



P18. Word Stress

Student Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

For listening and video links, go to Tinyurl <https://tinyurl.com/SDLA-Pronunciation>. Find your SDLA number on the left and all the resources to finish your SDLA will be on the right.

Section 0: Syllables

In order to understand word stress, let's review what a syllable is first. A syllable is a sound unit or one beat in a word. A word can be separated into syllables based on its vowel sounds. **Remember!** June is spelled with 2 vowels (June), but there is only 1 vowel **sound** because the "e" is silent. Here are more examples of words separated into syllables:

one	fro-zen	beau-ti-ful	feb-ru-ar-y
• 1 syllable	• 2 syllables	• 3 syllables	• 4 syllables

How many syllables are in the following words? Circle the correct number of syllables below each of the words. The first one has been done for you.

One	Waiting	Accident	Similar	Friendship	Activity	Thought	Conclusion	Worry
① 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

*Check your answers at the bottom of this page.

Section 1: Word Stress

One of the most common pronunciation mistakes that learners make is incorrect syllable stress (Kozyrev, 2005).

Using the dictionary can help you to learn how to pronounce the word with the correct syllable stress.



Which syllable is stressed in each of these words?

For example, if you want to check the syllable stress for the word *conclusion*, you can look it up in the dictionary. In the American Heritage Dictionary, for instance, syllable stress is shown with a **BOLD** accent mark **AFTER** the stressed syllable.





Try it out! First, divide the words below into syllables. Then look up the words using www.ahdictionary.com and mark the stressed syllable. The first one has been done as an example.

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|-------|
| 1. data | <u>da' ta</u> | 5. insignificant | _____ |
| 2. economy | _____ | 6. percent | _____ |
| 3. illegal | _____ | 7. respond | _____ |
| 4. individual | _____ | 8. specifically | _____ |

Section 2: Listening for Syllable Stress

Part 1: Listen to the conversation below about registering for classes online. Pay attention to the underlined words.

Student 1: Have you registered for classes for spring semester yet?

Student 2: No. I might do it tomorrow. What about you?

Student 1: You always wait until the last minute. I registered last Tuesday.

Student 2: It's difficult for me to make decisions. I can't decide if I want to take Speaking or Writing. And I'm not sure if I want to take morning or night classes.

Student 1: Decide soon, or there won't be any classes left!

Part 2: After you listen, divide each word into syllables. Then, mark the stressed syllable in each word. The first one is done for you. *Try to do this WITHOUT the dictionary and listen carefully to each word.*

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------|
| 1. registered | <u>re' - gis - tered</u> | 5. minute | _____ |
| 2. classes | _____ | 6. difficult | _____ |
| 3. tomorrow | _____ | 7. decisions | _____ |
| 4. always | _____ | 8. morning | _____ |

Part 3: Stress is also important to discriminate between one word whose meaning is changed based on stress. These types of words are called heteronyms. Stress can change the meaning and part of speech of the word from verb to noun. Here are some examples:

Noun	→	Verb	Noun	→	Verb
con'flict	→	con-flict'	at'-tri-bute	→	at-tri'-bute
pro'ject	→	pro-ject'	re'-ject	→	re-ject'

Look at the following sentences and choose which syllable needs to be stressed in the context of the sentence.

1. There's been an **in-crease** in the number of students attending community colleges this year. **noun / verb**
2. Do you need a **per-mit** to fish here? **noun / verb**
3. He **es-cort-ed** her out of the door and to her car because she parked far away. **noun / verb**
4. They went camping for three hot weeks in the Sahara **des-ert**. **noun / verb**
5. The victory was an **up-set** in the championships. **noun / verb**
6. He **re-belled** against authority to fight for his rights and the rights of others. **noun / verb**

Section 3: Repetition



Using your cell phone, **record yourself** reading the words from **Section 2 Part 2 and the Sentences from Section 2 Part 3**. Save it.

Listen with your eyes closed. Can you understand what you said? Which words are difficult to understand? Write them here.



Optional: Record a second time the correct sentences. Listen with your eyes closed. You can ask a friend to listen with their eyes closed. Can they understand every word? Write down which ones your friend could not understand. Practice those words more.

Section 4: Conversation Practice

Read the conversation below. Are there any words you don't understand? Look them up in a dictionary. Practice reading this to yourself. Practice as both speakers. You will practice this conversation with the tutor later. Concentrate on the pronunciation of the individual words.

You	Are your children grown up now, Laura?
Laura	Oh, yes. Rachel is married and has three children.
You	You're a grandmother? That's great. Congratulations!
Laura	Thanks! But I don't see my grandchildren very much. Rachel and her family live in Paris.
You	In Paris! Really?
Laura	Yeah. Rachel is a reporter for an American newspaper. Her husband is a French photographer. They met when they were reporting on the same story.
You	How romantic! And what about Grace? Is she married, too? She was such a bright girl - always reading.
Laura	No, she isn't married, but she has a boyfriend. And she still reads a lot. She's a librarian at the public library.
You	Wow! It's so nice to hear about your family. They are doing incredible things!

Section 5: Student Self-Assessment

Now that you've completed sections 1 through 4, rate how well you can do the following. Put an "X" in the box matching your self-assessment. This will help the tutor assist you better.

	I can't do this YET.	I can do this WITH some help.	I think I usually can do this WITHOUT help.	I can TEACH this to a classmate.
I can hear the difference between syllables in words.				
I can identify the stressed syllable of a word.				
I know some words I need to keep practicing.				

Congratulations! Now you can write your name on the door to work with a tutor. The tutor will call your name when he/she is ready.

Optional while you wait for a tutor:

Check out an iPad from the front desk. Go to the American English app and complete a lesson of your choice in Unit 9: Word Stress.

Section 6: Practice with a Tutor!

After completing the self-assessment, meet with a tutor and give this completed SDLA to them. To make sure you understand this activity, the tutor will review your answers and recordings with you. They will also help you practice the conversation in Section 4. After you have finished, the tutor will provide you with feedback in the following areas:

Area of Focus	1 Point	3 Points	5 Points
Content	Learner usually does not provide enough information in answers.	Learner provides all necessary information in answers some of the time.	Learner provides <u>extra</u> information in answers most of the time.
Skill: Word Stress	Learner usually cannot hear and speak the target sounds correctly.	Learner can hear and speak the target sounds correctly some of the time.	Learner can hear and speak the target sounds correctly most of the time.
Overall Pronunciation	Learner's speaking is unclear and often requires listener effort.	Learner's speaking is generally clear but requires listener effort sometimes.	Learner's speaking is clear and smooth and requires a little listener effort.

Total points: /15

***Students must receive at least 10 points to move on.**

Tutor Recommendations:

Congratulations! Move on

Student has successfully completed this SDLA and is ready to continue to the another SDLA.

Repeat

Student hasn't yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that the student complete it again.

Tutor Signature: _____

Date: _____