



Les sons et les lettres



Audio: Concepts, Activités
Record & Compare

L'accent aigu and l'accent grave

In French, diacritical marks (*accents*) are an essential part of a word's spelling. They indicate how vowels are pronounced or distinguish between words with similar spellings but different meanings. **L'accent aigu (´)** appears only over the vowel **e**. It indicates that the **e** is pronounced similarly to the vowel **a** in the English word *cake*, but shorter and crisper.

étudier	réserve	élégant	téléphone
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L'accent aigu also signals some similarities between French and English words. Often, an **e** with **l'accent aigu** at the beginning of a French word marks the place where the letter **s** would appear at the beginning of the English equivalent.

éponge <i>sponge</i>	épouse <i>spouse</i>	état <i>state</i>	étudiante <i>student</i>
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L'accent grave (`) appears only over the vowels **a**, **e**, and **u**. Over the vowel **e**, it indicates that the **e** is pronounced like the vowel **e** in the English word *pet*.

très	après	mère	nièce
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Although **l'accent grave** does not change the pronunciation of the vowels **a** or **u**, it distinguishes words that have a similar spelling but different meanings.

la <i>the</i>	là <i>there</i>	ou <i>or</i>	où <i>where</i>
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Prononcez Practice saying these words aloud.

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|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. agréable | 4. faculté | 7. déjà | 10. poème |
| 2. sincère | 5. frère | 8. éléphant | 11. là |
| 3. voilà | 6. a | 9. lycée | 12. élève |

Articulez Practice saying these sentences aloud.

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| 1. A tout à l'heure! | 4. Voilà mon père, Frédéric, et ma mère, Ségolène. |
| 2. Thérèse, je te présente Michèle. | 5. Tu préfères étudier à la fac demain après-midi? |
| 3. Hélène est très sérieuse et réservée. | |

Dictons Practice reading these sayings aloud.

Tel père, tel fils.¹

Like father, like son.
For an old mule, a golden bit.



À vieille mule,
frein doré.²



RESSOURCES

LM p. 18

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