

Lesson 1

Alphabets & Sounds

Do you recall having to memorise your ABCs when you were a child? Imagine that you are once again in the kindergarten classroom, armed with crayons and tracing paper, but this time a charming French teacher is standing in front of the class. Pay close attention to the L' Alphabet if you want to impress your teacher and demonstrate your desire to learn.

The French Alphabet -

There are 26 letters in the French alphabet, which gives it one feature in common with English.

But a lot of them are pronounced very differently.

Be aware that there are "accentuated vowels" and "emphasised consonants" before delving too deeply into the French alphabet, characters that are unique—and not found in written English.

- The grave accent è, which sounds like the "e" in the word "bet". It is also found in the vowels "a" and "u".*
- The acute accent é, which sounds like "ei". It can only be found above the letter e.*
- The circumflex accent ê, which is placed over all vowels. It causes the vowel to sound longer, such as the "ay" in "play".*

- The French /a/, which is a unique sound that sounds like a short "u" sound.
- The cedilla, which turns the "k" sound into the "s" sound. For example, the French word "garçon" (which means boy or waiter) is pronounced as /GHAR son/.
- The diaeresis (called "tréma" in French), which is placed on the second of two consecutive vowels. It is to show that the vowels are pronounced separately. For example, the French word for Christmas, Noël, is pronounced as /no EL/.

Use free tools like Google Translate to listen to these distinctive French sounds online to better comprehend them.

Now, practise speaking the letters that follow using the explanations provided beneath each one. Remember that the

Words based on the Standard American English accent are used to assist explain the sounds.

Aa/ah/

Sounds like the "a" in "father".

Bb/bé/

Sounds like the "e" in "bed".

Cc/sé/

Sounds like "k", but if there is a cedilla, it becomes the sound "s".

Dd/dé/

Sounds like

Ee/ə/

Sounds like the "a" in "again".

Ff/ef/

Sounds like the "f" in "food".

Gg/g/

Sounds like the "s" in "measure" if it comes after "e" or "i". Other than that, it sounds like the "g" in "girl".

Hh/ashe/

It is often not pronounced. For example, "heureux", which is French for "happy", is pronounced as/EUH reuh/.

Ii/ee/

Sounds like the "ee" in "seen".

Jj/dji/

Sounds like the second "g" in "garage".

Kk/ka/

Sounds like the "k" in "kite".

Ll/el/

Sounds like the "l" in "love".

Mm/em/

Sounds like the "m" in "man".

Nn/en/

Sounds like the "n" in "neck".

Oo/o/

Sounds like the "o" in "holiday".

Pp/pe/

Sounds like the "pe" in "pellet".

Qq/ku/

Sounds like the "k" in "kick".

Rr/er/

Sounds like the "r" in "error".

Ss/ess/

Sounds like the "s" in "sat".

Tt/te/

Sounds like the "t" in "tent".

Uu/y/

A uniquely French sound, which is similar to the "oo" in "too".

Vv/ve/

Sounds like the "v" in "vow".

Ww/doblé vee/

Sounds like the "w" in "weekend".

Xx/iks/

Sounds like the "x" in "xylophone".

Yy/y/

Pronounced as/I grec/ when alone. Other than that, it is like the sound "ea" in "each".

Zz/zed/

Sounds like the "z" in "zebra".

