

Word stress in English language

To communicate clearly when you are speaking in English, it's important to stress the correct syllables in each word. All words of more than one syllable have what is called **word stress**.

This means that at least one of the syllables is **longer** and **louder** than the other syllables. Basically, **stressing means to emphasize a sound**.

Uses: Stress helps us in:

- Communicating clearly and accurately.
- Understanding meaning (PRE - sent is a gift, pre - SENT is an action).

There are three very important rules about word stress:

- One word, one stress.
- The stress is always on a vowel.
- Prefixes and suffixes are never stressed.

Here are some rules for stressing:

| Type of word | Tendency | Examples |
|--|---|--|
| Most two-syllable nouns and adjectives | Stress on the first syllable | AP-ple PRE-sent HA-ppy |
| Most two-syllable verbs and prepositions | Stress on the last syllable | re-QUIRE pre-SENT be-TWEEN |
| Three-syllable nouns | Stress on the first syllable (except words with long vowel sound: engiNEER) | POL-i-tics GOV-ern-ment GEN-er-al |
| Three-syllable adjectives | Stress on the first syllable (except words with long vowel sound: PortuGUESE) | GEN-er-al DEL-i-cate EX-cel-lent |
| Three-syllable verbs | Stress on the first syllable (except words with prefixes: reMEMber, conTINue) | OR-gan-ize DEC -o-rate SIG-ni-fy |
| Words that end in -cy, -ty, -phy and -gy | Stress on the third-from-last syllable | de-MOC- ra-cy un-CER-tain-ty ge-OG-ra-phy ra-di-OL-o-gy |
| Compound nouns | Stress on the first part | HAIR-brush FOOT-ball |

Remember that there are exceptions to every rule.

Use a dictionary to check the word stress (') of new words.

The best way to learn English stress is to listen to audio materials and to repeat them after the speaker.

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