

19th & 20th century loan-words

French

Most of the French words that have been adopted during the last two hundred years have not been assimilated to English pronunciation in the way that earlier borrowings have been. Compare, for example, the pronunciation of *village* (1386) with the various contemporary spoken forms of *garage* (1902) – [ˈgæra:ʒ], [ˈgæra:ʒ], [gəˈra:ʒ], [gəˈra:ʒ], which retain some aspects of French pronunciation with variant syllable stress, and the assimilated form [ˈgæriʒ], which has followed the pattern of *village* [ˈvɪlɪʒ].

The following list is a small sample of 19th & 20th century French loan-words. They are in date order.

Activity 21.2

Consider the pronunciation of the words that you are likely to hear among English speakers. How far has assimilation to English patterns of speech taken place?

19 th C	
café	<i>café</i>
surveillance	<i>surveillance</i>
liaison	<i>liaison</i>
de luxe	<i>de luxe</i>
coupon	<i>coupon</i>
élite	<i>élite</i>
laissez-faire	<i>laissez-faire</i>
restaurant	<i>restaurant</i>
coupé	<i>coupé</i>
lingerie	<i>lingerie</i>

menu	<i>menu</i>
chef	<i>chef</i>
cigarette	<i>cigarette</i>
crochet	<i>crochet</i>
fines herbes	<i>fines herbes</i>
repertoire	<i>répertoire</i>
matinee	<i>matinée</i>
impasse	<i>impasse</i>
communiqué	<i>communiqué</i>
hangar	<i>hangar</i>
fiancé(e)	<i>fiancé(e)</i>

chic	<i>chic</i>
foyer	<i>foyer</i>
suède	<i>suède</i>
risqué	<i>risqué</i>
revue	<i>revue</i>
massage	<i>massage</i>
flair	<i>flair</i>
première (n)	<i>première</i>
cliché	<i>cliché</i>
décor	<i>décor</i>
chauffeur	<i>chauffeur</i>

20 th C	
limousine	<i>limousine</i>
déjà vu	<i>déjà vu</i>

haute couture	<i>haute couture</i>
fuselage	<i>fuselage</i>
rotisserie	<i>rotisserie</i>

camouflage	<i>camouflage</i>
collage	<i>collage</i>
courgette	<i>courgette</i>

Italian

19 th C		
bravura	<i>bravura</i>	1813
legato	<i>legato</i>	1815
alto	<i>alto</i>	1819
studio	<i>studio</i>	1819
replica	<i>replica</i>	1824
casino	<i>casino</i>	1831
tempera	<i>tempera</i>	1832
inferno	<i>inferno</i>	1834
intermezzo	<i>intermezzo</i>	1834
lasagna	<i>lasagna</i>	1846
salami	<i>salame</i>	1852
risotto	<i>risotto</i>	1855
vendetta	<i>vendetta</i>	1855
piccolo	<i>piccolo</i>	1856
magenta	<i>Magenta</i>	1860

vibrato	<i>vibrato</i>	1861
mafia	<i>mafia</i>	1875
pizzicato	<i>pizzicato</i>	1880
tombola	<i>tombola</i>	1880
diva	<i>diva</i>	1883
spaghetti	<i>spaghetto</i>	1888
20 th C		
gorgonzola	<i>gorgonzola</i>	1910
ciao	<i>ciao</i>	1929
al dente	<i>al dente</i>	1935
pizza	<i>pizza</i>	1953
scampi	<i>scampo</i>	1953
dolce vita	<i>dolce vita</i>	1961
paparazzo	<i>paparazzo</i>	1968

Spanish

19 th C		
mustang	<i>mestengo</i>	1808
ranch	<i>rancho</i>	1808
guerilla	<i>guerrilla</i>	1819
mescal	<i>mezcal</i>	1828
patio	<i>patio</i>	1828
stampede	<i>estampida</i>	1828
rodeo	<i>rodeo</i>	1834
vamoose	<i>vamos</i>	1834
lariat	<i>la reata</i>	1835

siló	<i>siló</i>	1835
canyon	<i>cañon</i>	1837
cafeteria	<i>cafetería</i>	1839
bonanza	<i>bonanza</i>	1844
tilde	<i>tilde</i>	1864
bronco	<i>bronco</i>	1869
tango	<i>tango</i>	1896
20 th C		
macho	<i>macho</i>	1928
machismo	<i>mach(o) + -ismo</i>	1948

Portuguese

There is little evidence of recent borrowings from Portuguese:

piranha	<i>piranha</i>	1869
samba	<i>samba</i>	1885

German

19 th C		
schnapps	<i>schnapps</i>	1818
poodle	<i>pudel</i>	1825
semester	<i>semester</i>	1827
alpenstock	<i>alpenstock</i>	1829
loess	<i>lösz</i>	1833
yodel	<i>jodeln</i>	1838
spitz	<i>spitzhund</i>	1842
umlaut	<i>umlaut</i>	1844
poltergeist	<i>poltergeist</i>	1848
zeitgeist	<i>Zeitgeist</i>	1848
ablaut	<i>Ablaut</i>	1849
zither	<i>zither</i>	1850
kindergarten	<i>Kindergarten</i>	1852
lager (beer)	<i>lager-bier</i>	1853
schnitzel	<i>schnitzel</i>	1854
bock	<i>Einbecker bier</i> f. <i>Einbeck, in Hanover</i>	1856
pretzel	<i>pretzel</i>	1856
edelweiss	<i>edelweiss</i>	1862
kummel	<i>kümmel</i>	1864

rucksack	<i>rucksack</i>	1866
Weltanschauung	<i>Weltanschauung</i>	1868
kirsch	<i>kirschwasser</i>	1869
ersatz	<i>ersatz</i>	1875
leitmotiv	<i>leitmotiv</i>	1876
delicatessen	<i>delikatessen</i>	1877
frankfurter	<i>Frankfurter wurst</i>	1877
dachshund	<i>dachshund</i>	1881
hamburger (food)	<i>Hamburger</i>	1889
seminar	<i>seminar</i>	1889
hinterland	<i>hinterland</i>	1890
schwa (= [ə])	<i>schwa</i>	1895
20 th C		
dobermann	<i>Dobermann pinscher</i>	1917
Gestalt	<i>Gestalt</i>	1922
Luftwaffe	<i>Luftwaffe</i>	1935
abseil	<i>abseilen</i>	1933
blitz	<i>blitzkrieg</i>	1940

Russian

vodka	<i>vodka</i>	1802
samovar	<i>samovar</i>	1830
troika 1	A Russian vehicle drawn by three horses abreast.	1842
kulak	<i>kulak</i>	1877
pogrom	<i>pogrom</i> , devastation, destruction. An organized massacre in Russia for the destruction or annihilation of any body or class: originally and especially applied to those directed against the Jews.	1882
borsch	<i>borsch</i>	1884
borzoi	<i>borzoi</i>	1887
dacha	<i>dacha</i>	1896

Some loan-words from the Soviet era referring to political issues during the 20th century have acquired a wider reference:

intelligentsia	<i>intelligentsiya</i>	1907
Bolshevik	<i>bolshevik</i>	1917
Soviet	<i>sovét</i> (council)	1917
commissar	<i>komiss-r</i>	1918
liquidate	in the sense of <i>to liquidate, wind up, ie to put an end to, abolish; to stamp out, wipe out; to kill</i> , after Russian <i>likvidirovat'</i>	1924
politburo	<i>politbyuro</i> , from <i>politicheskoe</i> , political + <i>byuro</i> , bureau. The highest policy-making committee of the former U.S.S.R., or of some other Communist country or party	1926
idiogram	<i>idiogramma</i> - a diagrammatic or systematized representation of a chromosome complement	1927
<i>gopak</i>	<i>gopak</i> - a dance.	1929
agitprop	<i>agitprop</i> , f. <i>agitsiya</i> agitation + <i>propaganda</i> propaganda.	1934
socialist realism	<i>sotsialisticheskaia realizm</i> . The official theory of art and literature of the Soviet Communist party	1934
babushka	1 grandmother, f. <i>baba</i> (peasant) woman. 2 a head-scarf.	1938
apparatchik	<i>apparatchik</i> - a member of the apparat	1941
troika 2	(a later, developed meaning from troika 1 above) A group or set of three persons or categories of people associated in power	1945
Cominform	the first elements of the Russian forms of <i>communist</i> and <i>information</i>	1947
apparatus	<i>apparatus</i> - the party machine of the Communist party in Russia	1950
disinformation	<i>dezinformatsiya</i> - the dissemination of deliberately false information.	1955
sputnik	<i>sputnik</i> , literally <i>travelling companion</i> . An unmanned artificial earth satellite	1957
samizdat	Russian abbreviation of <i>samoizdatel'stvo</i> self-publishing house. The clandestine or illegal copying and distribution of literature	1967
kalashnikov	<i>kalashnikov</i> - an automatic rifle of Russian manufacture.	1970
glasnost	<i>glasnost</i> - the fact of being public; openness to public scrutiny or discussion	1972
refusenik	<i>refusenik</i> - partial translation of Russian <i>otkaz-zhnik</i> , from <i>otkaz-ti</i> to refuse. A Jew in the Soviet Union who has been refused permission to emigrate to Israel.	1975
perestroika	<i>perestroika</i> - restructuring The restructuring or reform of the Soviet economic and political system, first proposed at the 26th Party Congress in 1979 and actively promoted under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985.	1981
gulag	The system of forced labour camps for political prisoners in the former Soviet Union.	?

Urdu & Hindi

Urdu

19 th C		
pardah	<i>pardah</i> = <i>veil, curtain</i> ; the system of the seclusion of Indian women of rank	1800
pyjamas	<i>paajamah</i>	1800
yoga	<i>yoga</i> - union	1820
tandoor	<i>tandur</i> - oven.	1840
charpoy	<i>charpai</i> - light Indian bedstead	1845
sitar	<i>sitar</i> - musical instrument.	1845
gymkhana	<i>gend-khana</i> - originally Anglo-Indian, "a place of public resort at a station, where the needful facilities for athletics and games of sorts are provided."	1861
khaki	<i>khaki</i> - 'dusty, dust-coloured'; a fabric of this colour used in the British army for field-uniforms.	1863
20 th C		
samosa	<i>samosa</i>	1955

Hindi

19 th C		
pukka	<i>pakkai</i> - sure, certain, reliable; cf <i>pukka sahib</i>	1803
chapatti	<i>chapati</i> - a cake of unleavened bread	1810
dacoit	<i>dakait</i> - armed rober, pirate	1810
gharry	<i>gari</i> - a cart or carriage	1810
thug	<i>thag</i> 1 Thug - one of an association of professional robbers and murderers in India, who strangled their victims. 2 a ruffian	1810 1839
chutney	<i>chatni</i>	1813
chota	<i>chota</i> - small; <i>chota peg</i> = a small 'peg' of whisky.	1815
dhobi	<i>dhobi</i> - a washerman	1816
popadam	Tamil <i>pappadam</i> , contraction from <i>paruppu adam</i> 'lentil cake'.	1820
topi/topee	<i>topi</i> - hat. cf Anglo-Indian <i>sola topi</i> , worn by Europeans against the sun. <i>sola</i> - an Indian plant; the pith was used in making the topee hats.	1835
lathi	<i>lathi</i> - a long heavy stick of bamboo, bound with iron.	1850
raj	<i>raj</i> - sovereignty, rule; <i>British Raj</i> = British rule in India before 1947.	1859
20 th C		
biryani	<i>biryani</i> - A highly-spiced Indian dish made of meat or vegetables cooked with rice, saffron, and brown lentils	1932
tikka	<i>tikka</i> - pieces of meat or vegetable marinated in spices and cooked on a skewer.	1955

Arabic

19 th C		
Islam	<i>islam</i>	1818
wadi	<i>wadi</i> - ravine or valley	1839
yashmak	<i>yashmaq</i> - veil	1844
halal	<i>halal</i> - lawful food	1855
jihad	<i>jihad</i> - a religious war	1869

Celtic

19 th C		
mavourneen	Irish <i>mo mburnín</i> - my darling.	1800
poteen	Irish <i>poitín</i> 'little pot', short for <i>uisge poitín</i> 'little-pot whisky'	1812
sporrán	Gaelic <i>sporan</i>	1818
colleen	Irish <i>cailín</i> - girl	1828
machree	Gaelic <i>mo chroidhe</i> - (of) my heart, my dear	1829
keen	Irish <i>caoine</i> - weeping lamenting	1830
menhir	Breton <i>men hir</i> 'long stone'	1840
cwm	Welsh <i>cwm</i> - valley	1853
ceilidh	Irish <i>céilidhe</i> , Scots Gaelic <i>ceilidh</i>	1875
macushla	Irish <i>mo my</i> + <i>cuisle vein</i> , pulse (of the heart).	1887
20 th C		
corgi	Welsh <i>cor</i> - dwarf + <i>gi</i> , from <i>ci</i> - dog.	1926

Japanese

19 th C		
hiragana	<i>hiragana</i> , from <i>hira</i> 'plain' + <i>kana</i> 'borrowed letter'; the cursive form of Japanese writing, intended for use by women.	1822
hara-kiri	<i>hara kiri</i> , from <i>hara</i> 'belly' + <i>kiri</i> 'cut' (<i>seppuku</i> is said to be a more elegant expression); suicide by disembowelment, as formerly practised by the samurai of Japan, when in circumstances of disgrace, or under sentence of death.	1856
tycoon	<i>taikun</i> 'great lord'; it was originally the title by which the shogun of Japan was described to foreigners.	1857
Noh	<i>no</i> , traditional Japanese masked drama.	1871
seppuku	<i>seppuku</i> , Japanese colloquial pronunciation of <i>setsu fuku</i> , from Chinese <i>qie</i> 'to cut' + <i>fu</i> 'belly' = <i>hara-kiri</i> .	1871
ju-jitsu	<i>jujutsu</i> , a Japanese system of wrestling and physical training.	1875
futon	<i>futon</i> ; a Japanese bed-quilt.	1876
sumo	<i>sumo</i> , a ritual form of wrestling contest.	1880
tofu	<i>tofu</i> , from Chinese <i>du</i> 'beans' + <i>fu</i> 'rotten'; a curd made from mashed soya beans.	1880
netsuke	<i>netsuke</i> , a small piece of carved ivory or wood worn by the Japanese on the cord by which articles are suspended from the girdle.	1883
kimono	<i>kimono</i> , a long Japanese robe with sleeves.	1886
judo	<i>judo</i> , from <i>ju</i> 'gentleness', + <i>do</i> , 'way'; a refined form of ju-jitsu introduced in 1882	1889
geisha	<i>geisha</i> ; a Japanese girl whose profession is to entertain men by dancing and singing	1891
banzai	<i>banzai</i> , 'ten thousand years'; a shout or cheer used by the Japanese in greeting the emperor or in battle.	1893
sushi	<i>sushi</i> ; a Japanese dish of cold boiled rice flavoured with vinegar garnished with fish or cooked egg.	1893
kamikaze	<i>kamikaze</i> , 'divine wind', from <i>kami</i> 'god' + <i>kaze</i> 'wind'. 1 originally used for the divine wind which blew on a night in August 1281, destroying the navy of the invading Mongols. 2 Japanese airmen who in the war of 1939-45 made deliberate suicidal crashes into enemy targets.	1896 1945
bushido	<i>bushido</i> ; in feudal Japan, the ethical code of the Samurai or military knighthood.	1898
haiku	<i>haiku</i> ; form of Japanese verse consisting of 17 syllables.	1899
kabuki	<i>kabuki</i> , from <i>ka</i> 'song' + <i>bu</i> 'dance' + <i>ki</i> 'art, skill'; a traditional form of Japanese drama.	1899
20 th C		
shubunkin	<i>shu</i> , 'vermilion' + <i>bun</i> 'portion' + <i>kin</i> 'gold'; a goldfish.	1917
dan	<i>dan</i> ; in Judo, a degree of proficiency	1941
bonsai	<i>bonsai</i> ; a Japanese potted plant or small tree, intentionally dwarfed.	1950
karate	<i>karate</i> , 'empty hand'; a Japanese system of unarmed combat in which hands and feet are used as weapons.	1955
origami	<i>origami</i> , from <i>ori</i> 'fold' + <i>kami</i> 'paper'; the Japanese art of folding paper into intricate designs.	1956
yokozuna	<i>yokozuna</i> , from <i>yoko</i> 'across' + <i>zuna</i> from <i>tsuna</i> 'rope, festoon', originally a sacred straw festoon presented to a champion wrestler; a grand champion sumo wrestler.	1966
shiatsu	<i>shiatsu</i> 'finger pressure'; a kind of therapy in which pressure is applied with the thumbs and palms to points on the body.	1967

Chinese

19 th C		
kow-tow	<i>ko-tou</i> , f. <i>ko</i> 'knock' + <i>tou</i> 'the head';	1804
chop-suey	<i>shap sui</i> , 'mixed bits'; a Chinese dish.	1888
20 th C		
chow mein	<i>chow mein</i> 'fried flour'; fried noodles.	1903
shih-tzu	<i>shizigou</i> f. <i>shi</i> lion + <i>zi</i> son + <i>gou</i> dog; a small long-coated dog.	1921
mah jong	<i>ma-tsiang</i> , 'sparrows', from <i>ma</i> , 'hemp' + <i>tsiang</i> , 'small birds'; a game.	1922
gung ho	<i>kung</i> 'work' + <i>ho</i> 'togethe'; a slogan adopted in the war of 1939-1945 by the United States Marines.	1942
dim sum	<i>dim sum</i> ; a savoury Cantonese-style snack.	1948
wok	<i>wok</i> ; a bowl-shaped pan used in Chinese cookery.	1952