

Unit 2

Identifying English Stress and Intonation

In this unit you are learning to listen to and identify English Stress and Intonation.

The rhythm of spoken English consists of stressed and unstressed syllables, words, and groups of words (like in contracted forms). Stress is important in English because the pattern of the language is stressed timed. (To compare, the pattern of Indonesian is syllable timed).

Exercise 1

Look at the following groups of words below. Notice their stress patterns as you listen to the recording. Listen again and repeat, marking ____ for strong stress and • for weak stress for each group.

Group a.

____ •
find it
phone him
tell me
show her
write it

Group b.

• ____
they know
it's mine
we walked
she's nice
it rained

Exercise 2

Look at the following words. Listen to the recording to identify its strong and weak stress. Listen again and repeat, marking ____ for strong and • for weak stress for each word.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. protest | 6. accent |
| 2. present | 7. survey |
| 3. desert | 8. produce |
| 4. transport | 9. subject |
| 5. object | 10. frequent |

Exercise 3

Nouns consisting of two syllables usually have the strong stress on the first syllable. Listen to the following words.

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| 1. teacher | 5. mountain | 9. matches | 12. houses |
| 2. doctor | 6. student | 10. pages | 13. letters |
| 3. lecture | 7. language | 11. places | 14. neighbours |
| 4. tutor | 8. boxes | | |

Listen again and repeat, marking the stress pattern for each word.

Exercise 4

Listen to the following words, then write them in the proper group according to the number of syllables they have.

	2 syllables	3 syllables
lecturer	_____	_____
principal	_____	_____
college	_____	_____
English	_____	_____
sentence	_____	_____
paragraph	_____	_____
essay	_____	_____
travel	_____	_____
ticket	_____	_____

Listen again, marking the stress pattern for each word.

Exercise 5

Nouns with more than two syllables often have the strong stress on the first syllable. Listen and repeat after the following nouns. Listen again, marking the stress pattern for each word.

alphabet	minister	catalogue
photographs	industry	

Other nouns may have variable stress patterns. Listen and repeat after the following words. Listen again, marking the strong and weak stresses for each.

suggestion	majority	possibility
election	publicity	opportunity

Exercise 6

The stress pattern may also vary when words of related meanings change their grammatical form. Listen and repeat after the following words. Listen again, marking the strong and weak stresses for each.

economy	economic
economist	economics
economize	economical

These are more examples. Listen and repeat after the following words. Listen again, marking the strong and weak stresses for each.

a.	b.
industry	industrial
politics	political
agriculture	agricultural

Exercise 7

Verbs of two syllables may have the strong stress on the first or second syllable. Listen to the following words. Notice that they have the strong stress on the first syllable. Listen again and repeat, marking the stress pattern for each word.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| — • | — • |
| 1. cover | 5. harden |
| 2. bother | 6. soften |
| 3. finish | 7. frighten |
| 4. publish | 8. happen |

Now listen to the following words. Notice that they have the strong stress on the second syllable. Listen again and repeat, marking the stress pattern for each word.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| • — | • — |
| 1. prepare | 5. perform |
| 2. propose | 6. enjoy |
| 3. belong | 7. mislead |
| 4. distrust | 8. retire |

Exercise 8

Listen to the following verbs. Listen again and repeat, marking the correct pattern in the proper column.

	— •	• —
advise	_____	_____
promise	_____	_____
brighten	_____	_____
believe	_____	_____
punish	_____	_____
translate	_____	_____
receive	_____	_____
shorten	_____	_____
excuse	_____	_____
polish	_____	_____

Exercise 9

Read the following sentences. Notice the words in *italics*. Identify whether they are nouns or verbs.

	Noun	Verb
1. Mary will <i>record</i> her voice on tape.	_____	_____
2. Metals <i>contract</i> when the temperature falls.	_____	_____
3. These goods are for <i>export</i> only.	_____	_____
4. She's making good <i>progress</i> in English	_____	_____
5. Prices continue to <i>increase</i> each year.	_____	_____
6. His <i>record</i> in the race is 2 hours 5 minutes.	_____	_____

7. He has just won a million dollar *contract*. _____
8. Australia and New Zealand *export* wool. _____
9. She'll *progress* in her English soon. _____
10. The *increase* of prices makes life difficult. _____
11. They often *present* gifts to the king. _____
12. He bought her a special birthday *present*. _____

Read the words and mark the syllable having the strong stress.

Exercise 10

Many words or parts of words change their stress from strong to weak form. It is usually the vowel sound that changes. Listen to the following phrases or sentences; paying attention to the underlined words. They are commonly spoken with weak stress in fluent English.

1. Articles

a, in a book
an, in an apple
the, in a teacher
the, in the animal
some, in some money

3. Conjunctions

and, in fish and chips
as, in as hard as iron
but, in strict but fair
than, in younger than him
that, in so that she could

5. Auxiliary Verbs

am, in I'm tired.
was, in She was there.
were, in You were strong.
shall, in We shall win.
have, in They have gone.
has, in He has finished.

2. Pronouns

me, in help me
he, in he didn't
her, in tell her
us, in show us
them, in buy them

4. Prepositions

at, in look at him
for, in it's for you
from, in it's from us
of, in out of here
to, in go to bed

had, in They had paid.

can, in I can go.

must, in We must stop.

do, in Do you like it?

does, in What does he want?

Intonation Patterns

Exercise 11

Intonation is the changing pitch, commonly rising and falling. Type I falls at the end, type II rises at the end.

a. Listen to some one word examples of Type I:

'No! 'Stop! 'Where? 'Why? 'Good.

Listen again and repeat.

b. Listen to some examples of words having Type II intonation pattern::

,Me? ,These. ,Two? ,His? ,Who?

Listen again and repeat.

c. The following words are spoken with a falling or rising intonation. Listen and identify whether it is falling or rising. Write (') to show the falling and (,) to show the rising intonation.

() him? () yes? () mine () whose? () wait () right.

Listen again and repeat.

Exercise 12

Type I intonation pattern is often used for statements, remarks, questions beginning with WH-words, and orders. Listen to the following questions and responses:

What's the 'time?	I don't 'know.
Where has she 'gone?	To visit her 'aunt.
Which is 'yours?	The one on the 'shelf.
Who's the 'author?	A man called 'Brown.

Listen again and repeat.

Read the following questions and responses using the falling intonation pattern.

Where do you \live?	Next to the \London museum..
Who's coming for \dinner?	One of my \best friends.
What does she \want?	Going out next \week-end.
How many do you \need?	Quite a \few.
When is your \birthday?	On the \first of April.
Whose bag is one the \chair?	It belongs to Mr. \Dean.

Exercise 13

Type II intonation pattern is often used for yes/no questions, remarks indicating requests, apologies, and some other feelings. Listen to the following questions and remarks using the rising intonation pattern.

1. Do you , know?	6. That's , right.
2. Are you , ready?	7. Good , bye.
3. Can I , help you?	8. I beg your , pardon?
4. Does she , like it?	9. Please sit , down.
5. Will you be , free tomorrow?	10. if you , like.

Listen again and repeat.



Read the following questions and remarks using the rising intonation pattern.



1. Are you /hungry?	6. It's /beautiful.
2. Do you like the /film?	7. Good /morning.
3. Can you /come with us?	8. /Both.
4. Is she /coming?	9. Merry /Christmas.
5. Would you open the /windows?	10. Enjoy the /music.

Exercise 14

Different intonation may result in different meanings. Listen to the following examples of expressions having different intonation patterns.

(CD-1 Track # 33)

-  Sorry? (a question, perhaps asking for a repetition).
-  Sorry. (an apology)

-  Pardon, me.
-  I beg your pardon

Each of the following pairs of words will be said once. Decide the general meaning and tick the proper column to indicate your answer.

(CD-1 Track # 34)

	Question/exclamation	statement/answer
1. Yes	_____	_____
2. Here	_____	_____
3. These	_____	_____
4. Five	_____	_____
5. Me	_____	_____

Exercise 15 (CD-1 Track # 35)

Listen to the following sentences, and complete the lines.

1. Where has he g_____?
2. T_____ are b_____ and sisters.
3. Give them a_____ week to f_____.
4. I asked h_____ to give me some b_____.
5. He s_____ that he can _____ it.
6. What h_____ they got to d_____?
7. When can she c_____ for a new o_____?
8. He was a_____ from w_____ last week.

Read the lines using the proper intonation pattern.

Sources:

Jordan, R. R. (1984). *Active listening*. London: Collins ELT.