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My First French Phrases (Speak Another Language!)



Synopsis

Open the pages of this book and you'll soon be speaking French! Colorful illustrations and simple labels make learning French fun. From the basics to cool phrases, this book will give you lots to talk about!

Book Information

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Series: Speak Another Language!

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

Customer Reviews

Jill Kalz is the author of more than 60 titles for children, including the Tuckerbean beginning-reader series and the picture book Farmer Cap ("Pfeffernut County" series), finalist for a 2008 Minnesota Book Award and winner of the Readers' Choice Award and an AEP Distinguished Achievement Award. Kalz has also published poetry in the Nebraska Review, the Ohio Review, Cream City Review, and other magazines. Her short story "Last Call" was a runner-up for Minnesota Monthly's Tamarack Award. Kalz works as a children's book editor and lives in Minnesota. A complete list of her titles can be found at jillkalz.com or the Jill Kalz author page on Facebook.

This is a good starter phrase book. I've enjoyed getting them in various languages to have basic phrases from many languages. Hope they put out more languages.

I am bilingual - I was educated in both French and English right up through university - and I take

issue with the numerous inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the pronunciation guide and throughout the book. Attempts to phonetically transcribe a language without using IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) are always inaccurate, but this book makes some blatant errors. For example, in the pronunciation guide on page 5, the reader is told that the letter W is pronounced as a V in French, which is not always the case. (There are very few words beginning with W in French, most of which have been adopted from other languages, which use the /w/ sound.) The reader is then told that 'bonne nuit' is pronounced as 'bohn nuit', but it is really more like 'bun' (feminine adjective) than 'bohn' (masculine adjective). Then, in several examples, 'je' is transcribed as 'zhuh' (which is about as close as one can get using this method for writing pronunciation), but 'j'ai' is transcribed as 'zay' and 'j'habite' as 'zah-BEET'. Although still not IPA, it would be more accurate to write them as 'zhay' and 'jhah-beet'. The sound of the J does not change here, so there is no logic behind the differences written. With words like 'faim', the M is not pronounced, but is part of the nasal vowel. Here, the reader is instructed one time to pronounce it as 'fuhn' and the next time (on the same page) to pronounce it as 'fam'. The same is the case with 'salle de bain', which is transcribed as 'sahl duh ban' instead of it being a nasalized vowel. (The N is not pronounced here as it is in English.) In many of the words, extra syllables are added that a native French speaker would not place there. For example, 'bonne chance' is written as 'bohn-NUH CHAHN-suh', but the adjective 'bonne' is only one syllable (and again is pronounced more like 'bun'), as is the noun 'chance'. Many other subtleties and nuances have also been missed, including examples where the final sound of 'quand' in a question should be pronounced as /t/ and linked to the following word. The adjective 'pret' is masculine on the cover, but feminine on page 23 for the same picture/scene. (It is actually unclear from the illustration as to whether the person being addressed is male or female.)

Additionally, several - nearly all - liaisons (elisions) are missing (e.g., 'nous etudions' is transcribed as 'noo ay-TUD-ee-ohn', but should be 'noo-zay-TU-dee-ohn'). In French, syllables begin with consonants and are considered part of an utterance, not part of a word, and the sounds are therefore linked. These kinds of errors can be found on every page within the book. (Please excuse the missing accents on some of the vowels in this review!) I'm sure that people reading this book are not studying the language seriously, but it would still have been useful to have pronunciation guides that at least come close to how French is actually pronounced. There is no information about the author, but I am fairly certain that she is not a native French speaker. Truly disappointing and irresponsible. If it were not for the numerous errors, I would say that this book is a good introduction to the spoken and written language. I'm just glad that I can guide my children through the proper pronunciation of such phrases. (I borrowed this book from the library to initiate more French learning

in my home, which I've been very negligent about!)

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