

Practice Stress

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Working on pronunciation of numbers and can/can't will improve your fluency and make it easier for others to understand you. And it will make telephone calls less scary and more fun.

STRESS IN NUMBERS

It is important to pronounce numbers with accurate stress. One main difference is between numbers ending in –teen and –ty, such as 14 and 40. Both the stress and the sound of the “t” are different.

f o u r t e e n

f o r t y (/t/ sounds like /d/)

Practice saying these sentences first with the teen number and then with the “ty” number. Record yourself and listen. Do you hear the difference?

- 1) The club had (19 / 90) members.
- 2) The store sells (16 / 60) different products.
- 3) Sue woke up at (5:13 / 5:30) this morning.
- 4) Almost (14 / 40) percent of my coworkers live near the office.
- 5) My brother is (17 / 70) years old.
- 6) I spent (14 / 40) dollars on groceries.
- 7) He lives on (13th / 30th) street.
- 8) Last week, the temperature was about (17 / 70).
- 9) I spent nearly (18 / 80) dollars on this.
- 10) I believe that (15 / 50) people are taking the English class.
- 11) The average cost is (14 / 40) thousand dollars.
- 12) The temperature is (13 / 30) Celsius.
- 13) The class is in Room (114B / 140B).
- 14) The war in (1818 / 1880) didn't last a long time.
- 15) My address is (4014 / 1440) North Peachtree Street.

CAN/CAN'T

For correct pronunciation, shorten the “a” in can and lengthen it in can’t.

Practice saying these sentences first with can and then with can’t. Record yourself and listen. Do you hear the difference?

- 1) I (can, can’t) speak several languages.
- 2) My brother (can, can’t) play the guitar.
- 3) He (can, can’t) fly a plane.
- 4) They (can, can’t) get here on time.
- 5) I (can, can’t) set up a meeting.

Challenge yourself. Talk with friends about things you can and can’t do. Can they understand you?