

# Practice Sentence Stress

 [coursera.org/learn/speak-english-professionally/supplement/43cer/practice-sentence-stress](https://coursera.org/learn/speak-english-professionally/supplement/43cer/practice-sentence-stress)

## Sentence Stress

Practicing English is different from many languages because it has a lot of rhythm, like a song with beats. Take, for example, the following sentences we looked at in the lecture video:

He **bought** some **jeans**. ta TA ta TAA (2 beats)

He **bought** a **pair** of **jeans**. ta TA ta TA ta TAA (3 beats)

**John** **bought** **two** **pairs** of **jeans**. TA TA TA TA ta TAAA (5 beats)

In the above sentences, some words are strong and others are weak. The last word is the strongest and longest. This combination of strong and weak syllables creates rhythm in each sentence.

In the following sentences the number of beats is marked. Practice saying the sentences with the correct number of beats.

1. Can I **borrow** a **pen**? (2 beats)
2. I'm **going** to the **bank**. (2 beats)
3. **Tell** her I'll be **late**. (2 beats)
4. **Let's** go to a **movie**. (3 beats)
5. The **pizza** **party** is **today**. (3 beats)
6. **Thanks** for the **birthday** **gift**. (3 beats)
7. **John** **studied** for **hours**. (3 beats)
8. **John** **studied** **four** **hours**. (4 beats)
9. The **key** to the **door** is **there**. (3 beats)
10. I'm **leaving** on **Monday** for my **country**. (3 beats)

How can you predict where the beats, or stress, will be?

Generally, we stress nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, WH-words, and negative words (e.g., “no,” “not,” “can’t”). They always have a beat—they are longer, louder, and higher. These words are called “content” words.

On the other hand, we do not stress prepositions, pronouns, articles, modals and auxiliaries (e.g., can, should, have, be). These words are reduced, unclear, often difficult to hear, and they are shorter, softer, and lower than stressed words. These words are called “structure” words.