

1. Illustrate the English phonemic contrasts given at the left with minimal pairs, one exhibiting the contrast in initial position and the other in final position, if possible.

	initial position	final position
a. /p, b/	pie, buy	rope, robe
b. /k, g/	_____, _____	_____, _____
c. /f, v/	_____, _____	_____, _____
d. /θ, ð/	_____, _____	_____, _____
e. /s, z/	_____, _____	_____, _____
f. /m, n/	_____, _____	_____, _____
g. /ŋ, ɲ/	_____, _____	_____, _____
h. /r, l/	_____, _____	_____, _____
i. /tʃ, dʒ/	_____, _____	_____, _____
j. /ʃ, ʒ/	_____, _____	_____, _____
k. /p, f/	_____, _____	_____, _____
l. /d, z/	_____, _____	_____, _____
m. /t, θ/	_____, _____	_____, _____
n. /d, ð/	_____, _____	_____, _____
o. /ʃ, tʃ/	_____, _____	_____, _____
p. /h, w/	_____, _____	_____, _____
q. /s, θ/	_____, _____	_____, _____

2. What do all these words have in common?

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3. People who live in small, closely-knit communities (like prisons or High Schools) sometimes develop special 'insider' or 'secret' languages. These languages help identify members of the community, and isolate outsiders (like prison guards, teachers or parents). Verlan is this kind of language for teenagers in France. The height of its popularity was in the late 1980s, but it is still widely used by teens living in the suburbs of Paris and beyond. The system behind verlan is simple, but like any language game it has its quirks!

The following are some examples of French words along with their translations into Verlan and English:

French	IPA	Verlan	IPA	English
a. metro	[mɛtro]	trome	[trome]	'subway'
b. démon	[dɛmɑ̃]	mondé	[mɑ̃de]	'demon'
c. gamin	[gamɛ̃]	mega	[mɛga]	'kid' (m.)
d. zonard	[zonɑʁ]	narzo	[nɑʁzo]	'thug'
e. fumer	[fume]	mefu	[mefu]	'to smoke'
f. jeter	[jete]	téjé	[téjé]	'to throw'
g. pasteur	[pastø]	steurpa	[støpa]	'pastor'

What's the rule? So far, it looks like: move the first two sounds to the end of the word. Now look at the following set:

h. bloquer	[bløkø]	québlo	[kɛblo]	'to block'
i. cresson	[kresɑ̃]	soncré	[sɑ̃kré]	'watercress'
j. blouson	[bluzɑ̃]	zomblou	[zɑ̃mblo]	'jacket'
k. francais	[frasez]	cefrain	[sezfrɑ̃]	'French'

Uh-oh, now the rule gets a little more complicated: move the first one or two consonants (if any), first vowel and sometimes the following consonant to the end of the word. AARGG! What's the right generalization?

Translate the following French words into Verlan (with IPA):

a. piston [pɪstɑ̃] 'piston'

b. foulard	[fulaʁ]	‘scarf’
c. poison	[pwazã]	‘poison’
d. savon	[savã]	‘soap’
e. toison	[twazã]	‘fleece’
f. sacquer	[sakɛ]	‘to fire’

So what on earth is going on with these examples?
 French IPA Verlan IPA English

a. lourd	[luʁ]	relou	[rɛlu]	‘subway’
b. rap	[rap]	pera	[pɛra]	‘rap’
c. black	[blak]	kebla	[kɛbla]	‘black’ (Eng.)