



**IIT Madras**  
ONLINE DEGREE



# SYLLABLES & STRESS IN WORDS

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# SYLLABLES

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- A syllable is a unit in which the word is divided while pronouncing it.
- A syllable should have a vowel with one or more consonants.
- One syllable words : cat, buy, force, drink , walk etc.
- Two syllable words : begin, bury, equal, happy, funny etc.
- Three syllable words: mosquito, september, department, camera, vitamin etc.
- Four syllabled words: information, january, american, discovery, dictionary etc.

**That's not all ! There are words with many more syllables.**



# SYLLABIFICATION

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## ONE SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Cat - / kat /
2. Buy - / bahy /
3. Force - / force /
4. Drink - / dringk /
5. Walk - / wahk /

## TWO SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Begin - / bih-gin /
2. Bury - / ber-ee /
3. Equal - / ee-qwul /
4. Happy - / hap-ee /
5. Funny - / fun-ee /



# SYLLABIFICATION

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## THREE SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Mosquito - / muh-skee-toh /
2. September - / sep-tem-ber /
3. Department - / dih-pahrt-ment /
4. Camera - / cam-er-a /
5. Vitamin - / vi-ta-min /

## FOUR SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Information - / in-for-may-shun /
2. January - / Jan-yoo-air-ee /
3. American - / uh-mer-i-kun /
4. Discovery - / dih-skuhv-er-ee /
5. Dictionary - / dih-skuhv-er-ee /



# STRESS- POINTS TO KNOW

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Syllables uttered with greater degree of force is said to be stressed. The three golden rules of stress in English words are :

- 1. A word can only have one stress.**
- 2. Only vowels are stressed, not consonants.**
- 3. There are many exceptions to the rules.**



# WORD STRESS & RULES

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1. water: **wa**-ter
2. people: **peo**-ple
3. television: **tel**-e-vi-sion
4. together: to-**geth**-er
5. potato: po-**ta**-to
6. Banana : ba-**na**-na
7. begin: be-**gin**



# Two-syllable nouns & adjectives

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- Rainy , Samples , Carton, Content
- In **most** two syllable nouns and adjectives, the **first syllable takes on the stress**.
- RAI-ny
- SAM-ples
- CAR-ton
- CON-tent





# Two-syllable verbs & preposition

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- In most two syllable verbs and prepositions, the **stress is on the second syllable**.
- re-LAX
- re-CEIVE
- di-RECT
- a-MONG
- About 80% of two-syllable words get their stress on the first syllable. There are exceptions to this rule, but very few nouns and adjectives get stress on their second syllable. Verbs and prepositions usually get stress placed on the second syllable, but there are exceptions to this too.

# Suffix -Word ending in er, or and ly

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- Stress is placed on the **first syllable**.

1. DI-rec-tor

2. OR-der-ly

3. MA-nag-er

# Suffix - Words ending in consonants and y

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- Stress is placed **on the first syllable**.

1. RA-ri-ty
2. OP-ti-mal
3. GRA-di-ent
4. CON-tain-er

# Suffix – words with different endings

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- Takes stress on the **syllable right before the suffix**. This applies to words of all syllable lengths.
- The suffixes are – able, ary, cian, cial, ery, graphy, ial, ian, ible, ic, ical, ics, ion, ity, ium, imum, logy, tal
- 1. able:
  - Understandable / un-der-**STAND**-a-ble /
  - DURable /**DU**-ra-ble /
- 2. ary:
  - PRIMary / **PRI**-ma-ry /
  - Diary /**DI**-a-ry/

# Suffix – words with different endings

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## 3. ible:

- VIsible / VIS-i-ble /
- terRIble, / TER-ri-ble /

## 4. ical:

- MAgical / MAG-i-cal /
- CRItical / CRIT-I-cal /

## 5. ics:

- GeNETics / ge-NET-ics /
- paediAtrics /pe-di-AT-rics /

# Suffix – words ending with ee, ese, ique and ette

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- the primary stress is placed on **the suffix**.

## 1. ee:

- agrEE / a-GREE /
- guarantee / gaur-en-TEE /

## 2. Ique :

- unIQUE / u-NIQUE /
- physique / phy-SIQUE /



# Prefix

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- Usually, prefixes do not take the stress of a word.
- There are a few exceptions to this rule, however, like: un, in, pre, ex and mis, which are all stressed in their prefix.
- in: IN-side, IN-efficient, IN-terest
- pre: PRE-cede, PRE-ar-range, PRE-li-min-ary



# COMPOUND WORDS

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- **Compound nouns** : a noun made out of two nouns in order to form one word.  
In a compound noun, the **first word** usually takes on the stress.
- SEA-food
- TOOTH-paste
- **Compound adjectives** : an adjective composed of at least two words.
- Rock- SOLID
- Sparkling- RED