




The nature of stress

- All stressed syllables are more **prominent** than unstressed syllables. Four different factors are important:
 1. Stressed syllables are **louder** than unstressed syllables; (loudness)
 2. The **length** of syllables; If one syllable is longer than the others there is quite a strong tendency to hear it as stressed;
 3. The **pitch** of the syllable: pitch in speech is related to the frequency of vibration of the vocal cords and to the musical notion of low and high pitched notes;
 4. A syllable will tend to be more prominent if it contains a vowel that is different in **quality** from neighbouring vowels (i.e. look at vowels against vowels encountered in weak syllables )

Words Stress



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Word Stress - Guidelines

- **Please read: Roach Chapter 10**
- **We should ask first: is the word simple, complex or a compound?**





Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple

Complex

Compound:





Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple : one morpheme: *enter, deny, return, cotton, potato*

Complex

Compound





Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple : one morpheme: *enter, deny, return, cotton, potato*

Complex : it contains one or more bound morphemes= affixes (prefixes or suffixes): *singer, goodness, unlock, capable, conversation* or is a **compound word**

Compound





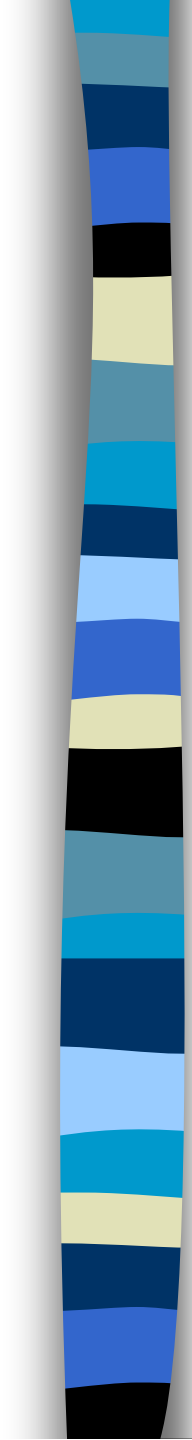
Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple : one morpheme: *enter, deny, return, cotton, potato*

Complex: it contains one or more bound morphemes= affixes (prefixes or suffixes): *singer, goodness, unlock, capable, conversation* or is a **compound word**

Compound: more than one unbound morpheme: *greenhouse, handbag, overcast, whitewash*



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- In order to decide on **stress placement** it is necessary to make use of some or all of the following information:
 1. Whether the word is morphological **simple** or **complex**;
 2. The **grammatical category** to which the word belong to (N, V, A, etc);
 3. The **number of syllables** in the word;
 4. The **phonological structure of those syllables**.



Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple: complicated rules, many exceptions

Complex: fairly simple and fixed rules (see Roach)

Compound: fairly simple rules, not many exceptions (see Roach)





Word Stress - Guidelines

Simple: complicated rules, many exceptions

I know of no simple or exceptionless set of rules, but try googling “word stress”:

■ <http://oak.ucc.nau.edu/tn24/wordstress/wstresstext.html>





1. SIMPLE WORDS

We have to consider the following:

- the phonological structure of the syllable
- the number of syllables
- the grammatical category





1. SIMPLE WORDS: Two-Syllable Words (Verbs, Adverbs, Adjectives, Prepositions)

- Phonological structure:

If the second syllable of the word is heavy (ie. contains a **long vowel or a **diphthong** OR ends in **more than one consonant**) the second syllable is stressed.**



1. SIMPLE WORDS

**2 syllables: VERBS, ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS,
PREPOSITIONS**

Second syllable stressed if heavy: apply, correct
ə¹plai, kə¹rekt

otherwise first syllable stressed: enter, open
¹entə, ¹əʊpən

(if əʊ GOAT occurs in the second of 2 heavy syllables, it generally becomes light: follow, borrow)

**descend return frighten capture obey below around
combine under quickly perverse rapid respect
complex* compact construct conduct refuse**



SIMPLE WORDS: Nouns

■ 2-syllable Nouns:

If the second syllable contains a short vowel the stress will usually come on **the first syllable**; otherwise it will be on **the second syllable**:

Money 'mɒni

Larynx 'lærɪŋks

Product 'prɒdʌkt

Balloon bə'lu:n

Estate 'steɪt

Design dɪ'zaɪn

1. SIMPLE WORDS

2 syllables: NOUNS

Second syllable stressed if its vowel is tense
(not enough to be heavy with a lax vowel):

balloon, design **bə'lu:n di'zain**

otherwise first syllable stressed: product,
absence **'prɒdʌkt 'æbsəns**

complex compact construct conduct esteem
return concept input intake* effect* fortune*
compound* command texture *refuse
machine refrain



1. SIMPLE WORDS

3 syllables: VERBS

**last syllable stressed if heavy: entertain, resurrect,
introduce**

entə¹teɪn rezə¹rekt intrə¹dju:s

**else stress on penultimate: encounter, remember,
determine**

ɪŋ¹kaʊntə rɪ¹membə dɪ¹tɜ:mɪn

**consider remodel undertake understand ascertain
organize* realize* idolize* specialize* supplement*
terrify captivate* contradict importune verify***





1. SIMPLE WORDS

■ 3 Syllables: Nouns & Adjectives

1. If the **final syllable** contains a **short vowel** or ~~ə~~ ~~ɪ~~, it is **unstressed**; if the syllable preceding this final syllable (penultimate) contains a **long vowel** or **diphthong** or ends with more than **one consonant** that **penultimate syllable is stressed**.
2. If the **final syllable** contains a **short vowel** and **the penultimate** contains a **short vowel** and ends with not more than **one consonant**, **the first syllable** is stressed.

1. SIMPLE WORDS

3 syllables: NOUNS, ADJECTIVES

penultimate syllable stressed if heavy: potato, disaster, synopsis

pə'teɪtəʊ dɪ'zɑːstə sɪ'nɒpsɪs

if the penultimate syllable is light and the final syllable has a lax vowel (even if heavy), the **first** syllable is stressed: quantity, cinema, intellect
'kwɒntəti 'sɪnɪmə
('sɪnɪmə) 'ɪntələkt

accident marigold insolent erudite* enclosure banana
wallaby character* acrostic elephant albatross absolute
professor photograph horizon





2. Complex Words

- Roach, Chapter 11
- Unclear distinction, not always useful
 - legal – illegal
 - lawful – unlawful





2. Complex Words: suffixes

- stem + affix (prefix, infix, suffix)
- Is the affix productive (=common, can be applied to new words) ?





2. Complex Words: suffixes

- Suffixes:

1. Do not affect the stress pattern
2. Affect the stress pattern
3. Take the stress themselves





2. Complex Words: suffixes

■ Suffixes:

1. Do not affect the stress pattern

comfort -able, wonder -ful

-age, -al, -en, -ing, -ish, -like, -less,
-ly, -ment, -ous, -fy, -wise, -y





2. Complex Words: suffixes

- Suffixes:

1. Do not affect the stress pattern

2. Affect the stress pattern.

attract the stress to the syllable
before the suffix

photo -**graphy**, perfect -**ion**, tranquil -**ity**

-**eous**, -**ious**, -**ial**, -**ic**, -**ive**





2. Complex Words: suffixes

- Suffixes:

1. Do not affect the stress pattern

2. Affect the stress pattern

3. Take the stress themselves

refugeee, mountaineer, Portuguese,
cigarette, picturesque



3. Complex words: compounds

- General rules:

1. If the first part of the compound is (in a broad sense) adjectival the stress goes on the second element with a secondary stress on the first:

,la^hd'spi:k^h

,sek^hnd'kla:s

,b^hd'temp^hd

,^hri:'wi:l^h

2. If the first element is a noun (in a broad sense), the stress goes on the first element:

'ta^hpra^ht^h

'k^h:feri

'st^hnra^hz

'ti:k^h



Word-class pairs, p.84-85

abstract ['bstrkt]A [b'strkt]V

conduct ['kndkt]N [kn'dkt]V

contract ['kntrkt]N [kn'trkt]V

contrast ['kntr:st]N [kn'tr:st]V

desert ['dezt]N [d'z:t]V

escort ['esk:t]N [s'k:t]V

export ['eksp:t]N [k'sp:t]V

import ['mp:t]N [m'p:t]V

insult ['nslt]N [n'slt]V

object ['bdkt]N [b'dekt]



Word-class pairs (II)

perfect [ˈpɜːfɛkt]A [pɛˈfekt]V

permit [ˈpɜːmɪt]N [pɛˈmɪt]V

present [ˈpreznt]N,A [prɛˈznt]

produce [ˈprɒdjuːs]N [prɛˈdjuːs]V

protest [ˈprɒtɛst]N [prɛˈtɛst]V

rebel [ˈrebəl]N [rɛˈbel]

record [ˈrekɔːd]N [rɛˈkɔːd]V

subject [ˈsʌbdʒɛkt]N [sɛˈbɔːdʒɛkt]V