

# **La Pronunciation**

# Pronunciation des voyelles

The vowels in French are the same as in English. Unless they have an accent, they are pronounced as normal. Practice each one...

a e i o u

# Pronunciation avec les accents

There are only 5 accents in French.

- ❑ accent aigu (é)
- ❑ accent grave (è, à)
- ❑ accent circonflexe (û)
- ❑ cédille (ç)
- ❑ tréma (ë)

Accents are very important to the spelling, pronunciation, and even the meaning of French words.

# Accent aigu

The accent aigu (é) tells you to pronounce an “e” similar to the “a” in the English word *date*.

Ex. éléphant      Sénégal

# Accent grave

The accent grave (è) tells you to pronounce an “e” like the “e” in the English word *jet*.

Ex. zèbre      zèle

# Accent grave continué...

An accent grave over an “a” or a “u” doesn’t change the sound of the letters. It does, however, change the meaning.

Ex. ou

où

a

à

# Accent circonflexe

The accent circonflexe can appear over any vowel, and it doesn't change the sound of the letter.

Ex. pâté   forêt   île   hôtel   flûte

# La cédille

The cédille only goes under the letter “c” and tells you to pronounce the “c” like an “s.”

Ex. français      ça



# Le tréma

When two vowels appear next to each other, a tréma over the second one tells you to pronounce each vowel separately.

Ex. Noël      Haïti

# Les consonnes

- ❑ Final consonants in French are **NOT** pronounced!
- ❑ The only exception is if they are a part of...

**CaReFuL**

**Ex. chaud, compris, achat, choix, avec, neuf**

# Le “r”

Contrary to the English “r,” the French “r” is pronounced by moving the tongue to the back of the mouth.

Ex. rendez-vous

bonjour

écrire

rouge

révolution

très

sucré

frère

# Comment est-ce qu'on prononce le “r”

1. Open your mouth.
2. Close your throat as if you're going to gargle or to avoid swallowing a mouthful of liquid and pronounce “K” carefully several times.
3. Pay attention to where in your throat the “K” sound is made.
4. Begin slowly closing your throat, until you can almost feel the “K” placement. Your throat should be only partially constricted.
5. Tense the muscles around the “K” placement.
6. Gently push air through your partially constricted throat.
7. Practice saying “ra-ra-ra” every day.

# Le H muet

For the most part, the letter “h” in French is mute. It is not pronounced and acts as if the word begins with a vowel. This means that contractions and liaisons are required.

Ex. le + homme = l’homme  
(elision)

les + hommes = les hommes  
(liaison)

# Le H-muet continué...

Here are the most common French words that begin with H-muet...

❑ habiller

❑ l'heure

❑ hier

❑ heureux

❑ l'hiver

❑ l'histoire

l'hôpital

horrible

l'humeur

l'huile

honnête

l'homme

# Le H-aspiré

The letter “h” in French words borrowed from other languages is usually aspirate. Though the h-aspirate is not pronounced, it acts like a consonant. Contractions are not permitted with it and liaisons are not made in front of it.

Ex. le hockey  
les héros

# H-aspiré continué...

Here are the most common words that begin with h-aspiré...

☐ le hamburger

☐ le hand-ball

☐ le héros

le hockey

le haricot

le hibou



# Le “gn”

In French, the letters “gn” are pronounced like the “ni” in “onion.” Here are some examples...

- ❑ agneau
- ❑ baignoire
- ❑ oignon