



IIT Madras

ONLINE DEGREE

Basic English
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Lecture 38
Word Stress - 2

Good afternoon, today we are going to talk; actually, we are continuing to talk about stress assignment in long English words, by long I mean words which are more than, which are two syllables or more, three or four, how stress is assigned to these words.

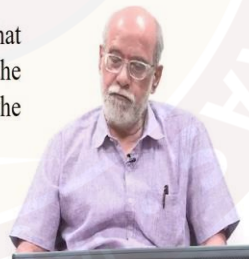
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- Stress on words in many languages is fixed; a syllable in one or another part of the word is stressed.



We will use a single inverted comma ‘ to show stress on the syllable.

- In all words in the French language, for example, that have two or more syllables, the last syllable has the most prominent stress. So, in **Pa’ris** in French, the second syllable is stressed.



As I said in the earlier unit stress assignment on longer words is fixed in many other languages; they are either in one or the other part of the word. How are the stresses shown? We saw that, so here for our convenience we are using a single inverted comma to show stress, the syllable actually the vowel following this sign is stressed. So, all along on this course, we will use this convention which is what a good number of dictionaries also use.

So, as I said some languages have fixed rules, in all words in the French language, for example, the main stress is assigned to the last word, so you have Pa’ris in French or the word for building

(Word in french) a word for the car you know goes on, but you know the word for boy *garcon*, word for library *Bibliothèque*, you always stress on the final syllable of a word of a long word in French.

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- In Tamil, it is usually the first or the second syllable in a word of more than two syllables that is stressed., such as for instance '**Rajendran**' in Tamil, usually it is the first syllable that get prominent stress.
- In Hindi, prominent stress is given on or near the final syllable of the word. So the same word, **Ra'jendran**, in Hindi may be stressed on the pre-final syllable.



In Tamil, for instance, it is usually either on the initial or near the initial syllable, so for example in a word like Rajendran, the stress it will be by most family speakers they stress the initials well they will say Rajandran, some also might say Rajendran, but it is never the case that it is Rajendraan you know, that does not happen.

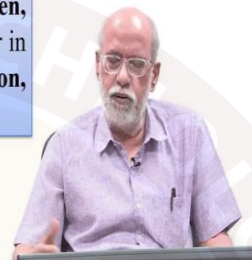
In Hindi, we have a similar rule, it is either on the final or near the final, so, for example, the same name by a Hindi speaker would be Rajendra, Punjabi's would call Rajinder, that is how it goes and also in other words, but English has no such thing, no fixed rule that makes it difficult. Next.

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- Unlike French, Tamil, Hindi, etc., word stress in English is not fixed for only a particular syllable in a particular position.

It can be on the initial syllable, as in 'Canada, 'category, 'dictionary, 'India, 'London, or on the final syllable as in absen'tee, Ber'lin, bet'ween, Bra'zil, Ne'pal, Ja'pan, de'gree, engi'neer, etc. or in the middle of the word, as in adminis'tration, bene'ficial, cer'tificate, eco'nomie, etc.



So, unlike French, Tamil or Hindi you know, the word stress is all over, you can take any text, listen to any audio clip and you will feel listen that look at the words that we have before us here on this PowerPoint slide, some words have initial stress like Canada, category, dictionary, some words have stress on the second syllable, Berlin, between, Brazil, Nepal, degree, some words have stress on the final syllable, degree, engineer, so what is the rule? Some words have it on the third syllable or fourth, administration, next.

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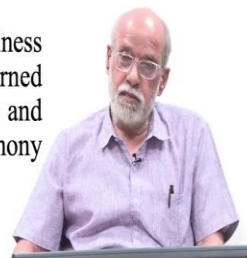


1. Listen to the audio recording played here, and mark stresses on all words of two or more syllables.

Link to the audio:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r5hJTbw75qsEy5HlthRA6TIKPC2H8I_V/view?usp=sharing

Sundar Pichai, is an Indian-American business executive. Born in Madurai, India, Pichai earned degree from IIT Kharagpur. Pichai, the Google and Alphabet CEO took part in a graduation ceremony hosted by You Tube called Dear Class of 2020.



Listen to the following audio recording and like we did with the audio recording of the British prime ministers greeting or British prime minister Diwali greeting we will also do the same exercise here, listen to this speech and make a note of long words and it put in an inverted comma or if you do not like that then underline the stressed vowel in these long words.

Sundar Pichai is an Indian American business executive born in Madurai, he Studied at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and then went to work in America and finally, you know today he is the Chief Executive Officer of you know, the Google company or the alphabets you know in a branch of that same company, and he is a very popular speaker sought-after speaker. He gave this speech to the class of 2020 the commencement speech following which the graduates go out of the University, please listen and make a note of the long words and stressed syllable in these words.

Sundar Pichai: Hello everyone and congratulations to the class of 2020, as well as your parents, your teachers and everyone who helped you get to this day, I never imagined I would be giving a commencement speech with no live audience from my backyard, but it is giving me a much deeper understanding for what our YouTube creators go through and I certainly never thought I would be sharing a virtual stage with the former president a first lady a Lady Gaga and a queen bee not to mention BTS.

I do not think this is the graduation ceremony any of you imagine, at a time when you should be celebrating all the knowledge you have gained, you may be grieving what you have lost, the moves you planned, the jobs you earn and the experiences you were looking forward to, in bleak moments like these it can be difficult to find hope, so let me skip right to the end and tell you what happens, you will prevail, that is not really the end of the speech, so do not get too excited. The reason I know you will prevail is because so many others have done it before you.

Professor Shreesh Chaudhary: This goes on, but we took a very short clip just to draw your attention to some words there, the text itself is pretty inspiring, so you know it is not difficult, you will prevail, you will learn to speak English the way it ought to be spoken, but a part of that exercise is to acquire quote on quote, right stress on long words, look at the text, for example, listen to it again and make a note of the long words and mark stresses on these words, here we go.

Sundar Pichai: Hello, everyone and congratulations to the class of 2020, as well as your parents your teachers and everyone who helped you get to this day, I never imagined I would be giving a commencement speech with no live audience from my backyard, but it is giving me a much deeper understanding for what our YouTube creators go through and I certainly never thought I would be sharing a virtual stage with the former president a first lady a Lady Gaga and a queen bee not to mention BTS.

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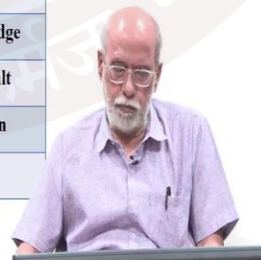
Professor Shreesh Chaudhary: Let us, look at the list of long words and see if you also mark them the way we have marked them, please.

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ANSWERS



He'llo	'everyone	congratu'lations	'parents
'teachers	'never	i'magined	co'mmencement
'audience	'backyard	'deeper	'understanding
'certainly	'sharing	'virtual	'former
'Lady	'Gaga	'mention	gradu'ation
'ceremony	'any	'celebrating	'knowledge
'grieving	ex'periences	'moments	'difficult
pre'vail	'really	ex'cited	'reason
'many	'others	be'fore	



These are the long words some I think these are all the long words in the speech given by commencement speech given by Sundar Pichai, please compare if you mark them that way, it is hello, everyone, congratulations, parents, teachers, never, imagined, go on.

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- Is there no rule of stress assignment in English?- No, not as simple and fixed as in many other languages we noted above.

- In Hindi or Tamil, a syllable with a long vowel is stressed.



Can we say therefore that there is no rule of stress assignment in English, it is a jungle that is not true, there are some rules, there are some general patterns, but of course it is not as simple and fixed as it is in many other languages we saw above, we noted above. In Hindi or Tamil, for instance, a syllable with a long vowel is stressed. Next.

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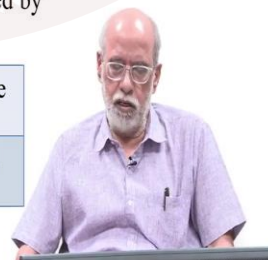


- In many words in English also, a syllable with a long vowel is stressed

a'go	a'vow,	a'way	de'lay	de'ny
------	--------	-------	--------	-------

- In many other words in English, a vowel followed by more than one consonant is stressed

ac'count	a'dept	a'ford	a'nounce
a'mend	ap'pend	a'scend	at'tend



And many words in English also a syllable with a long vowel is stressed, say for example look at words like ago, where a short and go in ago is long, avow where a is short but avo in vow is

long, away, delay, deny, in many other words just as in other languages a vowel followed by more than one consonant it stressed, it is true also of English, so, for example, you have account where o u is followed by two consonants compared with a which is followed by no consonant or you know maybe a little bit of one, adept a is followed by no consonant, but in ept, a is followed by two consonants.

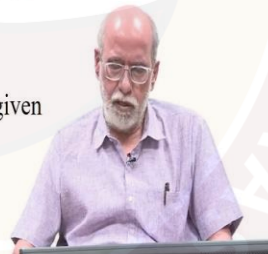
So, is the case with afford, announce, amend, append, ascent, attend, so you know like many other languages, English also assigns stress to long vowels, to vowels followed by more than one consonant, but in English, this is not all, there is more, and that is what makes English different. Look at the next.

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2. Make a list of words of two syllables with at least one long vowel, and see if it is stressed on the long vowel.
3. Make another list of words with two or three syllables with at least one vowel followed by more than one consonant, and see if this vowel is stressed.
4. Also, practice pronouncing these words with given stresses.



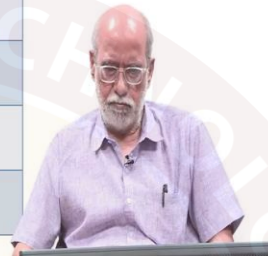
Actually, before we go further you can make a list of words with two syllables bi-syllabic words, with at least one long vowel and say which of these two syllables is stressed, is it a stressed on the long vowel? You can make another list of words with two or three syllables with at least one vowel which is followed by more than one consonant and see if this is stressed, once you make these lists also practice pronouncing these words particularly if your existing pronunciation of these words is different from the pronunciation of these words given in the dictionary.

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Stress on English Nouns Long Words & Bi-syllabic words



'abdomen	'absence	'accident
'adult	'advocate	'agent
'agency	'any	'allergy
appa'ratus	'comfort	A'merica
A'merica	'colleague	a'nalysis
de'corum	'argument	'husband



In many English words particularly nouns long English words bi-syllabic words, stress is assigned to the initial syllable, nouns of two syllables; usually, they get stress on the initial syllable, so, for example, it is abdomen, sometimes even in longer words even in three-syllable tri-syllabic words it is the initial syllable if it is a noun, then initial syllable that takes stress, so abdomen, absence, accident, you may notice that abdomen has three syllables, 'accident has only two, but they are both a noun, and therefore sorry absence has only two, 'accident again has three.

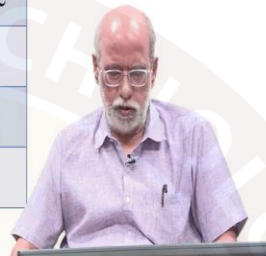
So, you know three syllables or two syllables in a large number of nouns in English main stress is assigned to the initial syllable, so you have 'adult, you have 'advocate, you have 'agent, you have 'agency, you have 'any, you have 'allergy.

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Stress on English Nouns



'attitude	'island	'bureaucrat
'bureaucrat	'merchant	'calendar
'parent	'character	'petrol
'citizen	'product	'competence
pro'fessor	de'mocracy	'silence
'editor	'something	'emphasis
'village	'pivot	'cinema



Same thing here, you have mostly on the initial syllable. Also you have sometimes also on the second syllable such as in democracy such as in professor, but look at this list of words you have more than 10 or 12 here and only 2 or 3 have and they are all nouns, but you have main stress on the initial syllable.

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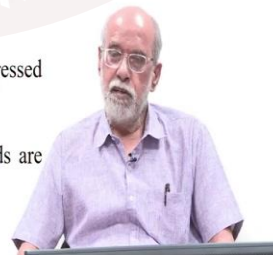


5. If you stress these words differently, you should learn to stress them in the manner indicated.

6. With the help of an *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English*, you can make a longer list of frequently used words of this kind, and learn their pronunciation with standard stresses as shown in dictionaries.

Make your own list of frequently used nouns that are stressed on the third and the second syllables from the end.

Lists of frequently used and generally misstressed words are given also in the book *Better Spoken English*.



So, you know you can do the following things if you like make a list of words long words bi-syllabic words, tri-syllabic words and see which of these words have stressed main stress on the

initial syllable and if you pronounce these words differently then you should re-learned the pronunciation of these words in the manner given there.

Actually you can also take any advanced Learner's Dictionary of English it shows you grammar, it shows you pronunciation, it gives you meaning or spelling, it also gives you usage, you know, so you can make a longer list of frequently used words maybe 100, 200 or you can use the book I have suggested, Better Spoken English, there I have about 700 words frequently used and mispronounced, you can slowly, carefully pronounce them getting right stresses and then you know, do the drill with them, every day for some time, not too long, not for 2 hours in 1 day definitely not.

Neither only for 2 minutes, maybe between 10 minutes and 30 minutes every day at least once if possible twice just read those words aloud with indicated stresses, and they will become part of your habit and then you know you will not only pronounce them right other words on that matter not given in the list will automatically be readjusted, and you will pronounce those words right as well.

Let us spend some time also on how we can make our own lists of words. Of course, I have told you that any Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English indicates stress on all long words and your task has been made easier by books like Better Spoken English, you can make your own list as well, it is pretty simple, go alphabetically look up a dictionary and one day say day one look at pages which you know have words beginning with a.

Now, as you read the dictionary, you will know intuitively which of these words are frequently heard and if you feel that a certain word is heard frequently a cat is heard oftener than a giraffe, then take cat do not take giraffe and see how it is stressed. So, in cat there is no problem, it is monosyllabic, you do not have to make a note.

But giraffe or camel, in camel you have stress on the initial syllable. If you do it differently make a note, otherwise do not, in giraffe the stress is on the second syllable, if you do it differently then make a note and relearned, like that you know if you look at all pages which list words beginning with a, then you will automatically understand which of these words are frequently heard by you and you do not have to go by others intuition after all English is your language, you

are going to use it for business, for other reasons, for administration, for giving and receiving news and information.

So, the way you speak, the way you feel comfortable is best, all we are trying to do is to draw your attention to the fact that you can make your own lists, as you read you will intuitively understand, you will automatically understand which of these words are frequently used if they are these words of monosyllabic have only one syllable no problem, you do them right anyway, but if they have more than one you know if it is something like 'pivot' pivot, then you know the stress in on the initial syllable, it is pivot.

If it is a word like let us say nation, then you were the stressing the initial syllable nation, if it is photo then initial syllable, but if it is photography then on the second syllable, so as you look at the pages you will know which of these words are frequently heard. Decision number one note that frequently used words.

Now, if it is monosyllabic, do not note it, but if it is bi-syllabic then ask yourself do I stress it the way it is indicated in the dictionary or do I do it differently, if you do it differently, if you see academic when you should say, when you should say academic, you say develop, when you should say develop, you say police when you should say police, use say balloon when you should see balloon, then make a note.

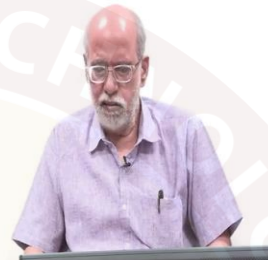
Once you have lists of this kind, one list with all words on the initial syllable, another list with all words on the second syllable, yet another list with all words on the final syllable then it is mechanical, you can take these lists in once in a while once in every day for 10 minutes read these words aloud to yourself 2 or 3 times, that is what we call drill, and you will find that under a few weeks these words have become, this kind of pronunciation has become a habit with you, and you have no difficulty speaking Standard English understanding and Standard English and also helping others, your colleagues, your friends, your family acquire standard pronunciation of a global language.

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7. Reading these words aloud, at a reasonably slow tempo and not too loud a voice can help you acquire correct pronunciation of these words, and of many other words stressed in this manner.



So, reading these words aloud at a reasonably slow tempo and not too loud a voice not too soft either can help you acquire correct pronunciation of these words and this may not only make you a still better speaker of the English language you are already a good speaker but these you know acquiring correct stresses will make you still better speaker of the English language, more importantly, it will make you a better listener of the English language, you will then enjoy English movies much more, English speech, English documentaries much more and you will be understood worldwide just as you will understand anyone from anywhere in the world.

The clue here is that though there are no hard and fast rules as there are in other languages in this branch of the language in many languages are very complicated case systems English does not have that. Some languages have very complex kind of gender systems, the chair is a girl, the table is a boy even in French in Hindi not so in English, but English has particularly spoken English as some complexity in its long words where there are no uniform rules of stress assignment, there, of course, are patterns and these patterns can be learnt.

And then you will find that if you have got or relearned the pronunciation of those few hundred words and it will not take you a long time in under a few weeks maybe about 6 to 8 weeks, by doing some practise every day with these lists either you make those lists or use the lists given in the book I have suggested you can relearn them and then you will find that not only you are

doing those words right you are doing not only those words right, you are also doing other words on those patterns right.

And as I said, a moment ago you will understand speakers of Standard English from anywhere without difficulty, and you will be understood by speakers of standard varieties of English anywhere without difficulty, you will as Sundar Pichai another very good speaker of the English language says you will prevail. Good luck, and thank you.

