



# FRENCH DICTION

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## Chapter 1: Phonetic Concepts **READING GUIDE**

*Gateway to French Diction* is both a basic textbook and a reference book to use throughout your career. That is why it contains so many details and examples of French words and phrases. Using the Reading Guides will help you recognize the information that should be mastered first.

### Diction

Someone whose first language is French is called a (1)\_\_\_\_\_.

When we make our sung texts clear, we have good (2)\_\_\_\_\_. When we speak or sing only the best, most correct sounds, we have good (3)\_\_\_\_\_. When we sing words efficiently and with little tension, we have good (4)\_\_\_\_\_. Our aim is to achieve (5)\_\_\_\_\_.

The science of speech sounds is (6)\_\_\_\_\_, and the scholars who study it are (7)\_\_\_\_\_.

IPA stands for (8)\_\_\_\_\_. To set off IPA symbols from other writing, we use (9)\_\_\_\_\_. The process of writing a text in IPA symbols is called (10)\_\_\_\_\_. In IPA, silent letters are (11)\_\_\_\_\_. Some signs that are used in normal writing are not used in IPA, for instance, (12)\_\_\_\_\_ and (13)\_\_\_\_\_.

Speech sounds that help to determine the meaning of what we say are called (14)\_\_\_\_\_. Whether a particular sound determines meaning in a particular language is proved by means of (15)\_\_\_\_\_. Sounds that are produced differently but are understood by the listener as if they are equivalent to each other are (16)\_\_\_\_\_.

### Orthography

The writing and spelling of a language constitute its (17)\_\_\_\_\_.

Words that are identical in meaning are (18)\_\_\_\_\_.

Words that are identical in spelling are (19)\_\_\_\_\_.

Words that are identical in sound are (20)\_\_\_\_\_.

If two letters are used to spell one sound, they are called a (21)\_\_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 3: Characteristic Patterns and Sounds in French **QUIZ**

Fill in the blanks with “FEWER,” “MORE,” or “THE SAME NUMBER OF.”

1. Compared to English, French has \_\_\_\_\_ different **vowel** sounds.
2. Compared to English, French has \_\_\_\_\_ **open** syllables.
3. Compared to English, French has \_\_\_\_\_ **smooth** connections between words.
4. Compared to English, French has \_\_\_\_\_ **diphthongs**.

Supply answers.

5. Which of these letters has a **grave** accent: “à” or “á”? \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Which of these letters has a **circumflex** accent: “ë” or “ê”? \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When the letter C has a **cedilla**, Ç, it is pronounced /\_\_\_\_\_/.

Rewrite these words in separate **syllables**. Example: *andante*, an - dan - te

8. *imiter* \_\_\_\_\_
9. *offense* \_\_\_\_\_

Is the **final** consonant letter pronounced, Yes or No?

10. *actif* \_\_\_\_\_
11. *femmes* \_\_\_\_\_
12. *chateaux* \_\_\_\_\_

Answer Key on Page 69

# Chapter 4: Oral Vowels ARTICULATION EXERCISES 1

## Bright Vowels

Use the following table to practice the bright vowels. Reading down each column, the vowels go from Level I to Level V (remember that there is no Level II in French). You are practicing the distinctions between vowels that are less open and those that are more open. As you read across each row, the vowel color stays the same, regardless of the initial consonant.

Do this out loud. Speak, chant, or sing the syllables. Repeat them (bibibibi) and mix them up (lilèlilèlilè). Experiment by following each vowel with various consonants.

	/m/	/l/	/b/	/v/	/z/
/i/	mi	li	bi	vi	zi
/e/	mé	lé	bé	vé	zé
/ɛ/	mè	lè	bè	vè	zè
/a/	ma	la	ba	va	za

## Dark Vowels

Practice the dark vowels just as you did the bright ones, by speaking, chanting, and singing them.

	/n/	/l/	/d/	/v/	/z/
/u/	nou	lou	dou	vou	zou
/o/	nos	leau	dos	vos	zeau
/ɔ/	nol	lol	dol	vol	zo
/ɑ/	nâ	lâ	dâ	vâ	zâ

## Mixed Vowels

As you read down a column, the vowels open from Level I to Level IV. As you read across a row, notice which two vowels are combined to form a mixed vowel.

	Bright	Dark	Mixed
/s/ /v/	/i/ si /si/ (if) vie /vi/ (life)	/u/ sous /su/ (under) vous /vu/ (you)	/y/ su /sy/ (known) vue /vy/ (seen)
/b/ /f/	/e/ bébé /bebe/ (baby) fée /fe/ (fairy)	/o/ beau /bo/ (beautiful) faux /fo/ (false)	/ø/ bœufs /bø/ (cattle) feu /fø/ (fire)
/s/ /ʒ/	/ɛ/ sel /sɛl/ (salt) gêne /ʒɛ nɛ/ (irritation)	/ɔ/ sol /sɔl/ (note G) Georges /ʒɔʁ ʒə/	/œ/ seul /sœl/ (alone) jeune /ʒœ nœ/ (young)