

UNIT ONE: WORD STRESS

LESSON 03: STRESS PLACEMENT IN SIMPLE WORDS

1. TWO-SYLLABLE SIMPLE WORDS (EITHER THE FIRST OR SECOND SYLLABLE IS STRESSED)

1.1. Two-syllable simple verbs

Rule 1: if the second syllable of the verb contains a long vowel or a diphthong or ends with more than one consonant it receives stress on the second syllable.

Exercise 01: transcribe the verbs in the table below

| Word | Transcription | Word | Transcription |
|---------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| apply | | relax | |
| arrive | | produce | |
| assist | | record | |
| attract | | complete | |
| demand | | resist | |
| avoid | | succeed | |
| receive | | applaud | |
| decode | | adopt | |
| include | | announce | |
| | | subsume | |

Rule 2: if the final syllable contains a short vowel and one final or no consonant, the first syllable is stressed.

Exercise 02: transcribe the following verbs in the table below.

| Word | Transcription | Word | Transcription |
|---------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| enter | | Open | |
| edit | | Profit | |
| begin | | Carry | |
| offer | | Study | |
| prosper | | Travel | |

What do you think of the following verbs?

Express /ɪks'pres/, equip /ɪ'kwɪp/, forget /fə'get/, forbid /fə'bid/.

1.2. Two-syllable simple adjectives and adverbs

Two-syllable simple adjectives and adverbs are stressed according to the same rule (as verbs)

Exercise 03: transcribe the words in the table below.

| Word | Transcription | Word | Transcription |
|----------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| Divine | | Hollow | |
| Correct | | Aloud | |
| Alive | | Narrow | |
| Splendid | | alone | |

*Exceptions: honest /ɒnɪst/, perfect /'pɜːfɪkt/

1.3. Two-syllable simple nouns

Nouns require different rules:

*If the second syllable contains a short vowel, the stress falls on the first syllable. Otherwise, the stress usually falls on the second syllable.

Exercise 04: Transcribe the nouns below.

| Adjective | Transcription | Word | Transcription |
|-----------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| Money | | Design | |
| Estate | | Dozen | |
| Halloween | | Taboo | |
| Product | | contract | |

*Other two syllable words such as adverbs and prepositions seem to behave like verbs & adjectives.

For Examples: almost / əl'mɔːst /, apart / ə'pɑːt /, inside / ɪn'saɪd /, above / ə'boʊv /, along / ə'lɔːŋ /, around / ə'raʊnd /

Exercise 05: Transcribe the words above and justify stress placement.

2. THREE-SYLLABLE SIMPLE WORDS (EITHER THE FIRST, SECOND OR THIRD SYLLABLE IS STRESSED)

2.1. Three-syllable simple nouns

Rule 1: if the final syllable contains a short vowel or a diphthong /əʊ/, it will be unstressed. If the syllable preceding the final syllable contains a long vowel, a diphthong or more than one consonant, the central syllable will receive the stress (that is, the 2nd one).

For Examples: *Disaster* /dɪ'zɑːstə /, *potato* /pə'teɪtəʊ /

Rule 2: If the final syllable contains a short vowel and the second one contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonant, the first syllable will receive the stress.

For Examples: *cinema* /'sɪnəmə /, *character* /'kærəktə /, *synonym* /'sɪnənɪm /

Exception: Most of the rules mentioned before show stress on the syllable containing a long vowel, a diphthong, or ending with more than one consonant. However, sometimes even if the final syllable fulfills the previous conditions, the stress can fall on the 1st syllable.

For Examples: *interview* /'ɪntəvjuː /, *continent* /'kɒntɪnənt /, *substitute* /'sʌbstɪtjuːt /

2.2. Three-syllable simple adjectives and adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs follow the same rules as nouns to assign stress placement.

For Examples: *difficult* /dɪfɪkəlt /, *tomorrow* /tə'mɒrəʊ /, *it is an adverb*

Exercise 06 : Transcribe the following nouns, adjectives or adverbs, then mark stress

| Words | Transcription | Words | Transcription |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Accident | | Synopsis | |
| Cathedral | | Innocent | |
| Camera | | Intellect | |
| Tobacco | | Insolent | |
| Already | | Opportune | |
| Together | | | |

2.3. Three-syllable simple verbs

Rule 1: If the final syllable (3rd one) contains a long vowel, a diphthong or ends with more than one consonant the stress will fall on that syllable (the 3rd syllable).

For Examples: intervene / ɪn'tɜːvɪːn/, introduce / ɪn'trə'djuːs/, resurrect / rezə'rekt/

Rule 2: The 2nd syllable is stressed if the 3rd syllable contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonant (that is, only 1 consonant or none).

For Examples: Establish / ɪs'tæblɪʃ/

Exercise 07: Transcribe the following verbs and determine stress placement

| verbs | Transcription | Verbs | Transcription |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Abandon | | Develop | |
| Deliver | | Imagine | |
| Determine | | Interrupt | |

More practice

Homework

- Classify** the following words according to the number of syllables, their category (verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions),
- Then transcribe** them and **justify stress placement**.

Parents ,seldom, embrace, slender, clever, happy, sorrow,, member, student, continue, appear, expect, explain, ensure, accept, support, create, patient, apparent, pleasant, modern, simple, virtual, pretty, perfect, stupid, solid, awkward, strange, congruent, shallow, pillow
 Around, many, village, region, amount, palace, polite, office, custom, destroy, protect, reduce, program, exist , medal, prevent, vaccine, invent, enough, over, advise, England, adopt, often, below, expand, discuss, Moscow, figure, erupt, weather, instead, Asian, surface, forest, climate, alarm, culture, extreme, intense, away, almost, ago, accomplish, bacteria, finance, horrible, event, banana, bicycle, tomorrow, opposite, piano.