



# How to Pronounce French Words the Right Way

KS4 FRENCH

KS3 FRENCH

Ages 11-16 ⌚ 4 min read

## Why French Pronunciation Is Tricky

**French** can feel confusing when you're learning it, because words often don't sound like they look. Many languages sound out every letter, but **French** has lots of silent letters and special sounds that don't exist in **English**. The good news? There are clear rules that help once you know them.

### Rule 1: Silent Letters

One of the biggest surprises in **French** is that many letters at the end of words are completely silent. The letters **s**, **t**, **d**, **p**, **g** and **x** are often silent at the end of words. For example, "**chat**" (cat) sounds like "shah", not "chat", and "**vous**" (you) sounds like "voo", not "vooss".

Think of it like watching a film with the subtitles on but the sound turned down for certain words—you see the letters but don't hear them.

### Rule 2: The Letter R

The **French R** is nothing like the **English R**. Instead of rolling your tongue, you make a sound deep in your throat. It's like you're gargling very quietly! This takes practice, but once you hear it, you can copy it.

### Rule 3: Vowel Sounds

**French vowels** are pronounced very clearly and stay the same sound. The letter **é** (with an accent) always sounds like "ay". The letter **à** sounds like "ah". Learning which accent marks go on which vowels helps you say words right.

### Rule 4: Nasal Vowels

**French** has special sounds called **nasal vowels** that don't exist in **English**. When you see letter combinations like "**on**" or "**an**", you say them through your nose a little bit.

Words like "**bon**" (good) and "**main**" (hand) use these sounds.

Think of it like holding your nose while speaking—the sound comes partly from your mouth and partly from your nose.

## **Rule 5: H Is Always Silent**

The letter **H** is always silent in **French**, even at the start of words. "**Homme**" (man) sounds like "om", not "hom".

## **Practice Makes Perfect**

The best way to learn **French pronunciation** is to listen to native speakers. Use online videos, language apps, and ask your teacher to hear how words really sound. Once you understand these rules, you'll find **French** becomes much easier to speak.