

Stress on two and three syllable words

Introduction

English is a stressed-timed language. This means that certain syllables and words have more emphasis placed on them than the others in speech. We have word stress and sentence stress in English. But we shall be focusing on word stress here.

Prompt

On the Black or Whiteboard, write two separate lists of words; the first list containing words stressed on the first syllable and the second, containing words stressed on the second syllable.

Examples:

Stress on first syllable	Stress on second syllable
PROduce	proDUCE
EXport	exPORT
OBject	obJECT
SUBject	subJECT

Read out the words slowly, then allow the students to also read them out and explain their observations. What is the difference between the first and second set of words?

Stage 1: Introduce the concept of stress.

Explain that when we say a word, we will emphasize one syllable more than the others and there is only one primary stressed syllable in English. Stress is important in English because it helps to convey meaning and can change the pronunciation of a word. Show examples of words with different stress patterns, such as "present" (first syllable stress) and "object" (second syllable stress). Look back at the chart on the BB/WB and talk about the different meanings.

Extension: You can ask the students to write definitions for the different meanings depending on whether they are a noun, or a verb.

Extension: Ask the students to suggest other words where the stress is on the first syllable.

<p>Stage 2: Teach the rules for stress on two-syllable words.</p>	<p>Continue to focus on teaching stress on two-syllable words. Explain that there are two basic rules for stress on these words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nouns, adverbs and adjectives are usually stressed on the first syllable. Examples: basket, beauty, gallop, happy • Verbs with two syllables are usually stressed on the second syllable. <p>Have students practice identifying the stress pattern of two-syllable words using these rules.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Teach the rules for stress on three-syllable words.</p>	<p>Once you get beyond two syllables, the rules are less fixed. For three-syllable words, look at the word ending (the suffix), using the following as your guide:</p> <p>Words ending in er, ly</p> <p>For three-syllable words ending with the suffixes er or ly, the stress is placed on the first syllable.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>ORderly SIlently LOvingly MAnager GARdener EASier</p> <p>Words ending in consonants and in y</p> <p>If there is a word that ends in a consonant, or in a y, then the first syllable usually gets the stress.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>RARity OPTimal GRAdient GENorous</p> <p>Again, have students practice identifying the stress pattern of three-syllable words using these rules. See if they can come up with other rules, although there is a lot of variation.</p> <p>Encourage your learners to make a note of the stress when they come across a new word.</p>
<p>Stage 4: Practice pronunciation and stress in context.</p>	<p>Once the learners have a good understanding of the rules for stress on two and three-syllable words, it's time to practice pronunciation and stress in context. Have learners read aloud sentences containing words with different stress patterns and encourage them to emphasize the stressed syllable.</p>

	<p>Sample sentences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• She thinks that the subject is difficult to understand.• They will subject him to hardship if he lives with them.• Abbey plans to export some goods to Ghana.• Exports to Canada are up to a million this year.
Stage 5: Reinforce learning with activities.	<p>Finally, use games and activities to reinforce your learners' learning. For example, you can play stress pattern bingo, where students have to identify the stress pattern of words on their bingo card. The students can also create their own sentences using words with different stress patterns.</p>

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