

## Stress and Rhythm

### Stress

Stress can be defined as the relative degree of force or emphasis given to a particular syllable or word to make it stand out (i.e., be easily noticed) from other syllables or words in an utterance. If syllables have stress, they are said to be stressed syllables (or accented syllables). If syllables do not have stress, they are considered to be unstressed syllables (or unaccented syllables). In this course, we will study two types of stress: word stress and sentence stress.

Word stress (also called accent) is the relative degree of force or emphasis that words or parts of words have when they are considered (or spoken) individually or in isolation (as in a dictionary). In our transcriptions, we will mark only two levels of word stress: primary stress ['] and secondary stress [ˌ]. The syllable that is pronounced loudest or with the greatest emphasis in a word receives the primary stress. Likewise, the syllable that is pronounced with a little less emphasis than the one which has the primary stress receives the secondary stress.

For example, the monosyllabic words 'book' and 'speak' have primary stress: /bʊk/, /spi:k/. Similarly, the syllables *pa-* and *-cause* of the dissyllabic words 'paper' and 'because' have primary stress: /ˈpeɪpər/, /brɪˈkɔːz/. In a like manner, the syllables *-ten-* in the word 'attention', *-a-* in the word 'pronunciation' and *sec-* in the word 'secondary' (which are polysyllabic words) have primary stress, while the syllables *-ary* and *-nun-* have secondary stress: /əˈtenʃn/, /prəˈnʌnsɪˈeɪʃn/, /ˈsekənˌdəri/.

Notice that the stress mark is placed just before the syllable that carries the stress or before /s/ when this sound is followed by another consonant (e.g., 'structure' /ˈstrʌktʃər/). In isolation, every word has a primary stress; however, pronouncing dictionaries do not usually mark the primary stress in the transcription of monosyllabic words. Likewise, only words of two or more syllables can have primary stress and secondary stress at the same time. Again, pronouncing dictionaries do not often mark the secondary stress in their transcriptions of dissyllabic words, but we will always do it in ours.

On the other hand, sentence stress is the relative degree of force or emphasis that words or parts of words have when they are used in **connected speech**, that is, in combination with other words forming phrases and sentences. For example:

- a. The teacher read the sentences.  
[ðə 'tʃi:tʃər 'red ðə 'sentənsɪz]
- b. Are you tired? [ɑːr ju 'tʃaɪəd]
- c. A cup of coffee. [ə 'kʌp ə 'kɒfi]
- d. Don't do it! [ˈ dʌn ,duː \_ɪt]

In our transcriptions, we will consider two levels of sentence stress: primary sentence stress and secondary sentence stress. Primary sentence stress (also called tonic stress) is marked just before the word or syllable with maximum emphasis. It will be indicated by the mark [ˈ] when we have rising-falling intonation (i.e., when the voice first goes upwards and then downwards on the syllable that has the primary stress) as in example (a) above; and indicated by the mark [ˌ] when we have rising intonation (i.e., when the voice goes upwards on and beyond the syllable that has the primary stress), as in example (b) above. In a similar manner, secondary sentence stress is marked just before the words or syllables that are pronounced with a little less emphasis than the word or syllable with the primary stress. It will be indicated by the mark [ˑ] if it occurs anywhere before the primary stress, as in example (c) above, and by the mark [˒] if it occurs anywhere after the primary stress, as in example (d).

In addition, notice that, in a single phrase or sentence, only one syllable or word usually has primary stress; all the other words have either secondary stress or no stress at all. However, in a sentence, there can be more than one secondary stress. Which words have secondary stress in the following sentences?

My mother died ten years ago. [maɪ 'mʌðər 'daɪd 'tʰen 'jɪəz ə'ɡəʊ]

Where does Mary live? ['weər dəz 'merɪ 'lɪv]

Similarly, we mark only one stress on words of two or more syllables, which normally have two stresses in isolation. Also, note that some monosyllabic words, especially function words, often lose their accent and become unstressed in connected speech. Function words (or grammatical words)<sup>1</sup> are words that have little or no meaning on their own, but show grammatical relationships in and between other words, phrases and sentences; e.g., prepositions ('at', 'for', 'in', 'on', 'to', etc.), conjunctions (e.g., 'and', 'but', 'that', 'what', etc.), pronouns ('I', 'me', 'you', 'her', 'them', etc.), auxiliary verbs (e.g., 'am', 'are', 'do', 'can', 'have', 'must'), and so on.

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<sup>1</sup> This point will be considered in more detail further ahead.

For example, when the following words appear in isolation (i.e., not in connected speech) or at the end of a sentence, we pronounce them with stress (i.e., they have a strong pronunciation form).

|            |            |          |             |            |            |
|------------|------------|----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| am /æm/    | are /a:r/  | at /æt/  | but /bʌt/   | can /kæn/  | do /du:/   |
| for /fɔ:r/ | have /hæv/ | me /mi:/ | must /mʌst/ | that /ðæt/ | them /ðem/ |

Examples: a) What are you looking at? ['wʌt\_ər ju 'lʊkɪŋ ,æt]

b) A: Are you tired? ['ɑr ju tʰaɪərd]

B: Yes, I am. ['jes\_ɑɪ\_æm]

c) A: Can you swim? ['kʰæn ju ,swɪm]

B: Yes, I can. ['jes\_ɑɪ kʰæn]

d) A: Have you ever been to London? ['hæv\_ju\_ˈevər bɪn tə ˈlʌndən]

B: Yes, I have. Twice. ['jes\_ɑɪ ˈhæv || ˈtwɑɪs]

But when the same words appear in phrases or sentences (i.e., in connected speech), they may lose their stress (i.e., they have a weak pronunciation form). Look at the examples below.

A: Can you give me a hand with the problem that we have to turn in tomorrow?

[ˈkʰæn ju ˈɡɪv mi\_ə ˈhændʱ wɪθ ðə ˈprɒbləm ðætʱ wɪ ˈhæftə ˈtʰɜ:r\_n\_ɪn təmərou]

B: Sorry! I am<sup>2</sup> busy right now. I must finish my assignment before noon. I can help you in the afternoon. Is that OK with you?

[^sɒri || ˈaɪ\_əm ˈbɪzi raɪtʱ ˈnaʊ || ˈaɪ məstʱ ˈfɪnɪʃ maɪ\_əˈsaɪnməntʱ brɪfɔ:r nu:n ||  
ˈaɪ kən ˈhelp\_ju\_ɪn ði\_æftərnu:n || ɪz ˈðæf\_ouˈkeɪ wɪθ\_ju:]

A: What are you looking for?

[ˈwʌt\_ər ju ˈlʊkɪŋ ,fɔ:r]

B: I am<sup>2</sup> looking for my keys. I do not<sup>2</sup> know where I put them. I didn't do what you told me.

[ˈaɪ əm ˈlʊkɪŋ fər maɪ ˈkʰi:z || ˈaɪ du ˈnɒtʱ ^nou | ˈweər\_ɑɪ ˈpʰʊtʱ ðəm || ˈaɪ ˈdɪdntʱ ˈdu: wɒtʃə  
ˈtʰoʊldʱ mi]

A: Have you seen 'Star Wars'?

[ˈhæv\_ju ˈsi:n ,stɑ:r ˈwɔ:rz]

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, when we speak, we often say 'I'm' [aɪm], 'don't' [dɒnt] and 'I've' [aɪv].

B. Yes, I have<sup>2</sup> seen it twice.  
[ˈjes | 'aɪ həv 'si:n\_ɪt<sup>1</sup> 'twɑɪs]

In the examples above, notice that the monosyllabic words with a single underline are not stressed (i.e., they have a weak pronunciation form), but the monosyllabic words with a double underline are stressed (i.e., they have a strong pronunciation form) and their stress is marked. Usually, when a monosyllabic word or a syllable of a longer word has no stress, the vowel sound of the word or syllable becomes schwa /ə/. On the other hand, when a monosyllabic word or a syllable of a longer word is stressed, the vowel sound of the word or syllable is a 'full' vowel (either a long vowel /i:, ɑ:, ɔ:, u:, ɜ:, aɪ, eɪ, oʊ, ɔɪ, aʊ, etc./ or a short vowel /æ, e, ɪ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ/).

But how do you know where to place the stress in words that have more than one syllable and what words are stressed and what words are not stressed in connected speech? Below are some helpful tips that might help you find the answers to these questions.

## Placement of Stress

In English, the placement of stress depends on the number of syllables that a word has and whether the word is used in isolation (i.e., alone) or in connected speech (i.e., together with other words forming phrases and sentences). As was said above, in isolation all one-syllable (monosyllabic) words have primary stress; however, in connected speech they often lose their stress, especially if they are function words. One of the reasons that this happens is because, in connected speech, among other things, we often speak more quickly and we need to say all the words of a phrase or sentence in a shorter time.

When words have two or more syllables, it is somewhat difficult to know where we must place the stress; therefore, we must learn to do it. In English, the position of the stress varies considerably; that is to say, the placement of stress can be predicted only to some extent. There are no infallible rules that we can follow in order to determine on which syllable words have their primary and secondary stresses; however, a series of helpful rules have been proposed.<sup>3</sup>

### Placement of stress in two-syllable words

In order to determine on which syllable we should place the primary stress (and secondary stress if there is one), we need to know several things: (a) the grammatical category of the word (i.e., whether the word is a noun, an adjective, a verb, an adverb, a preposition, and so on); (b) the syllable structure of the word (i.e., whether its syllables end with one or more consonants and whether the syllables contain long or short vowels); and (c) the morphological structure of the word (i.e., whether that word is a simple word<sup>4</sup> or a

<sup>3</sup> Especially by generative phonologists.

<sup>4</sup> **Simple words** consist of one free morpheme, which can consist of one or more syllables.

complex word.<sup>5</sup> The following rules will help you stress dissyllabic words with some degree of accuracy.

1. **Stress simple nouns** on the **first syllable** if their second syllable contains a **short vowel** (usually /ə/ or /ɪ/) or a **syllabic consonant**. E.g., *bottle* ['bʌtəl], *castle* ['kæsl̩], *China* ['tʃaɪnə], *clever* ['klevər], *gravel* ['grævəl], *happy* ['hæpi],<sup>6</sup> *larynx* ['lerɪŋks] (or ['lærɪŋks]), *money* ['mʌni], *people* ['pi:pl̩], *product* ['prɒdʌkt], *table* ['teɪbəl], *slender* ['slendər].
2. **Stress simple nouns** on the **second syllable** if the syllable contains a **long vowel** or **diphthong**. E.g., *balloon* [bə'lu:ən], *design* [dɪ'zaɪn], *estate* ['rsteɪt].
3. **Stress compound nouns** of the form **noun + noun** or **adjective + noun** as follows: Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress**<sup>7</sup> on the **second syllable**. E.g., *armchair* ['ɑ:mtʃeə], *background* ['bækgraʊnd], *blackbird* ['blækbə:rd], *blackboard* ['blækbɔ:rd], *bluebell* ['blu:beɪ], *bookstore* ['bʊkstɔ:ɪ], *clotheshorse* ['kləʊzhɔ:s], *door knob* ['dɔ:ɪnɒb], *greenhouse* ['grɪnhaʊs], *handbag* ['hæmbæg], *heartburn* ['hɑ:ɪtbɜ:n], *suitcase* ['su:tkeɪs], *sunrise* ['sʌnraɪz], *teacup* ['ti:kʰʌp]. **Exceptions:** *ice cream* [aɪs'kri:m].
4. **Stress compound nouns derived from phrasal verbs** as follows: Place the **primary stress** on the **lexical part of the verb** and the **secondary stress** on the **preposition**. E.g., *drive-in* ['draɪvɪn], *handout* ['hændaʊt], *push-ups* ['pʊʃʌps], *show-off* ['ʃəʊɒf], *shutdown* ['ʃʌtdaʊn], *sit-in* ['sɪtɪn], *take-off* ['teɪkɒf], *walkout* ['wɒkaʊt].
5. **Stress simple verbs** on the **second syllable** if it contains a **long vowel** or **diphthong**, or if it ends with **more than one consonant**. E.g., *apply* [ə'plai], *arrive* [ə'raɪv], *assist* [ə'sɪst], *attract* [ə'trækt], *correct* [kə'rekt], *decide* [dɪ'saɪd], *direct* [dɪ'rekt], *expand* [ɪk'spænd], *export* [ɪk'spɔ:ɪt]. **Exceptions:** verbs that end in **-ow** /oʊ/, such as *borrow* ['bərəʊ], *follow* ['fəloʊ].
6. **Stress simple verbs** on the **first syllable** if the second syllable contains a **short vowel** (usually /ə/ or /ɪ/) and **ends with one (or no) consonant**, or if it ends with a **syllabic consonant**. E.g., *bury* ['beri], *carry* ['kɛəri] (or ['kæəri]), *enter* ['entər] (or ['enər]), *envy* ['envi], *equal* ['i:kwəl], *listen* ['lɪsn̩], *marry* ['meri] (or ['mæri]), *open* ['oʊpən], *travel* ['trævl̩], *worry* ['wɜ:ri] (AmE) or ['wəri] (BrE). **Exceptions:** *begin* [brɪ'gɪn], *permit* [pə'rɪmɪt], *transmit* [træns'mɪt].
7. **Stress compound verbs** as follows:
  - a) If the verb consists of **two lexical words**<sup>8</sup>, place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **second syllable**. E.g., *blackmail* ['blækmeɪl], *broadcast* ['brɒdkæst], *wiretap* ['waɪtəp].

<sup>5</sup> **Complex words** may consist of (a) two or more free morphemes, forming compound words, (b) a free morpheme plus affixes (i.e., prefixes and suffixes), and (c) two or more roots, either alone or with affixes.

<sup>6</sup> [ɪ] is considered an unstressed short vowel allophone of /i/, used at the end of words and before other vowels within words. E.g., *happy* /hæpi/ ['hæpi], *creation* /kri'eɪʃn/ ['kri'eɪʃn].

<sup>7</sup> Some compound nouns may not have a secondary stress; e.g., *bedroom* ['be:dru:m] or ['be:drʊm], *classroom* ['klæsru:m] or ['klæsrum], *gentleman* ['dʒentlmən], *restroom* ['restrum] (or ['restrəm]).

<sup>8</sup> **Lexical words**, or lexical morphemes, are those words that have meaning and referents in the real or imaginary world. They are usually content words such as nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

- b) If the **verb** consists of a **grammatical word** and a **lexical word**, place the **primary stress** on the **lexical word**. E.g., *forget* [fər'get], *forgive* [fərgɪv], *withstand* [wɪθ'stænd], *withdraw* [wɪθ'drɔː]. **Exception:** The following verbs have a **secondary stress** on the **grammatical word**. E.g., *outrun* [aʊtrʌn], *outwit* [aʊt'wɪt].
- c) If the **verb** consists of **prefix plus a bound root**, place the **primary stress** on the **root**, which is usually the **second syllable**. E.g., *deceive* [drɪ'siːv], *perceive* [pə'rsiːv], *receive* [rɪ'siːv], *conceive* [kən'siːv], *contain* [kən'teɪn], *detain* [drɪ'teɪn], *retain* [rɪ'teɪn], *prepare* [prɪ'pɪə], *compare* [kəm'pɪə], *retreat* [rɪ'triːt], *repeat* [rɪ'piːt], *compose* [kəm'pəʊz], *suppose* [sə'pəʊz].<sup>9</sup>
- d) If the verb is a **separable phrasal verb**, place the **primary stress** on the adverbial **preposition** (or particle) – the second syllable, and the **secondary stress** on the **lexical part of the verb** – the first syllable. E.g., *back up* [bæk'ʌp], *break up* [breɪk'ʌp], *count in* [kaʊntɪn], *dig in* [dɪgɪn], *face up* [feɪs'ʌp], *hold up* [haʊld'ʌp], *let down* [let'daʊn], *make up* [meɪk'ʌp], *put on* [pʊt'ɒn], *put out* [pʊt'aʊt], *show off* [ʃəʊ'ɒf], *take off* [teɪk'ɒf].
- e) If the verb is an **inseparable phrasal verb**, place the **primary stress** on the **lexical part of the verb**, the **first syllable**, and **secondary stress** on the **preposition**, especially when it is at the end of a sentence.<sup>10</sup> E.g., *ask for* [æsk fɔːr], *call on* [kɔːl'ɒn], *look for* [lʊk fɔːr].
8. **Simple adjectives** follow the same rules as verbs, as described in (5) and (6) above. E.g., *alive* [ə'laɪv], *correct* [kə'rekt], *divine* [drɪvɪn], *even* ['iːvən] (or ['iːvən]), *hollow* ['hɒləʊ], *graphic* ['græfɪk], *lovely* ['lʌvli], *mellow* ['meləʊ], *secret* ['sɪkɪt] (or ['sɪkɪt]), *shallow* ['ʃæləʊ], *yellow* ['jeləʊ]. **Exceptions:** *honest* ['ɒnɪst], *perfect* ['pɜːfɪkt] (or ['pɜːfekt]).
9. **Compound adjectives** of the form **noun + past participle** or **noun + noun** have the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **second syllable**. E.g., *heartfelt* ['hɑːtfeɪlt], *soundproof* ['saʊndpruːf].
10. The following **dissyllabic words shift stress** depending on whether they are used as nouns, adjectives or verbs. When they are used **as nouns or adjectives**, these words have their **primary stress** on the **first syllable**; the **second syllable** often has a **secondary stress**. When they are used **as verbs**, these words have their **primary stress** on the **second syllable**; the **vowel of the first syllable** is usually /ə/ or /ɪ/. It must be warned that sometimes the accentuation patterns in American English and British English differ.

<sup>9</sup> Notice that the root usually has a long vowel or diphthong.

<sup>10</sup> In connected speech, the preposition receives no stress, unless it is at the end of a sentence. In this case, it receives secondary stress. E.g., *I'm looking for a job* [aɪm 'lʊkɪŋ fɔː ə 'dʒɔːb]. *John is the person I'm looking for* ['dʒɒn ɪz ðə 'pɜːsn aɪm 'lʊkɪŋ fɔːr]. *What are you looking for?* [wɒt əɹ ju 'lʊkɪŋ fɔːr].

|           | <b>Verb</b>  | <b>Noun/Adjective</b>   |            | <b>Verb</b>   | <b>Noun/Adj.</b>             |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| abstract  | /əb'strækt/  | / 'æb, strækt/          | impress    | /im'pres/     | / 'im, pres/                 |
| accent    | /ək'sent/    | / 'æk, sent/            | incense    | /in'sens/     | / 'in, sens/                 |
| addict    | /ə'dikt/     | / 'ædikt/               | increase   | /in'kri:s/    | / 'in, kri:s/                |
| address   | /ə'dres/     | / 'ædres/ <sup>11</sup> | insult     | /in'sʌlt/     | / 'in, sʌlt/                 |
| ally      | /ə'laɪ/      | / 'ælaɪ/                | misprint   | /mis'print/   | / 'mis, print/               |
| attribute | /ə'tribju:t/ | / 'ætri, bju:t/         | object     | /əb'dʒekt/    | / 'əb, dʒekt/                |
| compound  | /kəm'paʊnd/  | / 'kəm, paʊnd/          | perfume    | /pər'fju:m/   | / 'pɜ:r, fju:m/              |
| compress  | /kəm'pres/   | / 'kəm, pres/           | permit     | /pər'mit/     | / 'pɜ:r, mit/                |
| concert   | /kən'sɜ:rt/  | / 'kən, sɜ:rt/          | pervert    | /pər'vɜ:rt/   | / 'pɜ:r, vɜ:rt/              |
| conduct   | /kən'dʌkt/   | / 'kən, dʌkt/           | present    | /pri'zent/    | / 'preznt/                   |
| conflict  | /kən'flikt/  | / 'kən, flikt/          | produce    | /prə'dju:s/   | / 'pra: dju:s/ <sup>12</sup> |
| console   | /kən'soul/   | / 'kən, soul/           | progress   | /prə'gres/    | / 'pra: gres/                |
| construct | /kən'strʌkt/ | / 'kən, strʌkt/         | protest    | /prə'test/    | / 'prou, test/               |
| contest   | /kən'test/   | / 'kən, test/           | rebel      | /ri'bel/      | / 'rebɪ/                     |
| contract  | /kən'trækt/  | / 'kən, trækt/          | record     | /ri'kɔ:rd/    | / 'rekərd/ <sup>13</sup>     |
| contrast  | /kən'træst/  | / 'kən, træst/          | refill     | /ri'fil/      | / 'ri:, fil/                 |
| convert   | /kən'vɜ:rt/  | / 'kən, vɜ:rt/          | refit      | /ri'fit/      | / 'ri:, fit/                 |
| convict   | /kən'vikt/   | / 'kən, vikt/           |            |               |                              |
|           | <b>Verb</b>  | <b>Noun/Adjective</b>   |            | <b>Verb</b>   | <b>Noun/Adj.</b>             |
| decrease  | /di'kri:s/   | / 'di:, kri:s/          | refund     | /ri'fʌnd/     | / 'ri:, fʌnd/                |
| desert    | /di'zɜ:rt/   | / 'dez, zɜ:rt/          | regress    | /ri'gres/     | / 'ri:, gres/                |
| dictate   | /dik'teɪt/   | / 'dik, teɪt/           | resit      | /ri'sɪt/      | / 'ri:, sɪt/                 |
| digest    | /dɒ'dʒest/   | / 'daɪ, dʒest/          | retail     | /ri'teɪl/     | / 'ri:, teɪl/                |
| discard   | /dis'kɑ:rd/  | / 'dis, kɑ:rd/          | segment    | /seg'ment/    | / 'seg, ment/                |
| discount  | /dis'kaʊnt/  | / 'dis, kaʊnt/          | subject    | /səb'dʒekt/   | / 'səb, dʒekt/               |
| entrance  | /in'træns/   | / 'entræns/             | survey     | /sər'veɪ/     | / 'sɜ:r, veɪ/                |
| envelop   | /in'veləp/   | / 'envə, loup/          | suspect    | /sə'spekt/    | / 'sʌs, spekt/               |
| escort    | /ɪ'skɔ:rt/   | / 'eskɔ:rt/             | torment    | /tɔ:r'ment/   | / 'tɔ:r, ment/               |
| export    | /ɪk'spɔ:rt/  | / 'ek, spɔ:rt/          | transfer   | /træns'fɜ:r/  | / 'træns, fɜ:r/              |
| extract   | /ɪk'strækt/  | / 'ek, strækt/          | transform  | /træns'fɔ:rm/ | / 'træns, fɔ:rm/             |
| ferment   | /fər'ment/   | / 'fɜ:r, ment/          | transplant | /træns'plænt/ | / 'træns, plænt/             |
| implant   | /im'plænt/   | / 'im, plænt/           | transport  | /træns'pɔ:rt/ | / 'træns, pɔ:rt/             |
| import    | /im'pɔ:rt/   | / 'im, pɔ:rt/           | upset      | /ʌp'set/      | / 'ʌp, set/                  |

Read aloud the following pairs of sentences and try to make a clear difference between in pronunciation between the words with as single underline and the words with a double underline. Say whether the words function as nouns or verbs.

1. a) He became the ally of a boy named Aubrey Mills and founded with him a gang of adventurers in the avenue.

<sup>11</sup> AmE /ə'dres/ (n.).

<sup>12</sup> AmE /prə'du:s/ (v); / 'pra: du:s/, / 'prou, du:s/ (n.).

<sup>13</sup> BrE [ˈrekʰɔ:d].

- b) No foreign power will ally with us.
2. a) The mother said to her belligerent son, "Violence is no way to resolve a conflict."
- b) The two news reports seem to conflict each other.
3. a) The boy was addicted to playing on his video game console.
4. b) Since they had raised him from birth, Jack and Jill had to console each other after their dog died.
5. a) The contract was supposed to expire seven years after it was signed.
- b) Derek firmly stated that he would rather contract pneumonia and die than stand outside wearing that ridiculous pink and green poncho.
6. a) To desert the military is a crime.
- b) The Gobi is a large desert in Asia.
7. a) Dad, I was at the farmer's market and bought this incense.
- b) Big mistake. If you burn it here, you'll incense your mother.
8. a) All need to be present for a unanimous vote.
- b) He will present his ideas to the Board of Directors tomorrow.
9. a) The Americans only consume a small portion of this produce, and they are willing to sell us the rest.
10. b) The judicial power is by its nature devoid of action; it must be put into action in order to produce a result.
11. a) No one suspects that we stole the books.
- b) The suspects were detained by the police.

### Placement of stress in three-syllable words

The placement of stress in three-syllable words is more variable than in two-syllable words; therefore, it is less predictable. Here are a few rules that could help you know where to place the stress.

1. **Stress simple nouns** on the **second syllable** (i.e., the penultimate syllable) if the noun contains a **long vowel** (/i:, ʌ:, ɜ:, ɔ:, u:/) or a **diphthong** (/aɪ, aʊ, eɪ, eə, ɪə, ɔɪ, oʊ, ʊə/), or if it **ends with more than one consonant**, or if the **final syllable** contains an unstressed **short vowel** (usually /ə, ɪ/), the diphthong /oʊ/ or a **syllabic consonant**. E.g., *amazing* [ə'meɪzɪŋ], *apartment* [ə'pɑ:rtmənt], *arena* [ə'ri:nə], *collection* [kə'leɪʃn], *committee* [kə'mɪti] (or [kə'mɪri]), *demeanor* [də'mi:nər], *disaster* [dɪ'zæstər], *example* [ɪg'zæmpəl], *ferocious* [fə'rouʃəs], *guerrilla* [gə'rɪlə], *mimosa* [mɪ'moʊzə], *occurrence* [ə'kʰɜ:rəns], *perfection* [pə'fekʃn], *phonetics* [fə'netiks], *potato* [pə'teɪrou], *reaction* [rɪ'ækʃn], *synopsis* [sɪ'nəpsɪs], *vanilla* [və'nɪlə].
2. **Stress simple nouns** on the **first syllable** if the **second syllable** (or middle syllable) **and** the **final syllable** contain **short vowels** (usually /ə, ɪ, ʊ/) and **end with no more than one consonant**. E.g., *agony* ['ægəni], *animate* ['ænəmit], *camera* ['kæməɾə],<sup>14</sup> *capital* ['kæpətəl], *character* ['kærəktər], *cinema* ['sɪnəmə], *custody*

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<sup>14</sup> Also ['kæmrə].



[ˈkʰʌstədi], *empathy* [ˈempəθi], *emperor* [ˈempərər], *foreigner* [ˈfærənər], *government* [ˈgʌvənmənt],<sup>15</sup> *lunatic* [ˈlu:nətɪk], *memory* [ˈmeməri],<sup>16</sup> *politics* [ˈpʰələtɪks], *quantity* [ˈkwɒntəti], *rhetoric* [ˈrɛtərɪk], *sympathy* [ˈsɪmpəθi].

3. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **last syllable** of a **simple noun** if the **final syllable** contains a **long vowel** or **diphthong** or it **ends with more than one consonant**. E.g., *alkali* [ˈætkəlaɪ], *appetite* [ˈæpətaɪt], *graduate* (v.) [ˈgrædʒu,eɪt], *hurricane* [ˈhʊrɪkən],<sup>17</sup> *intellect* [ˈɪntələkt], *Malibu* [ˈmæləbu:], *marigold* [ˈmerɪɡould], *moderate* (v.) [ˈmɒdəreɪt], *Panama* [ˈpænəmə:], *satellite* [ˈsætəlaɪt], *stalactite* [ˈstæləktʰaɪt], *sympathize* [ˈsɪmpəθaɪz].
4. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **second syllable** of **compound nouns** that have the form **noun + noun**, **noun + adjective** or **verb + noun**. E.g., *book keeping* [ˈbʊk ˈki:pɪŋ], *brainwashing* [ˈbreɪnwɒʃɪŋ], *car-ferry* [ˈkɑ:fəri], *pickpocket* [ˈpɪkpʰɒkɪt], *con woman* [ˈkɒnwʊmən], *crybaby* [ˈkraɪbeɪbi], *firing squad* [ˈfaɪrɪŋskwɔ:d], *newspaper* [ˈnu:spheɪpər], *push button* [ˈpʊʃbʌtn], *songwriter* [ˈsɒŋraɪtər], *turntable* [ˈtɜ:ntleɪbəl], *typewriter* [ˈtʰaɪpraɪtər]. Exceptions: *fancy dress* [ˈfænsɪdres], *working man* [ˈwɜ:rkɪŋ ˈwʊmən].
5. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **third syllable** of **compound nouns** that have the form **noun + noun** or **adjective + noun**, such as *apple pie* [ˈæptˌpʰaɪ], *crime report* [ˈkraɪmrɪ ˌpʰɔ:rt], *flowerpot* [ˈflaʊərˌpʰɒt], *heavyweight* [ˈheviˌweɪt], *honey bee* [ˈhʌniˌbi:], *power plant* [ˈpaʊərˌplænt], *rattlesnake* [ˈrætl̩ˌsneɪk], *tenderfoot* [ˈtɛndərˌfʊt]. Exception: *ill omen* [ɪlˌɒmən].
6. Place the **primary stress** on the **second syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **first syllable** of **compound nouns** that have the form **adjectival**<sup>18</sup> + **noun**. E.g., *loudspeaker* [ˌlaʊdˌspi:kər], *three-wheeler* [θriːˌwi:lər].<sup>19</sup> Exception: *hardcover* [ˈhɑ:rdˌkʰʌvər]. Some compound nouns of the form **noun + noun** also have this accentuation pattern. E.g., *bull terrier* [ˌbʊltˌteriər].
7. With **compound nouns** that have the form **lexical word + suffix**, place the **primary stress** on the **suffix** and the **secondary stress** on the **lexical word** when the **suffixes** are **-ee**, **-eer**, **-ese**, **-ette**, **-esque**, **-ique**. E.g., *refugee* [ˌrefjʊdʒi:], *evacuee* [ɪˌvækju:i:], *mountaineer* [ˌmaʊntɪˈniər], *volunteer* [ˌvɒləntɪˈniər], *Portuguese* [ˌpɔ:rtʃəˈgi:z], *journalise* [ˌdʒɜ:nl̩ˈi:z], *cigarette* [ˌsɪgəˈret], *launderette* [ˌləʊndəˈret], *picturesque* [ˌpɪktʃəˈresk], *unique* [ˌjuːˈni:k].
8. **Simple adjectives** usually follow Rule 3 given above for nouns; i.e., **the primary stress falls on the first syllable** and **the secondary stress on the third syllable**. E.g., *anthropoid* [ˌænθrəˌpɔɪd], *derelict* [ˌderəˌlɪkt], *insolent* [ɪnˌsələnt], *opportune* [ˌɒpərˌtʃu:n].
9. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **second syllable** of **compound adjectives** that have the structure **noun + present participle**

<sup>15</sup> BrE [ˈgʌvmənt]

<sup>16</sup> Also [ˈmemri]

<sup>17</sup> BrE [ˈhʌrɪkən]

<sup>18</sup> An **adjectival** is a word or phrase that functions as an adjective.

<sup>19</sup> **Noun phrases** of the form **adjective + noun** have a secondary stress on the adjective and a primary stress on the noun. E.g., *tall man* [ˈtɒl ˈmæn], *big car* [ˈbrɪg ˈkɑ:ɹ].

- or **past particle**. E.g., *groundbreaking* ['graʊndbreɪkɪŋ], *heartbreaking* ['hɑ:tbreɪkɪŋ], *heartbroken* ['hɑ:tbrʊkən], *typewritten* ['tʰaɪprɪtɪn].
10. Place the **primary stress** on the **second syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **first syllable** of **compound adjectives** that have the structure **adjective + past participle**. E.g., *bad-tempered* [bæd'tʰempəd], *far-reaching* [fɑ:ri:tʃɪŋ], *good-looking* [gʊd'lʊkɪŋ], *hard-working* [hɑ:d'wɜ:kɪŋ], *high-sounding* [haɪ'saʊndɪŋ], *old-fashioned* [oʊld'fæʃnd], *sweet-smelling* [swi:t'smelɪŋ].
  11. **Stress simple verbs** on the **second syllable** if the last syllable contains a **short vowel** (usually /ə, ʊ, ɪ/) **and ends with not more than one consonant**. E.g., *accomplish* [ə'kʰʌmplɪʃ], *determine* [dɪ'tʰɜ:ɪnɪn] (or [dɪ'tʰɜ:ɪnən]), *encompass* [ɪn'kʰʌmpəs], *encounter* [ɪn'kʰaʊntər] (or [ɪn'kʰaʊnər]), *maneuver* [mə'nu:vər].
  12. Place the **primary stress** on the **last syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **first syllable** of a **simple verb** if the **last syllable** contains a **long vowel** or **diphthong**, or it **ends with more than one consonant**. E.g., *correspond* [kə'respænd], *entertain* [entər'tʰeɪn] (or [enər'tʰeɪn]), *represent* [reprə'zent], *resurrect* [rezə'rekt].
  13. Place the **primary stress** on the **last syllable** and the **secondary stress** on the **first syllable** of **compound verbs** that have the form **function word + verb**. E.g., *overcome* [oʊvər'kʰʌm], *overflow* [oʊvər'fləʊ], *override* [oʊvər'raɪd], *understand* [ʌndər'stænd], *undertake* [ʌndər'tʰeɪk].
  14. If the verb is a **separable phrasal verb**, place the **primary stress** on the adverbial **preposition** (or particle) – the third syllable, and the **secondary stress** on the **lexical part of the verb** – the first syllable. E.g., *put away* [pʰʊə'weɪ], *throw away* [θrouə'weɪ].
  15. Place the **primary stress** on the **second syllable** of the **lexical part** of a **complex word** when the **suffixes** are **–ance, –ant, –ence, –ent, –eous, –ic, –ion, –ive**. E.g., *courageous* [kə'reɪdʒəs], *climatic* [klaɪ'mætɪk], *dependence* [dɪp'hendəns] or [dɪp'hendɪs], *dependent* [dɪp'hendənt] (or [dɪp'hendɪt]), *importance* [ɪm'pɔ:ɪtəns] (or [ɪm'pɔ:ɪtɪs]), *important* [ɪm'pɔ:ɪtənt] (or [ɪm'pɔ:ɪtɪt]), *pathetic* [pə'tʰetɪk], *perfection* [pə'fektʃən], *reflexive* [rɪ'fleksɪv]. **Exception:** *consonant* [k'hʌnsənt], *reference* [refərəns], *referent* [refərənt].
  16. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **lexical part of complex words** with the suffixes **–able, –ible, –age, –al,<sup>20</sup> –ful, –less, –ly, –ment,<sup>21</sup> –ness, –ous**. E.g., *anchorage* [ˈæŋkərɪdʒ], *credible* [ˈkredəbəl], *critical* [ˈkrɪtɪkəl], *devilish* [ˈdevlɪʃ],<sup>22</sup> *logical* [ˈlɒdʒɪkəl], *passable* [ˈpæsəbəl], *poisonous* [ˈpɔɪzənəs], *possible* [ˈpɒsəbəl], *powerless* [ˈpaʊərləs], *punishment* [ˈpʌnɪʃmənt], *rapidly* [ˈræpɪdli], *wonderful* [ˈwʌndərfʊl], *yellowness* [ˈjeləʊnɪs].

<sup>20</sup> Some **nouns** that end in **–al** have the primary stress on the second syllable. E.g., *refusal* [rɪ'fju:zəl], *survival* [sə'rvaɪvəl].

<sup>21</sup> Some nouns that end in **–ment** have the primary stress on the second syllable. E.g., *development* [dɪ'veləpmənt], *engagement* [ɪn'geɪdʒmənt], *improvement* [ɪm'pru:vmənt], *involvement* [ɪn'vɒlvmənt].

<sup>22</sup> **Verbs** that end in **–ish** usually have the primary stress on the second syllable. E.g., *demolish* [dɪ'mɒlɪʃ], *replenish* [rɪ'plenɪʃ].

17. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **stem**<sup>23</sup> and the **secondary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **suffix** of **complex words** when the **suffixes** are **-(i)fy, -ize/-ise, -wise**. E.g., *glorify* [ˈglɒrəˌfaɪ], *purify* [ˈpjʊərəˌfaɪ], *realize* [ˈriːləɪz], *supervise* [ˈsuːpəˌvaɪz], *testify* [ˈtɛstəˌfaɪ], *otherwise* [ˈʌðəˌwaɪz].

There are pairs of three- and four-syllable words which end in **-ate** whose pronunciation varies depending on whether they are used as nouns/adjectives or verbs. When they are nouns or adjectives, the **-ate** ending receives no stress and is therefore pronounced /-ɪt/ or /-ət/. But when those words are verbs, the **-ate** ending receives secondary stress and is therefore pronounced /-eɪt/. Below is short list of such words.

|             | Verb              | Noun/Adjective  |            | Verb           | Noun/Adj.    |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| advocate    | /ˈædvəˌkeɪt/      | /ˈædvəkɪt/      | elaborate  | /ɪˈlæbəˌreɪt/  | /ɪˈlæbrɪt/   |
| animate     | /ˈænəˌmeɪt/       | /ˈænəmɪt/       | estimate   | /ˈestəˌmeɪt/   | /ˈestəmɪt/   |
| approximate | /əˈpræksəˌmeɪt/   | /əˈpræksəmɪt/   | graduate   | /ˈgrædʒəˌeɪt/  | /ˈgrædʒʊɪt/  |
| associate   | /əˈsəʊʃɪˌeɪt/     | /əˈsəʊʃɪət/     | initiate   | /ɪˈnɪʃɪˌeɪt/   | /ɪˈnɪʃɪət/   |
| certificate | /səˈtɪfəˌkeɪt/    | /səˈtɪfəkɪt/    | intimate   | /ɪˈntəˌmeɪt/   | /ɪˈntəmɪt/   |
| coordinate  | /ˈkəʊˌɔːrdəˌneɪt/ | /ˈkəʊˌɔːrdənɪt/ | moderate   | /ˈmɒdəˌreɪt/   | /ˈmɒdərɪt/   |
| delegate    | /ˈdeləˌgeɪt/      | /ˈdeləgɪt/      | predicate  | /ˈpredəˌkeɪt/  | /ˈpredəkɪt/  |
| deliberate  | /dəˈlɪbəˌreɪt/    | /dəˈlɪbrɪt/     | separate   | /ˈsepəˌreɪt/   | /ˈseprɪt/    |
| duplicate   | /ˈduːpləˌkeɪt/    | /ˈduːpləkɪt/    | triplicate | /ˈtrɪpləˌkeɪt/ | /ˈtrɪpləkɪt/ |

Likewise, there are some three-syllable words that end in **-ment** whose pronunciation varies depending on whether they are used as nouns or verbs. When they are nouns, the **-ment** ending receives no stress and is therefore pronounced /-mənt/. But when those words are verbs, the **-ment** ending receives secondary stress and is therefore pronounced /-mənt/. Below is short list of such words.

|            | Verb          | Noun         |            | Verb          | Noun         |
|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| compliment | /ˈkɒpləˌment/ | /ˈkɒpləmənt/ | ornament   | /ˈɔːrnəˌment/ | /ˈɔːrnəmənt/ |
| document   | /ˈdɒkjəˌment/ | /ˈdɒkjəmənt/ | supplement | /ˈsʌpləˌment/ | /ˈsʌpləmənt/ |
| implement  | /ˈɪmpləˌment/ | /ˈɪmpləmənt/ |            |               |              |

## Stress Shift

There are a few two-, three- and four-syllable words whose main (or primary) stress moves (or shifts) from the second or last syllable to the first syllable, depending on whether they are used as alone or before other words (usually modifying them or forming compound nouns). For example, the words *afternoon* [æftərˈnuːn], *pronunciation* [prəˈnʌnsiˌeɪʃn], the

<sup>23</sup> **Stems** are free roots to which derivational affixes have been added or are likely to be added. For example, in the word *disestablishment*, *disestablish*, *establishment*, and *establish* (which is a root at the same time) are stems.

cardinal numbers from *thirteen* [θɜːr'tiːn] to *nineteen* [naɪntiːn] usually receive their primary stress on the last syllable. But when they are used before other words, modifying them, their primary stress shifts to the first syllable. Notice where we stress these words in the following sentences.

I'll see you this afternoon.  
[aɪl 'siː ju ðɪs\_æftər'nʊn]

A: How many books do you need?  
['haʊ menɪ 'bʊks du ju 'niːd]

The afternoon classes are boring.  
[ði\_æftər'nʊn 'klæsɪz\_ər 'bɔːrɪŋ]

B: I need only thirteen.  
[aɪ 'niːd\_ɔʊnli θɜːr'tiːn]

or

A: How old are you?  
['haʊ\_ɔʊld\_ər 'juː]

B: I need only thirteen books.  
[aɪ 'niːd\_ɔʊnli θɜːr'tiːn 'bʊks]

B: I'm eighteen.  
['aɪm\_er'tiːn]

She knows good pronunciation principles.  
[ʃɪ 'nouz 'ɡʊd prə'nʌnsiəɪfɪ 'prɪnsəptɪz]

Or

B: I'm eighteen years old.  
['aɪm\_er'tiːn 'jɪəz\_ɔʊld]

### Placement of stress in words of more than three syllables

Words that have more than three syllables usually have the form **function word** + **lexical word**, **prefix** + **lexical word** or **lexical word** + **suffix**. The placement of stress in these types of words is very unpredictable and complex; however, the following rules will be helpful.

1. Place the **primary stress** on the **lexical word** and the **secondary stress** on the **function word** of **compound verbs**. E.g., *overpopulate* [ˌoʊvər'pʰapjəleɪt], *overpower* [ˌoʊvər'pʰaʊər], *underdeveloped* [ˌʌndərdrɪ'veləpt], *underestimate* [ˌʌndər'estəmeɪt].
2. Place the **secondary stress** on the first syllable of the first word and the **primary stress** on the **third syllable** of **compound nouns** such as *flying saucer* [ˌflaɪɪŋ'sɒsər], *woman writer* [ˌwʊmən'raɪtər], *second-class* [ˌsekənd'klæs].
3. Place the **primary stress** on the **lexical part** (or **stem**) and the **secondary stress** on the **prefix** of **complex nouns** and adjectives when the **prefix** is **semi-**.<sup>24</sup> E.g.,

<sup>24</sup> In AmE, *semi-* is often also pronounced [ˈsemaɪ-].

*semiconductor* [ˌsemɪkənˈdʌktər], *semifinal* [ˌsemɪˈfaɪnəl], (But *semicircle* [ˌsemɪˈsɜːrkəl]).

4. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **suffix** and the **secondary stress** on the **lexical part** of **complex words** when the suffixes are **–ality, –ation, –ility, –ivity, –mental, –ology, –logical**. E.g., *activity* [ækˈtɪvəti], *biology* [baɪˈɒlədʒi], *biological* [baɪˈɒlədʒəkəl], *creativity* [kriːˈeɪtɪvəti], *developmental* [dɪˈveləpˈmentəl], *instrumental* [ɪnstrəˈmentəl], *personality* [pɜːˈsɒnəli], *possibility* [pɒˈsəbɪləti], *ventilation* [ventɪˈleɪʃn].
5. Place the **primary stress** on the **last syllable** of the **lexical part** of **complex words** when the **suffixes** are **–eous, –graphy, –ial, –ious, –ity**. E.g., *advantageous* [ədˌvæntəˈeɪdʒəs], *photography* [fəˈtɒɡrəfi], *proverbial* [prəˈvɜːbiəl], *injurious* [ɪnˈdʒʊəriəs], *tranquility* [træŋˈkwɪləti].
6. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **lexical part** and the **secondary stress** on the **second syllable** of **complex words** with the **suffixes –able, –ary, –y**. E.g., *dictionary* [ˈdɪkʃənəri], *difficulty* [ˈdɪfəˈkʌlti], *military* [ˈmɪləˈtəri]. **Exception:** *democracy* [dɪˈmɑːkrəsi].
7. Place the **primary stress** on the **first syllable** of the **lexical part** of **complex words** with the suffix **–able**. E.g., *comfortable* [ˈkɒmfəˈrəbəl] (or [ˈkɒmfətəbəl]), *tolerable* [ˈtɒlərəbəl].

## Strong and Weak Pronunciation Forms<sup>25</sup>

In English, most words usually have more than one pronunciation. When words are in isolation, they have a strong pronunciation form (i.e., emphatic pronunciation or stressed pronunciation). Also, words often have a strong pronunciation form when they are at the end of sentences, in negative contractions, in short answers, or in careful, emphatic or slow speech. For example:

are / ˈɑːr/      because /brɪˈkɒz/      can / ˈkæn/      was / ˈwɑːz/ or / ˈwɒz/ or /wʌz/

What are you looking for? [ˈwʌr\_ər jə ˈlʊkɪŋ ˈfɔːr]

We aren't fools! [wɪ ˈɑːrnt ˈfuːlz]

Are you busy now? → Yes, I am. [ˈjes\_ɑɪ\_æm]

We do believe you. [wɪ ˈduː bəˈliːv\_jʊ]

I want you not him. [aɪ ˈwaɪnt\_juː | ˈnɒt\_ˈhɪm]

<sup>25</sup> A list of Strong and Weak Pronunciation Forms is given at the end of this Handout.

This is the kind of pronunciation that is usually represented in dictionaries. Notice that the words that are underlined or written in italics must be read with strong pronunciation.

On the other hand, when words occur **in natural fast connected speech**, one or more syllables may lose their original stress. In these cases, we say that their vowel sounds ‘weaken’ or ‘get reduced’ because they receive no stress. That is to say, in fast speech the tongue cannot move to the required position fast or completely enough to produce a full-quality vowel. Thus, the amount of movement of the tongue in pronouncing the vowels is reduced. Consequently, the unstressed vowels become (i.e., are pronounced) schwa /ə/ (or sometimes /ɪ/). When this happens, we say that the words have a weak pronunciation form (or a reduced pronunciation form or an unstressed pronunciation form). In practice, any unstressed vowel letter or combination of vowel letters representing vowel sounds and diphthongs can be reduced to /ə/ (or /ɪ/). This phenomenon can be represented by the formula: **NO STRESS** = /ə/. Notice the pronunciation of the underlined vowel letters in the following words: analysis [əˈnæləsis], animal [ˈænəmət̩], correct [kəˈrekt], decimal [ˈdesəmət̩], famous [ˈfeɪməs], harmony [ˈhɑːməni], open [ˈoʊpən], suppose [səˈpʰoʊz], syringe [səˈrɪndʒ].

Likewise, notice the pronunciation of *am*, *are*, *can* and *was* in the following sentences.

I am busy now. [ˈaɪ\_əm ˈbɪzi] or [ˈaɪm ˈbɪzi]

You can do it. [ˈjuː kən ˈduː\_ɪt] or [ˈjuː kn ˈduː\_ɪt]

The children are happy. [ðə ˈtʃɪldrən\_ər ˈhæpi]

She was right. [ˈʃiː wəz ˈraɪt]

As was said earlier, in English function words usually have a weak pronunciation in fast speech. Here is a list of such words: *a*, *am*, *an*, *and*, *are*, *as*, *at*, *be*, *been*, *but*, *can* (modal aux.), *could*, *do* (aux.), *does* (aux.), *for*, *from*, *had* (perf. aux.), *has* (perf. aux.), *have* (perf. aux.), *he*, *her*, *him*, *his*, *just*, *me*, *must*, *of*, *shall*, *she*, *should*, *some* (adj.), *than*, *that* (conj.), *the*, *them*, *there* (in the expressions *There is...*, *There are...*, *There was...*, *There were...*), *to*, *us*, *was*, *we*, *were*, *who*, *would*, *you*.

## Reduced Pronunciation in Relaxed Speech

“Reduced [pronunciation] forms are the pronunciation changes that occur in natural speech because of the environment or context in which a word or sound is found. The amount of reduction... depends on how fast the word or sound is spoken” (Weinstein, 2001, p. vii). Reduced pronunciation happens when the words of phrases or sentences are run (or fused) together in fast, natural relaxed speech.<sup>26</sup> They might be considered a sort of

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<sup>26</sup> **Relaxed speech** is the way people speak when they are stress-free and unconcerned about the correctness of the language from the point of view of grammar, pronunciation, etc., or the situation in which they find

“informal contractions”. These contractions are often used in informal spoken language; they should **never** be used in formal writing.

| <i><b>Contraction</b></i>                   | <i><b>Pronunciation</b></i>                 | <i><b>Uncontracted Form</b></i>     | <i><b>Examples</b></i>                 |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 'bout                                       | baʊt  | about                               | He was talkin' 'bout you.              |
| betcha                                      | 'betʃə                                      | bet you                             | I betcha you dunno it.                 |
| 'cause, cos, cuz                            | 'kɔːz, 'kɒz, 'kʌz                           | because                             | I left 'cause you didn't come on time. |
| c'mere                                      | kə'mɪər                                     | Come here!                          | John, c'mere!                          |
| c'mon                                       | kə'mɒn                                      | Come on!                            | C'mon, John!                           |
| could've, could of, coulda                  | 'kʊdəv, 'kʊrəv, 'kʊrə<br>kədəv, kərəv, kərə | could have (+ pp. form of verbs)    | We could've helped Mary, instead.      |
| couldja                                     | 'kʊdʒə                                      | Could you...?                       | Couldja help me?                       |
| couldn't've, couldn't of, couldnta, couldna | 'kʊdn̩təv, 'kʊdn̩tə, 'kʊdn̩ə                | couldn't have (+ pp. form of verbs) | He couldn't've done that.              |
| couldntcha                                  | 'kʊdn̩tʃə                                   | Couldn't you..?                     | Couldntcha go?                         |
| d'you                                       | dʒuː, dʒoʊ, dʒə                             | Do you...?                          | D'you smoke?                           |
| didja                                       | 'dɪdʒə, dʒə                                 | Did you...?                         | Didja see him?                         |
| didj'ave                                    | dɪd 'jæv, dʒæv                              | Did you have...?                    | Didj'ave a good time?                  |
| dontcha                                     | 'doʊntʃə                                    | Don't you...?                       | Dontcha love me?                       |
| dunno                                       | də'nʊʊ, rə'nʊʊ                              | don't know                          | I dunno.<br>[aɪ də'nʊʊ] or [aɪrə 'nʊʊ] |
| gimme                                       | 'ɡɪmɪ                                       | give me                             | Gimme love.                            |
| gonna                                       | 'ɡɒnə, 'ɡʌnə                                | going to (+ verb)                   | I'm gonna sleep.                       |
| gotta                                       | 'ɡatə, 'ɡarə<br>'ɡɒtə, 'ɡɔrə                | got to (+ verb)                     | I've gotta go now.                     |
| hafta                                       | 'hæftə                                      | have to (+ verb)                    | I have to eat now.                     |

themselves. This type of speech is typical of highly informal situations, such as when you are speaking to closed friends, relatives, and the like.

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|   |  |  | We have to go now.                         |
| hasta                                       | 'hæstə   | has to (+ verb)                            | John has to eat now.<br>She has to go now. |
| howdja                                      | 'haʊdʒə  | How did you...?                            | Howdja get here?                           |
| kinda                                       | 'kaɪndə  | kind of                                    | I'm kinda sad.                             |
| letcha                                      | 'letʃə   | let you                                    | I'll letcha do it.                         |
| lemme                                       | 'lemɪ  | Let me                                     | Lemme see it.                              |
| lotsa                                       | 'lɒtsə, 'lɒtsə                                 | lots of                                    | He ate lotsa grapes.                       |
| lotta                                       | 'lɒtə, 'lɑrə<br>'lɒtə, 'lɒrə                   | lot of                                     | I need a lotta help.                       |
| meetcha                                     | 'mi:tʃə  | meet you                                   | I'll meetcha at three.                     |
| might've,<br>might of,<br>mighta            | 'maɪtəv, 'maɪrəv, 'maɪrə                       | might have (+<br>pp. form of<br>verbs)     | We might've done it.                       |
| must've must<br>of, musta                   | 'mʌstəv, 'mʌstə                                | must have (+ pp.<br>form of verbs)         | She must've been ill.                      |
| mustn't of,<br>mustn't've,<br>mustnta       | 'mʌsntəv, 'mʌsɪv, 'mʌsntə, 'mʌsɪ               | mustn't have (+<br>pp. form of<br>verbs)   | He mustn't've hit it.                      |
| needja                                      | 'ni:dʒə  | need you                                   | I needja.                                  |
| oughta                                      | 'ɒtə, 'ɑrə, 'ɒtə, 'ɒrə<br>'ɔ:tə, 'ɔ:rə         | ought to (+ verb)                          | We oughta go home.                         |
| should've,<br>should of,<br>shoulda         | 'ʃʊdəv, 'ʃʊrəv, 'ʃʊrə<br>'ʃədəv, 'ʃərəv, 'ʃərə | should have (+<br>pp. form of<br>verbs)    | They should've run.                        |
| shouldn't've,<br>shouldn't of,<br>shouldnta | 'ʃʊdntəv, 'ʃʊdntə                              | shouldn't have<br>(+ pp. form of<br>verbs) | I shouldn't've run.                        |
| sorta                                       | sɔ:rtə, sɔ:rrə (AmE)<br>'sɔ:tə, sɔ:rə (BrE)    | sort of                                    | We're sorta bored.                         |
| supposta,<br>s'posta                        | 'spəʊstə, 'spəʊstə                             | supposed to                                | He s'posta be here by five.                |
| useta                                       | 'ju:stə, 'ju:stə                               | used to                                    | I useta live here.                         |
| waddaya                                     | 'wɒrəjə, 'wɑrəjə, 'wʌrəjə                      | What are<br>you...? What do<br>you...?     | Waddaya say?<br>Waddaya<br>sayin'?         |



|          |                             |   |  |
|----------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| wanna    | 'wʌnə, 'wɒnə, 'wʌnə         | want to (+ verb)                        | I wanna go home.                         |
| wantcha  | 'wʌntʃə, 'wɒntʃə<br>'wʌntʃə | want you                                | I wantcha.                               |
| watcha   | 'wɒtʃə, 'wʌtʃə, 'wʌtʃə      | what you, what you're, What are you...? | Whatcha said isn't true. Whatcha sayin'? |
| what'll  | 'wɒtɪ, 'wʌɪ, 'wʌɪ           | What will...?                           | What'll you do?                          |
| when'll  | 'wenɪ                       | When will...?                           | When'll you come back?                   |
| wheredja | 'weədʒə                     | Where do you...?                        | Wheredja live?                           |
| where'll | 'weərəl                     | Where will...?                          | Where'll they go?                        |
| why'll   | 'waɪ                        | Why will...?                            | Why'll I do it?                          |
| wontcha  | 'wʌntʃə                     | Won't you...?                           | Wontcha help me?                         |
| wouldja  | 'wʊdʒə, dʒə                 | Would you...?                           | Wouldja do it?                           |
| y'all    | jɒl, jɔɪ                    | you (pl.), you all (in Texas)           | Y'all know that.                         |

## Rhythm

When we speak naturally, some words are stressed and others are not stressed. The recurrence of stressed syllables at somewhat regular and equal intervals of time determines the rhythm of speech. The interval between stresses is affected by the number of (unstressed) syllables within a single tone group<sup>27</sup> and by the number and type of vowels and consonants within each syllable.

This phenomenon has led to the classification of the languages of the world into two big groups, namely, syllable-timed languages and stress-timed languages. “In a ***syllable-timed language***, every syllable is perceived as taking up roughly the same amount of time.... Syllable-timed languages tend to give syllables approximately equal stress” (Wikipedia). Among these languages, we find Spanish, French, Finnish and Slovene. On the other hand, in “a ***stressed-timed language***, syllables may last different amounts of time... [though we perceive] a fairly constant amount of time (on average) between consecutive stressed syllables” (Wikipedia). Languages like English, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian and Czech are considered to be stress-timed languages.

As a general rule, English tries to avoid having stresses too close together. Let us examine the rhythm of the following sentence:

Alice didn't / finish her / essay.  
1                      2                      3

This sentence can be divided into three segments or stressed groups, each one containing a stressed syllable (or **beat**) and several unstressed ones. When we speak naturally, each segment takes about the same time to be said, although each segment has a different number of syllables. Usually, the stressed syllables are pronounced longer and louder than the unstressed syllables. Similarly, **the unstressed syllables between stressed syllables are pronounced very quickly**, and the final sound of each word is linked with the initial sound of the following word. In short, the segments that have more syllables are said more quickly and the segments that have fewer syllables are said more slowly. Notice the stressed syllables (beats) in the following sentences:

I just called to say I love you,  
[aɪ dʒəs 'kɒld | tʊ 'seɪ | aɪ 'lʌv jʊ]

And I mean it from the bottom of my heart,  
[ænd aɪ 'mi:n\_ɪt | frʌm ðə 'bɒtəm | əv maɪ 'hɑ:t]

In English, content words (i.e., words which have a lexical meaning on their own and/or have a referent in the real or imaginary world, such as nouns (e.g., *table*, *car*), verbs (e.g., *run*, *eat*), adjectives (e.g., *cold*, *red*), adverbs (e.g., *slowly*, *hard*)) are usually stressed

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<sup>27</sup> A **tone group** (or **intonation group**) is the sentence or part of a sentence over which a particular pitch pattern extends.

in speech. However, function words (i.e., words which do not have a lexical meaning on their own but show grammatical ideas and relationships, such as the articles *a* and *the*; the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *you*; the auxiliary verbs *am*, *do*, *can*, and *have*; the prepositions *at*, *up* and *for*; the conjunctions *and*, *but* and *that*) are usually unstressed in connected speech.

Knowing which syllables should be stressed, using weak pronunciation forms, linking word up and using the correct intonation patterns, among others, will help us pronounce English sentences with a correct rhythm, especially when reciting poems and singing songs. For the sake of practice, say the following sentences, making sure to use correct rhythm. The stressed syllables have been written bigger than the unstressed syllables.

- **Dah** du du    **Dah** du    **Dah**    **Dah**
- This is the    house that    Jack    built.
- **Dah** du du    **Dah** du du    **Dah** du du    **Dah**
- These are the    houses that    Jacqueline    built.
- This is the    house that    Jack    built.
- These are the    houses that    Jack    built.
- These are the    houses that    Jacqueline    built.
- This is the    house that my    mother    designed.
- This is the    bicycle    Peter    repaired.
- Those are the    people we    met in the    park.
- That is the    person I    saw on the    stairs.
- Those are the    people we    drove to the    party.
- That is the    gardener who    works for my    mother.
- Andrew is    taller than    Peter and    Thomas.
- Fancy a    glass of    Italian    brandy?
- Tom's not as    tall as the    rest of the    family.
- What an    amazingly    lively    production.
- How can we    possibly    get there in    time!

## Exercises

- I. Your teacher will read aloud the words transcribed below. Please mark the primary stress and the secondary stress, if there is one, on each word. Follow the example give. Note: Remember that /ə/ **is never stressed**.

Example: transcriptions [ˌtʃænˈskʊpʃnz]

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. personality [pʰɜːr sn æl ə ti]      | 9. cigarette [sɪg ə ret]                |
| 2. representative [rep rə zen tə trɪv] | 10. responsibility [rɪ spən sə bɪl əti] |
| 3. indecisive [ɪn dɪ saɪ sɪv]          | 11. Japanese [dʒæp ə niːz]              |
| 4. pomegranates [pʰɑm ɪ græn its]      | 12. unfortunately [ʌn fɔːrtʃə nɪt li]   |
| 5. conversation [kʰɑn vər seɪ ʃn]      | 13. photographic [fou rə græf ɪk]       |
| 6. Alexander [æl ɪg zæn dər]           | 14. vegetation [vedʒ ə tʰeɪ ʃn]         |
| 7. Mississippi [mɪs ə sɪp ɪ]           | 15. dependability [dɪ pʰen də bɪl əti]  |
| 8. chimpanzee [tʃɪm pən ziː]           | 16. difficulty [dɪf ə kʰɪt ti]          |

- II. Please mark the primary and secondary stresses in the phrases and sentences transcribed below. Your teacher will read them aloud to you. Follow the example.

Example: John loves Mary. [ˈdʒɒn ˈlʌvz ˈmeri]

1. Phonetics is easy. [fə neɪtɪks ɪz ɪːzi]
2. Want to see it? [wʌnə siː ɪt]
3. I'm eighteen. [aɪm ɪt iːn]
4. Were they home? [wɜːr ðeɪ hoʊm]
5. A week ago. [ə wiːk ə ɡoʊ]
6. Where do you live? [wɛər du ju lɪv]
7. Come here, please. [kʰʌm hɪər ˌpliːz]
8. You study English? [ju stʌdi ɪŋɡlɪʃ]
9. A: How are you? [haʊ ɑːr ju]
- B: Fine, thanks. How are *you*? [faɪn θæŋks ˌhaʊ ər juː]
10. A: Who did that? [huː dɪd ðæt]
- B: Mrs. Jones. [mɪsɪz dʒoʊnz]

A: Mrs. Jones? [ mɪsɪz dʒoʊnz]

B: Yes, she did. [ jɛʃ ʃɪ dɪd]

III. Recite the following poems and song. Please watch your rhythm.

### **Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride**

By James Thomson (1834-1882)

Give a man a horse he can ride,  
Give a man a boat he can sail;  
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,  
On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,  
Give a man a book he can read;  
And his home is bright with a calm delight,  
Though the rooms be poor indeed.

Give a man a girl he can love,  
As I, O my Love, love thee;  
And his hand is great with the pulse of Fate,  
At home, on land, on Sea.

### **There's a Man in Our Town**

By Page Zyromski

There's a man in our town  
Who pads down the street  
Wearing shoes on his hands  
And gloves on his feet.  
He tells everyone  
That he happens to meet  
That he finds a bit  
More awkward to eat  
With shoes on his hands  
And gloves on his feet.

"But I couldn't imagine,"  
He says as he stands,  
"Wearing gloves on my feet  
And gloves on my hands!"

He says it's more loud  
Than politeness demands  
If he claps with his shoes  
When he wants to clap hands,  
Or tries to shake shoes  
When he wants to shake hands.  
But other than that,  
It's quiet and neat,  
Wearing shoes on the hands  
And gloves on the feet.

"And I couldn't imagine,"  
He says as he stands,  
"Wearing shoes on my feet  
And shoes on my hands!"

## **Put Your Hand In The Hand (by Ocean)**

Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.  
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.  
Take a look at yourself and then you can look at others differently,  
By puttin' your hand in the hand of the man from the Galilee.

Every time I look into the Holy Book, I wanna tremble, tremble.  
When I read about the part where a carpenter cleared the temple.  
For the buyers and the sellers were no different fellas than I profess to be,  
And it causes me shame to know that we're not the people we should be.

So put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.  
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.  
Take a look at yourself and then you can look at others differently,  
By puttin' your hand in the hand of the man from the Galilee.

My mama taught me how to pray before I reached the age of seven.  
She said, "There'll come a time when there'll probably need a room in  
heaven."  
For I'm feeling kinda guilty 'bout the number of times you do what we must  
do.  
But we forget what he said when we figured that he'd still make room.

So you've gotta put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.  
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.  
Take a look at yourself and then you can look at others differently,  
By puttin' your hand in the hand of the man from the Galilee.

(Everybody, come on!)

Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.  
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.  
Take a look at yourself... (fading)

## Bad Boys

### Inner Circle

Ooh!  
Bad boys!  
Watcha gon... watcha gon...  
Watcha gonna do  
When sheriff John Brown come for you?

Tell me!  
Whatcha wanna do?  
Whatcha wanna do? Yeah!

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?

When you were eight and you had bad traits,  
You go to school and you learn the golden rule.  
So why are you acting like a bloody fool?  
If you get hot, then you must get cool!

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 1 more time.)*

You chuck it on that one,  
You chuck it on this one,  
You chuck it on ya mother,  
And you chuck it on ya father.

You chuck it on ya brother,  
And you chuck it on ya sister.  
You chuck it down on that one,  
And you chuck it on me!

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 3 more times)*

Nobody now give you no break,  
Police now give you no break,

And no soldier wanna give you no break,  
Not even your i-Jah (?) now give you no break.

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 2 more times)*

Why did you have to act so mean?  
Dontcha know you're a human being?  
Born of a mother with the love of a father;  
Reflections come and reflections go,  
I know sometimes you wanna let go, hey hey  
I know sometimes you wanna let go.

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 1 more time.)*

You're too bad;  
You're too rude;  
You're too bad;  
You're too rude. Hey!

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 1 more time.)*

You chuck it on that one,  
You chuck it on this one,  
You chuck it on ya mother,  
And you chuck it on ya father.

You chuck it on ya brother,  
And ya chuck it on ya sister.  
You chuck it down on that one,  
And you chuck it on me.

Bad boys, bad boys,  
Whatcha gonna do?  
Whatcha gonna do  
When they come for you?  
*(Repeat 1 more time.)*

## My Holiday

We **travelled** to **Venice**; then **on** to **Verona**  
to **test** a Fiesta with **only** one **owner**.  
We **drove** through the **night** to a **village** near **Brussels**  
to **choose** lots of **booze** and eat **plenty** of **mussels**.  
We **later** decided to **head** off to **Spain**  
via **France** for a **chance** to drink **lots** of **champagne**.  
But after a week of good living and booze,  
we agreed that we'd need to rest up in Toulouse.  
Then we drove to Madrid before heading to Lisbon  
to meet our friend Pete who'd just flown in from Brisbane.  
We drove farther south to a town near Granada  
to find lots of wine to replenish the larder,  
and then spent a week just outside Algeciras,  
but folk that we spoke to refused to come near us.  
We stayed for a while in the town of Pamplona,  
where Pete walked the street (he's a bit of a loner).  
We drove fairly fast to a hotel in Cannes,  
where we tried to confide our affairs to a man,  
who gave us some goods to deliver in Rome  
for a fee we'd not see until safely back home.  
We sailed down to Malta to stay in Valetta,  
But a fax sent from Sfax made us think that we'd better  
cross over to Tunis then drive to Algiers  
to speak to a Greek I had known for some years.  
We drove through Morocco to reach Casablanca  
to discuss, without fuss, our affairs with a banker.  
Then headed back north, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar,  
but passed through so fast we were starting to falter.  
And round about then I began to remember  
I had to meet Dad on the tenth of September.  
We sold the Fiesta and loaded a plane  
with some gear from Tangier, then we got on a train,  
which roared through the night till it reached Santander,  
where we stayed one more day just to breathe in the air;  
then a boat brought us back to our native shores.  
So that was my holiday, how about yours?



## Strong<sup>28</sup> and Weak<sup>29</sup> Pronunciation Forms of English Function Words

|                     | <i>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</i>  | <i>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</i>   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>Articles:</b>    |  |   |
| a                   | eɪ   | ə (E.g., <i>a book</i> [ə 'bʊk], <i>a European</i> [ə jʊərə'piːən], <i>a ewe</i> [ə 'juː], <i>a union</i> [ə 'juːniən], <i>a one-eyed man</i> [ə 'wʌn_aɪd 'mæn], <i>a young man</i> [ə 'jʌŋ 'mæn])  |
| an                  | æn   | ən (E.g., <i>an apple</i> , <i>an errand</i> , <i>an hour</i> , <i>an island</i> , <i>an only child</i> , <i>an umbrella</i> )  |
| the                 | ði:  | ði (before vowel sounds); e.g., <i>the apple</i> , <i>the hour</i> , <i>the umbrella</i><br>ðə (before consonant sounds); e.g., <i>the ewe</i> [ðə 'juː], <i>the man</i> [ðə 'mæn], <i>the union</i> [ðə 'juːniən], <i>the European</i> [ðə jʊərə'piːən], <i>the one that I saw...</i> [ðə 'wʌn ðər_aɪ 'sɒ] |
| <b>Auxiliaries:</b> |  |   |
| am                  | æm   | əm (E.g. <i>I am busy</i> ; <i>What am I doing here?</i> )<br>-m (contracted; e.g. <i>I'm happy</i> . <i>I'm excited</i> .)   |
| are                 | ɑːr AmE; BrE (before words beginning with a vowel sound)<br>ɑː BrE (before consonant sounds) | ər (AmE; BrE before words beginning with a vowel sound) E.g., <i>They are in the office</i> .<br>ə (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>They are busy</i> .<br>-r (AmE contracted) E.g., <i>We're lost</i> . <i>You're wrong</i> . <i>They're ambitious</i> [ðeər_əm'bɪʃəs].)                             |
| be                  | bi:  | bɪ (esp. before consonants) E.g., <i>I want to be with you</i> .<br>bi (esp. before vowels) E.g., <i>I'll be in the office in a minute</i> .  |
| been                | bɪn (BrE), bɪn (AmE)   | bɪn (E.g., <i>I've been hurt</i> . <i>We've been to Lawrence twice</i> .)   |
| can                 | kæn  | kən, kɪ (E.g., <i>We can do that later</i> .)   |
| could               | kʊd  | kʊd, kəd (E.g., <i>If I were stronger, I could lift that box</i> . <i>What could I say?</i> )   |

<sup>28</sup> Strong (i.e., stressed) pronunciation forms occur when words are used (a) in isolation, such as in a dictionary; (b) in careful and slow speech, (c) in emphatic sentences; e.g., *I **do** love you*; (d) in negative contractions; *I haven't seen him lately*; (e) in short answers; e.g., *Yes, I am*; and (f) at the end of phrases and sentences; e.g., *I thought I could. What are you listening to?* With phrasal verbs, the preposition is always stressed.

<sup>29</sup> Weak (or unstressed or reduced) pronunciation forms occur when words are used in naturally spoken (fast) connected speech.

|      | <b>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</b> | <b>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</b>  |
|------|---|--|
| do   | du:                                       | <b>do</b> or <b>də</b> (before consonants) E.g. <i>Do you smoke? Do the children know it?</i><br><b>du</b> (before vowels) E.g., <i>Do I have to know that? Do animals sleep for eight hours?</i><br><b>d-</b> (contracted) E.g., <i>D'you know him?</i> [dʒu nou_ɪm]  |
| does | dʌz                                       | <b>dəz, əz</b> (E.g., <i>Does Mary live here? She does not seem to understand you. Where does he sleep?</i> ['weər dəz_i:'slɪ:p])<br><i>When's John leave ?</i> ['wenəz 'dʒən 'lɪ:v]<br><b>-s</b> (contracted, after voiceless consonants) E.g., <i>What's John want? What's it mean?</i> ['wʌts_ɪt 'mi:n]<br><b>-z</b> (contracted, after voiced consonants) E.g., <i>Where's he work?</i> ['weərz_i: 'wɜ:rk] |
| had  | hæd                                       | <b>həd, əd</b> (E.g., <i>I had never seen such a thing; John had left when I arrived at his house.</i> )<br><b>-d</b> (contracted) E.g., <i>We'd just had dinner when he called.</i> )   |
| has  | hæz                                       | <b>həz, əz</b> (E.g., <i>What has he said? He has built a beautiful house. Where has Mary gone?</i> )<br><b>-s</b> (contracted, after voiceless consonants) E.g., <i>What's Frank done?</i> )<br><b>-z</b> (contracted, after voiced consonants; e.g., <i>Why's John done that?</i> )  |
| have | hæv                                       | <b>həv, əv</b> (E.g., <i>What have they said? We have just seen him. I should have known better.</i> )<br><b>-v</b> (contracted) E.g., <i>I've already met him.</i>  |
| is   | ɪz  | <b>ɪz</b> (E.g., <i>The teacher is busy.</i> )<br><b>-s</b> (contracted, after voiceless consonants) E.g., <i>What's Frank doing? Mark's assisting another customer now.</i><br><b>-z</b> (contracted, after voiced consonants) E.g., <i>When's the meeting? She's gorgeous!</i>   |

|        | <b>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</b>                                | <b>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</b>  |
|--------|--|--|
| must   | mʌst   | <b>məst, məs</b> (E.g., <i>The children haven't woken up yet; they must be tired. You must eat.</i> )  |
| shall  | ʃəəl   | <b>ʃəl</b> (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>I shall never do that. What shall we do tonight?</i><br><b>ʃəl</b> (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>We shall always remember you. When shall I go?</i><br><b>-t</b> (contracted, before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>I'll never do that. We'll help you.</i>   |
|        |  | <b>-l</b> (contracted, before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>We'll always remember you.</i>  |
| should | ʃʊd  | <b>ʃʊd, ʃəd</b> (E.g., <i>What should they do? We should talk to them right away.</i> )  |
| will   | wɪl  | <b>wɪt</b> (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>I will call you later. You will hear from us soon.</i><br><b>wɪl</b> (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>I will always love you. He will enjoy the trip.</i><br><b>-t</b> (contracted, before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>You'll never forget it. Everybody'll be pleased.</i> ['evrɪbʌrɪt bɪ 'plɪzɪd]<br><b>-l</b> (contracted, before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>He'll eat right away. Kay'll answer your questions.</i> ['keɪl_ænsəɹ jər 'kwɛstʃənz]<br><b>-t</b> (contracted after plosives, fricatives and nasals) E.g., <i>What'll you do?</i> ['wʌt jʊ 'du:] <i>Ted'll work tonight.</i> ['tɛrɪt 'wɜ:rk tənʌɪt] <i>The class'll miss you.</i> [ðə 'klæsɪt 'mɪs_jʊ] <i>John'll help you.</i> ['dʒʌnɪt hɛlp_jʊ] |
| was    | wəz, wɒz, wʌz  | <b>wəz, wɪz</b> (E.g., <i>I was angry at him. What was he doing?</i> )   |
| were   | wɜ:r (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>wɜ: (BrE before consonant sounds) | <b>wər</b> (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>We were in the office when he called.</i> ['wi: wər_ɪn ði_ʌfɪs   'wen_i: k'hɒtɪd]<br><i>What were they doing when you saw them?</i> ['wʌt wər ðeɪ_ʌdu:ɪŋ   'wen_jʊ 'sɒ ðəm]<br><b>wə</b> (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>Where were the children?</i> ['weə wə ðə 'tʃɪldrən] <i>They were playing</i>  |

|                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
|                           |  | <i>in the park. [ˈðeɪ wə ˈpleɪɪŋ ɪn ðə ˈpɑːk]</i>  |
|                           | <b>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</b>                                | <b>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</b>  |
| <b>Subject Pronouns:</b>  |  |  |
| I                         | aɪ   | ɑː, ə (E.g., <i>When I saw them, they hid behind a car.</i> )  |
| you                       | juː  | ʃʊ, ju (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>You owe me some money.</i><br>jə (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>You know who did it, don't you?</i>  |
| he                        | hiː  | hɪ, hi, iː (E.g., <i>What does he want? He wants a cookie.</i> )   |
| she                       | ʃiː  | ʃɪ, ʃi (E.g., <i>Where does she work? I'm sure she can.</i> )  |
| we                        | wiː  | wɪ, wi (E.g., <i>When can we leave? They know that we won the game.</i> )  |
| <b>Object Pronouns:</b>   |  |  |
| me                        | miː  | mɪ, mi (E.g., <i>Help me do it. They gave me a nice present.</i> )   |
| you                       | juː  | ʃʊ, ju (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>Thank you a lot.</i><br>jə (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>We saw you near the bank.</i>  |
| him                       | hɪm  | hɪm, ɪm (E.g., <i>Tell him the truth. We saw him do it.</i> )  |
| her                       | hɜːr (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>hɜː (BrE before consonant sounds) | hər, ər (AmE) E.g., <i>Ask her to come here. We saw her near the park.</i><br>hər, ɜːr (BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>We saw her in class.</i><br>hə, ɜː (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>John saw her by the river.</i> |
| us                        | ʌs   | əs (E.g., <i>Help us build a better world. Mom told us a beautiful story.</i> )<br>-s (contracted) E.g., <i>Let's go! Let's eat ice cream.</i>   |
| them                      | ðem  | ðəm, əm, -m̩ (E.g., <i>Tell them the truth! Stop 'em!</i> )  |
| <b>Reflexive Pronouns</b> |  |  |
| myself                    | maɪself  | mə'self (E.g., <i>I did it myself. I went to the beach by myself.</i> )  |

|                                      | <b><i>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</i></b>  | <b><i>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</i></b>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| yourself                             | jʊr'self, jər'self (AmE)<br>jɔː'self, jʊə'self (BrE)  | <b>jər'self</b> (AmE) E.g., <i>You must see it yourself.</i><br><b>jə'self, jɔː'self</b> (BrE) or E.g., <i>You can get dressed by yourself.</i>   |
| himself                              | hɪm'self  | <b>hɪm'self, ɪm'self</b> (E.g., <i>John wrote the letter himself.</i> )   |
| herself                              | hər'self (AmE)<br>hə'self (BrE)   | <b>hər'self, ər'self</b> (AmE) E.g., <i>Mary said to herself, "I can do it."</i><br><b>hə'self, ɜː'self</b> (BrE) E.g., <i>My mother made the cake herself.</i>   |
| ourselves                            | ɑːr'selvz, aʊr'selvz (AmE)<br>ɑː'selvz (BrE)  | <b>ɑːr'selvz</b> (AmE) E.g., <i>We built this house ourselves.</i><br><b>ɑː'selvz</b> (BrE) E.g., <i>We must see that by ourselves.</i>   |
| yourselves                           | jʊr'selvz, jər'selvz (AmE)<br>jɔː'selvz, jʊə'selvz (BrE)                                    | <b>jər'selvz</b> (AmE) E.g., <i>You must see it yourselves.</i><br><b>jə'selvz, jɔː'selvz</b> (BrE) E.g., <i>You can get dressed by yourselves.</i>   |
| themselves                           | ðəm'selvz   | <b>ðəm'selvz, əm'selvz</b> (E.g., <i>The children painted their room themselves.</i> )  |
| <b><i>Possessive Adjectives:</i></b> |   |   |
| my                                   | maɪ   | <b>mɑː, mə</b> (E.g., <i>My brother works in a car factory. That's my man!</i> )  |
| your                                 | jʊr, jʊər (AmE)<br>jɔːr (BrE before vowel sounds)<br>jɔː, jʊə (BrE before consonant sounds) | <b>jər</b> (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>Your uncle is very knowledgeable. I met your mother a month ago.</i><br><b>jɔːr</b> (BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>Your aunt is so sweet. Eat your apple.</i><br><b>jɔː, jʊə</b> (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>Your brother works hard.</i> |
| his                                  | hɪz   | <b>hɪz, ɪz</b> (E.g., <i>I met his father two years ago.</i> )  |
| her                                  | hɜːr (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>hɜː (BrE before consonant sounds)                    | <b>hər, ər</b> (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>I saw her husband at the party. I want to see her assignment.</i><br><b>hə, ɜː</b> (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>I don't know her sister.</i>   |
| our                                  | aʊr, aʊər (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>aʊə (BrE before consonant sounds)               | <b>ɑːr</b> (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>Our teacher speaks five languages. Have you met our aunt?</i><br><b>ɑː</b> (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>Our car is quite comfortable.</i>  |

|                      | <b>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</b>                                | <b>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</b>   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| <b>Prepositions:</b> |  |   |
| at                   | æt, ær   | ət, ər (E.g., <i>We'll come back at five. At a moment's notice, we were ready.</i> )  |
| for                  | fɔːr (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>fɒː (BrE before consonant sounds) | fər (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>I've lived here for two years. I'm going to be out of town for a week. I've known him for ages.</i><br>fə (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>I'll do it for you. For Europeans, mangoes and pineapples are exotic fruits.</i>   |
| from                 | fɹəm, frɒm, frʌm   | fɹəm (E.g., <i>My house is at a stone's throw from my office.</i> )   |
| of                   | ɔv, ɒv, ʌv   | əv (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>I'm tired of eating rice.</i><br>ə (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>There were a lot of people at the meeting. It's kind of hard.</i><br>-v (after vowel sounds, esp. /ə/) E.g., <i>Emma of Spain has won the race.</i>   |
| to                   | tuː  | tə, tu, rə, ru, u (before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>I want to eat now.</i> [aɪ 'wʌntu_ɪt] or [aɪ 'wʌnu_ɪt] <i>Go to Australia.</i> ['gouɹu_ɒ'streɪliə]<br>tə, rə, ə (before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>We want to visit the Netherlands.</i> [wɪ 'wʌntə 'vɪzɪt ðə 'nedərləndz] or [wɪ 'wʌnə 'vɪzɪt ðə 'nedərləndz] <i>Go to your room.</i> ['gouɹə jə 'ruːm] |
| <b>Conjunctions:</b> |  |   |
| and                  | ænd  | ənd, ən, ɪ (esp. after plosives, fricatives and nasals) E.g., <i>I'll eat and drink all night long. I love rock 'n' roll.</i>   |
| as                   | æz   | əz (E.g., <i>John is as tall as Paul.</i> )   |
| but                  | bʌt  | bət, bər (E.g., <i>I love you, but I won't put up with rudeness.</i> )  |
| or                   | ɔːr (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds)<br>ɔː (BrE)                           | ər (AmE; BrE before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>You or Paul will have to do the job. Run or die. Leave me alone, or I'll call the police.</i><br>ə (BrE before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>John</i>   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <i>or Dan can do the job.</i>   |
|  | <b>Strong (or Stressed) Pronunciation</b>       | <b>Weak (or Unstressed) Pronunciation</b>   |
| so   | sou   | sou, sə E.g., <i>so easy, so tall.</i>  |
| than   | ðæn   | ðæn, ən (E.g., <i>John is smarter than I thought. It was bigger'n that.</i> )   |
| that   | ðæt   | ðæt, ət (E.g., <i>I hope that you understand what I mean.</i> )   |
| <b>Relative Pronouns</b>   |   |   |
| what   | wat, wɒt, wʌt                                   | wæt, wər (E.g., <i>I don't know what you want. Did you hear what I said?</i> )  |
| who  | hu:   | hʊ, hu, u (E.g., <i>Do you know who did it? I saw who did it.</i> )   |
| <b>Other Words:</b>  |   |   |
| because (Also informally spelled 'cause, 'cos or 'cuz.)          | bɪkɒz, bɪkɔːz, bɪkʌz<br>bə'kɒz, bə'kɔːz, bə'kʌz | kɒz, kɔːz, kʌz, kəz (E.g., <i>I hit him 'cause he kicked me first.</i> )  |
| get, git   | 'get, 'ɡɪt                                      | ɡɪt (E.g., <i>It's gittin' dark.</i> )  |
| how many   | 'hau 'meni                                      | 'haʊmənɪ, 'haʊmni (E.g., <i>How many girls were there?</i> )  |
| -ing   | -ɪŋ (careful pronunciation)                     | -ɪn, -ən (We were running/runnin' fast.)  |
| just   | dʒʌst   | dʒəst, dʒəs, dʒɪs (E.g., <i>I've just come back for the US. I just don't know what to say.</i> )  |
| not  | nɒt, nɔt  | nət, nt, n (contracted) E.g., <i>I cannot hear you well. We aren't excited about it. You mustn't smoke in class.</i>  |
| saint  | seɪnt   | sənt, sən, snt, sn (esp. BrE) E.g., <i>St. Ives, Saint John</i>   |
| some   | səm   | səm, sm (E.g., <i>I want some bread.</i> )  |
| there (as in <i>there is, there are, there was, there were</i> ) | ðeər, ðer (AmE)<br>ðeə, ðeɪ (BrE)               | ðər (AmE; BrE, before vowel sounds) E.g., <i>There is a nice restaurant around the corner. There are a lot of Chinese people in Mérida. There were three students in class today.</i><br>ðə (BrE, before consonant sounds) E.g., <i>There was a man at the door a while ago. There were four cars in the parking lot.</i> |

<sup>30</sup> This second pronunciation is not considered standard; it is typical of Afro-Americans in the US.

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