

PRONUNCIATION: Word stress

A. Stressed vs. unstressed syllables

In English polysyllabic words (with 2 syllables or more) put the stress on one syllable. The stressed syllable will be more prominent, while the unstressed syllables will be weaker.

1. Pronounce the following words and circle the stressed syllable.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. beautiful | 6. adjective | 11. interesting | 16. arrive |
| 2. education | 7. important | 12. international | 17. agriculture |
| 3. September | 8. identity | 13. tomato | 18. photography |
| 4. Japan | 9. before | 14. Canada | 19. university |
| 5. passenger | 10. vegetable | 15. shampoo | 20. beginning |

B. Stress in two-syllable words

Observe: Where is the stress in the following words?

Nouns	Verbs
artist	become
forest	repeat
brother	research
weather	prefer
record	record

Conclude: Most nouns (and adj) are stressed on the syllable while most verbs are stressed on the syllable.

Note: PAIRS of 2 syllable words (verb/noun or adj) can be spelt in the same way but stressed differently:

Noun/Adj	Verb
'produce	pro'duce
'decrease	de'crease
'contrast	con'trast
'export	ex'port
'perfect	per'fect

There are of course **exceptions**. In the following EXERCISE you must find the word with a different stress pattern from the others.

Example: money (10) machine (01) mountain (10) message (10)

- answer agree allow attract
- middle minute mission mistake
- compare correct copy collect
- garden granny guitar grammar
- complete common careful crazy
- pronounce provide promise prefer

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- 7. shampoo shoulder shower shopping
- 8. reason remove receive review

C. Stress in longer words

1. We can build longer words by adding parts to the beginning or end of shorter words. Usually, this does not change the stress: it stays on the same syllable as in the original word.

EXERCISE - Where is the stress in the following words?

- 1. forget, forgetful, forgetfulness, forgettable , unforgettable
- 2. believe, believer, believable, unbelievable, unbelieving
- 3. care, careful, carefully, careless, carelessness

Here is a list of beginnings and endings which do not change the stress of the shorter word:

- able (drinkable)	-hood (childhood)	-less (childless)	-ship (friendship)
-al (musical)	-ing (boring)	-ly (friendly)	in-/im- (impossible)
-er (player)	-ise (civilise)	-ment (employment)	un- (unhappy)
-ful (helpful)	-ish (childish)	-ness (happiness)	under- (underpay)

2. Some endings do change the stress in the shorter word.

EXERCISE - Where is the stress in the following words?

- 1. scientist → scientific
- 2. national → nationality
- 3. music → musician
- 4. educate → education

What about the following words?

-IC	-ITY	-IAN	-ION
basic	reality	Canadian	nation
public	majority	Brazilian	relation
electric	electricity	electrician	discussion
economic	personality	vegetarian	operation
romantic	university	pedestrian	competition
optimistic	publicity	politician	communication
pessimistic	authority	comedian	identification
diplomatic	opportunity	technician	telecommunication

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⇒ **RULE:** In words ending with **-IC, -ITY, -IAN, -ION**, the stress usually comes on the syllable the suffix.

It is also the case with the following suffixes: **-ual, -ial, -ient, -ious, -ior, -ics**

Now how do you pronounce: Supercalifragilistic ?!

D. PRACTICE Find the word stress in polysyllabic words and read out the following sentences.

1. The journalist recorded the news at the last minute.
2. Our team holds the record for total points scored.
3. The number of viewers increased by 42% last year.
4. There was a 3% increase in visitors.
5. The supporters are planning a non-violent protest in front of the stadium on Sunday.
6. They already protested last month.
7. You're such a rebel!
8. Conservatives rebel over gay marriage in France.

Last but not least, can you handle this one?

According to alarming news bulletins, there were numerous horrifying creatures coming from Mars everywhere!

Final <s> and -ed

1. Fill the following grid with the words below according to the pronunciation of the final <S>. *politicians, astronauts, candidates, offices, defeats, victories, advantages, compromises, missions, investments*

[S]	
[Z]	
[IZ]	

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2. Tick the box corresponding to the pronunciation of –ed

	/t/	/d/	/id/
strong- minded			
left-handed			
two-faced			
sorted out			
well-managed			
warm-hearted			
badly-behaved			
short-listed			
ill-advised			
level-headed			
blue-eyed			