 'Liberte - Egalite - Fraternite'
- Self-Belief
- Protection of France
- Mixed culture and integration with Europe
- Codified legal system. Flexibility in application
- French constitution - 'Indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic'

**Life Style Aspirations**
- Separate family and work life
- Long vacations
- Life revolves around sport/cultural activities/ family
- Workaholics are frowned on but concerns of job security
- Largest users of pharmaceutical products in Europe
- Strong village/small-town community spirit
- Social level is important. Pride in French achievements, culture and history
- Express differences
- Enjoy food and ambience more than materialism
- Wine is drunk by > 50% of the population
- Only 60% of the films shown in France are American
- The 'Cinq à sept' - a social gathering

**Language**
- Direct
- Subtle
- Complex
- Analytical
- Philosophical
- Levels of politeness (vous/tu)
- Academie Francaise keeps Anglo American words out of the vocabulary
- Strong Latin/Greek influence with regional
- 200m French speakers around the world
- Some people disappointed that English is business language
- Great literary history