

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION AND GRAMMAR

PRONUNCIATION.

(1) In a word of two or more syllables, slightly emphasise or stress the last syllable ; but make all distinct, except *e* [not *é*, *è*, *ê*] which is often silent in the word, and usually at the end, (except in singing). (2) Final consonants are usually silent, yet are often heard when the next word begins with a vowel sound (vowel or silent *h*). (3) A consonant before final *e* is sounded. (4) Each syllable begins with a consonant, if possible : *in-va-ri-able*, *pré-a-la-ble-ment*.

The following directions for *approximate* pronunciation of sounds are based on alphabetical order. The silent letters (except final *e*) are enclosed in parentheses. In the square brackets, the nasal vowels are marked *ā*, *ē*, *ō*, *œ*, (See pp. 3-4) ; and the other letters have their French values, except that "open" *o* is *ō*. The length of vowels, although important, is barely touched on. In *stressed* syllables they are usually long before the sounds *r*, *z*, *zh*, *v* and *y* ; while closed *a*, *o* and *eu*, and all *nasals*, are always long before any consonant sound.

a open, as in Scotch "cab," or perhaps in (Canadian) "ask," or "aisle." This sound is shown by *a* and *à*, and is by far the commonest in French :—*la*, *là*, *par(t)*, *arme*.

a closed, as in "father." Written *â* or *as*. *château*, *bâtir*, *pâte*, (*h*)*âte*, *pa(s)*, *ba(s)*.

e open, as in "set" (short or long). Written *è*, *é*, *es*, *et*, *ei*, *ey*, *ai*, *aî*, *ais* :—*sel*, *père*, *tête*, *il es(t)*, *vale(t)*, *peine*, *Seine*, *chaîne*, *maison*. *Ai(s)ne* [ên]. But the conjunction *e(t)* (and) is closed *e*.

e closed, as first part of *ei* in "eight" (no *y*-sound). Written *é*, *ée*, *er*, *ez*, and sometimes *ai* : *été*, *année*, *alle(r)*, *alle(z)*, *j'ai*, *j'irai*.