

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

FREE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

English Pronunciation for French Speakers

pour les francophones · built around your first language

/θ/ TH

the H

stress

the R

vowels

endings

You don't have to lose your accent.

You have to be understood.

by Evangeline Smith & Miriam Smith · authors of Speak Clearly

THE PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

English Pronunciation for French Speakers

A Speak Clearly Method guide

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Companion to "Speak Clearly: A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation."

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Built for French speakers

Your accent isn't random — it's French, an elegant and precise language, showing through in English. Because French follows clear rules, the places it shapes your English are predictable. And predictable means fixable.

This guide skips the sounds you already handle well and goes straight to the handful that most affect whether English listeners understand you the first time.

The promise

This is not about erasing your accent or sounding American. Only about 1 in 4 English speakers learned it as a first language — you're the majority, not the exception. We keep your accent and fix only what gets in the way of being understood.

How to use it

Read the strengths on the next page first, then work through the fix cards one at a time. Say everything OUT LOUD — into your phone's recorder or a mirror. A sound only counts when it survives outside the page.

Sounds you already own

French gives you a real head start. Several sounds that defeat other learners are already yours — trust them.

ch → SH

Your ch in chat, chercher is exactly English “sh” in she, wash.

j / g → measure

Your j in je, jour is the tricky /ʒ/ in measure, vision, usually.

oui → W

Your ou in oui, moi gives you English ‘w’ — “west” is easy for you.

v and z

You already have clear /v/ and /z/ — vine, zoo and eyes come naturally.

Vowel precision

French vowels are finely controlled — great ear training for English vowels.

Start from these. When a new English sound feels hard, remember how many you already make perfectly.

Fix cards · 1 of 3

H

/h/

The H sound

FRENCH HABIT

French h is silent, so “happy” becomes “’appy” and “house” becomes “’ouse” — the single most noticeable one.

THE FIX

Push a soft breath before the vowel — like fogging a mirror. Put your hand up: feel the air.

house

happy

behind

hello

TH

/θ ð/

The TH sound

FRENCH HABIT

French has no TH, so “think” becomes “sink/tink” and “this” becomes “zis/dis.”

THE FIX

Put your tongue tip between your teeth and push air. In a mirror you should see it.

think

three

this

mother

' ə

stress

Stress — the big one

FRENCH HABIT

French spreads emphasis evenly and leans on the last syllable. English hammers ONE syllable and weakens the rest.

THE FIX

Hit one strong beat per word and relax the others: baNAna, comPUter, PHOtograph.

banana

computer

photograph

Fix cards · 2 of 3

R

/r/

The English R

FRENCH HABIT

The French r is made in the throat. The English r is made with a floating tongue tip — completely different.

THE FIX

Curl your tongue up and back, touching nothing, and round your lips. No throat scrape at all.

red

right

car

around

i i

/ɪ i:/

Ship vs Sheep

FRENCH HABIT

French has one 'i', so short "ship" and long "sheep" sound the same.

THE FIX

Short /ɪ/: relaxed and quick. Long /i:/: spread your lips like a smile and hold it longer.

ship/sheep

live/leave

fill/feel

ʌ æ

/ʌ æ/

Cat vs cut

FRENCH HABIT

English /æ/ and /ʌ/ don't exist in French, so "cat" and "cut" blur together.

THE FIX

"cat": wide mouth, smile. "cut": relaxed and central. Feel your mouth change between them.

cat/cut

bad/bud

cap/cup

Fix cards · 3 of 3

-ED -S

endings

Say the endings

FRENCH HABIT French drops many final consonants, so ‘-ed’ and ‘-s’ vanish: “asked”→“ask,” “dogs”→“dog.”

THE FIX Say the ending crisply — askED, dogS, helpED. In English, final consonants carry meaning.

asked

dogs

helped

first

NG

/ŋ/

The NG sound

FRENCH HABIT French nasal vowels are lovely, but English ‘ng’ is a consonant — so “sing” gets nasalised away.

THE FIX Let the back of your tongue lift and the air out through your nose — then stop. No hard g.

sing

singer

running

PRACTISE

Your 7-day plan

Ten minutes a day. Record yourself on day 1 and day 7 — hearing your own progress is the most motivating thing you'll do.

DAY
1

The H

Breathe the h: house, happy, hello, behind. Hand up to feel the air. Record 3 sentences.

DAY
2

TH

Tongue between teeth: think, three, this. In the mirror.

DAY
3

Stress

One strong beat: baNAna, comPUter, PHOtograph. Exaggerate at first.

DAY
4

The R

Float the tongue, no throat: red, right, car, around.

DAY
5

Vowels

ship/sheep and cat/cut in the mirror. Watch your mouth change.

DAY
6

Endings & NG

Crisp endings (asked, dogs); nose test for sing, singer.

DAY
7

Together

Re-record your day-1 sentences. Compare. Pick your hardest sound to keep polishing.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THESE

Ready for all 22 sounds?

This guide covers the sounds French speakers most need. Speak Clearly — the full book — covers all 22 sounds and speech patterns, with minimal pairs and tongue twisters for every one, guides for six first languages, and a complete 30-day plan.

Speak Clearly

A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation

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Bonne chance! You don't have to lose your accent — just be understood.

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

**Speak clearly.
Speak as yourself.**

Parle comme tu es.

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