

Lesson 3

Vowel Pronunciations

/a/ -sounds like the first/a/ in marmalade, but not as open. The more open vowel sound that is similar to this one is â.

Examples: table (table), chat (cat), sac (bag), baggage (luggage), rat (rat), matin (morning), bras (arm)

/e/ -sounds like the the English indefinite article 'a' but make the sound sharper, such as the second/a/ in marmalade. Sounds that are similar to this one are/eu/ which is a more open e and/oeu/ which is a more open eu.

Examples: deux (two), oeuvre (master works), cheveu (hair), soeur (sister), beurre (butter), heure (hour)
Keep in mind that the final e in French words is always silent. For example: Notre Dame, Anne Also, the e in the middle of a French word is glided over. For example: boulevard, Mademoiselle

/i/ -sounds like the/ee/ sound in the English language but shorter.

Examples: courir (to run), pipe (pipe), midi (mid-day), minute (minute), nid (nest)

/o/-there are two different sounds with the letter o in French. The first sound is an open/o/ that sounds like the o in the following English words: not, more, and for.

The second sound is a more closed /o/ like the one in the English low and go.

Majority of the /o/ sounds in French pronunciation are open. It is only closed when it is placed at the end of the word.

Examples of the open /o/: botte (botte), homme (man),

Examples of the closed /o/: indigo (indigo), vélo (bicycle), développer (to develop)

Sounds that are similar to the closed /o/ are /eau/, /au/, and /ô/. For example: auto (car), contrôle (control), and eau (water)

/u/-the French pronunciation for u is not actually present in the English language. While the English pronunciation of /u/ is the sound of it in the word push, in French it is quite different. However, the u in push is present in the French language, but it is for the vowel combination /ou/.

Examples: minute, voiture (car), humain (human)

/y/ -the pronunciation of this is similar to the French double /i/ sound.

Examples: louer/loi ier/ (lease), noyer/noi ier/ (to drown), rayer/rai ier/ (to scratch), pays/pai i/ (country)

Practice pronouncing the following:

si => sou => su

rue => rit => roue

sous => assure => assis

écrou => écrit => écru

repu => tous => asile

tisse => sucre => rousse

git => joue => jus

revit => revue => couve

