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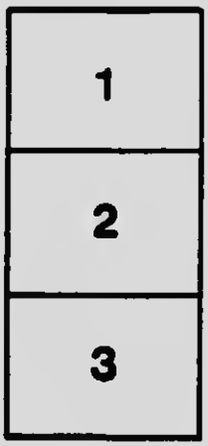

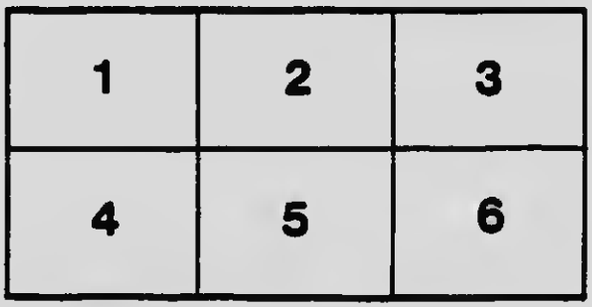

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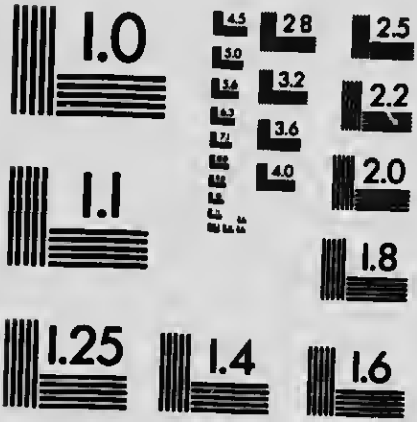

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ESSENTIAL OF

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

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TORONTO

G. E. Reaman,
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ESSENTIALS

OF

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

FOR USE AS A SUPPLEMENTARY READER
IN FRENCH CLASSES.

TORONTO:
THE COPP, CLARK COMPANY, LIMITED,
1908.

PREFATORY NOTE.

This series of eight lessons has been prepared as an aid in teaching French pronunciation. The difficulties which confront the beginner cannot be met satisfactorily by incidental teaching, and should be dealt with in separate lessons.

The method here outlined is based on the principle of associating the sound directly with the letter or combination of letters that represent it, rather than with an unfamiliar symbol. Phonetic transcriptions have been avoided, since they merely complicate the difficulties for the beginner. When the various sounds have been mastered, the transition to phonetics as employed in the High School French Grammar is comparatively simple.

Although the pupils may be drilled on the exercises at any stage in their French course, we would recommend that they be familiarized with the essential sounds of the language at the very beginning, in order to avoid the formation of bad habits, and to acquire accurate pronunciation in the initial stages.

These lessons are by no means intended as an exhaustive treatment of the subject of French pronunciation. They contain only the bare essentials, and were originally arranged to be issued as a set of tablets for class drill. It was concluded, however, that the teacher's time would be economized and his work in general facilitated, if they were placed in the hands of the pupils in pamphlet form. The booklets may be introduced through School Boards as supplementary reading books.

THE AUTHORS.

TORONTO, JULY 31ST, 1908.

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ESSENTIALS OF FRENCH PRONUNCIATION.

LESSON I.

CONSONANTS AND PRIMARY SOUNDS OF THE SIMPLE VOWELS.

Whilst there is a general similarity of sound between French and English consonants, the following differences in enunciation should be noted :—

(*a*) **l, m, n, r, v, z,** are enunciated in French with forcible and continuous vibration or tremulous sound, whilst in English the vibration, if any, is interrupted and scarcely perceptible. The vibration of **r** is especially prominent.

(*b*) **p, t, k,** are enunciated without the aspiration or strong emission of breath from the lungs, as in English, but with a slight explosion or burst of sound caused by the air being expelled from the windpipe and coming in contact with the air at the opening of the mouth.

(*c*) **b, d, g** (soft), **j,** are enunciated with forcible and continuous vibration accompanied by a slight explosion and without aspiration.

NOTE.—The five primary vowel sounds are :—

a like **a** in **hat.**

é, (**er, ez, ed,** final) like **a** in **fate.**

i (**y**) like **ee** in **see.**

o like **o** in **so.**

u has no corresponding sound in English. Begin with the sound of **ee** in see, and while continuing to articulate this sound, gradually protrude and round the lips, without changing the position of the other vocal organs, the result will be the sound of **u.**

EXERCISE I.

Repeat the vowel sounds with the consonants thus :—

(*a*) Vibration.

la- la- la- la- la,
lé- lé- le- lé- lé,
li- li- li- li- li,
lo- lo- lo- lo- lo,
lu- lu- lu- lu- lu,
la- lé- li- lo- lu.
ma- ma- ma- ma, etc.
na- na- na- na, etc.
ra- ra- ra- ra, etc.
va- va- va- va, etc.
za- za- za- za, etc.

al- él- il- ol- ul,
ar- ér- ir- or- ur,
av- év- iv- ov- uv,
az- éz- iz- oz- uz.

(*b*) Explosion without Aspiration.

ta- ta- ta- ta- ta,
té- té- té- té- té,
ti- ti- ti- ti- ti,
to- to- to- to- to,
tu- tu- tu- tu- tu,
ta- té- ti- to- tu.
pa- pa- pa- pa, etc.
ka- ka- ka- ka, etc.

at- ét- it- ot- ut,
ap- ép- ip- op- up,
ak- ék- ik- ok- uk

(*c*) Vibration and Explosion without Aspiration.

ba- ba- ba- ba- ba,
bé- bé- bé- bé- bé,
bi- bi- bi- bi- bi,
bo- bo- bo- bo- bo,
bu- bu- bu- bu- bu,
ba- bé- bi- bo- bu.
da- da- da- da, etc.
ja- ja- ja- ja, etc.
gé- gé- gé- gé- gé,
gi- gi- gi- gi- gi.

ab- ab- ab- ab, etc.
ad- ad- ad- ad, etc.
age- age- age- age, etc.

LESSON II.

SYLLABICATION.

Rule:—(*a*) One vowel with or without consonants constitutes a syllable.

(*b*) One consonant between two vowels goes with the second vowel.

(*c*) Two consonants between two vowels are separated, the first going with the first vowel, the second with the second vowel. In case of double consonants the sound of the first consonant is suppressed.

(*d*) The combinations **ch, ph, th, qu, gn, sc, sp, st, sph, str,** and **b, c, d, f, g, p, t, v,** followed by **l** or **r** as **bl, cl, fl, br, cr, fr,** etc., are not separated.

Note 1. Final consonants are not sounded except **c, f, l,** and sometimes **r.**

2. Final **e** unaccented forms a syllable with the preceding consonant, which receives special stress, but the sound of the final **e** is suppressed.

EXERCISE II.

In order to acquire the smoothness of enunciation characteristic of the French language, pronounce in syllables, placing equal stress on each syllable except the last, which may be slightly tonic:—

nid	**bru-tal**	**a-va-re**	**an-née**
a-mi	**dé-pu-té**	**ma-da-me**	**drô-le**
mi-di	**pu-blic**	**ma-la-de**	**pa-tri-e**

ma-ri	u-ti-li-té	li-vre	par-ti-e
mar-di	pré-pa-ré	a-gi-le	ra-pi-de
al-la	ca-nif	dô-me	tu-li-pe
par-mi	a-ni-mal	A-ra-bie	sa-la-de
da-tif	ja-bot	ty-pe	ar-bre
ki-lo	a-bri-té	na-tu-re	nô-tre
cô-té	rat-tra-pé	ba-na-ne	ba-bi-ne
dé-jà	fa-ta-li-té	é-ra-ble	ru-de
mé-tal	ré-a-li-té	sal-le	mi-nu-te

Divide into syllables and pronounce :—

général	ôté	tumulte	cravate
vérité	rôti	inutile	apôtre
frôla	bavardé	farine	digitale
futur	imagina	tapage	aller
mûrir	prévost	tyrannie	avez
brûlé	parlez	donner	tirer

LESSON III.

SECONDARY SOUNDS OF THE SIMPLE VOWELS

a, e, o.

RULES :—(*a*) **â**, and **a** followed by **s** are sounded like **a** in **father**, except in verb endings and in a few other words.

(*b*) **è**, **é**, and **e** (unaccented) at the beginning or in the middle of a syllable, (except the final **er**, **ez**, **ed**) are sounded like **e** in **let**.

(*c*) **e** (unaccented) at the end of a monosyllable or at the end of a pretonic syllable is sounded like **u** in **fun**.

(*d*) **o** before **r**, before a sounded consonant, and before **e** mute when the latter is not preceded by **s**, **m**, or **n**, is sounded like **o** in **for**.

NOTE.—(1) **s** between two vowels is sounded like **z**, otherwise like **s** in **so**; **ss** has always a hissing sound as in **dress**.

(2) **c** before **e**, **i**, **y** is sounded like **s**; **c** before **a**, **o**, **u** is sounded like **k**; **ç** is sounded like **s**.

(3) **g** before **e**, **i**, **y** is sounded like **s** in **pleasure**; **g** before **a**, **o**, **u** is sounded like **g** in **go**; **gu** before **e**, **i**, **y** is sounded like **g** in **go**; **gn** is sounded like **ny** in **canyon**; **q** and **qu** are sounded like **k**.

EXERCISE III.

(*a*) pas	pas-se	grâ-ce	Exc.	bras
gras	hé-las	fâ-ché	Exc.	don-nas
ba-se	â-me	pâ-té	Exc.	par-lâ-mes
va-se	â-ge	gâ-ter	Exc.	par-las-se

(*b*) très	prêt	mer	guè-re
pè-re	tê-te	est	guet-ter
thè-me	mê-me	gi-let	rè-gne
é-lè-ve	ê-tre	ef-fet	quê-te

Exc.—The **e** in **des** has the sound of **a** in **fate**, but in **les**, **mes**, **tes**, etc., it may be sounded like **e** in **let**.

(*c*)	le	que	fe-ra	*demi
	je	quel-que	re-pas	*venir
	ne	me-ner	le-vé	*cer-ise
	de	ce-ci	fe-nê-tre	*ce-la

*In conversation the **e** is often slurred :—**d'mi, v'nir, c'rise, c'la.**

(*d*)	port	por-te	com-me	ō-sar
	fort	ro-be	ca-rot-te	a-lors
	mort	no-ble	dol-lar	é-co-le
	bord	vo-tre	so-li-de	trop

LESSON IV.

COMPOUND VOWELS.

ai, ay, ei, ey; au, eau; ou; eu, oeu.

RULES:—(*a*) **ai, ay, ei, ey** have the sound of **e** in **let** except in the Present Indicative of **avoir**, in verb endings, and in a few other words, where they have the sound of **a** in **fate.**

(*b*) **au, eau** have the two sounds of **o** according to rules. (See Lessons I. and III.).

(*c*) **ou** is sounded like **oo** in **coo.**

(*d*) **eu** and **oeu** before **r** (sounded), and before a final consonant (sounded), are sounded like **u** in **fun.**

(*e*) **eu** and **oeu** when final in a syllable (with few exceptions), and when preceding a silent final consonant, have no corresponding sound in English. Begin with the sound of **a** in **fate** and while continuing to articulate this sound, gradually protrude and round the lips. The result will be the sound required.

NOTE.—(1) **h** is not sounded; **th** = **t**; **ch** = **sh** generally; **ph** = **f**.

(2) Final **ent** in verbs is not sounded.

EXERCISE IV.

(*a*)	aus-si	a-gneau	pau-vre	au-ra
	fau-te	ri-deau	gâ-teau	Au-gu-ste
	beau	jau-ne	sau-va-ge	au-ro-re
	haut	an-neau	che-vreau	au-ber-ge
(*b*)	a-vait	se-mai-ne	rei-ne	Exc. sais
	a-vaient	trei-ze	ja-mais	Exc. vais
	maî-tre	Ney	don-ne-rais	Exc. gai
	sei-ze	pei-ne	pei-gne	Exc. donn-ai
(*c*)	jour	rou-te	beau-coup	couteau
	goût	cou-ru	ge-nou	cou-tu-me
	hi-bou	vou-lu	mou-rut	pour-vu
	lourd	pou-let	four-mi	mou-jik
(*d*)	seul	heu-re	chauf-feur	peu-ple
	soeur	peur	leur	jeu-ne
	fleur	veu-lent	oeuf	Eu-ro-pe
	neuf	peu-vent	boeuf	cou-leur
(*e*)	peu	ceux	jeu-di	oeufs
	feu	deux	jeu-ne	boeufs
	veut	bleu	dé-jeu-ner	cou-ra-geux
	voeux	ne-veu	fou-gueux	che-veux

LESSON V.

NASAL VOWELS.

(*a*) **an, am, en, em, ean.**
(*b*) **in, yn, im, ym, ain, aim, ein, eim.**
(*c*) **on, om.**
(*d*) **un, um, eun.**

Any vowel or vowel combination followed by **m** or **n** *in the same syllable*, represents a nasal vowel sound.

Syllabication determines whether a vowel sound is nasal or not, *e.g.*, **instant = in-stant, inutile = i-nu-ti-le.** The former has the nasal vowel **in**, the latter has not. Likewise double **m** and double **n** are not nasal, the first consonant being suppressed according to the rules of syllabication. The first syllables of **emmener** and **ennuyer** are, however, nasal.

The four nasal sounds are produced by nasalizing the pure vowel sounds **a** as in **father**, **e** as in **let**, **o** as in **for**, and **u** as in **fun**, respectively. To nasalize a pure vowel sound, first articulate the pure vowel, then without changing the position of the other vocal organs, drop the uvula and attempt to repeat the sound. The air being thus forced partly through the nose instead of through the mouth, the result will be the nasal required. Avoid extreme depression of the uvula, thus closing the mouth passage entirely; otherwise the tendency is to add the sound of **g** to the nasal.

EXERCISE V.

(*a*)	**en-fant**	**Jean**	**sem-blant**	**ar-gent**
	prend	**dans**	**en-sem-ble**	**sep-tem-bre**
	champ	**au-tant**	**di-man-che**	**tan-te**
	temps	**quand**	**ce-pen-dant**	**en-ten-dre**

(*b*)	che-min	vi-iain	sein	syn-ta-xe
	en-fin	pein-dre	de main	sym-pa-thi-e
	faim	cou-sin	quin-ze	main-te-nant
	pain	in-stant	grim-per	in-té-res-sant
	plein	ain-si	des-sein	ma-ga-sin
(*c*)	mon	sa-von	bon	om-bre
	nom	ie-çon	jam-bon	au-ront
	on-ze	mon-tre	com-pa-gnon	ra-con-ter
(*d*)	un	au-cun	quei-qu'un	par-fum
	brun	iun-di	hum-ble	cha-cun

Divide into syllables and pronounce :—

pleine	chacune	comment	homme
une	bonne	commence	comme
brune	ennemi	immortei	flamme
Seine	innocent	inattendu	canne

LESSON VI.

DIPHTHONGS.

(*a*) **ia, ya ; iai, ie, iè ; ié ; io ; iu ; iou ; ieu ; ian ; ien, yen ; ion, yon, iom.**

(*b*) **oi, oy ; oin.**

(*c*) **ui, uy ; ua ; ue ; ueu ; uin ; uan.**

(*d*) **oua ; oue ; oui ; ouin.**

To produce the sound of each of these four classes of diphthongs assume the organic position of **i, o, u,** and **ou** respectively, and with a scarcely perceptible articulation of the sound, glide rapidly into the sound of the following vowel, except in the case of **oi** and **oy**. In these two glide into the sound of **a**.

Note.—(1) **ti** when followed by a vowel is often pronounced **see**, but in a verb-stem, or when preceded by **s** or **x**, it retains its original sound.

(2) **y** between two vowels counts **i** with the first and **y** with the second vowel, *e.g.*, **ayez** = **ai-yez**

(3) **en** (nasal) after **i** or **y** is sounded **in** (nasal) *e.g.*:—**bien, rien,** Exc. **science, patience, conscience.**

EXERCISE VI.

(*a*)	**piano**	*p^{i}a-no*	**amitié**	*a-mi-t^{i}é*
	ciel	*c^{i}el*	**viande**	*v^{i}an-de*
	pied	*p^{i}ed*	**premier**	*pre-m^{i}er*
	Dieu	*D^{i}eu*	**bien**	*b^{i}en*
	fière	*f^{i}è-re*	**crayon**	*crai-^{y}on*
(*b*)	**loi**	*l^{o}a*	**noyer**	*n^{o}a-yer*
	voix	*v^{o}ax*	**moyen**	*m^{o}a-yen*
	loyal	*l^{o}a-yal*	**citoyen**	*ci-t^{o}a-yen*
	besoin	*be-s^{o}in*	**moindre**	*m^{o}in-dre*
(*c*)	**lui**	*l^{u}i*	**nuage**	*n^{u}a-ge*
	celui	*ce-l^{u}i*	**muette**	*m^{u}et-te*
	depuis	*de-p^{u}is*	**lueur**	*l^{u}eur*
	minuit	*mi-n^{u}it*	**nuance**	*n^{u}an-ce*
	juin	*j^{u}in*	**saluant**	*sa-l^{u}ant*
(*d*)	**avoua**	*av^{ou}a*	**jouer**	*j^{ou}er*
	rouet	*r^{ou}et*	**jouir**	*j^{ou}ir*
	Louise	*L^{ou}i-se*	**babouin**	*ba-b^{ou}in*

LESSON VII.

LIQUID VOWELS.

(*a*) **ll, ill.**

(*b*) **ail, aill.**

(*c*) **eil, eill.**

(*d*) **eull, eulll, oeil, oeill, uell, ueill.**

(*e*) **oull, oulll.**

Any vowel or vowel combination followed by l or ll counts as one syllable, and represents a liquid vowel sound.

The five liquid vowel sounds begin with the sound of **ee** in **see**, **a** in **father**, **e** in **let**, **u** in **fun**, and **ou** in **coo** respectively, and are followed by the consonantal glide **y** which takes the place of the l sound. This glide is entirely suppressed in the liquid syllable ll, and in the other combinations is much more marked with ll than with l.

In pretonic syllables, the **y** glide is sounded at the beginning of the following syllable, *e.g.*, **sillon = see-yon.**

EXERCISE VII.

(*a*)	fu-sil	gen-til	sill-on	Guill-au-me
	ba-ril	gen-tille	blll-et	julll-et
	sour-cil	fille	pa-plll-on	cuill-er
(*b*)	bail	paille	faill-ir	mé-daille
	bé-tail	ba-taille	caill-ou	mu-raille
	dé-tail	vo-laille	é-caille	paill-as-se
	tra-vail	mi-traille	Ver-sailles	saill-ant
	éven-tail	ba-taill-on	man-geaille	gou-ver-nail

(*c*)	so-lell	a-beille	Mar-seilles	vieill-ard
	con-seil	o-reille	Mar-seill-ai-se	é-veil
	pa-reil	mer-veille	veille	som-meil
	pa-reille	meill-eur	vieille	gro-seille
(*d*)	deuil	é-cu-reuil	seuil	oeil
	or-gueil	feuille	veuill-ez	oeill-et
	fau-teuil	feuill-age	Vau-dreuil	ac-cueil
	cueill-ir	cer-cueil	feuille-ton	veuille
(*e*)	fe-nouil	bouill-on	mouill-é	em-brouill-ai
	gre-nouille	bouill-ir	bouill-ir	dé-bar-bouill-er

Exc. il, fil, mil, mille, cil, exil, ville, Lille, village, million, tranquille, millier, illustre, illégal, illuminer, illusion, avril (may be sounded liquid).

LESSON VIII.

LIAISON AND LINKING.

Liaison and Linking is the process of carrying over a final consonant, whether silent or sounded, to the following word when it begins with a vowel or **h** mute, *e.g.*, ils ont = il-zont; il est = i-lest.

RULES:—(*a*) **d** becomes **t**; **g** becomes **k** (except in ordinary conversation; **s** and **x** become **z**; **f** becomes **v** in the case of **neuf**.

(*b*) The consonant before **e** mute is carried over to the next word if it begins with a vowel or **h** mute.

(*c*) When a word ends in two or more consonants, the liaison is made by means of the first consonant; but in case of a final **s** denoting the plural, the **s** is carried over.

(*d*) Avoid liaison where there is a break in the thought, or where it would cause a harsh sound. The **t** of **et** (conjunction), the final consonant of a proper name, and the **m** of a nasal are never carried over, nor is there any liaison with **oui** or **onze.**

EXERCISE VIII.

(*a*) **vend-il** *ven-til*	**deux ou trois** *deu-zou-trois*
rang élevé *ran-ké-l'vé*	**neuf élèves** *neu vé-lè-ves*
des arbres *de-zar-bres*	**le boeuf utile** *le-boeu-fu-ti-le*
(*b*) **elle a** *el-l'a*	**l'autre est noir** *l'au-tr'est-noir*
notre oncle *no-tr'on-cle*	**mon frère en a** *mon-frè-r'en-na*
(*c*) **il-dort en paix** *il-do-r'en-paix*	**leurs enfants** *leur-zen-fants*
respect absolu *re-spe-kab-so-lu*	**chers amis** *cher-za-mis*
(*d*) **blanc / ou noir**	**tout / est en fleurs**
bienlôt / on sonne	**en haut / ou en bas**
Jean / est là	**les / onze heures**
pronom / in défini	**assurément / oui**

1. Ils ont assez à dire et à écrire à leurs amis.
   Il-zon-tas-se-za-di-ret-à-é-cri-rà-leur-za-mis.

2. Elle a donné votre argent à un pauvre enfant.
   El-la-don-né-vo-trar-gent / à-un-pau-vren-fant.

3. Le malade avait les yeux ouverts vers deux heures.
   Le-ma-la-de / a-vait-le-zyeu-zou-verts-vers-deu-zheu-res.

4. Ce grand homme répond à mes lettres.
   Ce-gran-thom-me répon-tà-mes-let-tres.

5. Il a mangé un oeuf énorme a neuf heures.
   I-la-man-gé / un-noeu-fé-nor-me / à neu-vheu-res.

6. Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.
   Qu'un-san-kim-pu-ra-breu-ve-nos-sill-ons.

7. Il écoutait avec une extrême et touchante indulgence.
   I-lé-cou-tai-ta-ve-ku-nex-trê-met-tou-chan-tin-dul-gen-ce.

8. Mon petit enfant / a beaucoup étudié, il est trop avancé pour les autres éleves.

9. Jean tend la main / à ses parents / en tremblant

10. Toujours intact aux yeux du monde.

11. L'érable est un bel arbre / et / il est très utile.