HEATH'S MODERN LANGUAGE SERIES. A SHORT FRENCH GRAMMAR

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649704149

Heath's Modern Language Series. A Short French Grammar by C. H. Grandgent

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C. H. GRANDGENT

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Trieste

Heath's Modern Language Series

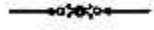
A SHORT

FRENCH GRAMMAR

BY

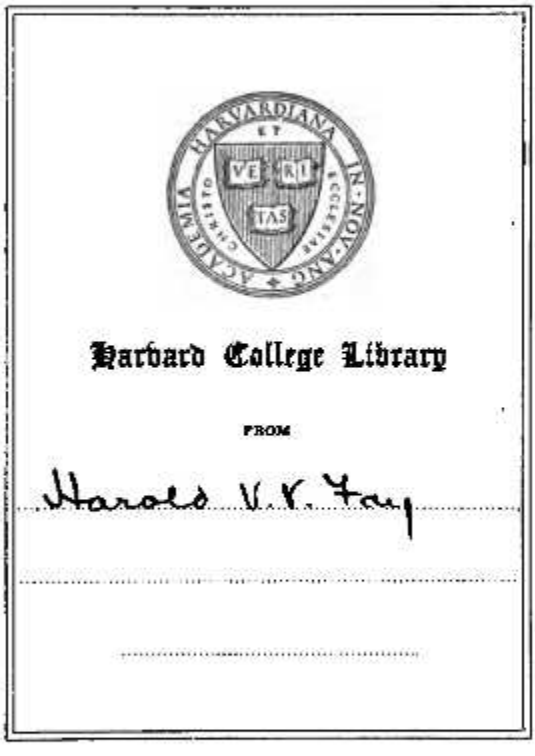
C. H. GRANDGENT

PROFESSOR OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF MODERN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



BOSTON, U.S.A.
D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
1908

Educ T 1519.08.430



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A SHORT FRENCH GRAMMAR.

1. PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING.

1. A language is written phonetically when the spelling of every word clearly indicates its pronunciation. With English and French this is far from being the case; for almost every letter has several different values, and many of the written letters are not sounded at all. In this book, therefore, the pronunciation of French will be shown by means of a special phonetic notation, which will always be enclosed in parentheses, so that students may not confound it with the usual orthography. For instance, "*quarter* = quart (kar)" means that the French word for *quarter* is spelled *quart* and pronounced *kar*.

VOWELS.

2. We can distinguish the following French vowels: —

	Usual Spelling.	Sound.
(a):	**a**; **à**	*between* a *in* pat *and* a *in* part
(â):	**â**; **a**	*nearly like* a *in* part
(*ã*):	**an**; **am**; **en**; **em**	*nasal* (â); *see* § 2, *b*
(e):	**e**	*nearly like* u *in* fur
(é):	**é**; **e**; **ai**	*nearly like* a *in* bakery
(è):	**è**; **ê**; **e**; **ai**; **ei**	*nearly like* e *in* bed
(*ẽ*):	**in**; **im**; **yn**; **ym**; **ain**; **aim**; **ein**; **en**	*nasal* (è); *see* § 2, *b*.

Usual Spelling.	Sound.
(ë): **eu; œu**	*rounded* (è); *see* § 2, *a*
(ẽ): **un; um**	*nasal* (ë); *see* § 2, *b*
(i): **i; î; y**	*nearly like* ea *in* eatable
(ó): **ô; o; eau; au**	*nearly like* o *in* popery
(ò): **o; au**	*between* u *in* hut *and* o *in* hot
(õ): **on; om**	*nasal* (ò); *see* § 2, *b*
(ö): **eu; œu**	*rounded* (é); *see* § 2, *a*
(ü): **u; û**	*rounded* (i); *see* § 2, *a*
(u): **ou; oû; où**	*nearly like* oo *in* booby

All French vowel sounds except (e), whether they are accented or unaccented, are always pronounced sharply and distinctly; they are neither drawled nor slurred. As a rule, they are shorter than English accented vowels. It is to be noted that most of the English "long vowels" are really diphthongs, while the French long vowels are simple sounds: English *rose*, *rave* are nearly (ròuz), (rèiv); but French 'rose,' 'rêve' are (róz), (rèv).

a. To pronounce (ü), (ö), (ë), round or pucker the lips, as for whistling, and try to say (i), (é), (è). Rounded (i) = (ü), rounded (é) = (ö), rounded (è) = (ë). Ex.: pu (pü), tu (tü), vu (vü); deux (dö), eux (ö), peu (pö); bœuf (bëf), œuf (ëf), seul (sël).

b. To pronounce (ã), (ẽ), (õ), (ũ), open the mouth very wide, and say the following English vowels as nasally as possible: *a* as in *mar*, *a* as in *man*, *u* as in *murder*, *aw* as in *maw*. English *a* in *mar* [or French (â)] nasalized = (ã), English *a* in *man* [or French (è)] nasalized = (ẽ), English *u* in *murder* [or French (ë)] nasalized = (õ), English *aw* in *maw* [or French (ò)] nasalized = (ũ). Ex.: an (ã), dans (dã); fin (fẽ), nain (nẽ); un (ẽ); bon (bũ), son (sũ).

c. When (â) and (è) are accented and long, they should be pronounced with the mouth very wide open. In this case (è) has a sound between *e* in *bed* and *a* in *bad*. Ex.: pâte (pât), bête (bèt).

d. When (ò) is followed by (r), students can best produce it by trying to pronounce a sound half-way between the *o* in *for* and the *u* in *fur*. Ex.: fort (fòr).

3. Examples:—

(a): à la gare (a-la-Gar).	(ë): un (ë), humble (ëbl).
(â): âne (ân), classe (Klâs).	(i): fini (fi-ni), île (il).
(â): l'enfant (lâ-fâ).	(ó): sot (só), beau (bó).
(e): ne, me, le (ne-me-le).	(ò): botte (bòt), mort (mòr).
(é): sais (sé), été (é-té).	(ô): mon (mô), tombe (tôb).
(è): est (è), père (pèr).	(ö): queue (Kö), vœu (vö).
(ê): sain (sê), vin (vê).	(ü): mur (mür), dû (dü).
(ë): veuve (vëv), peur (për).	(u): fou (fu), pour (pur).

The following notes on the written letters may be of some use:—

a. The letter *e* at the end of a word is regularly silent. It is very often silent in other places. Ex. vite (vit), médecin (méd-sê).

b. The combination *oi* is pronounced generally (wa), but in some words (wâ); *oin*, however, has the value (wê). Ex.: boire (bwar), boîte (bwat), bois (bwâ), froide (frwâd), loin (lwê), soin (swê).

c. In the group *ui* (üi) the (ü) is very short, and the stress is on the (i). Ex.: huit (üit), lui (lüi), puis (püi).

d. Before a vowel the combinations *ay*, *oy*, *uy* are regularly pronounced (èy), (way), (üiy). Ex.: payer (pè-yé), croyant (Krwa-yâ), appuyer (a-püi-yé).

e. After *i* or *y* the group *en* generally has the sound (ê) and not (â). Ex.: bien (byê), moyen (mwa-yê).

f. Before a vowel, and generally before another *n* or *m*, the groups *an*, *am*, *en*, *em*, *in*, *im*, *yn*, *ym*, *ain*, *aim*, *ein*, *on*, *om*, *un*, *um* do not represent the nasal sounds (â), (ê), (ô), (ë). Ex.: canon (Ka-nô), condamner (Kô-da-né), ennemi (èn-mi), indemnité (ê-da-ni-té), inimitié (i-ni-mi-tyé), synonyme (si-nò-nim), saine (sèn), aime (èm), reine (rèn), chienne (chyèn), tonne (tòn), homme (òm), une (ün), humain (ü-mê).

CONSONANTS.

4. The French language has the following consonants:—

	Usual Spelling.	Sound.
(b):	b; bb	*b* in *labor*
(ch):	ch	*sh* in *sheep*
(d):	d; dd	*d* in *seedy*