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French alphabet pronunciation printable

How to pronounce every letter in french. How to pronounce french alphabet. French alphabet pronunciation rules.

Once you get the alphabet down, the rest of language learning is as easy as ABC. French pronunciation is notoriously difficult for English speakers to master. It's almost as difficult as, well, English itself. If you're struggling with the vowel sounds, the silent syllables and the accent marks, it's worth it to take a step back and look at the parts that make up the language. In other words, you should look at the French alphabet. The French alphabet is a bit misleading to the learner, because it looks pretty much like the English one. That might make you think that you can skip studying it in detail. Taking a minute to relearn the ABC's will give you a leg up, however. Here's a brief walkthrough of the letters and some pronunciation basics. While this won't cover every single pronunciation question you might have, it should give you enough to get started. The French Alphabet Looking at the letters alone, the French alphabet is identical to the English alphabet. A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z If you like learning through music, here's an alphabet song based on the English one. While not really part of the alphabet technically, the biggest difference you'll notice in French writing is the use of diacritics, often called accent marks. There is also a ligature, which is the kind of letter that looks like two letters combined. With these taken into account, the French alphabet gets a few extra letters. À Á Â Ã Ä Å Æ Ç È É Ê Ë Ì Í Î Ï Ñ Ò Ó Ô Õ Ö Ù Ú Û Ü These accent marks are used to distinguish between words and sounds, and we'll dive deeper into them in the sections below. The Vowels There are fewer vowels than consonants, but they're more likely to cause you problems. We'll go through the vowels as they're most commonly pronounced. A And Æ In most cases, A sounds like the "a" in "father." The accent mark Å makes the same sound, and is mostly used to distinguish between French words like là ("the") and là ("there") or a (third-person singular conjugation of avoir) and à (preposition). Ça va ? — How are you? quatre — four Voilà ! Et avec ça ? — There you go. Anything else? If it's an Å, it sounds like the "a" in "cat." This letter often appears in the suffix -âtre often used with colors (bleuâtre means "blue-ish"). If it's followed by a U, it sounds like the "o" in "go." If it's followed by an I or a Y it's pronounced like the "ay" in "hay." Some verbs end in -aitre, where the I has a circumflex accent before the T, but it's pronounced the same as if the accent mark isn't there. anglais — English payer — to pay If followed by a single M or N (and that M or N isn't then followed by another vowel), the A is pronounced nasally. If you see "ain," it's pronounced like a nasal I. In a few words — mostly loanwords from Latin like ex-æquo — you will see the ligature Æ. In those cases, the letter is pronounced like the "e" in "egg." E The letter E is perhaps the most complicated vowel in the French alphabet, and its pronunciation changes depending on where it is in a word, what it's followed by and what accent mark it has. If you see "er," "ed" or "ez" at the end of the word, it's pronounced like "ay" in "hay," chanter — to sing un pied — a foot un nez — a nose If the "e" is in the middle of a word, at the beginning of a word followed by a consonant or followed by "le," "tte," "nne," "sse" or "t," it's pronounced like the "e" in "egg." une adresse — an address C'est complet ! — It's full! sec — dry un examen — an exam In monosyllable words ending in "e," it sounds like the "e" in "water." Je ne te le donne pas ! — I'm not giving it to you! If it appears at the end of a word or between two consonants (and no more than two consonants), the E is silent. le rhume — the cold rapidement — rapidly An È with a rising accent is pronounced like the "e" in "café." la télévision — the television enchanté — nice to meet you An É with a falling accent is pronounced like the "e" in "bed." Genève — Geneva la cuisinière — the chef An Ê with a circumflex accent sounds like the "e" in "egg." être — to be la fête — the party An Ê with two dots above it means that it is a normal E, pronounced separately from the vowel that comes before it. Joyeux Noël ! — Merry Christmas! If an E is before a U, it makes a sound that doesn't exist in English. It's like the "u" in "turn," but without the "r" sound that follows. If E is followed by I, it makes an "eh" sound. seize — sixteen la bouteille — the bottle If E is followed by M or N, it's pronounced like the nasal A discussed above. vendredi — Friday ensemble — together I is pronounced like the two "I"s in "graffiti." It's also pronounced this way if it is an I with the circumflex accent. la ville — the town le sortie — the exit If the letter I follows another vowel, it often changes the sound of that vowel (see the other vowels for more information). If the I has two dots above it, however, that means it's pronounced separately from the preceding vowel. hair — to hate naïf — naïve The letter combos IE and IO usually follow the regular pronunciation rules for the two separate vowels. If they appear before N at the end of a word, however, they are pronounced nasally. un musicien — a musician une excursion — a trip O And Æ If the O is before a Z sound or it's the last sound in a syllable, the letter makes the "oa" sound, as in "goat." It also makes this sound if it is the Ò with the circumflex accent. une chose — a thing euro — euro If the O appears in most other places, it makes the "o" sound in "cot." la pomme — the apple la carotte — the carrot When it's followed by a single M or N (and that M or N isn't then followed by another vowel), the O is pronounced nasally.

Pronunciation

a	ah	j	zee	s	ess
b	beh	k	kah	t	teh
c	seh	l	ell	u	ooh
d	deh	m	em	v	veh
e	uh	n	en	w	doo-blah-veh
f	eff	o	oh	x	eeks
g	zheh	p	peh	y	ee-grek
h	ahsh	q	koo	z	zed
i	ee	r	air		

le citron — the lemon un compromis — a compromise (the second "o" is not nasal because the M is followed by a vowel) If followed by a U, it makes a sound like the "ou" in "soup." Toulouse — Toulouse (city in France) If followed by an I, it makes a sound like the "wo" in "wow." Some verbs end in -oitre, where the I has a circumflex accent before the T, but it's pronounced the same as if the accent mark isn't there. soixante — sixty Au revoir ! — Goodbye! The ligature Æ makes a different sound from both O and E, and it's a sound that doesn't exist in English. It kind of sounds like the midpoint of O and E, but it can be hard for non-native speakers to master it. When Æ is followed by U, it also makes a sound that doesn't exist in English, though it's a pretty common French letter combo. un vou — a wish des œufs — the eggs U The letter U makes another sound that doesn't appear in English, sounding kind of like "ooh" but with a tighter pronunciation that makes it sound like a cross between "oo" and "ee." It's also pronounced this way if the Û has the circumflex accent mark.

French Alphabet

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	Letter	Name	Pronunciation
A	A	ah	N	èn	en
B	Bé	beh	O	O	oh
C	Cé	seh	P	Pé	peh
D	Dé	deh	Q	ku	koo
E	eu	uh	R	erre	air
F	èF	eff	S	esse	ess
G	jé	zheh	T	Té	teh
H	Hache	ahsh	U	U	ooh
I	I	ee	V	Vé	veh
J	Ji	zee	W	Double Vé	doo-blah-veh
K	Ka	kah	X	ix	eeks
L	èl	ell	Y	Igrec	eegrek
M	èm	em	Z	Zed	zed

Salut, bienvenue à Paris ! — Hello, welcome to Paris! When U appears before a single M or N (that isn't followed by a vowel), it is pronounced nasally. When Û has the falling accent mark, it doesn't change the pronunciation. It's usually used to distinguish between similar words, like ou ("or") and où ("where"). When U appears after other vowels, it often changes the sounds they make. You can find out more by looking at the individual vowels. When Û has the two dots over it, that means it's pronounced distinctly from the vowel directly before it. Sometimes Y At the beginning of a word before a vowel and between two or more vowels, Y is pronounced like the "y" in "yes." le yaourt — the yogurt le voyage — the voyage When Y appears before or after one or more consonants, it sounds like the "e" in "evil." le rythme — the rhythm le style — the style The Consonants After the headache that is the French vowels, the rest of the French alphabet is a breeze. And yet, there are still rules that you can learn about them. Here, we'll cover some of the most troublesome consonants and consonant clusters. C, Ch And Ç If the letter C comes before the vowels E, I or Y, it's pronounced like the English letter S. Also, if it has the accent mark called the cédille underneath it (Ç), it's pronounced like an S no matter what follows it. une annonce — an advertisement cinq Français — five French people If the letter C is followed by almost anything else or appears at the end of a word, it's pronounced like the English letter K. le canapé — the sofa avec Claire — with Claire The one exception is that the letter combination CH has its own rules. If it comes before a vowel, it makes the sound like the "sh" in "shore." If it comes before a consonant, it makes the K sound. cherche — search la technique — the technology G If the letter G comes before the vowels E, I or Y, it sounds like the "s" in "pleasure." This sound is much more common in French than in English. la gymnastique — gymnastics rouge — red If the letter G comes before an N, it makes the "ny" sound in "canyon." If the letter G comes before any other letter, it makes the same sound G usually makes in English, like in "get" or "gather." la guitare — the guitar anglais — English H There are two kinds of H in the French alphabet. The first is the silent H, or the H muet. If the H muet is preceded by a definite article or je, they are abbreviated (la heure becomes l'heure). If the word that comes before the H ends in a consonant that isn't usually pronounced, then in this case that consonant will be pronounced. J'habite ici. — I live here. (The je is abbreviated.) Les hommes sont heureux. — The men are happy. (The S in hommes and the T in sont are both pronounced.) The other H is the aspirate H, or H aspiré. This H is still silent, but definite articles and je are not shortened before it, and preceding consonants that are usually not pronounced stay unpronounced. Je hais le hasard. — I hate chance. Ces enfants ont huit ans. — These children are eight years old. L And LL The single letter L is simple: it's pronounced the same as the English L everywhere. l'eau minérale — mineral water The double LL has two possible pronunciations. For the most part, it's pronounced the same as the English L. If it follows an I, however, the LL usually sounds like the "y" in "yes." aller — to go Camille — Camille la gentillesse — the kindness P In most situations, the P in French is pronounced the same as the P in English. When P comes before an S or a T, or usually when it appears at the end of a word, it's silent.

French Alphabet

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
A	A	ah
B	Bé	beh
C	Cé	seh
D	Dé	deh
E	eu	uh
F	èF	eff
G	jé	zheh
H	Hache	ahsh
I	I	ee
J	Ji	zee
K	Ka	kah
L	èl	ell
M	èm	em
N	èn	en
O	O	oh
P	Pé	peh
Q	ku	koo
R	erre	air
S	esse	ess
T	Té	teh
U	U	ooh
V	Vé	veh
W	Double Vé	doo-blah-veh
X	ix	eeks
Y	Igrec	eegrek
Z	Zed	zed

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un compte — an account beaucoup — a lot S And Z When a single S is between two audible vowels, it's usually voiced, meaning it sounds like the "s" in "busy." la maison — the house La chaise est dans la cuisine. — The chair is in the kitchen. If the S is at the beginning of a word, after a consonant or is a double SS, it's usually unvoiced, like the "s" in "sip." la danse — the dance une adresse — an address sympa — friendly The letter Z is almost always voiced, like the "z" in "zero." le zoo — the zoo le Vénézuéla — Venezuela At the ends of words, S and Z are both usually silent. X When the letter X is inside a word or before a consonant, it's pronounced like the "x" in "taxi." un texte — a text un exemple — an example Usually at the end of a word, X is silent. je veux — I want amoureux — in love In rare cases, X can also sounds like an S or a Z.



Ah	Beh	Say	Day	Uh	Eff
Jay	Ash	Ee	Jee	Ka	Ell
Em	En	Oh	Peh	Koo	Air
Ess	Teh	Ooh	Veh	<small>Dooblayay</small>	Icks
	Egrek	Zed			

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le dixieme — the tenth dix — ten A Final Note To say it again: French pronunciation is a bit of a challenge. We didn't even cover the fact that most letters at the ends of words are silent, or the fact that every rule has an exception. The French alphabet can be a bit intimidating, but once you get it down, the rest will feel like a breeze. It is considered one of the easier languages for English speakers to learn, after all. Our best tip going forward is to listen to as much French as you can, whether it be in person or in podcasts or movies. You'll have it down in no time.