

# **LA FRANCE, QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST ?**

## **SUB-HEADING- FRENCH PRONUNCIATION**

**CLASS : 7**

**SUBJECT : FRENCH**

**CHAPTER NUMBER: 0**

**CHAPTER NAME : LA FRANCE,QU'EST-CE QUE  
C'EST?**

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**CHANGING YOUR TOMORROW**

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*French*

Pronunciation  
Guides

# FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

French pronunciation follows specific rules. Just as in English, not everything is spelled as it sounds or sounds the way it is spelled. English and French share many sounds, but French can have several spellings for the same sound.

You will find the French alphabet in a table below. The list includes the letters, their names (just as we say “jay” for the letter j or “zee” or “zed” for the letter z, letters in French also have names), the sound each letter makes, and example words. The pronunciation of each example word is in parentheses. In the next section, we will explore the pronunciation of some of these letters more in depth, but this list can act as a reference as you make your way through the book.

# PRONOUNCING VOWELS

## Pronouncing Vowels

French has six vowels: **a, e, i, o, u**, and **y**. Vowels take accents:

- The acute accent (**accent aigu**): é
- The grave accent (**accent grave**): à, è, ù
- The circumflex (**accent circonflexe**): â, ê, î, ô, û

**The vowel a (a) and its variants à and â sound similar to a in far**

la (lah) the (feminine)

facile (fah-cee-l) (easy)

pâte (pah-t) (paste)

**E e is pronounced uh like a in alone or u in burn.**

je (zhuh) I

le (luh) The

ce (suh) This/ That

## Accents

- Some but not all accents can change the sound of the letter and or the meaning of a word. The main ones are:
- É accent aigu
- È accent grave
- Ê accent circonflexe
- Ë trema
- Ç cedille



# PRONOUNCING VOWELS

## NOTE::

**An unaccented e at the end of a word is usually not pronounced.**

carotte (kah-rot) carrot

argile (ahr-zheel) clay

verre (vehr) glass

**é is pronounced like ay in day, but not drawn out (er and ez are pronounced the same way).**

thé (tay) tea

vélo (vay-lo) bicycle

carré (kah-ray) square

**è is pronounced like e in get (ai and âi are pronounced the same way).**

mère (mehr) Mother

père (pehr) Father

chère (shehr) expensive (feminine)

# PRONOUNCING VOWELS

**i** The vowel **i** or **î** sounds like **ee** in **beet**. Practice saying these examples:

mari (mah-ree) husband

vie (vee) life

pari (pah-ree) bet

The vowel **o** has an open and a closed sound. The open **o** sounds a little bit like **au** in **caught**.

bonne (bon) good

sotte (sot) silly (feminine)

vote (vot) vote

The closed **o** sounds like **o** in **roll**.

abricot (ah-bree-koh) apricot

sot (soh) silly

pot (poh) jar

# DIPHTHONGS

The vowel u has no equivalent in English, but you can make it by pronouncing the sound ee tu

Tu(tu) you

vu (vu) seen

lu (lu) read

**After the letters q and g, the u is silent in French.**

quatre (kahtr) four

guérir (gay-reer) to heal

## DIPHTHONGS

**Diphthongs are a combination of two vowels or of a vowel and a consonant and are treated as one syllable. There are many diphthongs in French.**

**ai or âi is pronounced like e in met.**

lait (leh) Milk

chaise (shehz) Chair

chaîne (shehn) Chain

# DIPHTHONGS

**au or eau is pronounced like o in roll.**

peu (puh)

jeu (zhuh)

deux (duh)

**eu The open sound is pronounced like u in fun.**

bœuf (buhf)

seul (suhl)

**er and ez at the end of a word are pronounced like ay in lay.**

assez (ah-say)

marcher (mahr-shay)

garer (gah-ray)

**oi is pronounced like wa in watch.**

moi (mwa)

toit (twa)

loi (lwa)



# DIPHTHONGS

**oy is pronounced like wa in watch ee.**

voyage (vwa-yazh)

noyau (nwa-yoh)

loyal (lwa-yahl)

**ou is pronounced like oo in zoo.**

jour (zhoo-r)

sous (soo)

vous (voo)

**ui is pronounced like wee.**

bruit (brwee)

nuit (nwee)

pluie (plwee)

**oui is pronounced like oo wee.**

oui (oo-wee)

Louis (loo-wee)

# PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

French consonants are mostly pronounced like their English counterparts, with a few variations and exceptions. Final consonants are usually not pronounced in French, except for **C, R, L, F** (consonants in **CaReFuL**).

● <b>Unpronounced Final Consonants</b>	<b>Pronounced Final Consonants</b>
● vous (voo)	avec (ah-vehk)
● alors (ah-lor)	sec (sehk)
● assis (ah-see)	bref (brehf)
● épuisé (ay-pwee-zay)	il (eel)

**In verb forms, the final **ent** of the third-person plural is silent.**

(ils) achètent (ah-sheht)

(ils) marchent (mahrsh)

(ils) vivent (veev)

**In the verb form **est** (is), only the **e** is voiced.** : est (ay) is

# PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

**C** As in English, French **c** has a **soft** and a **hard** sound. The hard sound **k** sounds like the **c** in carry. It occurs before **a, o, u,** and before a consonant.

carré (kahr-ray)

d'accord (dah-kor)

**c** The soft **c (s)** sounds like the **c** in cinnamon. It occurs before **e, i,** or **y.**

cercle (sehrkl)

cinéma (see-nay-mah)

cynique (see-neek)

**ç** (“**c cédille**”) before **a, o,** or **u** is pronounced like a soft **c (s** sound).

français (frah(n)-say) French

déçu (day-su) disappointed

**c + h** The combination **c + h** is pronounced like **sh** in sunshine when followed by a vowel.

chat (shah)

chercher (shehr-shay)

chaud (shoh)

# PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

**c + h is pronounced like k (or the hard c in cut) when followed by a consonant.**

Christine (krees-teen)

chrétien (kray-tye(n))

**g The letter g has a soft sound (zh) and a hard sound (g). The soft g occurs in front of the vowels e and i. It is represented by zh and is pronounced like s in pleasure.**

gérer (zhay-ray)

nager (nah-zhay)

juger (zhu-zhay)

**g The hard g occurs everywhere else. It sounds like the g in egg or go.**

gai (gay)

griller (gree-yay)

guide (geed)

**q The letter q (usually qu) is like the English k.**

(kuh-rehl) qui (kee)

quarante (kah-rah(n)-t)

# PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

**gn is pronounced like ni in onion.**

Allemagne (Al ma nay )

vigneron (vee-nyuh-roh(n))

saigner (say-nyay)

**h The letter h is always silent in French.**

haricot (ah-ree-koh)

habit (ah-bee)

hôtel (oh-tehl)

**ille and a final il are often pronounced like y in yes.**

famille (fah-mee-y)

travail (trah-vah-y)

pareil (pah-ray-y)

veille (vay-y)

# NASAL VOWELS

The syllables composed of a vowel and n or m create a nasal vowel sound, which is produced when air is expelled from both the mouth and nose. In French, a consonant n or m that follows a nasal vowel is not pronounced. In the word France, for example, we pronounce the nasal vowel a through the mouth and the nose but not the consonant n. Following is a chart of nasal vowels with examples:

- French Spelling an, en emin, ain, ein im, aim
- ien ion oin
- On, om, un

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