AIkits

LANGUAGES · CHEAT SHEET

French pronunciation cheat sheet

Vowels, the R, silent letters, accent marks, liaison and rhythm

1 Liaison map

Type	Where	Examples
Required	article or number + noun; pronoun + verb; très, chez	*les amis*, *deux enfants*, *vous avez*, *très utile*
Forbidden	before h aspiré; after et; after a singular noun; after inversion	*les héros*, *avant et après*, *Parlez-vous espagnol ?*
Optional	after plural nouns, être, longer adverbs	*des livres utiles*, *il est ici*, *mais enfin*

2 Vowels English lacks

u vs ou	*tu* [y] (you) vs *tout* [u] (all): same round lips, tongue forward for *tu*.
le vs les	*le* [ə] (the) vs *les* [e] (the, plural). Keep [e] pure: *été* (summer).
Nasals	*un bon vin blanc* (a good white wine): [ɑ̃] *vent*, [ɛ̃] *vin*, [ɔ̃] *vont*.

3 Consonants

R [ʁ]	Back of the mouth, where you say g in «get». Tongue tip down.
Final letters	Usually said: b, c, f, g, k, l, m, q, r. Silent r in *parler*, *premier*.
Silent finals	d, p, s, t, x, z: *grand*, *beaucoup*, *petit*. *Petite* ends in [t].

4 Accent marks

Mark	Effect	Example
é	closed [e]	*été* (summer)
è, ê	open [ɛ]	*très*, *être*
à, ù	no change	*où* (where)
ë, ï	split vowels	*Noël*, *maïs*
ç	c → [s]	*ça* (that)

5 Linking and rhythm

Enchaînement	A sounded consonant moves on: *avec elle* [a.vɛ.kɛl].
Elision	*le + homme = l'homme*. Not with h aspiré: *le héros*.
Stress	No word stress. Last syllable of each group is longer: *Les enfants | sont partis ?*

TIP

Ten minutes a day: listen, shadow, record, compare. Fix one sound per session.