A mini glossary in French, English, Spanish, Italian and German

Original LFDP writing with AI assistance. Prepared on 10 October 2026. No endorsement by the organisations cited.

This mini glossary helps with reading ordinary documents and instructions in five languages. It offers frequent words, not a complete dictionary. Context, region and level of politeness can change a translation. For an emergency, a legal procedure or a medical decision, have the meaning confirmed by a competent person.

Recognise the five columns

The order is always French / English / Spanish / Italian / German. The equivalents below reflect common uses; they do not cover every meaning of a word. German nouns begin with a capital letter. Keeping French and Spanish accents can prevent a word from changing or becoming harder to read.

Eight useful words

eau / water / agua / acqua / Wasser

aide / help / ayuda / aiuto / Hilfe

sortie / exit / salida / uscita / Ausgang

entrée / entrance / entrada / ingresso / Eingang

document / document / documento / documento / Dokument

bibliothèque / library / biblioteca / biblioteca / Bibliothek

télécharger / download / descargar / scaricare / herunterladen

enregistrer / save / guardar / salvare / speichern

Read an action in context

In an app, 'save' here means keeping information or a file. It does not automatically mean registering for a service or making an audio recording. Similarly, 'exit' here describes a way out of a place. In a program, the French word sortie may instead refer to an output. Translating a sentence requires more than lining up individual words.

Before acting, identify the verb, its object and any conditions. 'Download the document' refers to transferring a file. It does not prove that the file is already available offline. Saving may still require a name and a destination. Check the format, source and usage rights instead of assuming a button permits every kind of reuse.

Three common false friends

English library means a bibliothèque in French, whereas a French librairie sells books. English actually usually means en fait, not the French actuellement, which means currently. German Gift means poison in ordinary usage, whereas English gift means a present. These examples show why visual similarity does not prove that meanings match.

To check an unfamiliar word, consult an edited dictionary or a recognised terminology database. A specialist database such as IATE may suggest several equivalents depending on the field. Read the context labels and choose a sample sentence. Do not simply keep the first result. Automatic translation does not remove the need for this check in an important situation.

An exercise to help you remember

Choose two words and describe a real situation for each, such as finding a building's exit or keeping a document. Explain in English what you intend to do before looking for the equivalent. This small step reveals ambiguities and helps you remember a use rather than a string of letters.

Keep this glossary with your personal documents and its date. Add examples of your own, but mark them clearly as your notes. When an AI helps rephrase something, ask about the context and check the answer against a source. A confident tone guarantees neither an exact meaning nor correct pronunciation.

Primary sources

Institutions et organes de l'Union européenne - IATE, terminologie multilingue de l'Union européenne
https://iate.europa.eu/home

Contributeurs de Wiktionary allemand / Wikimedia - Gift, entrée allemande
https://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/Gift

Cambridge Dictionary - actually, anglais-français
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais-francais/actually

© 2026 LAFAYETTE DIGITAL PRODUCTS. Personal reading and downloading permitted. All other rights reserved.