

FRENCH OER - PRONUNCIATION



William J. Carrasco & Shahrzad Zahedi
Palomar College

Palomar College
French OER - Pronunciation

William J. Carrasco & Shahrzad Zahedi

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: Introduction

- 1.1: French Letters and Numbers
- 1.2: Phonetic Tools
- 1.3: Differences between French and English
- 1.4: French throughout the World

2: Written vs. Spoken French

- 2.1: Diacritical Marks
- 2.2: Silent Letters at the End of Words
- 2.3: Other Silent Letters (Silent H and Lapsed E)

3: Consonants- Introduction

- 3.1: Consonants - Introduction
- 3.2: The Letter R
- 3.3: The Letter Q

4: Double and Combined Consonants

- 4.1: Double Consonants
- 4.2: Consonant Clusters with the Letter H
- 4.3: Other Consonant Clusters

5: Consonants that change pronunciation

- 5.1: The Letter C
- 5.2: The Letter G
- 5.3: The Letter L
- 5.4: Consonants that change pronunciation between words

6: Vowels (Introduction)

- 6.1: Vowels - Introduction
- 6.2: Simple Vowels
- 6.3: Vowels with accents

7: The Letter E

- 7.1: The Silent E
- 7.2: The Ever-changing E Sound
- 7.3: The Lapsed E

8: Simple Vowels

- 8.1: The Letter A
- 8.2: The French Y and I

- 8.3: The Easy Vowel O
- 8.4: The Challenging Vowel U

9: Combination of Vowels

- 9.1: 9.1 The Vowel [o]- AU/EAU
- 9.2: The Vowel [ɛ] - AI, EI
- 9.3: The Vowel [ø] and [œ]- EU, Œ, ŒU
- 9.4: The Vowel [w]- OI/OY/OUE/OUI)/W
- 9.5: The Vowel [u]- OU
- 9.6: The vowel [y] - UI, UY
- 9.7: Double vowels

10: Nasal Vowels

- 10.1: Nasal Vowels - Introduction
- 10.2: The Vowel [ɑ̃] - AN, EN, AM, EM
- 10.3: The Vowel [ɔ̃]- ON, OM
- 10.4: The Vowel [ɛ̃] - IN, IM, YM, YN, AIN, EIN, AIM, EIM and [œ̃]- UN, UM
- 10.5: Non-nasalization
- 10.6: Let's Practice Nasal Sounds

11: Open vs. Closed Syllables and Vowels

- 11.1: Open vs. Closed Syllables
- 11.2: High Vowels (Closed Vowels)
- 11.3: Mid Vowels (Mid-Open and Mid-Closed Vowels)
- 11.4: Low Vowels (Open Vowels)

12: Prosody- Linking Syllables

- 12.1: Linking Consonants and Vowels
- 12.2: Contractions and Elisions

13: Prosody- Liaisons

- 13.1: How silent consonants are pronounced in liaisons
- 13.2: Types of Liaisons

14: Prosody - Rhythm and Melody

- 14.1: Stress and Rhythm
- 14.2: The Melody of French
- 14.3: Virelangues (Tongue-twisters)

15: Variations in Intonation

- 15.1: Dialectal Variations in Intonation (France)
- 15.2: Dialectal Variations in Intonation (Beyond France)
- 15.3: Fast French

16: Wrap-Up

17: Additional Resources

- [17.1: Culture](#)
- [17.2: Structure - Ça se prononce comment ?](#)
- [17.3: Structure - Prononciation et orthographe - Homonymes](#)
- [17.4: Structure - Comment ça s'écrit ?](#)
- [17.5: Structure - Différence de prononciation entre les temps des verbes](#)

[Index](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Introduction

- [1.1: French Letters and Numbers](#)
- [1.2: Phonetic Tools](#)
- [1.3: Differences between French and English](#)
- [1.4: French throughout the World](#)

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1.1: French Letters and Numbers

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about the French alphabet.

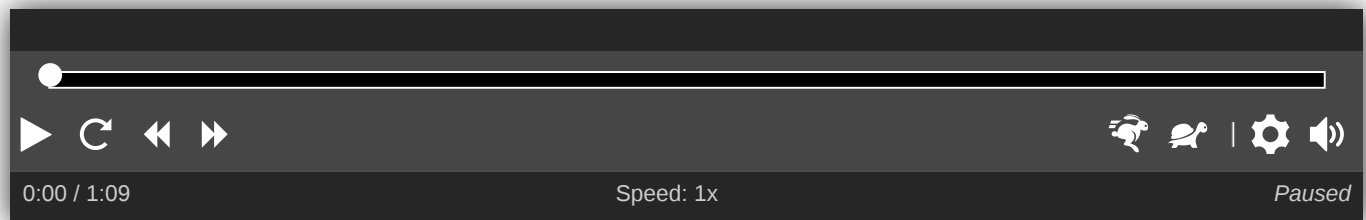
Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

[Let's get started!](#)

[The French Alphabet](#)



Alphabet

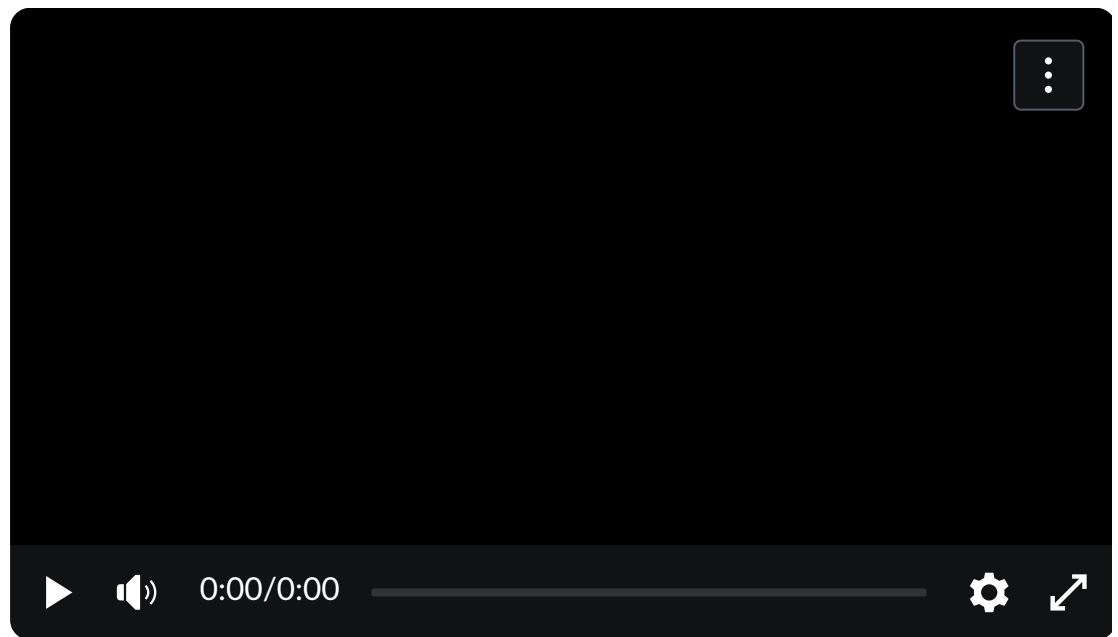
Lettres	Exemples
A	alligator
B	bison
C	canari
D	dauphin
E	escargot
F	faon
G	girafe
H	hamster
I	iguane
J	jaguar
K	koala
L	lion
M	méduse
N	narval
O	orque
P	panthère
Q	quetzal
R	rat
S	scorpion
T	tigre
U	urial
V	vache
W	wallaby
X	xérus
Y	yack
Z	zèbre

Additional Resources

- Practice identifying and pronouncing the letters of the French alphabet with this video: [French alphabet](#).
- Listen and sing along to this [French alphabet song](#).

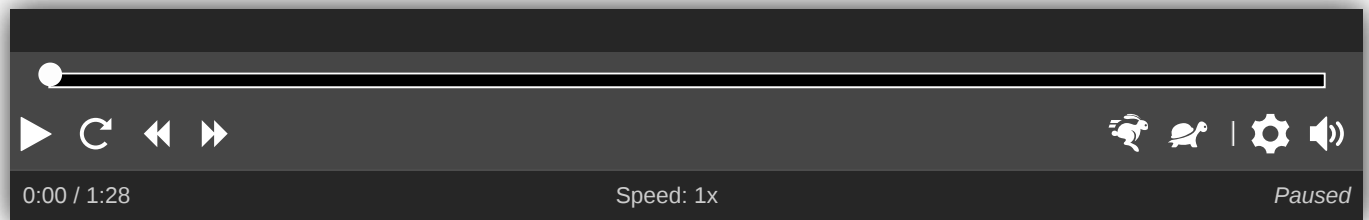
French numbers

Watch this video about variations in the pronunciation of French numbers:



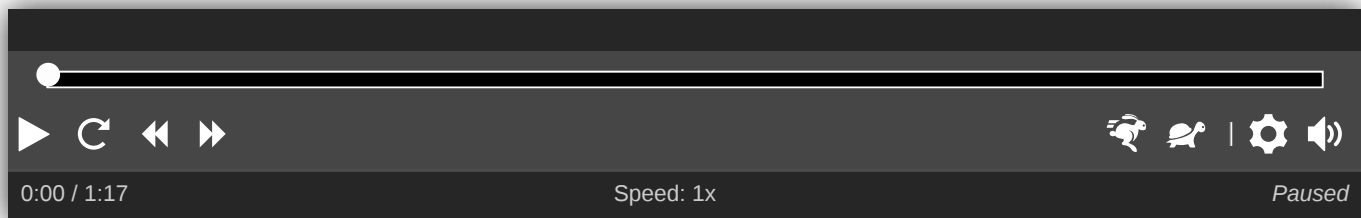
Here is [the video's transcription](#).

You can listen to the pronunciation of individual numbers in the tables below.



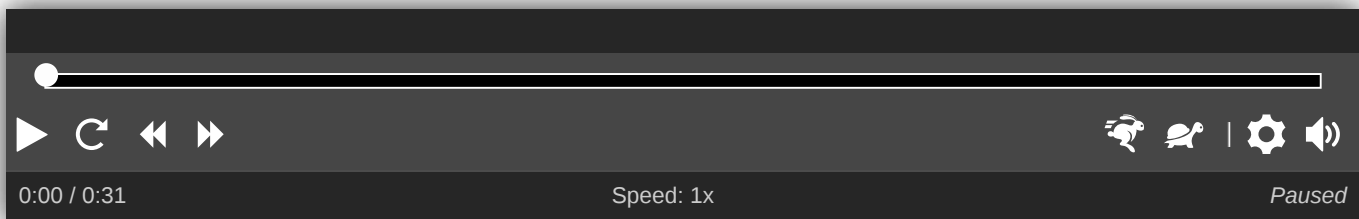
Numéros 1 - 60

Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres
1	un	21	vingt-et-un	41	quarante-et-un
2	deux	22	vingt-deux	42	quarante-deux
3	trois	23	vingt-trois	43	quarante-trois
4	quatre	24	vingt-quatre	44	quarante-quatre
5	cinq	25	vingt-cinq	45	quarante-cinq
6	six	26	vingt-six	46	quarante-six
7	sept	27	vingt-sept	47	quarante-sept
8	huit	28	vingt-huit	48	quarante-huit
9	neuf	29	vingt-neuf	49	quarante-neuf
10	dix	30	trente	50	cinquante
11	onze	31	trente-et-un	51	cinquante-et-un
12	douze	32	trente-deux	52	cinquante-deux
13	treize	33	trente-trois	53	cinquante-trois
14	quatorze	34	trente-quatre	54	cinquante-quatre
15	quinze	35	trente-cinq	55	cinquante-cinq
16	seize	36	trente-six	56	cinquante-six
17	dix-sept	37	trente-sept	57	cinquante-sept
18	dix-huit	38	trente-huit	58	cinquante-huit
19	dix-neuf	39	trente-neuf	59	cinquante-neuf
20	vingt	40	quarante	60	soixante



Numéros 61 - 100

Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres
61	soixante et un	71	soixante et onze	81	quatre-vingt-un	91	quatre-vingt-onze
62	soixante-deux	72	soixante-douze	82	quatre-vingt-deux	92	quatre-vingt-douze
63	soixante-trois	73	soixante-treize	83	quatre-vingt-trois	93	quatre-vingt-treize
64	soixante-quatre	74	soixante-quatorze	84	quatre-vingt-quatre	94	quatre-vingt-quatorze
65	soixante-cinq	75	soixante-quinze	85	quatre-vingt-cinq	95	quatre-vingt-quinze
66	soixante-six	76	soixante-seize	86	quatre-vingt-six	96	quatre-vingt-seize
67	soixante-sept	77	soixante-dix-sept	87	quatre-vingt-sept	97	quatre-vingt-dix-sept
68	soixante-huit	78	soixante-dix-huit	88	quatre-vingt-huit	98	quatre-vingt-dix-huit
69	soixante-neuf	79	soixante-dix-neuf	89	quatre-vingt-neuf	99	quatre-vingt-dix-neuf
70	soixante-dix	80	quatre-vingts	90	quatre-vingt-dix	100	cent



Numéros 100 - 2 milliards

Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres	Chiffres	Nombres
100	cent	300	trois cents	1.000	mille
101	cent un	400	quatre cents	10.000	dix mille
102	cent deux	500	cinq cents	100.000	cent mille
103	cent trois	600	six cents	1.000.000	un million (de)
200	deux cents	700	sept cents	2.000.000	deux millions (de)
201	deux cent un	800	huit cents	1.000.000.000	un milliard (de)
202	deux cent deux	900	neuf cents	2.000.000.000	deux milliards (de)

French Around the World

The French and other French speakers agree on numbers from 0 to 69. Starting from 70, however, the Swiss, Belgians, Canadians, and Congolese, use other numbers.

Since the Democratic Republic of Congo used to be a Belgian colony, their numbers resemble those of the Belgians. In Belgium, the DRC, Rwanda, Luxembourg, 70 is septante and 90 is nonante. 80 is sometimes quatre-vingts, like in France, and some people say huitante. Octante can also be heard for 80 in certain regions of Belgium.

In Switzerland, they also say septante for 70, huitante for 80 and nonante for 90. Same as in Belgium, the number 80 can be octante in certain regions of Switzerland, but this is very rare.

Flashcards

Study the [Quizlet vocabulary flashcards](#). Listen and repeat the French pronunciation.

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1.2: Phonetic Tools

Objectifs

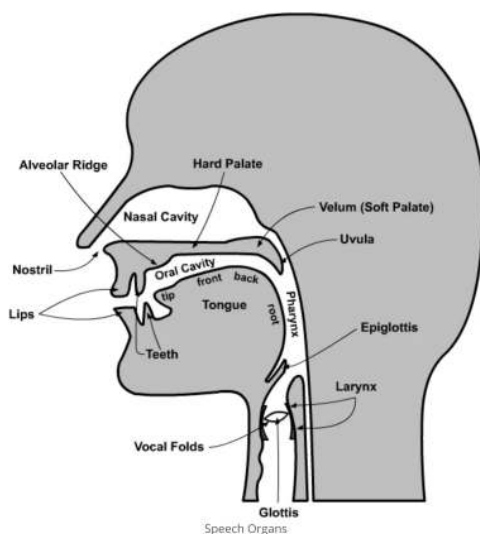
In this section, you will learn about the International Phonetic Alphabet for French.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

Let's get started!

The Organs of Speech



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Articulation of Speech: Consonants and Vowels

Consonants

Consonants are speech sounds produced with a narrowing or a closure at some point along the vocal tract (lungs, larynx, oral cavity and nasal cavity). It all depends on **the place of articulation** and **the manner of articulation**.

Place of Articulation

The place of articulation is *where* you make the constriction or closure along the vocal tract. **Labial** consonants are made with the lips: a **bilabial** consonant is when the upper and lower lips come together, for example, when pronouncing the letters **b** and **p**; a **labiodental** consonant the lower lip comes into contact with the upper teeth, like with the letters **f** and **v**. A **dental** consonant is when the tongue touches the upper teeth, like with the combined letters **th** in "the" or "these". **Alveolar** consonants occur when the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge behind your front teeth: **t**, **d**, and **l** are examples of alveolars. Velar sounds happen when the back of the tongue touches the velum, like the letters **c**, **k** and **g** in "car", "kill" and "go". **Uvular** consonants occur when the back of the tongue touches the uvula: this happens with the letter **r** in French. **Glottal** consonants involve the constriction of the glottis between the vocal folds. A glottal stop, for example, occurs when you hold the vocal folds together and then release them like the **t** and the end of the words "hot" or "don't", or the pause in the middle of "uh-oh".

Manner of Articulation

The manner of articulation is *how* the air flows through your vocal tract. There are seven of them. **Stops** - or plosives - occur when there is a complete closure (or blockage) of the airflow. The bilabial **p** in "pet" and **b** in "bet" are examples of stops (or plosives).

Nasal consonants and vowels are produced by lowering the velum to permit the air to flow through the nose (like the **n** and the **m** in the French word **bon** (good) and **compte** (count)). Fricatives are produced when the closure is incomplete at the place of articulation. The dental "th" and the labiodental "f" and "v" are examples of fricatives. When you combine stop and a fricative, it is called an affricate. We see this in the "ch" in "church" or the "j" in "joke". When the sides of the tongue are lowered at the point of articulation, we have **laterals**; for example the "l" in "love". Rhotics refers to the different ways to articulate the letter "r" and glides are consonants that are almost vowels (semivowels) such as the letters "w" and "y".

Voiced vs. Unvoiced Consonants

When a consonant is voiced, it means that your vocal folds are vibrating. When a consonant is unvoiced, the vocal folds do not vibrate. Compare for example, the voice letters "b" and "v" to the unvoiced letters "p" and "f". This difference is important for distinguishing words like **fin** (end) vs. **vin** (wine), or **beau** (beautiful) vs. **peau** (skin).

This overview of place and manner of articulation is just scratching the surface, but it gives you a general idea of how we can describe how consonants are articulated. For a complete list of consonants, look at the [IPA consonant chart](#).

Vowels

Vowels are speech sounds produced when air flows through your mouth without significant restriction or friction in the vocal tract. In most languages all vowels are voiced. The shape of your oral cavity is shaped primarily by the positioning and shaping of the tongue. How your tongue is positioned will define the size and shape of your resonating chambers (oral cavity, nasal cavity and pharynx).

Your tongue can move toward the front or toward the back of your mouth (front, central, back). At the same time, it can move up or down (high, mid, low). For example, a **high front** vowel means that your tongue is high up in your mouth and towards the front. We can feel this in the "ee" [i] sound in the word "meet". A **high back** vowel would be a vowel like "oo" [u] in "boot". The "e" [ɛ] in "bed" is a **mid front** vowel, whereas the "a" in "fat" is a **low front** vowel. The "o" in "cot" is an example of a low back vowel. For a complete presentation of vowel positions, see the [IPA vowel chart](#).

Additional Resources

You can hear the articulation of consonants and vowels with this [IPA consonant chart with audio](#).

Here is a downloadable copy of the [International Phonetic Alphabet](#).

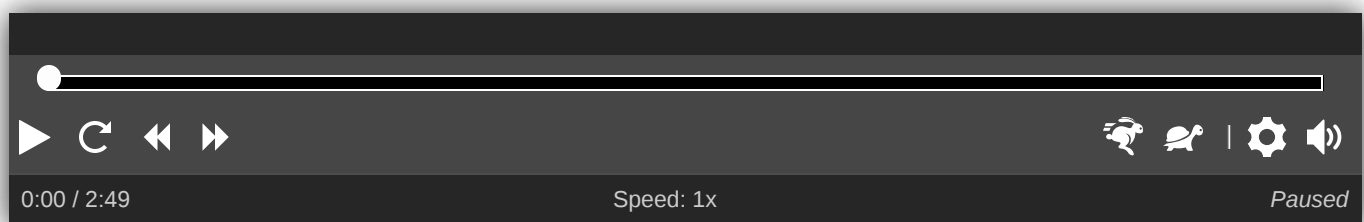
Phonetic Symbols for French Consonants and Vowels

The following tables provide a list of phonetic symbols (far right column) that tell you how each vowel and consonant is pronounced, i.e. how it actually sounds.

In the first column on the left, you will see the grapheme (i.e., the written letter[s]) that indicate when the phonetic sound is pronounced. The second column provides a list of other graphemes that are pronounced in the same way. For example, the grapheme « **au** » is pronounced [o], and so are the graphemes « **eau** », « **o** » and « **ô** ».

The table also provides words in which each sound occurs.

Consonants and Semi-consonants (aka Semi-vowels)

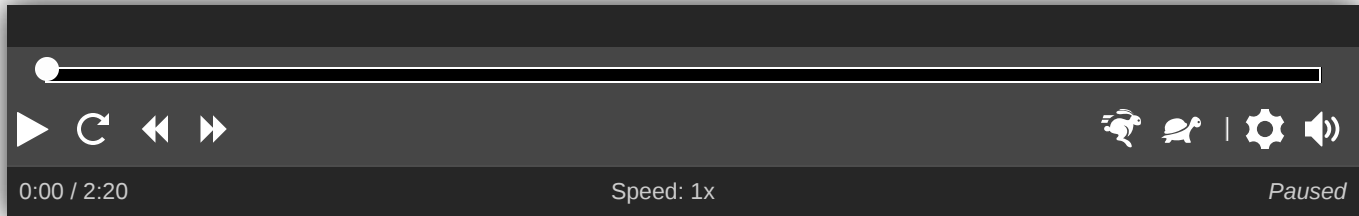


Consonants and Semi-consonants

Main grapheme	Equivalent Graphemes	Examples	Phonetic Symbol
b	—	bal, beau, bébé	[b]
c	k, qu	cours, kir, quand	[k]
ç	ç c + e/i s (at beginning of word) ss (between vowels) x	ça ceci sans assez six	[s]
ch	—	cher, chance	[ʃ]
d	—	dans, délire, dinde	[d]
f	ph	feu, fin, phase, strophe	[f]
g	gu	gare, goût, guide, vague	[g]
ge	g(é), g(è), g(i), j	neige, génial, gène, girage jamais	[ʒ]
gn	—	ligne, montagne	[ɲ]
h	—	homme	—
j	g(e,é,è,i)	je, jeune, joli gens, girafe	[ʒ]
k	c	kangourou, caline	[k]
l	ll, -ille (mille, ville et tranquille)	lait, lac, pull, ville	[l]
-ille	-il, y, hi	filles, famille, soleil, payer, hier	[j]
m	—	moi, mon, maman,	[m]
n	—	non, neige	[n]
pn	—	pneu	[pn]
ps	—	psychologie	[ps]
qu	c(a,o,u), k	qui, quand, cage, kangourou	[k]
r	—	rouge, pour	[ʁ]
s (between vowels)	z	Asie, zèbre	[z]
s (at beginning of word)	—	son, sel	[s]
ss (between vowels)	—	essence, finesse, poisson	[s]
t	th	toute, thé	[t]
ui	uy	oui, huit, essayer	[ɥ]
v	w (at beginning of word)	vrai, wagon	[v]
w (at beginning of word)	—	wagon	[v]
x	—	excellent, examen	[ks], [gz]

Main grapheme	Equivalent Graphemes	Examples	Phonetic Symbol
y	—	yaourt	[j]
z	s (between vowels)	zoo, zèbre, faisons, poison	[z]

Oral Vowels

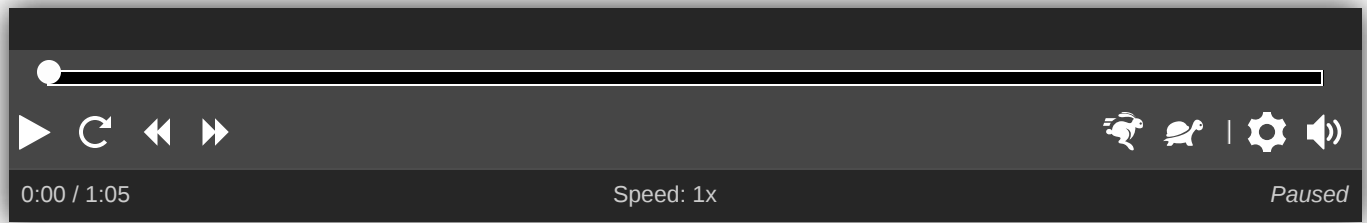


Oral Vowels

Main grapheme	Equivalent Graphemes	Examples	Phonetic Symbol
a	à, â	aller, là, attends, bateau	[a] [ɑ]
au	eau, o, ô	chaud, beau, labo, allô	[o]
ai	aî, è, ê, ei e + double consonant (ette, esse, elle), e + silent consonant (et)	lait, maître, mère, fête, peine, dette, vitesse, belle violet	[ɛ], [ɛ:]
e	—	je, le, petit monsieur*	[ə]
è	ê, ei, ai, aî, e + double consonant (ette, esse, elle), e + silent consonant (et)	mère, fête, caisse, maître, dette, vitesse, belle violet	[ɛ], [ɛ:]
é	-ée, -er, -ez, -ed, -es (monosyllables)	clé, année, parler, parlez, pied, les	[e]
eu	œu	deux, peu, fleur, sœur	[ø], [œ]
eu	eu (verb: avoir)	j'ai eu	[y]
i	ie, î, y	idée, vie, île, cycle	[i]
o	ô o + silent consonant au, eau,	vélo, allô mot taux, beau	[o]
o	ô	botte, bol	[ɔ]
oi	oî	moi, voir, boîte	[wa]
ou	où, ôû	nous, où, goût	[u]
u	eu (verb: avoir)	bu, sur, j'ai eu	[y]
-um	-omme, -emme	forum, homme, femme	[ɔm]

*The « on » in **monsieur** is an exception. It is pronounced like [ɔ̃]: « me-sieur ».

Nasal Vowels



Nasal Vowels

Main grapheme	Equivalent Graphemes	Examples	Phonetic Symbol
an	am, aon en, em	France, chambre, faon lent, temps	[ɑ̃]
en	em an, am	lent, temps chance, champs	[ɑ̃]
in	im, yn/ym, ain/aim, ein	vin, simple, synthèse, symboles, pain, faim, peindre	[ɛ̃]
-ien	-yen	bien, rien, moyen	[jɛ̃]
on	om	bon, nom	[ɔ̃]
-oin	-oins	loin, moins	[wɛ̃]
un		un, aucun	[œ̃] or [ɛ̃]

Notes & Other Resources

Any phonetic transcription of English words in this textbook will represent [General American English](#). If you want to see how English words are transcribed phonetically in other English dialects, you can consult [Explore English Pronunciation](#).

Read more about [French phonetics](#).

Here are two sites that present the International Phonetic Alphabet for French:

- [International Phonetic Alphabet for French](#)
- [International Phonetic Alphabet](#)

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1.3: Differences between French and English

📌 Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about differences between French and English pronunciation.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

You already know a lot of French!

The English and French languages share a long history of influence and exchange. The majority of the French vocabulary in English entered the language after the Norman conquest of England in 1066, when French became the language of the new Anglo-Norman court, the government, and of the elites for several centuries. This was called the Middle English period. By the time Early Modern English was emerging in the 15th century, approximately 45% of all English words were of French origin.

Today approximately 28% of English words can be traced to French. More recently, French has experienced an enormous influx of English vocabulary and expressions, especially in the internet age. In fact, some of the French you hear may actually be English that has been integrated in French. This tradition of linguistic exchange between English and French is still going strong.

French and English share some origins in Latin and Greek. Because French is a Latin-based language, it also has a lot in common with Spanish, particularly in its grammatical structures. So if you know Spanish, you know more about how French works more than you may think.

With shared connections to Latin, Greek and other languages, English, French and Spanish speakers have so many cognates (or *mots apparentés*) in common. This is an example of how learning another language enhance your knowledge of your own language.

English and Spanish share a lot of vocabulary with French. However, it is important to recognize that written French may look a lot like English and Spanish but it can be pronounced very differently. That is the biggest challenge for an English and/or Spanish speaker is learning how to pronounce French vowels and constants, but also knowing when NOT to pronounce silent letters you see in written down.

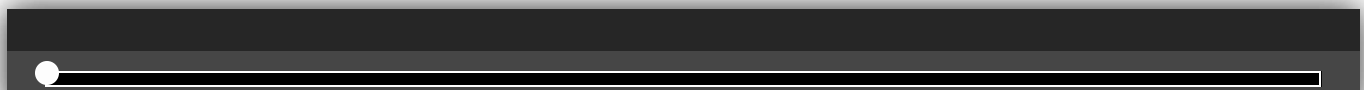
Cognates

Cognates - or **mots apparentés** - are words that have a similar spelling, pronunciation, and meaning across two languages. French and English share many cognates because they have a shared history. After the Norman Invasion in 1066, French became the language of law, religion, government and administration in England. By the end of the middle ages, around 45% of English was of French origin. Today, it makes up 29% of all English vocabulary. You can learn more about the ways French has influenced and changed English on the [French Together website](#).

Modern French language has also adopted an enormous amount of [English vocabulary and expressions](#). This long tradition of borrowing vocabulary from each other is alive and kicking. Take for example, the French word **mél** which was acquired from the English word **email**.

Cognates are particularly helpful for students who speak Latin-based languages like Spanish. Recognizing cognates can help English and Spanish speakers understand common French words that are also common in English, like **différence**, **classe**, **montagne**, **acteur** and **résultat**. At the same time, French becomes a resource for understanding English words you may not normally use, such as **commence**, **travail**, **emolument**, **pince-nez**, and **bouffant**. To learn more, read this article on [English words of French origin](#).

Listen to these French words and notice their similarity with English words:





0:00 / 0:33

Speed: 1x

Paused

Similarities and Differences between English and French Words

Français	Anglais
abondance	abundance
cercle	circle
furieux	furious
exactement	exactly
activités	activities
différent	different
aventure	adventure
commun	common
animal	animal
bicyclette	bicycle
guide	guide
hôpital	hospital
correctement	correctly
musique	music
humain	human
observatoire	observatory
négociier	negotiate
plat	plate
université	university
solidifier	solidify



Flashcards

Study the [Quizlet vocabulary flashcards](#). Listen and repeat the French pronunciation.

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1.4: French throughout the World

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about differences between different French dialects throughout the world

 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

French in the world



"Monde francophone" by William J. Carrasco is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

Who speaks French and Where?

French is spoken on all 5 continents and in 84 different countries. There are currently 321 million people in the world who speak French everyday and 144 million people who are studying French. The population of French-speakers is also growing at a faster rate than those who speak English or Chinese.

French Around the World

Watch these videos about French speakers throughout the world:

- How Many People Speak French?
- La langue française dans le monde (In French)

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

Founded in 1970, International Organization of **Francophonie** is an institution dedicated to promoting the French language and political, educational, economic and cultural cooperation among the 93 member countries. In French, it is called **l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)**.

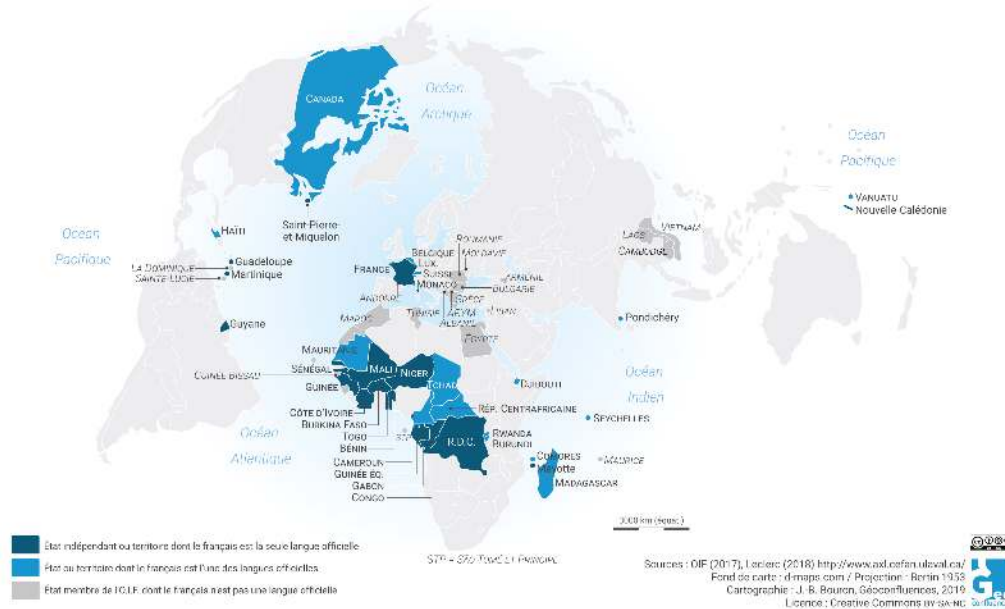
📌 Francophonie vs. francophone vs. francophile

A **francophone** is a person who speaks French or a region where French is spoken, while **Francophonie** refers to all the countries and institutions that share the French language and are linked by cultural and institutional ties. A **francophile** is a person who is fond of or greatly admires France or the French language.

The OIF's mission mandates are:

- To promote the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity
- To promote peace, democracy and human rights
- To support education, training, higher education and research

- To foster economic cooperation to bolster sustainable development



French Around the World

Read about some [Fun Facts about la Francophonie](#).

Watch these videos about La Francohonie

- [Présentation de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie - OIF](#)
- [What is La Francophonie ? \(CPAC\)](#)
- [What is La Francophonie? \(Praxis Greece organisation\)](#)
- [The Francophonie in brief \(in French\)](#)



"Cérémonie d'ouverture présentation du drapeau" is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

French Dialects and Accents throughout the World

Just like English and Spanish, French has many different dialects throughout the world. Dialects can vary from one region to another within France, but also across Europe including dialects in countries like Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland. There is

evenb more diversity across other continents like Africa, North America and Asia.

Accent vs. dialect

Do you know the difference between **accent** and **dialect**?

- **Accent** refers to pronunciation
- **Dialect** refers to a whole group of language features, including pronunciation, but also differences in vocabulary, grammar, and how the language gets used (like the rules of what counts as polite). A dialect is a variation of the same language. For example, Australian English and New England English are dialects of the English language.

When two people speak different dialects of the same language they will understand each other more or less. When they can't understand each other, it's because they are speaking different languages (and they have learned each other's language yet).

Watch this video on [45 Languages of France](#). The title of this video is deceiving because some of these languages are languages and some are dialects of French. See if you can recognize French in any of those.

Listen to the differences between the [Parisian accent and the Southern French accent](#).

In this video you can hear examples of different [French accents](#).

French Dialects in France and Europe

France

Within France alone, there are over 75 languages and dialects. Like most languages, there is so much diversity that it is difficult to know exactly how many dialects of French there are.

Regional languages spoken in France

- **Corsican:** A Romance language spoken on the island of Corsica, closely related to Tuscan Italian.
- **Catalan:** A Romance language spoken in parts of southern France near the Spanish border.
- **Basque:** A language isolate spoken in the French Basque Country, near the Pyrenees mountains.
- **Francoprovençal:** A Romance language spoken in eastern France.
- **Lorrain:** A dialect of the Langues d'Oïl spoken in the Lorraine region.
- **Walloon:** A dialect of the Langues d'Oïl spoken in Wallonia, Belgium, but also spoken in France.
- **Langues d'Oïl:** A group of closely related dialects spoken in northern France, including Picard, Norman, and Gallo.
- **Occitan:** A Romance language spoken in southern France, with several dialects.
- **Breton:** A Celtic language spoken in Brittany, in northwestern France.
- **Alsatian:** A Germanic language spoken in the Alsace region of eastern France.



"Langues de la France" is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Regional dialects of French in France

France has numerous regional dialects, such as [Marseillais](#), [Picard](#), [Lorrain](#), and others. These dialects are characterized by variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and sometimes grammar, but they generally allow for understanding with speakers of "standard" French. Here are a few examples:

- **Marseillais:** A dialect spoken in Marseille, with its own unique pronunciations and vocabulary.
- **Picard:** A dialect spoken in the northern part of France, with distinct features.
- **Breton:** While Breton is a separate language, some areas of Brittany may also have their own unique dialect of French.

Europe (Beyond France)

Dialects of French are also spoken in Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Andorra, Monaco and several other countries, in addition to the other languages spoken in there.

Learn more about [The Dialects And Regional Languages Of France](#).

North American French Dialects

Here are some dialects of French found in North America:

Québécois (Quebec French) – The standard French dialect spoken in Canada. Quebec French is the dominant and most prevalent regional variety of French found in Canada.

Acadian French – Acadian French is a variant of French spoken by Francophone Acadians in the Canadian Maritime provinces, the Saint John River Valley in the northern part of the U.S. state of Maine, the Magdalen Islands and Havre-Saint-Pierre, along the St. Lawrence's north shore. Speakers of Metropolitan French and even of other Canadian dialects have some difficulty understanding Acadian French.

Missouri French is now spoken by a handful of people in the Midwestern United States, primarily in Missouri. It is the last remnant of the form of French once spoken widely in the region known as the Illinois Country, which was colonized as part of French Louisiana. It is considered very moribund, with only a few elderly speakers still fluent.

Creole vs. Pidgin languages

A **creole** language is a fully developed language that emerges from a **pidgin**, a simplified language used for communication between groups with no shared language. Unlike **pidgins**, **creoles** become the native language of a community, with their own distinct grammar and vocabulary, evolving naturally over time.

Chiac (Newfoundland French) – Chiac is a dialect of combined Acadian French and English and is spoken mainly around Moncton, New Brunswick. The pronunciation of French words is very different from other dialects and resembles English pronunciation. Chiac cannot be identified solely on its frequent use of English words since many other French dialects use many English words as well, but Chiac has an unusual amount of English. Chiac French has developed through proximity to English-speakers who settled nearby during the colonial period.

Chiac is perhaps best categorized as a creole language alongside Haitian Creole and Louisiana Creole, French dialects that incorporate Indigenous, African, and other European languages, as opposed to dialects such as Québécois and Brayon that deviate slightly from Metropolitan French but are nonetheless derived primarily from earlier dialects of French with little contribution from other source languages.

Cajun French – Louisiana French, the largest of the groupings, is spoken mostly in Louisiana and derives from the forms of the language spoken by the colonists of lower French Louisiana. Louisiana French is traditionally divided into three dialects: Colonial French, Modern Louisiana French or "Acadian" French, and Louisiana Creole French. Colonial French was originally the dialect spoken by the land-holding educated classes. Acadian, the dialect of the Acadians who came to French Louisiana in droves following their expulsion from Acadia during the French and Indian War, was spoken largely by the white lower classes. Louisiana Creole, a creole that developed long before Haitian immigrants arrived in Louisiana, largely developed as the tongue of the Louisiana Creole community and a significant portion of self-identified Cajuns. However, linguists now believe that the Colonial and Acadian dialects have largely merged into modern Louisiana French but remain distinct from Louisiana Creole.

African French Dialects

There are more than 20 French-speaking countries in Africa. As of 2025 it is estimated that there are 167 million French speakers in Africa using French either as a first or second language. Here are some examples of French dialects

Abidjan/Ivorian French — While various indigenous African languages are still spoken within the city of Abidjan, as well as within the entire country of the Ivory Coast, French is used by a significant amount of the population as it is the main language used in commerce, education, and government.

Kinshasa French — Kinshasa French is the main language used in government and commerce domains in the Democratic Republic of Congo, however this French is highly influenced by the four national languages (Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, and Tshiluba) that are spoken much more frequently and casually. Many elements of Kinshasa French are also influenced from Belgian French because that region was colonized by Belgium.

Asian French Dialects

Cambodian French dates back to the French colonization of Indochina in 1863. Colonists taught French to the local inhabitants. This dialects are spoken by very few people, but there is an increased interest in learning French in recent years.

Indian French is the French spoken by Indians in past colonies of Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Karikal, Mahe and Yanam. There is a considerable influence from Dravidian languages like Tamil (Puducherry Tamil dialect), Telugu (Yanam Telugu dialect) and Malayalam (Mahé Malayalam dialect).

Lao French is spoken in Laos. It goes back to the French colonization of Indochina despite a decline in the language after the country's independence and the communist takeover. A revival has now raised the number of students learning French to 35%. In addition, the Laotian elite and the elderly population speak French, which is the diplomatic language of Laos.

Vietnamese French is spoken in Vietnam, which has the largest Francophone population in Asia. Over 5% of the population learns the language or speaks it well. French is also spoken among the elderly in Vietnam as a legacy of the colonial French era and also by the country's elite. A French pidgin, *Tây Bồi*, was spoken by Vietnamese servants in French households during the colonial era.

"Trois drapeaux" is in the [Public Domain](#)

French Around the World

Learn more about French dialects and accents throughout the world:

- [French Dialects](#)
- [28 different French accents](#)
- [French Accents Around the World](#)
- [La langue française dans le monde](#)
- [French language in Cambodia](#)
- [Indian French](#)
- [French language in Laos](#)
- [French language in Vietnam](#)

The French Academy

The French Academy (**l'Académie Française**) acts as an official authority on the French language and publishes an official dictionary of the language. Read more about the [French Academy](#).

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Written vs. Spoken French

2.1: Diacritical Marks

2.2: Silent Letters at the End of Words

2.3: Other Silent Letters (Silent H and Lapsed E)

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2.1: Diacritical Marks

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about French accent marks.

Media Alternative

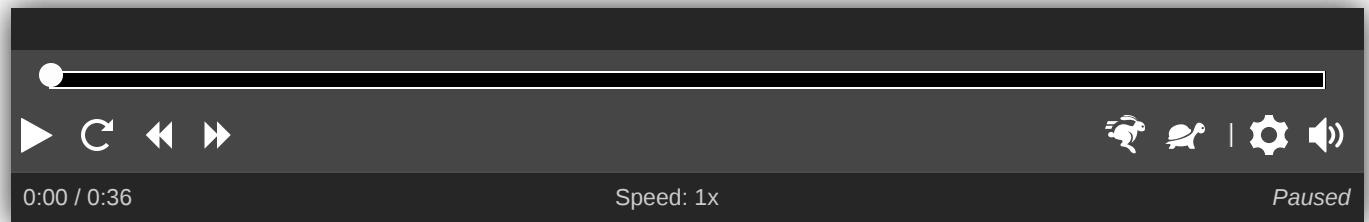
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study !

Diacritic Marks (accent marks)

Here are the important accents and diacritical marks to remember in French. They are important for both spelling and pronunciation:



Diacritic Marks

Mark	Name	Examples	Explanations
´	accent aigu (acute accent)	étudiant, marié, café	Indicates that an <i>i</i> is pronounced like the underlined vowels in day or late, but shorter and crisper. When a French word begins with <i>é</i> is often means that an <i>s</i> would appear at the beginning of the English equivalent: <i>éponge</i> -> sponge; <i>état</i> -> state; <i>diante</i> -> student.
`	accent grave (grave accent)	très, à	Indicates that an <i>e</i> is pronounced like the <i>e</i> in the English word <i>pet</i> . For example: très , nièce , père . When it is placed over an a or a u , it does not change the pronunciation, but it does distinguish words. Compare: la (the) vs. là (there); ou (or) vs. où (where); a (has) vs. à (to, at).
ˆ	accent circonflexe (circumflex)	hôpital, âge, île, août, sûr	This mark can appear above any vowel. It indicates that a letter has been dropped from an older version of the word, usually an <i>s</i> . This can help us identify mots apparentés. For example: hôpital (hospital), forest (forêt), fête (feast). L' accent circonflexe can also help distinguish between words with similar spellings: mûr (ripe) vs. mur (wall); sûr (sure) vs. sur (on).
¨	tréma (dieresis)	naïve, Haïti, égoïste	Indicates that the vowel under it must be pronounced separately from the vowel next to it (without blending)
ç	cédille (cedilla)	ça, garçon, français	Softens the letter c to be pronounced like an English /s/ instead of a /k/.

French Around the World

Accents in French are essential, especially those that change a letter's pronunciation. In informal contexts, like chatting or sending text messages, however, accents tend to be and can be omitted.

L'accent circonflexe

This ^ accent is called *circonflexe* or *chapeau* or even *chapeau chinois*. On some words, this accent is indicative of an *s* or *e* that disappeared over the course of time and were replaced by an accent on the vowel that came before or after it. This is the case in the words *forêt* (forest) or *fête* (fest), *âge* (éage) or *sûreté* (seureté). This form of writing was formalized by the

end of the 18th century. On most vowels, the accent had the purpose of opening the vowel on which it was placed. On other vowels, it's purpose is to distinguish between homonyms, like **sur** (on) and **sûr** (sure).

From the 1990's, the French Academy has decided that the accent circonflexe can be omitted on the letters **u** and **i** if it's purpose is not to distinguish between two homonyms. For example, one can write the words **boîte** (box) or **coût** (cost) with or without this accent.

Resources on l'accent circonflexe:

- [L'accent circonflexe Karambolage - ARTE](#)
- [Choquant ou pas la disparition de l'accent cironflexe](#)
- [l'accent circonflexe](#)
- [La nouvelle orthographe, parlons-en](#)

French Around the World

Accents in French are essential, especially those that change a letter's pronunciation. In informal contexts, like chatting or sending text messages, however, accents tend to be and can be omitted.

Let's practice !

Activity

Visit these sites to learn how to type these marks on your computer:

- [How to type accent marks with a Chromebook](#)
- [How to type French accent marks \(PC & Mac\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [French Accent Marks](#)

Type out the following sentence to show that you can make this accent marks:

Dès Noël, où un zéphyr haï me vêt de glaçons würmiens, je dîne d'exquis rôtis de bœuf au kir. (From Christmas, when a hated zephyr dresses me in Würmian icicles, I dine on exquisite roast beef with kir.)

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2.2: Silent Letters at the End of Words

Objectifs

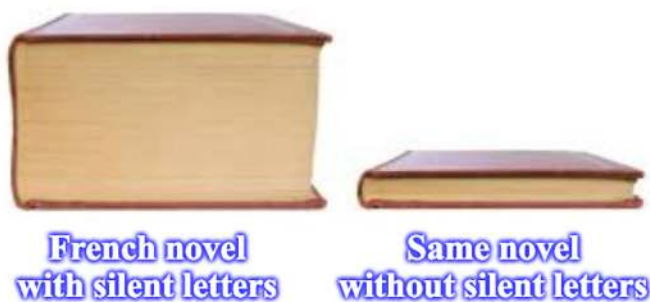
In this section, you will learn how to identify silent letters at the ends of words.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!



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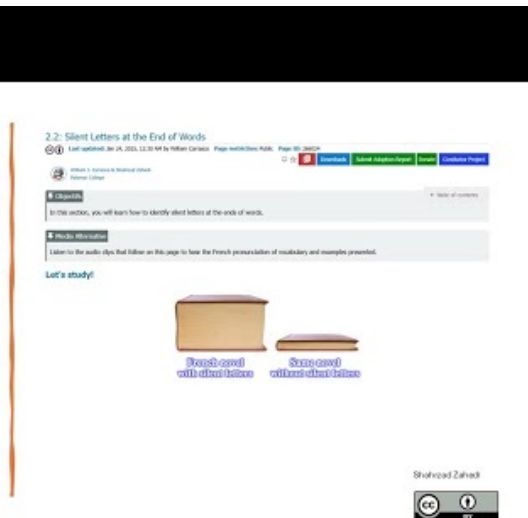
"Silent Letters" by William J Carrasco is licensed under

Silent letters at the end of words

Watch the video tutorial about silent letters, then read the additional details below.



Silent
letters at
the end of
words



Here is [the video's transcription](#).

In French, there are quite a few silent letters at the end of words. Consonants and vowels may both be silent. Here are some examples (silent letters in boldface):

danse, draps, muet

In the words above, the letters **e**, **ps**, and **t** are silent.

Most final consonants are not pronounced in French. Also, sometimes, clusters of letters are silent, such as:

C'est, donnent, étudiants

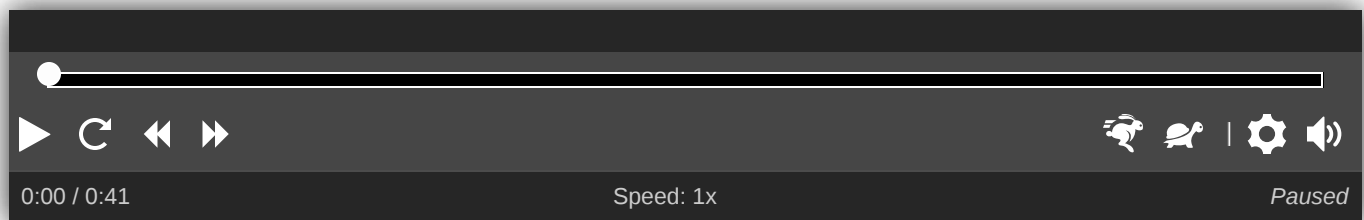
Since most consonants are silent at the end of words in French, it is easier to keep in mind the words that are not silent. The letters **c**, **r**, **f**, **l** are usually pronounced at the end of words. Think of the word **CaReFuL** (or **LuCiFeR**) to remember these letters.

It is easier with vowels. Only the vowel **e** is silent at the end of a word. Indeed, an unaccented **-e** (or **-es**) at the end of a word is usually silent:

française, plage, rêves, nuages

On this page, we will examine final letters that are silent as well as exceptions to the **CaReFuL** rule.

The following letters are generally silent at the end of words in French.



Silent letters at the end of words

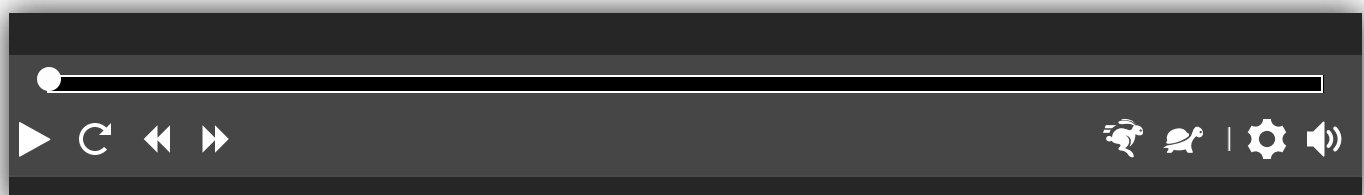
Letter	Examples	Pronounced when followed by -e
-d	canard , quand	fade, stade
-p	trop	clope
-s	tas, draps	phase
-t	chocolat, appétit	petite
-x	prix	—
-z	nez	—
-e	jeune, fille, danse, père.	

Note

- When these letters are followed by the plural **-s**, they remain silent: **draps**, **petits**, **grands**, **filles** etc.
- The letters **d**, **p**, **s**, **t**, **x** and **z** may be pronounced whenever there is a [liaison](#).

The CRFL rule: Letters that are silent at the end of words under certain conditions

According to the CRFL (i.e., “carfeul”) rule, if a word ends with a **c**, **r**, **f**, or **l**, you are going to pronounce them. However, under certain conditions these consonants will be silent:

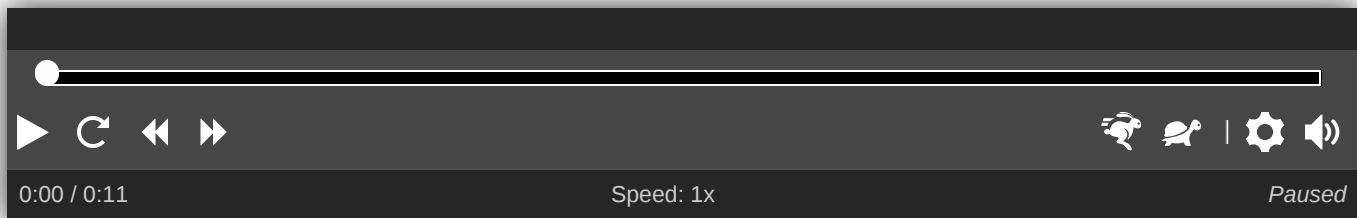


Consonants that are silent under certain conditions

Consonants	Conditions and examples	Exceptions and special cases
-c	précédé par "n" : franc, banc, tronc	mots particuliers : estomac, porc, tabac, clerc
-r	(a) infinitifs (-er) : parler, aimer, danser (b) substantifs et adjectifs : escalier, premier	Exception : r prononcé : amour, hiver, amer, cancer, enfer, cuiller, fleur Cas spécial : r muet : monsieur
-f	mots particuliers : nerf, clef, cerf, serf	Cas spécial : f muet dans le pluriel : des oeufs
-l	(a) mots de plus d'une syllabe : fusil, gentil, outil (b) mots particuliers : soûl, cul	

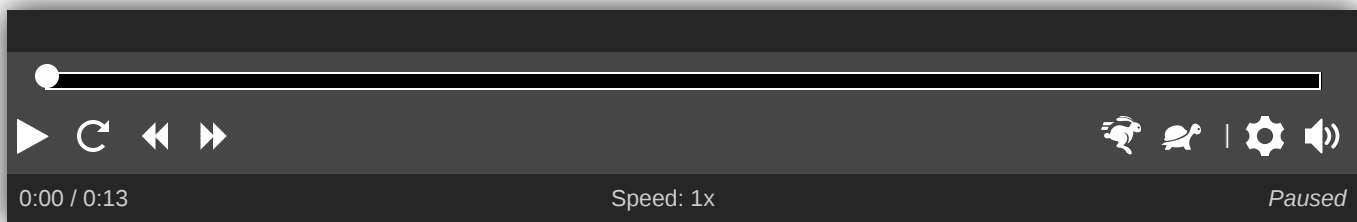
Letters that are (almost) always pronounced at the end of words

As mentioned above, when the consonants **l**, **c**, **f**, **r**, **k**, and **b** are placed at the end of a word, most of the time, they are pronounced. All other consonants are usually not pronounced.



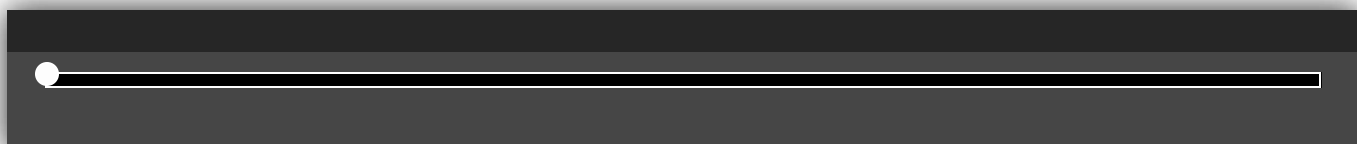
un parc, un club, une chef, un look, avril, le four

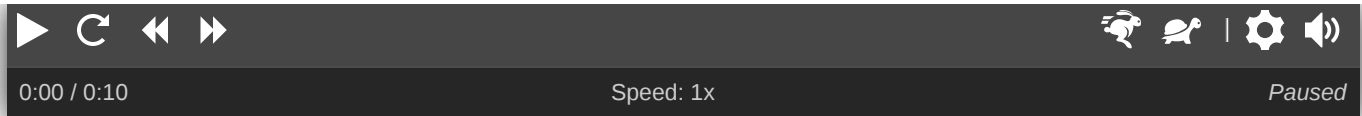
But there are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes letters that are usually silent can be pronounced. Here are a few examples of such exceptions:



minimum, un index, un autobus, le sud, le gaz huit

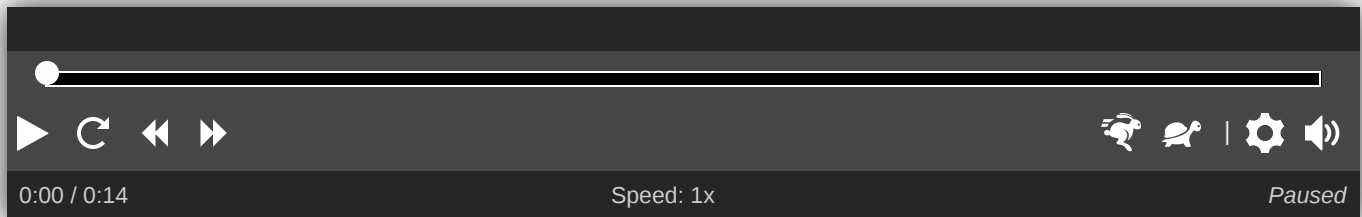
When it comes to vowels, it is easy, because all vowels are pronounced, except for the letter **e**.





cinéma, cacao, fini, vu, jockey

In the case of most words that are more than one syllable, and that end in **-er**, the **e** and the **r** combine and make the **é** sound. This is also the case with most verbs that end in **-er**.



manger, travailler, skier, ouvrier, damier, cendrier

Learning how to pronounce correctly takes time and practice. Above all, you need to listen to as much French as possible.

Additional Resources

- Watch this video for a general introduction to [French Pronunciation](#).
- Watch this tutorial on [Silent letters](#), then answer this question: What are the CRFL and Big Good Quality Kale rules?
- You can practice your French pronunciation with this Video tutorial: [Pronounce the 100 most common French words](#). Try to repeat everything you hear (practice makes perfect).
- You can listen to how specific words are pronounced by visiting the [How to Pronounce channel](#) on YouTube.
- You can hear audio recordings of French words and more at: [audiofrench.com](#). If you want to go all out, consult the [French Pronunciation: Ultimate Guide](#).
- Have fun practicing your pronunciation with these [tongue-twisters, or virelangues](#). Also try [les virelangues](#).
- Practice French pronunciation with this video of [illustrated French sounds](#).

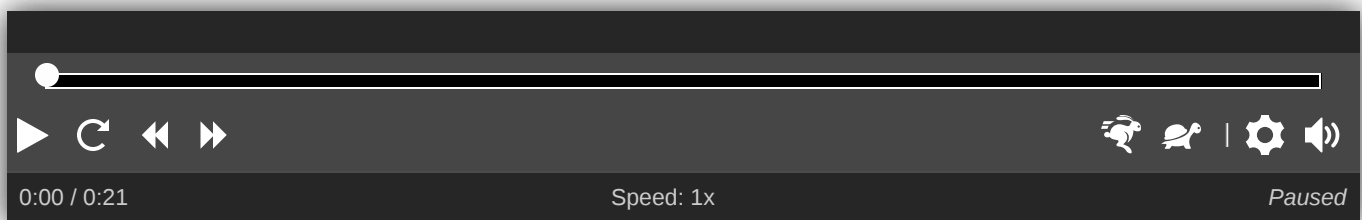
French Around the World

In certain southern French cities, such as Marseille, the final **e** is pronounced.

Let's practice!

Activity A

Listen and say if the letter at the end of each word is silent or pronounced.



1. bac
2. koala

3. naïf
4. arriver
5. croissant
6. heureux
7. bonheur
8. yeux
9. tour
10. un palmier

Activity B

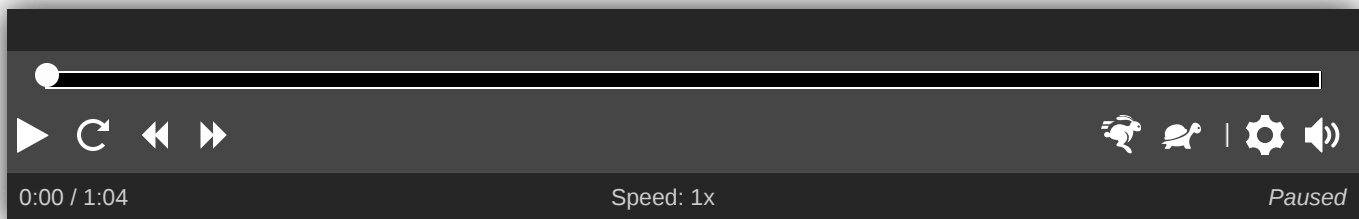
Look at the words below and put them in the right column.

Words whose final letter is silent	Words whose final letter is pronounced

1. béret
2. nid (nest)
3. trop (too much)
4. bref (brief)
5. quand (when)
6. tout (everything)
7. bec (beak)
8. rare
9. avec (with)
10. dans (in)
11. bol (bowl)
12. koala
13. naïf
14. arriver
15. croissant
16. heureux (happy)
17. bonheur (happiness)
18. yeux (eyes)
19. un tour
20. un palmier

Activity C

Listen to and read the text below. Double underline final letters that are silent and underline letters that are pronounced.



Les artistes : Amadou & Mariam

Amadou et Mariam sont nés à Bamako au Mali, Amadou, le 24 octobre 1954 et Mariam, le 15 avril 1958. Amadou et Mariam sont tous les deux aveugles. Amadou est devenu [aveugle](#) à l'âge de 16 ans et sa femme à l'âge de 5 ans. [Ils se marient](#) en 1980 et forment un groupe à la même époque. Dans leur groupe, Mariam chante et Amadou joue de la guitare.

En 1986, ils émigrent en Côte d'Ivoire et commencent une longue ascension vers la notoriété internationale. Amadou et Mariam jouent leur musique dans de nombreux pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest mais aussi en France, en Suisse, en Allemagne, en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis.

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2.3: Other Silent Letters (Silent H and Lapsed E)

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce:

- The silent **h**
- The **e caduc**

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

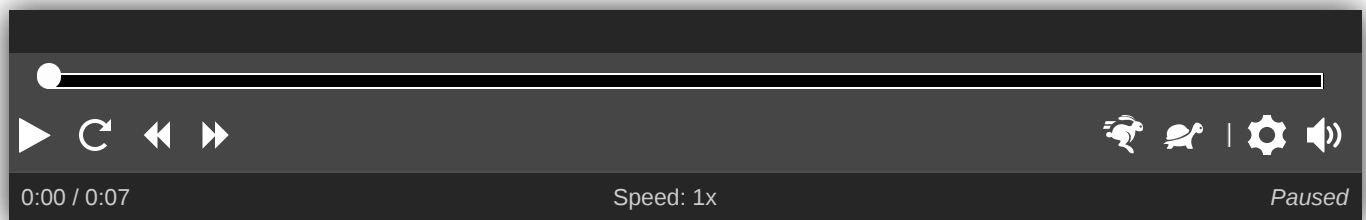
[Let's get started !](#)

Silent Letters

Both consonants and vowels may be silent (unpronounced) in French.

The Silent H

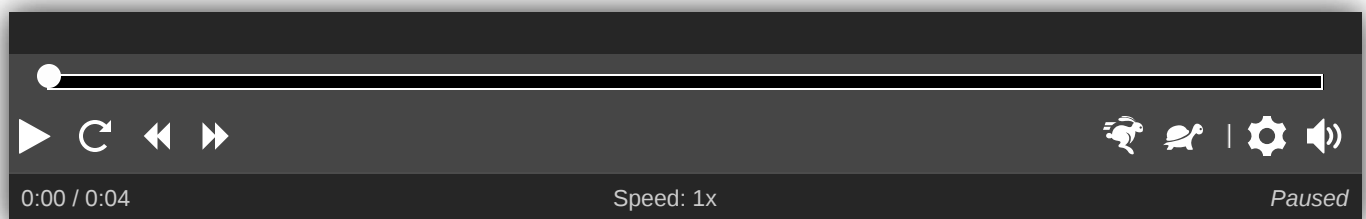
The letter **h**, however, is always silent. Here are a few examples:



habiter, **th**é, athlète, **h**éros

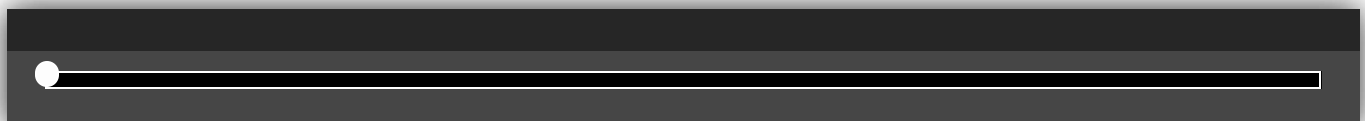
However, the letter **h** can be mute (**muet**) or aspirated (**aspiré**). When mute, it is basically non-existent; it connects to the previous consonant through elisions or liaisons.

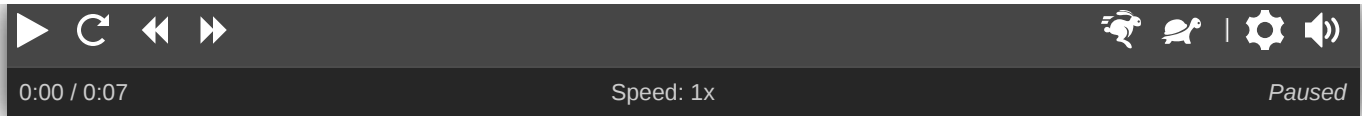
Here are a few examples of the silent **h**:



J'**h**abite, les **h**ôtels, l'**h**orloge

Here are a few examples of the aspirated **h**:



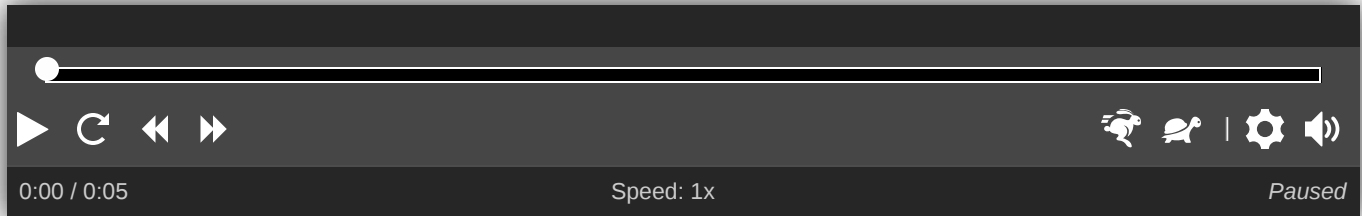


le **h**érissons, les **h**éros, des **h**aricots

The lapsed E

What is the **e caduc**, or lapsed **e**? It is usually the letter **e** that appears in the middle of a word. It can be skipped (made silent) or pronounced depending on the region or the person speaking.

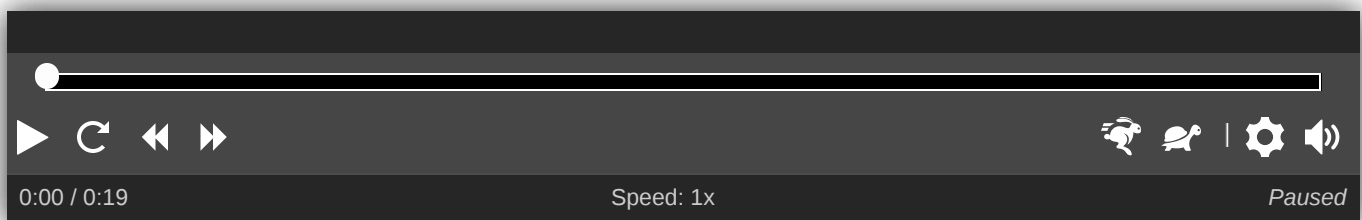
- The first rule is that if the letter **e** is usually pronounced when it appears in the middle of a word, and after two consonants.



The **e caduc** appearing in the middle of a word and after two consonants

Français	Anglais
gouvernement	government
mercredi	Wednesday
appartement	apartment

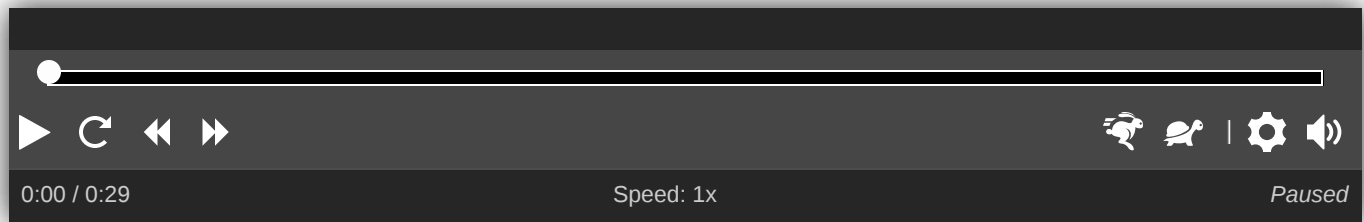
- When the **e caduc** is placed in the middle of a word and after one consonant or vowel, it is pronounced by some and not by others, depending on the region, the language level, and diction.



The lapsed **e** in the middle of a word and preceded by a single consonant

The regular spelling of the word	It can be pronounced...
p etit	p'tit
maintenant	maint'nant.
au re v oir	au r'voir
des remerciements	des remerci'ments
le dénouement	le dénou'ment

Again, depending on the region, language level, and diction, when the **e** is preceded by the following consonants, it can be dropped:
je, me, te, ne, se, de, ce.



When the letter **e** is preceded by **j, m, t, n, s, d** and **c**.

The regular spelling of the word	It can be pronounced...
Je vais bien.	J'vais bien.
Je me demande.	Je m'demande.
Je te donne.	J't'donne.
Je ne sais pas.	Je n'sais pas.
Il se dépêche.	Il s'dépêche.
Pas de croissants.	Pas d'croissants.
C'est cela .	C'est ç'la.

Additional Resources

Learn more about when to use the lapsed **e** by visiting these sites:

- [Le e caduc](#)
- [Le e caduc](#)

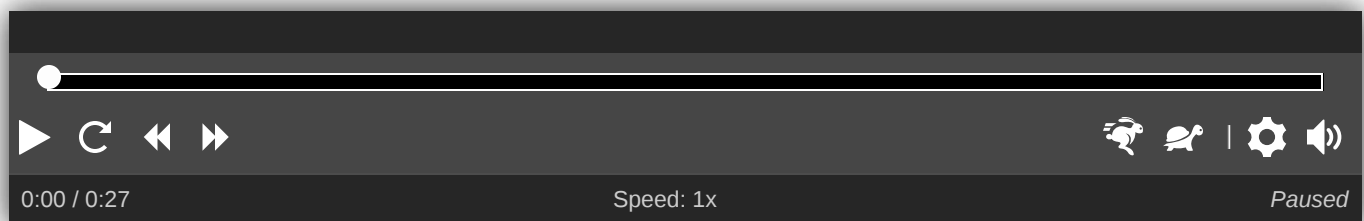
French in the World

In certain southern French cities, such as Marseille, the lapsed **e** is pronounced.

Let's practice !

Activity A

Listen and repeat.

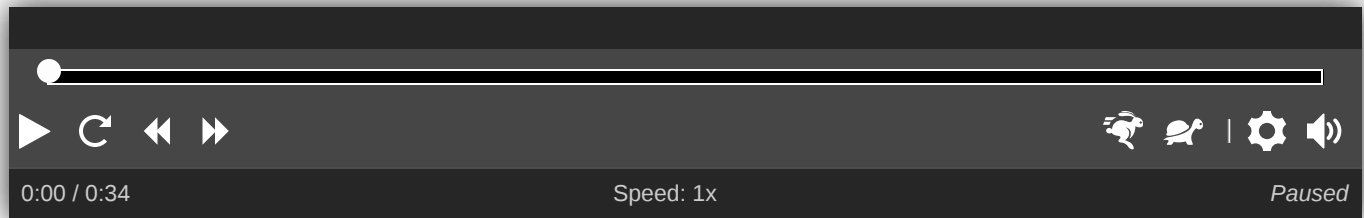


1. Le treizième arrondissement.
2. Donner un coup de main ?
3. Justement, elle aime le Petit Prince.

4. Sa dernière année de lycée.
5. Je ne te le demanderai pas deux fois.
6. Tu n'as pas de voiture ?
7. Franchement, je ne sais pas !

Activity B

Listen and determine whether or not the letter **e** is pronounced.



1. Je vais bien.
2. Les aboiements du chien.
3. Notre département
4. Comment vous appelez-vous ?
5. Le musée du Louvre
6. Il a pratiquement fini.
7. Le comportement des élèves
8. Nous aimons le tutoiement
9. Leur gouvernement
10. Une vue

Activity C

Can you answer these questions about other silent letters?

1. What is the difference between an **h muet** and an **h aspiré**?
2. When the letter **e** is placed in the middle of a word, when does it always have to be pronounced?
3. When the **e caduc** is placed in the middle of a word and after one consonant or vowel, is it always silent for all French speakers? Please explain.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Consonants- Introduction

[3.1: Consonants - Introduction](#)

[3.2: The Letter R](#)

[3.3: The Letter Q](#)

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3.1: Consonants - Introduction

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to:

- Pronounce consonants
- Identify silent consonants

Media Alternative

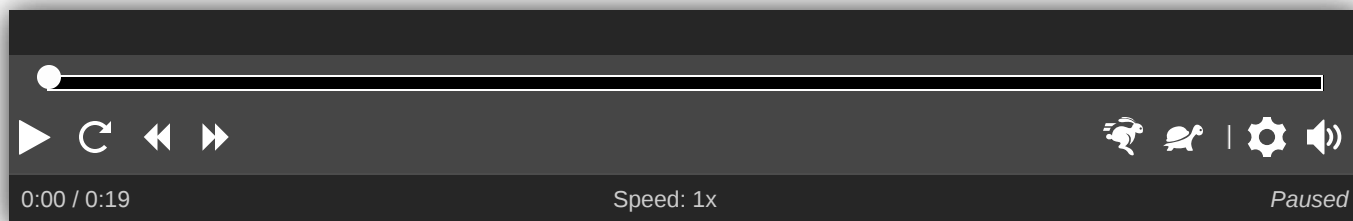
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

French Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced similarly in English and France, but not exactly the same. Two things that are significantly different in French and often challenging for English speakers are (1) silent consonants that we write but don't pronounce (see below) and (2) the pronunciation of the letter **r**. Here are the consonants that are most different from English:



Consonants		
Consonants	Pronunciation	Examples
r	How to pronounce r	Lorsque j'arrive à la gare
ç	Pronounce it like s in English	Ça, leçon
h	silent	hôpital, halles, haine

Note

There are many subtle differences between the way we pronounce consonants in English and French. To explore these, you can watch this tutorial on [the pronunciation of consonants](#). Later, you will learn how to pronounce clusters of consonants, such as **ss**, **th**, **qu**, etc.

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, can't, 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.

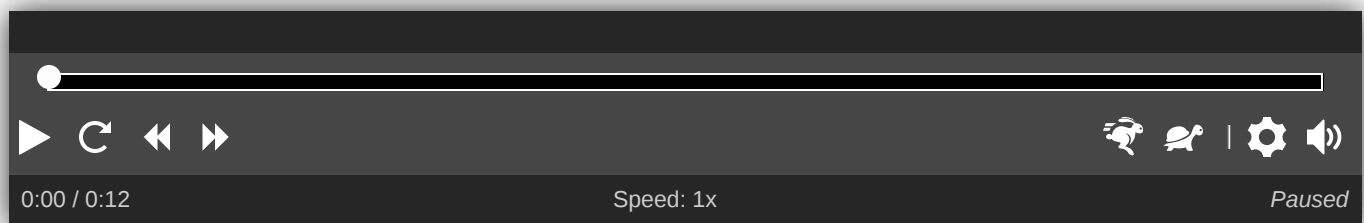
The French « r »

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: “ahhrrrah.”

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. j'arrive, j'arrête, je ris.
2. l'amour, la mort, la mer.

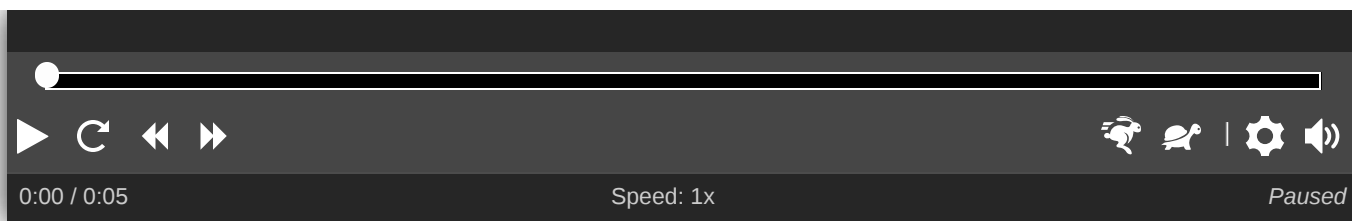
Pronounce each sequence slowly, patiently, until you can produce the « r » in each word reliably.

The Cedilla: « ç »

The French cedilla is just a « c » with a little curved line attached to the bottom: **ç**. You can think of it as a « c » that wants to be an « s », and it is pronounced [s]. For example, the word **ça** sounds like « saw », not « caw »

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 **habitude**, **homme**, and **hôpital** are all pronounced with an initial vowel sound, just like in the English word *honor*.



habitude, homme, hôpital

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)sychology and psychologie, (p)neumonia and pneumonie.

Silent consonants

In addition to the letter **h**, there are a number of consonants that may become silent in certain contexts.

Learning how to pronounce correctly takes time and practice. Above all, you need to listen to as much French as possible.

Additional Resources

- Watch this video for a general introduction to [French Pronunciation](#).
- Watch this tutorial on [Silent letters](#), then answer this question: What are the CRFL and Big Good Quality Kale rules?
- You can practice your French pronunciation with this Video tutorial: [Pronounce the 100 most common French words](#). Try to repeat everything you hear (practice makes perfect).
- You can listen to how specific words are pronounced by visiting the [How to Pronounce channel](#) on YouTube.
- You can hear audio recordings of French words and more at: [audiofrench.com](#). If you want to go all out, consult the [French Pronunciation: Ultimate Guide](#).
- Have fun practicing your pronunciation with these [tongue-twisters, or virelangues](#). Also try [les virelangues](#).
- Practice French pronunciation with this video of [illustrated French sounds](#).

French Around the World

The Consonants **T** and **D** in Quebec.

In Quebec French, certain consonants have specific pronunciation characteristics, notably the affrication of the consonants **t** and **d** before the vowels **i** and **u**, as well as modifications during liaisons.

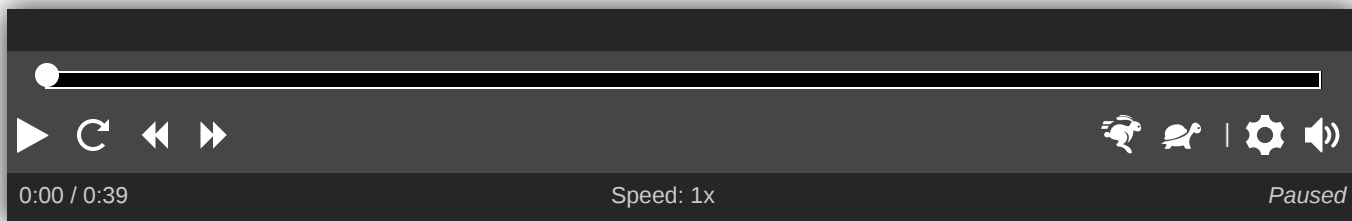
The consonants **t** and **d** are often pronounced [ts] and [dz] respectively before the vowels **i** and **u** (for example, 'tu' is pronounced [tsy] and **du** is pronounced [dzy]). Before other vowels or consonants, they are pronounced as in standard French.

Learn more about [Quebec French vs. French French](#).

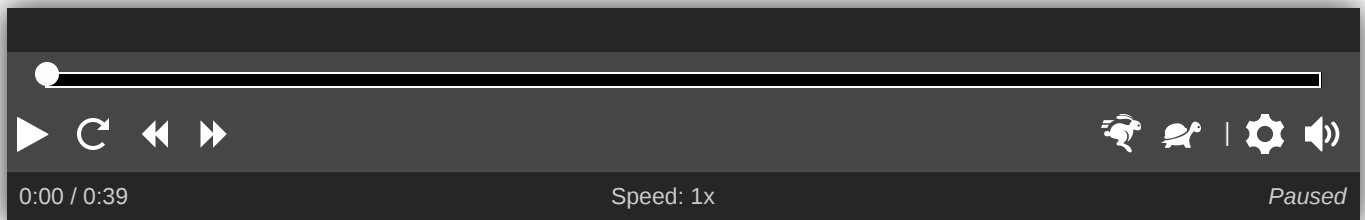
Let's practice!

Activity

Say whether the pronounced letters are vowels or consonants.



1. Voyelle ou consonne ?
2. Voyelle ou consonne ?
3. Voyelle ou consonne ?
4. Voyelle ou consonne ?
5. Voyelle ou consonne ?
6. Voyelle ou consonne ?
7. Voyelle ou consonne ?
8. Voyelle ou consonne ?
9. Voyelle ou consonne ?
10. Voyelle ou consonne ?



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3.2: The Letter R

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter **R**.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

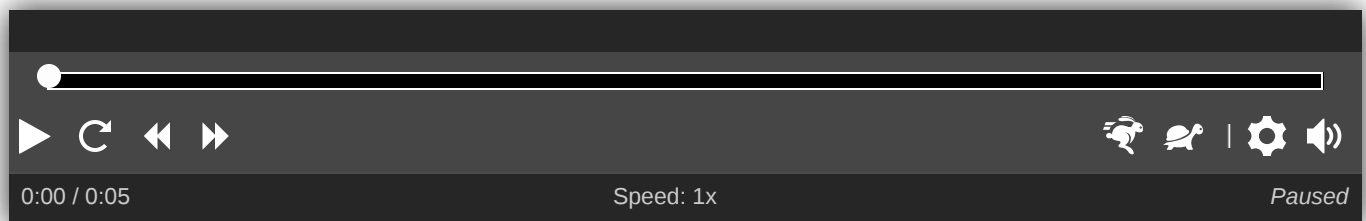
The letter R

How is the French **r** pronounced? And how does it sound? This is one of the more challenging letters to pronounce in French. In addition, it is the most pronounced consonant in French. Therefore, it's important to master it from the outset.

Furthermore, the **r** is pronounced differently in different parts of France and the Francophone world, and its pronunciation has also evolved over time. In fact, during the middle ages, the letter **r** was rolled like in Spanish.

If you are ready and willing to pronounce it like a Parisian, we will explain here how to practice it.

Listen to how these words are pronounced:



rapide

portable

prudence

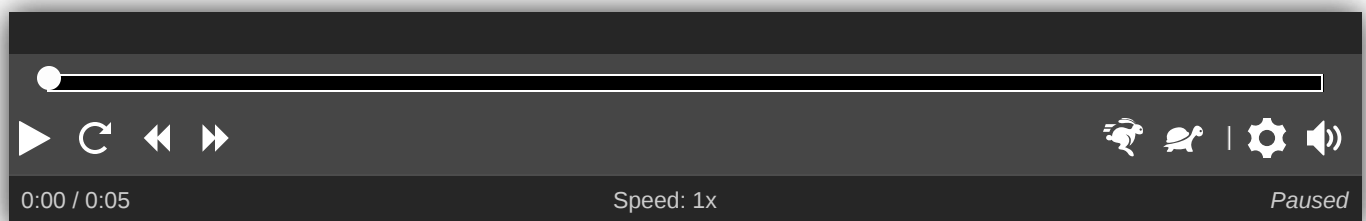
Do the **r** in these two words sound the same to you? And is it similar to the letter **r** in English?

Actually, the French **r** is more similar to the Arabic and Persian **kh**, the Spanish **j**, the **ch** in the word **machen** in German.

But how is the letter **r** produced? It's pronounced the same way that one gargles. The sound comes from the end of the throat, while the tongue is touching the bottom teeth.

The **r** is softer when it is between two vowels, or followed by a vowel.

(a) First, you may have noticed that when the letter **r** is at the end of a word that ends in **-er**, it is silent (muet).



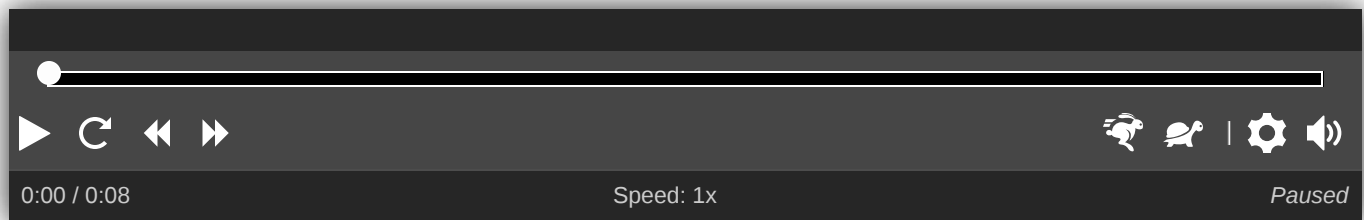
le barbier, en danger, un métier, aller

Note

There are some exceptions to this rule: **amer, mer, hier, fier, cancer, cher**

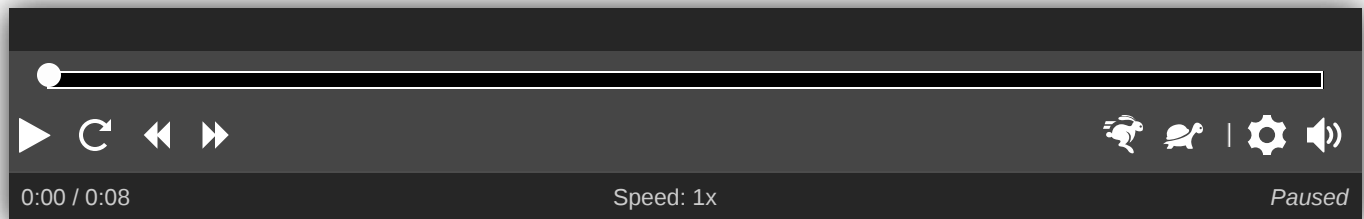
(b) Most websites claim that the **r** sound in French comes from the throat, but others suggest that we make the **r** sound when the tip of the tongue sinks down to touch the bottom teeth, while the back of the tongue arches up.

The **r** is actually pronounced with more friction when it is between two vowels or at the end of a word.



père, tour, voir, parents, girafe, bar

But it is pronounced with less friction when it is before a consonant.



partir, carte, cours, morceau, sortir, dortoir

Additional Resources

Watch these videos to practice pronouncing the French R:

- [The French R simplified](#)
- [The French R](#)

[To learn more about the letter r click here.](#)

Watch the video to practice [the letter r + vowels](#).

French around the World

The uvular R vs. the alveolar trill.

Did you know that some French speakers roll their R's like a Spanish R?

The alveolar trill was still the common sound of r in Southern France and in Quebec at the beginning of the 20th century, having been gradually replaced since then, due to Parisian influence, by the uvular pronunciation. The alveolar trill is now mostly associated, even in Southern France and in Quebec, with older speakers and rural settings.

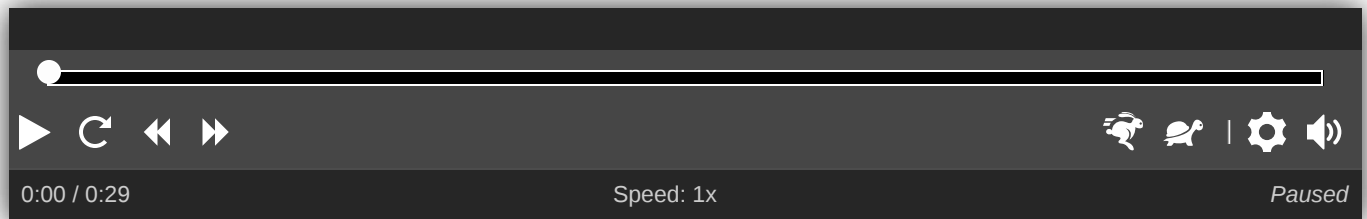
The letter R is often trilled in songs. Listen to Edith Piaf's R's when she sings [Non, je ne regrette rien](#).

Many French speakers in countries other than France will also roll their R's. Listen to how this man rolled his Rs when speaking the [Southern Camerounian accent](#).

Let's practice!

Activity

Practice pronouncing these words.



1. craindre
2. croire
3. Paris
4. aéroport
5. faire
6. français
7. erreur
8. rue
9. vouloir
10. suivre
11. fréquenter
12. le bonheur
13. bonjour
14. café crème
15. courrir

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3.3: The Letter Q

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter Q.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Watch the video tutorial about silent letters, then read the additional details below.

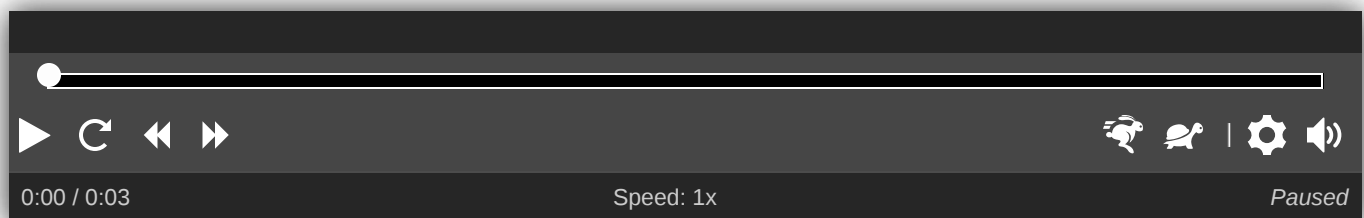


Here is [the video's transcription](#).

Let's study!

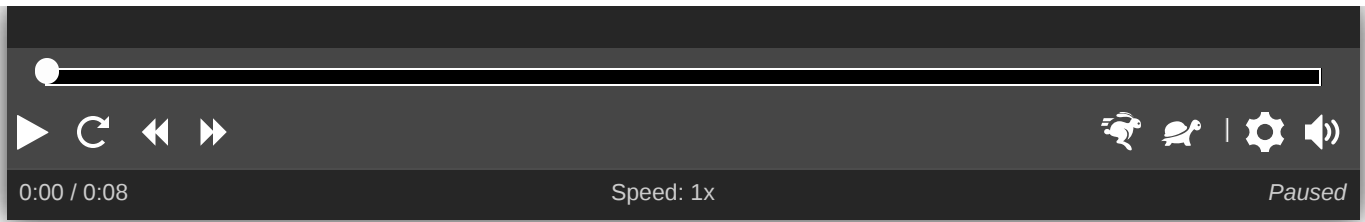
The letter **q** is usually followed by the vowel **u** in French, unless it appears at the end of the word. When it is followed by the letter **u**, it is just pronounced like the letter **k** in English. This means that the **u** is silent most of the time.

Here are examples of when the letter **q** appears at the end of a word. It's then pronounced like **[k]**



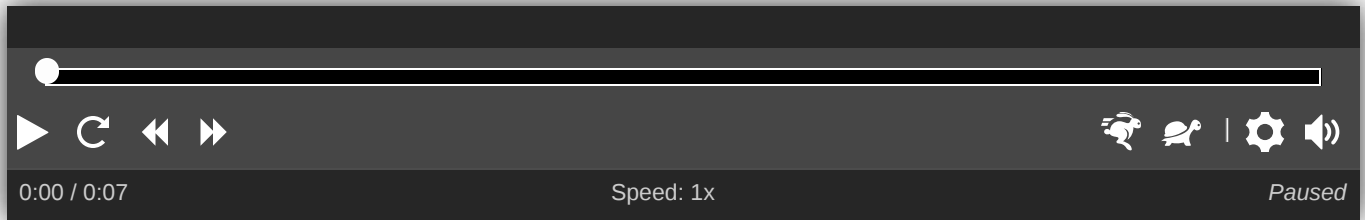
cin**q**, co**q**

Here are examples of words containing **qu** when the **u** is silent.



pique-nique, quand, banque, quantité, pratiquement

Here are exceptional cases where the **qu** sounds like [kw].

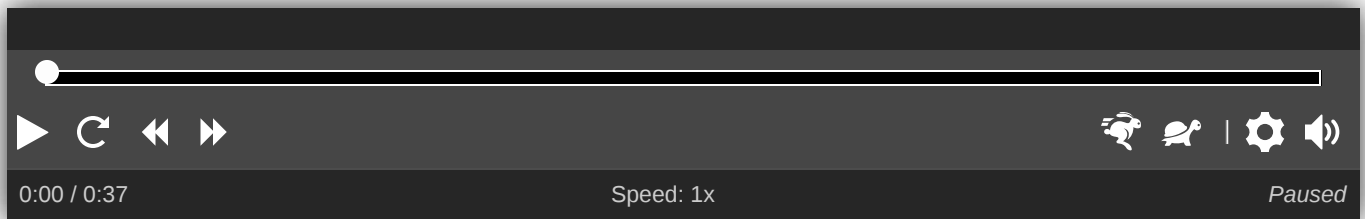


adéquat, équateur, aquarium, aquarelle

Let's practice!

Activity

Practice pronouncing these French words.



1. quel
2. qui
3. cinq
4. cinquante
5. quinze
6. pratiquer
7. quelques
8. quoique
9. quatorze
10. adéquat
11. écologiquement
12. presque

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Double and Combined Consonants

[4.1: Double Consonants](#)

[4.2: Consonant Clusters with the Letter H](#)

[4.3: Other Consonant Clusters](#)

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4.1: Double Consonants

Objectifs

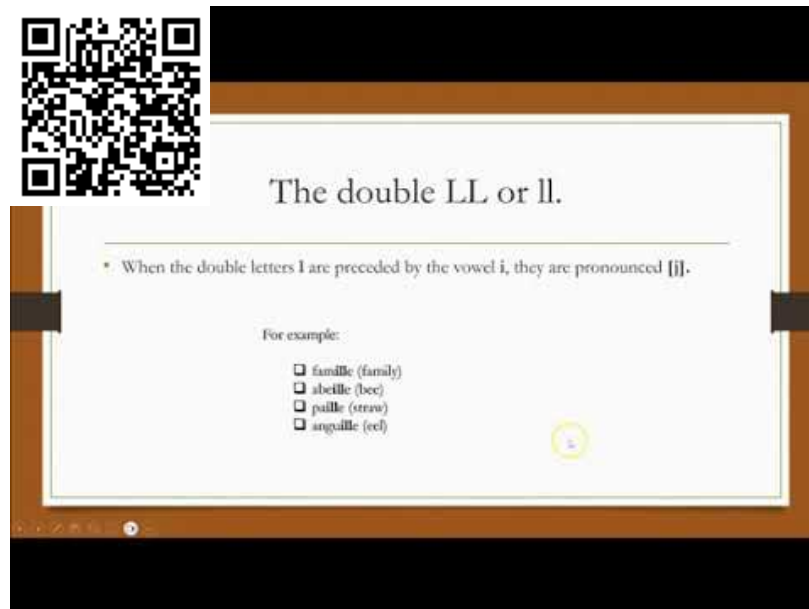
In this section, you will learn how to pronounce double consonants.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

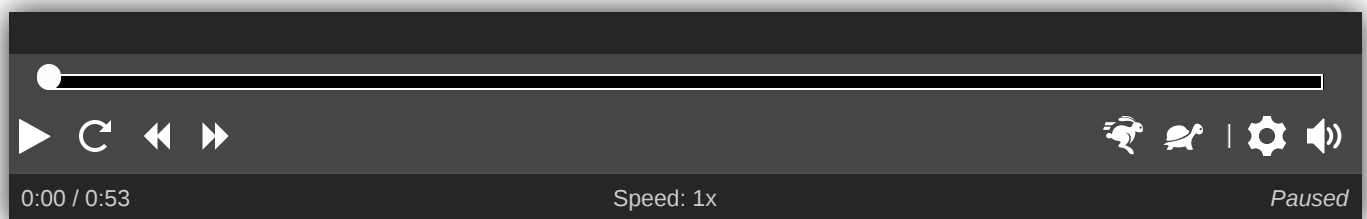
Let's get started!



Here is [the video's transcription](#).

Common double consonants

The consonants that double up most often are: **c, f, l, m, n, p, r, s** et **t**.

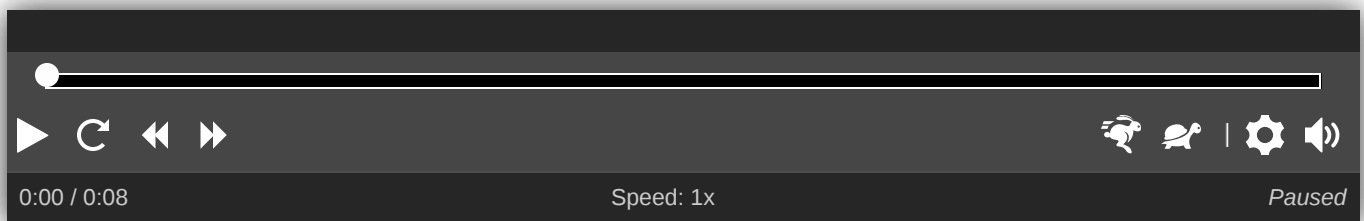


Double consonants

Consonants	Examples
cc	accélération, occulter, succinct
ff	effacer, suffir, souffrance
ll	aller, illégal, ville, jumelle
mm	immunité, communication, sommaire
nn	connaissance, antenne
pp	frapper, apporter, application
rr	marraine, correction, irrégulier
ss	poisson, frisson, finesse
tt	attribuer, cadette, littérature

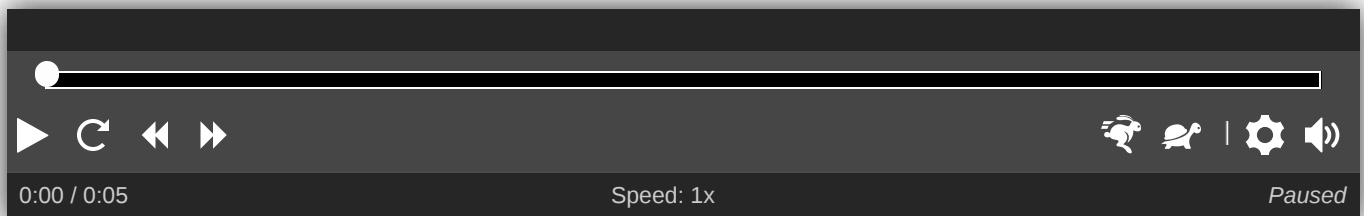
LL

The consonant that doubles up the most is the letter « l ». When preceded by the vowels a, e or o, it is pronounced [l], like normal L in English



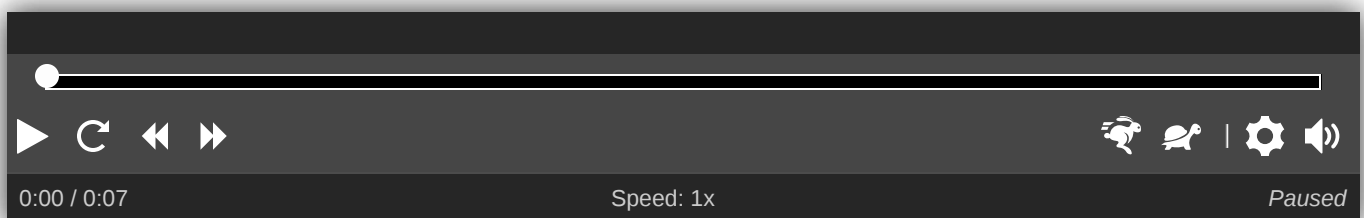
balle, pelle, collection, molle, pull

When the « l » is part of the grapheme « -ill », it will be pronounced [j], like a Y in English:



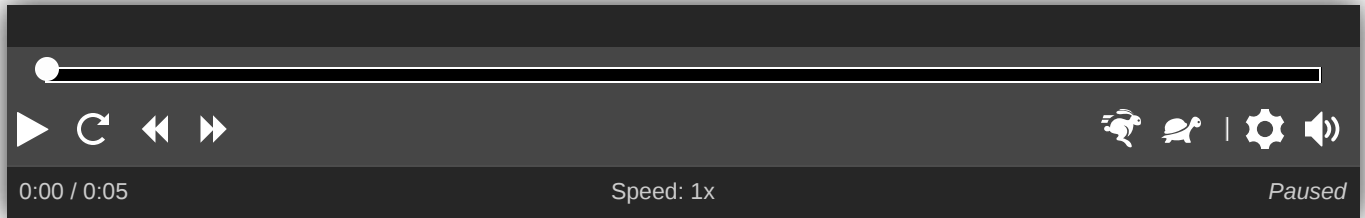
abeille, billard, famille

The only common exceptions to this are



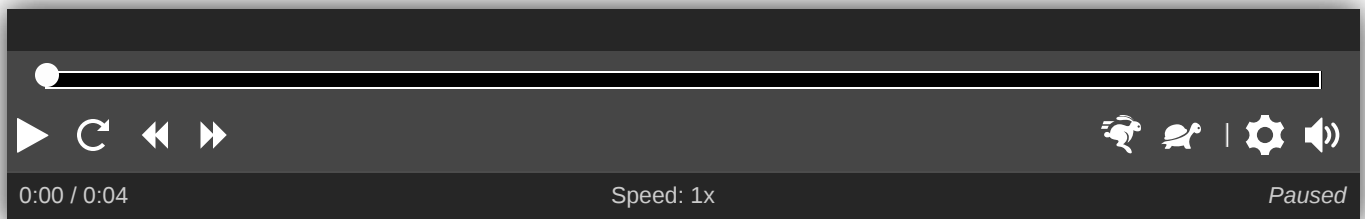
ville, mille, tranquille, Lille.

CC



accalmie, occulte, raccourci

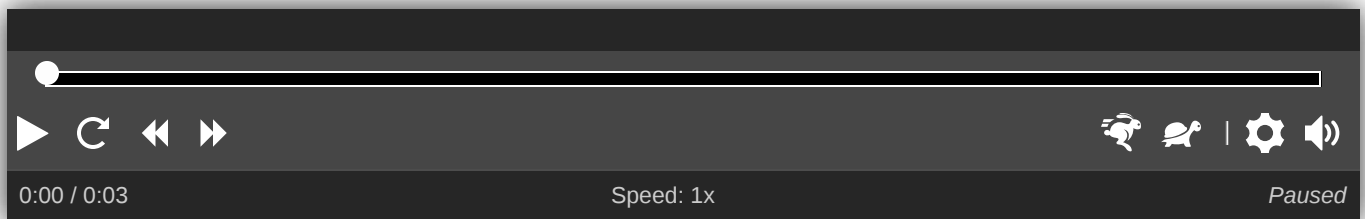
When a double cc is followed by an **e** or an **i**, the second **c** will be pronounced [s], as in:



accent, vaccination

SS

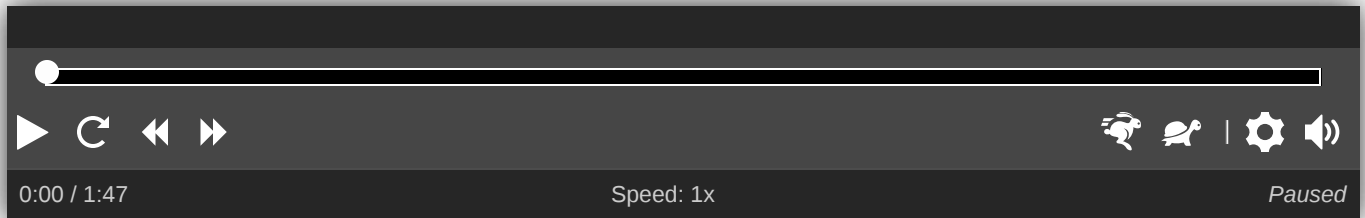
In order to preserve the [s] sound and avoid being pronounced as a [z], the letter **s** must be doubled up between vowels. Compare, for example:



poison (**s** =[z]) vs. poisson (**ss** = [s]).

This phonetic distinction makes the difference between poison (poison) and fish (poisson).

Here is a list of these most common double consonants with their pronunciation:



Common double consonants

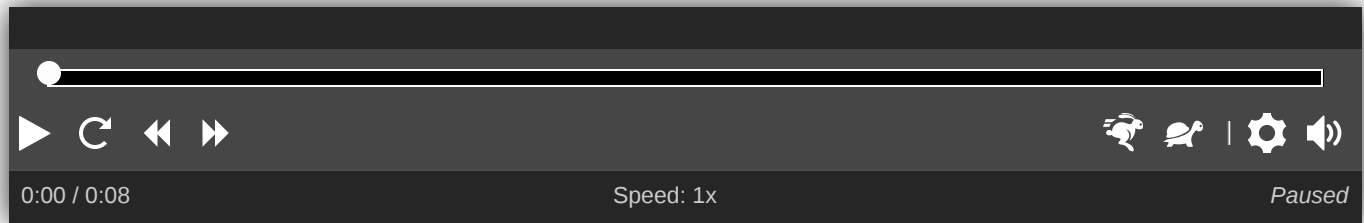
Double consonant	Pronunciation	Examples	Notes
bb	[b]	scrabble, abbé, gibbeux, rabbin, sabba	
cc	[k] [ks]	accalmie, occulte, raccourci accent, vaccin	When a double cc is followed by an e or an i , the second c will be pronounced [s].
dd	[d]	addition, adduction, bouddhisme, cheddar, reddition	
ff	[f]	affection, coiffer, offrir, truffe	
gg	[g] [ʒ]	aggraver, jogging, reggae, toboggan suggestion	When gg is followed by an e or an i (exception in words borrowed from other languages) the double gg will be pronounced [ʒ].
ll -ill -all, -ell, -oll -ille	[j] [l] [l]	balle, pelle, collection, pull famille, abeille, vieille ville, mille, tranquille	The consonant that doubles up the most is the L . When preceded by the vowels a , e or o , it is pronounced [l], like normal L in English. When the L is part of the grapheme -ill , it will be pronounced [j], like a Y in English. The only common exceptions to this are ville , mille and tranquille , along with place names like Lille .
mm	[m]	homme, enflammer, récemment, immature	
nn	[n]	colonne, panne, conditionnel, tonne	
pp	[p]	appareil, zapper, rappel, trappe	
rr	[ʀ]	amarre, charrue, ferraille, serrure	
ss	[s]	bâtisse, housse, moisson, tresse	In order to preserve the [s] sound and avoid be pronounced as a [z], the letter s must be doubled up between vowels. Compare, for example, poison (s = [z]) and poisson (ss = [s]). This phonetic distinction makes the difference between poison (poison) and fish (poisson).
tt	[t]	frotter, patte, trottoir	
zz	[z]	blizzard, grizzli, jazz, mezzanine, paparazzi, pizza	

Consonants that do not double up

The following five consonants are never doubled:

j, q, v, w and **x**.

Consonants **h** and **k** only double in the words



wahhabisme, wahhabite and Akkadien, Drakkar and trekking.

Contexts in which double consonants are found

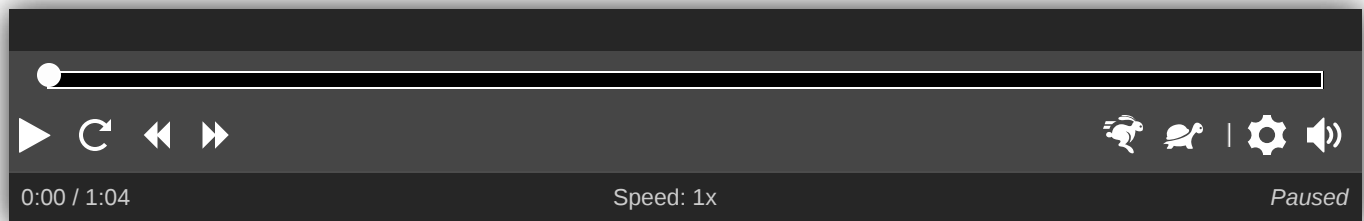
Masculine nouns and adjectives ending in **-on**, will become **-onne** in their feminine form (e.g., **bon** vs. **bonne**).

Whether or not a consonant is doubled depends on its surroundings (preceding or following letters) and its position in the word. For example, the doubling of a consonant almost never occurs after another consonant, after the pronounced letter **e** [ə], after an accented vowel, or after the letter groups **ai**, **au** and **oi**.

Double consonants in prefixes

Double consonants often appear after a prefix when the final letter of the prefix and the initial letter of the radical are identical. For example: **sur-** + **réaliste** = **surréaliste**.

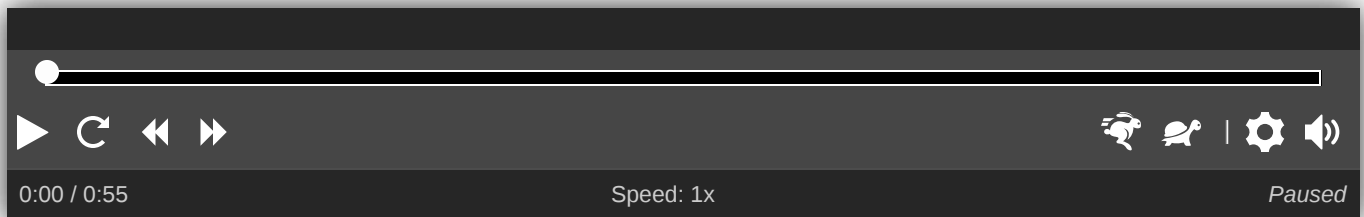
Here is a list of common prefixes with double consonants:



Prefixes with double consonants

Prefix	Words containing the prefix
acc-	accordéon, accueil, accrocher
aff-	affiche, affaire, affectueux
app-	application, appareil, apporter
arr-	arrêt, arroser, arracher
att-	attaquer, attention, attentat
eff-	effort, effroi
ess-	essor, essai, essentiel
ill-	illisible, illusoire
imm-	immense, immigration
inn-	innovation, innocence
irr-	irréversible, irréaliste
occ-	occasion, occident
off-	offense, office, offrande

Here are some words whose first consonant never doubles:



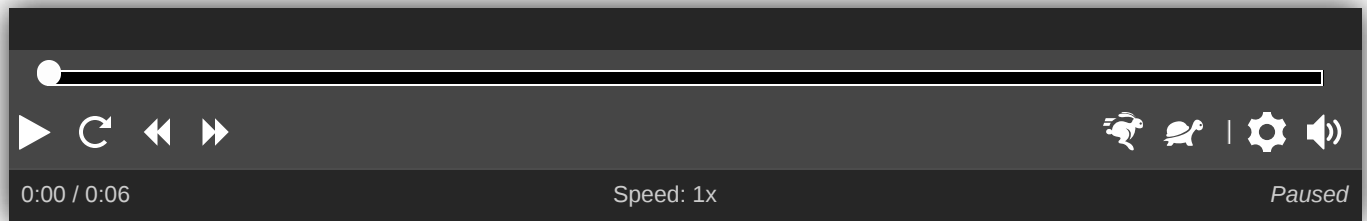
Prefixes whose consonants do not double

Prefix	Examples
ab-	abandon, abîme
ad-	adage, adorer
ag-	agacer, agonie
am-	amas, amour
ana-	analyse, anoblir
an-	anarchie, aneth
apo-	apogée, apôtre
éc-	écaille, éclair
el-	élan, électeur
er-	érafler, ériger, érudit
in-	inaction, inoccupé, inodore

Double consonants with suffixes

In most cases, the addition of a suffix will cause doubling of consonants:

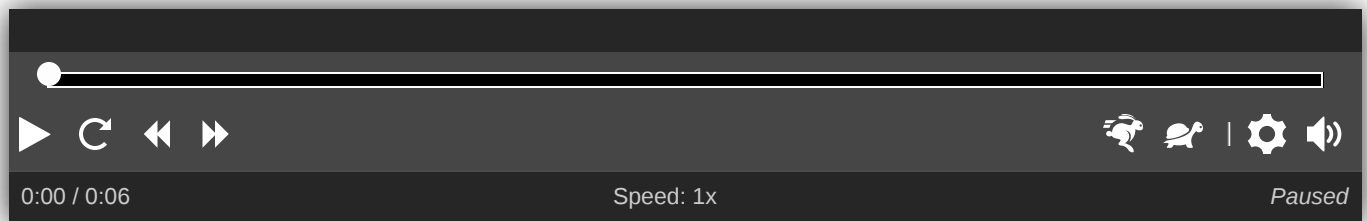
Some adverbs ending in **-mment**. Example:



constant (constant) => const**am**ment (constantly)

violent (violent) => viol**e**mmment (violently)

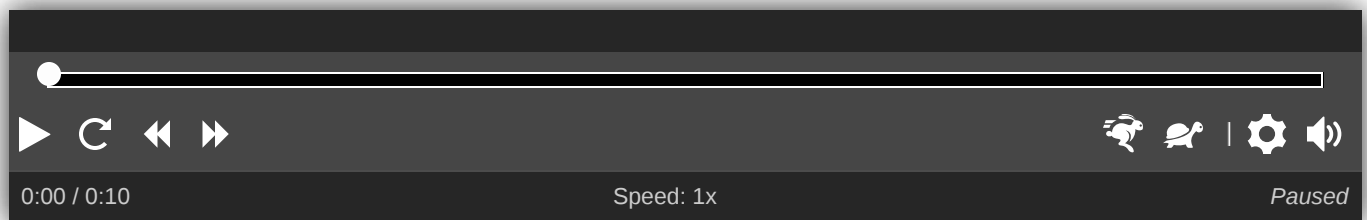
Verbs derivatived from nouns ending in **-on** will double up the **n**:



don => donn**e**r

pardon => pardonn**e**r.

In some cases, the addition of a suffix will eliminate a double consonant:



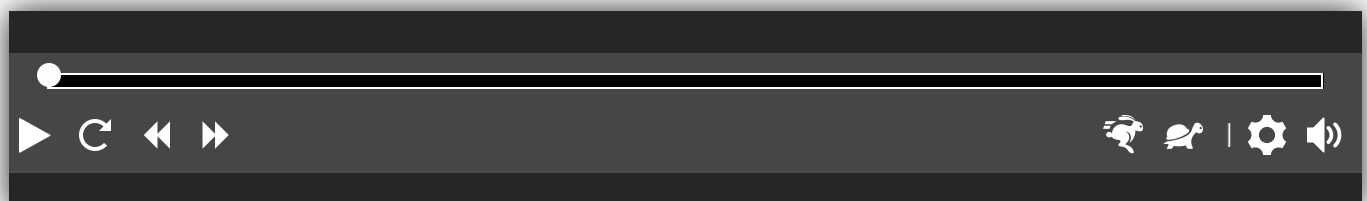
hom**mm**e => homicide

mon**nn**aie => monétaire

chatt**tt**e => chaton

CC

The consonant **c** is doubled in words that begin with:



0:00 / 0:13

Speed: 1x

Paused

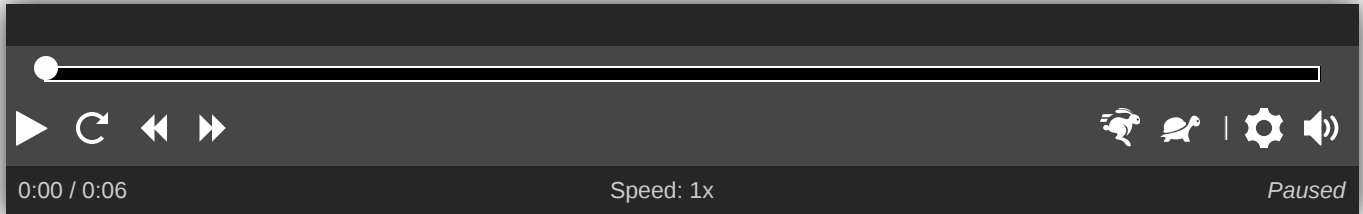
(a) **acc-**:

/k/: accueil, accabler

/ks/: accès

Exceptions: académie, acoustiques, acupuncture, acadien

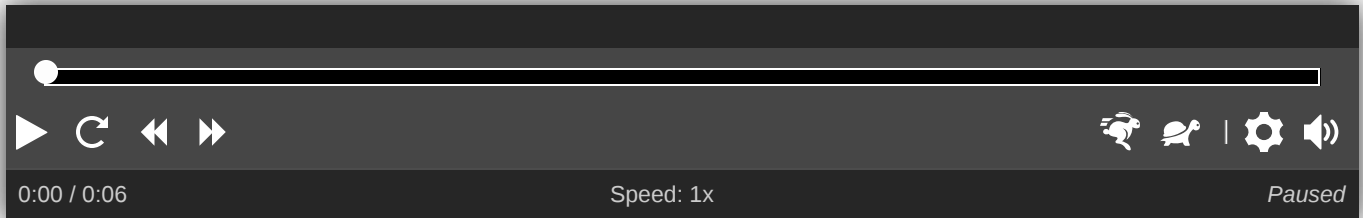
(b) **occ-**:



/k/: occupation /ks/: occident

Exceptions: océan, oculaire, octobre

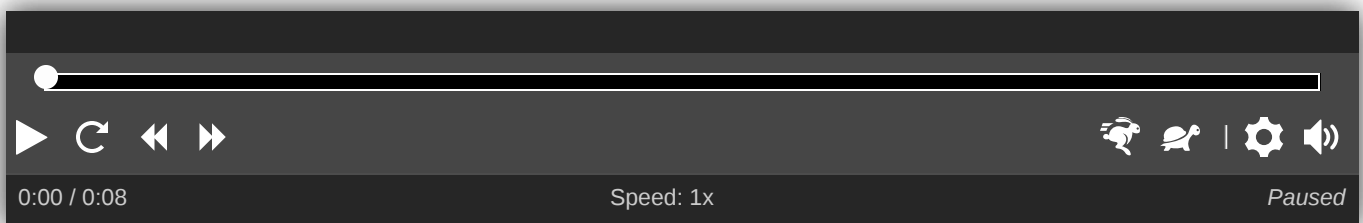
(c) **succ-**:



/k/: succulent

/ks/: succès, successeur, succinct

(d) **sacc-**:

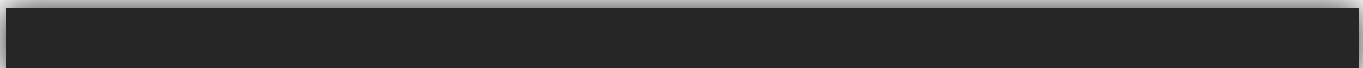


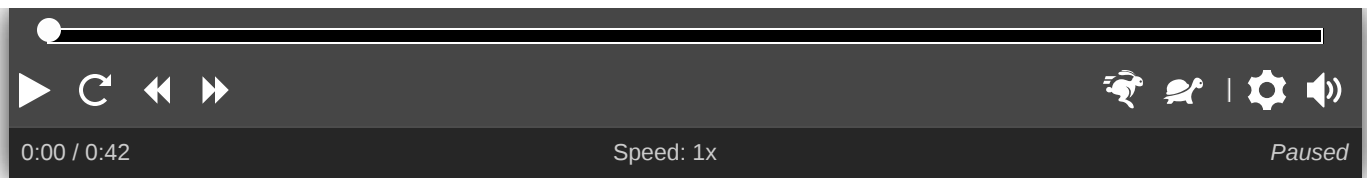
/k/: saccage, saccharine

Exceptions: sacrifice, sacoche, sacrilège

ff

The consonant **f** is doubled in words that begin with:





(a) **aff-** : affiliation, affaire, afférence

Exceptions : afin, africain

(b) **eff-** : effet, efficace, effervescent

(c) **diff-** : différence, diffusion, difficulté

(d) **souff-** : souffrir, souffler, souffleur

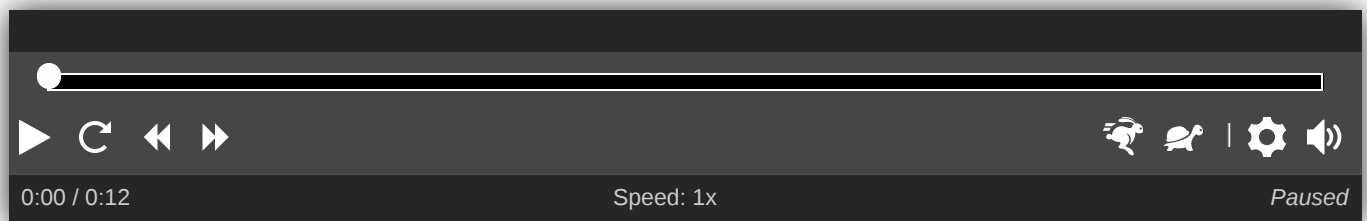
Exceptions: soufisme, soufre

(e) **suff-** : suffisant, suffrage, suffocation

(f) **siff-** : siffler

ll

The consonant **l** is doubled:

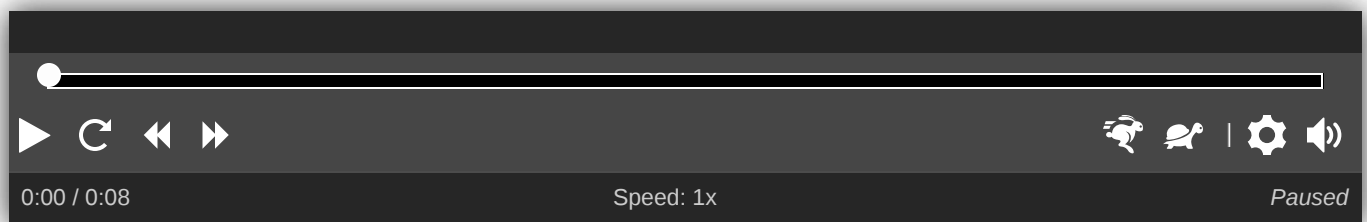


(a) in words that begin with **-ill** : illégal, illégitime

(b) in words that end with **-ille, -elle, -alle** (but the pronunciation varies) : fille vs. ville

mm

The consonant **m** is doubled in words that begin with:

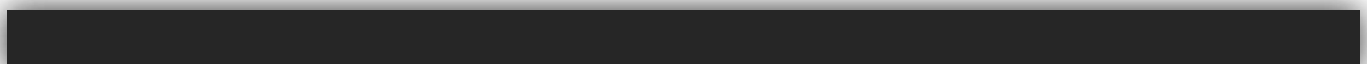


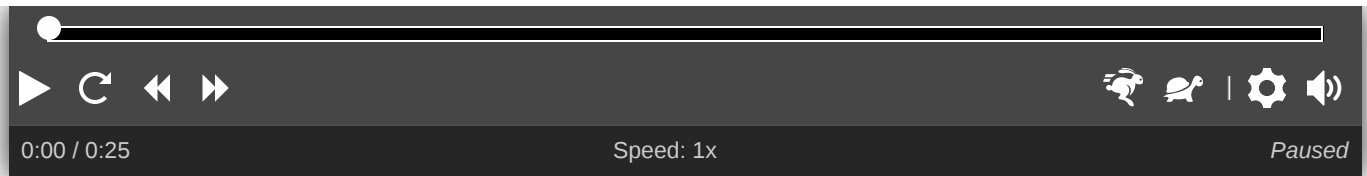
(a) **imm-** : immense, immersion

(b) **comm-** : commerce, communication, communauté

nn

The consonant **n** is doubled in words that begin with:

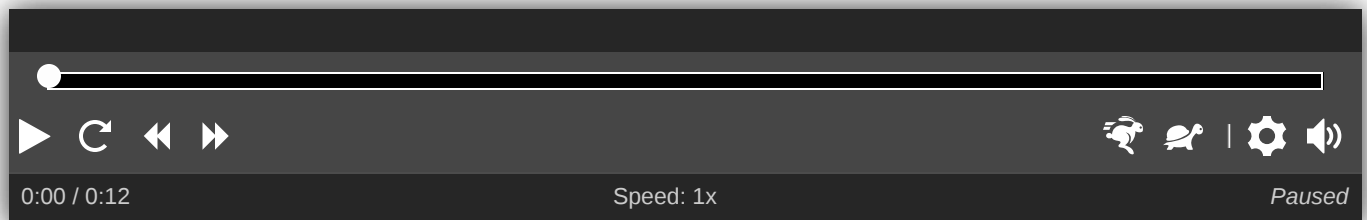




- (a) **conn-** : connaître, connivence
 - (b) **inn-** : innovation, inné
 - (c) in words that end with **-onner** : donner, s'abonner
 - (d) in words that end with **-onnel** : personnel, rationnel
- Exceptions:** téléphoner, détoner

pp

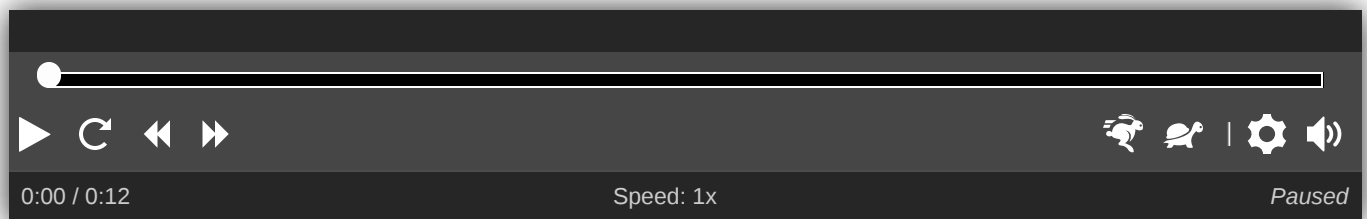
The consonant **p** is doubled:



- (a) in words that begin with **supp-** : supprimer, supposition
- (b) in words that begin with **app-** ou **rapp-** : apprendre, apparaître, rapporter

rr

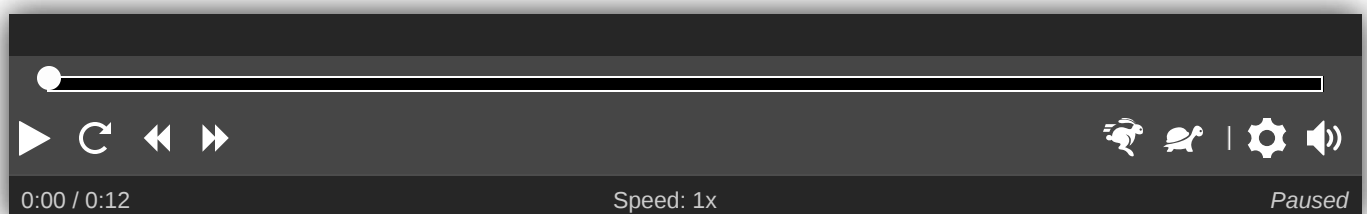
The consonant **r** is doubled in words that begin with:



- (a) **corr-** : correspondance, corrélation, corriger
- (b) **irr-** : irrégulier, irrationnel

tt

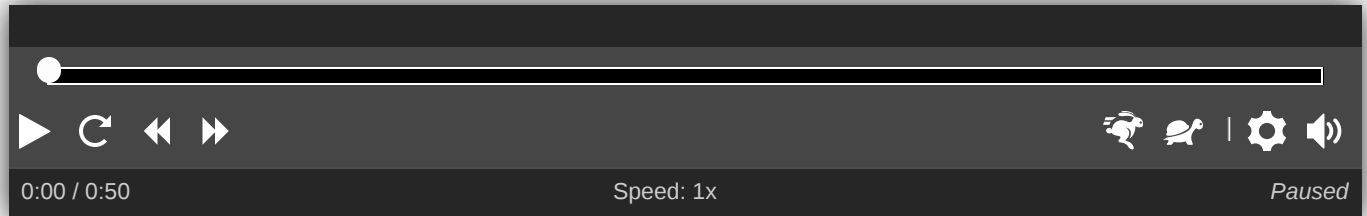
The consonant **t** is doubled:



(a) in words that begin with **att-**, ou **attr-** : attendre, attribution, atténuer

(b) in words that end with **-ette** : chaussette, galette

Here is a summary of prefixes and suffixes with doubled consonants:

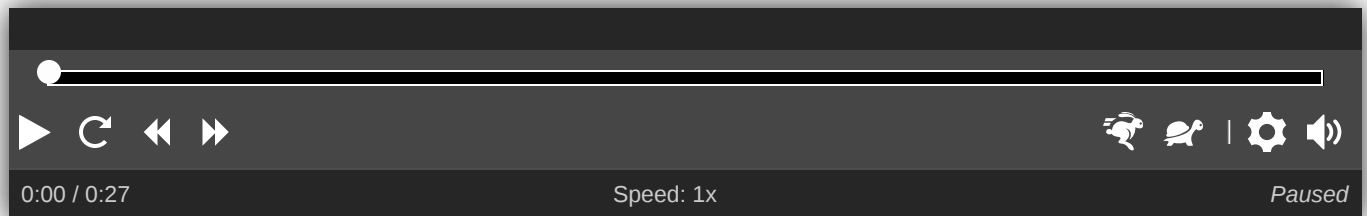


Prefixes and suffixes with doubled consonants

Doubles consonants	Prefixes et suffixes
cc	acc-, occ-, succ-, sacc-
ff	aff-, eff-, diff-, souff-, suff-, siff-
ll	ill-, ille
mm	imm-, comm-
nn	conn-, -onner
pp	app-, -rapp-, supp-
rr	irr-, corr-, charr-
ss	ess-
tt	att-, attr-, -ette

Doubled consonants in feminine nouns and adjectives

Consonant doubling appears in feminine noun and adjective endings. Examples include:



-el/-elle (réel, réelle),

-eil/-eille (pareil, pareille),

-en/-enne (ancien, ancienne)

-on/onne (patron, patronne)

-et/ette (violet, violette).

Double consonants in conjugated verb forms

Double consonants are found in the conjugated forms of certain verbs, including:

- the stems -elle- and -ette- of certain verbs in **-eler** (e.g., appeler => appelle) and **-eter** (e.g., jeter => jette)
- the -enne- in the stem of the verbs **tenir** (e.g., tiennent) and **venir** (e.g., viennent)

The double consonant **rr** in the future indicative and present conditional of the verbs courir (e.g., courrait) envoyer (e.g., enverrai), mourir (e.g., mourra), pouvoir (e.g., pourrai) and voir (e.g., verrons);

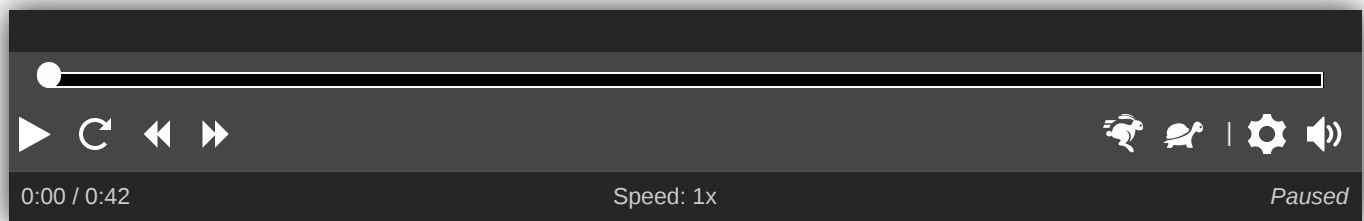
Additional Resources

Watch this video about the [doubling of consonants in French](#).

Let's practice!

Activity A

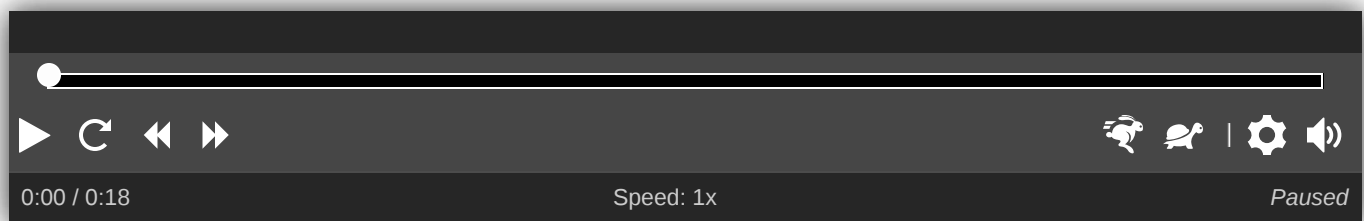
Choose the correct spelling.



1. Je m'___apele ___appelle.
2. Il marche dans le ___dessert ___désert.
3. ___Comment ___Coment vas-tu ?
4. Vous vous ___apelez ___appellez Gérard ?
5. Au restaurant, ils ___choississent ___choisissent la tarte aux pommes.
6. Si je ___réussissais ___réussissais mon examen, ce serait vraiment super.
7. Parlez ___lentement ___lentemment s'il vous plaît.
8. Nous oublions toujours d'ajouter les ___acents ___accents.
9. On n'aime pas ___tellement ___telement la chimie, c'est compliqué.
10. Les enfants ___metent ___mettent la table et puis la débarrassent.

Activity B

Double consonants or not? Listen and choose the right spelling.



Answer

1. courir ; 2. apporter ; 3. amener ; 4. voyelle ; 5. suffir ; 6. aimer ; 7. donner ; 8. fils ; 9. femme; 10. arriver.

1. ___rr ___r.

2. ____pp ____p.
3. ____mm ____m.
4. ____ll ____l.
5. ____ff ____f.
6. ____mm ____m.
7. ____nn ____n.
8. ____ll ____l.
9. ____mm ____m.
10. ____rr ____r.

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4.2: Consonant Clusters with the Letter H

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about consonant clusters with the letter **h** (**ch**, **th**, **ph**, **sh**).

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Watch the video tutorial about silent letters, then read the additional details below.



Consonant Clusters with H

By Shahrzad Zahedi



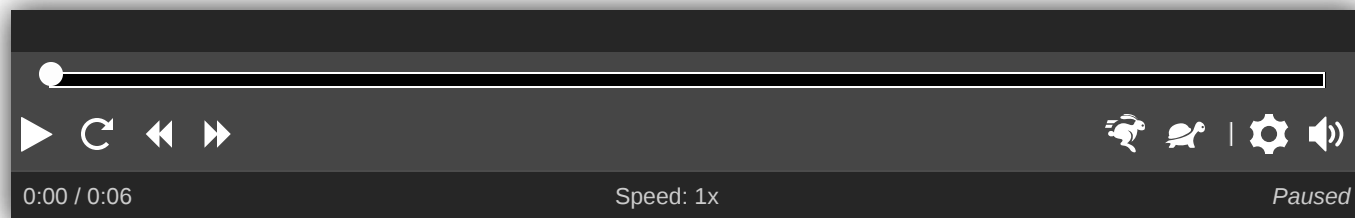
Here is [the video's transcription](#).

Let's get started!

The letters C and H

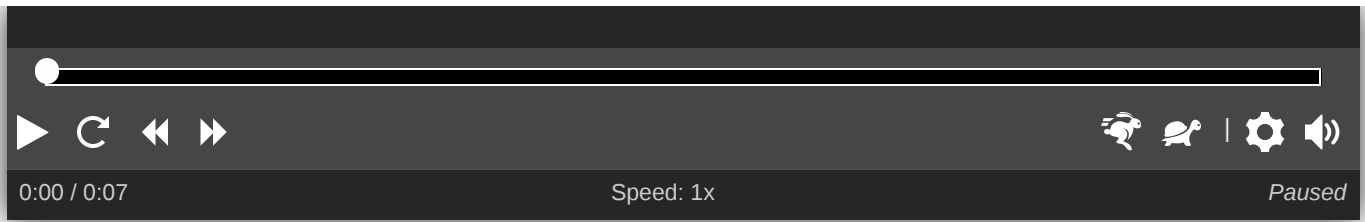
When the letters **c** and **h** are combined in French, they make the same sound as the combined letters **sh**, [ʃ], in English.

Here are a few examples of words that contain **ch** where the letter combinations are pronounced [ʃ].



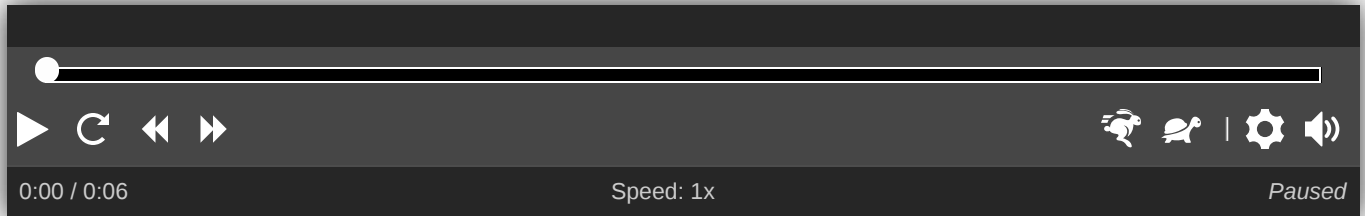
machine, riche, chapeau, chat

There are, however, a few exceptions. In a few cases, the **ch** has the same [k] sound as in the word **chord** in English.



psychiatrie, archéologie, **chaos**, **chronomètre**

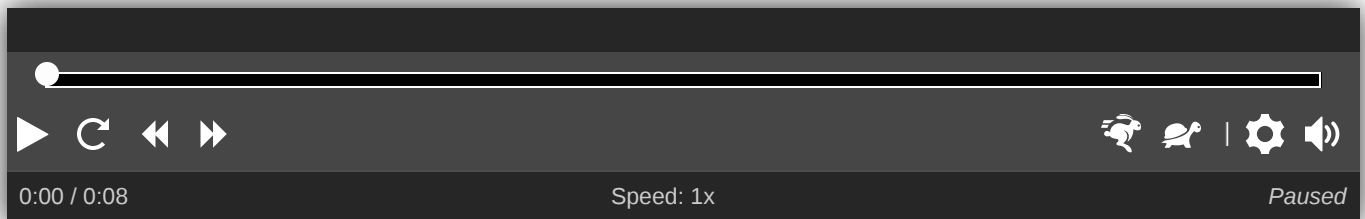
In other instances, the **ch** combination makes the [tʃ] sound, as in the word **chair** in English. This is mostly the case when there's a **t** before **ch**, and with words borrowed from other languages.



Tchao, **Tchatter**/**chatter**, **match**, **coach**

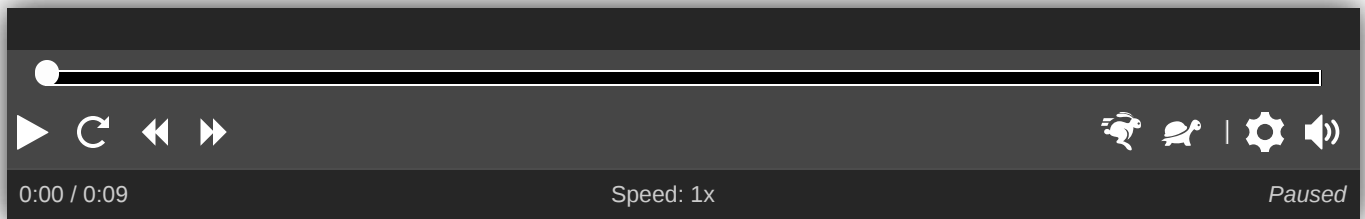
The letters S and H

In French, a small number of words borrowed from English keep the **sh** sound and spelling.



showbiz, **shampooing**, **shampouiner**, **shakesparien**

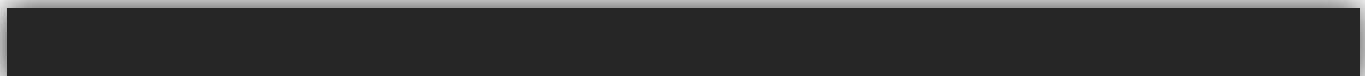
In cases where there is a **dé** before it, **sh** is pronounced like [z] in **zebra**.

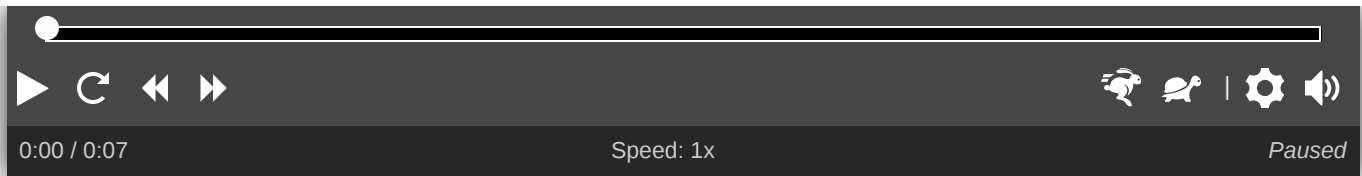


dé**sh**abiller, dé**sh**hydratation, dé**sh**érité, dé**sh**onorer

The letters P and H

In French, as in English, the **ph** combination produces the [f] sound in French.



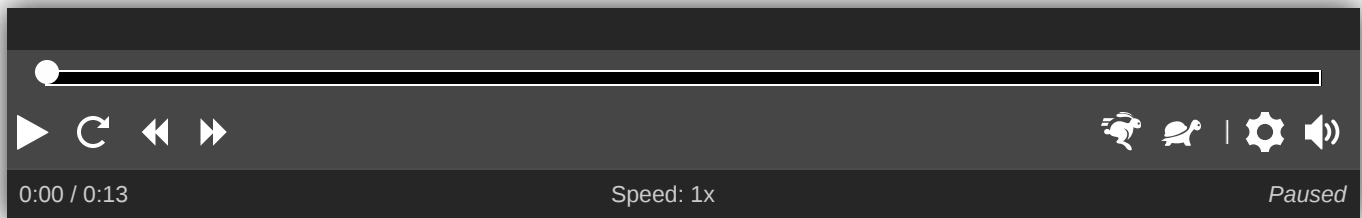


éléphant, **ph**oto, géographe, **ph**ase

In French, certain prefixes and suffixes are always written with **ph** instead of **f**.

For example: **phil**-, **phys**-, **phon**-

Or, -graph, -sphère, -phone

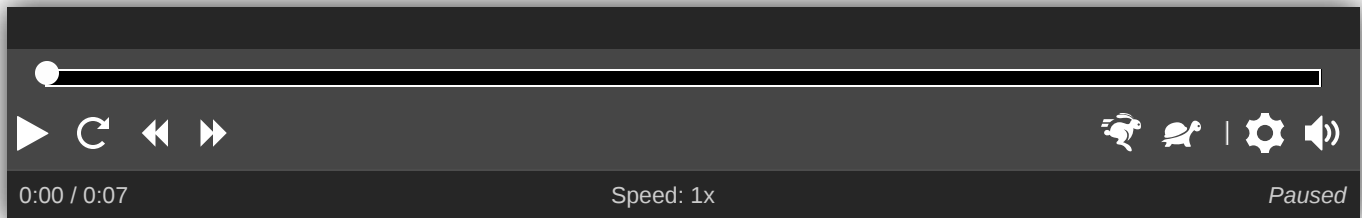


philosophie, **phys**iologie, **phon**étique

géographe, atmosphère, homophone

The letters T and H

The letter combination **th** is pronounced like the letter [t]. The English **th**, [ð], pronunciation does not exist in French.



thé, **th**éorie, mathématiques, Py**th**agore



Additional Resources

- [Consonne: définition et emploi en français](#)

Let's practice!

Activity

In the list of words below, look at the letters in bold and put the right phonetic symbol for that sound in front of the word.

Phonetic symbols: [ʃ] like in **sh**ow, [k] like in **arch**etype, [tʃ] like in **reac**h, [z] like in **ze**ro, [f] like in **ph**antom, [t] like in **tea**.

1. machine
2. rhyth**me**
3. dés**h**ydrogène**r**
4. coach

5. le **showbiz**
6. **ph**armacie
7. **th**ème
8. arch**it**ecture
9. arch**é**ologie
10. **th**éâtre

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4.3: Other Consonant Clusters

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about:

- Special combinations of consonants

Media Alternative

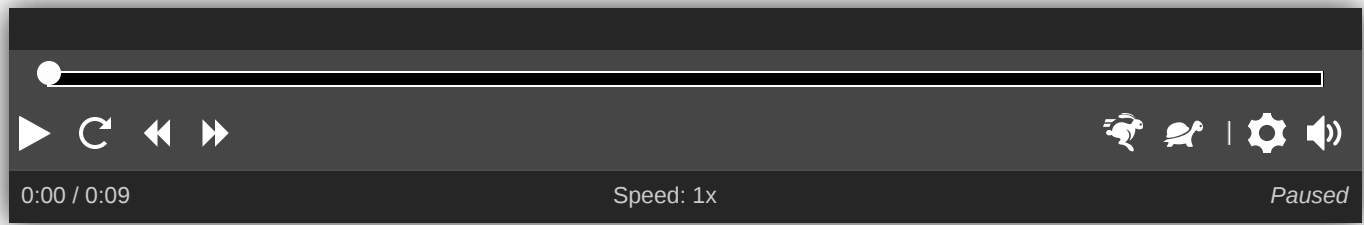
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The letters P and S

When combined, the letters **ps** sound very differently in French and in English. In English; the **p** tends to be silent, while in French both the **p** and **s** are pronounced. Listen to the difference in pronunciation between these words.



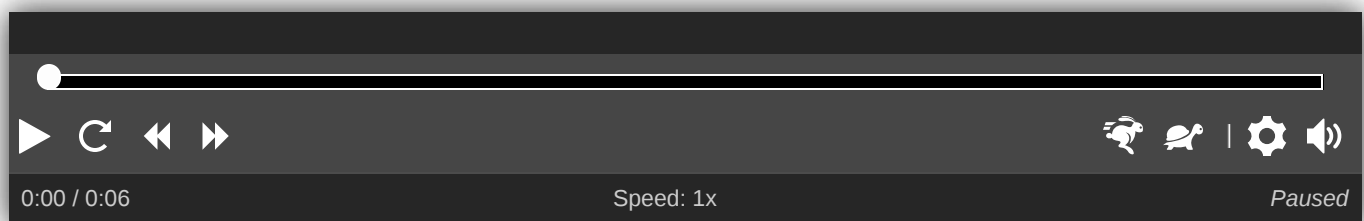
The pronunciation of ps in French and English

French pronunciation	English pronunciation
psychologie	psychology
pseudo	pseudo
psychiatrie	psychiatry

The letters P and N

The same goes for the combined letters **pn**. In English, the **p** remains silent while the **n** is pronounced, but in French, both letters must be pronounced.

Listen to the difference in pronunciation.

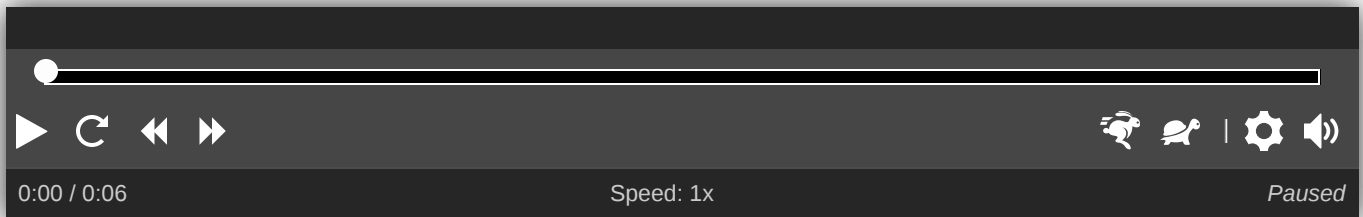


The pronunciation of pn in French and English

French pronunciation	English pronunciation
pneumonie	pneumonia
pneumatique	pneumatic

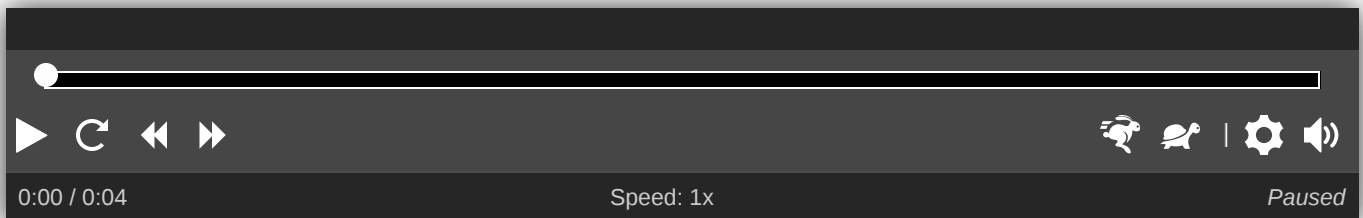
The letters M and N

The letter clusters **m** and **n** have two possible pronunciations in French. First, the words **automne** and **damné**, and all words that derive from them, are pronounced [n].



aut**mn**e autom**nn**al cond**mn**é cond**nn**ation

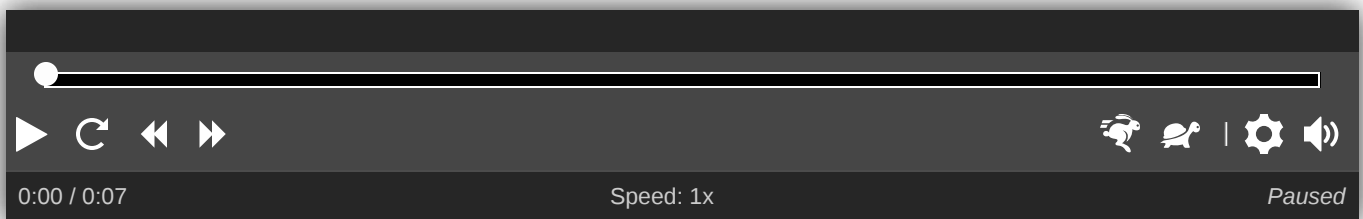
In all other words, the **m** and **n** are both pronounced.



gym**nn**astique calom**nn**ie hym**nn**e

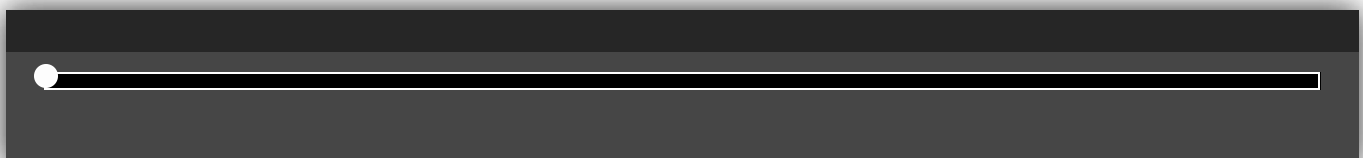
The letters G and N

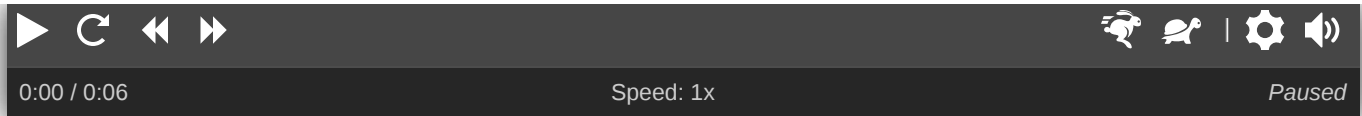
The letters cluster **gn** has two possible pronunciations in French. In most words, this letter combination is pronounced like the **ni** in **onion** or the Spanish tilde or **ñ**.



mont**gn**e magn**gn**itude ign**gn**orer pe**gn**e

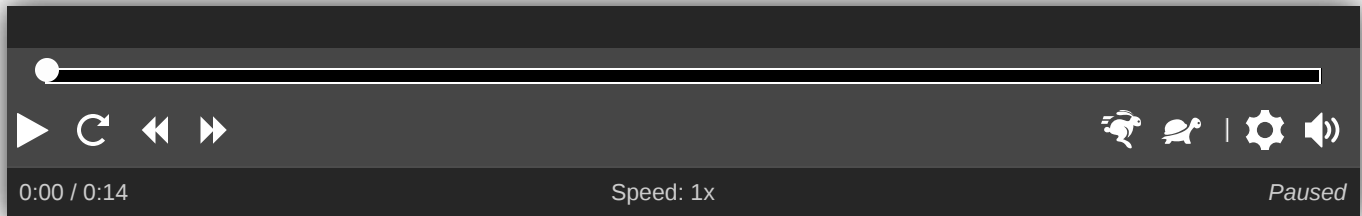
In a few cases, the **g** and **n** must be pronounced separately.





stagnation diagnostique magnum

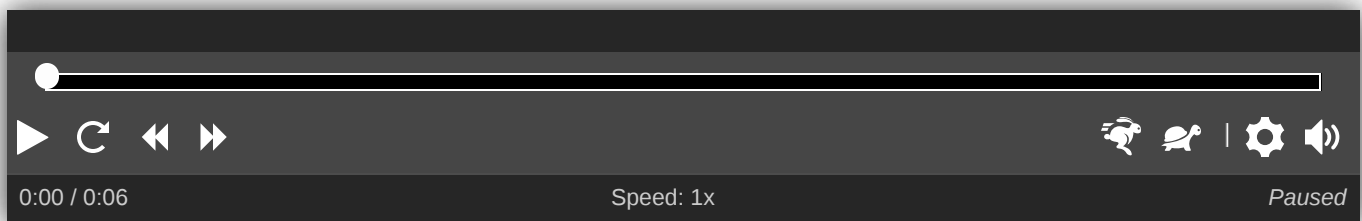
In a very small list of words, this combination can be pronounced as **gn** combined or as **g** and **n** (separate).



ignition igné inexpugnable magnat

The letters M or N and P

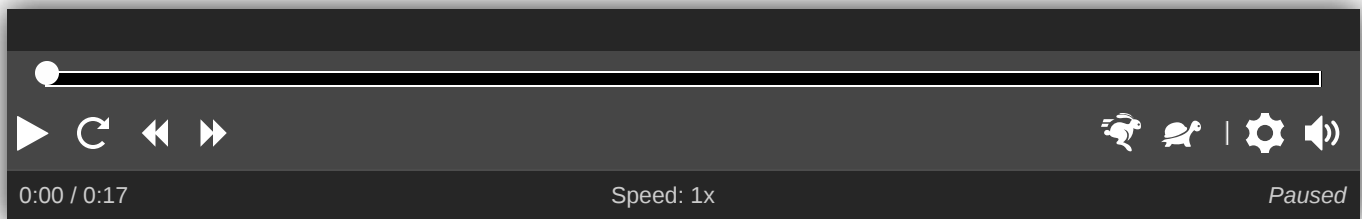
In monosyllabic words, or words that end with **m** and **p**, the cluster of the letters **m** and **p** generates a nasal [ɑ̃] sound.



champ temps camp clamp

In words that are more than one syllable, or when the **mp** cluster is in the middle of the word, in the first syllable, the **m** produces the nasal sound [ɑ̃] while in the next syllable the letter **p** is pronounced separately. This rule also applies to words containing the cluster **np**.

In French, there are no words that end in **np**.



camping accompagner champagne compliqué

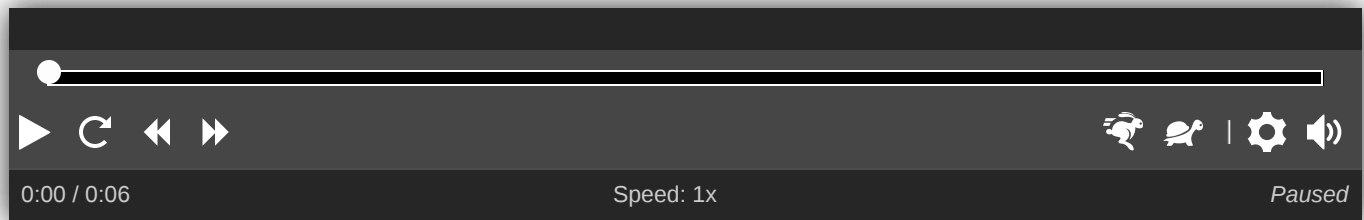
bienpensant embonpoint nonpareil panpsychisme

The letters NT, MT, ND or MD

The same rules that apply to the **mp** or **np** clusters also apply to the combined **nt** or **mt** letters.

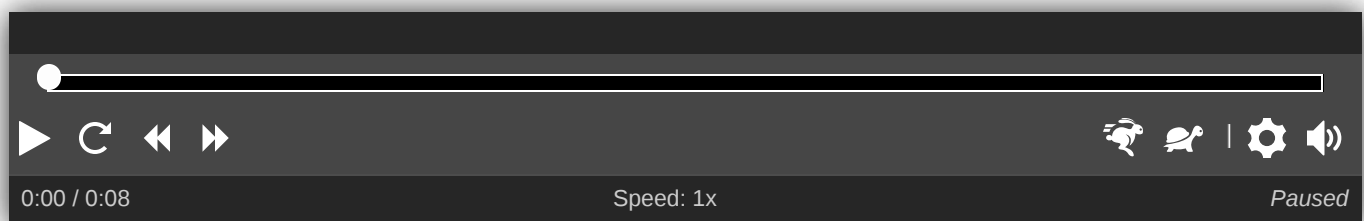
In French, there are no words that end in **mt** or **md**.

When the letters **nt** or **nd** appear in monosyllabic words, or in words that end in **nt** or **nd**, the letter clusters also produce a nasal sound [ɑ̃].



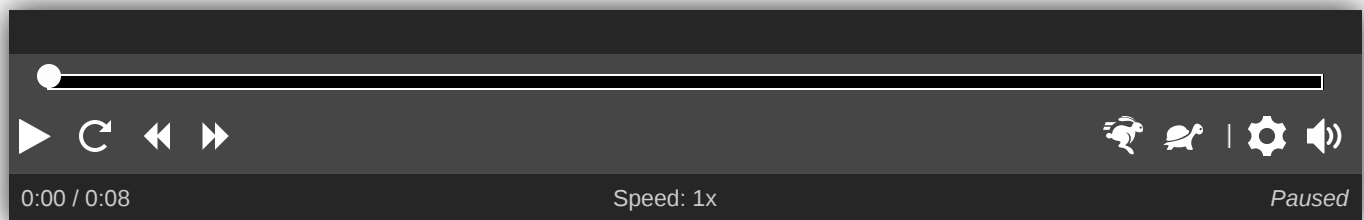
lent quand complètement prend

The one exception to this rule is the third person plural conjugation of verbs that end in **er**, or any verb where the third person plural ends in **ent**. In this case, the cluster **ent** is silent.



mangent étudient arrivent prennent viennent

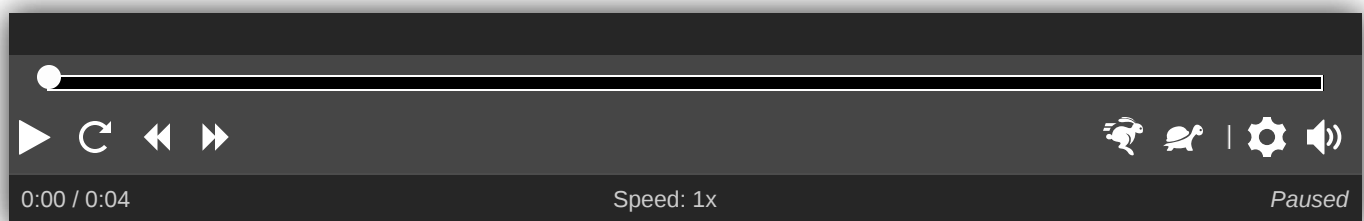
When the clusters **mt**, **nt**, **md** or **nd** appear in words with more than one syllable, in the first syllable, **n** or **m** produce the nasal sound [ɑ̃], while in the second syllable, the letter **t** or **d** is pronounced separately.



lentement circumduction abandonner comté

The letters M, P and T

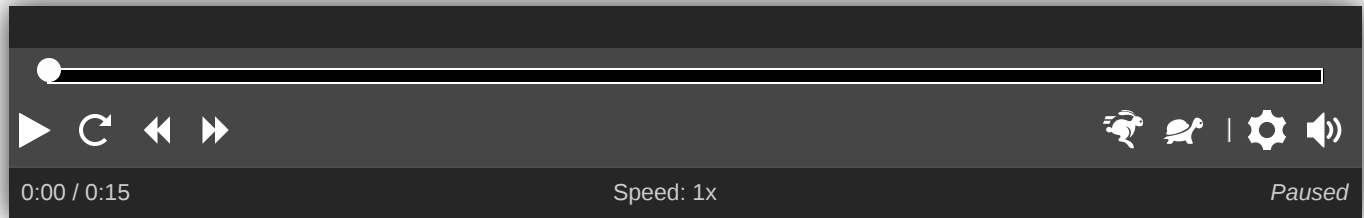
When the letters **mpt** appear at the end of a word, the cluster generates the nasal sound [ɑ̃].



prompt exempt rompt corrompt

Consonant clusters in French and English

The table below contains a list of consonant clusters that exist and are pronounced the same way in French and English. There are a few exceptions to this trend.

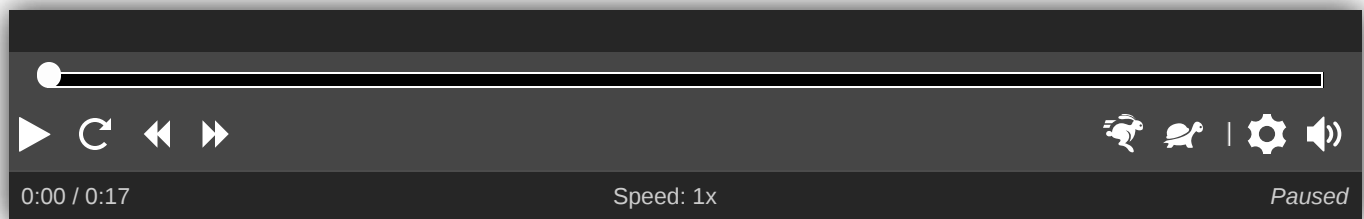


Consonant Clusters in French and English

French Pronunciation	English Pronunciation
table	table
fleur	flower
critère	criteria
classe	class
transférer	transfer

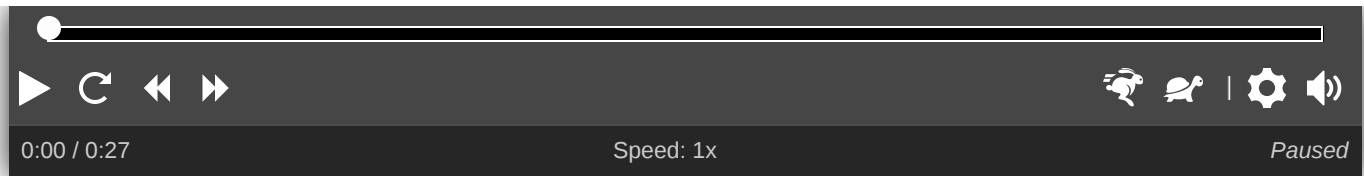
Summary

The tables below summarizes what we have explained about consonant clusters above.



Summary of Consonant Clusters

Rule	French Words	English Translations
The p in the ps or pn clusters is pronounced in French.	psychologie pneumonie	psychology pneumonia
The cluster mn is pronounced as n in this family of words (automne, damné)	autumnal condamnation	autumnal conviction, sentence
The letters m and n are pronounced separately in other words.	gymnastique hymne	gym, gymnastics anthem, hymn
Words where the consonant cluster is pronounced [ɲ].	montagne poignée ignorer incognito	mountain handle, fistful to ignore incognito



Clusters That Change Pronunciation Based on the Number of Syllables

Rule	French Words	English Translations
When the cluster np appears in monosyllabic words, it is pronounced [ɑ̃].	champ temps	field time
When the clusters np or mp appear in words with more than one syllable, the letters are pronounced separately.	champignon, camping bienpensant, embonpoint	mushroom, camping right-thinking person, stoutness
When the nt or nd clusters appear in monosyllabic words, they are pronounced [ɑ̃].	lent prend	slow take
When the nt , nd , mt , md clusters appear in words with more than one syllable, the letters are pronounced separately.	lentement grandement vicomte circumduction	slowly greatly viscount circumduction
When the mpt cluster appears at the end of a monosyllabic word, it is pronounced [ɑ̃].	prompt exempt corrompt	prompt exempt (he/she) corrupts
When the mpt cluster appears in words with more than one syllable, the letters mp are pronounced [ɑ̃] while the letter t is pronounced separately.	comptabilité compte	accounting count, tally

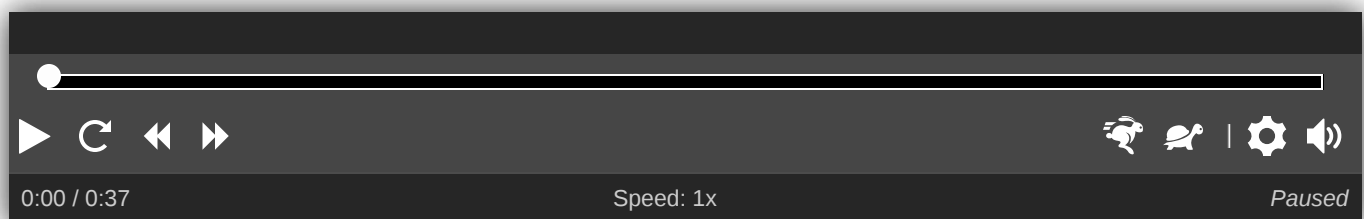
Additional Resources

- [Pronunciation of the letter clusters mn](#)
- [Other consonant clusters](#)

Let's practice!

Activity

Practice pronouncing the following words.



1. psychiatrie

2. capable
3. condamner
4. magnitude
5. rendre
6. psychologie
7. camper
8. automne
9. diagnostiquer
10. champs
11. pneumatique
12. corrompre
13. prompt
14. raffler
15. rentable
16. proclamer
17. pneu
18. plante
19. impromptu
20. cygne

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Consonants that change pronunciation

5.1: The Letter C

5.2: The Letter G

5.3: The Letter L

5.4: Consonants that change pronunciation between words

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5.1: The Letter C

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter **c**.

📌 Media Alternative

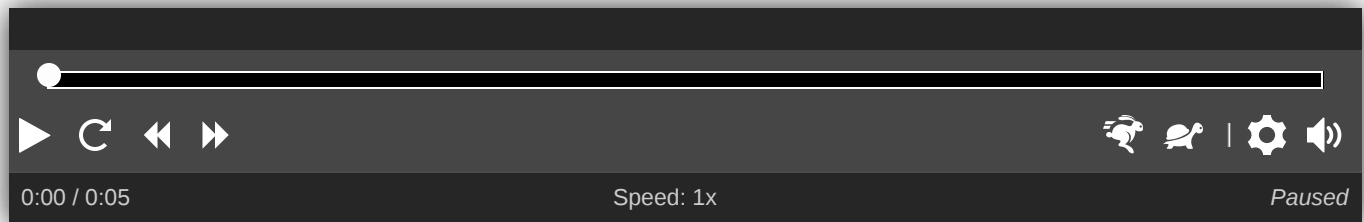
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

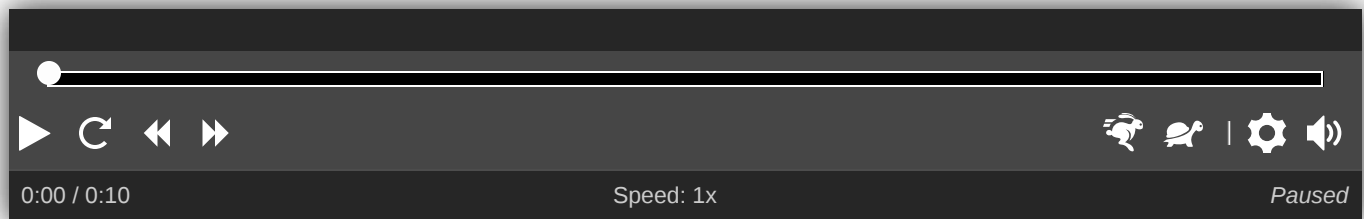
Let's go!

The letter **c** can be pronounced [s] or [k]. It's the letter after the **c** that determines its pronunciation. The rules are the same for [the letter g](#).

c + a, o, u = [k]



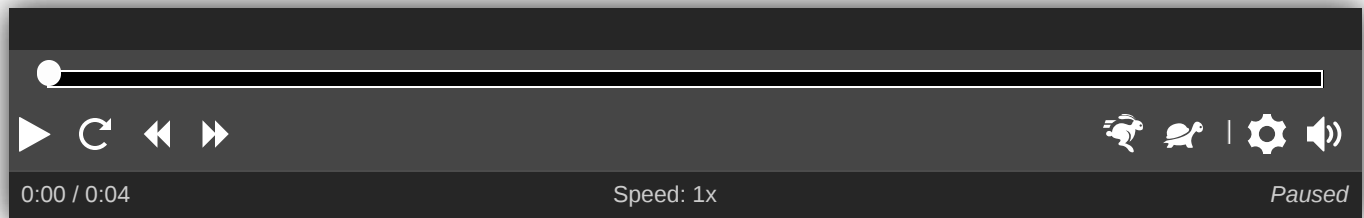
c followed by the letters **a, o, u** is pronounced [k] like in **cacao, coco** and **culture**.



c + e, i, y = [s]

c followed by the letters **e, i** or **y** is pronounced [s] like in **ceci, cela, cinéma** and **cygne**.

A **u** in front of an **i** makes the **c** "hard" ([k]): **cuisine, cuillère**.



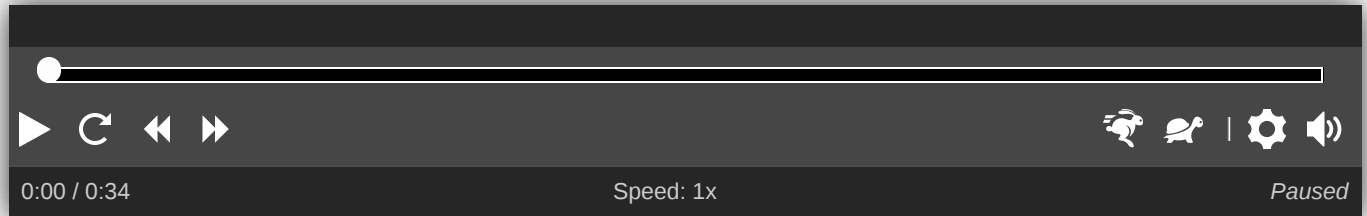
La cédille: ç

The cedilla (ç) changes the pronunciation of the letter **c** so that it is pronounced [s]: **ça va?**, **façon**, **aperçu**.

Let's practice!

Activity

Listen and repeat:



1. cire / cuir / cause / cerf / coupe / glace / parc / cesser
2. calquer / océans / cuivré / reçu / vécu / vaincu / soupçon
3. placard / berceau / ficeler / faculté / pacifique / reculer

"Prononciation de « ca, co, cu » vs. « ça, ço, çu » vs. « ce, ci, cy »" by William Carrasco & Shahrzad Zahedi is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#) / A derivative from [Sons et lettres](#) by Stephen Walton.

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5.2: The Letter G

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn two ways to pronounce the letter **g** with vowels.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

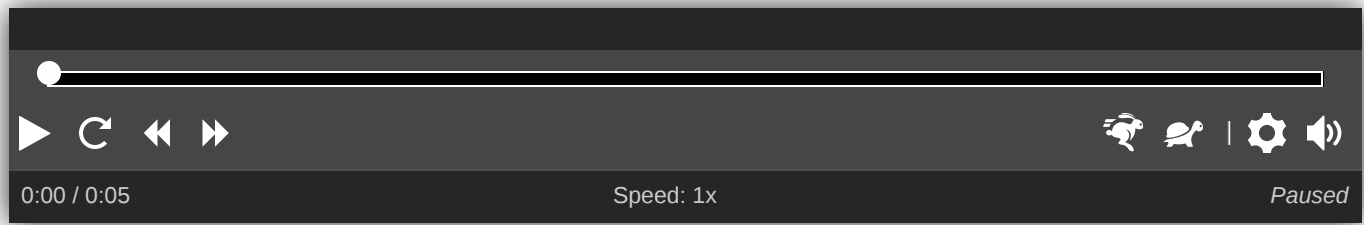
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!

The letter **g** can be pronounced [g] or [ʒ]. It's the letter after the **g** that determines its pronunciation. The same rule applies to [the letter c](#).

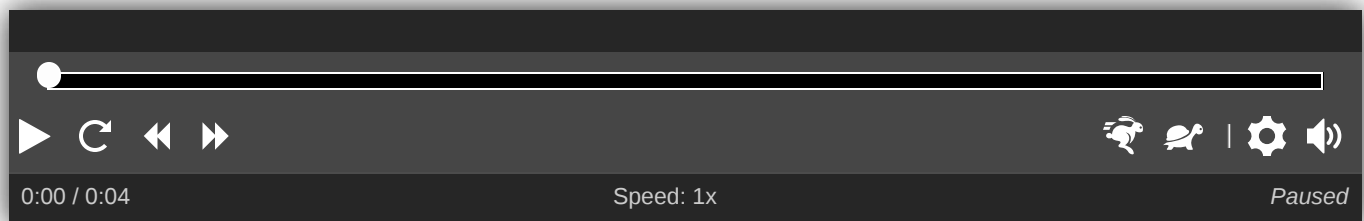
g + a, o, u = [g]

Like English, the **g** in **ga, go, gu** is pronounced [g], like in:



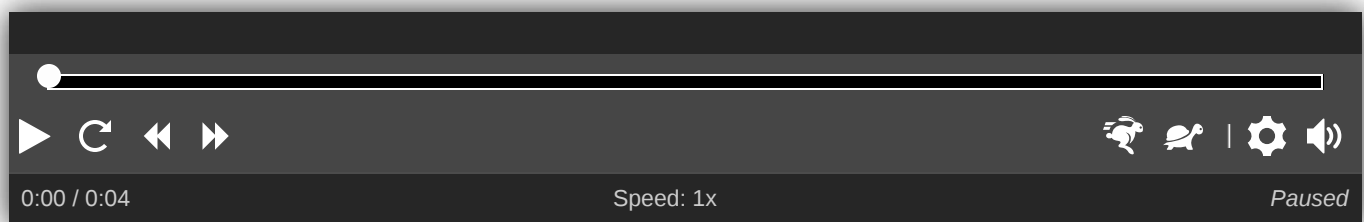
gâteau, Hugo, aigu.

If a vowel follows **gu-**, you will pronounce that vowel:



guide, **g**uerre, **G**uy. (The letter **u** is not pronounced.)

At the end of a word, **-gue** is pronounced [g]:



figue, **blague**, **langue**. (The letter **u** is not pronounced.)

g + e, i, y = [ʒ]

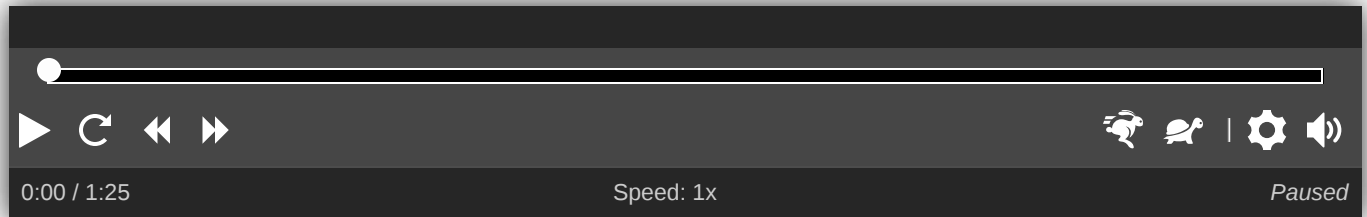
The **g** in **ge**, **gi**, **gy** is pronounced **[ʒ]**, like in **neige**, **girafe**, **gym**.

If there is a vowel after **ge-**, you will pronounce that vowel without pronouncing the **e**: **pigeon**, **mangeais**, **courageux**.

Let's practice!

Activity A

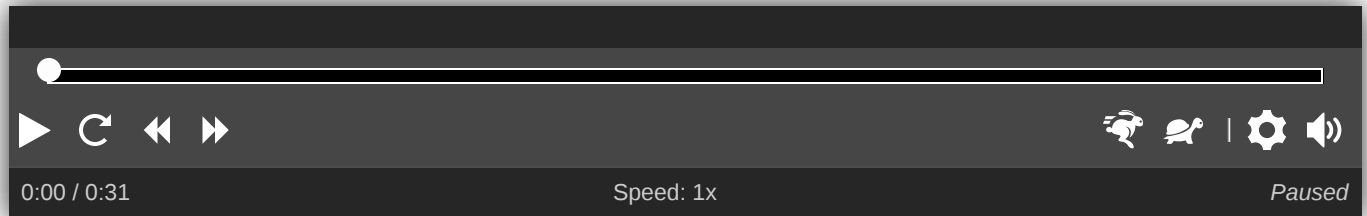
Listen and repeat:



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

Activity B

Underline all the words that have the **[ʒ]** sound. Circle all the words with the **[g]** sound.



1. **gorge** / **gérer** / **guerre** / **guère** / **gymnase** / **brigade**
2. **giffler** / **négation** / **nigérien** / **piège** / **gante** / **horloge**

"Prononciation de « go, ga, gu » vs. « ge, gi, gy »" by William Carrasco & Shahrzad Zahedi is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#) / A derivative from [Sons et lettres](#) by Stephen Walton

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5.3: The Letter L

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the **l** in **-il** and **-ill**.

Media Alternative

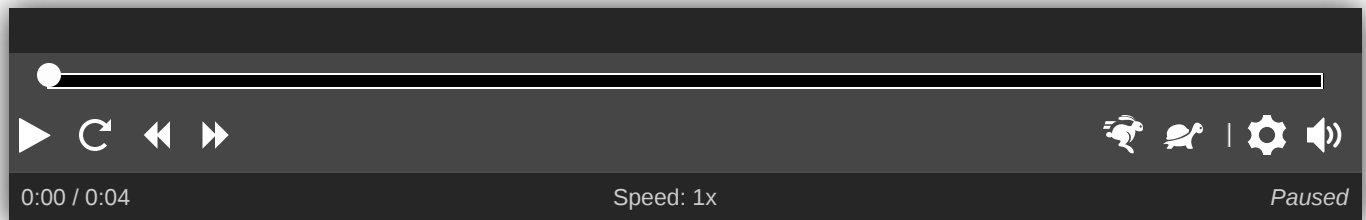
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!

L = [l]

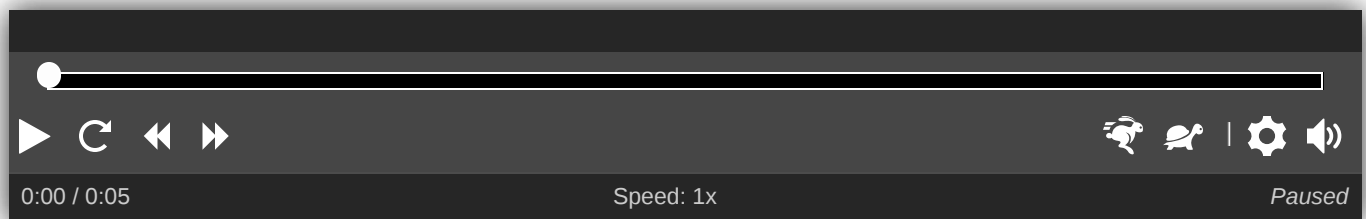
A single letter **l** is almost always pronounced [l]:



labo, file**t**, ba**l**

However, you will need to consider [the CRFL rule](#) to determine when the letter **l** goes silent at the end of a word. In words with more than one syllable and ending with **l**, the **l** will be silent: fusil, gentil, outil. A few one-syllable words ending in **l** will also have a silent **l**; for example, the **l** in **fil**s is silent (pronounced [fis]). Other examples include: soû**l**, cu**l**

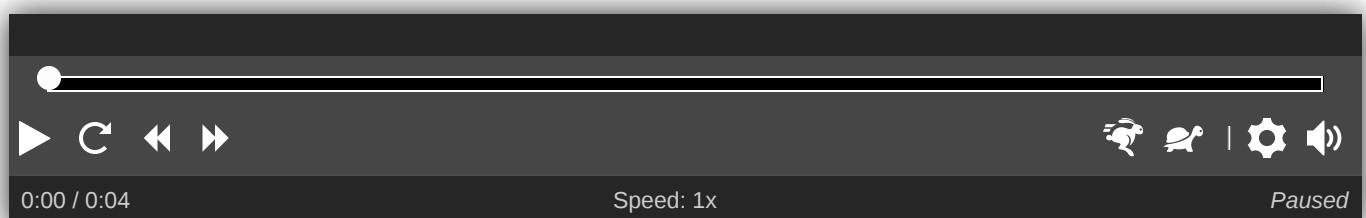
The letters **l** followed by a vowel is pronounced [li], like in



le, facile, and kilo.

il = [il]

The letters **il** are pronounced [il] when they are (a) at the end of a one-syllable word or (b) followed by a vowel. For example:





fil, facile, silence

LL

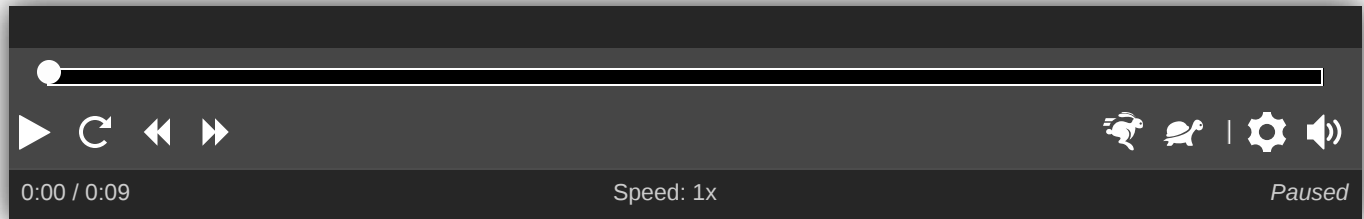
You can pronounce the double consonant **ll** in two ways:

[l] :(*L sound*): laugh, bill, Californie

[j] :(*Y sound*): you, tanya, coyote

ILL = [ij]

After a vowel, double **ll** is pronounced [l] (like l in less or ball)



Exemples

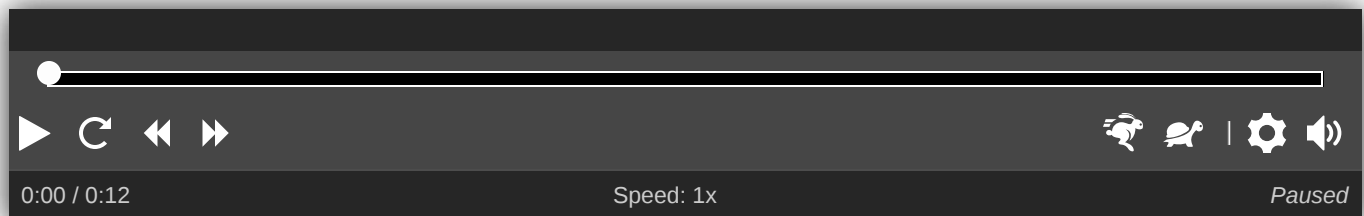
Exemples	
Français	Anglais
salle	room
belle	beautiful
syllabe	syllable
voyelle	vowel
ballon	ball

ill = /ij/ or /j/

The grapheme **ill** is pronounced with a [ij] or [j] depending on the context:

When preceded by a consonant, **ill** is pronounced [ij]:

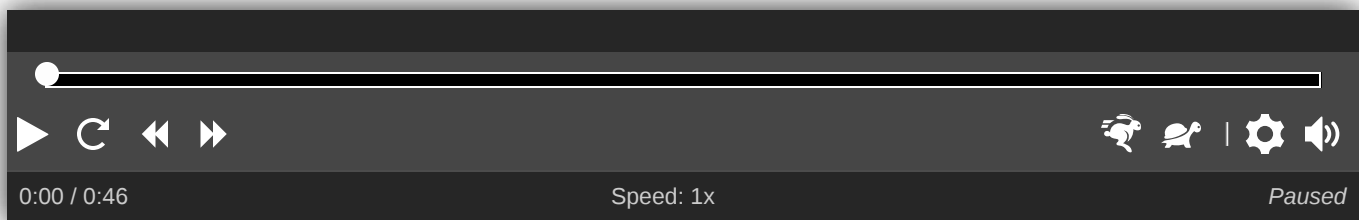
famille, habiller, brillant



ill pronounced as [ij]

Français	Anglais
la famille	family
la Bastille	Bastille
la cédille	cedilla (ç)
la chantilly	whipped cream
la fille	girl
la vanille	vanilla

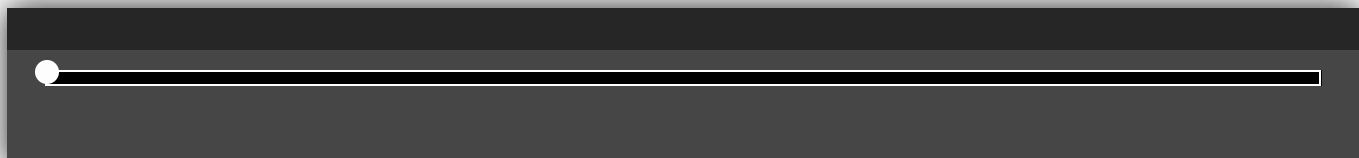
Exceptions to this rule are limited to **mille**, **ville** et **tranquille** which are pronounced with [iɪ], as are their derivatives (**million**, **village**, **tranquille**, etc.). The same rule applies to proper nouns (i.e., names of people and places): **Gilles** et **Lille**. This is the complete list (anything not listed here is pronounced [j]):

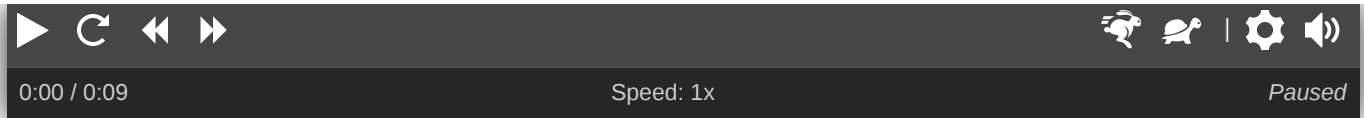


Exemples

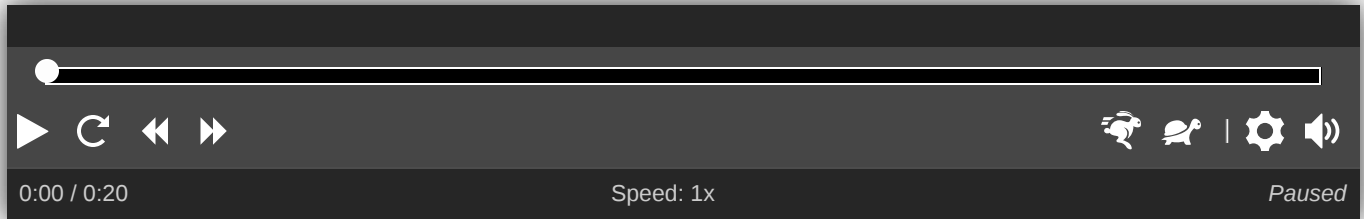
Français	Anglais
un billion	trillion
distiller	to distill
tranquille	calm, tranquil
une ville (une villa, un village, etc.)	town
Achille	Achilles
-illaire	-ilary (suffix)
Lille	Lille (town in Nord)
Gilles	Gilles (person's name)
mille (un millénium, millier, etc.)	thousand
milli- (millimètre, milligramme, etc.)	milli- (prefix)
un milliard (un milliardaire, le milliardième, etc.)	billion
un million (un millionnaire, le millionième, etc.)	million

When preceded by a vowel, **ill** is pronounced [jɪ]:





taille, travailler, feuille, bouteille, grenouille



ill pronounced as [j]

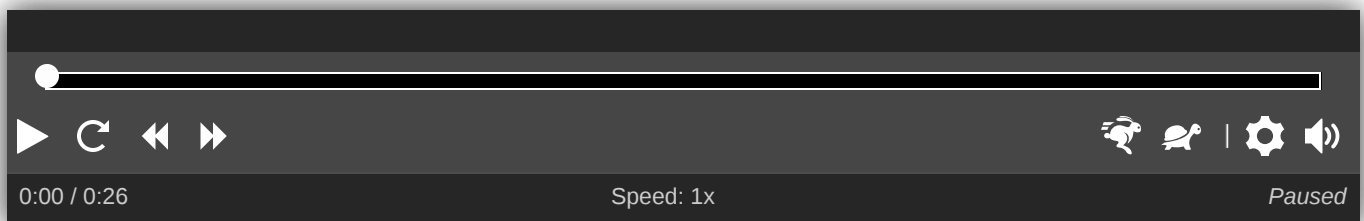
Voyelles + ll	Français	Anglais
ail	la paille	straw
eill	la veille	night before
euill	la feuille	leaf
ouill	Bouillir	to boil
ueill	Cueillir	to gather
uill	la cuillère	spoon

Let's practice!

Activity

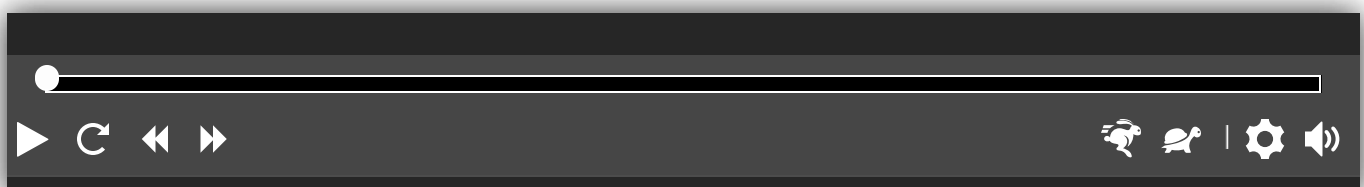
Listen and repeat

A.



1. le / fille / bile / mille / pastille / vanille / gorille
2. facile / famille / utile / docile / billet / filet / fillette / maquiller

B.



1. fille / feuille / bille / aille / paille / famille
2. ville / Bastille / bouteille / oreille / tranquille / brillante / nouilles
3. grenouille / habiller / bouillon / travailler / réveiller

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5.4: Consonants that change pronunciation between words

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about consonants that change in pronunciation when they serve as liaisons between words.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

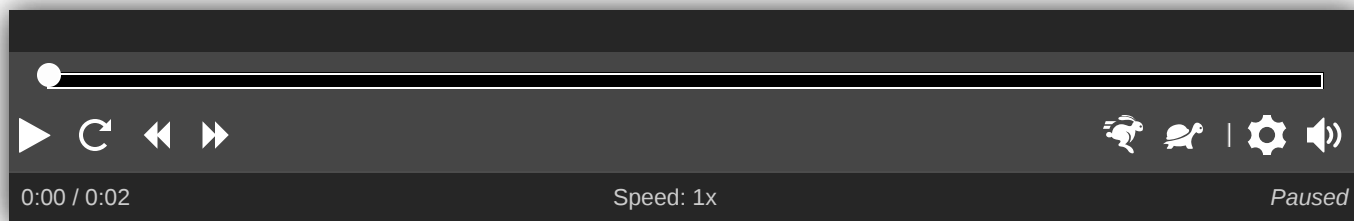
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Some consonants at the end of a word will change the way they are pronounced when they are followed by a word that begins with a vowel.

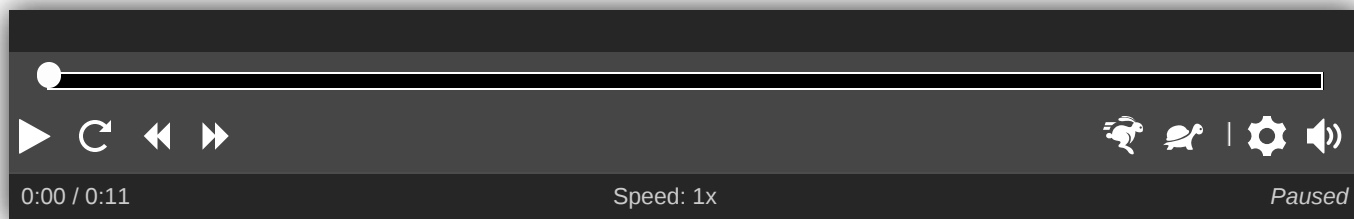
F

In words where the letter F is pronounced at the end of a word, it would normally sounds like [f]. However, when the next word starts with a vowel, it will be pronounced [v]. For example:



F = [v]: Il est neuf heures (It is nine o'clock)

Comparez:

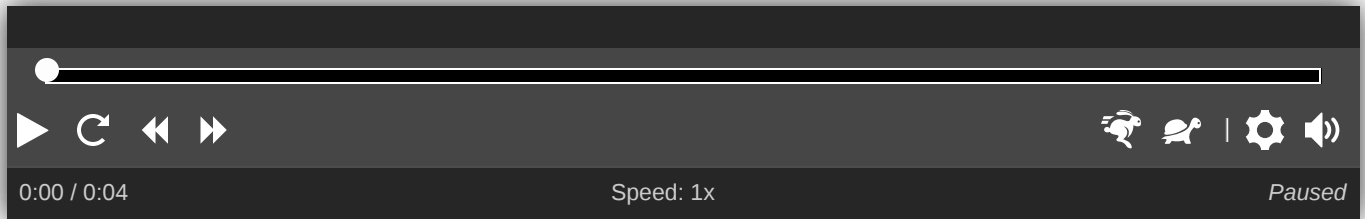


F = [f]	F = [v]*
neuf	neuf heures neuf ans

*F usually sounds like a [v] in the examples given above, but not in every situation. For example, in "neuf enfants", "neuf homicides", or "neuf œufs" people would not necessarily make this change, preserving the original [f] sound instead.

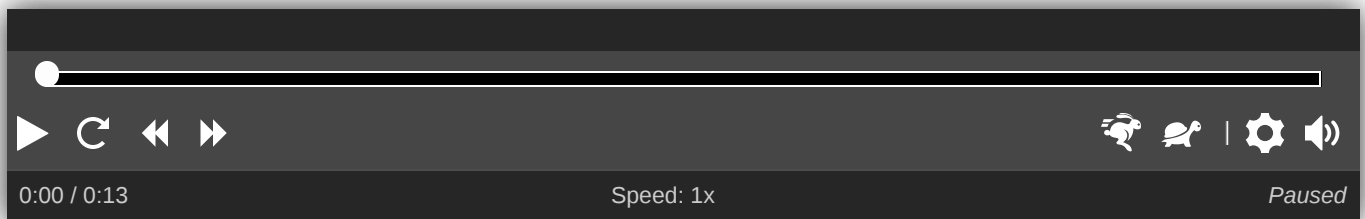
D

The letter D is normally silent at the end of a word, but when the following word begins with a vowel it will be pronounced to serve as a liaison between the two words. However, the letter D will not sound like a [d] in the liaison. Instead, it will sound like a T, or [t]. For example:



[Ø] = [t]: Quand il a froid, il porte un pull. (When he is cold, he wears a sweater)

Comparez:

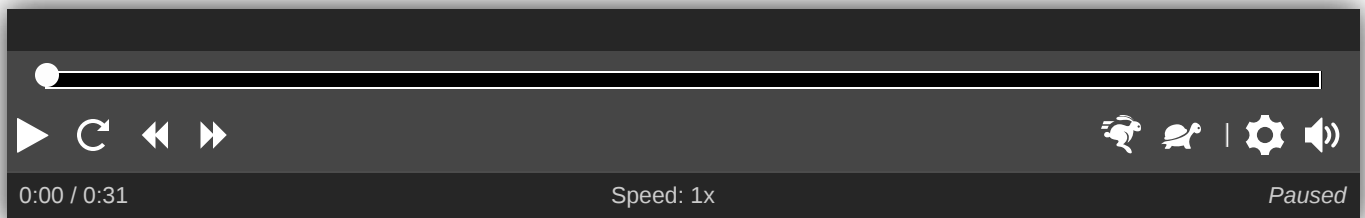


D = [Ø] (silent)	D = [t]
quand	quand il a froid quand elle est en France quand on mange

Let's practice !

Activity

Listen and repeat.



1. Quand est-ce que tu reviens ?
2. Tu pars à neuf heures ?
3. C'est quand votre anniversaire ?
4. J'ai neuf examens cette semaine.
5. Son frère a dix-neuf ans.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Vowels (Introduction)

[6.1: Vowels - Introduction](#)

[6.2: Simple Vowels](#)

[6.3: Vowels with accents](#)

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6.1: Vowels - Introduction

Objectifs

In this section, you will be introduced to French vowels.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

This video summarizes this unit's content.



Simple vowels in French

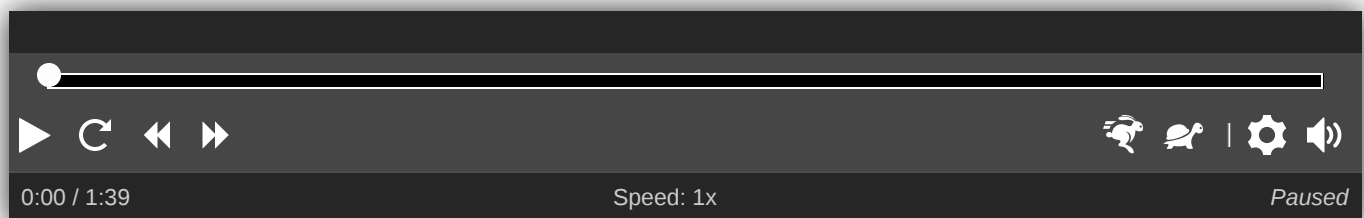
By Shahrzad Zahedi



Here is [the video's transcription](#)

Vowels

Vowels are usually challenging for French learners. Written vowels are the same in French and English: a, e, i, o, u. However, in spoken French there are at least 19 different vowel sounds. Here are the vowel sounds you will need to practice:



Vowels

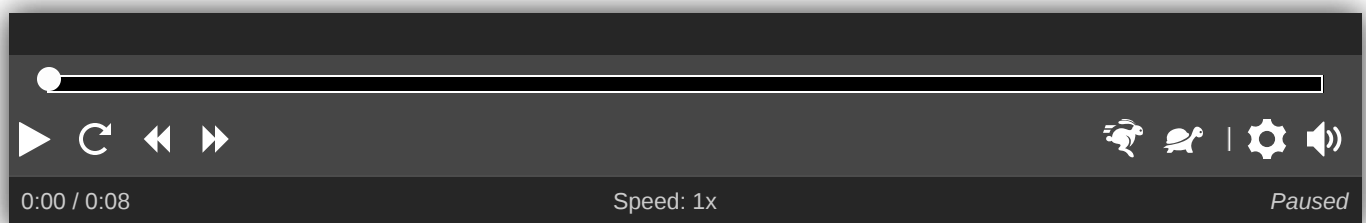
Vowels	Pronunciation	Examples
i	like "ee" in see	fini, lit, difficile
u	How to pronounce u	Tu, chute, rue
é	How to pronounce é	Pied, chez, marcher, clé
è, ê	How to pronounce è & ê	Mère, fête
e	How to pronounce e	Le, ce, de
eu	How to pronounce eu	Peu, queue, peur, jeuner
o	How to pronounce o	Sot, tôt, dos
on	How to pronounce on	Son, ton, Breton
ou	How to pronounce ou like "oo" in zoo	Coupe, fou, poubelle
oi	How to pronounce oi	Moi, toi, froid, boîte
oin	How to pronounce oin	Coin, besoin, soin
œ	How to pronounce œ	Sœur, cœur, œuf
au, eau	How to pronounce au, eau	Beau, faux
en, an, em, am	How to pronounce en, an, em, am	An, bilan, silence,
in, ain, un	How to pronounce in, ain, un	Pain, lapin, sain, fin, un

Additional Resources

- Practice pronouncing French vowels with this video tutorial on [Vowel sounds in French](#).
- Practice pronouncing different combinations of vowels with this video: [vowel sounds in combination](#).

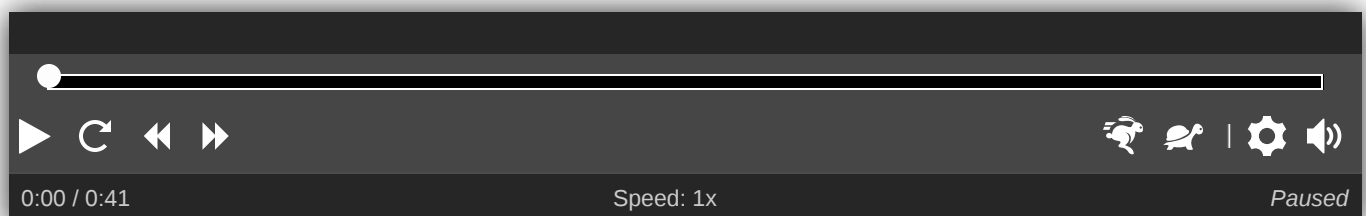
The Silent E

An unaccented **e** (or **es**) at the end of a word is usually silent:



française, plage, rêves, nuages, arrive

When the silent **e** is added to a word ending with a silent consonant, then that consonant should be pronounced.



Silent consonants at the end of words

Silent Consonants	Examples	Pronounced when followed by e
-d	canard , quand	fade, stade
-p	trop	clope
-s	tas, draps	phase
-t	chocolat, appétit	petite

Note

- When these letters are followed by the plural -s, they remain silent: **draps, petits, grands, filles** etc.
- The letters **d, p, s, t, x** and **z** may be pronounced whenever there is a [liaison](#).

Learning how to pronounce correctly takes time and practice. Above all, you need to listen to as much French as possible.

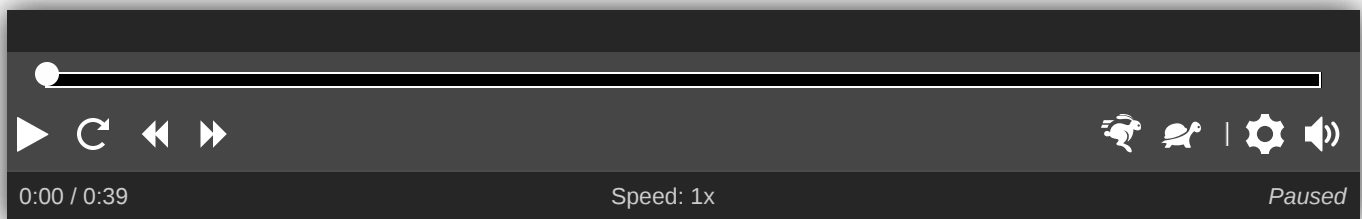
Additional Resources

- Watch this video for a general introduction to [French Pronunciation](#).
- Watch this tutorial on [Silent letters](#), then answer this question: What are the CRFL and Big Good Quality Kale rules?
- You can practice your French pronunciation with this Video tutorial: [Pronounce the 100 most common French words](#). Try to repeat everything you hear (practice makes perfect).
- You can listen to how specific words are pronounced by visiting the [How to Pronounce channel](#) on YouTube.
- You can hear audio recordings of French words and more at: [audiofrench.com](#). If you want to go all out, consult the [French Pronunciation: Ultimate Guide](#).
- Have fun practicing your pronunciation with these [tongue-twisters, or virelangues](#). Also try [les virelangues](#).
- Practice French pronunciation with this video of [illustrated French sounds](#).

Let's practice!

Activity

Listen and determine whether the pronounced letters are consonants or vowels.



1. Vowel or Consonant ?
2. Vowel or Consonant ?
3. Vowel or Consonant ?
4. Vowel or Consonant ?
5. Vowel or Consonant ?
6. Vowel or Consonant ?
7. Vowel or Consonant ?

8. Vowel or Consonant ?
 9. Vowel or Consonant ?
 10. Vowel or Consonant ?
-

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6.2: Simple Vowels

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about simple vowels **a**, **e**, **i**, **o** & **u**.

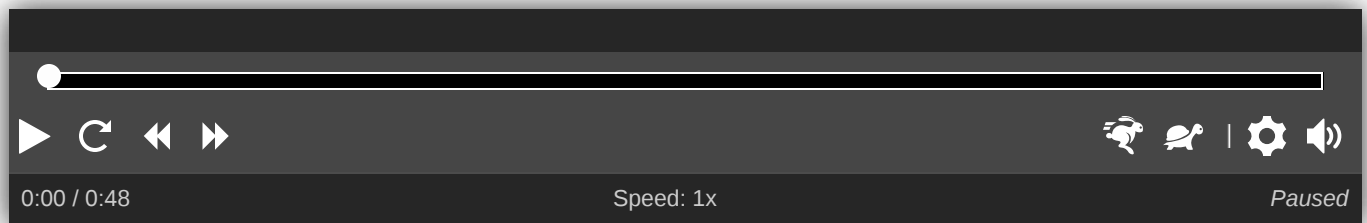
Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

This is a quick guide to the pronunciation of simple French vowels that appear in the French alphabet. Later, we will also cover vowels that are made up of vowel combinations, and nasal vowels.



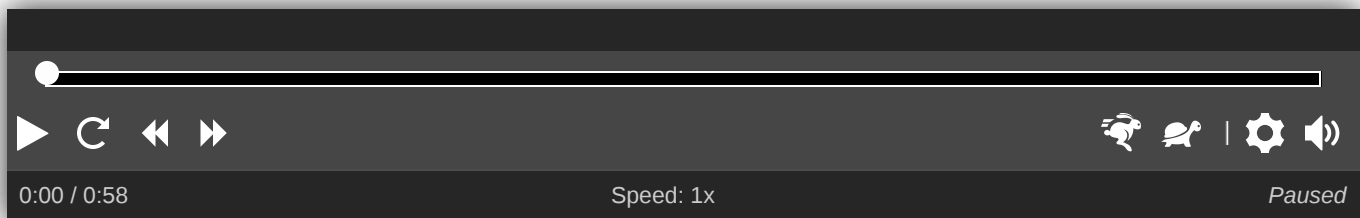
How to Pronounce French Simple Vowels

French Simple Vowel	Sample Words	Pronunciation
A, a	a nimal partir cinéma	Open mouth wide and drop chin. This letter is longer than the English a. It's similar to the a in animal or apple in English.
E, e	e je peler	In French, they say that to make this sound, your mouth should have the shape of the bottom of a chicken, "cul de poule". Your mouth should be closed, as if you want to give a kiss, or in the shape of an 8. This sound is similar to the u sound in curtain in English.
I, i Y, y	i ologie synonyme	These two vowels are pronounced the same in French. The sound is similar to ee in the words see or fee in English.
O, o	Closed [o] examples: o t rose Open [ɔ] examples: sonner o l	This vowel has two sounds, open and closed. The closed [o] is similar to the pronunciation in the English words no or go. The open [ɔ] is like the u or o sounds in the words fun or son.
U, u	u vue ridicule	This [y] sound does not exist in English. It's similar to u in the word rule but one's lips must be more pursed.

Let's practice!

Activity

Practice pronouncing these words.



1. a: arbre, architecture, trauma, banane.
2. e: je, le, appeler, mener, se.
3. i/y: biologie, synonyme, mime, timide.
4. o: sonner, bonheur, opérer, porter, soleil.
5. u: volume, vue, bu, pure, sur.

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6.3: Vowels with accents

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how accent marks affect the pronunciation of vowels.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

In French, there are 4 accents that can be placed on vowels.

The acute accent, **accent aigu**, **é**.

The grave or diacritical accent, **accent grave**, **è**.

The circumflex, **accent circonflexe** or **chapeau**, **ê**.

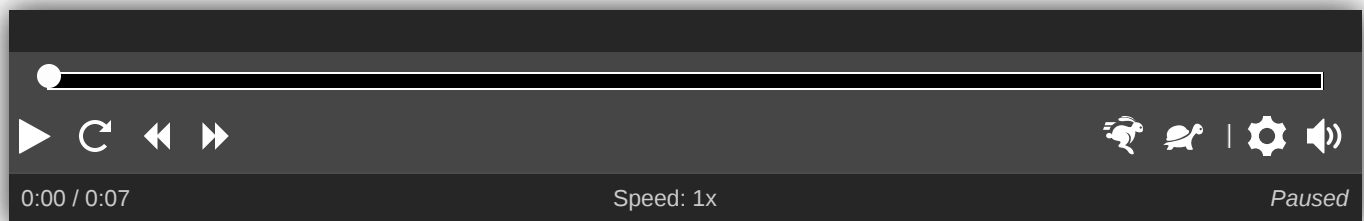
The dieresis, umlaut, two dots, **tréma**, **ë**.

Of course, most of these accents appear on other vowels than the letter e. We will go over each accent below.

Acute Accent

L'**accent aigu** goes from the bottom left to the top right. It only appears on the letter **e** in French. When the acute accent is placed on the letter **e**, it changes its sound from **e**, like in the word **je** to **é** like in the word **bébé**. With the accent, the **e** sounds like "ay" in English, but as though it is cut short in its pronunciation.

Here are a few examples:

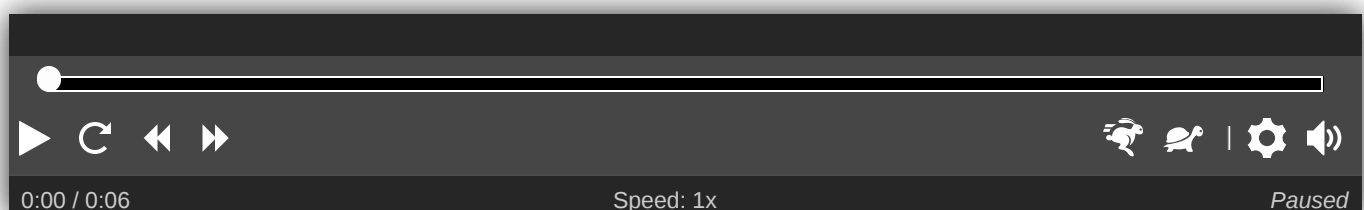


beauté, éléphant, étudier, lycée

Grave or Diacritical Accent

L'**accent grave** goes from the top left to the bottom right. It can be seen on the letters **é**, **à**, and **ù** in French. It is never placed on the letters **o** or **i**. When placed on the letter **é**, it changes its pronunciation from the **e** in **je** to the [ɛ] sound. It's similar to the pronunciation of **e** in the word **met** in English. It is considered a closed vowel sound.

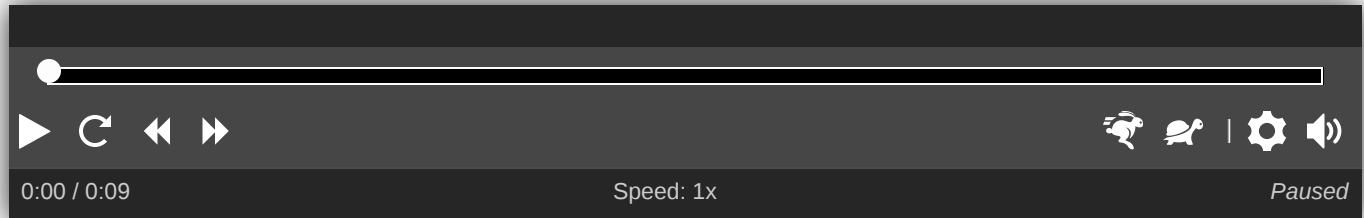
Here are a few examples:



mère, fière, complètement

When l'**accent grave** is placed on the letters **à** and **ù**, it does not change the letters' pronunciation. It can, however, change the meaning of the word.

Here are a few examples:



Words That Change Meaning with the Accent Grave

Without Accent	English Translation	With Accent	English Translation
ou	or	où	where
a	(he, she) has	à	in, at, to
la	feminine definite article (the)	là	there, here

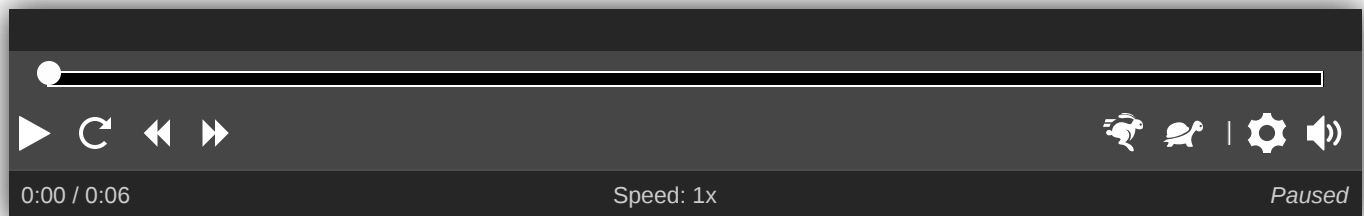
Accent Circonflexe or Chapeau

The circumflex accent, also called **chapeau** (hat), in French, can be found on all of the five vowels, **ê**, **â**, **ô**, **û**, **î**. It was placed on French letters around the 16th century, when the French Academy "normalized" French spelling. It replaced a letter **s**, often silent in old French.

This accent does not change the pronunciation of the vowels **û** or **î**. It does, however, change the pronunciation of the letters **ê**, **â**, and **ô**.

The **e** with the **chapeau**, the **ê**, is pronounced [ɛ], similar to **e** with **accent grave**.

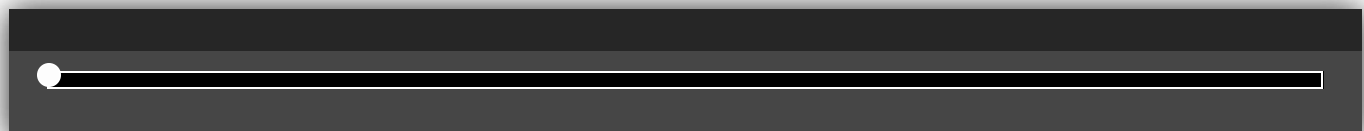
Here are a few examples:

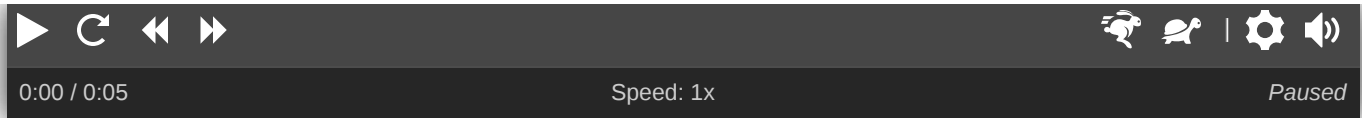


rêve, crêpe, fête, pêcher

The letter **a** with the circumflex accent, the **â**, is pronounced [ɑ] sound. This letter **a** is more elongated, like in the word papa in English.

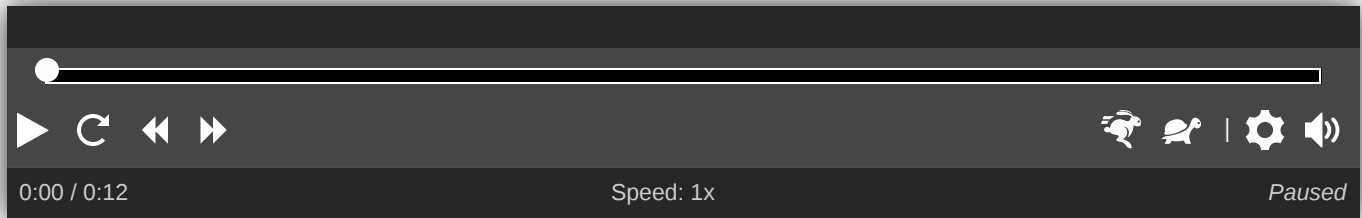
Here are a few examples:





pâtes, blancheâtre, grâce

Sometimes, the **accent circonflexe** is placed on the letter **a** to distinguish a word from its homophone. Here are a few examples.

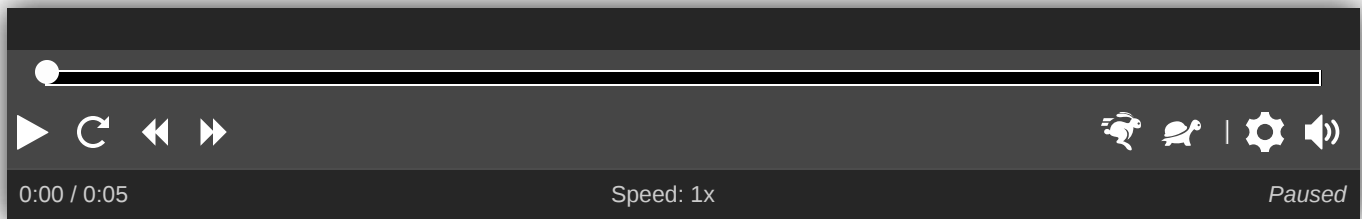


Homophones that Differ Because of the Accent Circonflexe

Without Accent	English Translation	With Accent	English Translation
tache	stain	tâche	task
mater	subdue	mâter	mast
matin	morning	mâtin	mastiff dog
pale	paddle, blade	pâle	pale

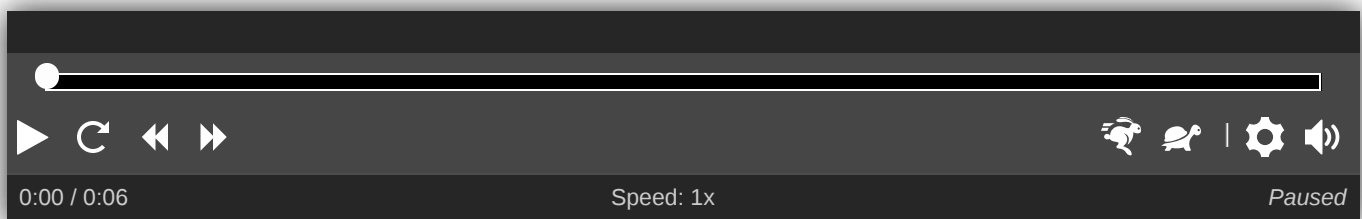
The letter **o** with an **accent circonflexe**, the **ô**, is pronounce [o]. It's a closed vowel sound, like in the word **no** in English.

Here are a few examples:



tôt, hôpital, côté

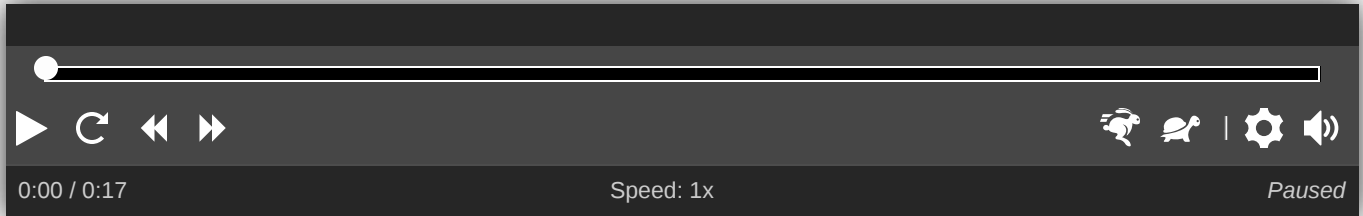
Like in the case of the **â**, at times, the accent on the letter **o** changes the word's meaning. Here are a few examples.



Homophones that Differ Because of the Accent Circonflexe

Without Accent	English Translation	With Accent	English Translation
cote	popularity, rating	côte	coast
mole	mole	môle	breakwater, pier, jetty

The letters **u** and **i** when spelled with the circumflex accent, do not change pronunciation. These accents are used to distinguish between a word and its homophone, like in the tables above.



Homophones that Differ Because of the Accent Circonflexe

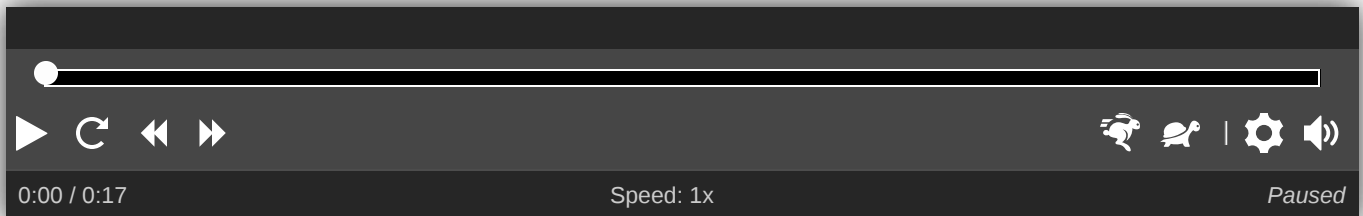
Without Accent	English Translation	With Accent	English Translation
boite	(he, she) limps	boîte	box, night club
cru	from the verb croire (to believe)	crû	from the verb croître (to grow)
du	partitive article or preposition meaning of the	dû	from the verb devoir (to have to)
notre, votre	our, your	le nôtre, le vôtre	ours, yours
sur	preposition meaning on	sûr	certain, sure

The tréma or Dieresis accent

The **tréma** or dieresis, umlaut, or 2-dot accent, is used on the letters **e**, **i**, and **u** in French.

This accent is used when the vowel that precedes the vowel with the **tréma** needs to be pronounced separately. So, for example, if the letter **ï** is preceded by the letter **a**, the two letters **ï** and **a** must be pronounced separately.

Here are a few examples:



naïf, ovoïde, haïr, polaroïd, égoïste

Noël, canoë, Israël, aiguë, contiguë

The **tréma** mostly appears on words with the vowels **i** or **e** and the dieresis. There exist very few words with **ü**.

Here is one example: capharnaüm (shambles, mess, pigsty).



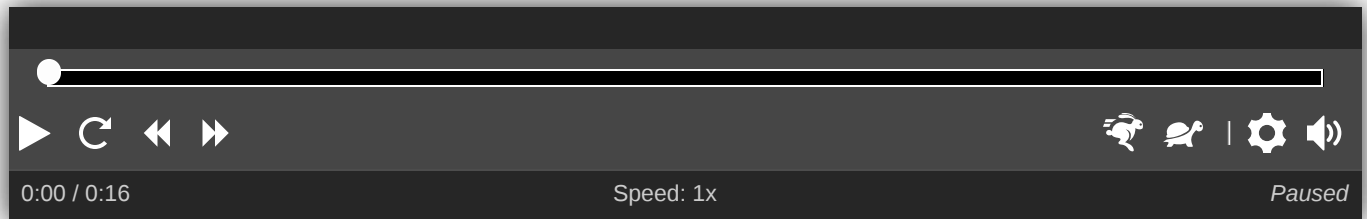
 Additional Resources

- [The circumflex](#)
- [List of words with or without the circumflex](#)

Let's practice !

Activity

First, listen to the pronunciation of these words. Then, determine whether **there's a difference** or **there's no difference** in pronunciation between the accented and unaccented words.



1. où and ou
2. sale and salé
3. côte and cote
4. jeûne and jeune
5. prêt and près

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: The Letter E

[7.1: The Silent E](#)

[7.2: The Ever-changing E Sound](#)

[7.3: The Lapsed E](#)

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7.1: The Silent E

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about the silent E.

Media Alternative

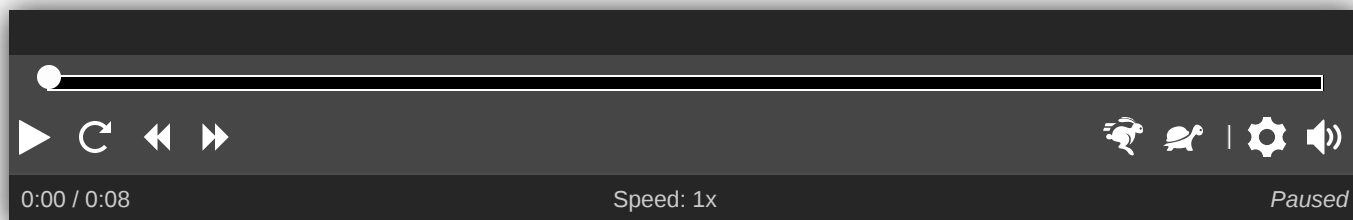
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Let's get started!

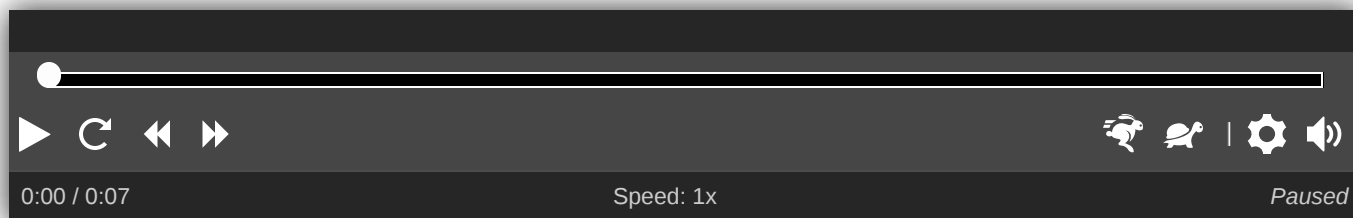
The silent E at the end of words

An unaccented **-e** (or **-es**) at the end of a multi-syllable word is usually silent:



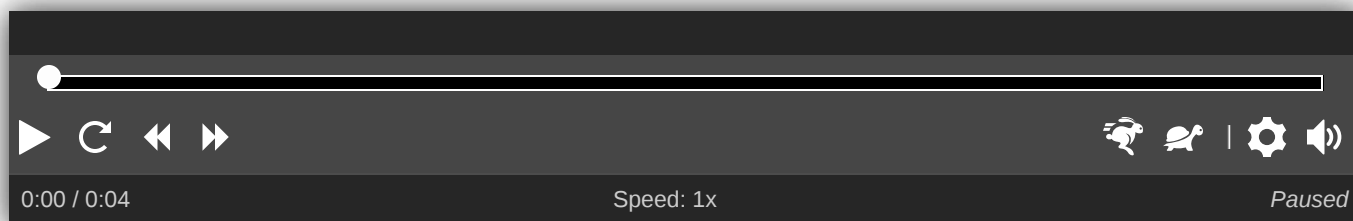
française, plage, silence, rêves, nuages

In one syllable words that end with **-e** or **-es** must be pronounced. For example:



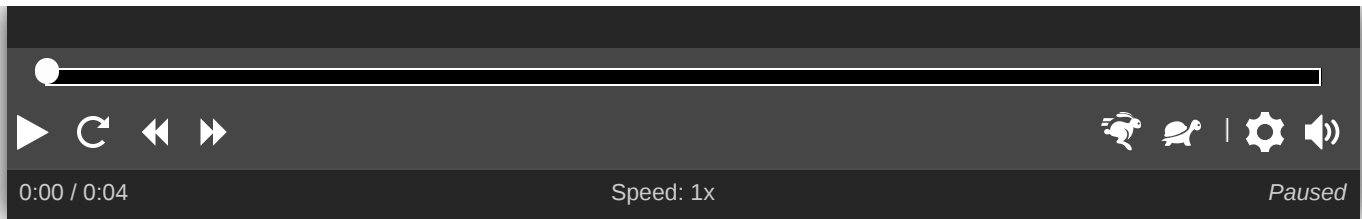
le, je, de, les, des

A few multi-syllable words can also pronounce the **e [ə]**:



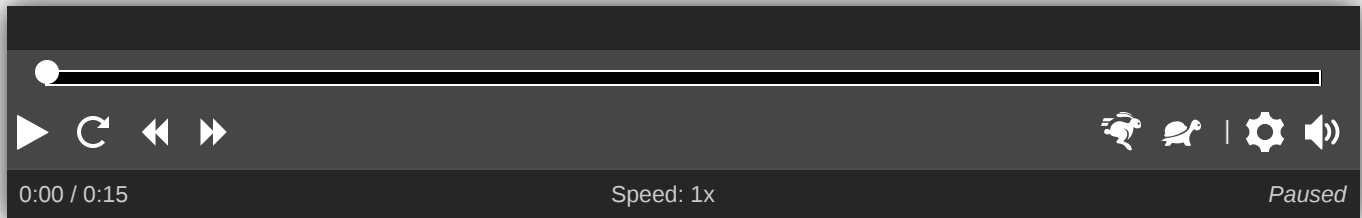
jusque, lorsque, puisque

In verb conjugations ending in **-e**, **-es** or **-ent**, the **-e**, **-es** and **ent** are all silent.



parle, manges, dansent

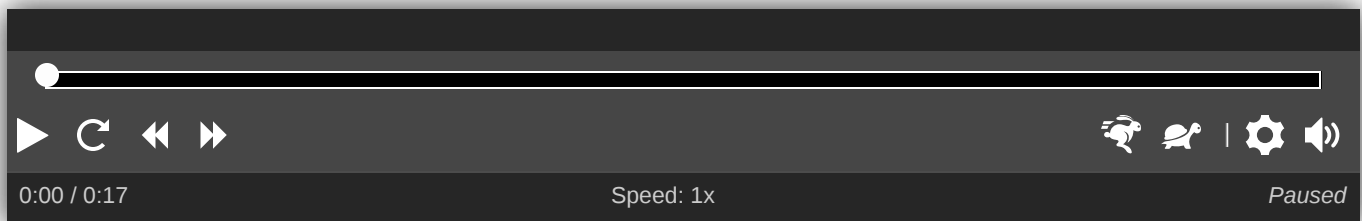
When an **e** at the end of a word has an acute accent (accent aigu) **é**, then it must be pronounced [e] as in play. Compare:



e = [ø]: rêve, chante, énonce, fonde

é = [e]: rêvé, chanté, énoncé, fondé

When the silent **-e** or **-es** is added to a word ending with a silent consonant, it will cause that consonant to be pronounced. Compare:



petit → petite

grand → grande

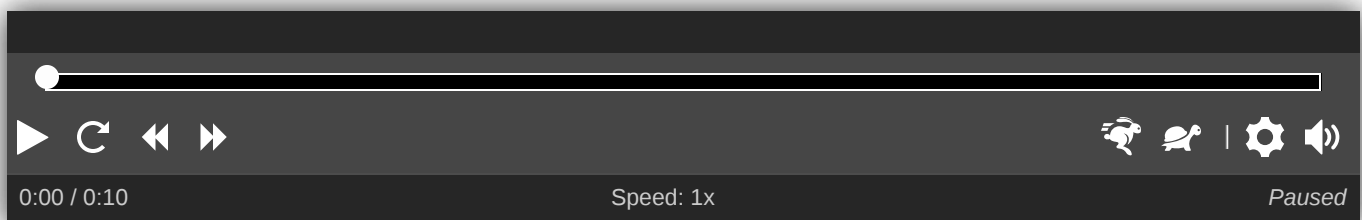
un → une

plein → pleine

tout → toutes

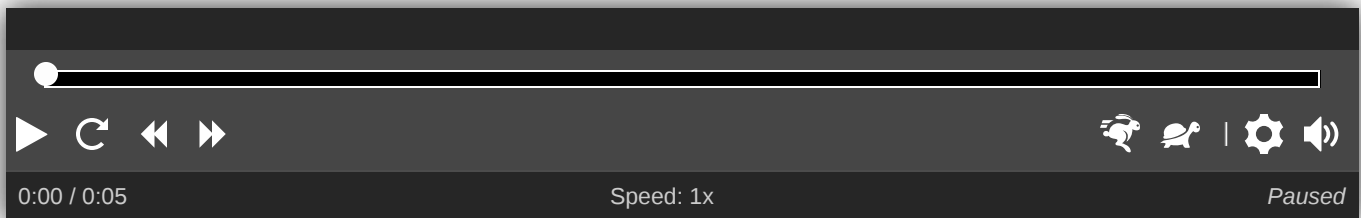
américains → américaines

Keep in mind that a pronounced **e** will disappear into silence in [elisions](#), whether required or optional:



Required Elisions

Required elisions	Result
te + aime	t'aime
de + ici	d'ici
se + appeler	s'appeler
je + habite	j'habite
quelque + un	quelqu'un
que + est	qu'est



Optional elisions

Optional elisions	Result
je ne sais pas	[jə n(ə) sɛ pa]
le bateau	[l(ə) ba to]
je suis	[ʃyi]

French in the World

The pronounced silent e.

This may sound strange, but sometimes the silent **e** can be pronounced. That's why it is also sometimes called the "unstable **e**" (e instable) or the "dropped **e**" (**e caduc**)

More often than not, the **-e** at the end of a word will remain silent and unaccented **e**'s in the middle of words will often be dropped or cancelled (**e caduc**), (such as the e in "médecin", which is usually pronounced "méd'cin").

In some cases, however, the silent **e** can be pronounced. For example, the silent **-ue** as the end of "chaque" The silent e at the end of a word may be pronounced to fit the rhythm of a poem. For example the 3-syllable passage "chaque baiser" (each kiss) can be pronounced at 4 syllables by pronouncing the e as a schwa (/ə/).

The silent **e** can be pronounced in a song such as in the opening verse of the French National Anthem, La Marseillaise:

Allons enfants de la patrie !

The **-e** at the end of "patrie" is normally silent, but when people sing this song they will pronounce it like a schwa (/ə/), thus adding a 3rd syllable to the pronunciation of "patrie".

Sometimes the silent **e** will be pronounced to emphasize emotion or add intensity, such as in the use of the expression "Merde !". While this is normally one syllable, the addition of a schwa (/ə/) at the end makes it two. It makes the expression more dramatic.

Some French speaking regions will pronounce the silent *e* more often than others. People from the South of France, for example, are more likely to pronounce unaccented *e* at the ends of words or phrases. This is one of the reasons why many people describe French in the South of France as more musical or melodic.

Watch this video on the [Marseillais accent](#).

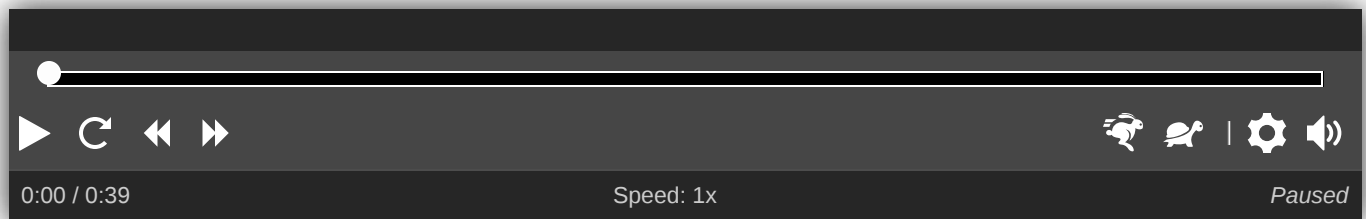
Listen to the southern French accent:

- [Accent du nord vs. accent du sud.](#)
- [Accent de Toulouse.](#)
- [Read more.](#)

Let's practice

Activity A

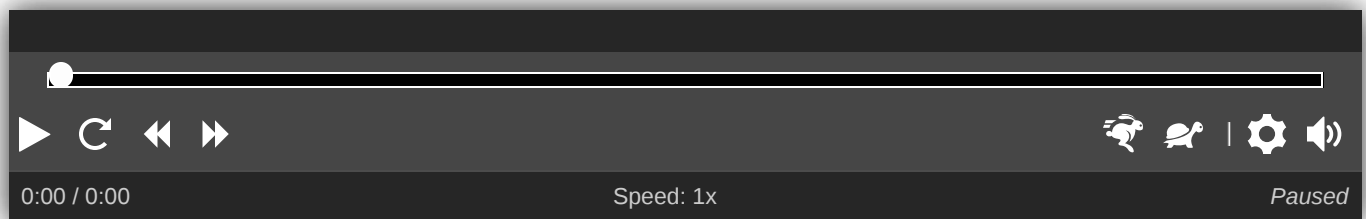
Listen and choose whether the **e** is silent or not.



1. Silent / Pronounced.
2. Silent / Pronounced.
3. Silent / Pronounced.
4. Silent / Pronounced.
5. Silent / Pronounced.
6. Silent / Pronounced.
7. Silent / Pronounced.
8. Silent / Pronounced.
9. Silent / Pronounced.
10. Silent / Pronounced.
11. Silent / Pronounced.
12. Silent / Pronounced.

Activity B

Do we pronounce the **e** or not in the following words?



1. livre
2. craie
3. gouvernement
4. une

5. musée
6. active
7. le
8. revoir
9. elle voyage
10. vue

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7.2: The Ever-changing E Sound

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn different ways to pronounce the letter E.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

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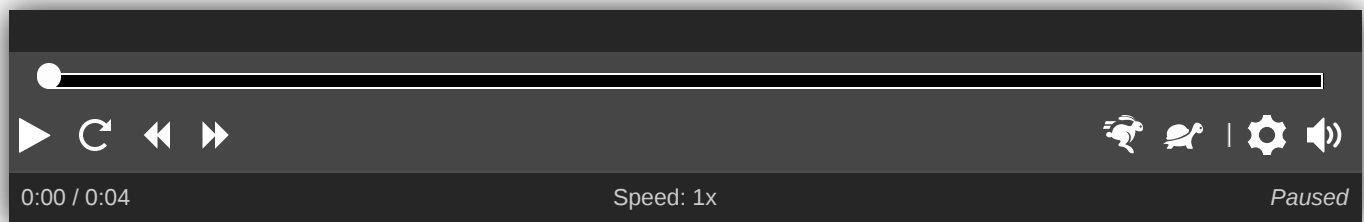
Let's get started!

In French, the letter **e** can be silent or pronounced. When it is pronounced, it can take on various pronunciations, based on the accent on it, or the letters that come after it.

The é sound

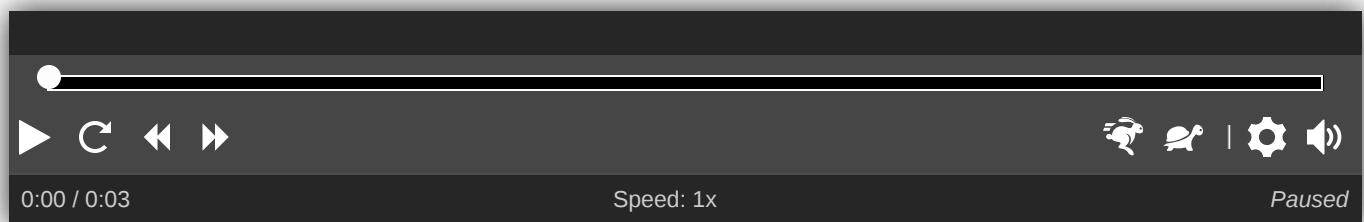
The letter **e** with an **accent aigu** is pronounced [e], like "ay". But the **e** can also be pronounced [e] in the following instances:

When it is followed by an **r**, **z**, **t** or **d** at the end of a word, like in the following words:



manger, parlez, et, pied

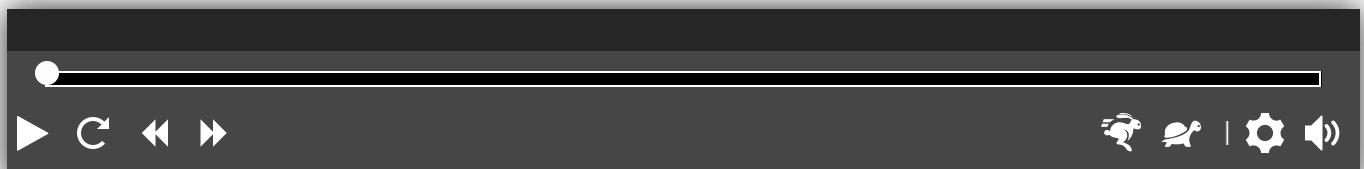
In a monosyllabic word, the **e** is pronounced [e] when it is followed by the letter **s**, like in:



mes, les, tes, des

The è sound

The letter **e** with an **accent grave** is pronounced [ɛ]. It's an open **e** sound. The letter **e** can also be pronounced [ɛ] in the following instances:



- When it is followed by two consonants, like in **jette**.
- When the **e** has an **accent circonflexe**, like in **crêpe**, **poêle**.
- When the **e** has a **tréma** on it, like in **Noël**.
- When the **e** is followed by **i**, like in **reine**, **peine**, **veine**.

French Around the World

France vs. Quebec

The letter E followed by a pronounced R would sound like /**ɛʁ**/ in France, somewhat like the ending of the English word "where". In Quebec, however, it will often sound like /**aɪʁ**/, similar to the **-ire** in the English word "wire" (followed by a French R). Compare the pronunciation of the homophones **ver**, **vers**, **vert**, **verre** in these videos:

- [France](#)
- [Québec](#)

Additional Resources

Learn more about [the difference between é and è](#).

The other cases of the letter e

Other times, the letter **e** can be silent at the end or middle of a word depending on the spelling. We will cover this on the next page.

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7.3: The Lapsed E

Objectifs

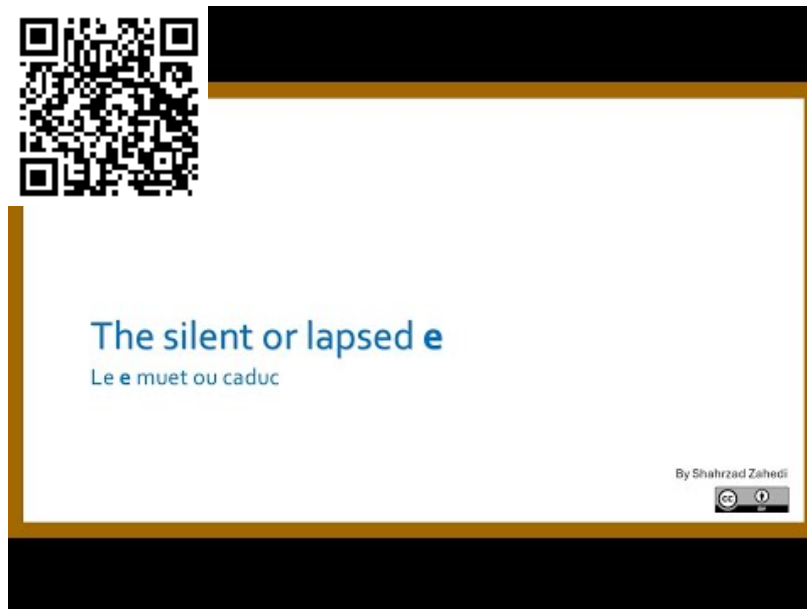
In this section, you will learn about the lapsed E.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

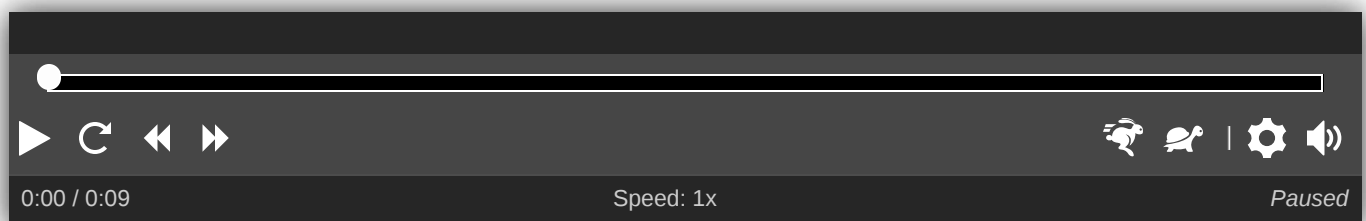


Here's [the video's transcription](#).

Le e caduc

The **e caduc** is a lapsed **e**, also referred to as a "cancelled" or "nullified" **e**. We have already seen that when the letter **e** appears at the end of a word and has no accent, it will be silent.

This rule excludes monosyllabic words, of course. Here are a few examples.



Je, ne, le, de, me, te, se

In the case of monosyllabic words that end in an **e**, this vowel should be pronounced.

Below, we will talk about when the letter **e** can be silent, depending on the speaker, formal or informal context, or regional accent.

The word **caduc** means to "to fall". This means that the letter **e** can be lapsed, or it can disappear in certain contexts.

This is mostly the case in spoken and informal French. In the south of France, since the accent is more articulate, the **e caduc** is actually pronounced.

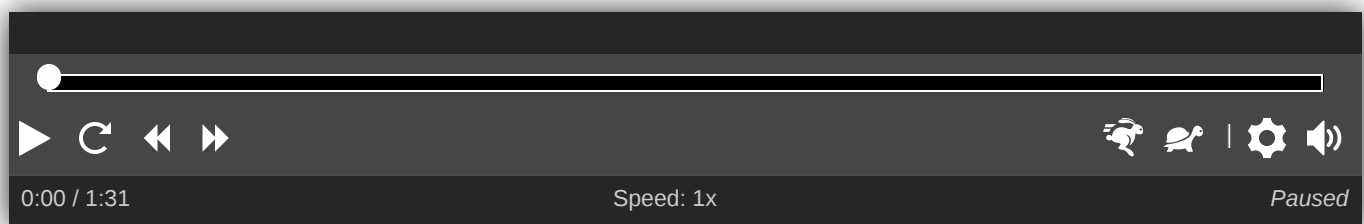
So here, we will mostly focus on spoken French of mostly the Parisian accent, where the letter **e** can be easily dropped by speakers.

In spoken French, the **e** can be lapsed in the following instances:

- When the letter **e** in the middle of a word is pronounced [ə].
- When the letter **e** is between a vowel, a consonant, and yet another consonant.
- When the letter **e** appears in the middle of a word, between another vowel and a consonant.
- In monosyllabic words that end in **e**, like the ones mentioned above.

When the letter **e** in the middle of a word is pronounced [ə] and it appears between three consonants, it should always be pronounced.

The table below will show examples of the rules mentioned above.



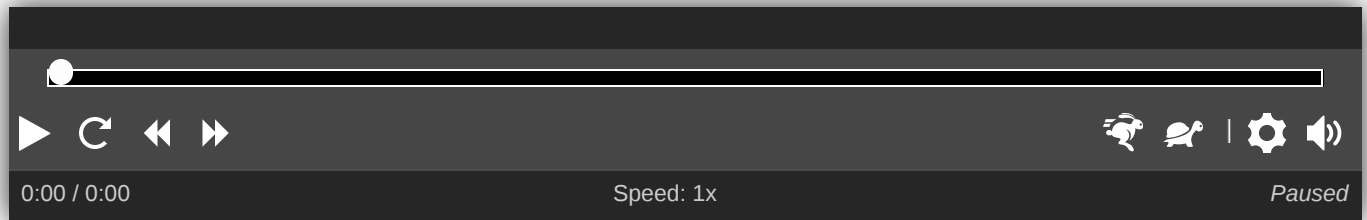
Rules of the Lapsed E

Rule	Example	The Lapsed E or Not	Translation
In monosyllabic words that end in e .	Je vais bien. Pas de crayon? Elle se lève.	J'vais bien. Pas d'crayon? Elle s'lève.	I am doing well. No pencil? She gets up.
In words between two consonants. Or between a vowel, a consonant, and another consonant	maintenant enveloppe fenêtre développement arrondissement heureusement	maint'nant env'loppe f'nêtre dév'lop'ment arrondiss'ment heureus'ment	now envelope window development city district luckily
When the letter e appears between a vowel and a consonant.	Nous étudierons. Vous jouerez au tennis. dénouement paiement	Nous étudi'rons. Vous jou'rez au tennis. dénou'ment pai'ment	We will study. You will play tennis. outcome, denouement payment
In cases where e appears between three consonants, it must be pronounced. Sometimes, even when there's no e , it is added when speaking. This is to ease up transition between three vowels.	ours blanc porte-feuille garderie gouvernement brusquement	ourse blanc	white bear, polar bear wallet day nursery, day-care center government abruptly, suddenly

Let's practice!

Activity A

Practice pronouncing the following sentences.



1. Je vais habiter dans le treizième arrondissement.
2. Tu me donnes un coup de main ?
3. Justement, elle aime le Petit Prince.
4. C'est sa dernière année de lycée.
5. Je ne te le dis pas.
6. Tu n'as pas de voiture ?
7. Franchement, je ne sais pas !

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Simple Vowels

[8.1: The Letter A](#)

[8.2: The French Y and I](#)

[8.3: The Easy Vowel O](#)

[8.4: The Challenging Vowel U](#)

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8.1: The Letter A

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter **a**.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

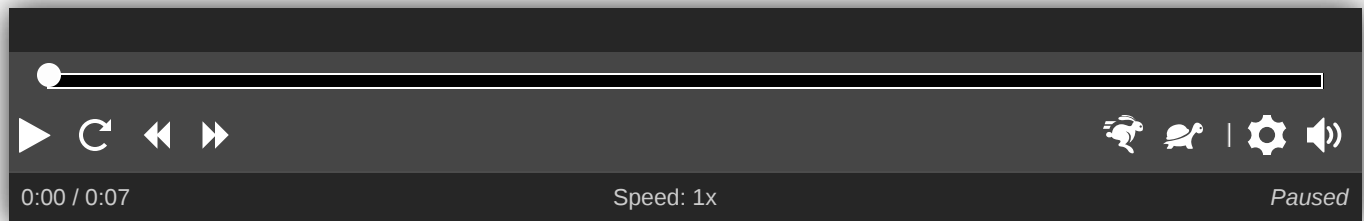
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Simple A

A

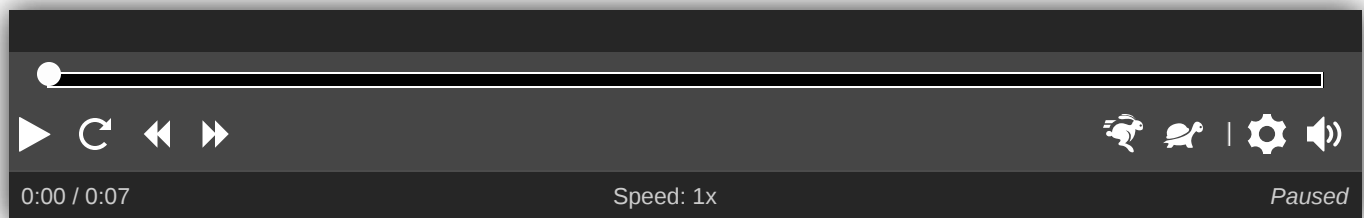
The letter **a** is pronounced [a], like in the English "ahh" or "mama".



bal, **sac**, **anagramme**, **actuel**

À

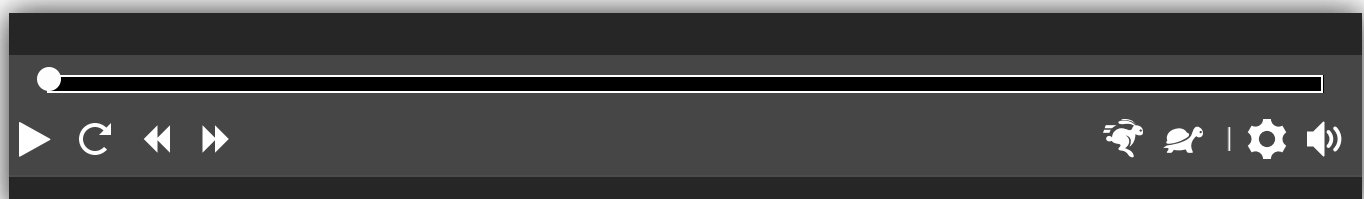
The letter **a** with a grave accent (**accent grave**) is pronounced the same way as **a** without the accent mark.



à, **là**, **déjà**, **prêt-à-porter**

One important purpose of this accent is to distinguish the word like **a** (*has*) from **à** (*to* or *at*), or **la** (*the*) from **là** (*there*). They sound exactly the same but have completely different meanings.

Â



0:00 / 0:06

Speed: 1x

Paused

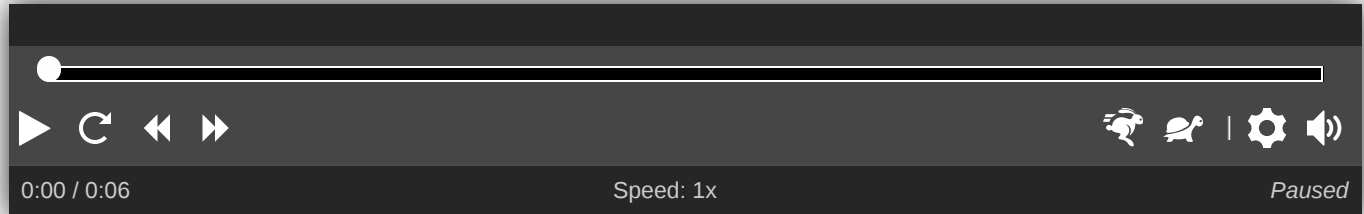
An **a** with a circumflex (ˆ) is also pronounced exactly like **a** and **â**,
âge, **âme**, **hâte**, **bâteaux**,

A Combined with Other Letters

When combined with other vowels, the letter **a** makes new vowel sounds.

AU

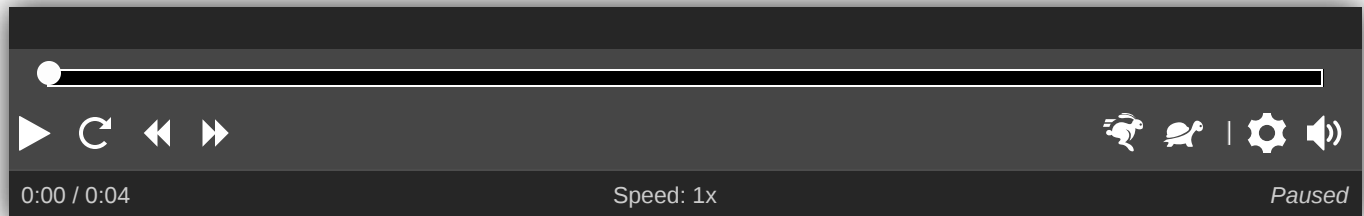
When **a** and **u** are combined, together they are pronounced [o], as in "oh!".



au, **jaune**, **aujourd'hui**, **peau**

AI

When **a** is followed by an **i**, it creates the vowel **ai** and is pronounced [ɛ].

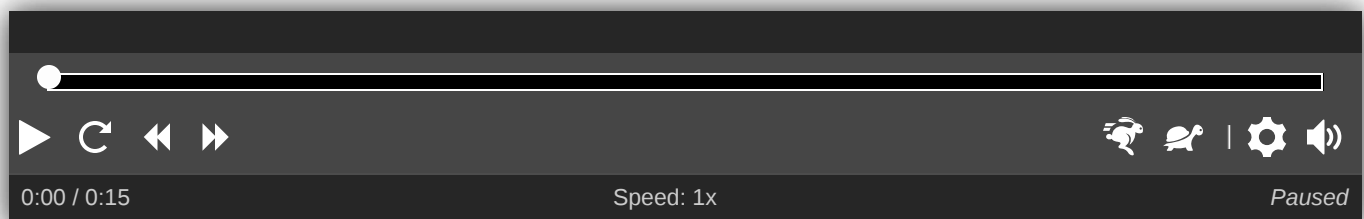


J'ai, **aime**, **fait**

AN, AM

When combined with the consonants **n** or **m**, the letter **a** becomes a nasal vowel.

When followed by an **n** or an **m** that is not then followed by another vowel, **an** or **am** creates the nasal vowel sound [ɑ̃]



an, **plan**, **anticiper**, **français**, **fantastique**
mamba, **camps**, **amplifier**

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8.2: The French Y and I

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce and distinguish the letters **y** and **i**.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

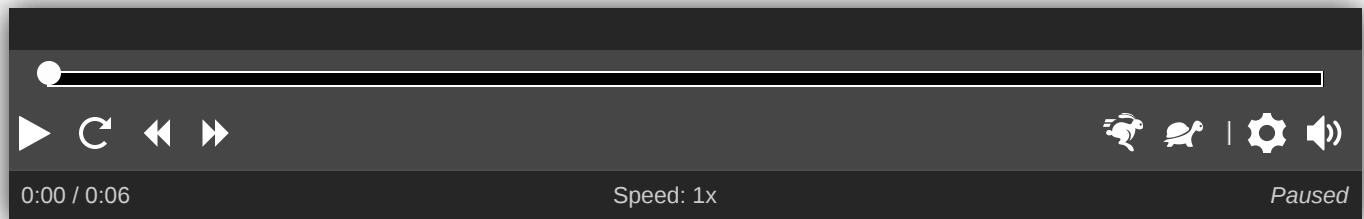
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Y

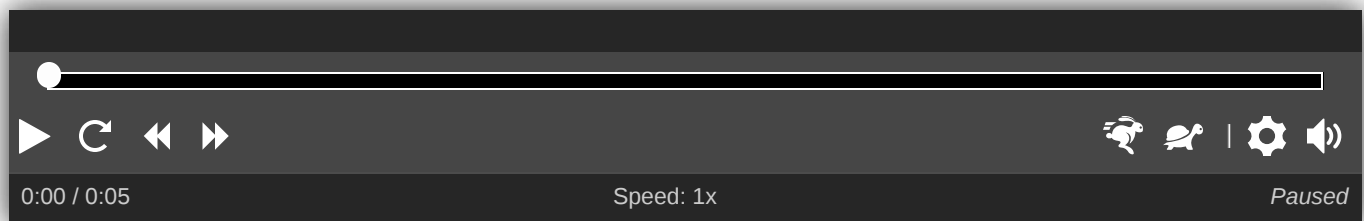
The letter **y** can be a vowel or semi-vowel.

In front of a consonant or on its own as a pronoun, **y** is a vowel and is pronounced [i].



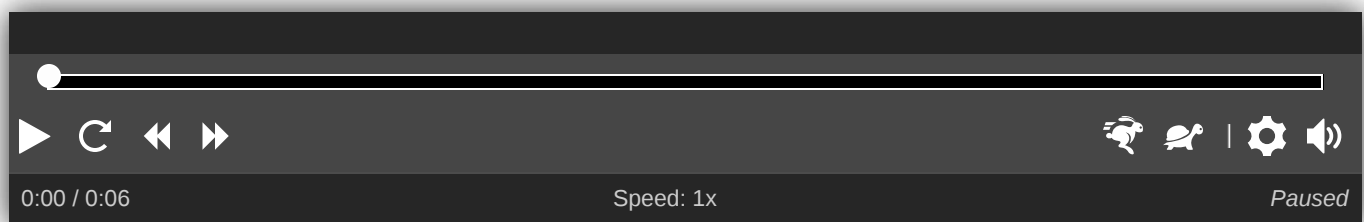
y, type, **Y**ves, Alysse

When it is placed at the beginning of a word, and before another vowel, **y** is considered a semi-vowel and is pronounced like the English **y** [j].



yeux, yaourt, essayer

Y can also be a nasal vowel when combined with an **n** or an **m**: **ym** [ɛ̃] or **yn** [ɛ̃].



sympa, symbole, synthèse

|

i+n

i+en

ai

ii

 Note

Careful! The French **i** and **y** never make the English **i** or **y** [**ai**] sound. For example, the letter **i** in **biologie** in French versus "biology" in English; The **y** in **psychologie** in French versus the first **y** in "psychology" in English.

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8.3: The Easy Vowel O

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter **o**.

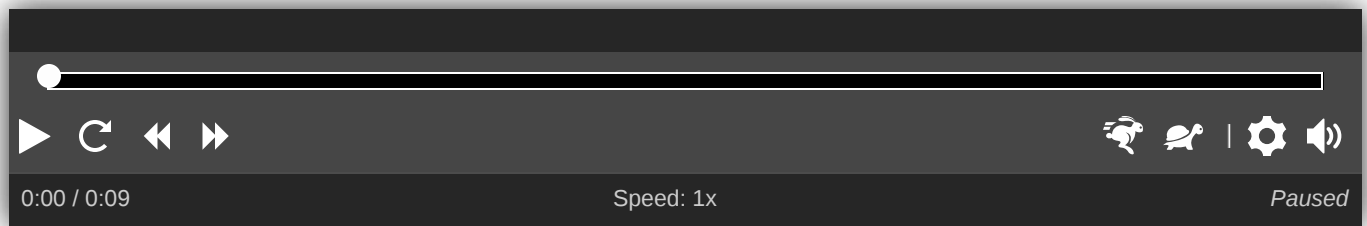
Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Congratulations! You already know how to pronounce **o** since it is the same in English and French. The French **o** almost always pronounced [o] like in **go** or **no**. While the **o** changes pronunciation a lot in English, the single **o** in French does not change much. Here are a few examples:



bol, **rôle**, **pot**, **rigolo**, **homme**, **origine**

Careful! **O** can change pronunciation **when** combined with certain other letters in French. Please refer to pages [9.3](#), [9.4](#), [9.5](#).

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8.4: The Challenging Vowel U

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the letter **u**.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

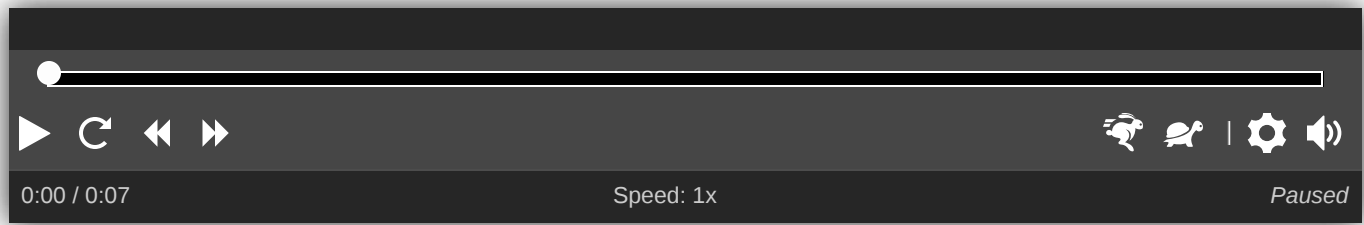
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The letter **u** has two pronunciations in French: [y] or [u].

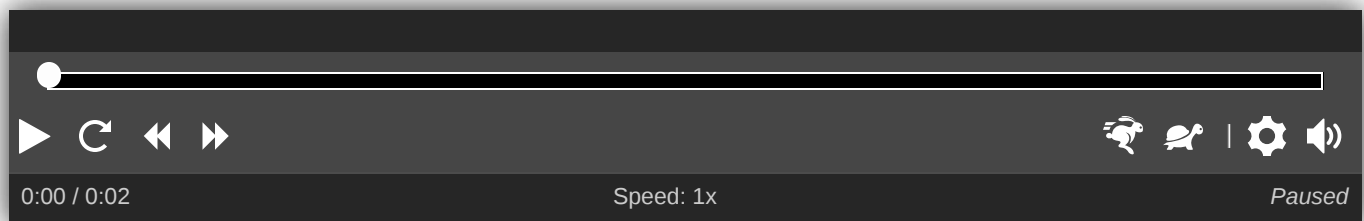
U as [y]

The letter **u** usually sounds like [y]. To make this sound, pucker your lips like you are about to blow out a candle or kiss someone, then say "ee" [i]:



tu, vu, sucre, musique

It can also be written as **û**, with a circumflex:

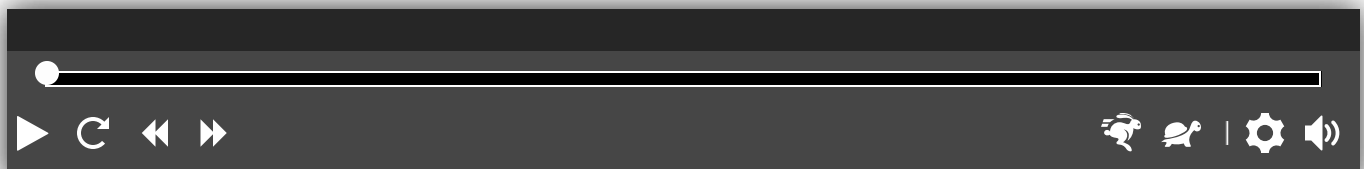


dû, chûte

U vs. OU

U [y] and **ou** [u] are two different vowel sounds that should not be confused in French. Otherwise, the meaning of the word may change.

For example:

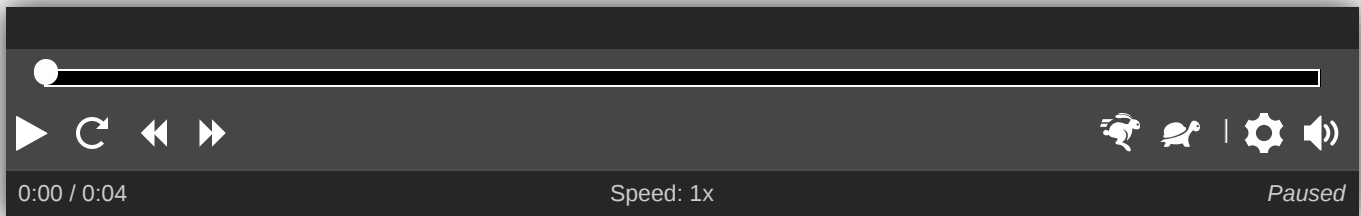


U vs. OU

U	OU
vu (seen)	vous (you)
pue (stink)	poux (louse)
but (goal)	bout (end)

U = [ɥ]

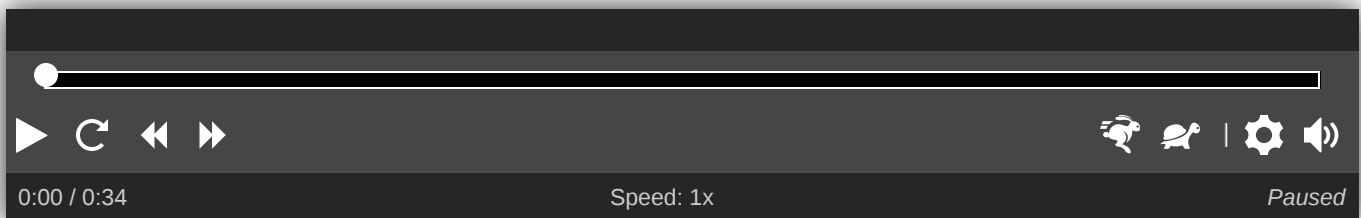
When **u** is followed by a vowel, it is pronounced [ɥ] like an English **w**, but with tightly pursed lips. This sound is called a semi-vowel because it almost sounds like you're saying and English **w**.



huit, huile, pluie, Suède

Other combinations with U

Just when you think it couldn't get any more difficult, you will see that the letter **u** can participate in a variety of other sounds depending on what it is combined with. For example:



Other combinations with the letter U

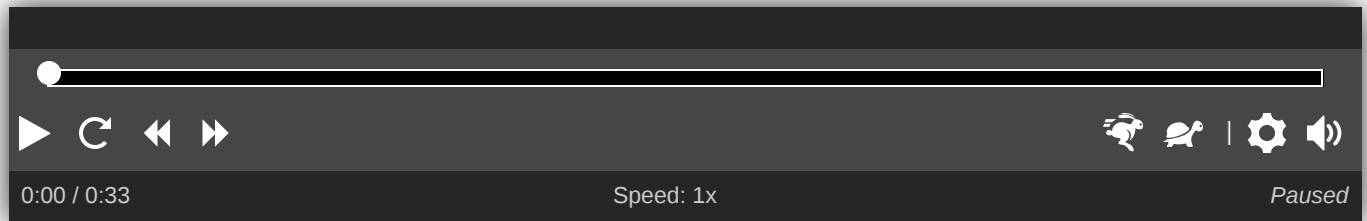
Combination	Sound	Examples
AU, EAU	[o]	jaune, beau
EU	[œ]	feu, peur
EU	[y]	eu (past participle of avoir)
EUIL, EUILL	[œj]	chevreuil, feuille
OU	[u]	fou, coup
OUIL, OUILL	[uj]	trouille, grenouille, bouillier, fenouil
UEIL, UEILL	[œj]	accueil, fauteuil, accueillir
UN, UM	[œ̃]	un, lundi, parfum

Let's practice !

Activity A

U v. OU

Listen and repeat:

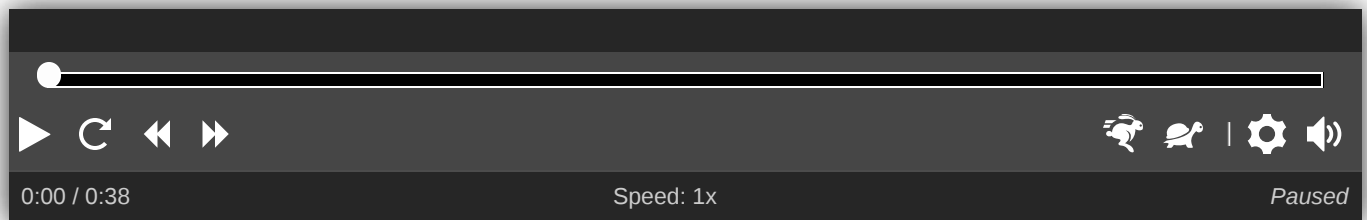


1. nous / rue / loup / mur / muse / poule / bus / tour / rhume / sûre
2. début / voyou / toutou / voiture / virgule / autour / futur / sucre
3. culture / Toulouse / troubadour

Activity B

U vs. I

Listen and repeat:



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

8.4: The Challenging Vowel U is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Combination of Vowels

9.1: 9.1 The Vowel [o]- AU/EAU

9.2: The Vowel [ɛ] - AI, EI

9.3: The Vowel [ø] and [œ]- EU, Œ, ŒU

9.4: The Vowel [w]- OI/OY/OUE/OUI)/W

9.5: The Vowel [u]- OU

9.6: The vowel [ɥ] - UI, UY

9.7: Double vowels

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9.1: 9.1 The Vowel [o]- AU/EAU

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the vowels sound [o].

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

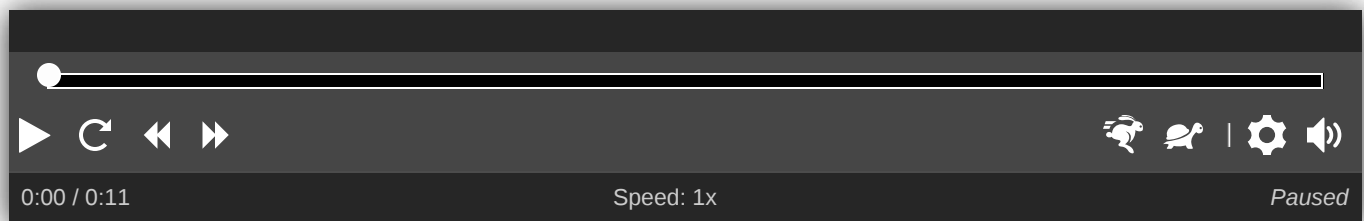
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!

The O sound

The [o] vowel sound, also called the closed **o** sound, can be found in the following instances in French:

Listen to the examples of the [o] sound in the right column of the table below:



Rule	Examples
When the letter o is followed by the z or m sounds	rose, atome
When the sound or letter o is at the end of a word	photo, dos
When there's an accent circonflexe on the letter o	hôte
When the vowels a and u are combined	animaux
When the vowels e , a , and u are combined	beauté

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9.2: The Vowel [ɛ] - AI, EI

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [ɛ].

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

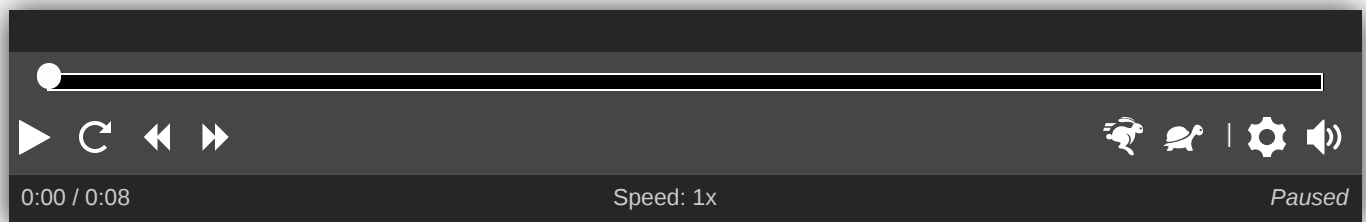
Let's get started!

On this page, I will list various ways to spell the [ɛ] and [e] sounds.

+ Note: AE = é, ai + é, -er, -et

The [ɛ] sound

The [ɛ] vowel sound, can be spelled:



- with the vowel combination **ai**, like in **araignée**
- with the vowel combination **ei**, like in **treize**
- with **ê**, like in **pêche**
- with **è**, like in **fière**
- with **et**, like in **tiret**

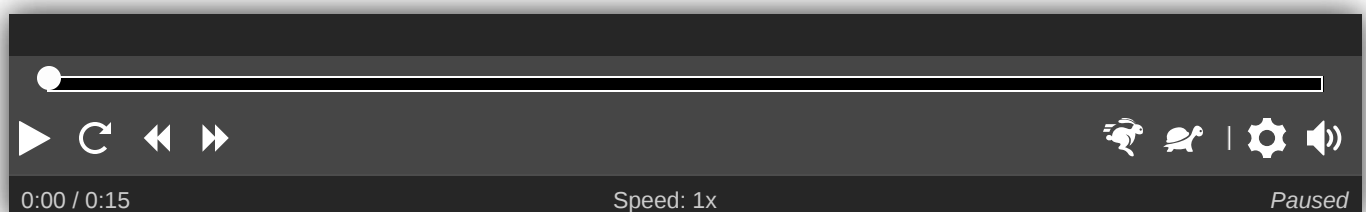
The [e] vowel sound, can be spelled:

- with the vowel combination **ai**, like
- with the vowel combination **ei**, like
- with **é** (**és**, **ée**, **ées**), like
- with **ë**
- with **ez**, **et**, **er**, **ed**, **es**

Now, we will discuss when the vowel combinations **ei** and **ai** are pronounced [ɛ] and [e].

When AI/EI are pronounced [ɛ]

The table below lists instances where **ai** and **ei** can be pronounced a closed e, or [ɛ].

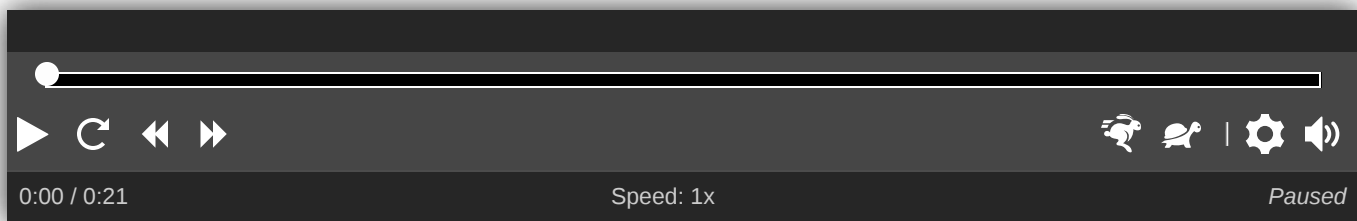


When **ai** and **ei** Are Pronounced [ɛ]

Vowel	Rule(s)	Example(s)	Translation(s)
ai	- when it's followed by a non-nasal silent consonant - When a noun or adjective ends in ai	français parfait balai mai vrai	French perfect broom May true
ei	when it's followed by a consonant sound.	peine neige	pain snow

When **ai/ei** are pronounced [e]

The table below lists instances where **ai** and **ei** can be pronounced a closed **e**, or [ɛ].



When **ai** and **ei** Are Pronounced [e]

Vowel	Rule(s)	Example(s)	Translation(s)
ei	When the vowels ei are in a word whose final syllable ends with a vowel sound, then they are pronounced [e].	enseigner freiner enseignant(e) treize	to teach to brake teacher thirteen
ai ay	- when a verb conjugation ends in ai, then it is pronounced [e]. - when a word ends in ai. ay and ai are pronounced [e] when the word ends with a vowel sound.	J'irai. J'ai balayer quai	I will go. I have to sweep platform, track

Additional Resources

Here are three sites with additional examples and information about the [e] and [ɛ] sounds.

- [The pronunciations of **ai** and **ei**](#)
- [The pronunciations of **é**, **è** and **ai**](#)
- [The difference in pronunciation between **aller** and **allait**.](#)
- A detailed list of [French vowel sounds and IPA symbols](#).

Notes:

- aile / paine
- aîle
- aïe
- ay
- eî
- eï

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9.3: The Vowel [ø] and [œ]- EU, Œ, ŒU

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [ø].

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

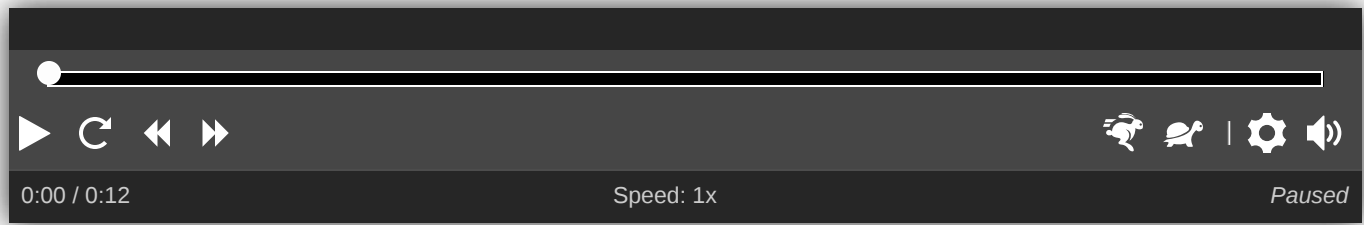
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

In French, the vowel combinations **eu** and **œu** are pronounced [œ] or [ø]. Make a sound similar to the "u" in "hurt" with your lips slightly rounded, keeping your mouth somewhat open.

The vowel [ø]

The combinations **eu** and **œu** are pronounced [ø] when they are at the end of a word.

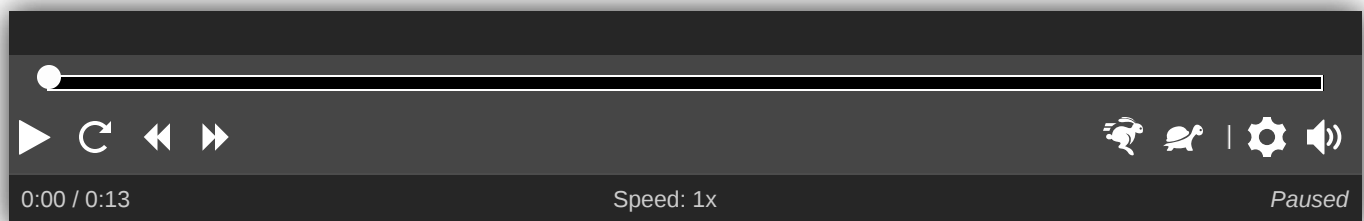


bleu, peu, pneu, creux, deux

vœu, œufs, nœud

The vowel [œ]

The combinations **eu** and **œu** are pronounced [œ] when they are before a consonant that is pronounced.



heure, peur, heureux, beurre

cœur, sœur, mœurs, œuf

✎ DAdditional Resources

Read more about [vowel sounds in French](#).

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9.4: The Vowel [w]- OI/OY/OUE/OUI)/W

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [w].

Media Alternative

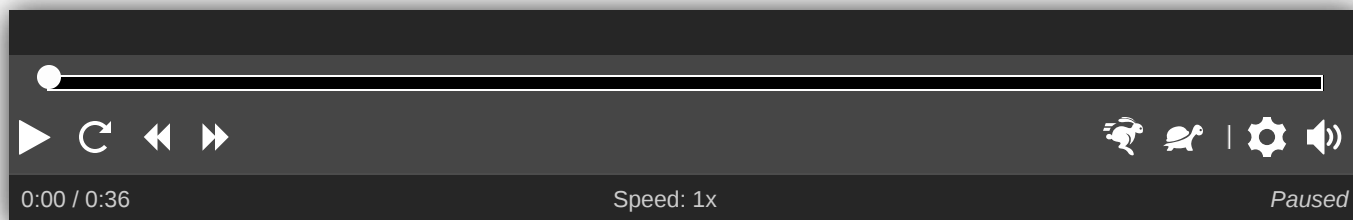
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The semi-vowel [w]

The semi-vowel **w** can be spelled in a variety of ways. The table below shows the variety of ways to spell this pronunciation.



How to Spell the Sound [w]

Spelling	Example(s)	English Translation
oui	oui in oui fou in er	yes incredible, amazing, unheard of rummage through, stick one's nose into
wi	ki wi wiki	kiwi wiki
wa	w apiti	wapiti
oi oy	pingou oi n bo i s o ie moy e n bro y er	penguin wood, woods goose means, average grind, crush, destroy
oue	ou est cou ue tte alou ue tte	west quilt, duvet lark, skylark

French Around the World

The vowel sound **oi** in North American French often pronounced differently from the French OI.

In Quebecois and Missouri French for example, the **oi** sound (as in toi, moi, oiseau) is pronounced **oé** (like "way") instead of "wa" used in France. For example the word **moi** would be pronounced "**mwa**" in France, but "**mway**" in Québec.

Listen the the way they pronounce [OI in Québec](#).

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9.5: The Vowel [u]- OU

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [u].

📌 Media Alternative

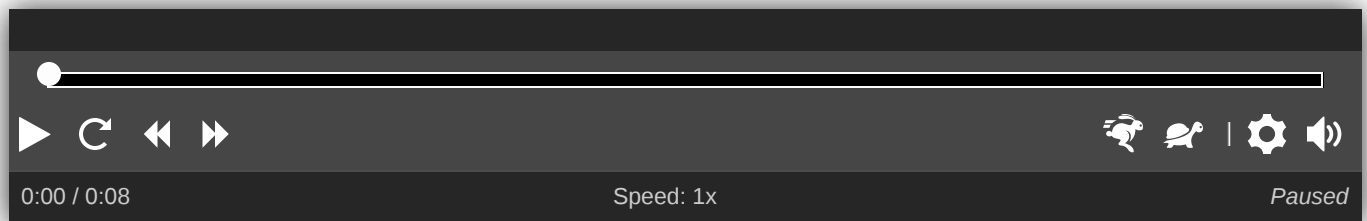
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The vowel combination vowel **ou** is pronounced [u] in French. When a word is borrowed from another language, like from English, two **o**'s, **oo**, can also be pronounced [u].

Here are a few examples:



cours, vous, trouver, pouvoir

cool

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9.6: The vowel [y] - UI, UY

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [y].

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!



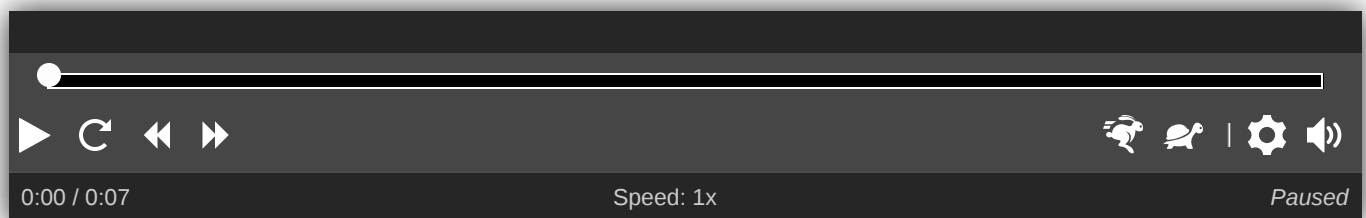
Here's [the video's transcription](#).

How to produce the sound [y]

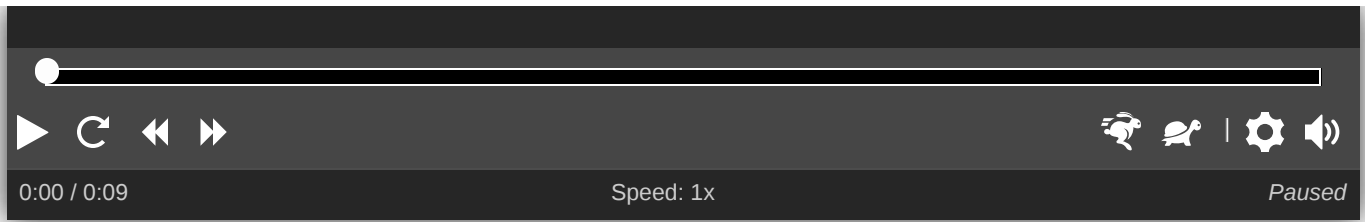
The semi-vowel [y], also known as a semi-consonant, stems from the [y] sound, though it's also quite different.

While the sound [y] is produced by the letter **u**, the [y] sound is produced by a combination of **u** and another vowel.

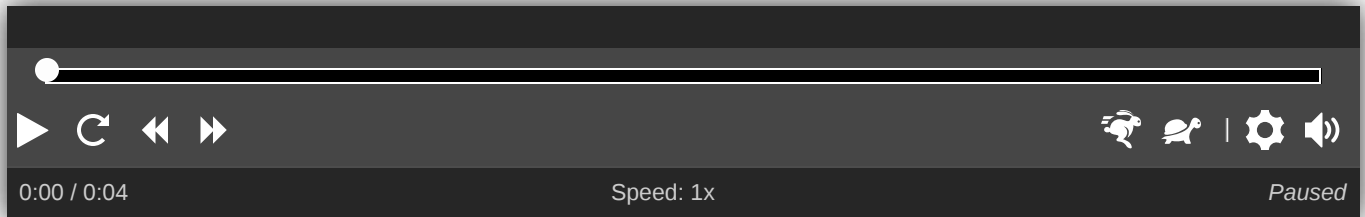
The [y] sound never appears at the end of a word. Here are the various ways that [y] can be produced:



- by the **ui** combination, like in
 - **huit, huile, fuite, nuit, puis.**



- by the **ue** combination, like in
 - cruel, muet, suer, habituer, saluer



- by the **ua** combination, like in
 - nuage, persuader

Additional Resources

Here's another site that describes [how to produce the sound \[ɥ\]](#).

Note: these are pronounced [wil]

x + EUIL | OUIL | UIL

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9.7: Double vowels

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn about double vowels.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

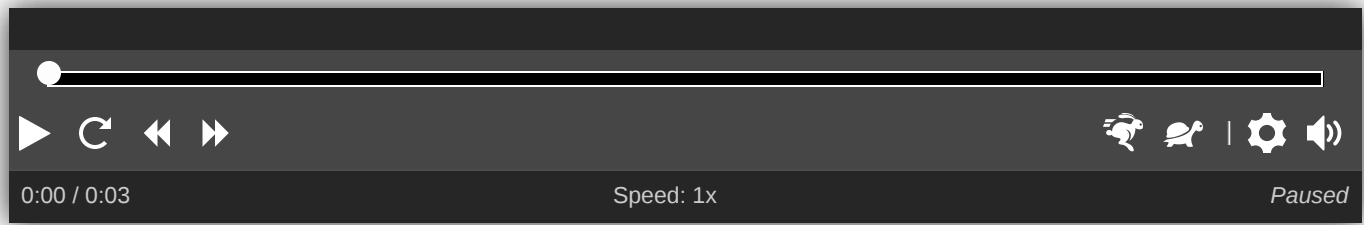
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!

All five vowels can be doubled: **aa**, **ee**, **ii**, **oo**, **uu**. Sometimes they are pronounced the same way as the single vowel; but in some cases the vowel must be pronounced twice.

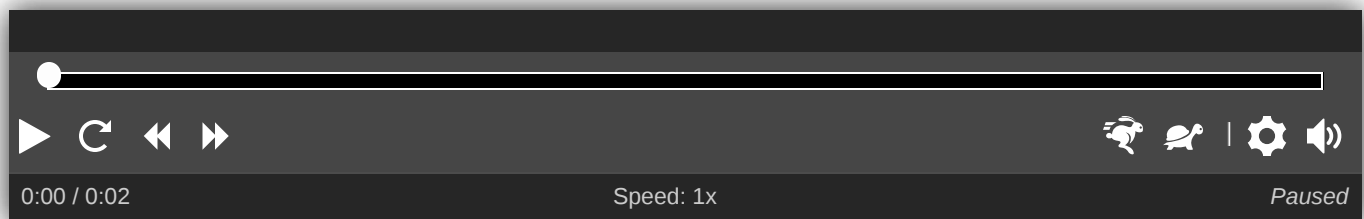
aa

Double aa is found in some words such as:



graaal, **naan**

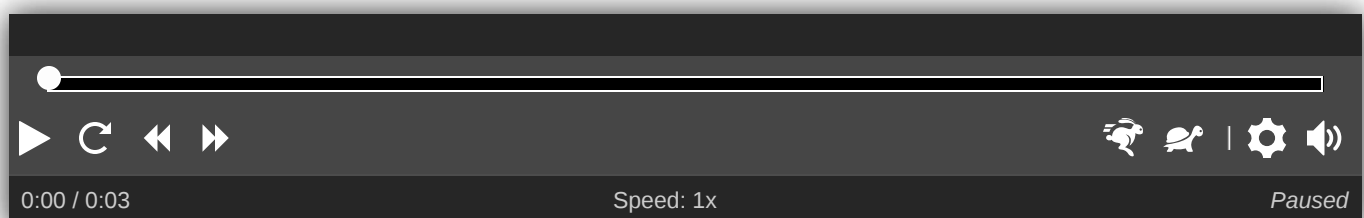
You must pronounce the **a** twice in composed or compound words, for example the **a** in the prefix **intra-** must be pronounced separately from an **a** that follows it, such as with **atomique**:



intraatomique

ee

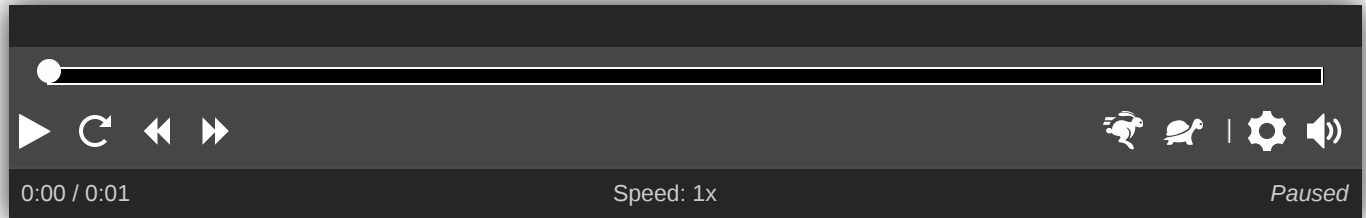
When an **e** follows an **é** (with an acute accent) in a past participle or adjective, you only pronounce [e] once:





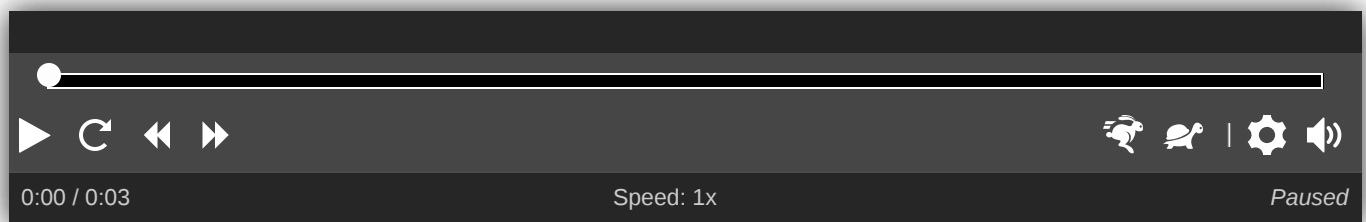
enchantée, chassée

Some words borrowed from other languages will also have a double ee pronounce [i]:



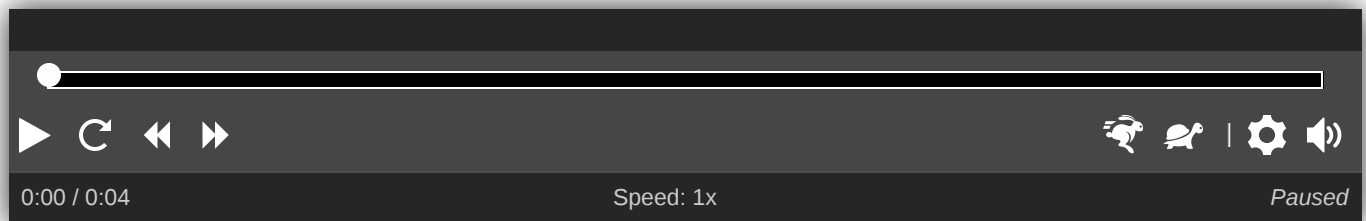
spleen

When an **e** follows an **é** (with an acute accent) in a verb, you must pronounce them separately:



créer, créerai

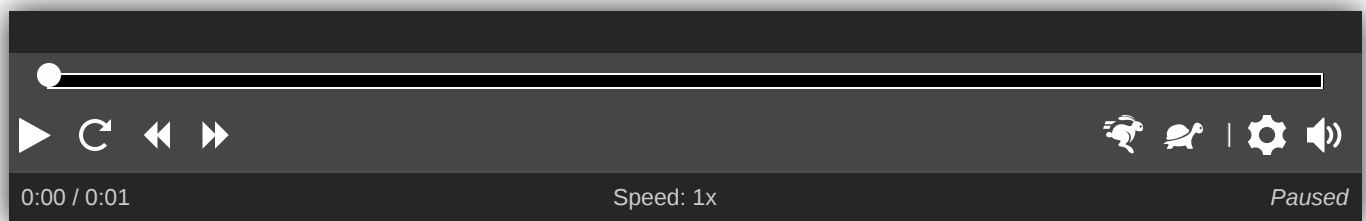
When **é** is followed by -en or -enne, you must pronounce the two **e**'s separately:



coréenne, méditerranéen

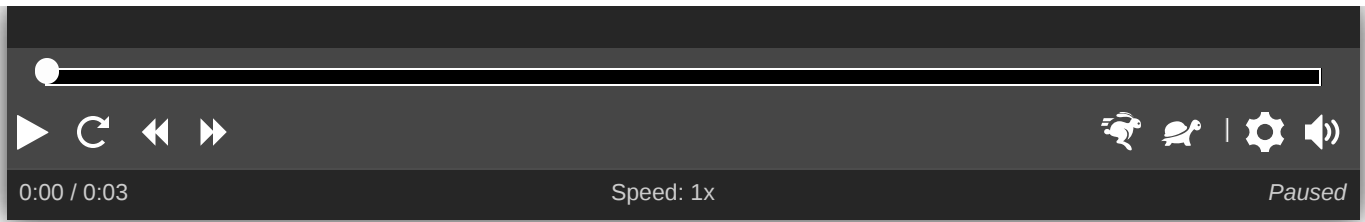
ii

A double **i** will often sound like a long **i** [i] in borrowed words.



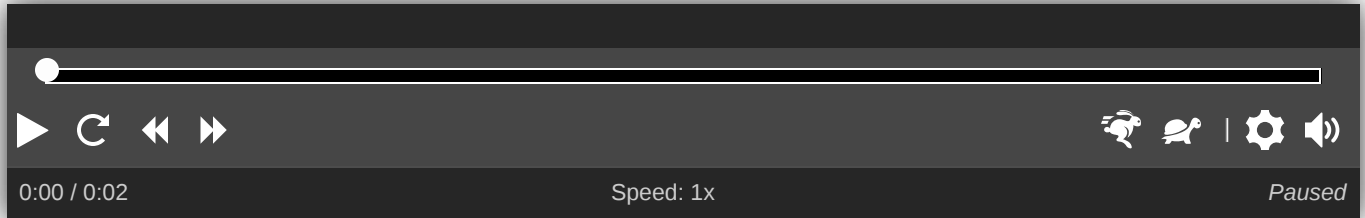
chiite

The double **i** is also used in the imperfect tense of verbs ending in **-ier**:



étudiiez, pliiiez

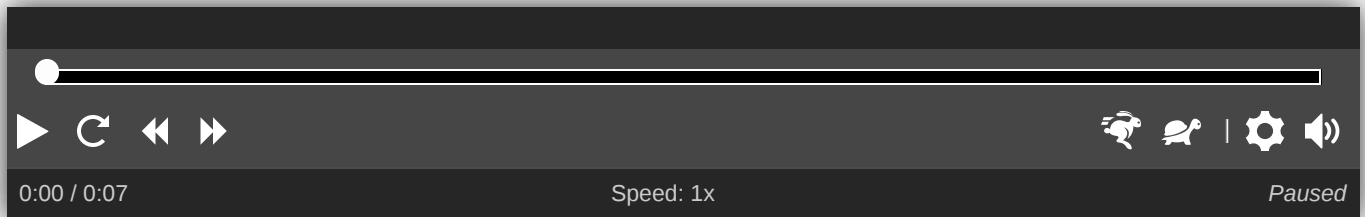
You must pronounce a double ii differently when the second i is part of the nasal vowel -in- [ɛ̃]:



antiinflamatoire

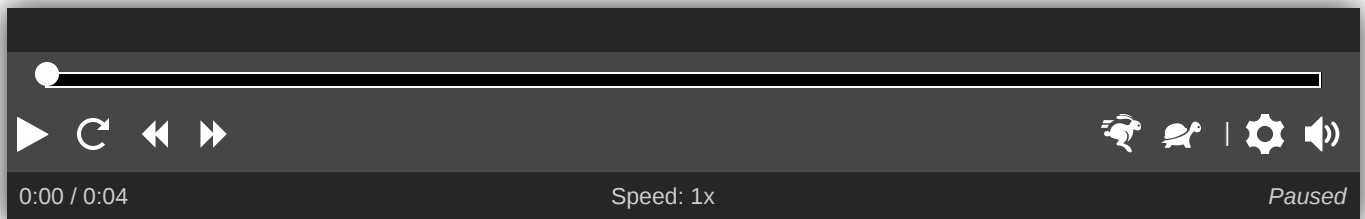
oo

In many words a double o is pronounced [o] twice:



alcool, coordonnée, coopérer microorganisme

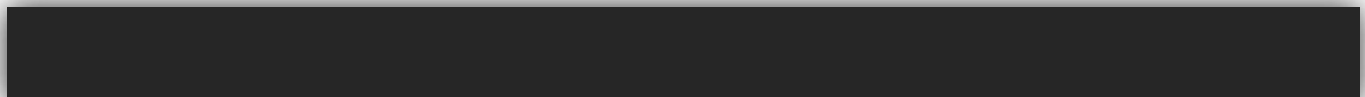
In words borrowed from English, they are pronounced [u]:

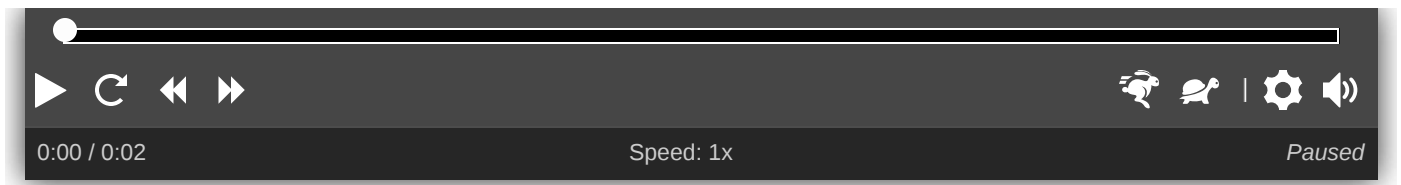


foot, zoom, smoothie

uu

In words borrowed from Latin, the two u's are pronounced separately and differently, as [u] + [ɔ]:





continuum

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Nasal Vowels

[10.1: Nasal Vowels - Introduction](#)

[10.2: The Vowel \[ã\] - AN, EN, AM, EM](#)

[10.3: The Vowel \[õ\] - ON, OM](#)

[10.4: The Vowel \[ẽ\] - IN, IM, YM, YN, AIN, EIN, AIM, EIM and \[œ\]- UN, UM](#)

[10.5: Non-nasalization](#)

[10.6: Let's Practice Nasal Sounds](#)

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10.1: Nasal Vowels - Introduction

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about nasal vowels.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!



The non-nasal exceptions:

They are not nasal sounds when followed by another **m/n** or by **e** or any other vowel.

aim, ain	aimer, laine	
im, in	imaginer, tinal	immobile, innocent
um, un	funer, lune	

Here's [the video's transcription](#).

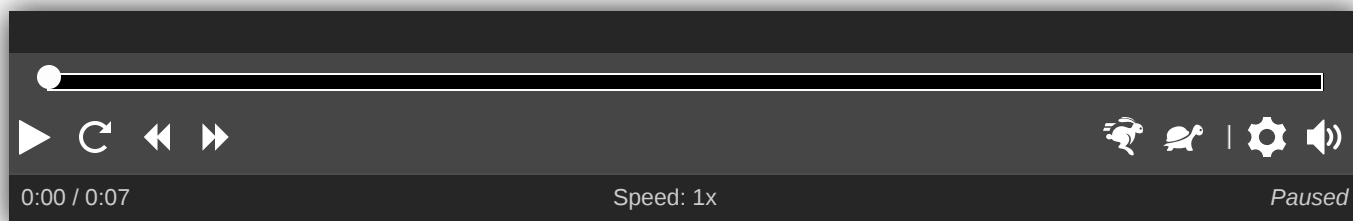
Nasal Vowels

You may have noticed that the French language has a lot of nasal sounds. That's because there are 4 different types of nasal vowels in French. For some words, the sound makes the nose vibrate. Try closing your mouth and making a sound with your nose. French nasal sounds sound almost like that.

In French, there are 4 nasal sounds. The people of the south clearly distinguish between these 4 sounds, but the people of northern France can only hear 3 nasal vowels. Here they are.

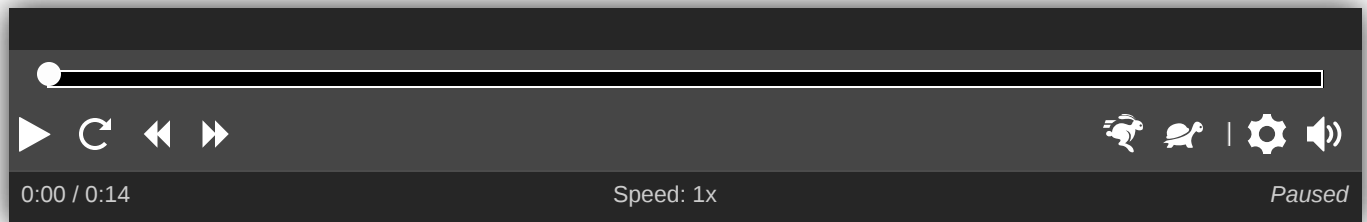
[ɔ̃] or Nasal

Your mouth should be round when pronouncing these vowels. There are two ways to write them: **on** and **om**.



pompier, **décontracté**, **tomber**, **contrôle**

When **on** or **om** is followed by another vowel, however, the sound is no longer nasal. This is also the case when **o** is followed by **nn** or **mm**.

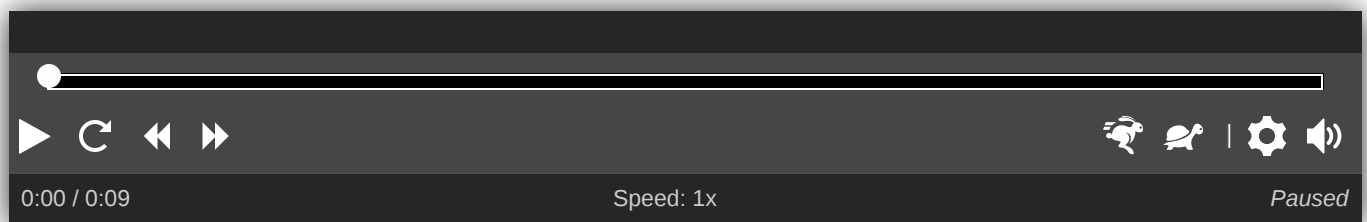


colonel, **tome**, **conifère**, **comique**

connu, **communiquer**, **connivence**, **commercial**.

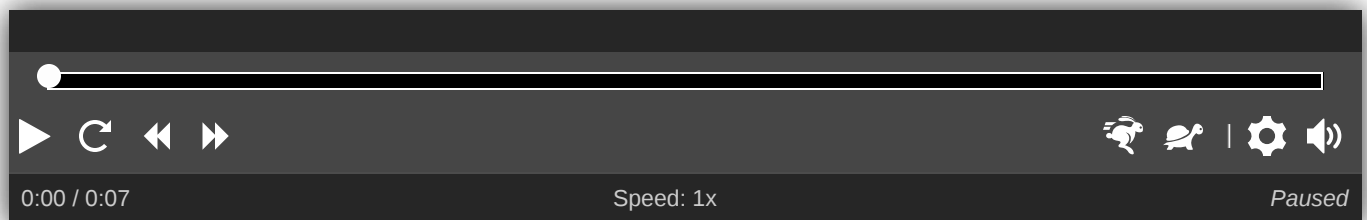
[**Ê**] or Nasal I

Your mouth should open for this sound, as if you were about to smile. There are many ways to write this vowel sound: **in**, **im**, **yn**, **ym**, **ain**, **aim**, **ein**, and very rarely **en** (like in **examen**).



pain, **vin**, **important**, **thym**, **synthèse**

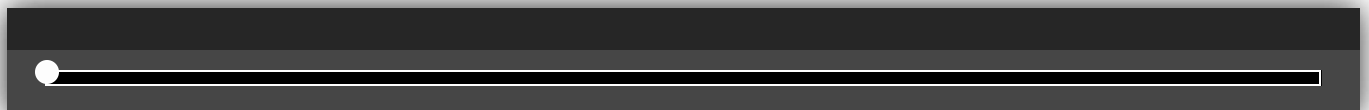
As the examples above illustrate, the nasal sound is only produced when **in/yn** or any of the other variations are either at the end of a word or followed by another consonant, other than another **m** or **n**. The words in the examples below do not have a nasal sound.

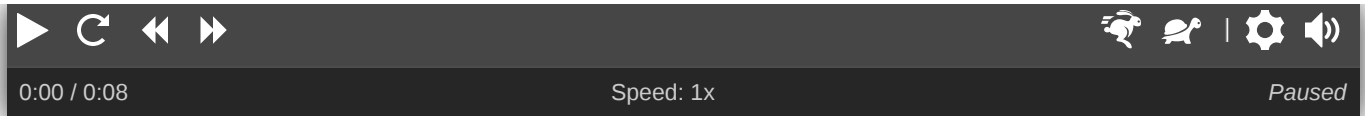


Maine, **climat**, **synonyme**, **reine**

[**œ**] or Nasal U

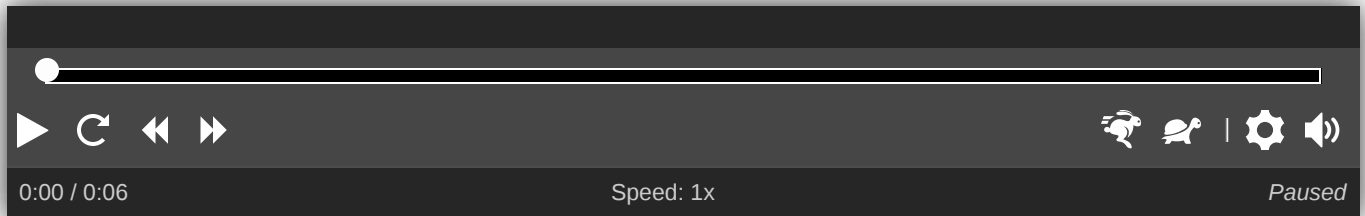
People from the northern region of France would say that this third nasal vowel can also be placed under the [**Ê**] sound category, but people from the south say that this is yet another nasal vowel, [**œ**], or nasal **u**. In order to make this sound, try contracting your mouth. There are two ways to write this sound: **un** and **um**.





parfum, **un**, brun, emprunt

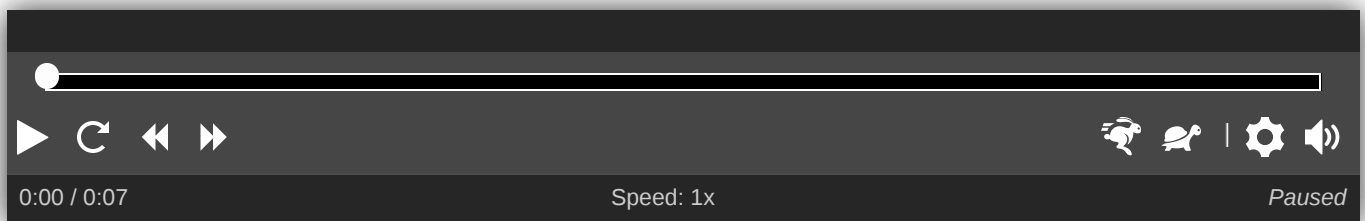
Once more, if **um** or **un** is followed by a vowel, then the sound is no longer nasal.



brume, lune, résumé, funiculaire

[\[õ\] or Nasal A](#)

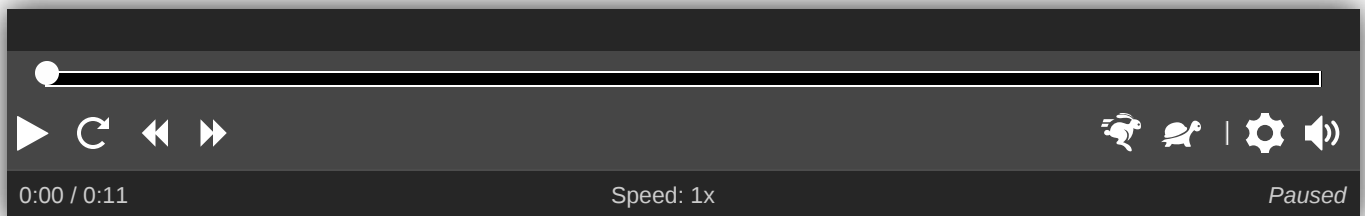
There are 5 ways to write this vowel sound: **am**, **an**, **en**, **em**, and very rarely **aon**.



lentement, pandémie, paon, jambe

When **m** or **n** is the last letter of a word, or when it is followed by another consonant (for example, **-nt**, **-mp**, **-ns**), we pronounce a nasal vowel, as in **faim**, **pain**, **bon**, **champ**, **tante**, **penser**.

When **m**, **mm**, **n**, or **nn** are followed by a vowel, the consonant is pronounced.



même, comme, ami, une, bonne, banane, panne

Additional Resources

- Watch this video for additional practice: [French Nasal Vowels](#).

French Around the World

The nasal vowels are pronounced differently in the south of France and in Québec. Both regions have a fourth nasal vowel, the **un/um** that they distinguish from **in/im**. This fourth nasal vowel is no longer pronounced in Parisian French. So, in standard French, there's no difference in pronunciation between the nasals **un/um** and **in/im**.

In Québec, the **un/um** nasals are pronounced like the vowel combination **eu** like in the word **feu**. This sound has disappeared in standard French. Also, in Québec, nasal vowels tend to be open while they are closed in European French.

Each southern French region preserves its own accent, but these southern accents have the nasal vowels in common. In the south, when a word ends with a nasal vowel, it is actually pronounced as a consonant, as the sound [ŋ]. This is the case, for example, for the word **demain**.

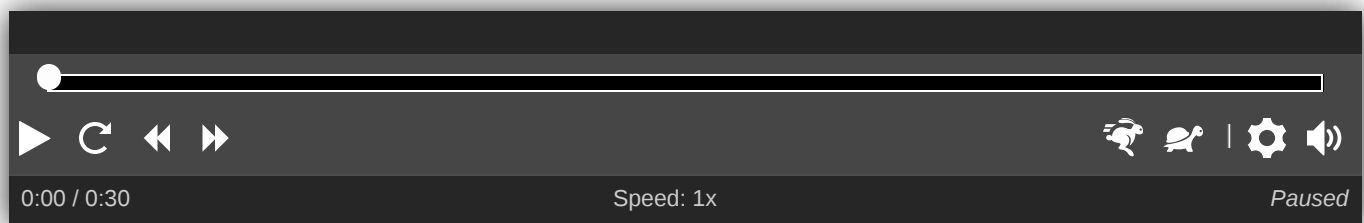
Resources:

- [Nasal pronunciation Québec versus France](#)
- [3 tips to recognize southern French accent](#)

Let's practice!

Activity A

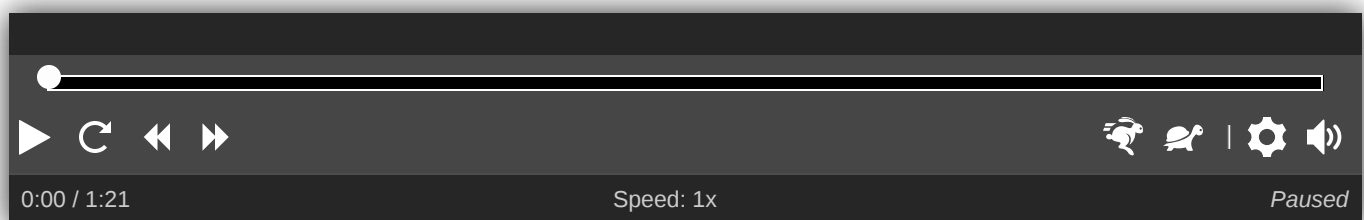
Do each of the words in the audio recording have a nasal vowel sound or not?



1. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
2. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
3. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
4. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
5. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
6. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
7. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
8. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
9. Is there a nasal vowel or not?
10. Is there a nasal vowel or not?

Activity B

Listen and repeat.



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

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10.2: The Vowel [ɑ̃] - AN, EN, AM, EM

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the vowels sound [ɑ̃].

Media Alternative

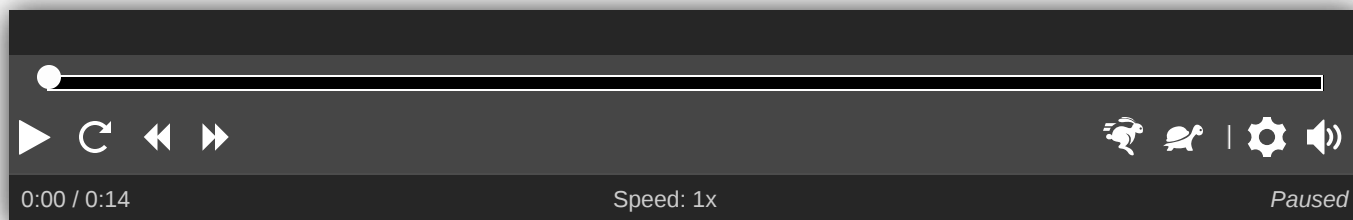
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

AN, AM, EN, AM = [ɑ̃]

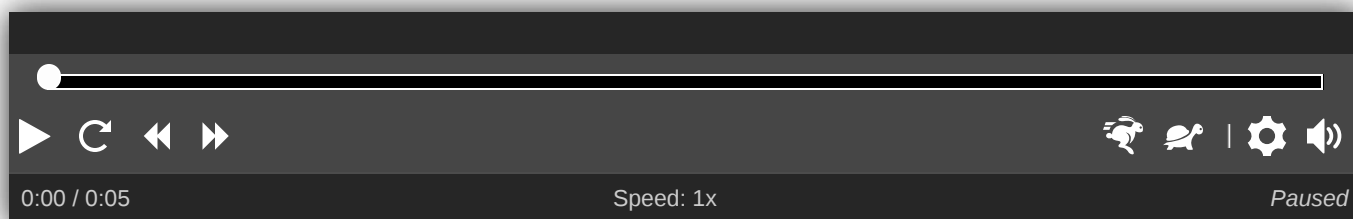
The graphemes **an**, **en**, **am** and **em** are pronounced [ɑ̃], as in:



dans, manger, français, penser, sens, champ, ensemble.

Exception 1

When preceded by a **y** or an **i**, the grapheme **-en** is not pronounced [ɑ̃]. **-ien** and **-yen** are pronounced [jɛ̃]

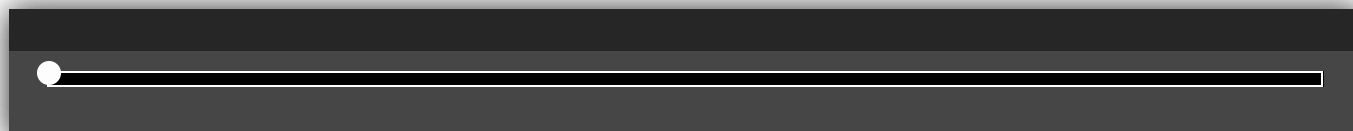


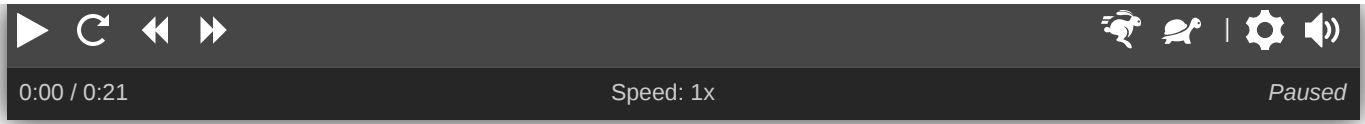
-ien and -yen

-ien	-yen
bien, chien	moyen

Exception 2

When followed by an additional **-n** and/or an **-e**, **-en**, **-am**, **-en**, and **-em** are no longer pronounced as nasal vowels. Compare the following:





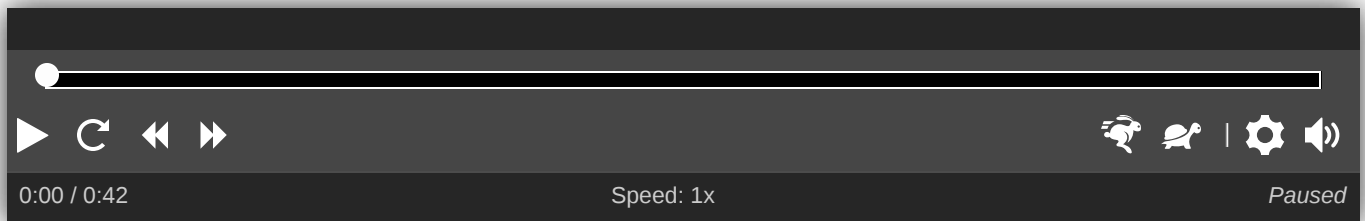
When nasal vowels are not nasal

Nasal vowel	Word with Nasal Sound	with added -e	with added -ne or -me
-an	paysan	paysane	panne
-am	jambe	âme	gramme
-en	prendre	gène	coréenne
-em	temps	sème	femme

Let's practice !

Activity A

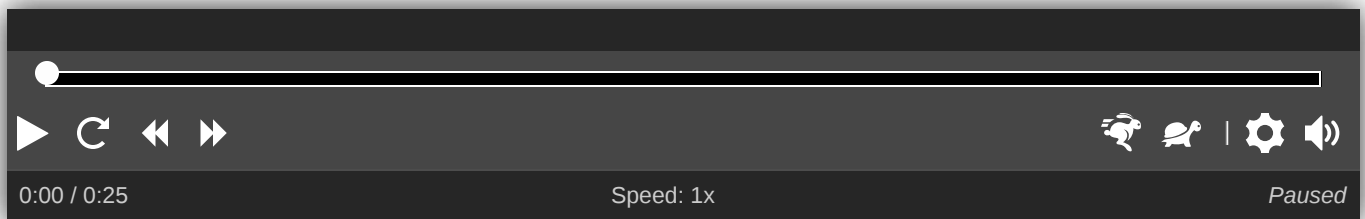
Listen and repeat.



1. quand, enfant, enchanté, France, manteau, an, dansant
2. champs, camp, amplifier, ampoule, lampe, chambre
3. lent, cent, tente, ensuite, entendre, en
4. temps, employé, décembre, tempête, embrasser

Activity B

Listen and repeat.

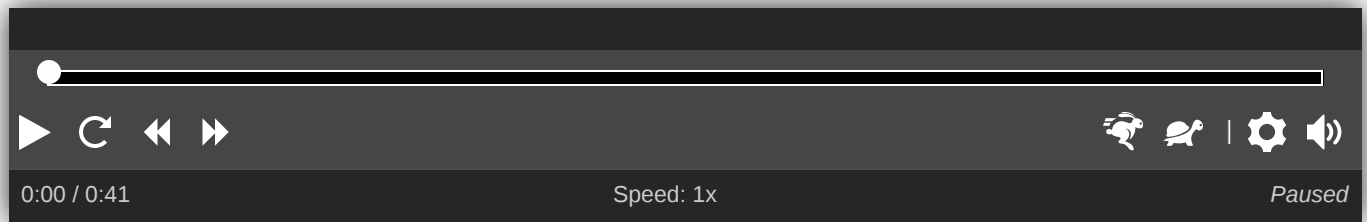


1. riant, rien
2. chant, chien
3. ment, mien
4. voyant, moyen
5. lent, lien
6. citant, citoyen

7. tente, tien
8. danse, doyen

Activity C

In this poem by Robert Desnos there are different spellings of the sound [Ǟ]. How many can you find?



Le Capitaine Jonathan,
Etant âgé de dix-huit ans
Capture un jour un pélican
Dans une île d'Extrême-orient,

Le pélican de Jonathan
Au matin, pond un oeuf tout blanc
Et il en sort un pélican
Lui ressemblant étonnamment.

Et ce deuxième pélican
Pond, à son tour, un oeuf tout blanc
D'où sort, inévitablement
Un autre, qui en fait autant.

Cela peut durer pendant très longtemps
Si l'on ne fait pas d'omelette avant.

— Robert Desnos (1900-1945)

10.2: The Vowel [Ǟ] - AN, EN, AM, EM is shared under a CC BY license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

10.3: The Vowel [ɔ̃]- ON, OM

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce the vowel sound [ɔ̃].

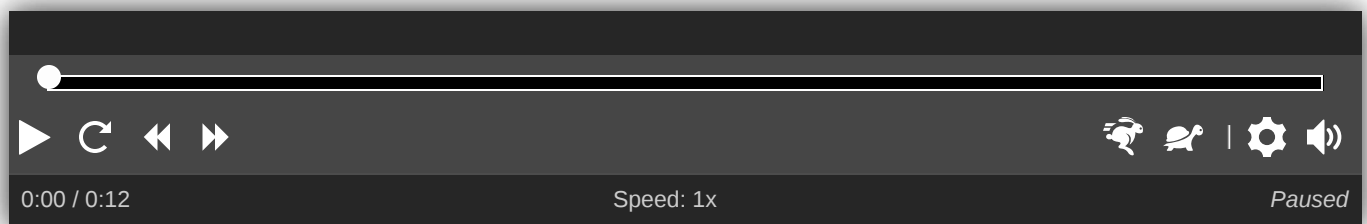
Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The graphemes **on** and **om** are pronounced [ɔ̃] as in:

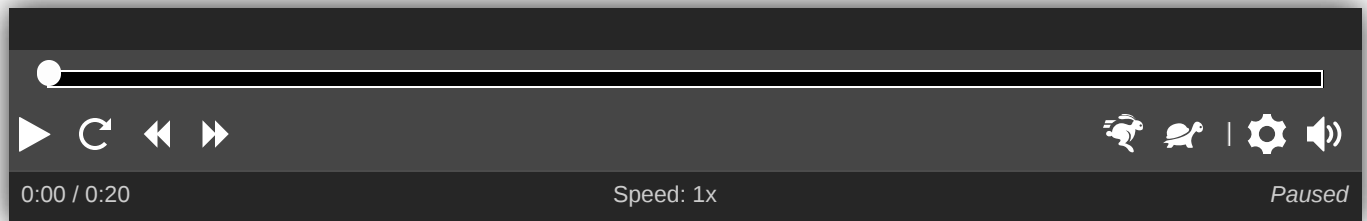


ton, **fond**, **salon**, **contrôle**

nom, **ombre**, **complet**, **tombe**

Exception

When **on** or **om** are followed by an **e** or when the consonants **n** and **m** are doubled up (e.g., **nn**, or **mm**), they are no longer nasal vowels. Compare for example:



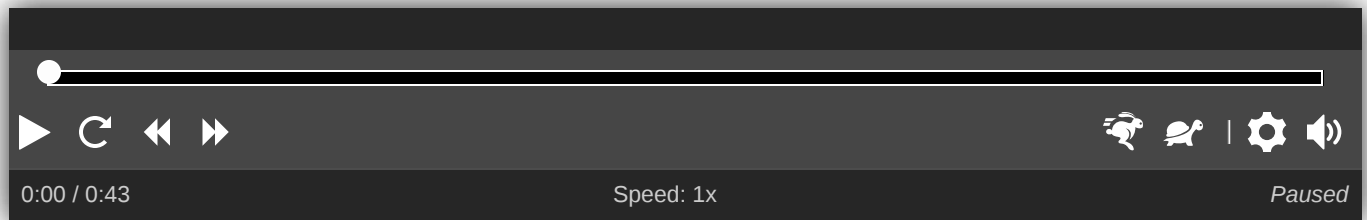
When nasal vowels are not nasal

Nasal Vowel	Word with Nasal Sound	with added -e	with double consonant (-nn, -mm)
on	ton	clone , drone	bonne , personne , connard
om	nom	dome , atome	somme , homme

Let's practice!

Activity A

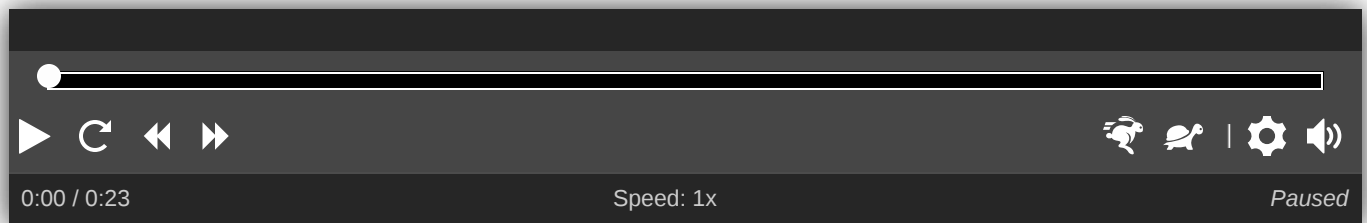
Listen and repeat.



1. ton, rond, monde, honte
2. leçon, maison, camion, question,
3. tonton, bonbon, songer, front
4. compte, complète, comble, tomber
5. comptabilité, nombre, pompier, considérer

Activity B

Listen and repeat.



1. bon, bonne
2. son, sonne
3. pom, pomme
4. nom, nommer
5. ton, tonnerre

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10.4: The Vowel [ɛ̃] - IN, IM, YM, YN, AIN, EIN, AIM, EIM and [œ̃]- UN, UM

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the vowel sounds [ɛ̃] and [œ̃].

Media Alternative

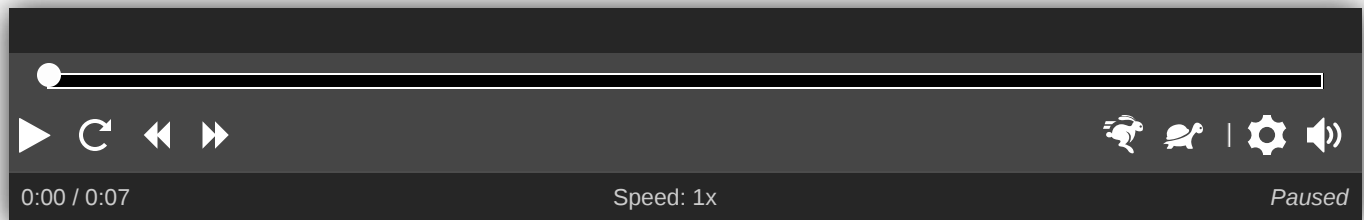
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

The Vowel [ɛ̃]

As a nasal vowel, the grapheme **in** is pronounced [ɛ̃] as in:



fin, vin, invité, mince

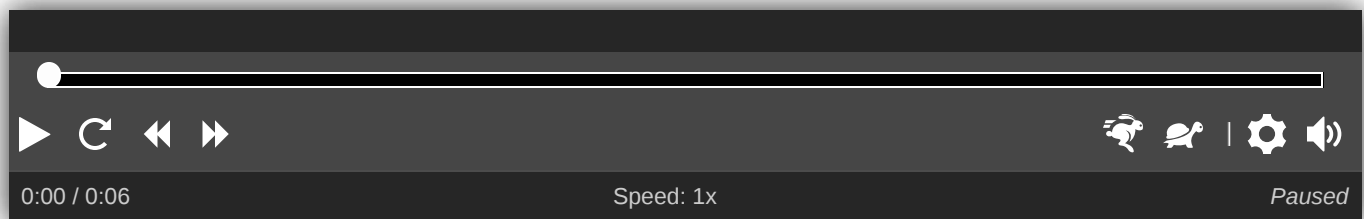
This sound can also be written with the following graphemes:

im, ym, yn, ain, ein, aim and eim

If any of these graphemes are followed by a vowel, they will no longer produce the nasal sound [ɛ̃].

In the case of **in, im, yn** and **ym**, the **i** and the **y** will be pronounced [i] and **n** and **m** will be pronounced [n] and [m]. There are exceptions to this. For example, in the words **gym** and **gymnase** the **ym** is not nasal and is pronounced [im].

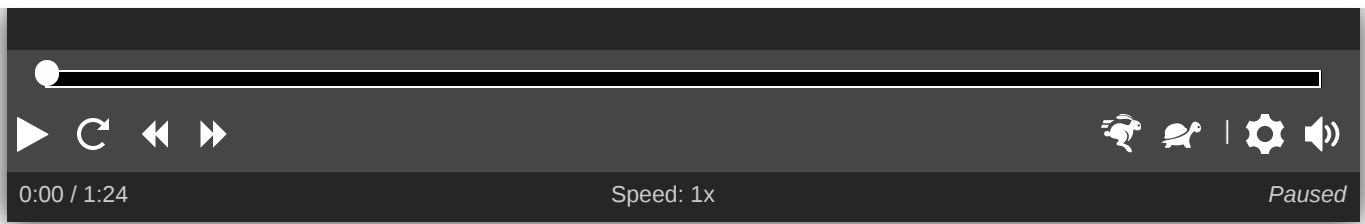
When followed by an **e**, **ain, ein, aim, and eim**, the **ai** or **ei** will be pronounced [ɛ̃] and the **n** and the **m** will be pronounced [n] and [m]:



saine, aime, pleine, seime

Sometimes, the **e** in **eim** will be part of a prefix and therefore take on a different pronunciation. Take, for example: **réimaginer**. In a word like **téléimpression**, the **im** will be nasal because it is followed by a consonant, because there's an **accent aigu** on **e**, and because **e** is part of the prefix **télé**.

Here is summary of these differences:



The nasal vowel [ɛ̃]

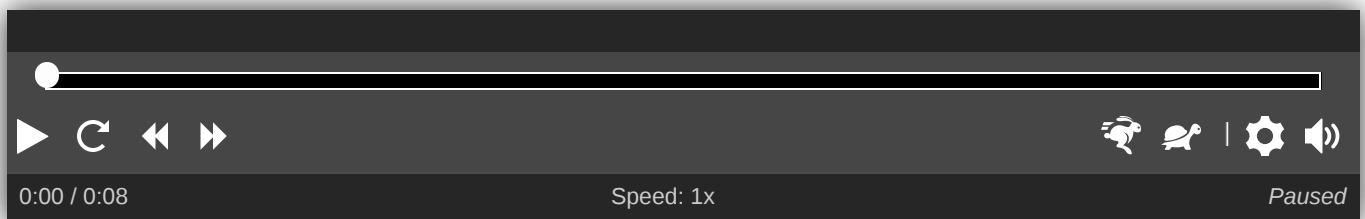
Graphemes pronounced [ɛ̃]	When they are nasal vowels (examples)	When they are not nasal vowels (examples)
in	vin , singe , individuel , printemps	fine , pinot , féline , innovant
im	impatient , grimper , simple , imbiber	imitation , grimace , immortel , régime
yn	synchronie , syntaxe , larynx	synapse , dynamique , cynique
ym	thym , symbole , symphonie	anonyme , gymnastique , antonyme
ain	pain , Alain , demain	Maine , centaine , cubaine
ein	plein , tein , atteint	peine , baleine , Seine
aim	faim , essaim	aime , vraiment
eim	Reims	seime

Ressources supplémentaires

Practice pronouncing [in](#), [ym](#), [aim](#), [ain](#), [ein](#), [eim](#).

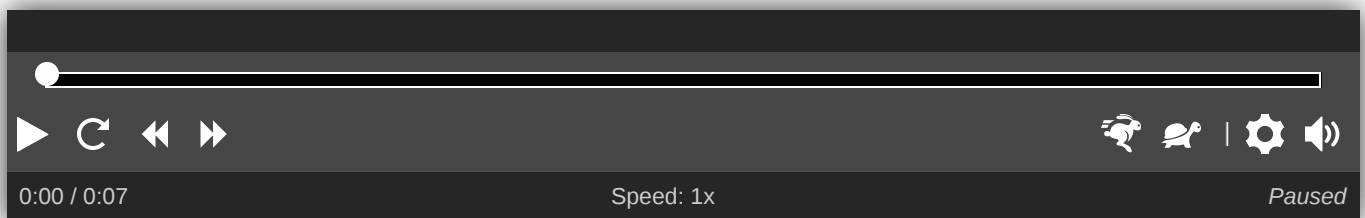
The vowel [œ]

When **un** or **um** is the end a word, or when it is followed by another consonant, it is pronounced [œ̃]:



un, **brun**, **lundi**, **humble**, **parfum**

When it is followed by a vowel, the sound is no longer nasal:

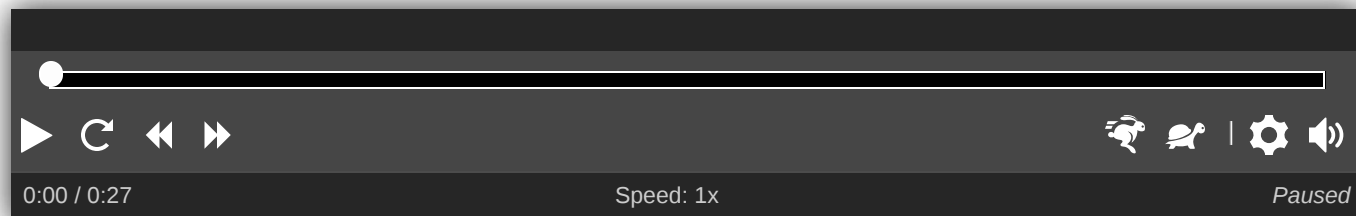


une, **brune**, **fumé**, **allumer**

Let's practice!

Activity

Listen and repeat.



1. un, une
2. brun, brune
3. l'un, lune
4. parfum, résumé
5. lundi, lunaire
6. plein, pleine
7. bain, laine
8. teint, peine

10.4: The Vowel [ɛ̃] - IN, IM, YM, YN, AIN, EIN, AIM, EIM and [œ̃]- UN, UM is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

10.5: Non-nasalization

Objectif

In this section, you will learn when nasal vowels become non-nasal.

Media Alternative

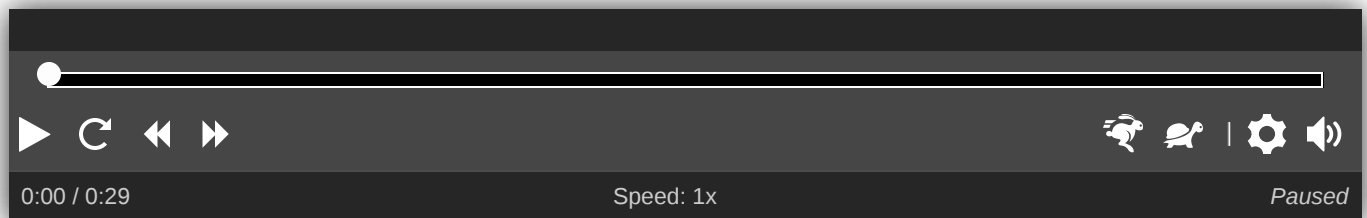
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's study!

As you've seen in this unit, certain graphemes produce nasal vowels in some contexts, but non-nasal vowels in other contexts.

Generally, when a nasal vowel — which has an **n** or an **m** at the end of its grapheme — loses its nasal vowel status as soon as a vowel (usually an **e**) follows it. The **n** and the **m** - which are normally silent are now pronounced. Whenever the **n** or the **m** are doubled up, the vowel will also cease to be nasal. Compare, for example, the following:



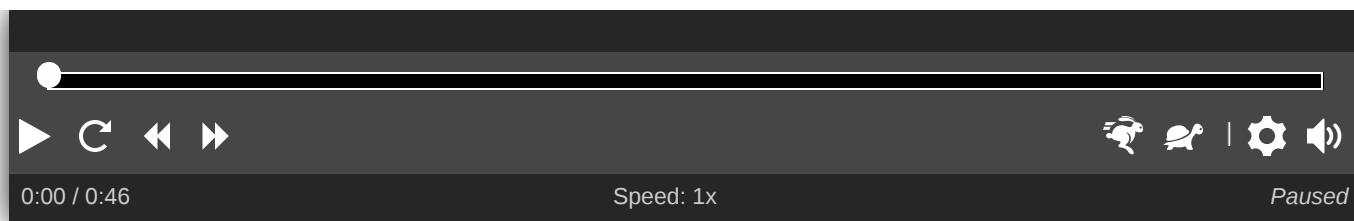
Nasal vs. non-nasal vowels

Nasal Vowels	Non-nasal vowels
flan	flane
un	une
brun	brune
bon	bonne
nom	nomme
fin	fine
plein	pleine
chien	chienne

Let's practice!

Activity

Listen and repeat



1. cousin, cousine
2. copain, copine
3. bon, bonne
4. plan, plane
5. matin, matinal
6. grain, graine
7. canadien, canadienne
8. sain, saine
9. ton, tonnerre
10. prénom, prénommer

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10.6: Let's Practice Nasal Sounds

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will have a chance to practice pronouncing nasal vowels.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

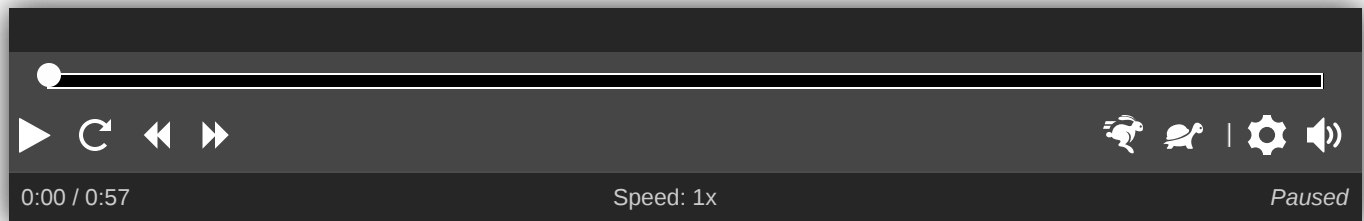
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's Go!

Let's practice!

Activity A

Listen and repeat.



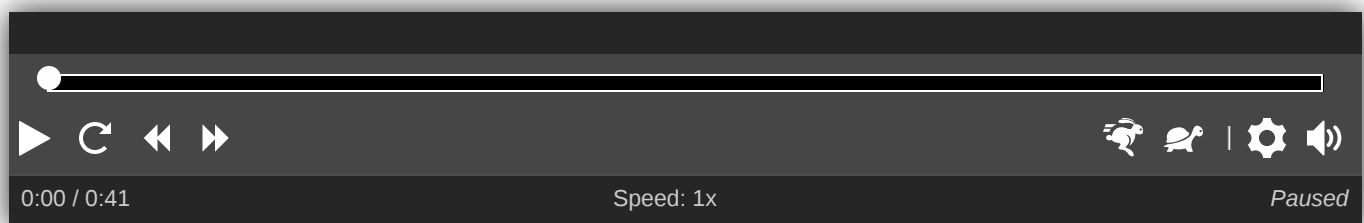
1. an / non / mont / dent / oncle / lent / blonde / onze / camp
2. dimanche / cochon / prison / entrée / boisson / poisson / français / confort
3. fin / vent / sang / bien / main / tendre / viande / simple / étrange
4. étreinte / silence / demain / sympa / enfer / interne / manger / entier / excellent

Activity B

Find the letters!

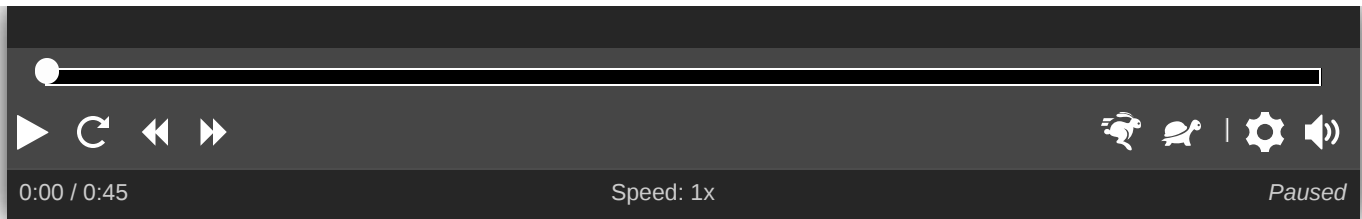
Your professor will pronounce a nasal sound. Choose all the words in each of the lists with that sound.

A.



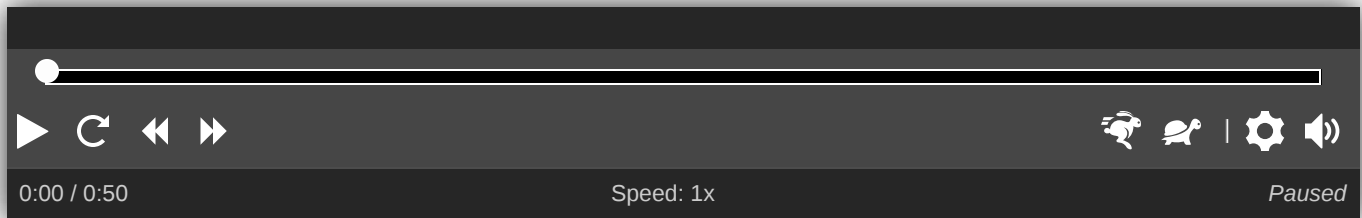
1. ton / rond / dans / train / monde / honte / bonne / vendre
2. leçon / maison / voisin / camion / question / changer / ceinture
3. monter / blanchir / sincère / tomber / temps

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.



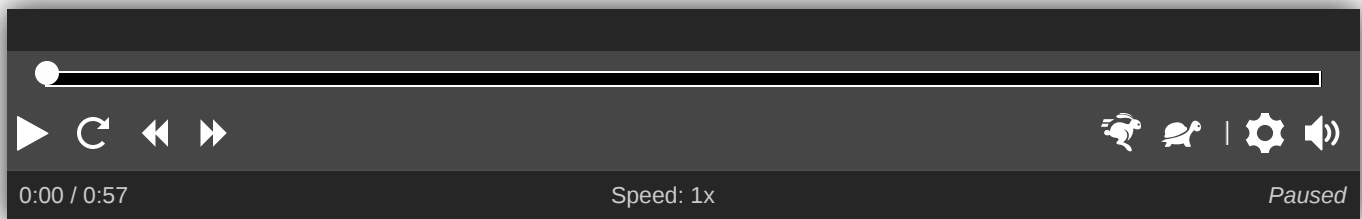
1. sans / un / bain / sont / bien / loin / entre / cinq / mince
2. prenons / devient / cousin / douzaine / soudain / scandale / honteux
3. peinture / planter / complète / coincer / bronzer / symbolique

Activity C

Rhymes. Choose the words that rhyme in each list and put them together.

Example: **mon / grand / un prince / pont / mince / vent** =>

Write : **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

"Prononciation de « an », « on » et « in »" by William Carrasco & Shahrzad Zahedi is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#) / A derivative from [Sons et lettres](#) by Stephen Walton.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Open vs. Closed Syllables and Vowels

11.1: Open vs. Closed Syllables

11.2: High Vowels (Closed Vowels)

11.3: Mid Vowels (Mid-Open and Mid-Closed Vowels)

11.4: Low Vowels (Open Vowels)

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11.1: Open vs. Closed Syllables

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn the difference between open and closed syllables.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

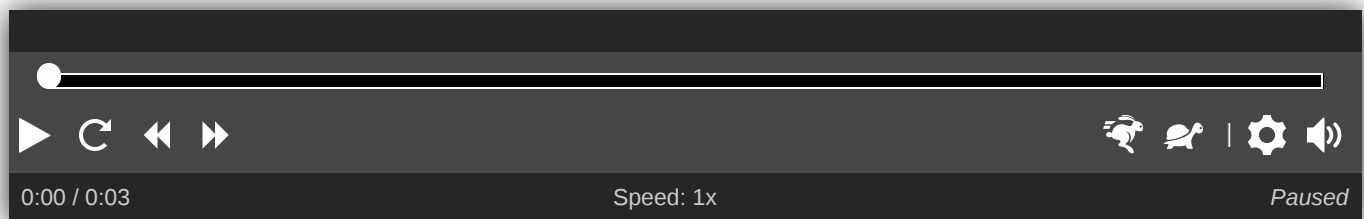
Let's get started!

Open vs. closed syllables

The difference between open and closed syllables in French is based on the sound of the syllable, not the letters:

- **Open syllables** end in a vowel sound, such as in the word **petit**. (**t** is silent)
- **Closed syllables** end in a consonant sound, such as in the word **avec**. (**c** is pronounced)

Compare for example:



pot (pot) vs. **pote** (buddy, friend)

The **t** in **pot** is silent, so **pot** is a one-syllable word ending in the vowel sound [o]. Therefore, the **o** is more closed and is pronounced [o].

Pote ends with the sound [t], so the **o** is more open and is pronounced [ɔ].

The distinction between open and closed syllables is important for a number of reasons, including the "Loi de position" and the unstable "E". The "Loi de position" is a tendency for mid-open variants to be found in closed syllables, and mid-closed variants to be found in open syllables. This tendency is more pronounced at the ends of words.

In French, only the last syllable of a word can be stressed, or accented. This means that it is a little longer than the other syllables.

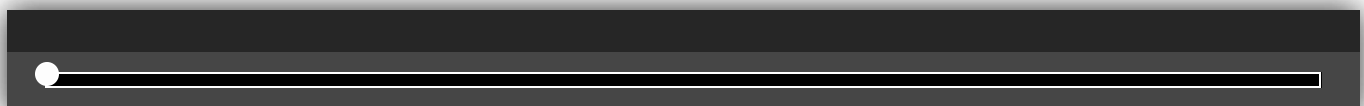
✎ Additional Resources

You can also [watch this video](#) that provides many examples of open and closed vowels.

Let's practice!

Activity

Listen and repeat





0:00 / 0:17

Speed: 1x

Paused

1. vœu, œuf
2. beau, botte
3. jeu, jeune
4. son, sonne

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11.2: High Vowels (Closed Vowels)

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the pronunciation of high vowels (closed vowels).

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

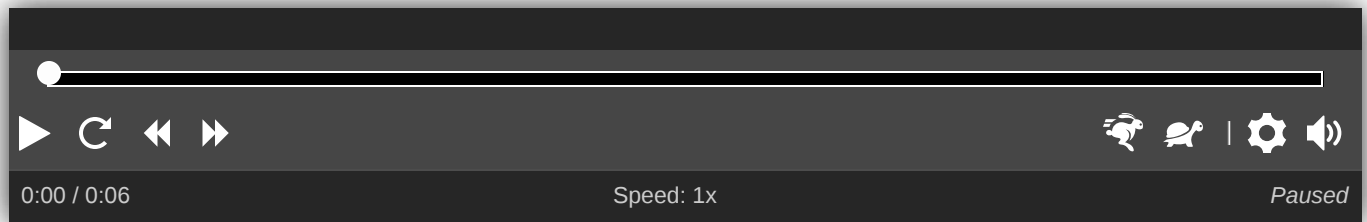
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

High Vowels ([i], [u], [y])

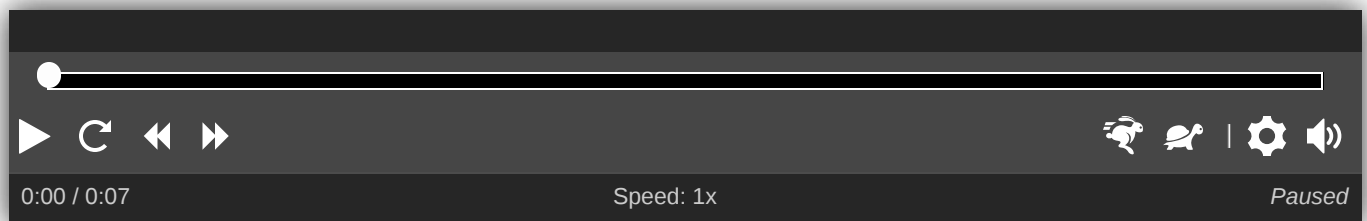
High vowels — or "closed vowels" — are sounds produced with the tongue close to the roof of the mouth and the passage of air through your mouth is more closed. French has three high vowels: [i], [u], and [y]

[i] is high (closed), front, unrounded and oral



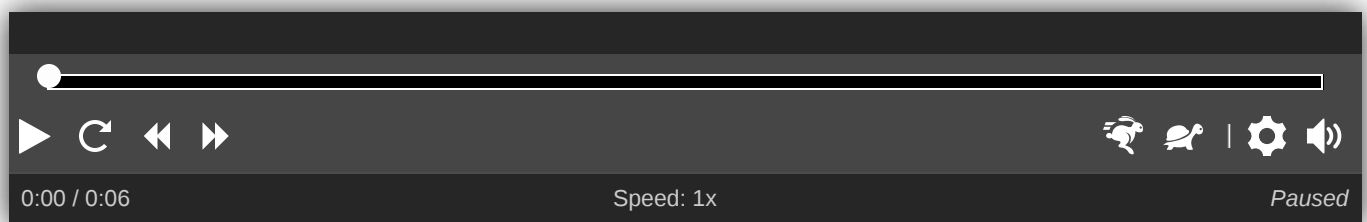
dix, stylo, minitel, horrible

[u] is high (closed), back and oral



douce, nous, fou, bonjour, cours

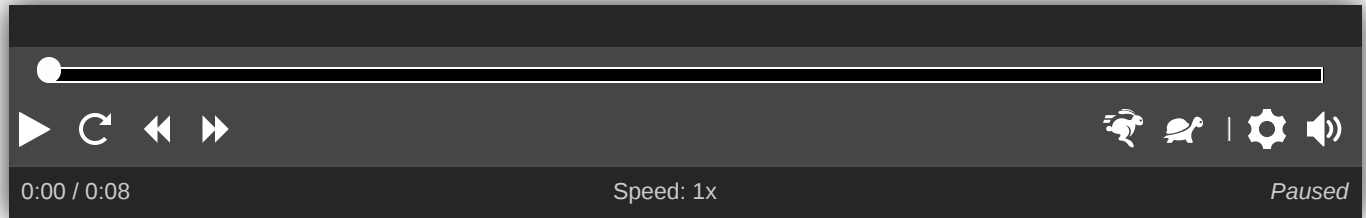
[y] is high (closed), front, rounded and oral



sucre, tu bûcher, mur

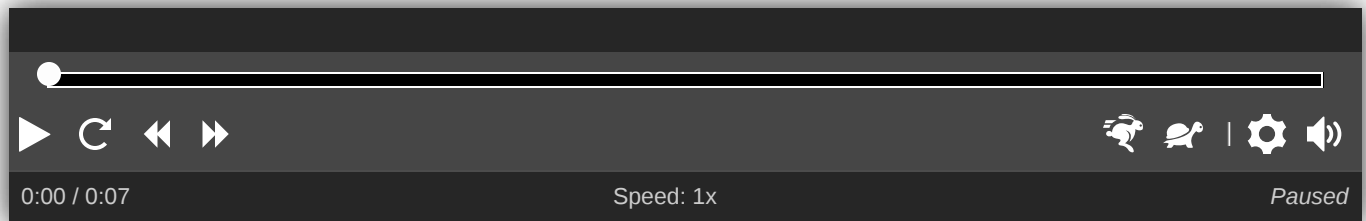
High semi-vowels ([w], [ɥ], [j])

[w] is very high, back, rounded and non-syllabic. It must precede a vowel and is never found at the end of a word:



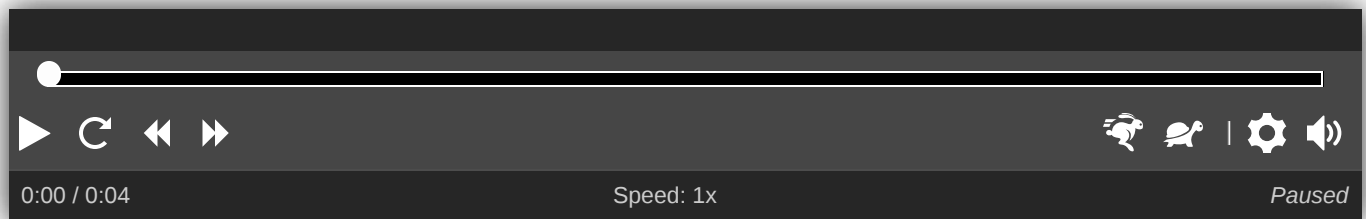
ouest [wɛst], oiseau [wazo], oui [wi] jouer [ʒwe]

[ɥ] is very high, front, rounded and non-syllabic. It must precede a vowel and is never found at the end of a word:



suis [sɥi], nuit [nɥi], nuage [nɥaʒ], fruit [frɥi].

[j] is very high, front, unrounded and non-syllabic. It must appear beside a vowel and cannot form the centre of a syllable:



taille [taj], yeux [jø], dieu [djø].

Here is a summary of high, mid and low vowels:

High, Mid and Low Vowels

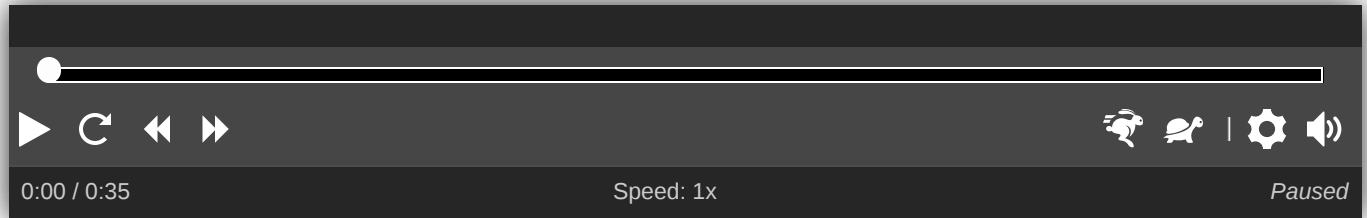
Vowel type	Low Vowels (Open vowels)			Mid-vowels (Mid-open)			Mid-vowels (Mid-closed)			High Vowels (Closed vowels)		
Oral vowels	[ɑ]	[a]	[ɔ]	[ə]	[œ]	[ɛ]	[o]	[ø]	[e]	[u]	[y]	[i]
Nasal vowels	[ã]		[ɔ̃]		[œ̃]	[ɛ̃]						
Semi-vowels										[w]	[ɥ]	[j]

Whether or not a vowel is pronounced more or less openly also depends on context.

Let's practice !

Activity A

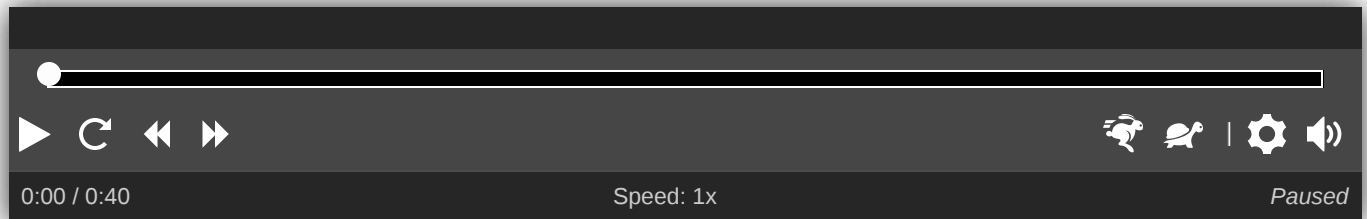
Ou vs. u. Listen and repeat.



1. tu / nous / rue / loup / mur / muse / poule / bus / tour / rhume / sûre
2. début / voyou / toutou / voiture / virgule / autour / futur / sucre
3. culture / Toulouse / troubadour

Activity B

U vs. i. Listen and repeat.



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

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11.3: Mid Vowels (Mid-Open and Mid-Closed Vowels)

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the pronunciation of mid vowels.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Mid-vowels ([e], [ɛ], [ə], [ø], [œ], [o], [ɔ])

Mid-vowels — aka "mid-closed" & "mid-open vowels" — are articulated with the tongue in the middle of the mouth (in terms of height). The passage of air through your mouth is more open than with a high vowel. There are two mid positions: mid-**closed** (higher tongue) and mid-**open** (lower tongue). Three pairs of French mid-vowels exist:

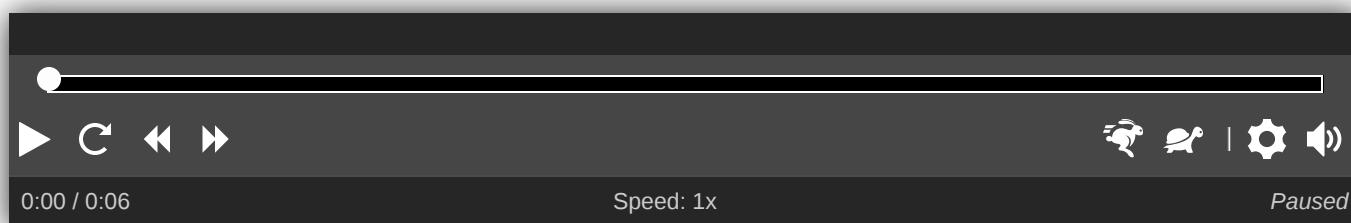
Oral Mid-vowels

French Oral Mid-vowels			
Front			Back
	unrounded	rounded	rounded
mid-closed	[e], [ə]	[ø]	[o]
mid-open	[ɛ]	[œ]	[ɔ]

Two kinds of O

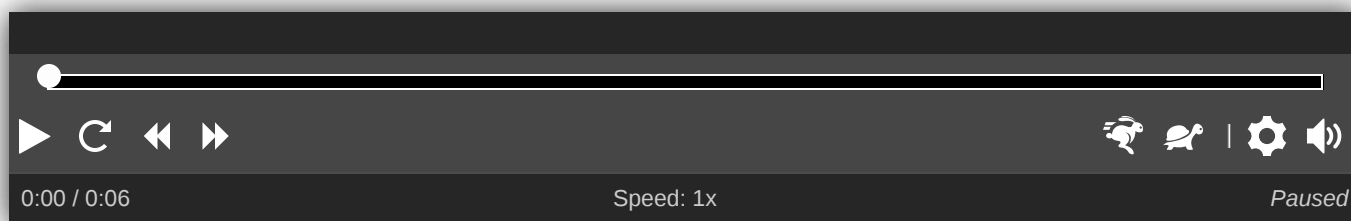
As you can see in the chart, there are two kinds of O:

[ɔ] is mid-open, back, rounded and oral:



mort, folle, bonne, possible

[o] is mid-closed, back, rounded and oral:

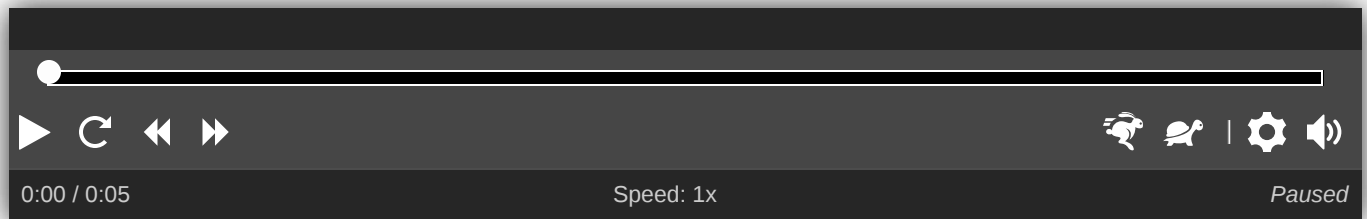


eau, auto, faux, bientôt

Three kinds of E

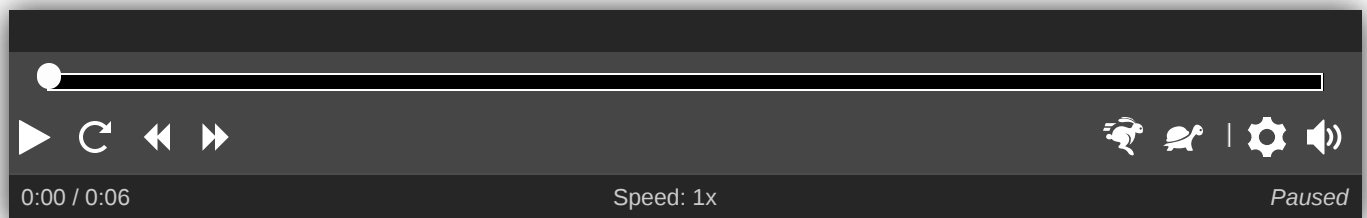
There are three kinds of E:

[ə] is mid-closed, front, (usually) unrounded and oral:



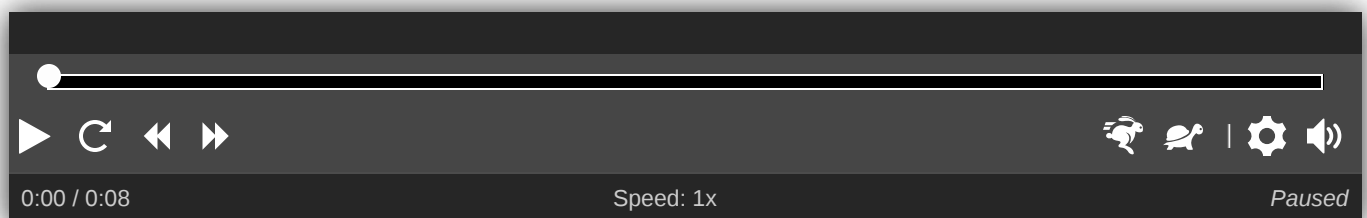
je, que, fenêtre, devoir

[ɛ] is mid-closed, front, unrounded and oral:



bête, gèle, violette, fenêtre

[e] is mid-open, front, unrounded and oral:



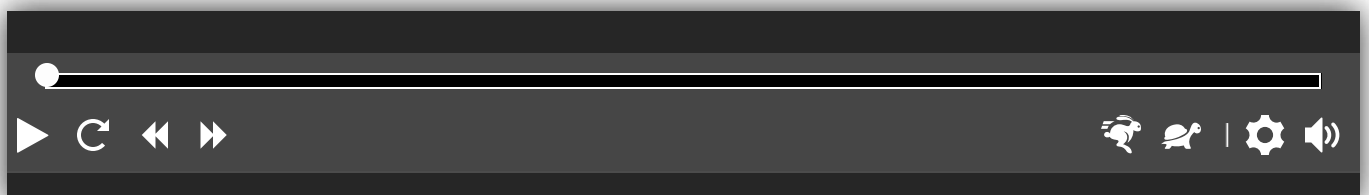
dé, poupée, éléphant, nez, aller, pied

Learn more about the [Letter e in Unit 7](#).

Nasal Mid-vowels

Nasal mid-vowels include the mid-closed [ɔ̃], and [œ̃], and the mid-open [ɛ̃]. Here are some examples:

[ɔ̃] is mid-open, back, rounded and nasal:



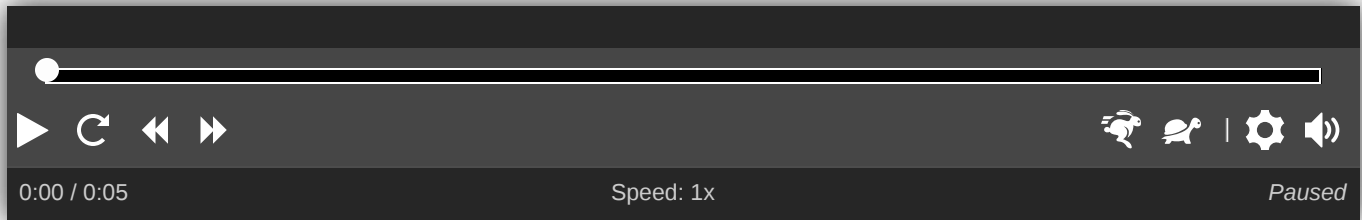
0:00 / 0:04

Speed: 1x

Paused

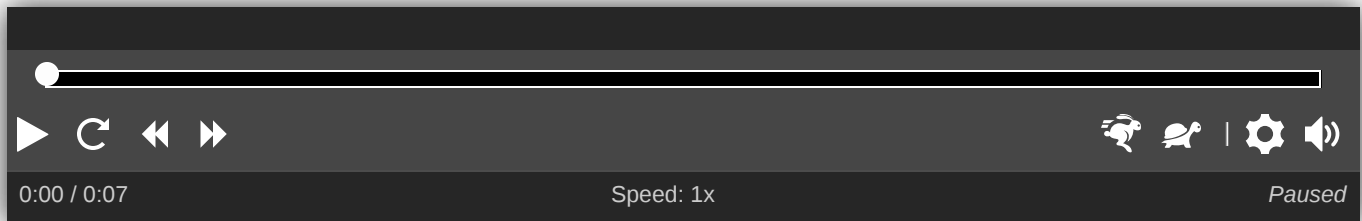
on, bonbon, tomber

[œ] is mid-open, back, unrounded and nasal:



un, lundi, parfum

[ɛ̃] is mid-closed, back, unrounded and nasal:



fin, malin, main, impossible, sympa

Nasal Vowels

French Oral Mid-vowels			
	Front		Back
	unrounded	rounded	
Open-mid	[ɛ̃]	[œ]	[ɔ̃]
Open			[ɑ̃]

Here is a summary of high, mid and low vowels:

High, Mid and Low Vowels

Vowel type	Low Vowels (Open vowels)			Mid-vowels (Mid-open)			Mid-vowels (Mid-closed)			High Vowels (Closed vowels)		
Oral vowels	[ɑ]	[a]	[ɔ]	[ə]	[œ]	[ɛ]	[o]	[ø]	[e]	[u]	[y]	[i]
Nasal vowels	[ã]		[ɔ̃]		[œ̃]	[ɛ̃]						
Semi-vowels										[w]	[ɥ]	[j]

Whether or not a vowel is pronounced more or less openly also depends on context.

Let's practice!

Activity

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11.4: Low Vowels (Open Vowels)

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn about the pronunciation of low vowels (open vowels).

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Low vowels ([ɑ], [a], [ã])

Two kinds of A

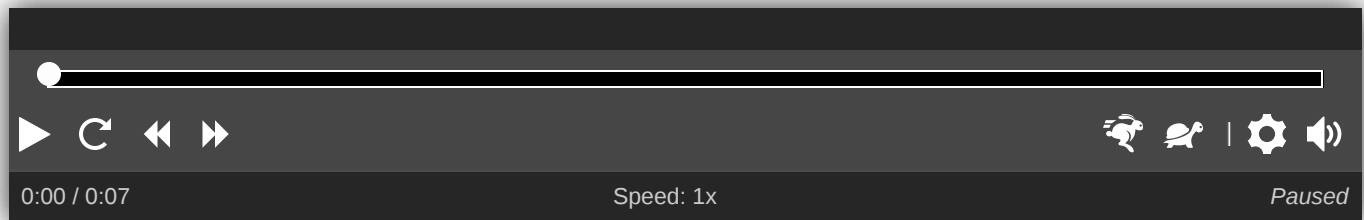
French low vowels — or open vowels — are vowel sounds produced with the tongue positioned low in the mouth. Unlike high vowels, where the tongue is closer to the roof of the mouth, low vowels involve a more open oral jaw which enlarges the mouth's resonating chamber. The primary low vowels in French are [a] and [ɑ].

In modern French, these two types of A can be indistinguishable, and therefore not absolutely important to learn unless is in important for a certain French dialect. This distinction is more important in English.

[a] is low (open) with your tongue back, like the **a** in the English words **father** and **calm**.

[ɑ] is low (open) with your tongue forward towards your teeth, like in the English words **accident**, **dad** and **at**.

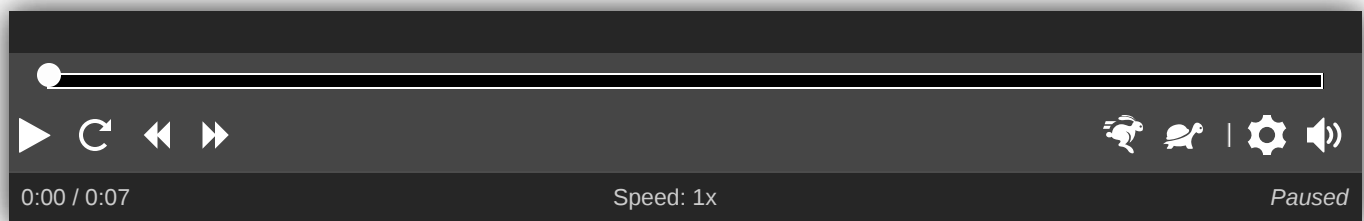
You can sometimes hear this variation in the French a, but not always. Here are some examples:



bas, pâte, chat, attaque,

Nasal low vowel [ã]

The vowel [ã] is low, back, unrounded and nasal:



plan, chanter, temps, penser

How open or closed a vowel is pronounced is a question of degree: some are more open or closed than others.

Here is a summary of high, mid and low vowels:

High, Mid and Low Vowels

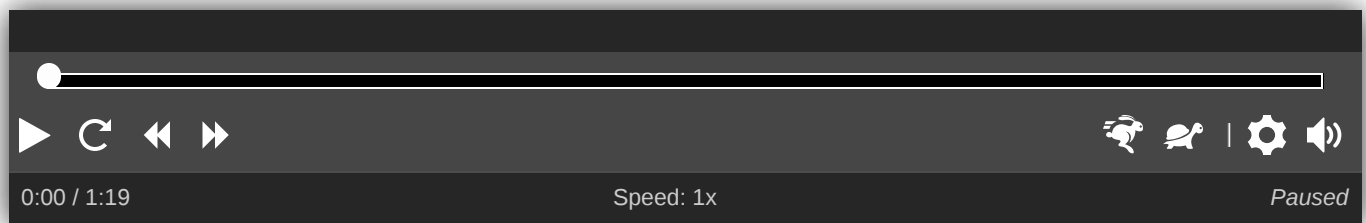
Vowel type	Low Vowels (Open vowels)			Mid-vowels (Mid-open)			Mid-vowels (Mid-closed)			High Vowels (Closed vowels)		
Oral vowels	[ɑ]	[a]	[ɔ]	[ə]	[æ]	[ɛ]	[o]	[ø]	[e]	[u]	[y]	[i]
Nasal vowels	[ã]		[ɔ̃]		[œ̃]	[ɛ̃]						
Semi-vowels										[w]	[ɥ]	[j]

Whether or not a vowel is pronounced more or less openly also depends on context.

[Let's practice!](#)

[Activity](#)

Low vowel à vs. mid vowel è. Listen and repeat.



1. chat / bras / caisse / casse / salle / belle / glace / plage / neige
2. guerre / repas / retard / beau-frère / fromage / prochaine / dommage
3. elle / tasse / chère / beige / sage / mettre / règle / page / tête / fête
4. gare / chef / chaise / bases / maître / été / déjà / promesse / courage

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Prosody- Linking Syllables

[12.1: Linking Consonants and Vowels](#)

[12.2: Contractions and Elisions](#)

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12.1: Linking Consonants and Vowels

📌 Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to link consonants and vowels between syllables.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

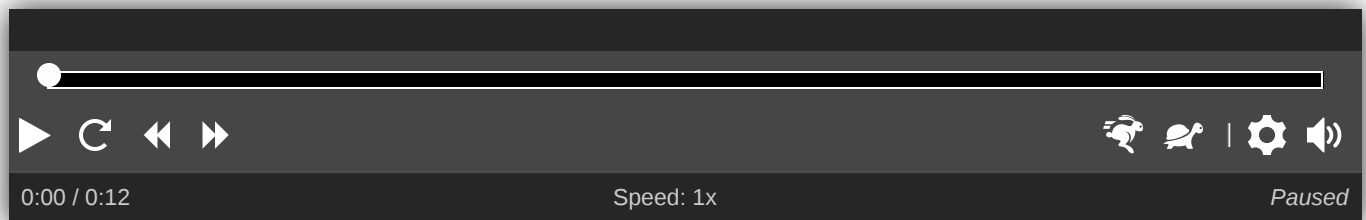
In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Linking Syllables

In French, the vowel is the core of a syllable. A syllable can contain multiple consonants and semi-vowels, but only one vowel. In the word **magasin**, for example, we have 3 syllables: **ma** + **ga** + **sin**. As we see in this example, French generally favors open syllables, i.e., syllables that end with a vowel sound.

In French words and sentences, a consonant is almost always pronounced with the vowel that follows it. For example, when the single-syllables like **il** [il] or **haute** [ot] are followed by another syllable which is starting with a vowel, the ending consonants will attach themselves to the additional vowel:

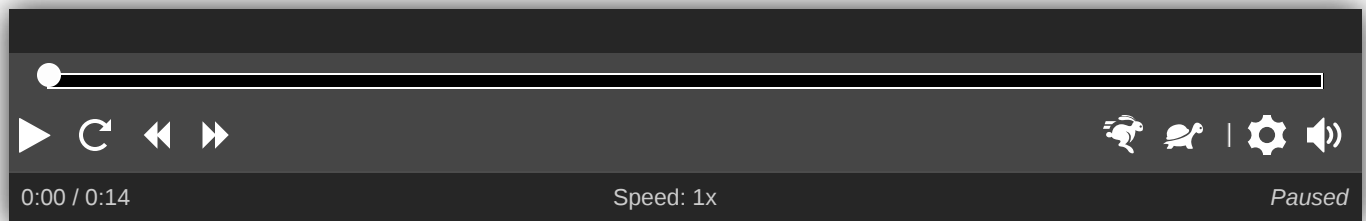


il [il] → ilôt [i lo]

haute [ot] → hauteur [o tœr]

tombe [tɔ̃mb] → tomber [tɔ̃m be]

Silent consonants at the end of a syllable may be pronounced when followed by a vowel (called a [liaison](#)). For example:

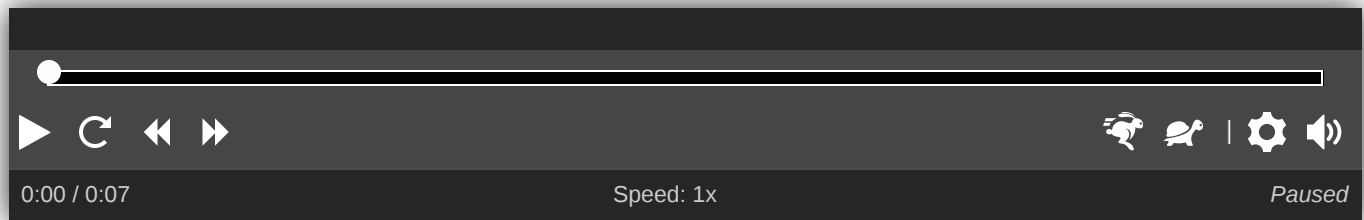


un [ɛ̃] → un [ɛ̃] + arbre [aʁbʁ] = un arbre [ɛ̃ naʁbʁ]

petit [pəti] → petit [pəti] + homme [ɔm] = petit homme [pəti tɔm]

Consonantal Linking

As we've seen above, a consonant pronounced at the end of a word forms a syllable with the initial vowel of the following word:

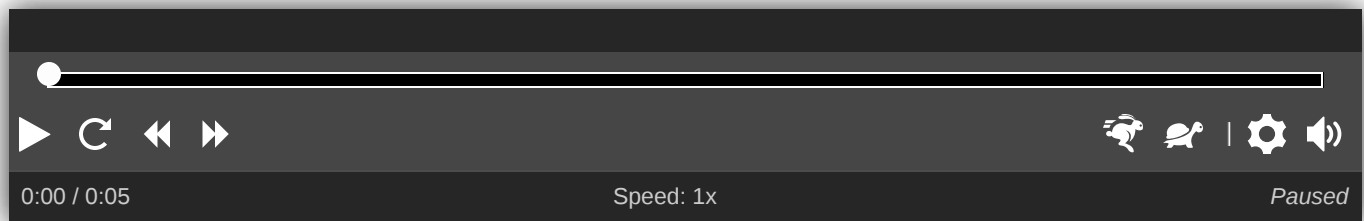


entre elle [ɑ̃ trɛl]

où vont-ils ? [u vɔ̃ til]

pour eux [pu rø]

Special case: the letter **f** in the word **neuf** (nine) will change pronunciation when linked to a vowel after it. For example:



neuf [nœf] →

neuf ans [nœ vɑ̃]

neuf heures [nœ vøʁ]

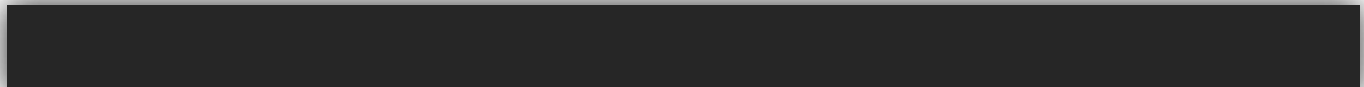
French vs. English

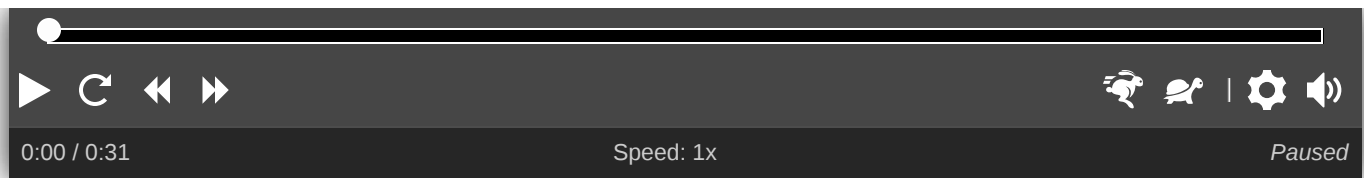
In French there are less "ruptures" - or pauses - between words than English. In certain cases, a strong division is required (as is the case with the aspirated **h** in **la haine**), but most words just flow together. In English, however, the duration of these ruptures (or pauses) can be very important. In the following table, the words in the right column have a longer pause between words, which helps the listener distinguish them from the words in the left column.

Differences in pauses between words

Column 1	Column 2
it stops	its tops
an A	a nay
that stall	that's all
it stank	it's tank

In French, the words on the left sound just like the ones on the right. Any differences between them are much more subtle than differences we see in the English examples above. Because of this, context (i.e., the words that come before and after them in a text) is needed to distinguish them.



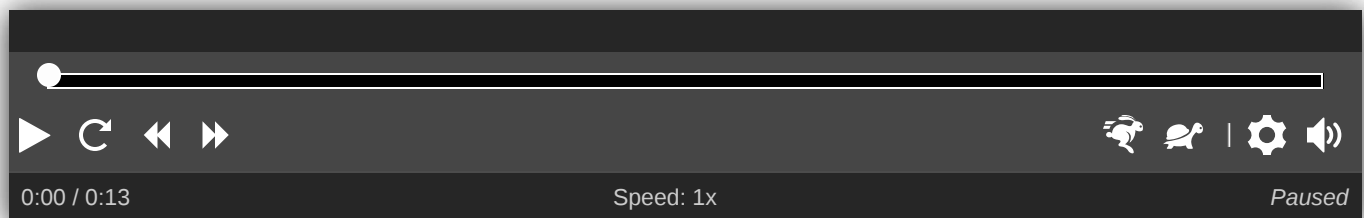


Passages that sounds the same

Column 1	Column 2
il a mille pieds	Il a mis le pied
la croix	l'accroît
qui l'aime	qu'il aime
l'abouche	la bouche

Vocalic Linking

When two consecutive vowels appear in neighboring syllables, we have vocalic linking.



agréable → agré[^]able.

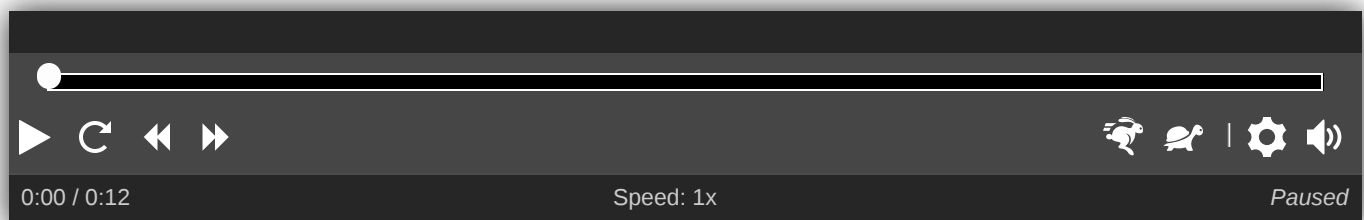
géant → gé[^]ant.

aéroport → a[^]éroport.

il va[^]appeler

j'en veux[^]un

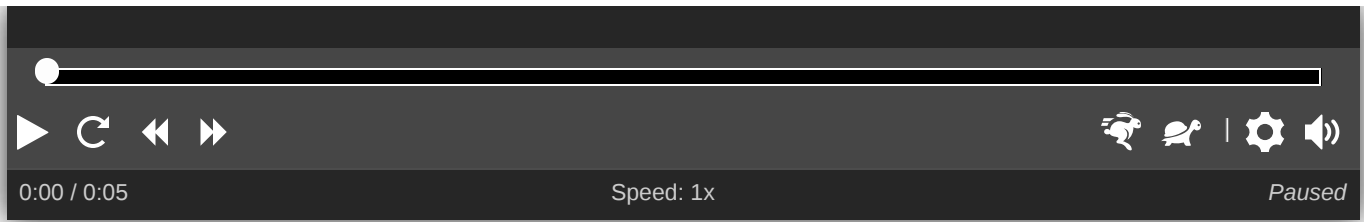
Even though the vowels flow together, they must still be clearly pronounced to avoid confusion between passages that sound alike. Compare, for example:



j'ai[^]été (I was) vs. j'étais (I used to be)

elle a[^]accepté (she accepted) vs. elle acceptait (she used to accept)

When a dieresis or **tréma** (¨) is placed on top of an vowel it means that that particular vowel must be pronounced distinctly and not merged or blended with surrounding vowels. For example:

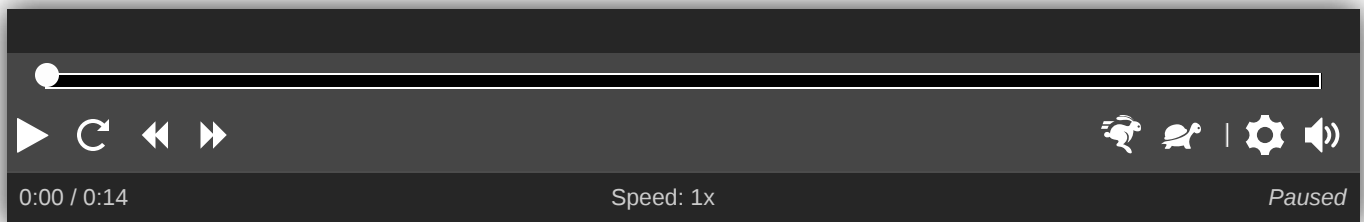


Haïti, égoïste, Noël

In certain cases, two words will form an elision: the merging of two words — one ending with a vowel followed by one beginning with a vowel — joined by an apostrophe. A word like **je** (I) will merge with the verb **ai** (have) to form **j'ai** (I have). The **e** [ə] sound will disappear and the remaining **j** [ʒ] will be attached to **ai** [ɛ] to form [ʒɛ]

Some elisions appear in both oral speech and writing, while others are purely oral.

Examples of written & oral elisions include:

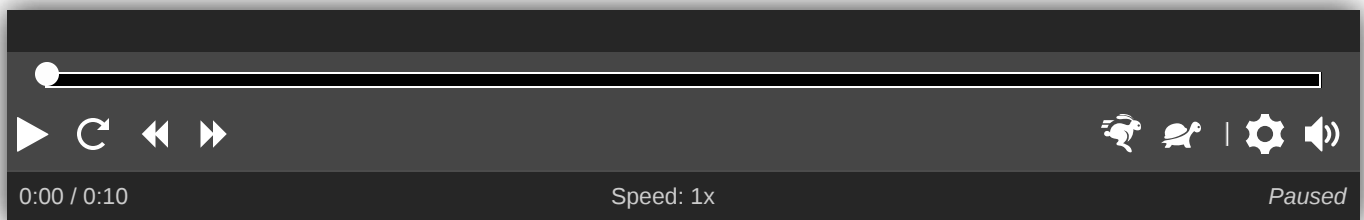


le + aime => l'aime

que + est => qu'est

ne + irons => n'irons

Examples of purely oral elisions (only written when trying to represent oral speech) include:



tu + as => t'as

je ne sais pas => j'n'sais pas

Structure : Élisions et contractions

Contractions

Contractions

contractions with de + definite article	contractions with à + definite article
de + le = du	à + le = au
de + les = des	à + les = aux

Élisions

Written and spoken elisions

Articles, pronoms	Élisions	Exemples
le, la	l' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Elle est à l' hôpital.
je	j' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	J' étudie le français.
me	m' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Ils m' ont dit.
te	t' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Je t' aime.
ne	n' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Il n' y a pas de papier.
de	d' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Un verre d' eau.
que	qu' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Qu' est-ce que c'est ?
se	s' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Il s' appelle Louis.

Pour en [savoir plus](#).

Let's practice

Activity

Practice pronouncing the following.

1. toujours
2. chaleur
3. littérature
4. J'ai été malade / j'étais malade.
5. Naïf
6. Neuf oeufs.
7. aérobic
8. désagréable
9. Il a acheté des légumes. / il achetait des légumes.
10. Deux enfants

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12.2: Contractions and Elisions

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to make contractions and elisions.

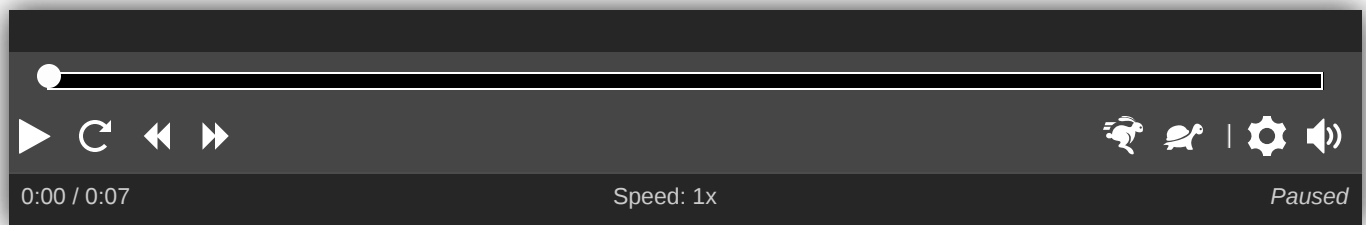
Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

Contractions



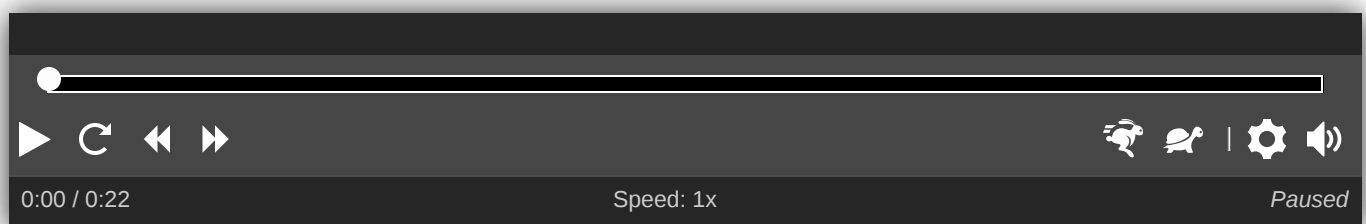
Contractions

contractions with de + definite article	contractions with à + definite article
de + le = du	à + le = au
de + les = des	à + les = aux

Elisions

Articles and Elided Pronouns

Here is a listed of all the articles and pronouns that are elided in written French:

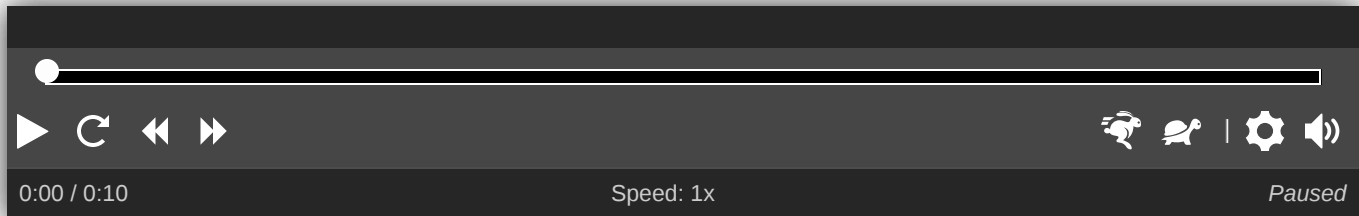


Written and spoken elisions

Articles, pronouns	Elisions	Examples
le, la	l' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Elle est à l' hôpital.
je	j' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	J' étudie le français.
me	m' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Ils m' ont dit.
te	t' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Je t' aime.
ne	n' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Il n' y a pas de papier.
de	d' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Un verre d' eau.
que	qu' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Qu' est-ce que c'est ?
se	s' [a,e,i,o,u,y,h]	Il s' appelle Louis.

You would never contract **Elle + est**

Elisions often occur in oral speech, but they are never written down unless the writing is meant to represent actual speech (such as in a novel). For example:



Tu aimes la musique ? => **T'**aimes la musique ?

Tu as vu le film ? => **T'**as vu le film ?

Additional Resources

Watch this video to review contractions and elisions: [article contracté](#), [article élide](#)

French Around the World

In informal or spoken Québécois French, some lapsed vowels are omitted, combining two consonants. One example is **t'sais** instead of **tu sais**.

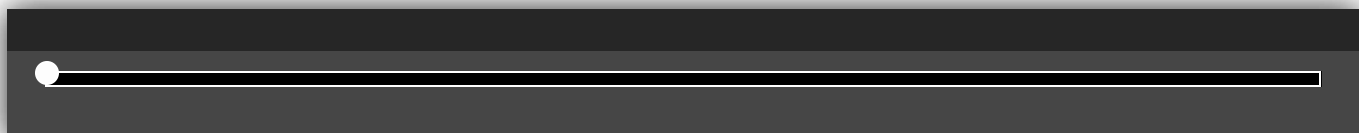
Resources:

- [Les contractions extrêmes: stun et chtun](#)

Let's practice!

Activity

Complete the blanks below with the right letter.





0:00 / 0:29

Speed: 1x

Paused

1. _____'aime.
2. Je suis à _____'école.
3. Comment _____'appelles-tu ?
4. _____'est-ce que c'est ?
5. _____'est un éléphant.
6. Vous _____'avez vue à Paris ?
7. Elle _____'appelle Sarah.
8. Ils mangent un canard à _____'orange.
9. Vous venez _____'Italie ?
10. Nous ne mangeons pas _____'escargot.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Prosody- Liaisons

[13.1: How silent consonants are pronounced in liaisons](#)

[13.2: Types of Liaisons](#)

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13.1: How silent consonants are pronounced in liaisons

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to recognize and pronounce liaisons.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

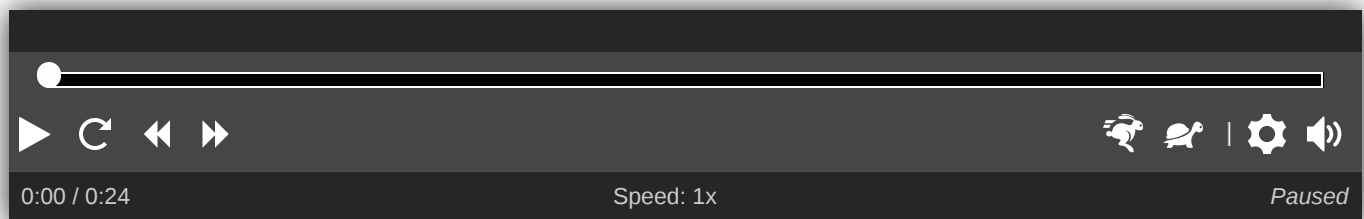
What is a liaison?

A **liaison** is the pronunciation of a linking consonant between two words in an appropriate context. For example, the word **les** ('the') is pronounced [le] and the word **amis** ('friends') is pronounced /ami/. when they are pronounced separately, the -s at the end of each word is silent, but the combination *les amis* is pronounced [lez_ami], with a linking [z]. In other words, the silent -s in **les** is pronounced like a [z] at the beginning of the word **ami** so that it sounds like [le zami]. A liaison connects one word to the next.

A liaison only happens when the following word starts with a vowel or a semivowel

In certain syntactic environments, liaison is impossible; in others, it is mandatory; in others still, it is possible but not mandatory and its realization is subject to wide stylistic variation.

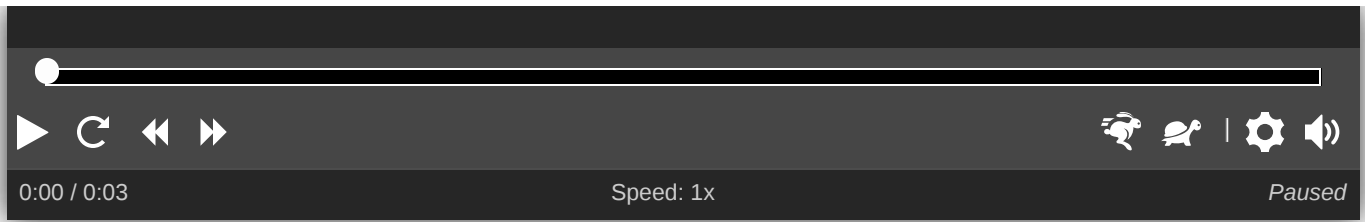
[VIDEO]



Silent letters that are pronounced in a liaison

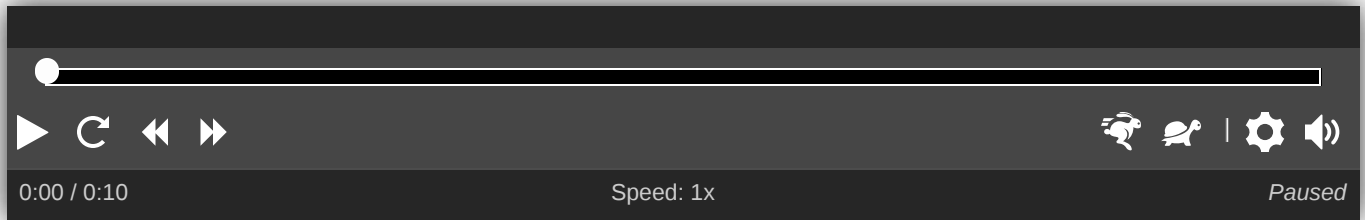
Silent Letter	Pronunciation in a Liaison	Examples
s, x, z	[z]	les amis, deux heures, chez eux
t, d	[t]	petit enfant, quand il pleut
r	[r]	premier enfant
p	[p]	trop important
n	[n]	un an
f	[v]	neuf heures
g*	[g], [k]*	Bourg-en-Bresse

In the following examples the t at the end of a word is normally silent (**tout**, **comment**), but when it is followed by a vowel, we pronounce it.



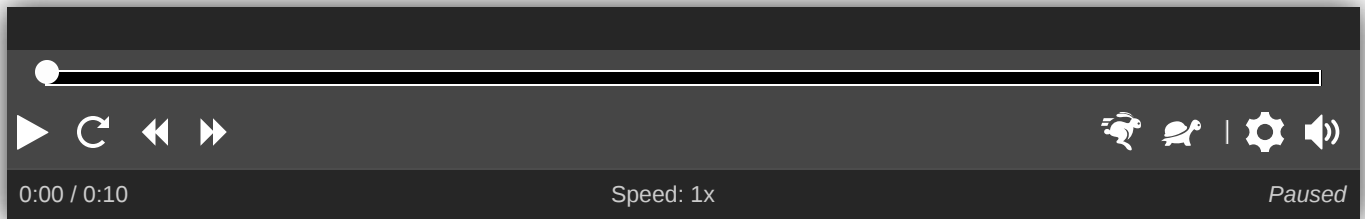
À tout__à l'heure ! Comment__allez-vous ?

An **s** or **x** in a liaison sounds like the letter **z**:



trois__examens, six__étudiants, deux__hommes, les__ordinateurs

Liaisons also exist after one-syllable adverbs, conjunctions, or prepositions.



Chez__elle très__élégant bien__évidemment dans__un roman

Note

There are always exceptions to the rules and norms of a language. French speakers do not always follow these guidelines. For example, many people might say **C'est incroyable** without a liaison, while still making the liaison in **C'est immense**.

Additional Resources

To learn more about when you do or don't do liaisons, watch this video: [French Liaisons](#). (Suggestion: Concentrate more on the examples than the grammatical explanations.)

You will find more of these obligatory liaisons in these [fixed expressions](#).

Note

Les liaisons dangereuses (Dangerous liaisons).

Not all liaisons are about French pronunciation. Liaison also means "connection", "relationship", or even "liaison" in English.

Les Liaisons dangereuses is a famous novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. Explore these videos to learn more:

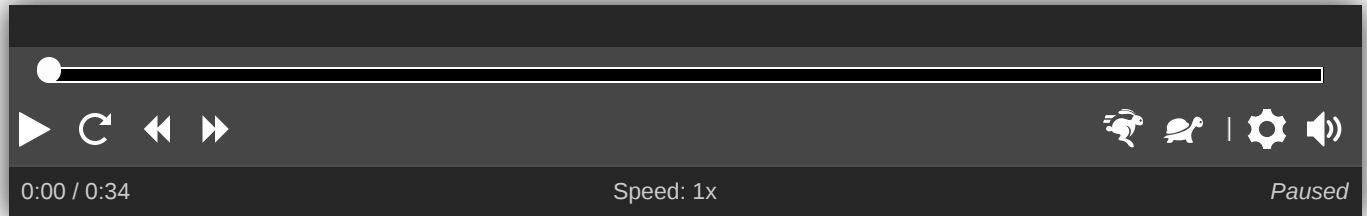
- [Les liaisons dangereuses \(le livre\)](#)

- [Les liaisons dangereuses \(le livre\)](#)

Let's practice!

Activity A

Practice pronouncing the following:



les jeux olympiques

chocolat italien

les Etats-Unis

Robert et Anne

des informations

les hôtels

Paul et Yvette

Manu est avec Juliette

Bernard adore

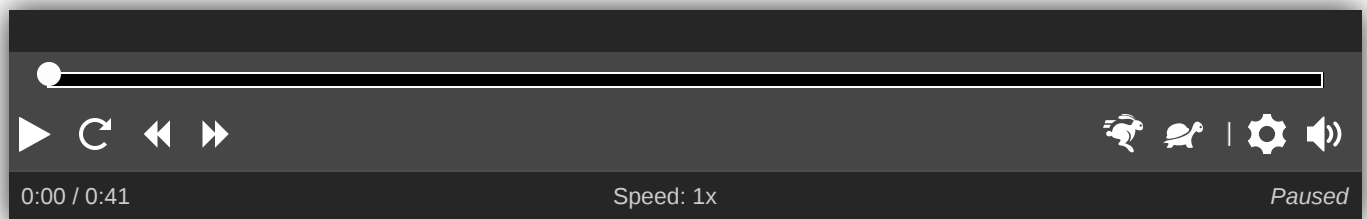
C'est un objet

dix animaux

Les amis de nos amis

Activity B

If you hear a liaison in each statement, write **oui** and if you do not hear it, write non.



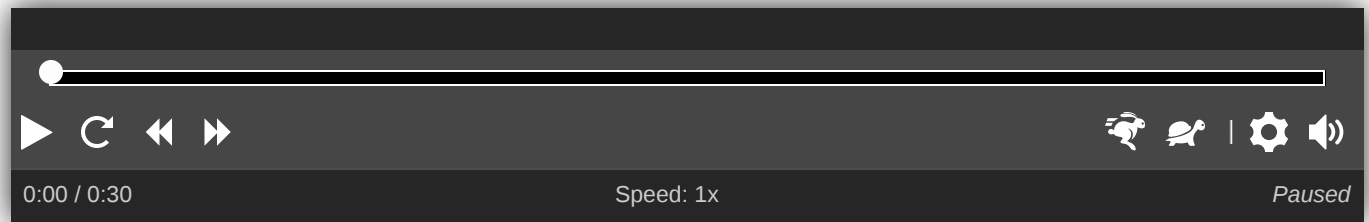
1. Liaison, oui ou non ?
2. Liaison, oui ou non ?
3. Liaison, oui ou non ?
4. Liaison, oui ou non ?
5. Liaison, oui ou non ?
6. Liaison, oui ou non ?
7. Liaison, oui ou non ?
8. Liaison, oui ou non ?

9. Liaison, oui ou non ?

10. Liaison, oui ou non ?

Activity C

Can you pronounce these words or expressions correctly?



1. un an
2. les autres
3. Tout à fait
4. Vous êtes ici ?
5. Ils sont à l'étage ?
6. Nous aimons les artistes.
7. C'est très important.
8. Ses amis l'appellent Joe.
9. Nous avons deux examens à dix heures.
10. Mes oncles sont amusants

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13.2: Types of Liaisons

Objectif

In this section, you will learn when to make a liaison.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

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Let's get started!



Here's [the video transcription](#).

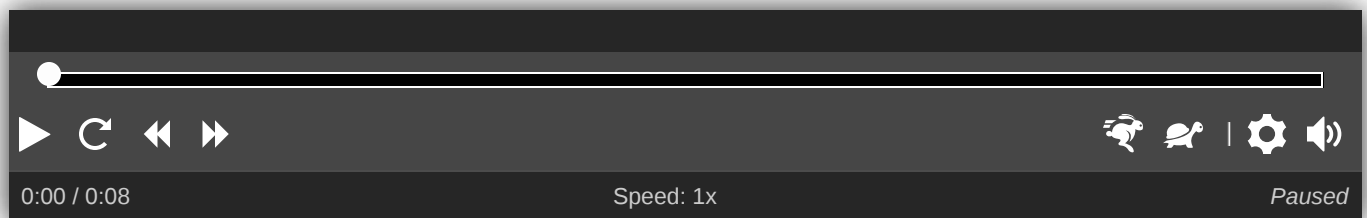
In French, a silent consonant at the end of a word can be pronounced if the word that follows begins with a vowel or vowel sound (silent h). This connection between the consonant and the vowel is called a **liaison**.

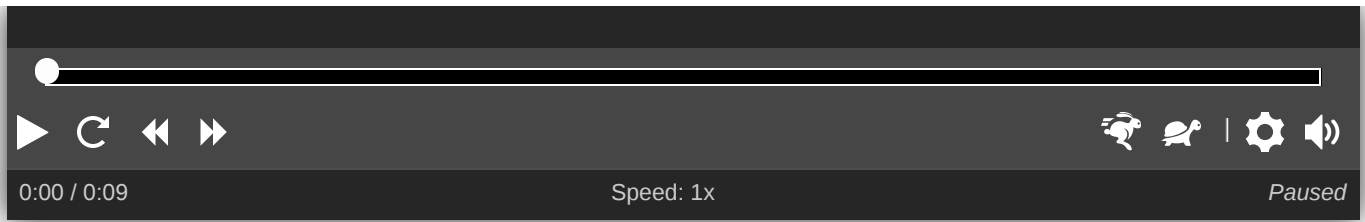
There are three types of **liaisons**, optional, forbidden, and obligatory.

Optional Liaisons

Some **liaisons** are optional.

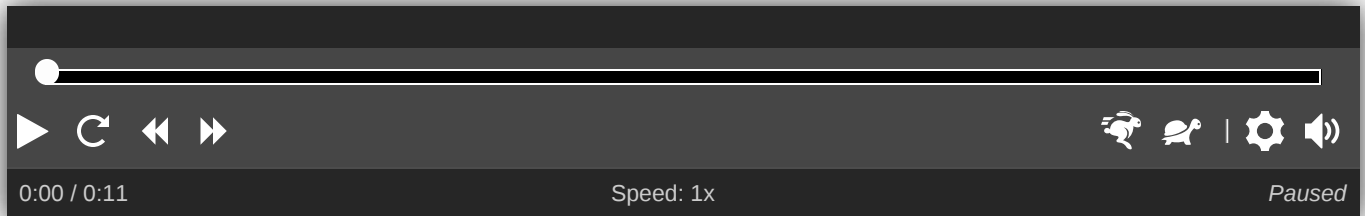
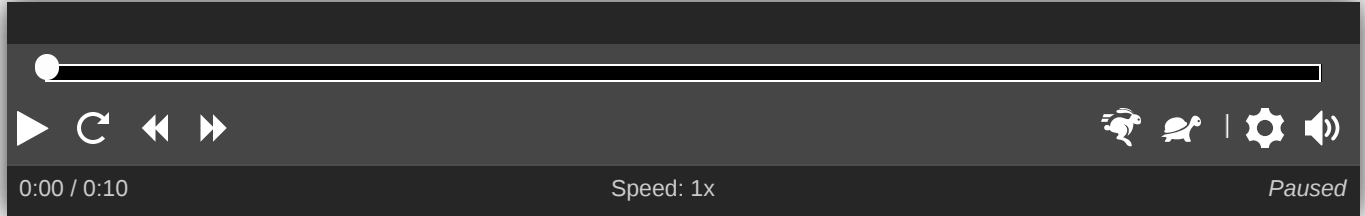
(a) Between a plural noun and the adjective or a preposition that follows





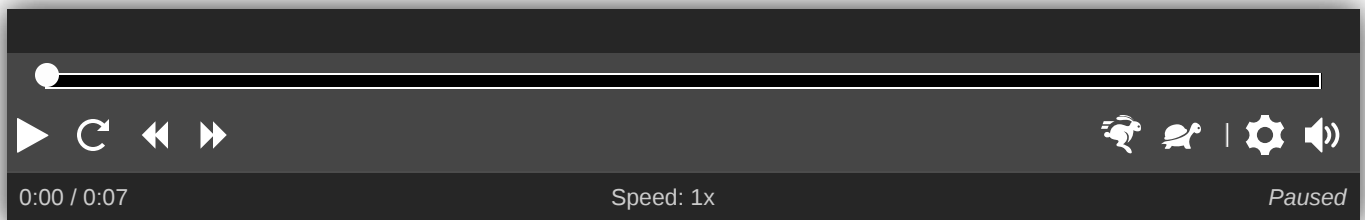
des fenêtres **ouvertes**, les portes **entrouvertes**, les gens **en** classe

(b) You can make a **liaison** between **est** and **sont** and a word that comes after them, but French speakers often do not.



Il **est** **ici**. Ils **sont** **à** la gare. Il **est** **obligé**. Elles **sont** **intelligentes**.

(c) You can make a liaison between a preposition and the word that follows



sous **un** arbre, devant **une** maison, après **avoir** nettoyé

Here's a summary of optional liaisons:

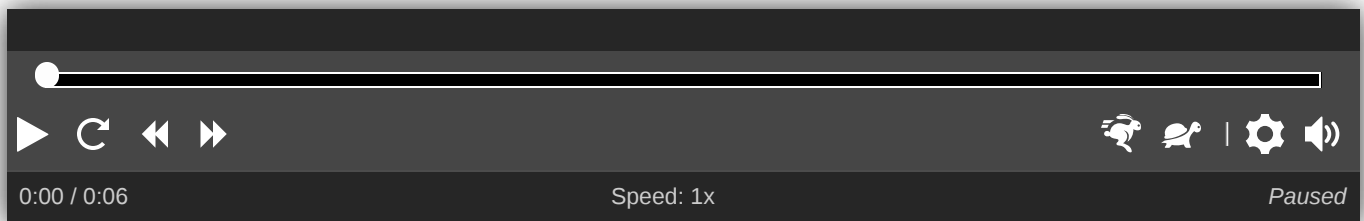
Optional Liaisons

Rule	Examples in French	Translations in English
Between a plural noun and the adjective or a preposition that follows	des fenêtres ouvertes les portes entrouvertes les gens en classe	open windows half-open, ajar, doors the people in class
Between the helping/auxiliary verbs avoir and être and the past participle	ils sont arrivés vous avez entendu	they arrivez you heard
Between a preposition and the word that follows	sous un arbre devant une maison après avoir nettoyé	under a tree in front of a house after having cleaned
Between an -er verb and the word that follows	aller ici se promener au parc	to go here to walk in the park

Forbidden Liaisons

In certain contexts, you cannot make a liaison.

(a) Never make a liaison after a proper name like Robert or Paris.

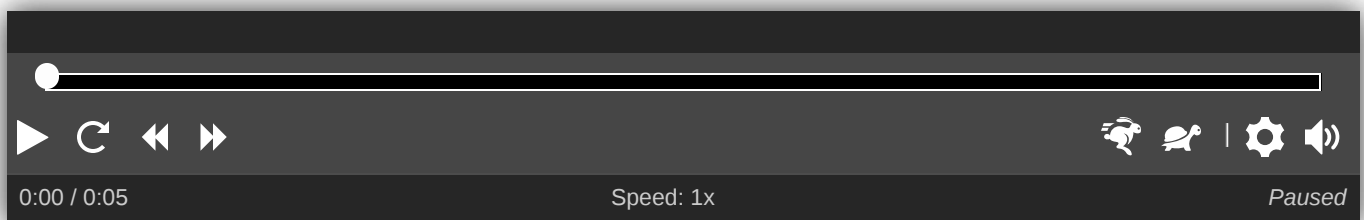


Robert **est**__anglais. Paris **est**__incroyable.

(b) Never make a liaison with the word **et** (and).

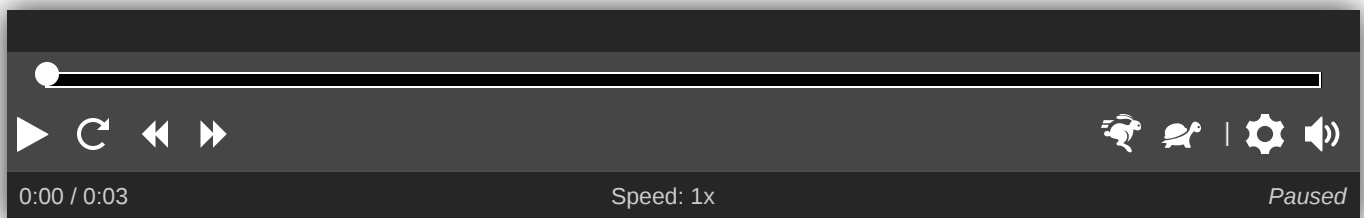
Hélène **et** Anne, Paul **et** Eric

(c) Never make a liaison between a noun and an adjective that follows it.



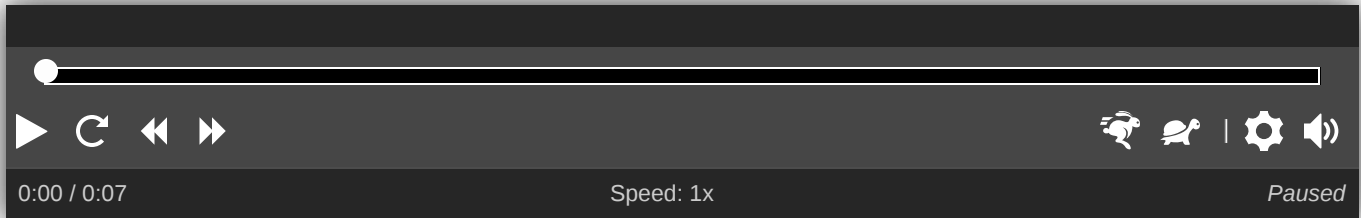
un cours horrible, un instrument **élégant**.

(d) Never make a liaison with numbers that begin with a vowel.



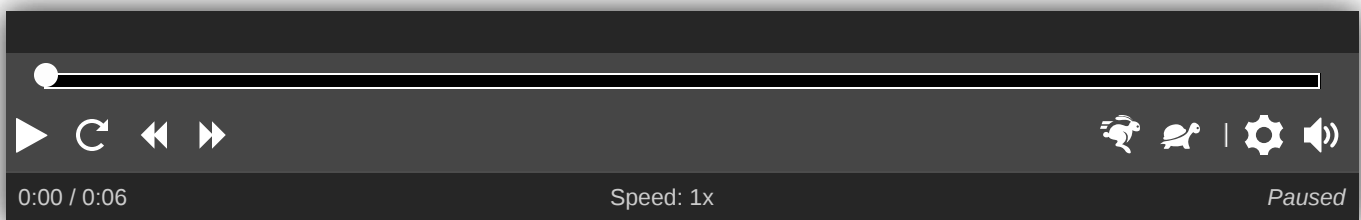
Je fête mes onze ans

And Never make a liaison between **est** and the number when telling time, but make a liaison between the number and heures.



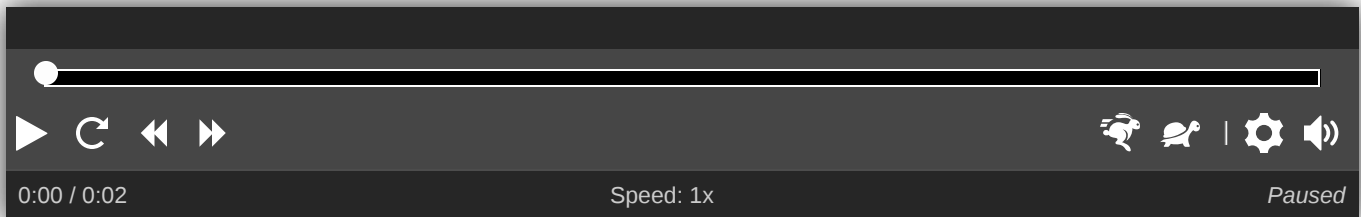
Il **est** onze heures. Il **est** une heure moins cinq. Il est six__heures.

(e) Never make a liaison an aspirate **h**



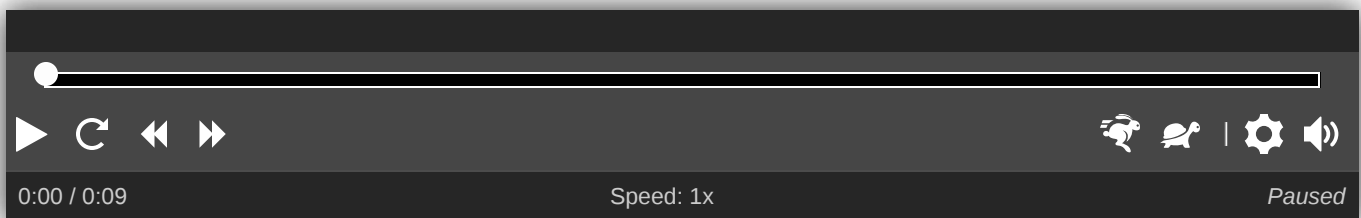
Des haricots, Les héros, Un hamburger

(f) Never make a liaison with the word **oui**.



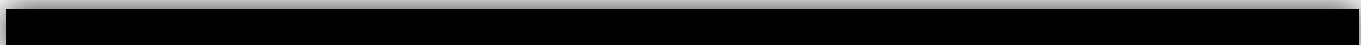
Un oui ou un non

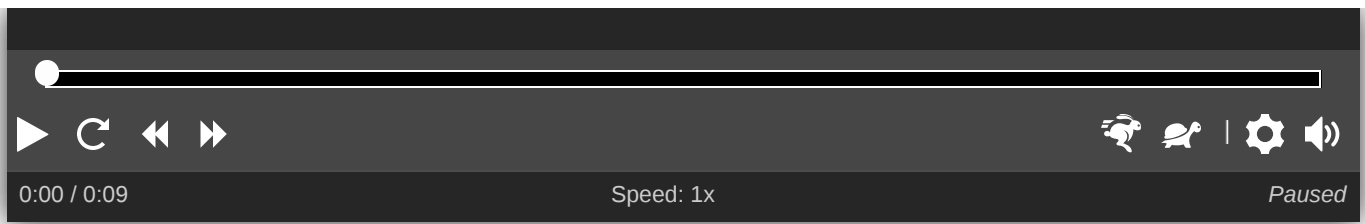
(g) Never make a liaisons between a sujet and a verb



Quelqu'un appelle, Les étudiants aiment, Les chiens aboient

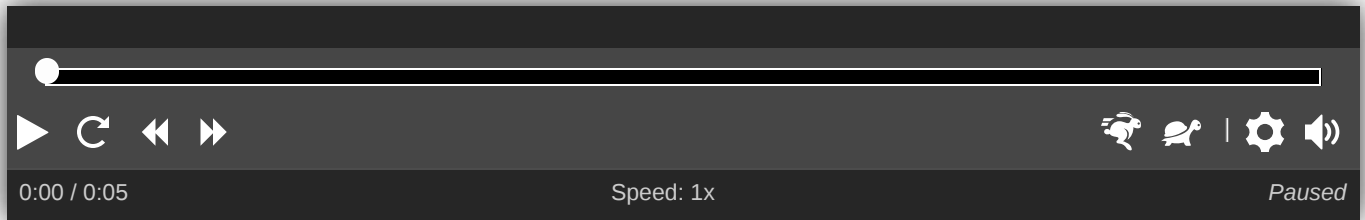
(h) Never make a liaison between an adverb that ends in **-ment** and an adjective that follows





Vraiment **in**quiet, Franchement **in**utile, Complètement **é**trange

(i) Never make a liaison between two words separated by punctuation



des amis, **é**nergiques, **é**taient assis au café

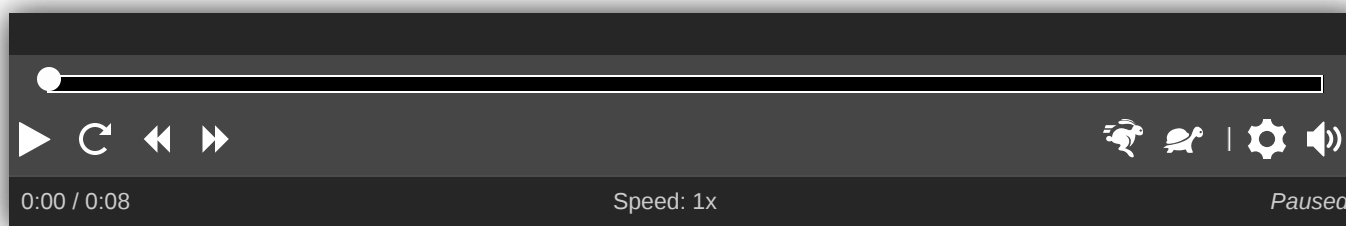
Here's a summary of cases in which there should never be **liaison**.

List of Forbidden Liaisons

Rule	Examples in French	Translations in English
After a proper name (e.g. of a person or place)	Robert habite à Paris Paris est incroyable	Robert lives in Paris Paris is incredible
After the conjunction "and" (et)	et alors ? et on a dansé	and so? and we danced
Between a noun and an adjective that follows	étudiant intelligent lettres urgentes fruit orange animaux incroyables appartement énorme	intelligent student urgent letters orange fruit incredible animals enormous apartment
With numbers that begin with a vowel Between est and the number when telling time	Je fête mes onze ans, il est onze heures	It is eleven o'clock
With an aspirated h , or h aspiré . When an h is aspirated, it is considered a consonant, so there should be no liaison. This is also for differentiating between certain possible homophones.	Les héros Un hibou Des haricots	the heroes an owl beans
With the word oui	un oui un un non	a yes or a no
Between a subject and a verb. This means between any subject except for subject pronouns, and the verb that follows them.	les étudiants aiment quelqu'un appelle les chiens aboient	the students like someone is calling the dogs bark
Between an adverb that ends in -ment and an adjective that follows	Vraiment inquiet Franchement inutile Complètement étrange	really worried frankly useless completely strange
Between two words followed by a punctuation sign.	des amis, énergiques , étaient assis au café.	Energetic friends were sitting at the café.

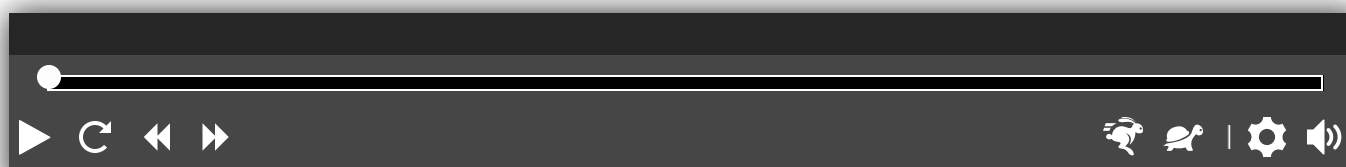
Mandatory Liaisons

(a) Always make a **liaison** between articles or numbers and a noun that comes after and begins with a vowel or silent h.



dix heures, les écoles, des arbres, un appartement

(b) Always make a **liaison** between possessive adjectives and nouns that come after them.



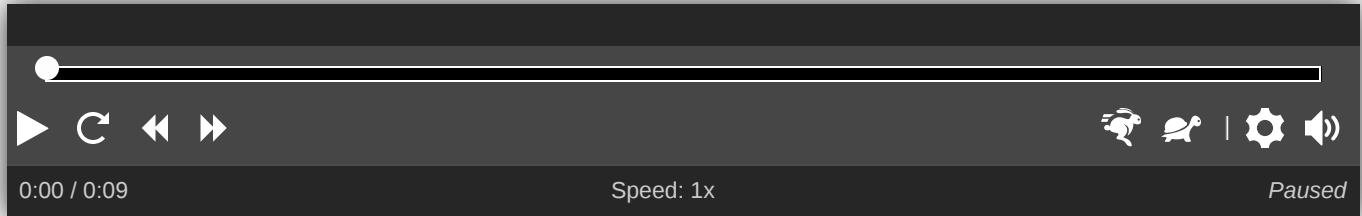
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Speed: 1x

Paused

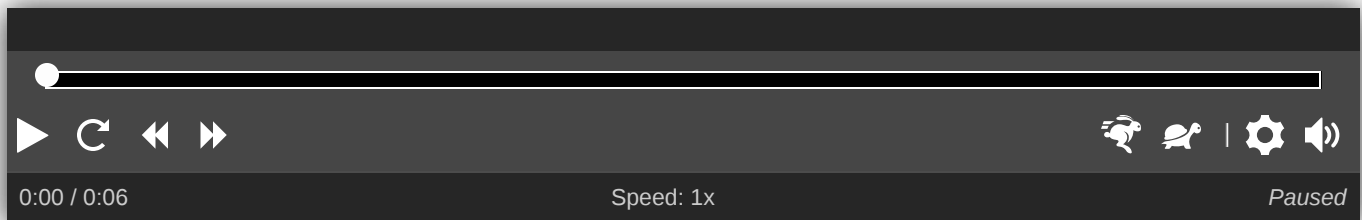
Nos amis, Mon argent, Tes ordinateurs, Leurs éléphants

(c) Always make a **liaison** between a subject pronoun and a verb that begins with a vowel.



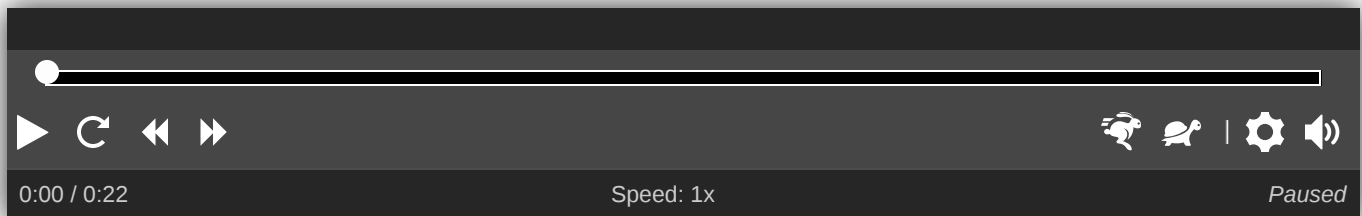
Nous aimons, Vous habitez, Ils adorent, On arrive !

(d) Always make a **liaison** after a short adverb



très occupée, tout étonné, plus organisé

(e) Some expressions have obligatory liaisons, especially compound words.



Mandatory Liaisons

C'est-à-dire

Petit à petit

A tout à l'heure

Tout à coup

De temps en temps

Les États-Unis

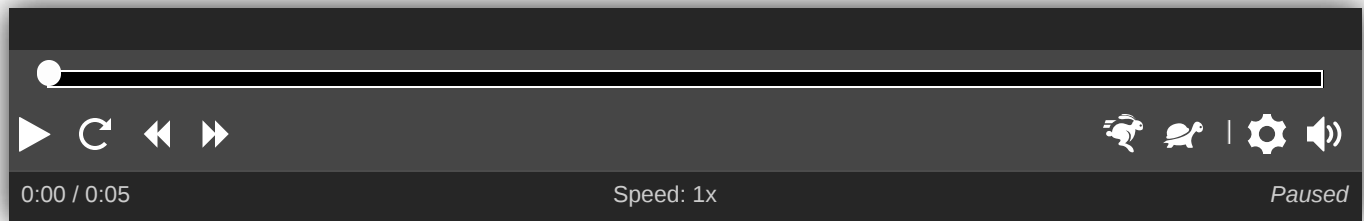
Plus ou moins

Avant-hier

Tout à fait

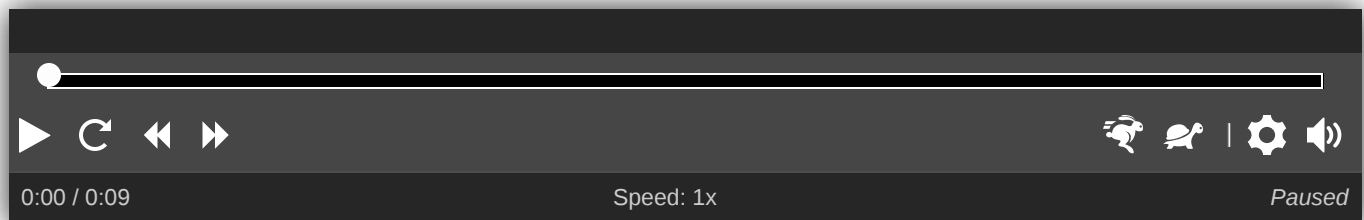
Quand est-ce que...

(e) Always make a **liaison** between two pronouns:



Elles__y vont. Nous_en avons acheté

(f) Always make a liaison after the prepositions **dans**, **chez**, **sans**, and **en**.



chez__eux, dans__un sac, sans__argumenter, en__ajoutant

Here's a summary of cases in which there should always be **liaison**.

List of Obligatory Liaisons

Rule	Examples in French	Translations in English
After the articles (un, des, les) and numbers	les <u>é</u> coles un <u>e</u> nfant	the schools a child
After possessive adjectives (mon, ton, son, mes, tes, ses, nos, vos, leurs)	mon <u>o</u> rdinateur leurs <u>a</u> mies	my computer their friends
Between subject pronouns and the verb that follows	ils <u>é</u> coutent vous <u>o</u> ubliez nous <u>a</u> llons	they listen you forget (formal) we go
After a short adverb	très <u>o</u> ccupée tout <u>é</u> tonné plus <u>o</u> rganisé	very busy totally surprised more organized
Between two pronouns	elles <u>y</u> vont nous <u>e</u> n avons acheté	they go there we bought some of it
In the majority of compound expressions	c'est- <u>a</u> -dire tout <u>a</u> fait pied- <u>a</u> -terre Petit <u>a</u> petit A tout <u>a</u> l'heure Tout <u>a</u> coup De temps <u>e</u> n temps Plus <u>o</u> u moins Avant- <u>h</u> ier sous- <u>e</u> ntendu Etats- <u>U</u> nis	meaning totally short-term lodging little by little see you soon suddenly from time to time more or less the day before yesterday misunderstanding United States
after the following prepositions: - dans - chez - sans - en	chez <u>e</u> ux dans <u>u</u> n sac sans <u>a</u> rgumenter <u>e</u> n <u>a</u> joûtant	at their house in a bag without arguing by adding

Additional Resources

- Read more about [mandatory liaisons](#).
- Additional information about [liaison rules](#).
- On this page, you can listen and repeat [groups of words with or without liaisons](#).
- When to consider [the letter h as a vowel and as a consonant](#).
- [When is the liaison optional?](#)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Prosody - Rhythm and Melody

[14.1: Stress and Rhythm](#)

[14.2: The Melody of French](#)

[14.3: Virelangues \(Tongue-twisters\)](#)

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14.1: Stress and Rhythm

📌 Objectif

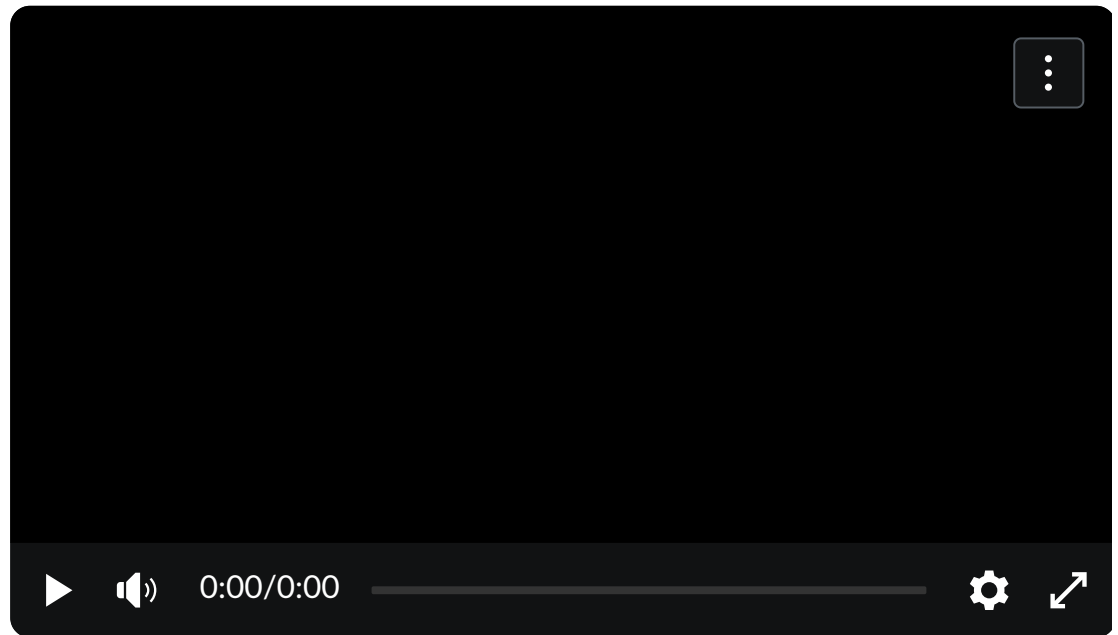
In this section, you will learn when to stress certain syllables in a word or a sentence.

📌 Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!



Here is [the video's transcription](#).

Stress & Rhythm

Stress is the emphasis or prominence given to a certain syllable in a word or to a certain word in a phrase or sentence. That emphasis is usually caused by an increased loudness and vowel length, a more complete articulation of the vowel, or changes in tone. Stress is also sometimes called **accentuation**. Stress patterns in language create what is called **rhythmic accentuation**, which is similar to rhythm patterns in music.

English vs. French

Stress Placement

In English, the location of the stress depends on the word. Compare, for example, "**involve**" vs. "**in**come" (the bold face indicates the syllable that is stressed). The stress is not on the "**in**-" in the first word, but it is in the second word.

Where you place the stress can change depending on the word. Compare:

record vs. **re**cord

present vs. present

These are a type of heteronym, words that are spelled the same but pronounced differently (like **live** [lɪv] vs. **live** [laɪv], or **tear** [tɛr] vs. **tear** [tɪr]).

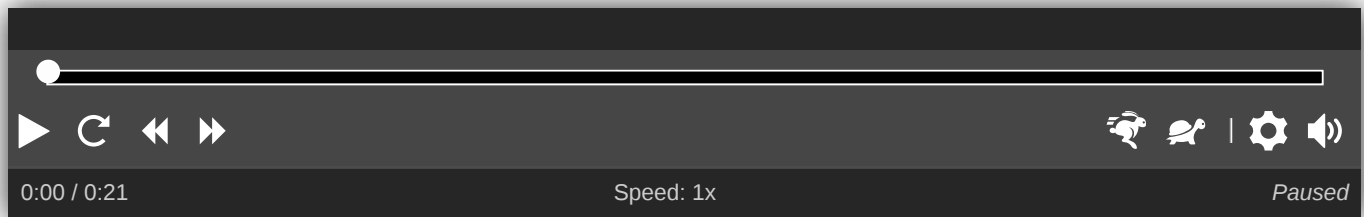
In French, there are not two words that look the same but are pronounced differently. They will sound the same; in fact many words that are spelled differently will still sound the same. For example, **vers** [vɛʁ] means "towards", **vers** [vɛʁ] means "worms" and **vers** [vɛʁ] also means "verse". To make things even more interesting, the words **verre**, **vert** also sound exactly the same: [vɛʁ]. Check out this video on how to say: [A green worm goes towards a green glass.](#)

In English, stress can also shift within a sentence in order to emphasize or insist upon a certain word. This shift in stress corresponds to a shift in meaning. Compare for example:

What did you do? vs. What did you do?

Why are you talking to her? vs. Why are you talking to her?

In French, the stressed syllable is always the last syllable of a word, phrase or clause, so we don't have the same variation of stress location as in English. For example:



comprends

comprene**ns**

compréhens**ible**

compréhensib**ilité**

Je vais à la biblioth**èque**

Je vais étudier à la biblioth**èque**

In English, there can be various degrees of stress within a word. For example, in the word "deniability" we have two stresses, one (1) stronger than the other (2):

2 1

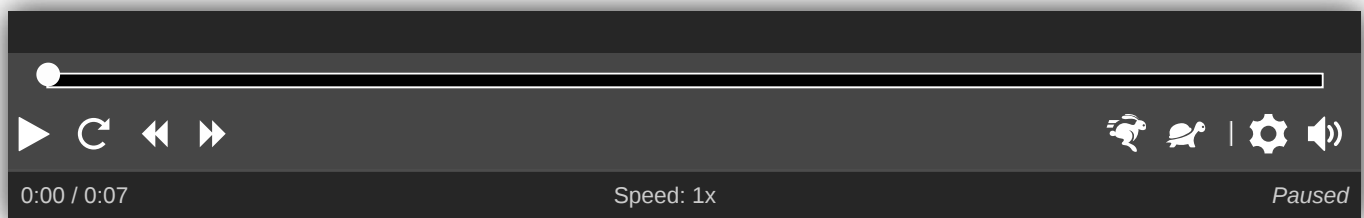
de.**ni**.a.**bi**.li.ty

There can also be variation at the sentence level:

2 3 1

Tell me a story

In French, the last syllable of the word or phrase is usually the only one stressed.



Où tu **vas** ?

Où vas-tu ?

Qu'est-ce que tu as **fait** ?

In French there can be some variation with a sentence, though much less so than in English.

In general, English speakers stress syllables more intensely and with more variation in intensity than French speakers. This is largely due to the fact that stress placement is important for meaning (like "**re**cord" vs. "re**co**rd"). However, stressed syllables in French with have a longer vowel than in English.

English is a [stress-timed language](#) and French is a syllable-timed language. For example, each of the following two English sentences has a different number of syllables, but all of them have 3 stressed syllables (in bold):

Boys eat cake

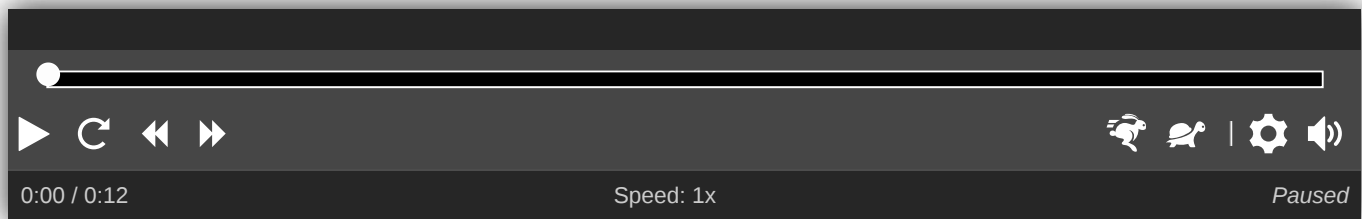
The **boys eat** the **cake**

The **boys** can **eat** the **cake**

The **boys** have **eaten** the **cake**

The **boys** will be **eating** the **cake**

French, on the other hand is syllable-timed language, meaning that each syllable gets an equal amount of stress, except for the last one.

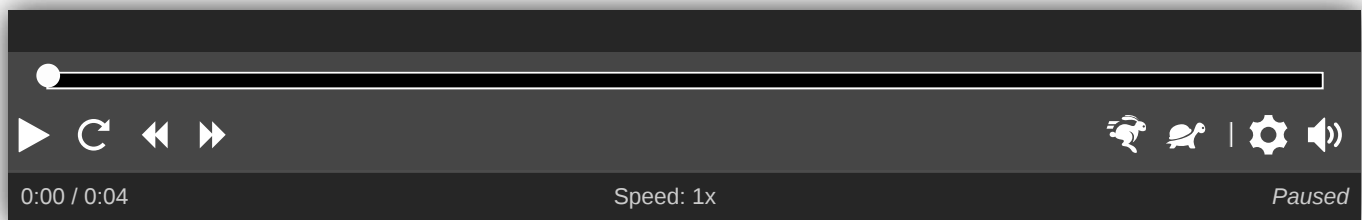


Les garçons mangent le **gâteau**

Les garçons ont mangé le **gâteau**

Les garçons de l'école ont mangé le **gâteau**

There are still cases in French where stress will not be placed at the end of a sentence or word, for example when you want to insist on a certain point. For example:



La soirée n'est pas **ce** soir; c'est **demain** soir. (The party is not tonight; it's tomorrow night)

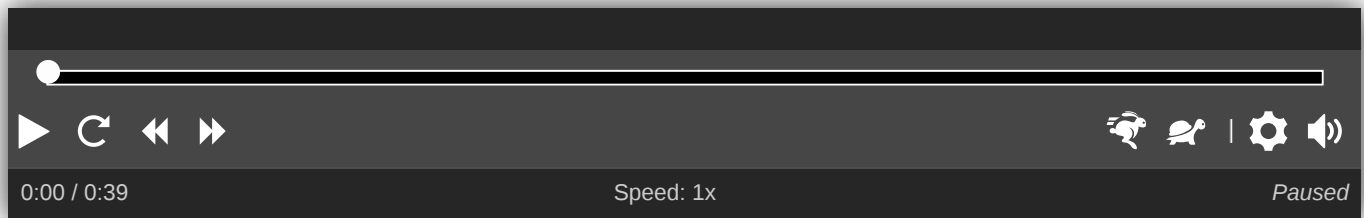
Additional Resources

- [Rhythmic accentuation of words in French sentences.](#)

Let's practice!

Activity A

Listen and repeat.

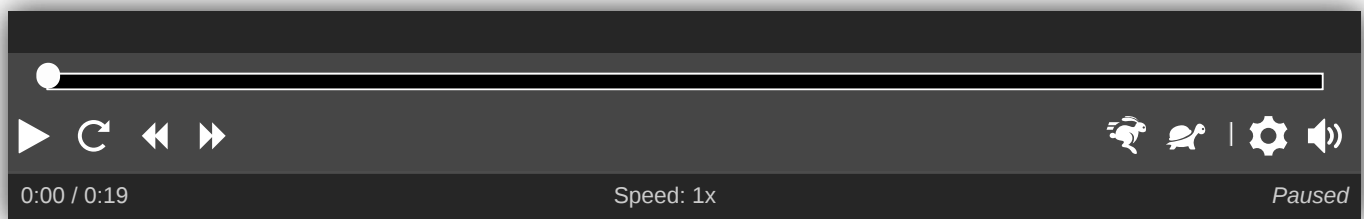


1. [2 syllables] Entrez!, Je sais, C'est moi!, Tu l'as
2. [3 syllables] Fantastique!, Choisissez, Je la veux, Il va où?
3. [4 syllables] Je vais en France, Tu dînes chez Marc, N'oubliez pas
4. [5 syllables] Je ne comprends pas, Nous mangeons ensemble
5. [6 syllables] Apportez du fromage, Je ne veux pas mourir

Activity B

Repeat these sentences and place the stress on the final syllable.

1.



L'étudiant (the student)

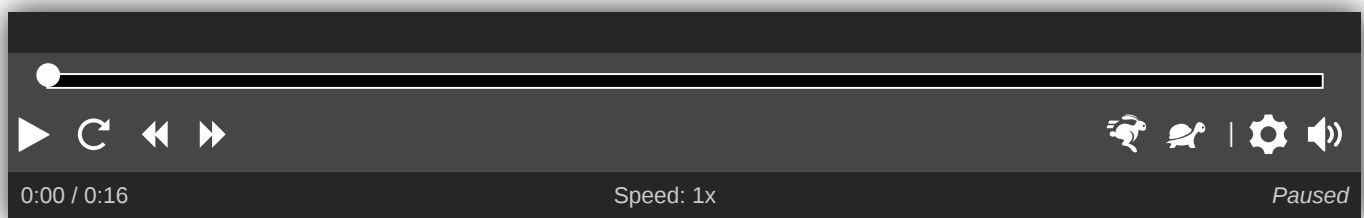
L'étudiant arrive (the student arrives)

L'étudiant arrivera (the student will arrive)

L'étudiant arrivera à trois heures (the student will arrive at three o'clock)

L'étudiant arrivera à trois heures et demie (the student will arrive at three thirty)

2.



Hélène

Hélène et Paul

Hélène et Paul mangent

Hélène et Paul mangent du pain

Hélène et Paul mangent du pain au café

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14.2: The Melody of French

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce French musically.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's explore!

The melody of a language stems from its tones and rhythm. This means to speak a language as it should be, one should pay attention to the intonations and to the rhythm of sentences.

In terms of rhythm, French differs from English because its syllables are all of the same length. In English, however, syllables can be short or long.

On the other hand, French is similar to English in that every syllable contains only one vowel.

In French, most words or most final syllables end with a vowel sound, and the final syllable is always accentuated. This is not the case in English.

On the next few pages, we will also explore French intonations when it comes to affirmations, exclamations, and questions.

As a final note, the French language sounds beautiful because it has so many **liaisons** and **enchaînements**. This means that the words are meshed together through these two tools. This is why when a second language learner first hears French, it sounds as though all the words are jumbled together.

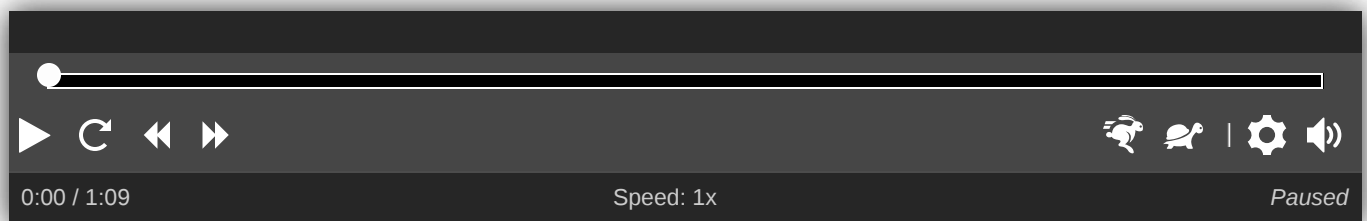
Additional Resources

- [Rhythm](#)
- [Intonation](#)

Let's Practice!

Activity

Practice saying these sentences.



1. J'ai un rendez-vous chez le coiffeur.
2. Tu as un examen ?
3. Vous y allez à six heures ?
4. Quand est-il allé à l'aéroport ?
5. Quel âge as-tu ?

6. Les amis de mes amis sont mes amis.
7. Ma soeur aînée est née en Suisse.
8. Elle court à toute allure.
9. Quand ont-ils acheté cet appartement ?
10. Tu leur a dit d'aller là-bas ?

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14.3: Virelangues (Tongue-twisters)

Objectif

In this section, you will learn how to pronounce some tongue twisters in French.

Media Alternative

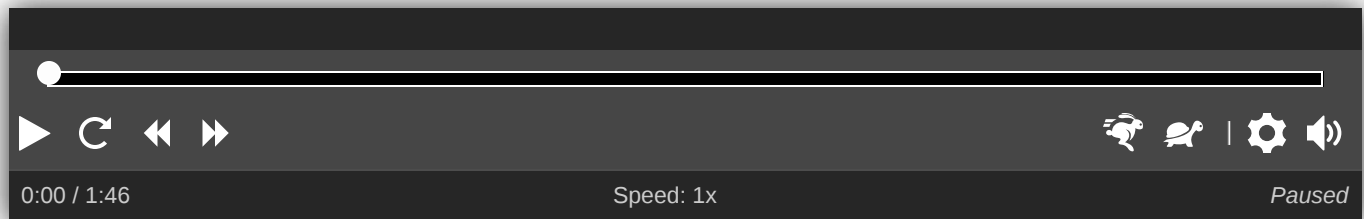
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's Practice !

Les Virelangues

Virelangues are tongue-twisters. Here's a list of common French **virelangues**. Can you pronounce them?



- As-tu été à Tahiti ?
- Seize chaises sèchent.
- Douze douches douces.
- As-tu vu le ver vert allant vers le verre en verre vert ?
- Cinq chiens chassent six chats.
- Son chat chante sa chanson.
- Un dragon gradé dégrade un gradé dragon.
- Un chasseur sachant chasser doit savoir chasser sans son chien.
- Le mur murant Paris rend Paris murmurant.
- Vincent vint sans vin et Vivien vint sans ses cent vingt vins.
- Vingt beaux blonds boivent vingt bons vins blancs sur un banc blanc.
- Un généreux déjeuner régénérerait des généraux dégénérés.
- As-tu vu le tutu de tulle de Lili d'Honolulu ?
- Les chaussettes de l'archiduchesse sont-elles sèches, archi-sèches ?
- Trois tortues trottaient sur un trottoir très étroit.
- Tu t'entêtes à tout tenter, tu t'uses et tu te tues à tant t'entêter.
- Un pâtissier qui pâtissait chez un tapissier qui tapissait, demanda un jour au tapissier qui tapissait : vaut-il mieux pâtisser chez un tapissier qui tapisse ou tapisser chez un pâtissier qui pâtisse ?
- Elle est partie avec tonton, ton Taine et ton thon.
- L'Arabe Ali est mort au lit. Moralité : Maure Ali, t'es mort alité.
- La cavale aux Valaques avala l'eau du lac et l'eau du lac lava la cavale aux Valaques.
- Fait faire à Fabien fourbe et fautif force farces fausses et fantasques.
- Que c'est crevant de voir crever une crevette sur la cravate d'un homme crevé dans une crevasse.

- Le cricri de la crique crie son cri cru et critique car il craint que l'escroc ne le croque et ne le craque.

Let's Practice!

Activity A

Choose 5 tongue-twisters you find most difficult and try to pronounce them as quickly as possible.

Activity B

Put at least 2 tongue-twisters in each of the categories below.

Activity

The sounds s, ch, sh et j	The sounds t et d	The sounds f et v	The sounds é, i et u	Nasal vowels in, an/en, et on

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Variations in Intonation

[15.1: Dialectal Variations in Intonation \(France\)](#)

[15.2: Dialectal Variations in Intonation \(Beyond France\)](#)

[15.3: Fast French](#)

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15.1: Dialectal Variations in Intonation (France)

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about different dialectal and stylistic variations in French intonation.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's explore!

The standard French accent, the most popular, is the Parisian accent. When we learn French in school, the accent, rhythm, and intonation that we are taught, it is most often that of Paris.

Yet, in France, there are many different dialectal variations in accent, rhythm, and intonation.

On this page, we will explore some of these different regional dialectal variations.

Watch and listen to the various videos, and see if you can notice these distinctions.

- [L'accent lyonnais](#) (the accent of the Lyon region)
- [L'accent du sud](#) (southern French accent), including the [accent of Marseille](#) and the [accent of Toulouse](#)
- The [accent of the Alsace-Lorraine region](#)
- Here's a video containing [samples of 28 different accents in France](#).

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15.2: Dialectal Variations in Intonation (Beyond France)

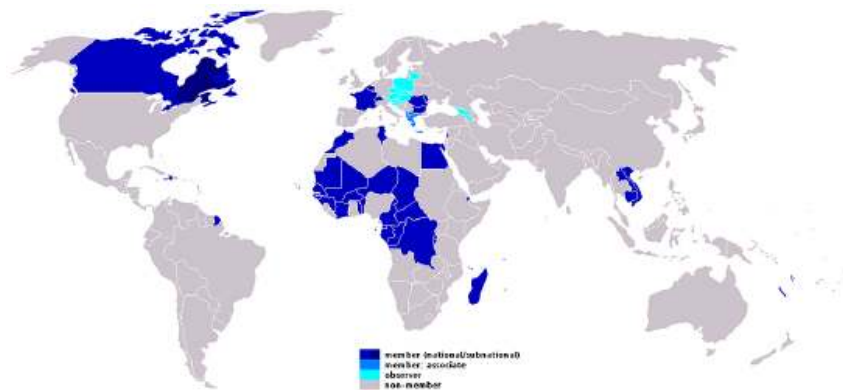
Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about other dialects of French from around the world.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.



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Let's explore!

Each region of the world where French is spoken also has its own accent, rhythm, and intonation. In many of the regions or countries where French is spoken - and in larger cities - the French spoken is quite similar to the Parisian French. In smaller areas - or in the countryside - the accents can vary quite a bit from the "standard" French accent. Even within one country, such as Belgium or Switzerland, accents can vary from region to region. On this page, we will explore some of these different countries or regions.

For more information on the different kinds of French spoken around the world, visit page [1.4: French Throughout the World](#).

Watch and listen to the various videos, and see if you can notice these distinctions between continental France and French spoken in other places in the world.

French in Europe

Switzerland

Listen to how they speak French [in Switzerland](#)

Belgium

Explore Various [Belgian-French accents spoken in Belgium](#).

French in Africa

Here's are some videos on the various [African French accents](#) and [African French Dialects](#)

French in North America

French [spoken in Quebec](#)



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Watch how these French speakers [react to Cajun French](#).

French in Asia

Watch this video about [Vietnamese French](#).

French in the Caribbean

Listen to the intonation and rhythm is this person's [West Indian accent \(accent antillais\)](#).

French Around the World

Intonation and rhythm contribute to the musicality of a language and its different dialects. Listen to these different French accents from around the world and pay attention to differences in intonation and rhythm:

- [Do you know the French accents?](#)
- [French Language Differences Between 7 Countries! Can They Understand Each Other?](#)

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15.3: Fast French

Objectif

In this section, you learn how to pronounce French more quickly with **common shortcuts**.

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

In the audio players, you can slow down the audio by clicking on the turtle and speed up by clicking on the rabbit. The turtle and rabbit are located at the bottom right corner of each audio player.

Let's get started!

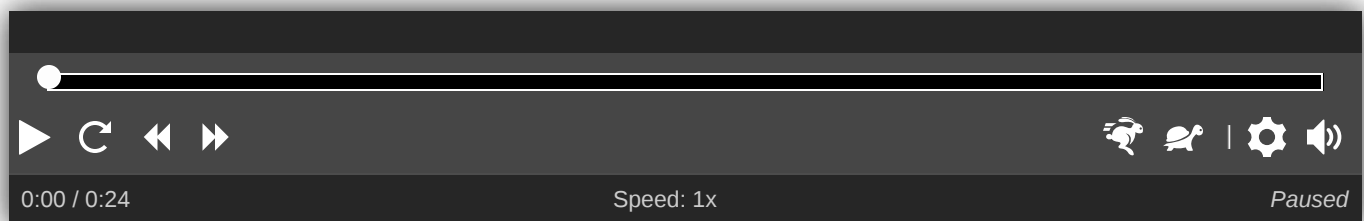
Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.



How to Pronounce Fast French

The French we learn in school, the official French language, can be quite different from the French you may hear if you travel to France. This is because French people have a tendency to speak very fast, and to cut some vowels, entire words, or consonants. This is especially true with the younger generation.

Here are a few tricks if you want to catch, understand, or even speak like Parisians.



(a) The first trick is to omit the letter **e** in the middle of long words and at the end of some one-syllable words like **je**, **te**, **ce**, **que**, **me**, etc.

Il est **petit**. → Il est **p'tit**.

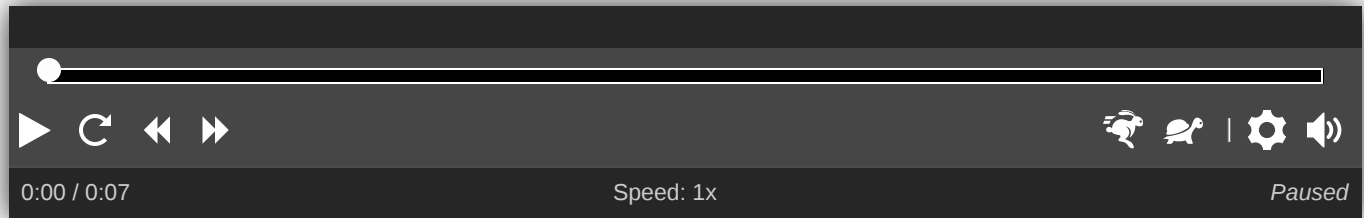
Je vais à l'**épicerie**. → Je vais à l'**épic'rie**.

Je me suis levée tôt. → Je **m'suis** levée tôt. OR **J'me** suis levée tôt.

Je t'ai donné **le** stylo. → **J'tai** donné l'stylo.

On fait une **promenade**. → On fait une **prom'nade**.

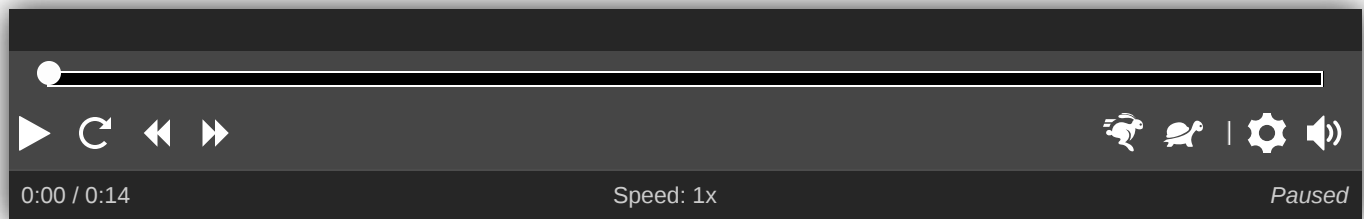
- (b) The affirmative expression **oui** is always said **ouais**, much like yeah in English.
- (c) Sometimes, the negative expression **non** is said **nan**, although this is not as common as **ouais**.
- (d) Some expressions take on a **ch** (sh) sound in spoken French.



Je suis là. → **Chuis** ici.

Je **ne** sais pas. → **Chais** pas.

- (e) In negative sentences, the negative adverb **ne** is almost always omitted.

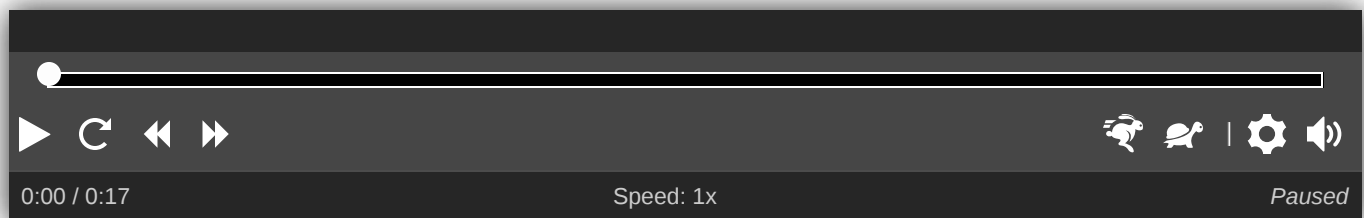


Il **n'**aime pas sa chambre. → Il aime pas sa chambre.

Vous **ne** venez pas ? → Vous **v'**nez pas ?

Ne t'inquiète pas ! → T'inquiète pas. OR even T'inquiète !

- (f) The third person singular impersonal subject pronoun **il** is often omitted in spoken French.



Il y a une fille qui habite chez moi. → **Y a une fille qui habite chez moi.**

Il faut faire attention. → Faut faire attention.

Il faut que tu me dises la vérité. → Faut qu'tu m'dises la vérité.

Let's practice!

Activity

Now, let's see if you can figure how to transform the following sentences.

1. Hier, je suis allée au cinéma. →
2. Tu me prêtes ta voiture ? →
3. On va à la boulangerie ? Oui, on y va cet aprèm. →
4. Comment vous appelez-vous ? →
5. Je t'ai appelé il y a une heure. →
6. Il faut que tu lises le Petit Prince. →
7. Tu sais où je peux acheter des bonbons ? Non, je ne sais pas du tout. →

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: Wrap-Up

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

17: Additional Resources

[17.1: Culture](#)

[17.2: Structure - Ça se prononce comment ?](#)

[17.3: Structure - Prononciation et orthographe - Homonymes](#)

[17.4: Structure - Comment ça s'écrit ?](#)

[17.5: Structure - Différence de prononciation entre les temps des verbes](#)

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17.1: Culture

The pronunciation of the French language has been through extensive changes over the centuries, including the pronunciation of vowels, consonants, and stress patterns.

In the past, most theological, educational and administrative documents were written in Latin. French was considered a vernacular language. The first official document written in French dates back to 842 A.D.: the Strasbourg Oath, or *Le Sermon de Strasbourg*.

Before France coalesced into a unified entity, it was split into two major regions based on the language or dialect spoken there. Essentially, at the time, present-day France was split into two sections from the middle. The southern region was known as the *Langue d'Oc*, while the northern part was called *Langue d'Oïl*. The distinction arose from the Latin vernacular: "oc" and "oïl" signified "yes", and they clearly showed the distinction in language or dialect between the two parts.

Present-day French came about from the language spoken in the north, from the *Langue d'Oïl*.

- In the 17th century, Cardinal Richelieu founded the French Academy - *L'Académie Française* - which still exists today. It was meant to universalize French spelling for mostly administrative purposes. Before this time, Latin was still the most common language used for administration. **For this reason, the clerics, who were not happy with this decision, decided to base the new "Middle French" on the Latin origin of words in French.**

- The French language has known 3 main phases in history: Old French, Middle French, and Modern French. With the official use of the French language, Middle French was born. This phase was the first standardization of the French language's spelling.

- In the **next units**, we will go over the history of Old French and how it differed from the reformed Middle French. We will also discuss other languages spoken in France.

- <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/le...nt-du-francais>

- <https://www.superprof.fr/blog/reform...mie-francaise/>

- https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_French

- <https://www.alloprof.qc.ca/fr/eleves...rancaise-f1020>

- <https://blablalagr3.blogspot.com/>

- <https://fr.Wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A...fran%C3%A7aise>

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17.2: Structure - Ça se prononce comment ?

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn how to:

- Pronounce consonants and vowels
- Identify silent letters

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

On étudie !

La prononciation des consonnes et des voyelles

Les consonnes

Most consonants are pronounced similarly in English and France, but not exactly the same. Two things that are significantly different in French and often challenging for English speakers are (1) silent consonants that we write but don't pronounce (see below) and (2) the pronunciation of the letter **r**. Here are the consonants that are most different from English:

▶ 0:00 / 0:19 ———— 🔊 ⋮

Les consonnes

Consonnes	Prononciation	Exemples
r	How to pronounce r	Lorsque j' arrive à la gare
ç	Pronounce it like s in English	Ça , leçon
h	silent	hôpital, halles, haine

Note

The ideal gas law is easy to remember and apply in solving problems, as long as you get the **proper values a**

There are many subtle differences between the way we pronounce consonants in English and French. To explore these, you can watch this tutorial on [the pronunciation of consonants](#). Later, you will learn how to pronounce clusters of consonants, such as **ss**, **th**, **qu**, etc.

Les voyelles

Vowels are usually more challenging for French learners. Written vowels are the same in French and English: a, e, i, o, u. However, in spoken French there are at least 15 different vowel sounds. Here are the vowel sounds you will need to practice:

▶ 0:00 / 1:39 ———— 🔊 ⋮

Les voyelles

Voyelles	Prononciation	Exemples
i	like "ee" in see	fini, lit, difficile
u	How to pronounce u	Tu, chute, rue
é	How to pronounce é	Pied, chez, marcher, clé
è, ê	How to pronounce è & ê	Mère, fête
e	How to pronounce e	Le, ce, de
eu	How to pronounce eu	Peu, queue, peur, jeuner
o	How to pronounce o	Sot, tôt, dos
on	How to pronounce on	Son, ton, Breton
ou	like "oo" in zoo	Coupe, fou, poubelle
oi	How to pronounce oi	Moi, toi, froid, boîte
oin	How to pronounce oin	Coin, besoin, soin
œ	How to pronounce œ	Sœur, cœur, œuf
au, eau	How to pronounce au, eau	Beau, faux
en, an, em, am	How to pronounce en, an, em, am	An, bilan, silence,
in, ain, un	How to pronounce in, ain, un	Pain, lapin, sain, fin, un



Ressources supplémentaires

- Practice pronouncing French vowels with this video tutorial on [Vowel sounds in French](#).
- Practice pronouncing different combinations of vowels with this video: [vowel sounds in combination](#).

Les lettres muettes (Silent letters)

Both consonants and vowels may be silent (unpronounced) in French. Here are some examples (silent letters in boldface):

hôpital, **h**aleine parler, Didier français **l**ent, dans**ent** appétit, tout faux quand

The letter H is always silent, but other letters are only silent in certain situations. Most final consonants are not pronounced in French. For example:

Sometimes, clusters of vowels are silent, such as:

C'**est** donn**ent** étudian**ts**

An unaccented -e (or -es) at the end of a word is usually silent:

française plage rê**ves** nuag**es**

The consonants -c, -r, -f, and -l are usually pronounced at the end of a word:

parc bonjour actif animal

Here is a useful summary of silent letters:

Le H muet

La lettre **h** est toujours muette :

▶ 0:00 / 0:10 ——— 🔊 ⋮

Lettre	Exemples
-h-	habitude, h omme, h ôpital, orthographe, h aut

Lettre muettes en fin de mot

The following letters are generally silent at the end of a word.

▶ 0:00 / 0:41 ——— 🔊 ⋮

Lettres muettes en fin de mot

Lettre	Exemples	Prononcé quand il est suivi par -e
-d	canard , quand	fade, stade
-p	trop	clope
-s	tas, draps	phase
-t	chocolat, appétit	petite
-x	prix	—
-z	nez	—
-e	jeune, fille, danse, père.	

Note

- When these letters are followed by the plural -s, they remain silent: **draps**, **petits**, **grands**, **filles** etc.
- The letters **d**, **p**, **s**, **t**, **x** and **z** may be pronounced whenever there is a [liaison](#).

Lettre muettes en fin de mot sous certaines conditions (The CRFL rule)

According to the CRFL (i.e., “carfeul”) rule, if a word ends with a **c**, **r**, **f**, or **l**, you are going to pronounce them. However, under certain conditions these consonants will be silent:

▶ 0:00 / 0:54 ——— 🔊 ⋮

Consonnes muettes sous certaines conditions

Consonnes	Conditions et exemples	Exceptions et cas spéciaux
-c	précédé par "n" : franc, banc, tronc	mots particuliers : estomac, porc, tabac, clerc
-r	(a) infinitifs (-er) : parler, aimer, danser (b) substantifs et adjectifs : escalier, premier	Exception : r prononcé : amour, hiver, amer, cancer, enfer, cuiller, fleur Cas spécial : r muet : monsieur
-f	mots particuliers : nerf, clef, cerf, serf	Cas spécial : f muet dans le pluriel : des oeufs
-l	(a) mots de plus d'une syllabe : fusil, gentil, outil (b) mots particuliers : soûl, cul	

Learning how to pronounce correctly takes time and practice. Above all, you need to listen to as much French as possible.

Ressources supplémentaires

- Watch this video for a general introduction to [French Pronunciation](#).
- Watch this tutorial on [Silent letters](#), then answer this question: What are the CRFL and Big Good Quality Kale rules?
- You can practice your French pronunciation with this Video tutorial: [Pronounce the 100 most common French words](#). Try to repeat everything you hear (practice makes perfect).
- You can listen to how specific words are pronounced by visiting the [How to Pronounce channel](#) on YouTube.
- You can hear audio recordings of French words and more at: [audiofrench.com](#). If you want to go all out, consult the [French Pronunciation: Ultimate Guide](#).
- Have fun practicing your pronunciation with these [tongue-twisters](#), or [virelangues](#). Also try [les virelangues](#).
- Practice French pronunciation with this video of [illustrated French sounds](#).

On pratique !

Activité

Ecoutez et identifiez si les lettres prononcées sont des voyelles ou des consonnes.

▶ 0:00 / 0:39 — 🔊 ⋮

1. Voyelle ou consonne ?
2. Voyelle ou consonne ?
3. Voyelle ou consonne ?
4. Voyelle ou consonne ?
5. Voyelle ou consonne ?
6. Voyelle ou consonne ?
7. Voyelle ou consonne ?
8. Voyelle ou consonne ?
9. Voyelle ou consonne ?
10. Voyelle ou consonne ?

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17.3: Structure - Prononciation et orthographe - Homonymes

Objectif

In this section, you will learn about French homonyms, homographs and homophones

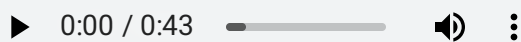
On étudie !

Les homonymes

Les homonymes sont des mots qui se prononcent ou s'écrivent de la même manière, ou même les deux à la fois, mais qui n'ont pas le même sens.

Les homonymes parfaits

Les homonymes parfaits se prononcent et s'écrivent de la même manière mais veulent dire deux choses différentes.



la **mine** (mine) vs. la **mine** (lead)

un **tour** (tour) vs. un **tour** (turn) vs. la **tour** (tower)

la **voile** (sail) vs. le **voile** (veil, curtain)

la **page** (page of a book) vs. le **page** (page of the king)

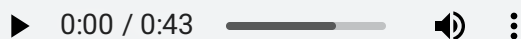
le **court** (court) vs. **court** (adj. short) vs. il/elle **court** (he/she runs)

la **pomme** (de douche) vs. une **pomme** (fruit)

je **suis** (être) vs. je **suis** (suivre)

Les homographes

Les homographes sont des mots qui s'écrivent de la même manière et ne sonnent pas de la même manière.



Il **est** de l'**est**.

Les poules du **couvent** **couvent**.

Mes **films** ont cassé mes **films**.

Cet homme est **fier** ; peut-on s'y **fier** ?

Je suis **content** qu'ils nous **content** cette histoire.

Ils **violent** leurs promesses et Ils ont un caractère **violent**.

Ces filles se **parent** de fleurs pour leur **parent**.

Ils **négligent** leur devoir ; moi, je suis moins **négligent**

Les homophones

Les homophones sont des mots qui sonnent de la même manière, mais qui ne s'écrivent pas de la même manière.

▶ 0:00 / 0:04 ——— 🔊 ⋮

Exemples

Français	Anglais
ferment (n., m.)	ferment, enzyme
fermant (participe présent de <i>fermer</i>)	closing

▶ 0:00 / 0:04 ——— 🔊 ⋮

Exemples

Français	Anglais
ferme (n., f.)	farm
(ils) ferment (v.)	they close

Note

ferment (n.) et ferment (v.) sont des homographes.

Ressources supplémentaires

Explorez [les homonymes](#) et [les phomophones](#).

Explorez d'autres [jeux de mots](#) et ces [virelangues](#).

On pratique !

Activité A

Prononcez. Répétez ces groupes de mots suivants à voix haute.

▶ 0:00 / 0:57 ——— 🔊 ⋮

parle, parles, parlent

parler, parlez, parlé

en, an

haut, au, eau

la, là, l'a

guerre, guère

quel, quelle, qu'elle

fête, faites, faite

peux, peut, peu

frais, frai

mai, mets, mais
mère, maire, mer
maître, mètre
trait, très
soit, soie
né, n'est, nés, nez
vert, verre, vers, ver
leur, leurs, leurre
c'est, s'est, sais
tant, temps
alêne, haleine
chaîne, chêne
croit, croît
conte, compte
sont, sont
foie, fois, foi
mal, mâle
cet homme, cette, sept, Sete, c'est (un).

Activité B

Choisis des homonymes, homophones et des homographes des listes ci-dessus, et écrivez des phrases qui ont du sens.

Modèle : Cette année je vais visiter Sète avec sept amis. C'est une bonne idée, n'est-ce pas ?

Activité C

Jeux de mots. Explorez les jeux de mots suivants:

1. Prononcez: Je méditerai... Tu m'éditeras.
2. Un virlangue : Le ver vert va vers le verre
3. Trouvez l'erreur: Il était maire et père de famille. (mère)
4. Devinettes:

Note

Savez-vous la différence ?

Les verbes **peindre** vs. **peigner**:

Question: En quoi un coiffeur et un peintre ressemblent-ils ?

Réponse: Ils peignent tous les deux. (peigner – peindre)

Les verbes **suivre** vs. **être**.

Question: Je ne **suis** pas ce que je **suis**, car si j'étais ce que je **suis**, je ne serais pas ce que je **suis**. Qui **suis**-je ?

Réponse: l'ombre

17.4: Structure - Comment ça s'écrit ?

Objectifs

In this section, you will learn about:

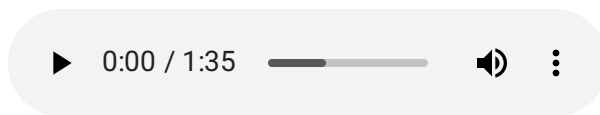
- The French alphabet
- French accent marks

Media Alternative

Listen to the audio clips that follow on this page to hear the French pronunciation of vocabulary and examples presented.

On étudie !

[L'alphabet français](#)



Alphabet

Lettres	Exemples
A	comme alligator
B	comme bison
C	comme canari
D	comme dauphin
E	comme éléphant
F	comme faon
G	comme girafe
H	comme hamster
I	comme iguane
J	comme jaguar
K	comme koala
L	comme lion
M	comme mule
N	comme narval
O	comme orque
P	comme panthère
Q	comme quetzal
R	comme rat
S	comme scorpion
T	comme tigre
U	comme urial
V	comme vautour
W	comme wallaby
X	comme xérus
Y	comme yack
Z	comme zèbre

Ressources supplémentaires

- Practice identifying and pronouncing the letters of the French alphabet with this video: [French alphabet](#).
- Listen and sing along to this [French alphabet song](#).

Les signes diacritiques

Here are the important accents and diacritical marks to remember in French. They are important for both spelling and pronunciation:

Les signes diacritiques

Signes	Exemples	Explications
accent aigu (´)	étudiant, marié, café	Indicates that an <i>i</i> is pronounced like the underlined vowels in <i>day</i> or <i>late</i> , but shorter and crisper. When a French word begins with <i>é</i> it often means that an <i>s</i> would appear at the beginning of the English equivalent: <i>éponge</i> -> <i>sponge</i> ; <i>état</i> —> <i>state</i> ; <i>étudiante</i> —> <i>student</i> .
accent grave (`)	très, à	Indicates that an <i>e</i> is pronounced like the <i>e</i> in the English word <i>pet</i> . For example: très , nièce , père . When it is placed over an a or a u , it does not change the pronunciation, but it does distinguish words. Compare: la (the) vs. là (there); ou (or) vs. où (where); a (has) vs. à (to, at).
accent circonflexe (^)	hôpital, âge, île, août, sûr	This mark can appear above any vowel. It indicates that a letter has been dropped from an older version of the word, usually an <i>s</i> . This can help us identify mots apparentés. For example: hôpital (hospital), forest (forêt), fête (feast). L'accent circonflexe can also help distinguish between words with similar spellings: mûr (ripe) vs. mur (wall); sûr (sure) vs. sur (on).
tréma (¨)	naïve, Haïti, égoïste	Indicates that the vowel under it must be pronounced separately from the vowel next to it (without blending)
cédille (ç)	ça, garçon, français	Softens the letter <i>c</i> to be pronounced like an English /s/ instead of a /k/.

On pratique !

Activité A

The names of these animals begin with which letter of the alphabet? Don't forget the appropriate accent if there's one.

1. __léphant
2. __anard
3. __oala
4. __rque
5. __igre
6. __guane
7. __lligator
8. __ion
9. _____èbre

10. __allaby

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17.5: Structure - Différence de prononciation entre les temps des verbes

Objectif

In this section, you will practice pronouncing words and phrases that have the same consonant sounds but different vowel sounds.

On étudie !

Structure : Pronunciation

Voyelles

Voyelles	Voyelles
ai, è	ou
au, eau	o
u	eu
in, ain, im, aim	on, om

Lettre muettes

Lettres muettes en fin de mot	Lettre muettes en fin de mot sous certaines conditions (The CRFL rule)	Le H muet
-d, -p, -s, -t, -x, -z, -e	-c, -r, -f, -l	h

Pour en [savoir plus](#).

Liaisons, contractions et élisions

Les liaisons	Les Contractions	Les élisions
Tout à coup De temps en temps Quand est-ce que... Pour en savoir plus .	de + le = du de + les = des à + le = au à + les = aux Pour en savoir plus .	l', j, m', t', n', d', qu', s' + [a,e,i,o,u,y,h] Pour en savoir plus .

On pratique !

Activité A

Entraînez-vous à prononcer ces mots et expressions.

▶ 0:00 / 1:25 — 🔊 ⋮

1. j'aimais, jamais, j'ai aimé, je mets
2. veux, vous, vu, veau
3. peu, poux, pu, peau
4. loup, l'eau, lu, le
5. je l'ai aimé, je l'aimais, je le mets, je la mets
6. je vais, j'avais, j'y vais, java

7. j'ai été malade, j'étais malade, je t'aime Ahmad
8. ils ont, ils sont
9. décidé, décédé

Activité B

Entraînez-vous à prononcer ces mots et expressions.

▶ 0:00 / 1:38 — 🔊 ⋮

1. j'ai passé, je passe, je passais
2. j'étudiais, j'étudie, j'ai étudié
3. je jouais, je joue, j'ai joué
4. je mangeais, je mange, j'ai mangé
5. il acceptait, il accepte, il a accepté
6. je pensais à vous, je pense à vous, j'ai pensé à vous
7. elle se levait, elle se lève, elle s'est levée
8. tu te reposais, tu te reposes, tu t'es reposé(e)
9. il se fâchait, il se fâche, il s'est fâché
10. tu te réveillais, tu te réveilles, tu t'es réveillé(e)
11. je travaillais ici, je travaille ici, j'ai travaillé ici
12. je passais du temps, je passe du temps, j'ai passé du temps
13. je travaillais tard, je travaille tard, j'ai travaillé tard
14. tu te levais tôt, tu te lèves tôt, tu t'es levé(e) tôt
15. elle montait te voir, elle monte te voir, elle est montée te voir.
16. il restait longtemps, il reste longtemps, il est resté longtemps
17. il se préparait, il se prépare, il s'est préparé.
18. elle acceptait, elle accepte, elle a accepté

Activité C

Le futur vs. le conditionnel. Entraînez-vous à prononcer ces mots et expressions.

▶ 0:00 / 0:34 — 🔊 ⋮

1. il y aura, il y aurait
2. nous parlerons, nous parlerions
3. vous parlerez, vous parleriez
4. vous étudierez, vous étudieriez
5. vous aurez, vous auriez
6. tu iras, tu irais
7. nous choisirons, nous choisirions

On approfondit !

Ressources en ligne

Use the following resources to type accents and/or search for words:

- [Accents](#): ç, à, é, è, â, ê, î, ô, û, ù, è, ï, ü
- [Dictionnaire](#) français-anglais

Exercice 1 : Aujourd'hui, hier et maintenant

Answer

1. Un virus a infecté mon ordinateur.
2. Elle surfait sur Internet.
3. Il n'y avait pas de téléphone portable, alors on se parlait dans la rue et on jouait ensemble.
4. Tu surfes sur Internet.
5. Je passais beaucoup de temps sur ma tablette.
6. On s'est servies d'un téléphone à cadran.
7. Les enfants jouent aux jeux vidéo.
8. Il a surfé sur Internet.
9. J'ai passé beaucoup de temps sur ma tablette.



Ecoutez et choisissez le temps de l'action: **maintenant**, **hier**, ou **durant l'enfance**.

1. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
2. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
3. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
4. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
5. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
6. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
7. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
8. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).
9. (maintenant, hier, durant l'enfance).

✓ Vérifier

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Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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