

■ CONSONANT SOUNDS

FRENCH SPELLING	APPROXIMATE SOUND	EXAMPLE
b, d, k, l, m, n, p, s t, v, z	same as in English	
c (before e, i, y)	<u>s</u>	<i>cinéma</i>
c (before a, o, u)	<u>k</u>	<i>café</i>
ç (appears only before a, o, u)	<u>s</u>	<i>français</i>
ch	<u>sh</u>	<i>chaud</i>
g (before e, i, y)	<u>zh</u> in measure	<i>âge</i>
g (before a, o, u)	g in game	<i>gâteau</i>
gn	ny in <u>on</u> ion	<i>agneau</i>
h	always silent	<i>homme</i>
j	<u>zh</u> in measure	<i>Jacques</i>
qu, final q	<u>k</u>	<i>qui</i>
r	pronounced in back of mouth, rolled like light gargling sound	<i>Paris</i>
ss	<u>s</u>	<i>tasse</i>
s (beginning of word or before/after consonant)	<u>s</u>	<i>salle, disque, absurde</i>
s (between vowels)	<u>z</u> in <u>Z</u> elda	<i>maison</i>
th	<u>t</u>	<i>thé</i>
x	gz in <u>ex</u> act	<i>exact</i>
x	<u>ks</u> in <u>ex</u> cellent	<i>excellent</i>
ll (between i and e)	y in yes	<i>volaille</i>
ll	<u>l</u> in <u>ill</u>	<i>elle</i>

■ VOWEL SOUNDS

FRENCH SPELLING	APPROXIMATE SOUND	EXAMPLE
a, à, â	<u>a</u> in father	<i>la</i>
é, er, ez (end of word)	ay in lay	<i>thé, parler, allez</i>
e (plus final pronounced consonant)	<u>e</u> in met	<i>belle</i>
è, âi	<u>e</u> in met	<i>père, chaîne</i>
e	<u>uh</u> in alone	<i>le, lever</i>
eu, œu (always followed by a consonant sound)	<u>uh</u> in fur but with very rounded and loose lips	<i>leur, cœur</i>
eu, œu (never followed by any sound)	<u>uh</u> but with very round and tight lips	<i>feu, vœu</i>
i	<u>ee</u> in beet	<i>ici</i>
i plus vowel	y in yesterday	<i>lion, bien</i>
o, au, eau, ô	<u>o</u> in caught	<i>mot, chaud, beau, hôte</i>
ou	<u>oo</u> in toot	<i>vous</i>
oi	<u>wa</u> in watt	<i>moi</i>
oy	<u>wa</u> followed by a y sound	<i>croyant</i>
u	no equivalent in English -say ee, then round your lips	<i>tu, fumeurs</i>
ui	<u>wee</u> as in week	<i>lui</i>

■ NASAL VOWELS

Nasal vowels are sounds produced when air is expelled from both the mouth and the nose. In French, a consonant, *n* or *m*, that follows a nasal vowel is not fully pronounced. For example, the French word *on*: We pronounce the nasal vowel *o* through the mouth and nose, but we do not sound the following consonant *n*.

FRENCH SPELLING	APPROXIMATE SOUND	EXAMPLE
an, en	vowel in balm	<i>France</i>
em	vowel in balm	<i>emmener</i>
in, ain, ein	vowel in man	<i>fin</i>
im, aim	vowel in man	<i>faim</i>
ien	y + vowel in men	<i>bien</i>
ion	y + vowel in song	<i>station</i>
oin	<u>w</u> + vowel in man	<i>loin</i>
on	vowel in song	<i>bon</i>
om	vowel in song	<i>tomber</i>
un	vowel in lung	<i>un</i>