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View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500)Bagpipes (links | edit) List of decades, centuries, and millennia (links | edit) Fashion (links | edit) Giovanni Boccaccio (links | edit) History of Mali (links | edit) History of Mauritius (links | edit) Post office (links | edit) Snare drum (links | edit) Republican Party (United States) (links | edit) 20th century (links | edit) 15th century (links | edit) 17th century (links | edit) 18th century (links | edit) 1624 (links | edit) 1626 (links | edit) 1642 (links | edit) 1648 (links | edit) 1649s (links | edit) 1640s (links | edit) 1597 (links | edit) 1690 (links | edit) 1688 (links | edit) 7th century (links | edit) 10th century (links | edit) 9th century (links | edit) 8th century (links | edit) 6th century (links | edit) 5th century (links | edit) 3rd century (links | edit) 2nd century (links | edit) 1573 (links | edit) 1570s (links | edit) 1574 (links | edit) 1476 (links | edit) 1436 (links | edit) 1542 (links | edit) 1540s (links | edit) View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500) Retrieved from "WhatLinksHere/16th century" Spelling and punctuation of the French language Part of a series on theFrench language Langues d'oïl Dialects Creoles Francophonie History Phonological history Oaths of Strasbourg Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts Anglo-Norman Grammar Adverbs Articles and determiners Pronouns (personal) Verbs (conjugation)morphologypassé composépassé simple Orthography Alphabet Reforms Circumflex Braille Phonology Elision Liaison Aspirated h Help:IPA/French vte This article contains phonetic transcriptions in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). For an introductory guide on IPA symbols, see Help:IPA. For the distinction between [] , / and ⟨ ⟩, see IPA's Brackets and transcription delimiters. French orthography encompasses the spelling and punctuation of the French language. It is based on a combination of phonemic and historical principles. The spelling of words is largely based on the pronunciation of Old French c. 1100–1200 AD, and has stayed more or less the same since then, despite enormous changes to the pronunciation of the language in the intervening years. Even in the late 17th century, with the publication of the first French dictionary by the Académie française, there were attempts to reform French orthography. This has resulted in a complicated relationship between spelling and sound, especially for vowels; a multitude of silent letters; and many homophones, e.g. saint/sein/sain/seing/céins/ceint (all pronounced [sɛ̃]) and sang/sans/cent (all pronounced [sɑ̃]). This is conspicuous in verbs: parles (you speak), parle (I speak / one speaks) and parent (they speak) all sound like [paʁl]. Later attempts to respell some words in accordance with their Latin etymologies further increased the number of silent letters (e.g., temps vs. older tans - compare English "tense", which reflects the original spelling - and vingt vs. older vint). Nevertheless, the rules governing French orthography allow for a reasonable degree of accuracy when pronouncing unfamiliar French words from their written forms. The reverse operation, producing written forms from pronunciation, is much more ambiguous. The French alphabet uses a number of diacritics, including the circumflex, diaeresis, acute, and grave accents, as well as ligatures. A system of braille has been developed for people who are visually impaired. French alphabet The letters of the French alphabet, spoken in Standard French Problems playing this file? See media help. The French alphabet is based on the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet, uppercase and lowercase, with five diacritics and two orthographic ligatures. Letter name Name (IPA) Diacritics and ligatures A a /a/ Ää, Åä, Ææ B b /b/ C c /s/ Çç D d /d/ E e /a/ Êê, Èè, Ëë F f /f/ G g /ʒ/ H h /a/ I i /i/ Îî, Ïï J j /ʒ/ K k /a/ L l /e/ M m /e/ N n /e/ Ññ O o /o/ Ôô, Òò P p /p/ Q q /y/ R r /e/ S s /s/ T t /é/ U u /y/ Üü, Ûû V v /v/ W w /double v/ double v /dublvə/ X x /ks/ Y y /y/ Z z /zé/ Zède /zéd/ (w) and (k) are rarely used except in loanwords and regional words, /w/ is usually written ⟨ou⟩, /k/ is usually written ⟨c⟩ anywhere but before ⟨e, i, y⟩, (qu) before ⟨e, i, y⟩, and sometimes ⟨que⟩ at the ends of words. However, /k/ is common in the metric prefix kilo- (originally from Greek χίλις khília "a thousand"), e.g. kilogramme, kilomètre, kilowatt, kilohertz. The diacritics used in French orthography are the acute accent (´); accent grave, the circumflex (ˆ); accent grave, the diaeresis (¨); tréma, and the cedilla (¸); cédille. Diacritics have no effect on the primary alphabetical order. An acute accent over ⟨e⟩ represents /e/, an (a) in modern French is often used where a combination of ⟨e⟩ and a consonant, usually s, would have been used formerly, e.g. écouter < escouter. A grave accent over ⟨a⟩ or ⟨u⟩ is primarily used to distinguish homophones: à ("to") vs. a has"); ou ("or") vs. ouï ("where"; note that ouï is only used in this way). A grave accent over ⟨e⟩ indicates /ɛ/ in positions where a plain ⟨e⟩ would be pronounced /ə/ (schwa). Many verb conjugations contain regular alternations between ⟨é⟩ and ⟨e⟩; for example, the accent mark in the present tense verb lève /lev/ distinguishes the vowel's pronunciation from the schwa in the infinitive, lever /ləv/. A circumflex over ⟨a, e, o⟩ indicates /a, ɛ, ɔ/, respectively, but the distinction between ⟨a⟩ /a/ vs. ⟨â⟩ /a/ is being lost in Parisian French, merging them as [a]. In Belgian French, ⟨ê⟩ is pronounced [ɛː]. Most often, it indicates the historical deletion of an adjacent letter (usually s or a vowel): château < castel, fête < feste, sûr < seur, diner < disner (in medieval manuscripts many letters were often written as diacritical marks, e.g. the circumflex for /s/) and the tilde for /n/). It has also come to be used to distinguish homophones, e.g. du ("of the") vs. dû (past participle of devoir "to have to do something (pertaining to an act)"); however dû is in fact written thus because of a dropped ⟨e⟩: deu (see Circumflex in French). Since the 1990 orthographic changes, the circumflex on ⟨i⟩ and ⟨u⟩ can be dropped unless it distinguishes homophones, e.g. chaîne becomes chaîne but sûr (sure) does not change to avoid ambiguity with the word sur (on). A diaeresis over ⟨e, i, u, y⟩ indicates a hiatus between the accented vowel and the vowel preceding it, e.g. naïve /naiv/, Noël /nosɛl/. The diaeresis may also indicate a glide/diphthong, as in naïde /najɛd/. The combination ⟨œ⟩ is pronounced in the regular way if followed by i (Samøens /samwɛ/). An exception to this is Citroën /sitʁwɛn/. The combination ⟨æb⟩ is either pronounced /æ/ (Raphaël /safaɛl/ or /a/ (Stael). It represents /t/ if it precedes ⟨n⟩ (Saint-Saëns [sɛsɑ̃(s)]). A diaeresis on y only occurs in some proper names and in modern editions of old French texts, e.g. Aÿ /aï/ (commune in Marne, now Aÿ-Champagne), Rue des Cloÿs ? (alley in the 18th arrondissement of Paris), Croÿ /kwɔi/ (family name and hotel on the Boulevard Raspail, Paris), Château du Feÿ /dyfɛi/ (near Joigny), Ghÿs /gis/? (name of Flemish origin spelt (Gh)is) where cursive ⟨ij⟩ looked like ⟨y⟩ to French clerks), L'Hay-les-Roses /aj lɛ ʁoz/ (commune between Paris and Orly airport), Pierre Louÿs /luis/ (author), Eugène Ysaÿe /izai/ (violinist/composer), Moÿ-de-l'Aisne /mɔidələn/ (commune in Aisne and a family name), and Le Blanc de Nicolaÿ /nikolai/ (an insurance company in eastern France). The diaeresis on ⟨u⟩ appears in the Biblical proper names Archélaüs /aʁʁelaj/? , Capharnaïm /kafarnaïm/ (with ⟨im⟩ for ⟨um⟩ as in words of Latin origin such as album, maximum, or chemical element names such as sodium, aluminium), Emmaüs /emajys/, Esaü /ezay/, and Saül /sawl/, as well as French names such as Haüy /aœy/ (IWP-fr has as 3 syllables, [aœy]) Nevertheless, since the 1990 orthographic changes, the diaeresis in words containing ⟨guê⟩ (such as aigüe /egyi/ or cigüe /isigi/) can be moved onto the ⟨u⟩: aigüe, cigüe, and by analogy may be used in verbs such as j'argüe. Without a diaeresis, the ⟨ue⟩ would be silent (or a schwa in accents which retain one): Aigues-Mortes /g(ə)imɔʁt(ə)/. In addition, words of German origin retain their umlaut (ä, ö, ü) if applicable but often use French pronunciation, such as Kärcher /kʰæʁʃ/ or /kʰæʁʃ/, trademark of a pressure washer). A cedilla under ⟨c⟩ indicates that it is pronounced /s/ rather than /k/. Thus je lance "I throw" (with ⟨c⟩ for /s/ before ⟨e⟩). Je languis "I was throwing" (⟨c⟩ would represent /k/ before ⟨a⟩ without the cedilla). The cedilla is only used before ⟨e, o, u⟩, e.g. ça /sɑ/. A cedilla is not used before ⟨e, i, y⟩, since they already mark the ⟨c⟩ as /s/, e.g. ce, ci, cycle. A tilde (˜) above ⟨n⟩ is occasionally used in French for words and names of Spanish origin that have been incorporated into the language (e.g., El Niño, piñata). Like the other diacritics, the tilde has no impact on the primary alphabetical order. Diacritics are often omitted on capital letters, mainly for technical reasons (not present on AZERTY keyboards). However both the Académie française and the Office québécois de la langue française reject this usage and confirm that "in French, the accent has full orthographic value",[1] except for acronyms but not for abbreviations (e.g., CEE, ALENA, but E.-U.).[2] Nevertheless, diacritics are often ignored in word games, including crosswords, Scrabble, and Des chiffres et des lettres. The ligatures ⟨œ⟩ and ⟨ø⟩ are part of French orthography. For collation, these ligatures are treated like the sequences ⟨ae⟩ and ⟨oe⟩ respectively. ⟨œ⟩ (French: e dans l'a, a-e entrelacé or a, e collés/liés) is rare, appearing only in some words of Latin and Greek origin like tœnia, ex æquo, cœcum, œthuse (as named dog's parsley).[3] It generally represents the vowel /œ/, like /é/. The sequence ⟨ae⟩ appears in loanwords from both sounds are heard, as in maestro and paella.[4] ⟨œ⟩ (French: e dans l'o, o-e entrelacé or o et e collés/liés) is a mandatory contraction of ⟨oe⟩ in certain words. Some of these are native French words, with the pronunciation /œ/ or /o/, e.g. choeur "choir" /kœʁ/, cœur "heart" /kœʁ/, mœurs "moods (related to moral)" /mœʁ, mœʁs/, neud "knot" /nœ/ , sœur "sister" /sœʁ/, œuf "egg" /œf/, œuvre "work (of art)" /œvʁ/, vœu "vow" /vœ/. It usually appears in the combination ⟨œu⟩: œil /œj/ "eye" is an exception. Many of these words were originally written with the digraph ⟨œu⟩; the ⟨o⟩ in the ligature represents a sometimes artificial attempt to imitate the Latin spelling: Latin: bovem > Old French bueif/beuf > Modern French bœuf. It is also used in words of Greek origin, as the Latin rendering of the Greek diphthong ⟨ou⟩, e.g. celacanthé "celacanth". These words used to be pronounced with /œ/ but in recent years a spelling pronunciation with /o/ has taken hold, e.g. œsophage /ozzaf/ or /ozzaf/, Edipe /edip/ or /odip/ etc. The pronunciation with /œ/ is often seen to be more correct. When ⟨œ⟩ is found after ⟨c⟩, the ⟨c⟩ can be pronounced /k/ in some cases (cœur), or /s/ in others (celacanthé). ⟨œ⟩ is not used when both letters contribute different sounds. For example, when ⟨o⟩ is part of a prefix (coexist), or when ⟨e⟩ is part of a suffix (minoen), or in the word moelle and its derivatives.[5] French digraphs and trigraphs have both historical and phonological origins. In the first case, it is a vestige of the spelling in the word's original language (usually Latin or Greek) maintained in modern French, e.g. the use of ⟨ph⟩ in téléphone, ⟨th⟩ in théorème, or ⟨ch⟩ in chaotique. In the second case, a digraph is used to an archaic pronunciation, such as ⟨ou⟩, ⟨au⟩, ⟨oi⟩, ⟨ai⟩, and ⟨œu⟩, or is merely a convenient way to expand the twenty-six-letter alphabet to cover all relevant phonemes, as in ⟨ch⟩, ⟨on⟩, ⟨un⟩, ⟨ou⟩, ⟨un⟩, and ⟨in⟩. Some cases are a mixture of these or are used for purely pragmatic reasons, such as ⟨ge⟩ for /ʒ/ in il m'angeait ("he ate"), where the ⟨e⟩ serves to indicate a "soft" ⟨g⟩ inherent in the verb's root, similar to the significance of a cedilla to ⟨c⟩. Some exceptions apply to the rules governing the pronunciation of word-final consonants. See Liaison (French) for details. Consonants and combinations of consonant letters Spelling Major value(IPA) Examples of major value Minor values(IPA) Examples of minor values Exceptions Foreign words -bs, -cs (in the plural of words ending in silent (b) or (c)), -ds (in œufs, bouzufs, and plurals of words ending in a silent (f)), -gs, -ps, -t Ø plombs, blancs, prends, œufs (also /f/), cerfs, longs, draps, achats /t/ quarts /d/ bavards b/ elsewhere /b/ ballon, abbé Ø Lefebvre /v/ Habbadiah before a voiceless consonant /p/ absolu, observer, subtil Ø (before p) subploral finally Ø plomb, Colomb /b/ Jacob ç /s/ ça, gargon, reçu ç before (e, i, y) /s/ cyclone, loquace, douce, ciel, œux Ø (after s or x) scene, exception /f/ ciao, ciabatta initially/medially elsewhere /k/ cabas, crasse, cœur, sacré ç before e and o in scientific terms of Latin and Greek origin/Ø cœcum, celacanthé bifteck, knickerbockers, knickers (before k) (see also -ct, -cu, -cte) /g/ second finally /g/ lac, donc, parc Ø tabac, blanc, caoutchouc /g/ zinc cc before (e, i, y) /s/ accés, accent /s/ suction /k/ soccer /f/ fettuccine elsewhere /k/ accord ch /g/ chat, dysharmonie, transhumance ss /v/ baisser, passer -si /s/ et (direction), ouest, podcast Ø est (verb), Jésus-Christ (also /t/) t, it elsewhere /t/ tout, attente /s/ nation (see i + vowel) Ø hauriois, ashme /j/ minuit (see i + vowel) /s/ thread finally Ø tant, raffut /t/ dot, brut, yaourt tch /tʃ/ tchat, match, Tchad th /t/ thème, thermique, aneth Ø ashme, birath, goth /s/ thread v /v/ ville, vanne w /w/ kiwi, taekwondo, week-end (in new orthography, weekend), whisky /v/ edelweiss, wagon, wrap, interviewer x initiallynext to a voiceless consonantphonologically finally /ks/ axe, expansion, connexe /gz/ xénophobie, Xavier, xylophone /k/ xosa /l/ xéras (also /ks, gz/) Ø auxquels, auxquelles medially elsewhere /ks/ galaxie, /ks/ qin, adagio, management /g/ burger, gimmick, gyzoa initially/medially elsewhere /f/ gain, glacier finally Ø jng, long, sang /g/ erg, zigzag /h/ keg gq /g/ 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