



## French Pronunciation and Cognates

French words, for the most part, put the stress of a word at the **end** whereas in English the stress often goes at the beginning. Don't worry if you can't hear the stress. Some people find it a challenge.

Lazy French – The French can't be bothered to pronounce most of the letters at the end of words. Try these without pronouncing the last letters. **Paris, grand, petit, poulet, deux.**

The exceptions are words that end in the consonants in the mnemonic **FRoLiCK BBQ.**

Try these out for size: **neuf, partir, normal, sac, coq, sportif**

There are exceptions to these exceptions (as always!) words ending in 'nc' are silent **blanc, franc**  
**-ER verbs** (don't worry if you don't know what that means yet – you will soon enough :-)) – the -er is pronounced more like 'ay' **manger** (mangay) to eat, **parler** (parlay) to talk/speak.

**Liaison** This is what often happens when one French word that normally has a silent ending is followed by another word that begins with a **vowel**. Now you can merge the two words together – so that you sound a little drunk.

**Vous\_avez** – 'you have' (with your drunk impression the 's' sound is more of a 'z' *vouzavez*)

**Ils\_ont** – 'they have' (sounds like *ilzon*) **deux oranges** 'two oranges' (*durzorange*)

The letter(s) '**e**' or '**es**' at the end of a word is/are **MUTE** but it gives the letter before it a strong sound. To sound French you spit the letter preceding an 'e' or 'es' out! **grande, petite, tout le monde.**

**H** is silent **hôtel** (otel), **hôpital** (opital)

**R** is like having a hairball that you need to clear from the back of your throat. **robe** dress, **rouge** red

**QU** is a 'k' sound **quiche** (kische), **qui** (key) 'who'

**TH** is a 't' sound **thé** (tay) 'tea', **Thierry** (tierry)

**CH** is a 'sh' sound **chat** (sha) 'cat', **chips** (ships) 'crisps'

**IN/IM/UN** usually sounds like 'an' without the 'n' sound **vin** 'wine', **important, un** one, a/an

**Accents** (the funny squiggles you find above words) serve to either:

- change the sound of the letter – **e** (er), **é** (ay), **è** (eh)
- change the meaning of the word – **ou** 'or', **où** 'where', **a** 'has', **à** 'at/in/to'.
- tell you that a letter '**s**' used to be there – **forêt** forest, **hôpital** 'hospital'
- to tell you to pronounce all the letters **Anaïs** pronounced Ana –*eees* not Anay!

**Cognates** - a fancy term for words that look the same or similar and mean the same in different languages. Around 50% of English is derived from Latin so we share a lot of cognates with the French language.

ion - prononciation, réservation, condition  
 ance - importance, France, chance  
 ence - indépendance, évidence, différence  
 age - âge, cage, courage  
 ude - attitude, gratitude, solitude  
 ure - agriculture, sculpture, température  
 ible/able - possible, terrible, table, capable  
 ant/ent - important, intelligent, accident  
 um - aluminium, calcium, minimum  
 ary – **aire** - nécessaire, vocabulaire,  
 militaire  
 ory - **oire** - victoire, territoire, gloire

ic/ical – **ique** - identique, logique, magique  
 sm – **sme** - organisme, racisme,  
 bouddhisme  
 ty – **té** - identité, anxiété, honnêteté  
 or – **eur** - acteur, majeur, horreur (quelle horreur!)  
 ist – **iste** - dentiste, artiste, liste  
 ian- **ien/ne** - parisien/ienne, canadien/ienne,  
 australien/ienne  
 ive – **if/ive** - positif/ive, compétitif/ive,  
 massif/i

