



SONS & LETTRES

A pronunciation method for intermediate-level French

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PREFACE

PREFACE

WHY THIS BOOK?

Is French pronunciation easy? Is good pronunciation important? If you are using this book, either in a French class or for individual study, your answer to the first question is unlikely to be “yes, of course it is!” French sounds and French spelling differ from English in many respects, and rare is the intermediate student who can read a paragraph of standard French prose with accuracy. As for the second question, if you have ever had the opportunity to use your French with native speakers, you may know from experience that a few mispronounced vowels can prevent effective communication. Some slips of the tongue may be amusing, while some could be more significant. If you agree to work for 12 (*douze*) euros and get the French vowel wrong, you might end up 10 euros short (*deux euros*). Accurate pronunciation is important if you want to speak French and be understood, and so it is important to work through the difficulties in decoding and pronouncing the written word that stand in the way of intelligibility. At another level, learning about pronunciation and developing good habits can make the entire experience of learning French less mysterious and more fun.

The materials assembled in *Sons et lettres* are inspired by a desire to help students feel more confident about French pronunciation and more at home with French words. In particular, these materials are intended to clear away the confusion that English speakers often feel when they see French words with mysterious combinations of letters. In our experience, students are rarely given the information they need to successfully decipher and pronounce French words. Some explicit instruction about the pronunciation of letters and combinations of letters is a part of all beginning French courses, of course, but this instruction is often incomplete or unsystematic, due to either a lack of time or a lack of materials.

The instruction you received in reading your first language, whether it was English or another language, was probably quite different from the way you have learned about French pronunciation. As a child learning English in elementary school, one is taught how to say the alphabet, how to recognize and pronounce different combinations of letters, and how to attempt the pronunciation of unfamiliar words by recognizing the elements that constitute them. One learns, for example, that letters of the alphabet stand for certain sounds, and then how to apply this **alphabetic principle** first to simple and then to more complex words. The learner already knows a great many words, having heard and used them within their language community, and then in school they learn to read and to write them, matching the written forms to what they recognize aurally. Literate English speakers eventually become familiar both with the regularities of English spelling and with its many irregular spellings and pronunciations. In an alphabetic language such as English, the ability to read is founded on this ability to recognize patterns in combinations of letters and to connect those printed symbols with their sounds, their words, and ultimately their meanings. Elementary school taught us that spelling provides a key to knowing how words sound—except, of course, when it doesn't.

It should come as no surprise that the alphabetic principle applies in French as well, and you already know that many of the sounds and spelling rules are not the same as in English. This book aims to teach you to recognize most of the common spelling patterns in French words and how they correlate to the sounds of those words. With that knowledge you will be able to read both the familiar and the unfamiliar words which you meet in your studies, your travels, or your forays into French media. Hence the title, *Sons et lettres*: Sounds and Letters. The operating principle throughout these pages is that French pronunciation is remarkably regular and uniform, and becomes less difficult once you know the sounds and the underlying rules.

The approach used in *Sons et lettres* may be similar to lessons you remember from reading instruction in your first language, but there are a number of factors in learning French as an adult that differ from the process of learning to read as a child. First, French has a number of sounds, especially vowel sounds, which are not present in the English sound system. You are already familiar with many or perhaps all of these uniquely French sounds (the vowel sound in *tu*, for example), but you probably do not have complete confidence in your ability to make those sounds. For each lesson in *Sons et lettres*, your instructor will model how to produce the sounds that are foreign to English. A second important factor is that, as an adult learner of French, there is an inevitable vocabulary deficit that did not exist when you learned

to read in your first language or languages. Before you ever began to read, you already knew a great many words, and that knowledge included knowing how they sounded, what they meant, and how to say them. You knew all this because your family and your speech community had repeatedly exposed you to those words. Consequently, you already had most of the essential information about thousands of words, except that you did not know how to recognize them in print. Learning to read then taught you how to map the many spoken words you already knew onto the system of printed words, and then how to apply those rules to unfamiliar words. But for all of us who began learning French as adults (that is, teenagers and older), including the author of this book, our lack of elementary knowledge about the French lexicon is a basic fact of life, at least initially. From the standpoint of pronunciation, this means that as adult learners we have no existing auditory knowledge of many words, and we must rely heavily on the spelling system to determine how to read and say them.

VOWELS COMPARED

English and French share several vowels that are very similar in pronunciation. English has four vowel sounds not found in French (the vowels in *pick*, *cat*, *shut*, and *foot*), while French has **seven** vowel sounds not present in English (in *tu*, *deux*, *beurre*, *corps*, and the nasal vowels in *bon*, *vent*, *vingt*). There are also consonant sounds unique to each language (notably, the different *r*'s), but the consonant differences are less significant than the differences between the two vowel systems.

Now if the rules that govern the relationship between French speech sounds and French spelling were the same as the rules in English, our pronunciation difficulties would be greatly reduced. But our knowledge of English is of little use in trying to decipher, for example, the verb ending of *ils parlaient*. This combination of letters is not encountered as such in English, and puzzling through how to say *aient* is unlikely to lead us to the correct solution. Until it is explained to us, we don't have a clue that the *-ent* ending is silent and only the *ai* affects the pronunciation, and that those five letters of the third-person plural imperfect represent a single vowel sound. Moreover, our knowledge of English spelling patterns can interfere and lead to mispronunciations, and, for this reason, part of learning French involves disconnecting letters and letter combinations from their English equivalents in order to reassign them to different sounds. Once the new associations are made, and after a certain amount of time and practice, we begin to acquire the habits that will enable us to read French words confidently and fluently.

The factors that facilitated our learning to read and write as children, by their absence, make our experience of French feel *foreign*: the sounds that don't exist in our native language, our lack of basic vocabulary, and the different rules used to encode familiar and unfamiliar sounds are obstacles that we must overcome in order to become comfortable reading French words.

Fortunately there are keys that can help us surmount these difficulties. First, the French spelling system is much more regular and more reliable than what we are accustomed to in English. To understand this, consider the plight of the French speaker learning English who must learn six pronunciations of the letters *ou* in order to correctly pronounce common words such as *bough*, *bought*, *though*, *through*, *enough*, and *could*. Each of the vowel sounds represented by *ou* in these words is different from the others, and there is no apparent pattern to differentiate them, no clear rule to guide us to how they are said; we learned by memorizing each word individually. Now, compare this to the situation of an English speaker learning French, who can depend on the letters *ou* consistently representing the same vowel sound /u/. Our expectation is that spelling should tell us how to pronounce a word, and in French it usually does! While it is far from absolute, this regularity is surprisingly consistent, and the lessons in *Sons et lettres* are built upon this fact. Consequently, once the patterns and spelling rules presented here become ingrained, you should be able to apply them in such a way that you can accurately pronounce a large number of familiar and unfamiliar words.

HOMOPHONES

In English, identical spellings often represent different sounds (e.g., *cough*, *ouch*, *through*; *beat*, *hear*, *health*), which makes pronunciation uncertain. French has the opposite tendency: different spellings often may represent the same sound. This results in a wealth of **homophones** (words with different spellings that are pronounced the same), such as *Pau* [city in southwestern France], *peau* [skin], and *pot* [jar], or *cent* [100], *sans* [without], and *sang* [blood]. Homophones make meaning ambiguous, but they are also a rich source for word play and puns.

Since this book is intended for the second year of French study, it is assumed that you are already familiar with some of the material in the lessons, and you may find yourself asking whether certain lessons are necessary. Indeed, some of the early lessons may seem very easy, not only because you are familiar with the sounds they highlight, but also because the spelling rule being presented is simple: *ou* is pronounced /u/, and *au* is pronounced /o/. What could be more straightforward than that? Nevertheless, since students come to second-year French with widely varying knowledge about pronunciation, either because they have had different teachers or different curricula, some review is important to ensure that all have a good understanding of the basic rules. Moreover, many students, particularly in second year, are not fully aware of the regularities in French spelling. For this reason, *Sons et lettres* aims to develop a systematic and practical understanding of the relationship between pronunciation and spelling in French. So if you find some lessons fairly simple, or a matter of review, remember that the principles, rules, and exercises are all designed to give you firm footing in the jungle of French words that you have in your native language. We encourage you therefore to learn the spelling rules presented for each sound, and to be deliberate in doing the exercises proposed in each lesson so that they become second nature.

INTRODUCTION

GRAPHEMES

One concept that is used throughout *Sons et lettres* is the concept of the **grapheme**. This is a technical term used in English language reading instruction which may be unfamiliar to you. (Other words commonly used in this context are *letter*, *digraph*, and *trigraph*.) We use it because it is more accurate and more inclusive than the word *letter*. Since the notion of the grapheme is the basis for all the lessons in this book, it is essential that you understand it and its ambiguities.

We define a grapheme as **a letter or combination of letters within a word that represent a given sound**. For example, the letter *a* in English commonly represents the vowel sound in *cat*, and the letters *c* and *t* are graphemes that usually represent the sounds /k/ and /t/, respectively. Similarly, the combination *ea* is a grapheme that commonly represents the vowel sound in *wheat*, the grapheme *sh* commonly represents the final consonant sound in *fish*, and the grapheme *ough* often represents the sound /o/ in the word *though*. (Note: characters between forward slashes are phonetic or IPA symbols, as explained below on page 26.) In each of these cases, a grapheme, whether it be a single letter or a combination of two or more letters, is usually understood to represent a single sound, except in a few cases (see inset below).

The difficulty that besets many spelling systems, however, (and especially English!), is that the value of a grapheme (i.e., the sound it represents) may not be stable. That is, the same grapheme may also represent other, different sounds in other words or contexts. So, the letter *a*, which represents one vowel in *cat*, is also used to represent a different sound in *Kate*, and yet another in *father*. Similarly, the grapheme *ea*, which represents one sound in *wheat*, can also represent the sound /ɛ/ as in *head*, and the combination *ough* can represent the two

sounds /ɔf/ in *cough*, but in *bought* it represents only the vowel without the /f/. Despite these inconsistencies, we have learned through training and practice to recognize the symbols as having different values in certain words. Although they no longer pose a problem, they do illustrate both the problematic nature of English spelling and the ambiguous nature of graphemes: a particular letter or combination may represent different sounds in different contexts. (See exercise 1 on page 37, which explores the notion of the grapheme and its sometimes slippery nature.)

Just as the same individual graphemes can represent different sounds in English, so it is in French. Consider the words *seize* [sixteen] and *fraise*

ONE SOUND PER GRAPHEME

There are only a few cases in which a grapheme is understood to represent *two* sounds occurring together. In the word *moi*, for example, the *oi* represents the sounds /wa/, even though neither *o* nor *i* separately stands for /w/ or /a/. Such cases are rare. Normally a grapheme represents a single sound.

[strawberry]. You probably know that the graphemes *ei* and *ai* represent the same vowel sound, and that the graphemes *-ze* and *-se* both represent the same consonant /z/, and also that the phrase *seize fraises* [sixteen strawberries] is a rhyme. Now consider the words *peint* [painted] and *pain* [bread]: in this case we have the same letters *ei* and *ai* as in *seize fraises*, but in a different context, followed by the letter *n*. The letter *n* redefines the graphemes to include the following consonants (*eint* and *ain*) and they represent a different sound, a nasal vowel, for which the consonants that follow (*-n* and *-nt*) are silent.

While both French and English have graphemes that can represent more than one sound, graphemes in French are significantly more consistent (less ambiguous) than are those in English. The spelling rules presented in each chapter of *Sons et lettres* will teach you the regular graphemes as well as the occasional irregularities. These rules are a key to learning to pronounce French with accuracy.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

Accent Marks

Accent marks, also known as diacritical marks, are important features of written French that distinguish it from English. They have two basic functions: meaning, and pronunciation.

Meaning. The first function affects writing only and not the sound of the word, and it is limited to a few cases: accent marks distinguish different meanings of words that otherwise have the same spelling and pronunciation. The most common cases are *a/à*, *ou/où*, and *du/dû*. The *accent grave* distinguishes the preposition *à* from the verb *avoir* (as in, *elle a*), and the word *where* [*où*] from the word *or* [*ou*]; the circumflex distinguishes the partitive article *du* (as in *du pain* [some bread]) from the past participle of the verb *devoir* (as in, *il a dû partir* [he had to leave]). In these cases, the pronunciation of each word in the pair is the same.

Pronunciation. The second and most common function of accent marks is to signal a particular pronunciation, most often the pronunciation of a vowel. In this context, accent marks should be considered to be part of the grapheme. Historically, these marks were introduced into French because the original Latin alphabet did not have enough characters to represent accurately and unambiguously the number of vowel sounds in French as it evolved, especially those sounds represented by the letter *e*. Accent marks were added to a letter to expand the basic sound palette for that letter, if you will. The following chart lists the accent marks used in French and describes their applications and effects on pronunciation.

ACCENT TRIVIA

Sometimes referred to as “the tombstone of a dead letter,” the circumflex was introduced in the eighteenth century to mark the place where a letter *s* was dropped from the spelling because it was no longer pronounced. The English forms of these French words often retain the written *s* and its sound, as in *hôpital*, *honnête*, *forêt*, and *château* [castle].

ACCENT MARKS: CONTEXTS & FUNCTION

NAME		LETTERS AFFECTED	FUNCTION
accent aigu	◌é	e	Distinguishes the “bright,” closed e (<i>étudier</i>) from other vowel sounds (<i>je</i> ; <i>belle</i>)
accent grave	◌è	e a, u	Distinguishes the “open” e (<i>père</i>) from the closed e and from the <i>schwa</i> (the sound in <i>je</i> , <i>le</i> , etc.) No effect on pronunciation of a or u. The accent distinguishes between à (preposition) and the verb <i>avoir</i> (<i>il a</i>), and between ou (or) and où (where).
accent circonflexe	◌ê	a, e, i, o; u	No regular effect on pronunciation; a few words with ô (<i>nôtre</i> , <i>vôtre</i> , <i>côte</i>) have a rounder, longer o (/o/). The circumflex also distinguishes between the words <i>du</i> and <i>dû</i> .
tréma	◌ë	a, e, i, o	Indicates that the marked vowel is pronounced as a separate syllable, distinct from the preceding vowel (<i>Noël</i> = <i>No-ë-l</i>). It does not change the sound of the vowel.
cédille [cedilla]	ç, Ç	c, C	Changes the consonant sound from /k/ to /s/ before the letters a, o, and u.

Unpronounced Letters in French

One of the challenges that written French poses for English speakers is that so many letters which we would pronounce in English words are silent in French. This is especially true of final consonants (treated in the review section on page 30), but it is also true of consonants in other positions, and of vowels in certain contexts. For example, the words *conte* [tale], *comte* [count, as in count Dracula], and *compte* [account] are **homophones** (that is, they have the same pronunciation) and neither the final -e nor any of the consonants in *om*, *on*, or *omp* are pronounced, as such. In lesson 9, we will see that the *n* and *m* after a vowel both indicate the same thing—namely, that the vowel is nasalized, such that the *p* in *compte* has no effect on the pronunciation. For English speakers, for whom these letters usually represent spoken consonants, accurate French pronunciation requires us to learn to interpret these letters differently than we normally would.

This is even more true in the case of final consonants. The consonants at the end of masculine adjectives (*petit*) or high-frequency verb endings (*finis*, *finit*, *prend*, *prends*) do not correspond to our learned habits about these letters in English. We learn to ignore the final consonant of such verb endings when we learn about verb endings in beginning French. This is relatively easy to do in the case of a uniform grammatical pattern (such as regular verb endings), but some patterns are more complex. The ending -*ent*, for example, is completely silent at the end of a verb (*ils parlent*), but not when it occurs in other word classes such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs (*accent*, *transparent*, *rapidement*). In these cases, -*ent* represents a vowel sound, but still without a pronounced consonant *n* or *t*. We must learn to recognize these different contexts and adapt our pronunciation accordingly.

Why is this? Why do French words so often end with unpronounced consonants? For example, why aren't the singular verb forms for *finir* all just written *fini*, since neither the -*s* of *finis* nor the -*t* of *finit* is pronounced? The short answer, in most cases, is that at an earlier time in the history of the language these endings *were* pronounced. During the centuries of its evolution from Latin to Old French, the pronunciation of individual words and the system of sounds as a whole changed, so that some final consonants faded and eventually disappeared from speech altogether. While the pronunciations changed, however, the written forms did not change to reflect this evolution. Spelling, because it is written down and encoded in documents and dictionaries, tends to be more durable (one could also say, more conservative), while spoken language features and patterns gradually and naturally evolve and change. If the spelling is not revised to reflect this evolution, then the

vestiges of old pronunciations will remain. This is as much the case in English as it is in French, but it creates difficulties for students of French when we encounter a word first in its written form. Lacking the auditory information that a native speaker acquires from repeatedly hearing a given word, we may be unsure whether or not to pronounce its final consonants. This is also an area where many exceptions exist, and where it may be impossible to offer broad rules about the status of a particular letter, such as final *r*, *s*, or *t*. In such cases, the goal of *Sons et lettres* will be to provide reliable rules for specific contexts and to make you aware of the limits of a rule.

Ultimately, most second-language learners of French face a fundamental obstacle: the language is first and foremost a spoken phenomenon only imperfectly represented by its written form. This is a familiar situation. When we learned to read and write English, we also had to come to terms with spelling

SPELLING REFORM

The French spelling system has been modernized over the course of its history to reflect changes and to impose some uniformity, especially during the 17-18th centuries through the influence of the *Académie Française*. There have also been more recent attempts at reform, but such efforts are rarely comprehensive, and are complicated by the fact that spelling signals not only pronunciation, but also reflects a word's history, its grammatical features and its relationships with other words.

and the irregularities of the written language. But, unlike native speakers of French, who begin with an extensive knowledge of its spoken forms, much of our initial access to the language comes through this imperfect writing system on which we must rely without the advantage of the native speaker's auditory knowledge. And so we must first learn *not to pronounce* final consonants, and then learn the many exceptions to this rule as we expand our vocabulary.

As literate English speakers, we can appreciate the challenges posed by written forms that don't seem to correspond to their spoken equivalents. Still, despite the irregularities of written French, and despite the significant differences between English and French spelling, it is important to remember that French spelling *is* largely regular, to a much greater degree than is English. This again is the basic premise on which *Sons et lettres* is built. As you learn the regularities of French spelling and practice them, your pronunciation should improve significantly.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Program Components

Two components make up the student materials for the several lessons: a web-based program of exercises focusing primarily on listening discrimination, and a set of classroom worksheets [*fiches de classe*]. The following overview describes these materials briefly; your instructor will explain how to use them in more detail.

The lessons in the program are usually based on two contrasting sounds. Your instructor will begin each lesson by previewing the two sounds and their main graphemes in class to familiarize you with them and to review what you may already know. Then, you will complete a series of exercises outside of class using the *Sons et lettres* website.

Web exercises. The *Sons et lettres* website address is <https://sons-et-lettres.com/>. The exercises on the site are primarily listening exercises, designed to first ensure that you can hear the difference between the target sounds for each lesson. (This is important, because if you cannot distinguish between different sounds you will not be able to pronounce them accurately.) First, you will hear pairs of words and determine whether the words have the same or contrasting sounds [*Écoute 1*]. Some pairs will have the same sound (for example, *fou* and *tout*, which rhyme) and some will have contrasting sounds (for example, *fou* and *faux*, which don't rhyme). Next, in *Écoute 2*, you will hear groups of three words, one of which differs from the other two in terms of its pronunciation, and you will indicate which two words have the same sound (for example, in the series *fou/faux/tout*, *fou* and *tout* form a pair because they have the same vowel sound). You will not **see** any of these words initially, only hear them, but you will have the option of seeing the words displayed after giving your answer. After completing the listening exercises, the rule will be shown which describes how the two sounds are represented in spelling. The rule is followed by an exercise [*Écoute 3*] in which you both hear *and* see pairs of contrasting words and you will indicate which of the two written words you hear (or hear first). This exercise requires you to match the words you hear with the graphemes you see. Finally, in *À vous de parler*, you will have an opportunity to pronounce the target sounds, reading and saying familiar and unfamiliar words and comparing your pronunciation with that of model speakers.

The web exercises take about ten minutes per lesson. In some cases, they will be relatively easy, especially if you are already familiar with the target sounds and their spelling. In other lessons, contrasts which are inherently

difficult for English speakers may prove more challenging. Remember that, even when the exercises seem easy, they are still useful because they allow you to focus your attention on the target sounds as pronounced by a French speaker, which will help you develop an aural model that you can imitate.

Classroom. After completing the web exercises, you will go over a written worksheet in class. Your instructor will review the spelling rule for the target sounds, model their pronunciation, and give you the opportunity to practice them. The textbook worksheets [*fiches d'exercices*] propose simple reading, speaking, and writing activities to develop your ability to recognize and produce the sounds in a series of words. In the exercise called *Cherchez les lettres*, you will search a list for words that contain a target sound. Other activities will ask you to think of words you know containing the target sounds, and to use them in playful or interesting ways. Throughout the exercises you will be repeatedly exposed to familiar and unfamiliar words with the lesson's target graphemes. Most of the time the meaning of the words is of secondary importance: the focus is on their sound. While we encourage you to ask about unfamiliar words and to learn what they mean, we also encourage you to think of them as simple objects, and to enjoy and appreciate their forms and their sounds for their own sake. Such an approach will prove fruitful in ways that may not be obvious to you; it will ultimately enrich and develop your knowledge of the language.

Symbols and Conventions

C or V. The letters “**C**” and “**V**,” used in the spelling rules in some lessons, stand for **consonant** and **vowel**. As you will learn, certain sounds are often found in particular contexts (e.g., following a vowel or preceding a consonant). In most cases, “**C**” and “**V**” will refer to consonant *sounds* and vowel *sounds*, but occasionally they will refer to letters. For example, in the rules for pronouncing *o*, the notation $o + \mathbf{C}_{\text{finale muette}}$ refers to silent final consonant letters following the letter *o*, such as in *mot* or *gros*. In contrast, the notation $o + \mathbf{C}_{\text{prononcée}}$ refers to any consonant sound following the letter *o*, such as in *bol* or *stopu*. In this context, the pronounced consonant changes the sound of the letter *o*.

IPA symbols. This book also makes use of the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). These symbols are a convenient way of representing speech sounds in a consistent fashion, without the ambiguities inherent in ordinary spelling. Whenever a character appears between forward slashes (e.g., “/a/”), the slashes indicate that this is a phonetic symbol. A table of the IPA symbols used for French is found in appendix A. The symbols are often easy to

decipher (especially in the case of consonants), but some characters are non-alphabetic (e.g., /ʒ/, representing the sound “zh” in the word *jour*) and some symbols are at odds with what they stand for in French or English spelling (for example, /y/ does not represent any of the sounds we associate with a y, such as in *baby* or *youth*, *mythe* or *yaourt*; it represents the vowel sound in French *tu*). Since IPA characters are commonly used in French dictionaries, you may want to learn them in order to have the key to dictionary pronunciations. It is not required that you learn them in order to use *Sons et lettres*, however; it will be sufficient if you recognize the equivalence between the sound you will hear for a rule and the symbol you will see.

What to Practice, and How

Here are some suggestions to help you take advantage of what you learn in *Sons et lettres*:



LEARN THE SPELLING RULES

After completing a lesson on the web and in class, review the rules, make sure you understand them completely, and begin to commit them to memory. This way, whenever you see the graphemes for a sound that you have learned, you will be able to apply them. Over time, the rule will become internalized and the pronunciation will become automatic.



READ AND REPEAT

Read aloud the word lists in the *Cherchez les lettres!* exercises after you do them in class, and use the web application's *A vous de parler* exercises to practice and refine your pronunciation. Short periods of repetition will reinforce the associations between graphemes and pronunciation and help make the rules become habits.



SOUND OUT NEW WORDS

When reading new material in French, take the time to decipher new or unfamiliar words. Identify the graphemes and slowly sound out words syllable by syllable and repeat them until they feel familiar. If you are uncertain about how to pronounce a word, consult an online dictionary (such as larousse.fr, which lets you hear the pronunciation), or ask your instructor.



**PLAY
WITH
WORDS**

Many activities in the lessons in *Sons et lettres* are designed to be fun. We encourage you to play with French words and sounds, both inside and outside of class. Think of words that rhyme with vocabulary words that you learn, and put rhyming words together to make combinations that are meaningful or ridiculous, humorous or serious. Write them down and say them aloud. Keep lists of favorite words, odd words, difficult words, etc. Words are the heart of the language; play with them and make them your friends.



**FIND TEXTS
THAT
YOU LIKE**

Seek out short poems or song texts that please you. Listen to them, if possible, and say or sing them aloud to yourself, or perhaps to your friends.

OVERVIEW

In English, a consonant at the end of a word is usually pronounced. In French, of course, the general rule is just the opposite: a final consonant is normally silent. The purpose of this section is to review the basic rules concerning pronounced and unpronounced final consonants in French. Bear in mind that, in contradiction to the guiding principle of *Sons et lettres*, this is an area with many irregularities where French spelling can be misleading and challenging as a result. As an anglophone, one must learn to process these graphemes differently, and one must always be prepared for those cases that don't follow the rules. With that caveat in mind, you can think of this feature of French spelling as an area with one general rule and three exceptions:

General rule

Final consonants are normally silent in French.

Exceptions

1. At the end of a word, any consonant followed by the letters -e or -es is pronounced (but the -e is not).
2. In words borrowed from English, a final consonant is usually pronounced.
3. In words ending with the letters -c, -r, -f, or -l, the consonant is usually pronounced.

OPEN SYLLABLES

Statistically speaking, French has a strong preference for ending syllables with a vowel sound instead of a spoken consonant, including at the ends of words. This tendency toward *open syllables* (syllables which end with a vowel sound, like *see*, *weigh*; *chou*, *faux*) is the opposite of English's general preference for *closed syllables* (syllables which end with a consonant sound, like *green*, *caught*; *bouche*, *ferme*). These linguistic differences may make it easier to understand why final consonants usually go unpronounced in French.

THE RULES IN DETAIL

General Rule

A consonant at the end of a word is not pronounced. This rule applies especially to the following letters: *-s, -x, -t, -d, -n, -p, -g, -z*. Many of these letters occur regularly in three predictable grammatical contexts (see chart on page 34). These three contexts are:

- Verb endings: singular forms (*-es, -s, -t, -d, -x*) and plural forms (*-ons, -ez, -ent*)
- Adjectives: masculine forms (*-t, -d, -s, -x, -n*), e.g., *fort, grand, gros, faux, bon*
- Plural markers: (*-s, -x*)

Exception #1

Any consonant followed by the letters *-e* or *-es* at the end of a word is pronounced. This refers only to the *-e* without an accent mark, and occurs regularly in feminine forms of words (compare: *un/une, petit/petite, froid/froide*, etc.), but also applies to pairs of unrelated words, such as *coup* [blow] and *coupe* [cut]. The letter *-e* itself is usually **not** pronounced; it only signals the pronunciation of the preceding consonant. (The verb ending *-ent* has the same effect: it is not pronounced, but it causes a preceding consonant to be pronounced, e.g., *ils attendent, elles servent*.) Note that this rule is valid not only for *-e*, but for any vowel that follows a consonant. However, in the case of vowels other than *e*, the vowel itself is also pronounced and adds another syllable (as in *sort/sorti, perd/perdu, rat/raté*).

Exception #2

In words borrowed from English, the final consonant is pronounced. Such words do not follow the general rule precisely because they are loan words which have retained this feature of their original pronunciation. Some common examples are: *un short, un tee-shirt, des baskets, un jean* (or *un blue-jean*), *le fun, un modem, un clip, le blues; le parking; le jazz*.

Exception #3

In words ending in *-c, -r, -f, or -l*, this letter is usually pronounced. In most cases these are short, single-syllable words. The following chart shows the most common words that follow this rule. You will notice that all of

them are words of one syllable (occasionally two), whereas most of the exceptions are two syllables or more. Even this generalization has a few important exceptions, however, so it is helpful to remember the word **CaReFuL**, as a reminder to double-check the pronunciation in a dictionary for words ending with *-c, r, -f, or -l*.

LIST OF COMMON C-R-F-L WORDS		
	FINAL CONSONANT IS PRONOUNCED	EXCEPTIONS (final consonant is silent)
-c	donc; avec, mec, sec; chic, flic, fric; fac, lac, sac, parc; truc	porc, tabac, estomac
-r	amer, cher, fer, hiver; fier [<i>proud</i>], hier -ir verb infinitive endings (finir, partir, etc.)	-er verb endings (aller, skier, etc.)
-f	bref, chef; bœuf, neuf, œuf, veuf [<i>widow</i>]; soif; vif	clef [<i>old spelling of clé</i>], nerf [nerve]
-l	il, avril, civil, exil, fil* [thread], vil; bal, mal, poil; bel, sel; bol, sol, vol; nul * <i>fils</i> [son] is pronounced /fis/; the <i>l</i> is silent; <i>fils</i> [threads] is pronounced like <i>fil</i> .	gentil

UNPRONOUNCED FINAL CONSONANTS: CONTEXTS AND EXAMPLES

LETTERS	CONTEXTS	EXAMPLES	EXCEPTIONS
-s, -x	<p>Articles:*</p> <p>Subject pronouns:*</p> <p>Verb endings:</p> <p>Nouns: plural endings</p> <p>singular nouns:</p>	<p>les, des</p> <p>nous, vous, ils, elles</p> <p>tu ... manges, écoutes je/tu ... finis, reviens je/tu ... pars, dors je/tu ... descends, comprends je/tu ... veux, peux je/tu ... crois, bois, mets</p> <p>les garçons, les femmes; les bateaux</p> <p>bois, jus, refus, pays</p>	<p>bus, sinus</p>
-t, -d	<p>Verb endings: singular (il/elle/on)</p> <p>Adjectives (masc. forms):</p> <p>Nouns:</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p>il/elle/on ... finit, conduit, dit il/elle/on ... part, dort il/elle/on ... peut, veut il/elle/on ... attend, comprend</p> <p>petit*, tout*, haut, délicat, secret; grand*, chaud, froid</p> <p>billet, forêt, objet, idiot; nord, pied, regard, retard</p> <p>salut</p>	<p>net, ouest, est sud</p>
-z	<p>Verb endings (vous):</p> <p>Nouns:</p> <p>Prepositions, adverbs:</p>	<p>parlez, allez, entrez, etc.</p> <p>nez, riz</p> <p>chez*, assez</p>	<p>gaz</p>

UNPRONOUNCED FINAL CONSONANTS: CONTEXTS AND EXAMPLES

LETTERS	CONTEXTS	EXAMPLES	EXCEPTIONS
-g	Nouns:	bourg, Strasbourg	
-n	Adjectives: masculine forms Nouns:	bon, mon, ton, son plan, fin	
-nc -ng		blanc, franc, tronc long, rang, sang, poing	donc (n is silent)

*The rules for liaison affect the pronunciation of final consonants for articles, subject pronouns, and certain adjectives (those preceding a noun) and prepositions. In these cases, the consonant is pronounced when followed by a word that begins with a vowel sound.

FICHES D'EXERCICES

PRELIMINARY EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1: GRAPHEMES

Grapheme: "a letter or combination of letters within a word that represents a given sound"

1. Consider the underlined graphemes in the following list of English words. For each word, can you think of other common words in which the same grapheme represents a *different* sound than the sound in the given word?

Example: met, egg

the

we, he, she

foot:

doubt:

win:

great:

thin:

chalk:

2. Consider your names (first, middle, last). Can you break them down into the separate graphemes that represent each sound? Does each letter represent a single sound (i.e., is each of the individual letters a distinct grapheme, as in *Bob?*), or are some graphemes composed of more than one letter (as in *Shawn: sh aw n*)?

3. Think back to the spelling rules that you learned in elementary school. Can you remember any of them? Try to think of at least one rule. For example, could you tell a non-English speaker how to pronounce *mat* and *mate*, and explain the rule for pronouncing the letter *a* in these two contexts? Does this rule also apply to other vowels?

4. Consider the English word *own*. Think of other words that include it in which *-own* is pronounced the same way, and words in which it is pronounced in a different way. Does there seem to be any rule that applies to these different pronunciations?

5. What spelling rules having to do with pronunciation do you know in French?

EXERCISE 2: UNPRONOUNCED FINAL CONSONANTS

A. Masculine/Feminine

One adjective in each pair ends in an unpronounced consonant, while the other ends in a pronounced consonant. Cross out the silent final consonant and underline the pronounced consonant, then **say the pair aloud**. Release the pronounced consonant clearly to mark the distinction between masculine and feminine.

Note: the order (m/f, f/m) changes at random.

Example: tout / tou <u>t</u> e	lour <u>d</u> e / lour <u>d</u>
petit / petite	grand / grande
chaude / chaud	froide / froid
gris / grise	vert / verte
haute / haut	bas / basse
plat / plate	ronde / rond
mort / morte	vivant / vivante
divers / diverse	délicat / délicate
prête / prêt	doux / douce

B. Mixed categories (nouns, adjectives, verbs)

One word in each pair ends with a silent final consonant. First, identify the word and cross out the silent consonant. Then, underline the pronounced consonant at the end of the other word. **Say both words aloud**. Pronounce the final consonant with a clear release.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. loupe / loup | 6. secret / secrète |
| 2. bas / base | 7. boute / bout |
| 3. sauce / saut | 8. croix / croise |
| 4. fous / foule | 9. laid / laide |
| 5. fait / faite | 10. bonne / bon |

C. Trouvez l'intrus!

In each group, find the **one** word that ends with a consonant *sound*. Circle the word and underline the pronounced consonant(s). Cross out the silent final consonants in the other words.

Example: faux / fausse / faut [il faut]

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. chaud / chaude / chaut | 6. coupe / coup / coût |
| 2. maux / mot / mauve | 7. coup / coût / coûte |
| 3. mous / mousse / moût | 8. bout / bouts / boule |
| 4. toute / tout / toux | 9. rat / ras / rate |
| 5. toux / tout / tousse | 10. poux / pouls / pousse |

D. Verb endings

One of the conjugated verbs in each group ends in a consonant sound. Circle the verb and underline the consonant. Cross out the silent final consonant(s) in each of the other conjugated verbs. Pronounce the infinitive and then the three verbs in order. Be sure to pronounce the final consonant with a distinct release to indicate the plural form. **Note:** the conjugated forms may or may not be in their customary order.

Example: attendre: attends / attend~~+~~ / attendent

1. sortir: sort / sors / sortent
2. dormir: dors / dorment / dort
3. servir: servent / sers / sert
4. venir: viennent / vient / viens
5. finir: finis / finissent / finit
6. pouvoir: peuvent / peux / peut
7. boire: boit / bois / boivent
8. vouloir: veut / veulent / veux
9. prendre: prends / prend / prennent

SECTION I: VOYELLES ORALES

RÈGLE

au = /o/	<p>Les graphèmes au et eau se prononcent /o/, comme dans le mot beau.</p> <p>Graphèmes équivalents: -ô-; -o+C_{finale muette} (<i>tôt, dos</i>)</p>
ou = /u/	<p>Le graphème ou se prononce /u/, comme dans le mot nous.</p> <p>Graphèmes équivalents: oû, oû (Les accents ne changent pas la prononciation.)</p>

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. beau / cou / vous / eau / chaud / goût / douze / faute / août / soupe / aube
 2. bateau / ragoût / bisou / épaule / genou / bonjour / biseau / tabou
 3. boutique / beauté / soucoupe / causer / poulet / moustique / sauter / écouter
- B.** 1. boue / peau / faux / douze / mot / maux / nous / gauche / jour / bouche / jaune
 2. cachou / plateau / dépôt / bijoux / manteaux / morceau / amour / secours
 3. chevaux / épaule / souper / toujours / fauché / goûter / audace / nautique

Orthographe française, mots anglais

Les “mots” suivants n’existent pas en français; mais si vous les prononcez et utilisez votre imagination, vous pouvez entendre un mot anglais. Quel est le mot anglais?

tauste:	meauste:	maute:	Bauzeau:
bouste:	choute:	toulze:	

RÈGLE

a = /a/ | Les graphèmes **a**, **à**, et **â** se prononcent /a/, comme dans **salle, mal**.
(Un accent ne change pas la prononciation de la lettre a.)

è = /ɛ/ | Le graphème **è** se prononce /ɛ/, comme dans **mère, père**.
Graphèmes équivalents:
e + C_{prononcée} en syllabe finale: *cher, chef, bel, sec, tête*
e + CC en syllabe finale: *-elle, -enne, -erre, -esse, -ette*
ai + C: *faire, laine, naître*
ei + C: *neige*

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. chat / bras / caisse / casse / salle / belle / glace / plage / neige
2. guerre / repas / retard / beau-frère / fromage / prochaine / dommage
3. voilà / café / fenêtre / Paris / entourage
- B.** 1. elle / tasse / chère / beige / sage / mettre / règle / page / tête / fête
2. gare / chef / chaise / bases / maître / été / déjà / promesse / courage
3. pêle-mêle / naître / nager / chasser / belle-mère / comprennent

Jeux et activités

A. Homophones

Les homophones sont des mots qui ont la même prononciation, mais les sens et les orthographes sont différents (e.g., *waste/waist*, *so/sew* en anglais). Dans chaque liste, trouvez les homophones du premier mot et mettez un cercle autour d'eux; barrez [*cross out*] les intrus.

Modèle:	pouce	poche	pousse		
1.	fête	faites	foot		
2.	graisse	grasse	Grèce		
3.	guerre	gare	guère		
4.	chère	chair	char	cher	
5.	car	quart	carre	Caire	
6.	mettre	maître	mitre		
7.	phare	fard	faire	far	
8.	Seine	séné	saine		
9.	par	pars	père	part	pare
10.	paire	perds	père	poire	pair

B. Petites phrases

Vous connaissez déjà des mots qui contiennent le son **a** (/a/). Pensez à des paires de mots—un verbe et un nom—et créez de petites phrases avec ces mots. Les phrases peuvent être drôles, intéressantes, ou bizarres. Travaillez avec un partenaire, si vous désirez. Ensuite, faites la même chose pour /ɛ/. (Suggestion: pour les noms, regardez les listes de *Cherchez les lettres!*)

Exemples:

a: nager / garage: *On ne nage pas dans le garage.*

è: acheter / bête: *Il achète une petite bête*.*
jeter / dettes: *Je jette mes dettes (par la fenêtre).*

*petite bête: insect, bug

RÈGLE

i = /i/

Les graphèmes **i** et **-ie** se prononcent /i/, comme dans **six**, **ami**, **amie**, **finir**.

Graphèmes équivalents: **î** (*île*), **ï** (*maïs*); **y** (*cycle*)

(Un accent circonflexe ne change pas la prononciation de la lettre *i*. Le tréma [¨] ne change pas le son, mais indique une syllabe distincte: *ma-ïs*.)

(Pour la prononciation de *in* ou *im* (*vin*, *simple*), voir leçons 9 et 11.)

u = /y/

Le graphème **u** se prononce /y/, comme dans **tu**.

Graphème équivalent: **-û** (*dû*)

(L'accent circonflexe ne change pas la prononciation.)

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.1. lu / lit / vie / bus / skis / qui / sur / fiche / ville
 2. prune / lire / ligne / luxe / pipe / rhume / type
 3. habits / salut! / facile / satire / lunettes / finir / citrons / pyrex / inerte
- B.1. vue / nu / sire / sûr / prix / pure / nulle / pile / juste / zut!
 2. sud / lire / reçu / perdu / fragile / début / études / élire / super
 3. putois / piquant / tyran / farfelu / Cyrano / usurper / accumuler

Jeux et activités

A. Des listes

Quels mots connaissez-vous contenant les sons **i** (/i/) ou **u** (/y/)?

Pour chaque son, faites une liste de 3–4 mots avec ce son (vous pouvez utiliser les mots de *Cherchez les lettres!*).

Combinez les mots pour créer de petites phrases (phrases drôles ou bizarres, si cela vous dit). Travaillez seul/e ou avec un partenaire.

Exemples:

i: livre, fille, dix

u: plus, futur, rhume

i et **u**: ami, dur, difficile

La **fil**le a achet**é** **dix** liv**res**.

Dans le **fu**tur, les **rh**umes n'existeront **plu**s.

Mes **am**is sont **du**rs et **diffi**ciles

B. Mots voisins

Pour chaque mot, trouvez un nom de la même famille se terminant par *-ie*.

Exemple: boulanger: une boulangerie

boucher: une poisson: une
sucre: une sonner: une
tapis: une compagne: la

C. Quel verbe avec quel nom?

Pour identifier le pronom (*l'*) dans chaque phrase, regardez la liste des noms. Quel nom (a–d) va ensemble avec quelle phrase (1–4)?

1. Je l'ai appris.	a. le professeur
2. Je l'ai conduit.	b. l'alphabet
3. Je l'ai dit.	c. "Bonjour! Ça va?"
4. Je l'ai compris.	d. le bus

RÈGLE

ou = /u/ | Le graphème **ou** se prononce /u/, comme dans **nous**.
Graphèmes équivalents: où, où

u = /y/ | Le graphème **u** se prononce /y/ comme dans **tu**.
Graphème équivalent: -û (dû)
(L'accent circonflexe ne change pas la prononciation.)

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. tu / nous / rue / loup / mur / muse / poule / bus / tour / rhume / sûre
2. début / voyou / toutou / voiture / virgule / autour / pendule / futur
3. mouchoir / utile / lucide / vouloir / unique / ouvrir / ululer / ridicule
- B.** 1. fou / coup / du / goût / rude / lune / pouce / coude / nulle / soupe / sucre
2. bayou / statue / hibou / beaucoup / chaussure / atchoum! / culture / Toulouse
3. couper / prudente / ouvert / foulard / stupide / soufflé / pouvoir / s'amuser / troubadour

Jeux et activités

A. Des listes

Quels mots connaissez-vous qui contiennent le son **ou** (/u/) et **u** (/y/)? Pour chaque son, faites une liste de 3–4 mots avec ce son (vous pouvez utiliser les mots des listes de *Cherchez les lettres!*). Combinez les mots pour créer de petites phrases (phrases drôles ou bizarres, si cela vous dit). Travaillez seul/e ou avec un partenaire.

Exemples:

ou: *où, bouche, mouche, soupe* *Où est la mouche?*
Dans la soupe, ou dans ta bouche?

u: *lune, sur, tulipe, voiture* *Il y a une tulipe sur la voiture.*
Pas de tulipes sur la lune.

B. Participes

Beaucoup de participes passés se terminent en **-u**. Par exemple, *voir—vu*, *descendre—descendu*. En groupes ou individuellement, créez une liste d'au moins quatre participes passés en **-u**. Qui peut trouver le plus de participes?

C. Quel verbe avec quel nom?

Pour identifier le pronom dans chaque phrase, regardez la liste des noms: quel nom (a–d) va ensemble avec quelle phrase (1–4)?

1. Je l'ai attendu.	a. le devoir
2. Je l'ai bu.	b. le bus
3. Je l'ai rendu.	c. Albert Camus (auteur)
4. Je l'ai lu.	d. le jus

RÈGLE

ou = /u/ | Le graphème **ou** se prononce /u/, comme dans **nous**.

eu = /ø/ | Le graphème **eu** se prononce /ø/ ou /œ/, comme dans **peu** et **peur**.

Graphème équivalent: œu, comme dans *vœu* [vow, wish], *sœur*

Exception: Le participe passé du verbe *avoir* (*eu*) rime avec **tu**: *J'ai eu, tu as eu*, etc.

REMARQUE. Les voyelles dans **peu** et **peur** sont différentes, mais la différence est petite: la bouche est un peu plus ouverte pour *peur* /œ/ que pour *peu* /ø/. La voyelle plus ouverte se trouve dans les syllabes terminées par une consonne prononcée.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.1. nous / jeux / neuf / mou / ceux / joue / foule / deux / août
 2. cœur / douce / douze / veuf / genou / cheveu / amour / égout
 3. joyeux / curieux / goûter / vouloir / pleuvoir / moulin / couloir
- B.1. chou / euh / ceux / source / veux / vieux / boules / deux / pleut
 2. cours / fâcheux / bijou / neveu / chanceuse / Pérou / l'hébreu
 3. toutefois / heureuse / deuxième / douter / merveilleux / paresseux

Jeux et activités

A. Suffixes

Beaucoup de noms français se terminent en *-eur* et en *-euse*, un suffixe qui désigne une personne qui fait l'activité indiquée par le verbe. Trouvez le mot qui correspond à chaque définition.

Exemple: Une personne qui fait de la *boxe*—> *un boxeur, une boxeuse*

Une personne ... qui *joue* (à un sport): _____

... qui *court*: _____

... qui fait du *rap*: _____

... qui *dort*: _____

... qui *conduit*: _____

Pouvez-vous penser à d'autres mots qui se terminent en *-eur/-euse*?

B. Deux voyelles ensemble

Complétez chaque phrase par le mot logique de la liste.

Liste: *couleurs / chou-fleur / douleur / douteux / écouteurs / fournisseur*

1. Le jaune et le bleu sont des ...
2. Le contraire de *sûr*, c'est ...
3. Le ... , c'est un légume blanc.
4. Une personne qui fournit est un ...
5. Une sensation pénible est une ...
6. Un appareil pour écouter de la musique, c'est des ...
7. *Midi*, c'est la même chose que ... heures. (*À vous de deviner. C'est un nombre.*)

C. Des listes

Quels mots connaissez-vous qui contiennent le son **eu** (/ø/) et **ou** (/u/)? Pour chaque son, faites une liste de 3–4 mots avec ce son (vous pouvez utiliser les mots des listes de *Cherchez les lettres!*). Combinez les mots pour créer de petites phrases (phrases drôles ou bizarres, si cela vous dit). Travaillez seul/e ou avec un partenaire.

Exemples:

rouge, douze, chou: Voilà douze choux rouges.

deux, bleu, yeux: J'ai deux yeux bleus.

RÈGLE

a = /a/ | Les graphèmes **a**, **à**, et **â** se prononcent /a/, comme dans salle, mal.

o + C_{prononcée} = /ɔ/ | La lettre **o** suivie d'une consonne prononcée se prononce /ɔ/, comme dans **homme, carotte, prof.**

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. char / mort / moche / l'art / mal / comme / plage / sac / voilà / couronne / déjà
 2. courage / cacher / colosse / bravo! / savoir / dormir / Paris / partir / travailler
- B.** 1. place / gosse / tard / tort / homme / phare / bonne / retard / encore / école / massage
 2. horloge / chasser / praline / sortir / garder / formule

Jeux et activités

A. Homophones

Les homophones sont des mots qui ont la même prononciation, mais le sens et l'orthographe de chaque mot sont différents (e.g., *so/sew* en anglais). Dans chaque liste, trouvez les homophones du premier mot et entourez-les [*circle them*]; barrez [*cross out*] les intrus.

Modèle:	pouce	poche	pousse		
1.	l'art	l'air	lors	lard	lourd
2.	par	part	port	pur	pars
3.	phare	fort	fard	far	four
4.	décor	des coeurs	des corps		
5.	mal	malle	molle	mâle	moule

B. Révision: voyelles

Le professeur va prononcer des séries de mots. Pour chaque série, indiquez l'ordre dans lequel vous entendez les mots (1-6).

Modèle: __ le trac / __ le troc / __ le truc

1. __ basse / __ bosse / __ Beauce / __ bus
2. __ pas / __ peu / __ peau / __ poux / __ pu
3. __ part / __ port / __ peur / __ pour / __ pur
4. __ bal / __ belle / __ bol / __ bulle / __ boule
5. __ mal / __ mel / __ meule / __ molle / __ mule / __ moule

RÈGLE

o + C_{muette} = /o/

La lettre **o** suivie d'une consonne muette se prononce /o/, comme dans **mot, dos**.

Graphèmes équivalents: -ô (*tôt*), -au (*faux*), -eau (*beau*)

o + C_{prononcée} = /ɔ/

La lettre **o** suivie d'une consonne prononcée dans la même syllabe se prononce /ɔ/, comme dans **homme, carotte, prof**.

Exception: Quand la consonne finale est /z/, on prononce **o** /o/: *rose, chose*, etc.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. peau / mot / note / dos / dort / folle / chaud
2. sot / sotté / haut / cloche / allô / idiot / sortent / beauté
- B.** 1. comme / seau / poche / coq / flot / corps / snob* / stop!*
2. bientôt / d'accord / atroce / bateau / alcool / pilote / abricot* / idiote / enveloppe

*Parce que ce sont des mots anglais, on prononce la consonne finale de *snob* et *stop*, mais on ne prononce pas le *t* final d'*abricot*, qui est un mot français.

Jeux et activités

A. Trouvez le mot correct

Voilà une liste de mots qui se terminent en /o/. Utilisez-les pour compléter les phrases suivantes.

gros lot / matelots / recto / sabots / sauts [cf. sauter] / trop! / verso

1. Ceux qui travaillent dans un navire s'appellent des ...
2. "Quelle sale cuisine ! c'est ..."
3. On a écrit sur les deux faces de ce papier, c'est à dire, ... et ...
4. Elle a gagné à la loterie et on lui a donné le ...
5. Le garçon faisait des petits ... pour prendre un fruit du pommier.
6. Les humains ont des *pieds*; les chevaux et les vaches ont des ...

RÈGLE

é = /e/

Le graphème **é** se prononce toujours /e/ comme dans **école, année**.

Graphèmes équivalents:

-er, -ez, -ai (terminaisons verbales): *parler, parlez, parlerai*

-es dans les monosyllabes (articles et autres): *les, des; ces; mes, tes, ses*

e = /ə/

Le graphème **e** (sans accent) se prononce /ə/, comme dans **je, le, petit**.

e + CC représente d'autres sons: /ɛ/ (**elle**), /e/ (**effort**)

-e ne se prononce pas à la fin d'un mot: *parle, comme*

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. me / les / été / menu / cela / leçon / légume
 2. depuis / demain / détail / venir / récent / légende / genou
 3. fenêtre / vérité / devenir / recevoir / léger / melon / février / obtenir
- B.** 1. que / j'ai / blé / des / ceci / bébé / semaine / méchant
 2. métal / légal / devoir / détour / retour / génial / mémoire
 3. décembre / Sénégal / revenir / céréales / demoiselle / réveiller

Jeux et activités

A. Contraires

Trouvez dans la liste le verbe qui veut dire le contraire du verbe donné. Prononcez les paires (attention à bien prononcer la voyelle dans la première syllabe).

Liste 1: dépenser (*to spend*), détester, réussir, réveiller, séparer

Exemple: adorer: _____

échouer (*to fail*): _____

endormir (*put to sleep*): _____

économiser: _____

réunir: _____

Liste 2: recevoir, refuser, venir

accepter: _____ aller: _____ donner: _____

B. Encore une fois!

Beaucoup de verbes français commencent avec le préfixe **re-** ou **ré-** qui veut dire *répéter l'action*. Ainsi, *refaire* veut dire *faire encore* [*to redo, do again*]. Pour chaque définition en anglais, pensez à l'équivalent en français qui commence avec **re-** ou **ré-**. Dans chaque cas, prononcez bien le préfixe.

Exemple: *read again* (*reread*) = _____

Verbes en **re-**: *see again, close again, come back* (*return*), *say again, put back, ask again*

Verbes en **ré-**: *revise, unite again, write again, react*

C. Préfixes opposés

En français comme en anglais, le préfixe **re-** veut dire *faire encore* et le préfixe **dé-** veut dire *faire le contraire*. Ainsi, *refaire*=*to redo*, *défaire*=*to undo*. Combinez chacun des deux préfixes **re-** et **dé-** avec chaque verbe ci-dessous et écrivez les deux verbes. Prononcez les trois verbes apparentés [*related*], en contrastant bien les voyelles **e-** et **é-**. Pouvez-vous deviner le sens des deux verbes?

Exemple: charger / *to load*: _____, _____ Sens?:

boutonner / *to button* (e.g., a shirt):

couvrir / *to cover* (e.g., a pot):

maquiller / *to put on make-up*:

monter / *to assemble, put together* (e.g., a motor):

peupler / *to populate* (e.g., a region):

placer / *to place*:

SECTION 2: VOYELLES NASALES

RÈGLE

Quand **m**, **mm**, **n**, ou **nn** sont suivis d'une voyelle ($m + V$, $mm + V$; $n + V$, $nn + V$), on prononce la consonne, comme dans **même**, **comme**, **ami**, **une**, **bonne**, **banane**.

Quand **m** ou **n** sont la dernière lettre d'un mot, ou quand ils sont suivis d'une autre consonne (par exemple, $-nt$, $-mp$, $-ns$), on ne prononce pas /m/ ou /n/; on prononce une voyelle nasale, comme dans **faim**, **pain**, **bon**, **champ**, **tante**, **penser**.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un mot. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec le même son final que le mot prononcé, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. son / donne / don / pont / somme / nom
2. Rhône / plomb / chanson / atomes / menton / démon
- B.** 1. sein / Seine / main / chêne / chaîne / grain / bien
2. vient / viennes / chante / veines / coréenne
- C.** 1. sang / grand / crâne / champ / plan / pannes / sent
2. vent / Anne / autant
- D.** 1. sons / ton / tonne / fond / donne / Toulon / couronne
2. Narbonne / voyons / personne / bonbon / Yvonne

Jeux et activités

A. Cherchez l'intrus

Dans chaque série de mots, il y a *un mot* qui n'est pas comme les autres. Dans le groupe A, l'intrus se termine avec une consonne nasale; dans le groupe B, l'intrus se termine avec une voyelle nasale. Barrez l'intrus.

Exemples: A. ton / t~~onne~~ / thon B. ma~~in~~ / Maine / mène

1. don / dont / donne	1. canne / Caen / cane
2. faim / fine / fin / feint	2. Seine / scène / saine / sein
3. vaine / vain / vin / vint	3. Rennes / rein / rênes / reine
4. peint / peine / pain / pin	4. sonne / Saône / sont
5. plain / plaint / plein / plaine	
6. paon / pan / panne	

B. Noms et adjectifs

Pensez aux noms et aux adjectifs (professions, nationalités) qui se terminent avec la lettre **-n**. Combien pouvez-vous trouver? Donnez le masculin et le féminin.

Exemples: *musicien/ne; américain/e.*

C. Verbes

Faites une liste des verbes qui se terminent avec une voyelle nasale au singulier (*il/elle*) et avec une consonne nasale au pluriel (*ils/elles*). Pensez aux verbes irréguliers en *-enir, -endre*.

Exemple: *il tient, ils tiennent.*

RÈGLE

on = /ɔ̃/Les graphèmes **on** et **om** se prononcent /ɔ̃/,
comme dans **bon**, **compter**.**an, en** = /ɑ̃/Les graphèmes **an, en, am, em** se prononcent /ɑ̃/,
comme dans **manger, champ, ensemble**.**Exception:** À la fin d'un mot, les graphèmes
-ien et **-yen** ne se prononcent pas avec /ɑ̃/; ils se
prononcent comme *bien*: *chien, moyen*.**Notez bien:***m* et *n* représentent les mêmes voyelles nasales:*comte* = *conte*;*champ* = *chant*.**Cherchez les lettres!**

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. an / non / mont / dent / oncle / lent / blonde / onze / camp
2. dimanche / cochon / prison / entrée / boisson / poisson / français / confort
- B.** 1. en / pont / thon / grand / quand / bon / temps / tante / danse
2. honte / jambe / avion / parent / garçon / charmante / enfant / bonjour / croissant

Jeux et activités

A. Révision: voyelle ou consonne nasale?

Dans chaque série de mots, il y a *un mot* qui n'est pas comme les autres. Dans le groupe A, l'intrus se termine avec une consonne nasale; dans le groupe B, l'intrus se termine avec une voyelle nasale. Barrez l'intrus.

Exemples: A. ton / ~~tonne~~ / thon

B. ~~main~~ / Maine / mère

A	B
1. don / dont / donne	1. canne / Caen / cane
2. faim / fine / fin / feint	2. Seine / scène / saine / sein
3. vaine / vain / vin / vint	3. Rennes / rein / rênes / reine
4. peint / peine / pain / pin	4. sonne / Saône / sont
5. plain / plaint / plein / plaine	
6. paon / pan / panne	

B. Chiffres

Lisez les chiffres suivants. Lesquels contiennent la même voyelle que **on**? La même voyelle que **an**? Ecrivez le mot pour chaque nombre, si nécessaire.

11 / 30 / 40 / 60 / 70 / 91 / 100

C. Petites phrases avec des voyelles nasales

Cherchez dans les listes A et B ci-dessus (*Cherchez les lettres!*) et relevez [*pick out*] quelques mots qui partagent la même voyelle et que vous pouvez combiner en une petite phrase. Par exemple, dans liste B:

bon, thon → *Le thon est bon*

croissant, charmant → *Ce croissant est charmant!*

RÈGLE

an, en = /ɑ̃/

Les graphèmes **an, am, en, em** se prononcent /ɑ̃/,
comme dans **manger, champ, ensemble**.

in, yn, un = /ɛ̃/

Les graphèmes **in, im, yn, ym, un** se prononcent
/ɛ̃/, comme dans **main, fin, plein, sympa**.

Les lettres **a** ou **e** avant **in/im** ne changent pas la
prononciation.

Exception: Rappelez-vous que les graphèmes **ien**
et **yen** contiennent la même voyelle que **in**: **bien**,
combien; **moyen**; **tu reviens**; etc.

Notez bien:

m et *n* représentent les mêmes voyelles nasales:

champ = *chant*

faim = *fin*

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A. 1. fin / vent / sang / bien / main / tendre / viande / simple / étrange
2. étroite / silence / demain / sympa / enfer / interne / manger / entier / excellent
- B. 1. plan / pain / faim / champs / coin / chien / change / singe / safran
2. cousin / voisin / pendant / alpin / besoin / gentil / peinture / impossible

Jeux et activités

A. Homophones

Dans chaque série, mettez un cercle autour des mots avec la même prononciation que le premier mot (homophones), et barrez (/) les intrus.

Modèle:	pouce	poche	pousse	passe	
1.	dans	dent	daims	dents	
2.	cent	ceint	sans	sang	sent
3.	saint	sein	sang	ceint	
4.	faim	fine	fin	feint	
5.	teint	temps	tint	tente	thym
6.	pin	peins	peine	pente	pain

B. Chiffres

Lisez les chiffres suivants. Lesquels contiennent la même voyelle que **plan**? La même voyelle que **plein**? Les deux sons? Ecrivez le mot pour chaque nombre, si nécessaire.

5 / 15 / 20 / 25 / 30 / 40 / 50 / 60 / 80 / 85 / 90 / 95 / 100

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. ton / rond / dans / train / monde / honte / bonne / vendre
2. leçon / maison / voisin / camion / question / changer / ceinture
3. monter / blanchir / sincère / tomber
- B.** 1. lent / saint / cent / quand / bombe / danse / tente
2. compte / prendre / avant / iguane / congé / ensuite / entendre
3. vingt-et-un / océan / quantité / tonton / enchanté!
- C.** 1. sans / un / bain / sont / bien / loin / entre / cinq / mince
2. prenons / devient / cousin / douzaine / soudain / scandale / honteux
3. peinture / planter / complète / coincer / bronzer / symbolique

Jeux et activités

A. Rimes

Dans chaque série, mettez ensemble les mots qui riment, pour créer une paire. Lisez les paires à haute voix.

Exemple: mon / grand / un prince / pont / mince / vent
Lisez: *mon pont; grand vent; un prince mince*

1. mon / vingt / nom / mains
2. ton / quarante / tentes / thon*
3. gens / train / bon / plein / garçon / pensants
4. cent / vin / bons / fin / bonbons / ans
5. onde / bain / en / moyen / France / blonde
6. chance / chien / blonde / immense / canadien / vagabonde

*tuna

B. Combien?

Pouvez-vous trouver un nombre (ou plusieurs) qui rime(nt) avec chaque nom?

Exemples: _ lune: **une lune**; _ yeux: **deux yeux**
_ plantes / _ bronzes / _ vins / _ veufs / _ croix / _ dettes / _ chaises

SECTION 3: CONSONNES

RÈGLE

gn = /ɲ/

Le graphème **gn** se prononce /ɲ/ comme dans **ligne, montagne, gagner.**

n + V = /n/

La lettre **n** suivie d'une voyelle se prononce /n/ comme dans **fine, pleine.**

Graphème équivalent: **nn** (*bonne*)

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. signe / fine / manne / pagne / peigne / Seine / digne
 2. dizaine / châtaigne / champagne / planète / donner / soigner / cogner
 3. année / agneau / Agnès / sénateur / vigneron / magnifique
- B.** 1. mine / Maine / vigne / tonne / veine / ligne / Cannes
 2. arène / Auvergne / domaine / douzaine / montagne / finesse / pognon
 3. dominer / enseigner / cinéma / fanatique / phonétique / soulignons /
 nénuphar

Jeux et activités

A. Verbes:

Le graphème *gn* figure dans la conjugaison de plusieurs verbes (en *-gner*, en *-indre*). Quelques exemples sont donnés. Lisez les formes à haute voix, en prononçant clairement le /ɲ/.

gagner [*to win, earn*]: je **gagne**, tu __, on __ // nous **gagnons**, vous __, elles __

signer [*to sign one's name*]: je signe, tu __, on __ // nous signons, vous __, elles __

se peigner [*to comb oneself*]: je me peigne, tu __, on __ // nous nous peignons, vous __, ils __

craindre [*to fear*]: je crains... // nous **crainons**, vous **craignez**, elles **crainent**

peindre [*to paint*]: je peins... // nous peignons, vous __, elles __

se plaindre [*to complain*]: je me plains... // nous nous plaignons, vous __, ils__

B. Paires:

Trouvez dans la liste les deux mots pour traduire chacune des phrases suivantes, puis écrivez la phrase. Ajoutez les articles et changez la forme des verbes et des adjectifs si nécessaire.

araignée / bagnole (f) / baigner / beignets / craindre / espagnol / magnifique / montagne (f)

1. A magnificent mountain:
2. A Spanish jalopy [beat-up old car]:
3. Do you [vous] fear spiders?:
4. The doughnuts are bathing.:

C. Danger!

Il y a beaucoup de mots avec *-nge-* en français, et on peut confondre les lettres avec *-gn*. Il faut faire attention à l'orthographe pour bien lire et prononcer. Chacune des phrases suivantes contient un mot en **-gn-** et un mot en **-ng-**. Prononcez les phrases en faisant attention à la différence.

J'ai gagné une orange.

Un ange* cogne* à la porte.

*ange: angel; cogner: to knock

Connaissez-vous la signature du singe*?

*singe: monkey, ape

Tu fais ton linge* en ligne?

*linge: laundry

RÈGLE

V + **s** + V = /z/

Un seul **s** entre deux voyelles se prononce /z/,
comme dans **ch**ose, **fr**aïse, **l**isez, **As**ie.
En liaison, un **s** final se prononce /z/: les enfants,
mes amies.

V + **ss** + V = /s/

Double **ss** se prononce /s/, comme dans **f**ausse,
chasse, **m**ousse.
Au début d'un mot, ou avec une autre consonne,
un seul **s** = /s/: soeur, espérer, absent, version.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le graphème) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. fraise / classe / phrase / mousse / chaise / crise / fesse / lisent
2. épouse / richesse / saucisse / excuse / cerise / croissant / faisons
3. ciseaux / chaussette / oiseau / chaussure / voisine / épuisé / analyser
- B.** 1. chose / presse / tasse / thèse / suisse / cuisse / rose / russe
2. vitesse / morose / sottise / jeunesse / angoisse / bisou / message
3. plaisir / vaisselle / raison / raisin / paresseux / choisissez / Narcisse

Jeux et activités

A. Verbes en couleurs

Beaucoup de verbes réguliers en *-ir* ont le sens de *changer, acquérir une nouvelle qualité*. Ainsi, *grandir* = *devenir grand*; *mincir* = *devenir mince*. C'est le cas aussi pour certains verbes de couleur: *noircir*, par exemple, veut dire *devenir noir*. Comme *finir*, ces verbes forment leur pluriel en *-iss-*.

Répondez aux quatre questions en complétant la phrase avec le bon verbe de la liste. Conjuguez-le et prononcez clairement la consonne /s/.

Verbes: ***blanchir, jaunir, rougir, verdir***

1. Que font les arbres au printemps? Ils...
2. Que font les feuilles en automne? Elles...
3. Que font les cheveux d'une personne âgée? Ils...
4. Que font les gens quand ils sont embarrassés? Ils...

B. Prénoms français, prénoms anglais

Prononcez les prénoms français suivants en suivant les règles pour la prononciation du **s**: *Élise, Jason, Joseph, Joséphine, Lise, Thérèse*.

Maintenant, pensez aux prénoms équivalents en anglais: comment est-ce qu'on les prononce? Avec /s/ ou avec /z/?

C. Une seule lettre, une grande différence

Écoutez les quatre mots que votre professeur va lire, et écrivez les lettres (s ou ss) pour les compléter.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. de ___ e r t | 3. poi ___ o n |
| 2. dé ___ e r t | 4. poi ___ o n |

Lesquelles de ces quatre choses trouvez-vous agréables? Mettez un cercle autour de ces mots, puis barrez [*cross out*] les choses que vous trouvez désagréables. Comparez vos choix avec d'autres étudiants. Est-ce qu'il y a des différences d'opinion?

RÈGLE

La lettre **g** représente /g/ ou /ʒ/ (**zh**); c'est la lettre après la lettre **g** qui détermine sa prononciation.

g + a, o, u = /g/

Comme en anglais, le **g** dans **ga, go, gu** se prononce /g/, comme dans **gâteau, Hugo, aigu**. S'il y a une voyelle après **gu-**, on prononce la voyelle sans prononcer **u**: **guide, guerre, Guy**. À la fin d'un mot, **-gue** se prononce /g/: **figue, blague, langue**. (Le **u** ne se prononce pas.)

g + e, i, y = /ʒ/

Le **g** dans **ge, gi, gy** se prononce /ʒ/, comme dans **neige, girafe, gym**. S'il y a une voyelle après **ge-**, on prononce la voyelle sans prononcer **e**: **pigeon, mangeais, courageux**.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant le graphème qui représente le son.

- A.** 1. figue / sage / plage / blague / orgue / page / mangue
 2. guide / gauche / gîte / gosse / visage / pirogue / saga / sagesse
 3. aigu / léger / figure / danger / légume / gingembre / guili guili*
 *tickle tickle
- B.** 1. vague / songe / juge / blogue / orge / tige / algue
 2. golf / geai / orage / collègue / bloguer / bouger / congé
 3. gorille / girafe / agacer / agence / étagère / courageux / catalogue

Jeux et activités

A. Mots anglais, mots français

Regardez les mots suivants et prononcez-les selon les règles. Dans certains mots le **g** se prononce comme en anglais; dans d'autres la prononciation est différente. Trouvez les mots qui ont une prononciation différente.

algue [algae] / fugitif / garage / gecko / geyser / margarine

B. Paires qui contrastent

Les deux mots dans chaque paire ont la même prononciation, sauf la lettre **g**. Lisez les deux mots à haute voix.

âgée—aguets; doge—dogue; draguer—dragée; fige—figue
léguer—léger; orge—orgue; prodigue—prodige

C. Allitération au zoo!

Prononcez les mots dans chaque liste (animaux, noms). Puis choisissez un nom pour chaque animal dans la liste des noms. Harmonisez les noms: pour les animaux qui contiennent /g/, choisissez un nom qui commence avec /g/; pour ceux avec /ʒ/, choisissez un nom avec /ʒ/.

Exemple: *Gaétan la gazelle.*

Animaux: gazelle (f), geai [jay], gibbon, girafe (f), gorille, grenouille (f), kangourou

Noms: Gaétan, Gary, Gaston, Georges, Gertrude, Gilberte, Gisèle, Guillaume

D. Matières scolaires

Quels cours universitaires contiennent la lettre **g** au début, au milieu ou à la fin du mot? Dressez une petite liste. Pensez aux mots avec **g** en anglais: *géologie*, ...

E. Gaston et Gisèle

Écrivez des mots qui contiennent la lettre **g** pour créer des phrases et faire un portrait de ces deux enfants, Gaston et Gisèle. Pensez aux adjectifs, aux verbes, et aux noms avec **g**. Créez 2–3 phrases drôles, intéressantes, bizarres!

Exemples:

Gaston joue de la guitare. Il est égoïste et aime les blagues.

Gisèle est un génie. Elle aime la neige, et nager à la plage.

F. Voyages à l'étranger

Imaginez des voyages aux pays ou aux villes dont les noms contiennent la lettre **g**, et des activités avec la lettre **g**.

Exemple: "En Egypte je vais nager. Dans mes bagages je vais mettre mes godasses [*shoes*] et un gilet [*vest*]."

G. Titres fantaisistes*

Inventez des titres avec au moins trois **g**.

Exemples:

Films: "À la Plage avec Gilles et Ginette." (film d'amour)
"La Courgette qui a mangé Chicago." (film d'horreur)
Chanson: "Gina a giflé [*slapped*] son homme et déménagé [*left*]" (country)
Emission de télé: "Georges le géant gentil" (émission pour enfants)

*fantaisiste: *whimsical*

*courgette: *zucchini*

RÈGLE

La lettre **c** représente /s/ ou /k/: c'est la lettre après la lettre **c** qui détermine sa prononciation. Les règles sont les mêmes que pour la lettre **g**.

c + a, o, u = /k/ | **c** suivi des lettres **a, o, u** se prononce /k/ comme dans **cacao, coco, culture**.
La cédille (ç) change la prononciation du **c** devant ces lettres. Dans ce cas, on prononce /s/: **ça va?, façon, aperçu**.

c + e, i, y = /s/ | **c** suivi des lettres **e, i** ou **y** se prononce /s/ comme dans **ceci, cela, cinéma, cygne**.
Un **u** devant **i** rend le **c** dur (/k/): **cuisine, cuillère**.

Cherchez les lettres!

Avant chaque liste, le professeur va prononcer un son. Identifiez tous les mots dans la liste avec ce son, en soulignant les lettres (le *graphème*) qui représentent le son.

- A.** 1. cire / cuir / cause / cerf / coupe / glace / parc / cesser
2. calquer / céans / cuivré / reçu / vécu / vaincu / soupçon
3. placard / pourceau / ficeler / faculté / pacifique
- B.** 1. coup / sceau / coing / cuit / cite / farce / coudre / calcaire
2. cuillère / pacage / souci / acier / rancune / leçon / Mâcon
3. berceau / bercail / reculer

Jeux et activités

A. Céline et Carl: un portrait

Choisissez des adjectifs de la liste pour faire les portraits de Carl et Céline, deux personnages de votre imagination. Pour chacun, choisissez: **un** adjectif de nationalité (ou de région), **une** profession, et **deux** adjectifs de caractère, soit quatre adjectifs au total. **Le début des mots doit correspondre au son initial du nom** (/s/ pour Céline, /k/ pour Carl). Pour Celine, mettez les adjectifs au féminin.

Profession et nationalité:

céramiste / cinéaste / comédien / cuisinier / cycliste
canadien / celtique / coréen

Caractère:

calme / capable / capricieux / carnivore / caressant / catastrophiste / causeur /
cérébral / compliqué / confus / content / cool / courageux / cultivé / curieux /
cynique

Céline est ...

Carl est ...

RÈGLE

il + V = /il/

Les lettres *il* suivies d'une voyelle se prononcent avec /l/, comme dans ***île, facile, kilo.***

ill = /ij/ ou /j/

Le graphème *ill* se prononce avec un yod, /ij/ ou /j/ selon le contexte: est-ce qu'il y a une consonne ou une voyelle (C ou V) avant?

·C + *ill*-: on prononce /ij/, comme dans ***fil*le, *fa*mille, *ha*biller, *br*illant.**

·V + *ill*-: on prononce la voyelle suivie d'un yod (/j/), comme dans ***ta*ille, *trava*iller, *feu*ille, *bou*teille, *gre*nouille.**

Exceptions:

mille, ville et ***tranquille*** se prononcent avec /il/ (sans yod), ainsi que les mots apparentés (*million, village, tranquillement*, etc.). De même pour les noms propres ***Gilles*** et ***Lille*** (nom d'une ville française).

Cherchez les lettres!

- A. 1. *île* / *fil*le / *bil*e / *mil*le / *pastil*le / *Odil*e / *vanil*le / *goril*le
 2. *facil*e / *fa*mille / *util*e / *docil*e / *bil*let / *fil*et / *fil*lette / *maqu*iller
- B. 1. *fil*le / *feu*ille / *bil*le / *ail*e / *pail*le / *fa*mille / *volail*le / *faucil*le
 2. *vil*le / *Bastil*le / *bou*teille / *oreil*le / *tranquil*le / *brillan*te / *nouil*les
 3. *gre*nouille / *ha*biller / *bouill*on / *scintil*ler / *trava*iller / *réveil*ler / *gaspil*ler

Jeux et activités

A. Paires similaires

Dans chaque paire, les deux mots ont le même son: /l/ ou /j/. Pour chaque paire, identifiez le son en question, et écrivez /l/ ou /j/ dans l'espace. Prononcez les deux mots à haute voix.

Exemples: a. difficile / pâle: ___ b. feuille / fille: ___

1. filet / facile: ___

2. piller / fillette: ___

3. veille / vaille: ___

4. piler / filer: ___

5. vile / ville: ___

6. aile / îlot: ___

B. Contrastes

Chaque paire a un mot avec /l/ et un mot avec /j/. Identifiez le son dans chaque mot et indiquez la prononciation avec les symboles phonétiques (/l, j/ ou /j, l/). Puis prononcez-les à haute voix. Faites bien le contraste entre /l/ et le yod.

Exemples: a. caille / cale: ___

b. fouille / foule: ___

1. file / fille: ___

2. pile / pille: ___

3. bille / bile: ___

4. pilote / pillage: ___

5. famille / familier: ___

6. fouiller / fouler: ___

RÈGLE

A la fin d'un mot, le graphème *-il* se prononce /il/ ou /j/ (le yod) selon le contexte. Il faut regarder la lettre avant: est-ce une consonne ou une voyelle?

C + *il* = /C + il/ | Après une consonne, le graphème *-il* se prononce /il/ comme dans **avril**, **fil** [string].

V + *il* = /V + j/ | Après une voyelle, le graphème *-il* se prononce [j]. On prononce la voyelle suivie d'un **yod** (/j/), comme dans **œil**, **soleil**, **détail**.

Exceptions: *gentil*, *outil* [tool], *fusil* [rifle], *persil* [parsley], *sourcil* [eyebrow]. On prononce la fin de tous ces mots avec /i/ (sans /l/, sans yod).

Cherchez les lettres!**A. (mots en -il)**

1. il / ail / bail / cil / œil / deuil / fil / mail / rail / seuil / vil
2. civil / conseil / détail / avril / babil / soleil / exil / profil / travail

B. (mots en -il et -ile)

1. île / ailes / pail / bile / seuil / huile / gril / toile / éveil / étoile / orteil
2. docile / corail / baril / pareil / utile / Brésil / péril / sommeil / pilule

C. (mots en -il, -ile et -ill-)

1. mil / fille / feuille / ville / quille
2. paille / huile / bétail / facile / viril / portail / réveil / hostile
3. fauteuil / écureuil / appareil / faufilet / habiller

Jeux et activités

A. Contrastes

Chaque paire a un mot avec /l/ et un mot avec /j/. Identifiez le son dans chaque mot et prononcez-les à haute voix.

1. babil / babillage
2. vieil / vielle
3. gril / grillage
4. ville / réveiller
5. sommeiller / sommelier
6. volatil / volaille
7. maille / mille
8. ail / aile

B. Comment dire?

Trouvez l'équivalent en français.

1. 1000 families (2000, 3000)
2. quiet bowling pins [*quilles*]
3. winged [*ailé*] garlic

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

French Graphemes and their Phonetic Symbols (IPA)

The main grapheme/sound pairs unique to French are included here. Most graphemes that represent the same sound in English and French have been omitted (e.g., **b**, **ph**).

ORAL VOWELS

MAIN GRAPHEME	EQUIVALENT GRAPHEMES	KEYWORDS	PHONETIC SYMBOL (IPA)
a	à	aller, là	/a/
au	eau	chaud, beau	/o/
e		je, le, petit	/ə/
è		mère	/ɛ/
é	-ée -er, -ez, -ai (verbes) -es (monosyllabes)	école, année parler, parlez, parlai les, mes	/e/
eu	œu	deux, peu; fleur, sœur	/ø/; /œ/
eu		VERBE <i>avoir</i> : j'ai eu, etc.	/y/
i	ie, î	idée, vie, île	/i/

o	o + C _{muette}	vélo, mot	/o/
oi	oî	moi, voir; boîte	/wa/
ou	où, ôû	nous; où, goût	/u/
u	û	tu, une; dû	/y/
-um		forum	/ɔm/
y		cycle	/i/

NASAL VOWELS

MAIN GRAPHEME	EQUIVALENT GRAPHEMES	KEYWORDS	IPA (Phonetic) Symbol
an	am; aon	danse, chambre; faon	/ɑ̃/
en	em	lent, temps	/ɑ̃/
in	im, yn/ym	vin, simple, syntaxe, symbole	/ɛ̃/
	ain/aim ein	pain, faim peintre	
-ien	-yen	bien, rien; moyen	/jɛ̃/
on	om	bon, nom	/ɔ̃/
-oin	-oins	loin, moins	/wɛ̃/
un		un, aucun	/ɛ̃/ (or /œ̃/)

CONSONANTS & SEMI-CONSONANTS

MAIN GRAPHEME	EQUIVALENT GRAPHEMES	KEYWORDS	IPA (Phonetic) Symbol
c		face, ceci; cours	/s/; /k/
ç		ça, façon; avançais	/s/
ch		cher	/ʃ/
g	gu	gare, goût, guide, vague	/g/
ge	g(é), g(è), g(i)	neige, génial, gène, girafe	/ʒ/
gn		ligne, montagne	/ɲ/
h		homme	—
j		je, jeune, joli	/ʒ/
l		lait, lac	/l/
-ille	-il	fille, famille, soleil	/j/ (le yod)
pn		pneu	/pn/
ps		psychologie	/ps/
qu		qui, quand	/k/
r		rouge, pour	/ʁ/

s		Asie, cousin	/z/
ss		finissent	/s/
t	th	toute, thé	/t/
v		vrai	/v/
w		wagon	/v/
x		excellent; examen	/ks/; /gz/
y		yaourt	/j/ (le yod)
z		zoo, zèbre	/z/

BEYOND INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS: PROSODIC FEATURES OF FRENCH

Sons et lettres is designed to help you recognize the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) that correspond to French sounds, and to help you learn to pronounce those sounds correctly. In addition to knowing how to produce the individual sounds which constitute the language (its phonemes), there are also a number of important differences between the pronunciation rules for French and English which must be learned in order to sound French. This material is usually covered in a course on French phonetics and pronunciation, or perhaps in a conversation and pronunciation class; although extensive discussion is beyond the scope of this book, the following brief presentation will familiarize you with some significant aspects of French that go beyond the production of individual sounds.

French Vowels

Vowel consistency. One important difference between French and English vowels concerns the consistency of sound-symbol correlation for vowels in French. As you know, in English, a written vowel can have more than one pronunciation (*sit, site*), and vowels often become lax in an unaccented syllable. Compare the vowels in *Canada*: the first *a* is in the accented syllable and has a different vowel sound than those in the following unaccented syllables, each of which contains a lax vowel (similar to the one in the word *uh*). In addition to the change in sound, this lax vowel (called a *schwa*) is often dropped, eliminating a syllable, as in *Barb'ra, p'lice, or int'resting*.

While the schwa (/ə/) is also found in French, it cannot be substituted for any unaccented vowel as in English. In French, the vowels you see should be pronounced as they are written: each vowel is to be pronounced distinctly and clearly, with its proper sound. There is no relaxation or regular alternation between stressed vowels and schwas, as there is in English. By way of example, say each of the following French words, being careful to pronounce all of the vowels consistently and to pronounce identical graphemes with the same sound: *Barbara, Canada, Mississippi, Phillipe, photographie*. There should be no schwas. Notice when you do so that this is very different from the way you would pronounce the same names and words in English; the reason for this is the lack of vowel consistency in English.

Diphthongs. One regular and distinguishing feature of English is the presence of *diphthongs*, sounds that begin with one vowel sound and end in another sound within the same syllable. For example, if you say the word *how*, slowly, elongating the vowel, you will notice that the vowel begins with *ah* (/a/) and ends with *w* (/w/). Repeat the word slowly a few times and notice both the change in the vowel sound and the change in the shape of your lips: it is the movement of the lips, the jaw, and the tongue that produces the diphthong.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

While diphthongs are not a feature in standard, continental French, they are common in certain regional varieties of French. If you travel to Québec or to the *Midi* (the south of France), for example, you will notice diphthongs as a regular feature of the regional accent.

English has four other diphthongs, which can be heard in the words *show*, *say*, *high*, and *boy*. But while diphthongs are a standard feature of American English, they are not a feature of continental French, and it is important to avoid them by training oneself to produce vowels in a French way. Here are some suggestions on how to do this:

♦ **PRACTICE VOWELS** by sounding out individual syllables slowly: *tout*, *jour*, *tou-jours*. For each syllable, the vowel is the same and the position of your lips doesn't change. Say the three words in succession while maintaining the position of your mouth, lips and tongue; if you can prolong both syllables of *toujours* without altering the vowel sound, you are doing it correctly. Then try contrasting vowels in the same way, lengthening the vowels and listening to be sure they don't change: *beau*, *thé*, *beau-té*.

One factor that can affect the vowel sound is the consonants that precede and follow it in a syllable. In English, these consonants alter the vowel slightly. You can practice reducing this interference with the following technique: before pronouncing the syllable, form your mouth to the shape of its vowel, then say the initial consonant(s) through the shape of the vowel. For example, to produce *tout*, first say *ou*; then, without changing the shape of your lips, say *tout* (saying the /t/ through the vowel shape). Similarly, with the word *foule* (crowd), say the /f/ through the shape for *ou*, and make sure that the articulation of the final /l/ does not alter the shape of the vowel (as it would in English *school*, for example).

Try this technique on the following series of words. In each, your mouth stays in the same position for the vowel throughout the series, and any consonants are pronounced *through* the shape of the vowel:

- (1) ou, sou, chou
- (2) tu, vu, mur, dur
- (3) heure, sœur, beurre, leur
- (4) or, fort, corps, bord

♦ **LISTEN TO YOURSELF** to be sure that the vowel sound stays constant during its production. Again, practicing by prolonging the length of the vowel in each syllable of a word will help you develop this awareness. You can practice these techniques with the different vowel sounds you learn in *Sons et lettres* and then apply them to a variety of words, first slowly and then progressing toward a more normal rhythm. After a time you should develop the ability to produce vowels without diphthongs. You may find that this is a *crisper* way of speaking, in contrast to the relatively relaxed manner that is natural to American English.

Nasal vowels. Another distinct characteristic of the French vowel system is the presence and prominence of *nasal vowels* (treated in Leçons 9–12). The distinctive sound of nasal vowels is produced by the passage of air through both the mouth and the nose (hence the term *nasal vowel*). In English, vowels with this nasal quality occur when they precede the letters *m* or *n*, and this *nasalization* is a by-product of saying those consonants. You can observe this by saying contrasting words with and without a final /*m*/ or /*n*/, such as *foe/phone*, *fat/fan*, *hat/ham*. The vowel sound in the second word of the pair sounds different because it is nasalized.

Unlike in English, where both the nasalized vowel and the nasal consonant occur together, in French, only the nasal vowel is pronounced and the following /*n*/ or /*m*/ is silent. Compare English *on* and French *an*. The vowel in both words is nasal, but in English the tip of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth behind the teeth to produce the consonant sound /*n*/. In French there is **no** contact and **no** consonant sound. English speakers need to be careful to avoid adding an /*n*/ to the end of a nasal vowel.

French Consonants

French consonants pose relatively few problems for English speakers. However, there are two particular areas which are treated differently in the two languages that merit some discussion: consonant release, and the French *r*.

Consonant release. English speakers tend to not pronounce final consonants fully or distinctly. In words such as *big*, *bad*, *tight*, *stop*, and *fun*, for example, the final consonant sounds may not be fully articulated in normal speech (it is sometimes said that these consonants get “swallowed”). In continental French, pronounced final consonants should be enunciated with a distinct **release** of the consonant (called *détente* in French). This means that the point of contact is fully released, whether it be between the two lips (/p/), the upper teeth and lower lip (/f/), or the tip of the tongue and the upper teeth (/t/). Practice making a distinct contrast between the final consonants in the following English/French pairs. In the first word of each pair, the point of contact is not released, while in the second there is a slight burst of air caused by the release of the final consonant: *bun/bonne*, *soup/soupe*, *debt/dette*, *peel/pile*, *mud/mode*, *some/somme*.

The release of the final consonant in French is important because the presence or absence of the consonant often serves as a grammatical marker, signaling for example that an adjective is masculine or feminine (*petit/e*), or that a verb is singular or plural (*il vient/ils viennent*). Do not be shy about pronouncing these final consonants energetically; while it may seem strange to do so in English, it is quite normal in French.

French *r*. The French *r* can be one of the most difficult sounds for English speakers, as it is a very different sound than the English *r* (which itself is difficult for speakers of certain languages, including French). The sounds are different because they are produced in different ways and in different areas of the mouth. The American *r* is produced in the *middle* of the mouth by raising the sides of the tongue, whereas the French *r* is produced in the *back* of the mouth by raising the back of the tongue toward the uvula (the fleshy knob that hangs down in the back of your throat).

Learning to make the French *r* requires practice and patience. It is helpful to first locate, with your tongue, the area of the mouth where it is produced by saying “*ka*, *ga*” with a forceful *k* and *g* sound. As you do so, notice that the back of your tongue rises to touch the back of your mouth and momentarily block the passage of air. (You can observe this by using a small mirror and opening your mouth wide, looking at the back of your throat as you say “*ka*, *ga*.”)

The French *r* occurs slightly further back in your mouth than *ka* and *ga*. Try it by first anchoring the tip of your tongue against your lower front teeth; keep it there, then say “AGA, ARA.” The *g* blocks the air completely, but for the French *r*, the tongue allows some air to pass through the narrow opening created by the back of the tongue, as if you were gargling: “*ahh-rrrah*.” You can practice by making a gargling sound (perhaps in a place where you are alone and can feel comfortable making odd sounds!). When you can consistently produce the *r* by itself, try saying the French word *garage*: first press and keep the tip of your tongue against your lower front teeth, then say “*gaa-raage*” slowly, syllable by syllable, prolonging the *r* in the middle. (Anchoring the tongue tip against the teeth is important: it keeps your tongue tip stationary and restricts the movement to the rear of your mouth where the sound is articulated.) When you can control the *r* with some consistency, practice with different vowels using the following sequences:

1. ARA, ORO, IRI, EUREU, ÉRÉ.
2. j’arrive, j’arrête, je ris.
3. l’amour, la mort, la mer.

Pronounce each sequence slowly, patiently, until you can produce the *r* in each word reliably. (Source for no. 1: Carduner and Hagiwara, *D’accord: la prononciation du français international, acquisition et perfectionnement*. John Wiley & Sons, 1982.)

Other Consonants

The letter *h*. Remember that there is no *h* sound in French, as there is in English. An *h* at the beginning of a word is not pronounced. So, for example, the words *homme*, *heureux*, and *habiter* are all pronounced with an initial vowel sound, as in the English word *honor*.

The consonant clusters *ps* and *pn*. In the combinations *ps*- and *pn*-, the *p* is pronounced together with the following consonant, unlike in English where the *p* is silent. Compare (**p**)*psychology* and **ps***ychologie*, (**p**)*neumonia* and **pn***eumonie*.

Rhythm and Accentuation

French and English differ in the ways they accentuate words and in their general rhythmic patterns. There are two basic differences. First, they differ in the *position* of the accent. In English, the accent can fall on any syllable in a word and any word in a sentence (and when we learn a word in English, learning which syllables are stressed is an integral part of learning its pronunciation). In French, all syllables in a word or in a phrase are unaccented except for the last one (the *tonic* syllable), which is accented. Second, the two languages differ in the *quality* of the accented syllable. In English, the accented syllable is stronger than the other syllables, while in French the *tonic* syllable is longer (without being stronger). In the words *national*, *assembly*, and *understand*, for example, the position of the syllable stress shifts, falling respectively on the first, middle, and last syllables, and these syllables are said with greater force. In the French words *assemblée*, *nationale*, and *compréhension*, the accent falls—as in all French words—on the final syllable (tonic syllable), which is lengthened but not stronger.

In practice, this means that the rhythmic contour of any English phrase or sentence will have a shifting accented (stronger) syllable preceded and followed by weaker, unaccented syllables. As we saw above in the section on vowel consistency, the unaccented syllables will often be schwas. In a French phrase or sentence, the rhythmic pattern consists of a series of equal, unaccented syllables ending with a longer (accented) syllable. These patterns can be shown graphically as follows:

English: x**X**xx xx**X** x x **X**xx, etc.

French: xxxx**X** xxx**X** xxxxxx**X** xx**X**, etc.

For the English speaker, the challenge of learning to produce a French-sounding speaking pattern lies in not imposing otherwise intuitive English patterns upon French words and phrases. To do this, remember:

1. to reserve the accent for the tonic syllable (avoid accentuating the syllables at the beginning or in the middle of a word or phrase);
2. to produce the accented syllable by lengthening it, resisting the tendency to say it with greater force;
3. to make the syllables preceding the accent of equal length.