Les Prononciations

Hard and soft vowels

- A, O, and U are sometimes called hard vowels
- E and I are soft vowels,
- Because certain consonants (C, G, S) have a "hard" and a "soft" pronunciation, depending on which vowel follows.

Nasal vowels

- Vowels followed by M or N are usually nasal.
- Nasal pronunciation can be very different from the normal pronunciation of each vowel.

Accents

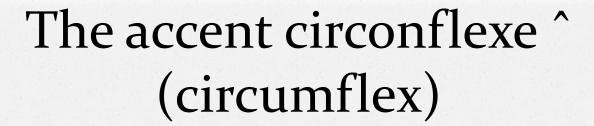
- Accents may change the pronunciation of vowels.
- There are four French accents for vowels and one accent for a consonant :
- The accent aigu (acute accent)
- 2. The accent grave ` (grave accent)
- 3. The accent circonflexe ^ (circumflex)
- 4. The accent tréma " (dieresis or umlaut)
- 5. The cédille (cedilla)



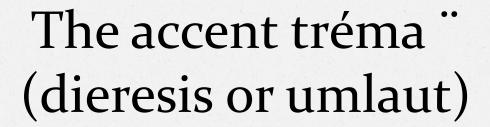
- Can only be on an E.
- At the beginning of a word, it often indicates that an S used to follow that vowel,
- o e.g., étudiant (student).

The accent grave `(grave accent)

- Ocan be found on an A, E, or U.
- On the A and U, it usually serves to distinguish between words that would otherwise be homographs;
- o e.g., ou (or) vs où (where).



- o can be on an A, E, I, O, or U.
- The circumflex usually indicates that an S used to follow that vowel, e.g., forêt(forest).
- It also serves to distinguish between homographs;
- e.g., du (contraction of de + le) vs dû (past participle of devoir).



- o can be on an E, I, or U.
- It is used when two vowels are next to each other and both must be pronounced,
- o e.g., naïve,Saül.



- Is found only on the letter C.
- It changes a hard C sound (like K) into a soft C sound (like S), e.g., garçon.
- The cedilla is never placed in front of E or I, because C always sounds like an S in front of these vowels.



- It is essential to put accents in their proper places
- An incorrect or missing accent is a spelling mistake just as an incorrect or missing letter would be.
- The only exception to this is capital letters, which are often left unaccented