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# ENGLISH PHONETICS

3

Lesson 29  
Word & Sentence Stress



Listen to the words.

PREsent

preSENT

**Stress** refers to the **emphasis** on one syllable or part of a word when pronouncing it. The placement of stress can also change the meaning and function of a word.

**RE**cord (noun)

re**COR**D (verb)

**PER**mit (noun)

per**MIT** (verb)

**IM**port (noun)

im**PORT** (verb)

When a **noun** or an **adjective** has two syllables, the stress is usually on the **first syllable**.



table      /**TA**.ble/

scissors    /**SCI**.ssors/

pretty      /**PRE**.tty/

clever      /**CLE**.ver/

When a **verb** or a **preposition** has two syllables, the stress is usually on the **second syllable**.



become /**be**.**COME**/

beside /**be**.**SIDE**/

begin /**be**.**GIN**/

between /**be**.**TWEEN**/

Words with **the same spelling**  
that are both a **noun** and a **verb**  
have **different word stress**.



**SUS**pect (noun)

sus**PECT** (verb)

**RE**cord (noun)

re**CORD** (verb)

Words that are three syllables and **end** in '**er**' or '**ly**' are often stressed on the **first syllable**.



orderly     /**OR**.der.ly/

manager     /**MAN**.a.ger/

hamburger   /**HAM**.bur.ger/



Words ending in 'ic', 'sion', and 'tion' are usually stressed on the second-to-last syllable.



romantic /ro.MAN.tic/

decision /de.CIS.ion/

translation /trans.LA.tion/



In most **compound nouns**, the word stress is on the **first noun**.



classmate /**CLASS**.mate/

armchair /**ARM**.chair/

goldfish /**GOLD**.fish/

toothbrush /**TOOTH**.brush/

In most **compound adjectives**  
and **verbs**, the stress is on the  
**second word**.



hi-tech     /**hi.TECH**/

checkout     /**check.OUT**/

well-known     /**well.KNOWN**/

understand     /**un.der.STAND**/

**Listen and underline the stressed syllable in each word.**

1. production

2. permission

3. traveler

4. important

5. sugar-free

6. toothpaste

**Sentence stress** means stressing the words or syllables within a sentence to convey meaning and importance.

I **work** in New York. (what I do)

I work in **New York**. (city)

## Content words are stressed.

**Nouns** (paper, Sam)

**Adjectives** (tall, blue)

**Main Verbs** (talk, sing)

**Adverbs** (slowly, quickly)

**Wh-words** (why, what)

## Function words are unstressed.

**Prepositions** (in, on)

**Determiners** (a, an)

**Conjunctions** (and, but)

**Helping verbs** (is, are)

**Pronouns** (he, she)

**Encircle the stressed words.**  
**Underline the unstressed words.**

- 1 The kids are at the park.
- 2 She is going to study tonight.
- 3 They'll ask the teacher for help.
- 4 Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Listen and read the sentence stressing a different word each time. Explain the differences in meaning.

I didn't steal your money.

1 2 3 4 5





**WELL DONE!**

**Pronunciation Rule:  
Word & Sentence Stress**