

G. — Pronunciation of Vowel Sounds

In pronouncing French vowel sounds the following general rules should be carefully observed: —

1. Never drawl a vowel sound or allow it to become a diphthong, as often happens in English; French vowels are uniform throughout their utterance, the position of the organs of speech remaining unchanged during the whole continuance of the sound.
2. Never slur over or clip out vowel sounds (except *e* in certain cases, see below), but give each its full value.
3. Lip rounding (as observed in 'who,' 'no,' 'law') and lip retraction, that is, drawing the corners of the mouth backward as in smiling (to be observed in 'let,' 'hat') are much more definite and energetic than in English.

NOTE. — Some vowel sounds are denoted by a single letter; others are denoted by two or more letters; see below.

H. — Single Letters denoting Vowel Sounds

- a** usually like *a* in 'pat,' but with wider mouth opening and definite lip retraction; the point of the tongue is against the lower teeth — Symbol [a]: *patte* [pat], *part* [pa:r], *chat* [ʃa], *malade* [malad], *papa* [papa], *mal* [mal].
- à** always as above: *là* [la], *voilà* [vwala].
- â** usually like *a* in 'ah!' 'father,' but with the mouth well open, the lips neither rounded nor retracted, and the tongue not touching the lower teeth — Symbol [a]: *pâte* [pa:t], *bâtir* [ba:ti:r], *bâton* [ba:tɔ̃].

EXCEPTIONS: 1. *a* before final *s*, usually before medial *s*, and also in some rarer combinations (but with varying usage) = [ɑ]: *pas* [pa], *passer* [pa:se], *gagner* [ga:ne], *nation* [na:sjɔ̃], *occasion* [ɔka:zjɔ̃], *bataille* [ba:ta:i]. 2. *â* in verb-endings = [ɑ]: *nous donnâmes* [dɔnam], *vous donnâtes* [dɔnat].

- é** almost always like *a* in 'patience,' but with definite lip retraction — Symbol [e]: *été* [ete], *allé* [ale], *né* [ne], *dérégulé* [deregle].
- è, ê** always like *e* in 'let,' but with the mouth wider open and the lips definitely retracted — Symbol [e]: *près* [pre], *prêt* [pre], *père* [pe:r], *espèce* [espes], *fête* [fe:t], *même* [me:m], *êtes* [et].
- e** (1) like *e* in 'the boy,' but with slight lip rounding — Symbol [ə]. It is so pronounced in monosyllables and in any syllable