



FRENCH LIAISON

Cheat Sheet for English Speakers

Know when to link words - and when not to.

THE CORE IDEA A normally silent final consonant may become audible before a vowel sound or h muet.
Do not link automatically: the grammatical context decides whether liaison is mandatory, optional, or forbidden.

1. MANDATORY

Common close grammatical groups

les amis	S -> /z/
des enfants	S -> /z/
ils ont	S -> /z/
nous avons	S -> /z/
vous êtes	S -> /z/
un petit ami	T -> /t/

2. OPTIONAL

Depends on register and speaking style

More common in careful or formal speech.

Often omitted in casual conversation.

Tip: learn mandatory and forbidden patterns first; add optional liaisons later.

3. FORBIDDEN

Do NOT make a liaison here

After et

et une amie

Before h aspiré

les héros

After many singular nouns

garçon intelligent

HOW LIAISON CONSONANTS SOUND

Written	Liaison	Example
S	/z/	les amis
X	/z/	deux enfants
D	/t/	un grand homme
F	/v/	neuf ans
T	/t/	petit ami
N	/n/	un homme

H MUET vs H ASPIRÉ

H MUET

H is silent

liaison possible

les hommes

H ASPIRÉ

H is silent

blocks liaison

les héros

Aspiré does not mean an English-style H sound.

LIAISON vs ENCHAÎNEMENT

Liaison

final consonant is normally silent and then becomes audible.

Example: les amis

Enchaînement

final consonant is already pronounced and flows into the next syllable.

Example: elle est

Golden rule: do not create a liaison just because the next word starts with a vowel.

QUICK PRACTICE - LISTEN, CONNECT, REPEAT

LINK les amis | des enfants | ils ont | nous avons | vous êtes

NO LINK et une amie | les héros | un garçon intelligent

KEY TAKEAWAY Mandatory first. Forbidden next. Optional later.

The goal is not to make more liaisons - it is to make them where French naturally expects them.