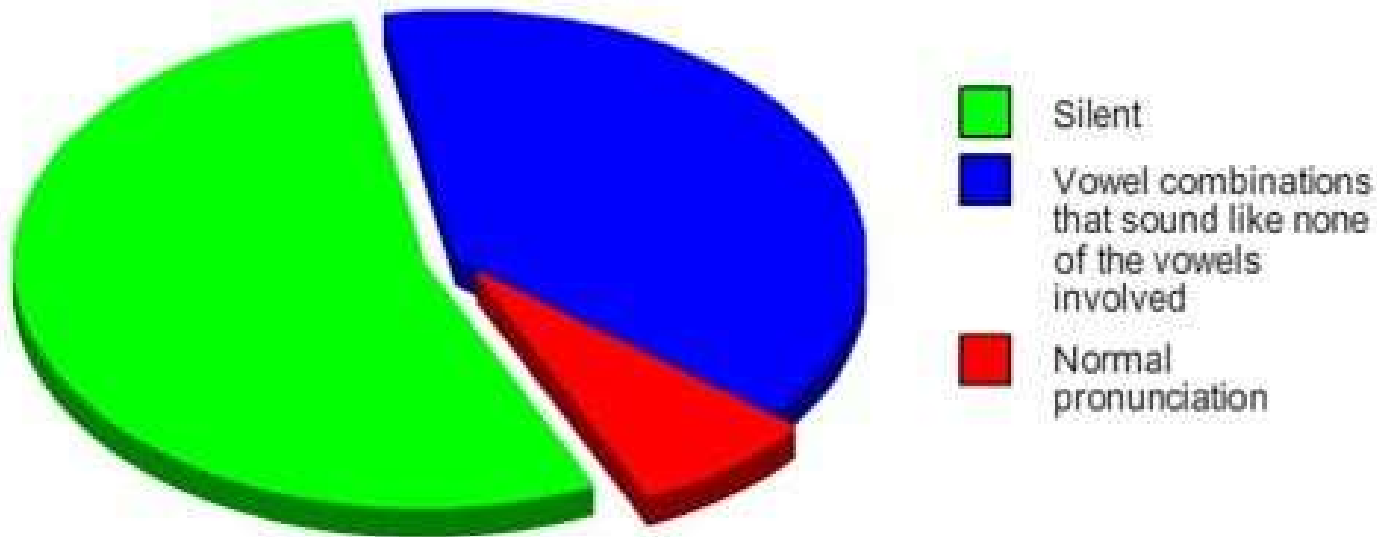


French Letters and Their Pronunciation

CURRENT VERSION HAS TOO MUCH WORDS FOR A PRESENTATION BUT VERY GOOD FOR « end slide » / « printing » / « résumé)

Longer sentences in presentation, more to oral, whereas printing requires, more description



International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

Written form of pronunciation in // or []

- Mangeons /mãzõ/ [mãzõ]
- Russie /Rysi/
- Beurre /bœR/
- Élève /elɛv/
- Premier /pRɛmjɛ/

→ Symbols used in the dictionary

→ All languages (English too!)

→ Can compare pronunciation between words or languages (eg. R is the same in DE/FR)

sound in french words

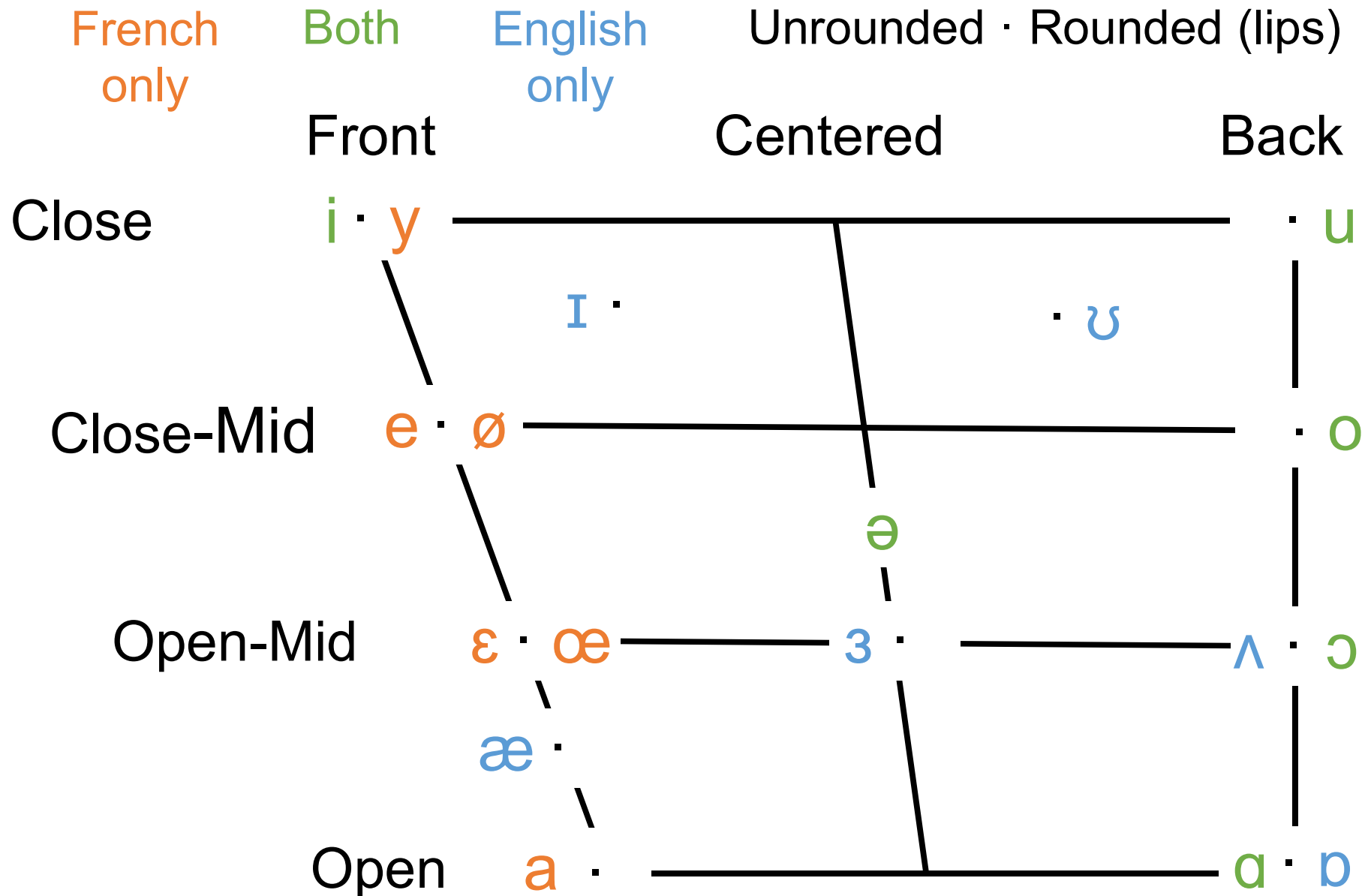
Vowels

closest equivalent in english

	i ci, vie , lyrique	i	/i:/ heel, bead
Two letters for		ɪ	Hit /:/ means <i>longer time</i>
One sound!	le , premier	ə	a bird, above, over, open
	été , jouer, j'ai	e	~ /ɛ/ bay
	fève , être, merci, jouet, lait	ɛ	Set
	peu , deux	ø	~ /ə:/ urgent, ferm, work
	cœur , peur, cueillir	œ	~ /ɜ:/ bird
	a mour, plat	a	~ /æ/ cat
	p â te, bas	ɑ	/ɑ:/ after
	or , homme	ʌ	fun, cousin
	mot, gauche , eau , hôpital	ɔ	~ /ɒ/ wash, pot /ɔ:/ born
		o	~ /oʊ/ goat, code
In red the « French writing »	gen ou	u	~ /ʊ/ full, hook ~ /u:/ boom
of the sound when IPA is not	ur ne	y	
used			

How to pronounce vowels (all languages!)

Vowel trapezium (where in the mouth the sound comes from)



lots of online videos give
tricks to say those!

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=j_Qs75dfpko](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_Qs75dfpko)

Nasal Vowels

pin , plein, pain, synthèse, examen	ẽ
un , brun, parfum	œ
an , pendant, faon*	ã
on , bonbon	õ

*very few words

see also grammatical rule
« N transforms to M before
BMP »

Semi-consonants

yaourt, maille	j	yes
joie, oui, nouer	w	wa
huile, lui	ɥ r	/wj/ like

Consonants

chat, schéma	ʃ	shower
jus, genou	ʒ	measure
agneau	ɲ	canyon
renard	ʁ	/R/ for convenience

Work on the differences

All French agree that those sound are **clearly** different:

/ə/ (no accent)	≠	/e/ (accent)
/e/ (close)	≠	/ɛ/ (open)
mais /ɛ/ (close)	≠	ma /a/ (open)
peu /ø/ (close)	≠	peur /œ/ (open)
blanc /ɑ̃/ (open, unrounded)	≠	blond /ɔ̃/ (close, rounded)
mourir /u/ (back)	≠	murir /y/ (front)
rue /y/ (rounded)	≠	riz // (unrounded)

But, don't worry!

Here, a lot of some French people (regions or accents) can not (under some circumstances) even tell the difference.

brin / ẽ / (unrounded)	≠	brun / œ / (rounded)
patte / a / (front)	≠	pâte / ɑ / (back)
pomme / ɔ / (open)	≠	paume / o / (closed)
de / ə / (central)	≠	deux / ø / (front)
parlerai / e / (subjunctif)	≠	parlerais / ɛ / (imparfait)

And finally don't worry if you can't tell the difference when French do, you will probably be understood 😊

Trying to explain to some French people that in English /ə/ ≠ /ʌ/ ≠ /ɑ/ ≠ /ɜ/ will make her·him go crazy!

Regional accents

Finally, like in English, regions/accents change the sound the people use for one word.

For example, some accents pronounce **les** /ɛ/ whereas generally people (and dictionaries) use /e/

Other examples include:

haie /he/ vs /hɛ/

autre /otr/ vs /ɔtr/

tu **es** /ɛ/ vs /e/

jouet /ɛ/ vs /e/

...

Handy References

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_French

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_English

wordreference.com/fren/élève

[www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/
ipa-charts/ipa-chart-download-print/](http://www.internationalphoneticalphabet.org/ipa-charts/ipa-chart-download-print/)
(chose Kiel :D)

Stress and Syllables

In English, the stress is generally at the beginning of words.

In French it's generally at the end, which gives a different rhythm to the language.

In IPA, /' / is used
eg.

When writing a sentence in IPA, the syllables are written with /./
eg.

Consonants at the end

Mute, don't say it!

blanc

grand

sang

beaucoup

tables

chat

hiboux

Mute E

e // is so discrete we generally don't say it at the end of words (one exception is to exaggerate but you look funny)

l'école est /le.ko.lɛ/

la journée /la.ʒuʁ.ne/

...

Liaison

A mute consonant *before a vowel* is pronounced

- d → /t/ grand homme /gʁɑ̃t_ɔm/
- p → /p/ trop aimable /tʁop_ɛmabl/
- r → /ʁ/ premier enfant /pʁɛmjɛ̃_ɑ̃fɑ̃/
- s → /z/ les euros /lez_øʁo/
- t → /t/ pot-au-feu /pot_ɔ fø/
- x → /z/ mieux être /mjøz_ɛtʁ/
- n (nasals) → [n] un ami /œ̃n_ami/

For « C » and « G », they were said « K » in the old times, now we don't hear it anymore, except in expressions (croc-en-jambes).

For other examples:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaison_\(French\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaison_(French))

Pronunciation S

Between two
vowels

/ z / **maison**
/ z /

Otherwise

/ s / **se**
moisson
espérer

Pronunciation H

Mute, don't say it !

« Normal H »	Habiter	Hiver
Elision	/abite/	/ivɛR/
Liaison	→ j'habite	→ l'hiver
	→ en habitant	→ un hiver
	/ɑ̃n habitɑ̃/	/œ̃n ivɛR/

« Aspirated H »	Haricot	Haut
IPA : 'h	/'aRiko/	/'o/
No Elision	→ le haricot	→ le haut
No liaison	→ des haricots	→ en haut
	/de aRiko/	/ɑ̃ o/

French Letters and Their Pronunciation



Nasal N transforms to M

Before M, B, P

bombe
crampons
empire
lampe

embarquer
ambulance
compas
lampe

EXCEPTIONS

bonbon
bonbonne
bonbonnière
néanmoins
embonpoint