

- not final before a single consonant sound (but see note, below): *me* [mə], *le* [lə], *que* [kə], *cheval* [ʃəval], *tenir* [təni:r], *tu seras* [səra], *ceci* [səsi], *mercredi* [merkredi], *appartement* [apartəmā]. This letter is commonly called *e* mute (*e muet*).
- (2) but in the endings *-er*, *-ez* (*r*, *z* silent), in words like *les*, *mes*, etc., in *et* and a few other words, *e* = [e]: *donner* [dəne], *février* [fevrje], *avez* [ave], *chez* [ʃe], *les* [le], *ses* [se], *et* [e], *pied* [pje], *clef* [kle], etc.
- (3) it regularly has the sound of [ɛ] (cf. *è*, above), before a doubled consonant, or before two or more consonant sounds: *cesser* [sɛse], *perdre* [pɛdr], *espérer* [ɛspere]; also before a final consonant sound, and before silent final *t*: *avec* [avɛk], *eet* [ɛt], *fier* [fjɛ:r], *jouet* [ʒwɛ] (but not in *et*); also before *il*, *ill*: *soleil* [sɔlə:j], *abeille* [abɛ:j]; further, in *tu es* [ɛ], *il est* [ɛ].

EXCEPTIONS: Observe *descendre* [desā:dr], *femme* [fam], and adverbs in *-emment*, e.g., *prudemment* [prydāmā]. Words in *eff-*, *ex-* (before vowel), *dess-* may be pronounced either with [ɛ] or [e]: *effet* [ɛfe or efe], *example* [egzā:pl or egzā:pl], *dessert* [desɛ:r or desɛ:r], but observe *dessus* [dəsy], *dessous* [dəsu] and words like *ressembler* [rəsāble].

**Silent e.** The letter *e* is silent in prose (1) at the end of words: *rue* [ry], *donnée* [dəne], *place* [plas], *ai-je* [ɛ: ʒ], *table* [tabl], *vendre* [vā:dr]; (2) within words after a vowel sound: *gaieté* [gete], *remercierons* [rəmersirā]; (3) in the verb-endings *-es*, *-ent*: *tu donnes* [dən], *ils donnent* [dən], *ils donnaient* [dəne].

NOTE. — In ordinary speech the [ə] sound is usually slighted or wholly omitted in most cases where consonantal combinations resulting therefrom can be readily pronounced, e.g. *mad(e)moisell(e)*, *ach(e)ter*, *maint(e)nant*, *am(e)ner*; but *mercredi*, *apercevant*, *lentement*, etc.

- i, f** like *i* in 'machine,' with energetic lip retraction (never like *i* in 'city') — Symbol [i]: *ici* [isi], *vive* [vi:v], *vie* [vi], *il* [il], *île* [il], *famille* [fami:j].

EXCEPTION: For *i* = [j], see Semi-Vowels, below.

- o** usually like *o* in 'not,' but with definite lip rounding — Symbol [o]: *note* [nɔt], *dot* [dɔt], *fort* [fɔ:r], *robe* [rɔb], *école* [ekɔl], *votre* [vɔtr], *étouffe* [etɔf], *orner* [ɔrne].
- ô** regularly like *o* in 'ocean,' but with much tenser lip rounding and protrusion, as for whistling — Symbol [o]: *côté* [kote], *vôtre* [vo:tr], *bientôt* [bjêto].

EXCEPTIONS: 1. *o* = [o] as a final sound, and in a few other words: *mot* [mo], *nos* [no], *gros* [gro]; *rose* [ro:z], *chose* [ʃo:z],