

How to pronounce French sounds

In most cases, **consonants** make the same sounds in French as in English. Generally, consonants at the end of words are silent.

Vowels, however, are quite different:

For each French vowel sound (except u), there is an English word (or part of a word) that sounds like it. Read it aloud to find out how to say the French sound, then practice saying the examples of each word.

Accents change the sound of the letter **e** but not of other vowels.

a = ah often like the “a” sound in “cart”: ami, chat, banane, tomate

i = ee like the “i” in “machine”: lion, joli, ski

e = uh like the “a” sound in “above”: le, petit, robe

é = like the “ay” sound in “late”: bébé, élephant, école

è = like the “a” sound in “care”: pere, zebre

ê = like the “e” sound in “get”: fete, meme, pret

o = similar to the “o” in English, depending on the word, it can be pronounced like either of the “o”'s in “chocolate”: gros, rob, crocodile, orange

u = round your lips as if you were going to say “oo”, then try to say “ee”: du, une, jus

Other pronunciation guidelines:

h is always silent in French

s at the end of a word to indicate the plural is silent

qu sounds like K (not kw as in quick)

th is pronounced T

ch is pronounced like the English sh, like in shirt

oi = sound like the “wa” in water

au/eau = long o sound like in so

ou = oo like the ou in group, not out

Words are usually stressed on the last syllable, unlike English words.

Developed by Mme Yu