

TRAVEL WORDS IN PICTURES



# French

## Visual Dictionary

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand





# French

Visual Dictionary

for  
**dummies®**



WILEY

## French Visual Dictionary For Dummies®

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# Introduction

This *Visual Dictionary For Dummies* is your ideal travel companion. It can be carried conveniently and consulted quickly; all you have to do is show the picture of the thing you're talking about or of the situation you wish to describe, and presto! And since the pictures are accompanied by the corresponding English words and their French translations, you will also be able to learn a lot of new vocabulary!

## Sounds, rhythm and intonation

French and English have a lot in common, including a common history. French is a Romance language descended from Latin with German and English influences, while English is a Germanic language peppered with French and Latin borrowings. Thus, they share some similarities, most notably the same alphabet and a number of true cognates — words that are the same in both French and English, such as **original**, **final**, and **mental**.

The sounds: the vowels

### *Simple vowels*

In English, the vowels are divided into two groups: the so-called long or tense vowels and the so-called short or lax

vowels. French has a similar system, with a few twists. For example, vowels in French are what are known as *pure vowels*; that is to say they are not diphthongs as in British and American English. Most English speakers pronounce the letters “a” and “e” with an extra *yuh* sound at the end, and their “o’s” and “u’s” with an extra *wuh* sound at the end. You must not do this in French.



REMEMBER

The distinction between long and short vowels exists in French, but two of the English short vowels do not exist (the short “i” in **did** and the short “u” in **put**) so make sure to never pronounce these vowels when speaking French.

Here’s a listing of the vowel sounds found in French:

- **acheter (short a):** The French sound in **acheter** is kind of like American English’s short “o” sound, as in **hot**, but in French the lips are spread more widely. It may be spelled A or À (an *accent grave*). In one word — **femme** — it is spelled with an “e.”



REMEMBER

Only three French vowels can take the *accent grave*: à, è, and ù. The purpose of the accent depends on the letter in question, although it generally indicates that the vowel should be short.

- **pâtes (long a):** This sound is pronounced with more rounded lips and is slightly elongated; it falls

somewhere between the French short “a” and the “au” sound in the English word **pauper**.



REMEMBER

The *accent circonflexe* (here on the **â**) can be found on a, e, i, o, or u. It often means that, in the original Latin form of the word, the vowel was followed by the letter “s.” It can be used to distinguish between two words — **sur** (on) versus **sûr** (sure), for example — or to change pronunciation.

- **école (long e):** The French “e” sound in **école** matches the sound we have for the “a” in **gate**. The annoying thing about the long “e” sound is that there are at least 6 different spellings for this sound in addition to the **é** in **école**:
  - *er*: At the end of an infinitive verb (*chanter*)
  - *ez*: Second person plural verb ending (*vous chantez*)
  - *ez*: At the end of a word (*nez*)
  - *e (ss)*: At the beginning of a word (*essence*)
  - *ed*: At the end of a word (*pied*)
  - *e (ff)*: At the beginning of a word (*effort*)



REMEMBER

The *accent aigu* (**é**, acute accent) can only be added to the letter “e.” At the beginning of a word, “é” is usually a sort of linguistic marker, indicating that the Old French or Latin word started with *es* or *s*. For example, you can trace the French word **école**

back to the Middle French **escole** and the Latin **schola**.

- **pêche (short e):** To get the short French “e” sound, just think of the “e” sound in **pet**. Again, the one sound has multiple additional spellings:
  - è: nouns, adjectives, and so on (*mère*)
  - e: before a consonant (*elle*)
  - ei: nouns, adjectives, and so on (*reine*)
  - et: at the end of a word (*carnet*)
  - ai: nouns, adjectives, and so on (*raisin*)
  - âi: nouns, adjectives, and so on (*maître*)
- **(short i):** Don’t worry about the short “i” sound. It doesn’t exist in French.
- **petit (long i):** Think **ski** when you want to say a long French “i” sound.
- **sonner (short o):** The sound of the French **sonner** is a good match for the short “o” sound in the English word **not**.
- **rose (long o):** The sound of the French **rose** is similar to English’s long “o” sound as in **go**, but without the diphthong transition to a “w” sound at the end.
- **(short u):** Don’t worry about the short “u” sound. It doesn’t exist in French.
- **loupe (long u):** The long “u” sound in French closely matches the vowel sound we have in the English word **boot**.

- **samedi (e instable or e muet/schwa):** In French, words like **samedi** can be pronounced two ways — as a three-syllable word (*sahm-uh-dee*) or a two-syllable word (*sahm-dee*). As a three-syllable word, you have a long “a” sound in the first syllable and an *unaccented schwa* sound in the second syllable. (“Unaccented” here just means that you don’t emphasize that syllable at all; the “schwa” sound is, believe it or not, the most common vowel sound in the English language.) For the second syllable (the *schwa* syllable), think of the sound in the English word **uh** — that word we say when we are trying to think of a word — or the last syllable in a word like **banana**.

### *Blending your words*

Yes, French speakers tend to talk fast! That means words tend to blend together — you sometimes don’t make a clear distinction from the end of one word and the beginning of another:

- **Vowel/Vowel:** When a word ends with a vowel and the following word also starts with a vowel, both vowels form two syllables, and you don’t add a pause.
- For example, with the phrase **Tu as un vélo** (“You have a bike”), you’d say the entire phrase as if it were one word without any pauses, and the sounds of **Tu as** seem to merge.
- **Consonant/Vowel:** When a word ends with a consonant and the following word starts with a vowel, the

last consonant of the first word becomes the first letter of the second word, as in **Il arrive** ("he arrives"), pronounced "eelareev." You link the consonant to the vowel to form a syllable.

## The sounds: the consonants

Most French consonants match the sound of English exactly, but you'll need to pay particular attention to some consonants that are tricky for English speakers to pronounce.

- **"c":** In French, the letter "c" has two pronunciations — hard and soft. The hard pronunciation (**le cadeau**) uses the "c" sound found in the English word **carrot**. The soft pronunciation (**une cerise**) uses the "c" sound found in the English word **ceremony**. Use the soft pronunciation when the "c" comes right before an "e," "i," or "y." Use the hard pronunciation when the "c" comes right before an "a," "o," or "u."



REMEMBER

When a "c" precedes a hard vowel but needs a soft pronunciation (in the case of **ça va?**, for example), you change the "c" to a "ç" (*cédille*) to make the "c" soft.

- **"ch":** The French "ch" (**chien**) almost always has the "sh" sound found in the English name **Sherlock**. The "ch" sound in the English word **cheese** only occurs in words borrowed from English, like **cheap** and **le match**. The only other pronunciation you might



run across is the “k” sound you find in the word **le chaos** — it appears in the English word **chaos** as well.

- **“g”**: Just like the French “c,” the French “g” has two pronunciations — hard and soft. The hard pronunciation (**le gare**) uses the “g” sound found in the English word **gold**. The soft pronunciation (**gérer**) uses the “g” sound found in the English word **massage**. Again, use the soft pronunciation when the “g” comes right before an “e,” “i,” or “y.” Use the hard pronunciation when the “g” comes right before an “a,” “o,” or “u.”



REMEMBER

When a “g” precedes an “e,” “i,” or “y,” but needs a soft pronunciation, you add a “u” to make it soft (**guérir**, for example). When a “g” precedes an “a,” “o,” or “u,” but needs a hard pronunciation, you add an “e” to make it hard (**nous mangeons**, for example).

- **“h”**: The letter “h” is always silent in French, as in **l’homme**, **heureux**, and **haut**.
- **“j”**: The French “j” is always soft. In fact, it sounds exactly like the soft French “g” in **gérer**. So, if you can pronounce the “g” sound in an English word like **massage**, you can pronounce the French “j” in a word like **jeudi**.
- **“q”**: For all intents and purposes, a “q” in French is going to be followed by a “u” — just like in English. In French, however, the “qu” combination can sound like an English “k” (as in **quand**) or it can have the “kw”

sound found in the English word **quiz** (think **l'équateur** or **l'aquarelle**.)



## REMEMBER

The one exception to the “q followed by u” rule is when a French word ends in “q,” as in **cinq** and **le coq**.

- **“r”**: The French “guttural R” (**rouge**) poses particular problems for English speakers, since the sound doesn’t really exist in the English language. The closest we come is when we try to imitate a dog by saying **Grrrrrrr, grrrrrrrrr!** The idea is to get that throaty, guttural sound and put it at the front of the word — kind of like the **rrrrrruff rrrrrrruff** English speakers use to imitate a dog barking.
- **“s”**: The letter “s” in French has two distinct pronunciations — just like English, by the way. Think of the “s” sound in **sensibility** versus the “s” sound found in the word **vision**. In French, the “s” sound is almost always the **sensibility** sound; the **vision** sound only occurs when you have a single “s” between two vowels (**visage**) or when you are blending two words (**ils ont**).
- **“th”**: The “th” sound found in an English word like **theater** does not exist in French. That means a word like **le thé** starts with the same “t” sound as the English word **tea**.

## The non-sounds: silent letters

French words end with all kinds of letters that, to English speakers, seem to be randomly pronounced or ignored. However, it's not as random as it appears. Here are some tips to help you understand when letters should be silent.

- **C, R, F, L:** If a French word ends with "c," "r," "l," or "f," the final letter is usually pronounced.
  - **Un truc**
  - **Un dortoir**
  - **Le chef**
  - **Avril**

There's one big exception to the CRFL rule: Verbs ending with the letters "er" have a silent "r."

- **Aimer**
- **Manger**
- **Tuer**
- **B, K, Q:** In addition to the CRFL words, words ending with "b," "k," and "q" also have their final letter pronounced.
  - **Le club**
  - **Un steak**
  - **Cinq**

All other consonant letters found at the end of words are usually *not* pronounced:

- **Froid** (*exceptions: sud, proper names like David and Alfred*)
- **Le poing** (*exceptions: le grog*)
- **Un dragon** (*exceptions: amen*)
- **Le parfum** (*exceptions: aquarium or forum*)
- **Un coup** (*exceptions: un slip, un cap*)
- **Le marais** (*exceptions: un fils, un autobus, le tennis*)
- **Elle mangeait** (*exceptions: brut, huit, words ending in -ct and -pt, like direct and sept*)
- **Deux** (*exceptions: six, index, Aix*)
- **Le riz** (*exceptions: le gaz*)



REMEMBER

The logic behind the one exception to the “M” rule has to do with French words taken straight from the Latin — like **aquarium** or **forum**, as pointed out above. In such cases, the final “m” is pronounced.

# En route !

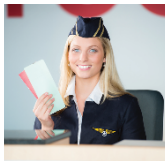
Let's go!



## À l'aéroport At the airport



**Aéroport**  
Airport



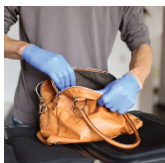
**Compagnie aérienne**  
Airline



**Comptoir  
d'enregistrement**  
Check-in counter



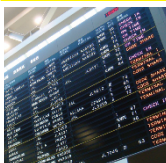
**Sécurité**  
Security



**Douanes**  
Customs



**Vol**  
Flight



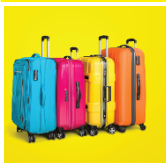
**Panneau d'affichage**  
Departure/Arrival board



**Correspondance**  
Connecting flight



**Bagage à main**  
Hand/Carry-on luggage



**Bagages**  
Luggage, baggage



**Valise**  
Suitcase



**Sac à dos**  
Backpack



## À l'aéroport At the airport



**Chariot (à bagages)**  
(Luggage) trolley



**Récupération  
des bagages**  
Baggage claim



**Passeport**  
Passport



**Billet**  
Ticket



**Carte d'embarquement**  
Boarding pass



**Porte d'embarquement**  
Gate



**Embarquement**  
Boarding



## À l'aéroport

At the airport

### Phrases clés

### Key phrases

**Merci de présenter votre passeport et votre carte d'embarquement à la porte d'embarquement.**

Please present your passport and boarding pass at the gate.

**Veuillez sortir votre ordinateur portable de votre sac à la sécurité.**

Please take your laptop out of your bag at security.

**Le vol AF22 pour Paris est prêt pour l'embarquement.**

Flight AF22 to Paris is now ready to board.

**Dernier appel pour les passagers du vol BA354 à destination de Nice.**

This is the final call for passengers on flight BA354 to Nice.





## L'avion

The plane



**Steward/Hôtesse de l'air**  
Flight attendant



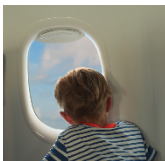
**Pilote**  
Pilot



**Siège**  
Seat



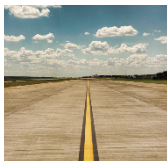
**Ceinture de sécurité**  
Seat belt



**Hublot**  
Window



**Couloir**  
Aisle



**Piste**  
Runway



**Sortie de secours**  
Emergency exit



**Masque à oxygène**  
Oxygen mask



**Gilet de sauvetage**  
Life vest



**Décoller**  
To take off



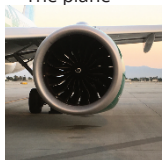
**Atterrir**  
To land



**L'avion**  
The plane



**Aile**  
Wing



**Moteur, réacteur**  
Engine



**Toilettes**  
Bathroom, lavatory



**Tablette**  
Tray table



**L'avion**  
The plane

**Phrases clés**

**Key phrases**

**Veillez attacher votre ceinture de sécurité.**

Please fasten your seat belt.

**Nous vous rappelons que ce vol est non-fumeur.**

We remind you that this is a non-smoking flight.

**Nous allons vous montrer les consignes de sécurité.**

We will be showing our safety demonstration.

**Tous les appareils électroniques doivent être en mode avion ou éteints.**

All electronic devices must be switched to airplane mode or switched off.

**Veillez vous assurer que le dossier de votre siège est remonté et que votre tablette est rangée.**

Please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position.



## Le train

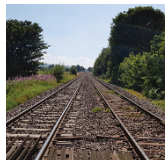
The train



**Gare**  
Train station



**Train**  
Train



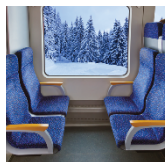
**Voie (férée)**  
(Railway) track



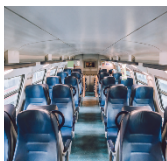
**Quai**  
Platform



**Train à grande vitesse**  
High-speed train



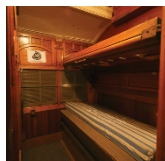
**Compartment**  
Compartment



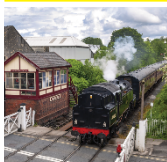
**Voiture, wagon**  
Carriage, coach, car



**Wagon-restaurant**  
Dining-car



**Wagon-lit**  
Sleeping-car



**Passage à niveau**  
Level crossing



**Guichet**  
Booking/Ticket office



**Billetterie automatique**  
Ticket machine



# Le train

The train



**Aller simple**  
Single/One-way ticket



**Aller-retour**  
Return/Round-trip ticket



**Consigne**  
Left luggage office, checkroom



**Bureau d'informations**  
Information desk



**Contrôleur**  
Ticket inspector



**Train de nuit**  
Overnight train



**Couchettes**  
Berths



**Tarif**  
Fare



**Composter (un billet)**  
To punch (a ticket)



**Monter dans le train**  
To get on the train



**Descendre du train**  
To get off the train



## Le train

The train

### Phrases clés

### Key phrases

**Je souhaiterais acheter  
un aller simple pour  
Marseille.**

I'd like to buy a single  
ticket to Marseille.

**À quelle heure part le  
prochain train pour  
Nantes ?**

When does the next train  
for Nantes leave?

**Le train à destination de  
Paris dessert les gares  
de Rouen et Giverny.**

The train to Paris stops  
at Rouen and Giverny.

**Le train en provenance  
de Calais entre en gare  
voie 2.**

The train from Calais is  
arriving at platform 2.



## Les transports en commun

Public transportation



**Transports en commun**  
Public transportation



**Bus**  
Bus



**Autobus**  
Coach



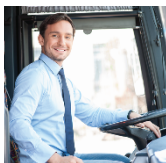
**Bus à impériale**  
Double-decker



**Navette**  
Shuttle bus



**Arrêt de bus**  
Bus stop



**Chauffeur de bus**  
Bus driver



**Prix du trajet**  
Fare



**Siège**  
Seat



**Billetterie automatique**  
Ticket machine



**Carnet de tickets**  
Book of tickets



**Itinéraire**  
Route



## Les transports en commun

Public transportation



### Métro

Underground (UK)/Subway (US)



### Station de métro

Underground/Subway station



### Train de banlieue

Commuter/Local train



### Tramway

Tram



### Quai

Platform



### Réseau

Network



### Ligne

Line



### Présenter son ticket

To produce one's ticket



### Rater le bus

To miss the bus





## Les transports en commun

Public transportation

### Phrases clés

### Key phrases

<b>Où est l'arrêt de bus le plus proche ?</b>	Where is the nearest bus stop?
<b>Quel bus dois-je prendre pour aller à l'aéroport ?</b>	What bus do I take to get to the airport?
<b>À quelle heure le bus part-il ?</b>	What time does the bus leave?
<b>Dois-je descendre ici pour aller au musée ?</b>	Do I get off here for the museum?
<b>Combien y a-t-il d'arrêts pour aller à la plage ?</b>	How many stops are there to go to the beach?
<b>Prendre le métro aux heures de pointe est une mauvaise idée : c'est bondé !</b>	Riding the subway during peak hour is a bad idea: it is crammed!



## La voiture

The car



**Voiture**  
Car



**Permis de conduire**  
Driving licence, driver's license (US)



**Réservoir**  
Tank



**Essence**  
Petrol, gas (US)



**Station essence**  
Petrol/Gas station



**Voiture de location**  
Rental car



**Phares avant**  
Headlights



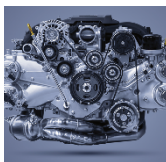
**Feux arrière**  
Tail lights



**Feux de stop**  
Brake lights



**Feux de détresse**  
Warning lights



**Moteur**  
Engine



**Ceinture de sécurité**  
Safety belt