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BSc Degree

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English – II (Advanced English)
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Lecture No. 04
Long Vowels

Welcome to this, the next session in the module on spoken English part of this course in English. Today, we are going to have some exercise, some practice in identifying Long Vowels in a real-life speech. We have already seen what consonants and vowel sounds are, and vowel sounds are characterized also by length. Some vowel sounds in English, in particular, are long, very long. And they constitute, they make the rhythm of English, along with pauses and stresses. It is the length of vowel sounds, which contributes significantly to the typical rhythm of the English language. Long Vowels followed by Short Vowels, again Long Vowels followed by Short Vowels. That makes the rhythm of the English speech. Next screen.

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- After pauses and stresses, it is the length of vowel sound that makes a rhythm.
 - We have already seen the features of vowel and consonant sounds.
 - An important feature of vowel sounds is their length.




So, we have already looked at some samples of how pauses and stresses create a rhythm. We have seen that in speeches, in conversation, and in some songs. Another speech, and this time, we are not looking only at pauses and the stresses. Of course, we are looking at them as well, but

we are also additionally going to look at the length of vowel sounds, whether we can identify long vowel sounds from others in a spoken text in English. Next.

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- In standard varieties of English, there may be up to 20 vowel sounds. At least 12 of them are long.
- Listen, for instance, to Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on the freedom of India.



In all the standard varieties of English worldwide, there are more long vowel sounds than short ones. Actually, in some, there can be up to 20 vowel sounds. And at least 12 of them are long sounds. They are longer than 700, 800 nanoseconds. Some are longer than even 1000 nanoseconds—longer than long vowels in many other languages in the world. Therefore, for learners of the English language, it is important that they acquire the habit of speech such that they can distinguish between long and short vowels and their short vowels are short enough and their long vowels are long enough.

And one way of doing that is to look at them in some standard speech in some sample of well-known speakers. What we have taken is something like that, the speech by Jawaharlal Nehru at the freedom of India. Many people, it is also generally remembered as Nehru's speech called “A Tryst with Destiny”. This was actually; go next.

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- As you listen to the speech, you can mark stresses.
- You can underline the long vowels.
- Compare your work with the sample we have created, but first listen to the speech without the text, and then with the text.



This was actually, this speech Nehru gave at the Constituent Assembly in the midnight of fourteenth, fifteenth August when India became independent. At the stroke of midnight hour, India became independent and Nehru gave this speech heralding in nations, voicing a nation's hope and aspirations from its freedom.


As you listen to the speech, you can mark stresses on polysyllabic words. You can also underline all the Long Vowels, which also means that you can look at the text and you can listen to the speech again and again. It may not be one listening or one look at the text may not be enough. But it is possible for some of you. It is enough. In that case, you do not need to. Otherwise, for those of us who have not been used to this kind of exercise or exposed to this kind of speech, please do not hesitate and listen to this is speech once or twice with the text. Again once or twice without the text and then finally, with the text, such that you mark the text for as we have said here.

Number 1, come back, the mark is stresses on bisyllabic, trisyllabic, and polysyllabic words and underline the long vowels in all. The entire speech, in all words, wherever you see a long vowel, you may please underline that long vowel. After doing all this, you can also try and give a

spoken... imagine you are a television reporter and you are summarizing a long speech. No television, no mass medium, no newspaper, no radio reporter can afford to reproduce the entire speech. For that, they have a separate channel, separate hour.


So, what most reporters do is, give a presentive summary of speeches, the events, the talks they may have heard. You can do the same thing here. This will also give you some practice in speaking in a natural real-life situation.

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Jawaharlal Nehru (1889 – 1964)

- Nehru was the first Prime minister if India.
- This speech was given by him at midnight of 14-15 August 1947 in the constituent assembly, New Delhi.



So, here we go. Jawaharlal Nehru, I mean this photograph represents him when he was still very young before Independence of India. Remember, he became Prime Minister when he was already 59 or so.

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LONG YEARS AGO...



Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrEkYscgbqE>

Please watch the section 00:00 – 01:19

Source: Xplorer India (Youtube)

Video description: Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on the freedom of India.

We are using 1.19 minutes of this video for academic purposes.



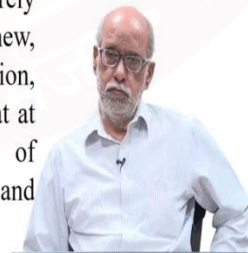
So, listen to this speech first.

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TRANSCRIPT



Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.



This speech is longer, the text is also longer. You can look at all of it at your leisure. But look at the text now, look at the transcript now. This is it. It would be good if you made a note of the

bisyllabic, trisyllabic words and tried and marked, underlined Long Vowels. And then again, go back to the text, go back to the speech and compare whether you have done them correctly.

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ACTIVITY



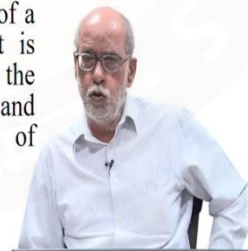
- Listen to the speech now and underline all the syllables with long vowel sounds.



STRESSED SYLLABLES



Long years ago we made a tryst with 'destiny, and now the time comes when we shall re'deem our pledge, not 'wholly or in full 'measure, but very subs'tantially. At the stroke of the 'midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will a'wake to life and 'freedom. A 'moment comes, which comes but 'rarely in 'history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a 'nation, long sup'pressed, finds u'tterance. It is 'fitting that at this 'solemn 'moment we take the pledge of 'dedication to the 'service of 'India and her 'people and to the still 'larger cause of hu'manity.



We have done it for you. We have marked the stresses. After you have done your work, please. As I have always said, it is possible. It is always possible for any one of us to say, "Oh look, it is boring. I am not going to do it." And come to the answer, come to the example given.

In that case, you are missing the chance for yourself of learning something important and useful. So, I am quite confident none of us is going to do that, and we will come and look at it only after we have done our part of the work. And it is possible you have got them all right. And it is also possible that you have made some mistakes somewhere. If that is the case, you can go back to this page, listen to it again and correct any mistakes that you might have made. That is perhaps the best way to learn a skill and to learn a language.

So, please, as you play, compare your work with what we have given here. Here we have, on this, this slide, you have the stressed syllables in bisyllabic or polysyllabic words. So, for example, in the first line, destiny. It is stressed on the initial syllable, but in the second line, the word 'redeem'. It is stressed on the second syllable. 'Measure', first syllable. 'Midnight', first syllable. Or 'substantially', second syllable. Actually, 'substantially', fourth syllable from the end, second from the beginning.

So, this is the problem with English. Unlike many other languages, it is not certain in English that all the initial words or all the final words or all the penultimate syllables or all the second syllables in any word are stressed. In English, it can be on the final syllable, on the initial syllable, on the pre-final syllable, on the post-initial syllable. That is why, as we learn the meaning and the spelling of a word, it is important that -- we should also learn how to stress a bisyllabic, a trisyllabic, and a polysyllabic word, words of 3 or longer syllables in English. So, this is the problem with English. Unlike many other languages, it is not certain in English that all the initial words or all the final words or all the penultimate, syllables or all the second syllables in any word are stressed. In English, it can be on the final syllable, on the initial syllable, on the pre-final syllable, on the post-initial syllable. That is why, as we learn the meaning and the spelling of a word. It is important that -- we should also learn how to stress a bisyllabic, a tri-syllabic, and a poly-syllabic word, words of 3 or longer syllables in English.

I just said in an earlier session, you may think it is a mind-boggling exercise. In theory, yes. In practice, no. Because we only speak a certain kind of and a certain number of words, even in our work life, even in our academic life. So, we have made a study, and we found with students at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, and with faculty at the Institute of, at the Indian

Institute of Technology, Madras, that fewer than 1000 long words are used frequently in academic situation.

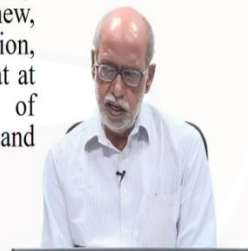
Actually, there is a long and, actually, there is an old study by somebody called Professor Gimson of London, who said that, fewer than 15 percent bisyllabic and trisyllabic words are used frequently. Almost 87 percent words that are used frequently are mono-syllabic words. You can see that here as well. In the first two lines, only two words are bi-syllabic, 'destiny' and 'redeem'. So, with practice, you can overcome these problems and you can get them all right. Next.

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LONG VOWELS ARE UNDERLINED



Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.



This slide gives you, we have underlined all the long vowels. You can compare your work with the examples given here. And if they are wrong, you can do them again. If they are right, you can congratulate yourself and go to the next piece of work.

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ACTIVITY



Listen to the speech by Barack Obama

- Underline long vowels
- Mark stresses
- Prepare a spoken summary of this speech. What the speaker has said in three minutes, should be summarized in about one third of the original.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueMNqdB1QIE>

Please watch the section 00:00 – 3:00 minutes



Next. Once again, we have given you a speech by another popular leader of our times. Listen to that speech. It is rather a long speech. If you have time, listen to all of it. Otherwise, only to a part of it and do the same thing. Namely, underline Long Vowels, mark stresses, and then prepare spoken report, like television or radio reporters do. This is the best way to learn how to speak standard varieties of English so that you understand everyone and everyone understands you around the world. Thank you and good luck.