Online Resources for French Pronunciation

WordReference, Forvo, UCLA Vowels and Semivowels, Linguee, Acapela Group

WordReference

http://www.wordreference.com/fren/

Description

While primarily known as a multilingual dictionary, this ever-updating website has many tools to support learner pronunciation. Many dictionary entries have IPA transcriptions that show feminine and masculine production variation, examples of the entry in context, and audio files of the word pronounced in different dialects. There is also a lively online forum community where native and non-native speakers discuss grammar, usage, and pronunciation questions.

Example of Use

Choose a specific word to work on. Listen to the audio file of the word in different dialects and practice speaking the word aloud in contexts provided by the site. Ask a question about pronunciation and sociolinguistics on the forum and interact with speakers around the world about these topics.

This content is also featured in upcoming publications:
- Bajorek, Joan Palmiter (2017). "Free Pronunciation Technology: Maximizing the Potential of Forvo and NetProF Pronunciation Feedback" Ed. Edwige Simon. *The FLTMag*. http://fltmag.com/

Forvo

https://forvo.com/

Description

Geared towards more intermediate learners, Forvo is wikipedia-like large collection of over 100,000 spoken sound files, many which are repetitions of the same utterance in Spanish that include information about the speaker such as their gender and geographical location. Sound files are voted on by users of the site and the word or phrase is often shown in context. Registered users can be more active members of the community and can add words to be pronounced, vote on sound files, create a list of favorites, add files themselves, and download sound files.

This site requires users to have pre-existing knowledge of vocabulary and grammar structures to understand and navigate through the site to find specific information, thus it may not be as helpful for beginning learners.

Example of Use

Learners can search for specific words or phrases and listen to them in context. Especially for entries with several sound files, students can consider dialectal differences among varieties of French.

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Peter Ladefoged
A Course in Phonetics

Performance Exercises 11 G French

li	ly	lu		
'bed'	'read [p.p.]'	'wolf'		
le	lø	lɔ		lõ
'the [pl.]'	'the [m.sg.]'	'prize'		'long'
lɛ	lœʁ	lɔʁ	lɛ̃	lœ̃di
'ugly'	'their'	(name)	'flax'	'Monday'
la		lɑ	lã	
'there'		'tired'	'slow'	

UCLA Phonetics: French Vowels

http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter11/french/french.html

Description

A simple but effective interface, this website shows the approximate height and backness of fifteen French vowels. Each vowel is shown in a /lV/ environment with an English gloss and a sound file attached to the word if clicked. The vocabulary used is high to low frequency words of different word classes. Learners may be very familiar with versions of "the" and "their," but not as familiar with items such as "flax" and "wolf." This is an especially important tool for French mid-vowels that are often difficult for L1 English L2 French learners to contrast for both perception and production.

Example of Use

This tool would be most effective for beginner and intermediate learners who are learning to map orthographic forms, meaning, and phonetic realizations. Learners could memorize these words and contrast them when interpreting other words in novel contexts.

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UCLA Phonetics: French Semi-Vowels

http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter11/frvowel/frenchvowel.html

Description

A simple but effective interface, this website shows the approximate height and backness of eight French semi-vowels. Vowels are shown in /mV/, /lV/, or /VV/ environments with an English gloss and a sound file attached to the word if clicked. The vocabulary used is high to low frequency words of different word classes.

Example of Use

This tool would be most effective for beginner and intermediate learners who are learning to map orthographic forms, meaning, and phonetic realizations. Learners could memorize these words and contrast them when interpreting other words in novel contexts.

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Linguee

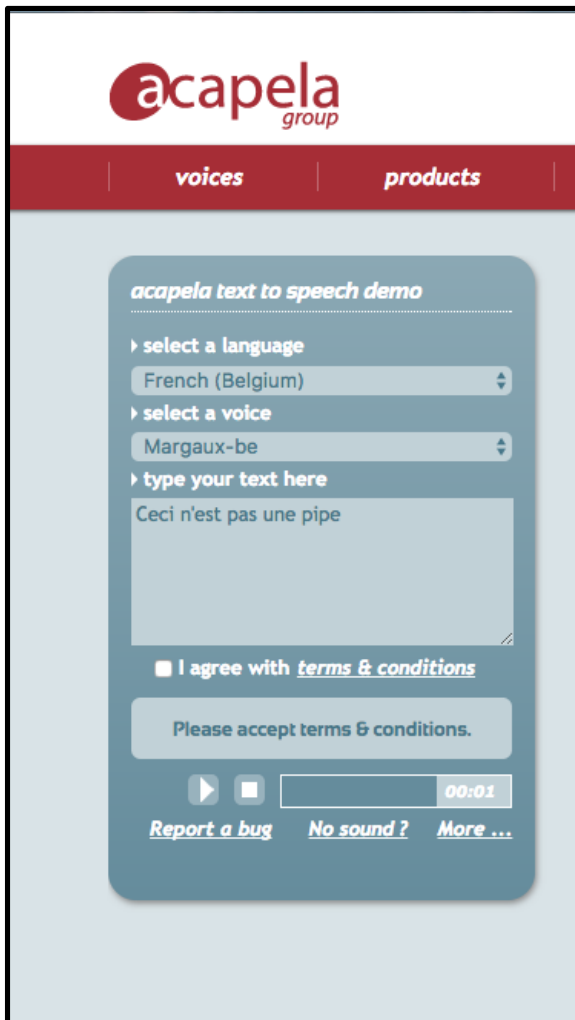http://www.linguee.fr/anglais-francais

Description

Part dictionary, part corpus search, this website and phone app shows dictionary translations with sound files for the different vocabulary terms. The site also provides the word or phrase in context from online searches with a side to side translation. In addition to the website corpus the dictionary draws upon, the website publishes the most popular searches on LInguee by frequency and are constantly updated.

Example of Use

Learners can use this site to consider pronunciation and usage context to better understand appropriateness of words in online contexts.

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Acapela Group

http://www.acapela-group.com/

Description

This website provides text-to-speech audio for short to medium length texts.
10 voices from Belgium, 1 voice from Canada, and 16 voices from France are supported for the French language. Some of the voices have several variations such as "happy," "sad," and "from afar." Although some voices are more naturalistic than others, the segmental and suprasegmental features are addressed in the sound production. The voices will also pronounce nonwords and incorrect spellings of words.

Example of Use

Learners can use this resource to listen to longer utterances and compare varieties of French using the specific texts they are most interested in.

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