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BSc Degree

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English II
(Advanced English)
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Speaking – Robert Kennedy on Need for Compassion

Welcome to this next session of this speaking module of the course in Advanced English. Do all people, all who speak English, do they speak the same way? And that is a question often asked by students. It is not, the answer is pretty simple. No language is spoken alike by all its speakers. It happens only with machines; all machines speak alike. But, anything in nature has a variety and yet within this variety, there is uniformity; there is homogeneity, there is lots of similarity. So, that we understand one another. We also understand how we differ from one another. But, we also understand one another.

How do we differ in languages? How are we similar in languages? Once again it is pretty simple to understand. There is a lot of similarity in features like accent, which is as I said in the earlier session, which is an aggregate of tempo - the speed at which you speak, the place and the number of pauses you take, the length of vowels and the variety in the consonant sounds and the way you combine these things, they make your accent. And then in many other aspects we differ. We produce one sound rather than another sometimes. Sometimes we are in a hurry, sometimes we are not.

But what is...what is the core of all without which it will cease to be English, is alike in all standard varieties, whether spoken by a leader in United States or a leader in India. Whether spoken by a leader in South Africa or spoken by a leader in Ireland or in Albania, it does not matter. You might notice that they differ from one another in one or two in very small ways. But they have a huge, a great deal of similarity. Otherwise, people will not understand each other. These dialectal differences - difference of one dialect from another, will make them incomprehensible to one another. That does not happen.

We can retain our individual identity and yet we can learn those features of a standard accent, standard speech, which can make us intelligible to everyone around the world. And which can

help us understand everyone around the world. We heard a speech by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi as you know was also very well educated. His school in Gujarat, then college in London and came back and learned all his life and became very powerful. One of the most popular speakers of any language of his time. People came from far and wide to listen to him. Similarly there are another people Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela.

If you have not heard these people, you should; that is a great education. Not just in language, not just in speech or spoken English. But also in values, in... in... in character building, in personality development. Here, today in this session, I am going to play an American politician, the late Robert Kennedy.

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Robert Kennedy was attorney general in the cabinet of his brother John Kennedy, who became president of India, president of, sorry, the United States of America, during 1960 and 64, 63 actually. His term was cut short, he was assassinated. Robert was his attorney general, which is equivalent of law minister and home minister put together in America, as a very powerful position.

After the, almost after the president and the vice-president, the position of attorney general in the American president's cabinet. Robert Kennedy like his brother and like others in the family was

also very well educated. Was a graduate of Harvard law school, became a senator of the United States and at a very young age, became a well-known leader. Unfortunately, he was also assassinated at the young age of 43. He also, like his brother, advocated unity, was against segregation between black and white people. He was also for unity. One law, one nation - whether for everyone, whether black or white or anyone. All Americans, in his opinion formed one nation.

Here, many people say, this speech, delivered soon after the assassination of Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King, as you know was a great champion of black rights. A human rights activist, who spoke and fought in a civil disobedience movement, against segregation and against discrimination against blacks. But, he was also assassinated in 1968 and Robert Kennedy gave this speech impromptu or almost impromptu. Without any prepared speech, just from the notes scribbled in a car, while he was going to the spot from where he announced this sad news to his constituency. Without any police protection, without his secretaries, without his assistance. That is the power of education.

If you check with Google and look at the biography of Robert Kennedy, you will find that these people were great leaders. Very well educated, young, handsome, hard working, energetic and dedicated and knowledgeable. In that six-minute speech, you will find him talking about both politics and philosophy. He quotes Aeschylus, the great Greek playwright, the great Greek writer of tragedies, immortal tragedies.

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Aeschylus, (born 525/524 BC—died
456/455 BC, Sicily)



Aeschylus himself, an immortal Greek playwright, wrote nearly 450 years Before Christ and wrote immortal works. If you have time, you could read his plays and as it happened those days, plays were often written in verse, in songs and great quotes. Look at the quote that Robert Kennedy brings.

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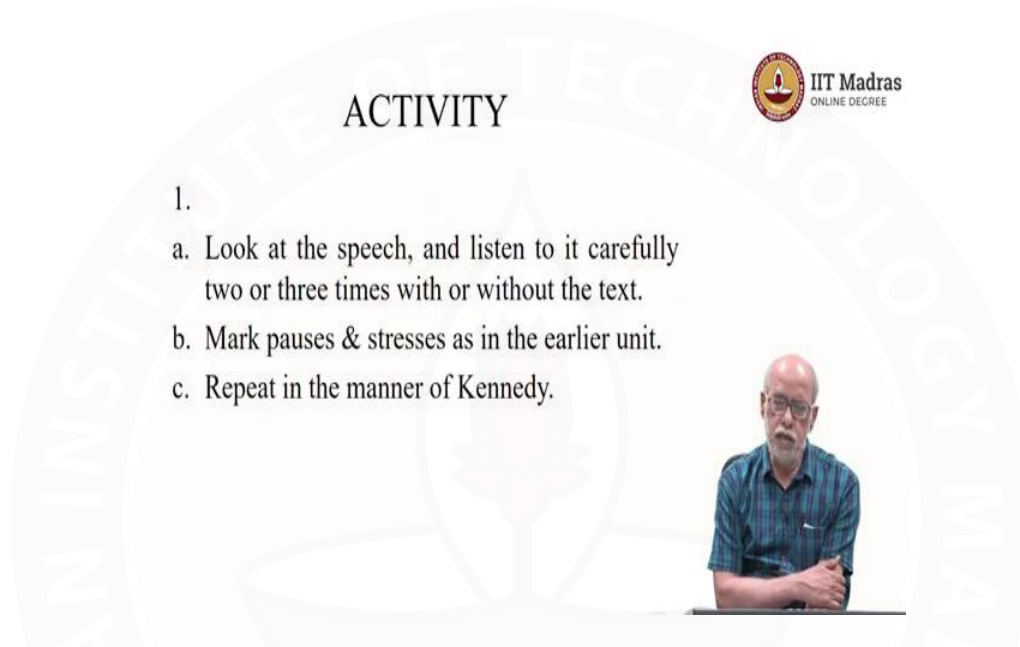


Aeschylus wrote: "In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."



He says no matter how angry you are, no matter how anguished in what pain you are, eventually sleep overcomes you, and in your sleep dawns wisdom, in spite of you. Even when you are determined on revenge, even when you are angry, God sees to it that you receive the grace of God's wisdom. Robert Kennedy prays for that wisdom among his countrymen here. Listen to at least a small part of it here with us and then you can listen to all of it on your own.

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ACTIVITY

1.
 - a. Look at the speech, and listen to it carefully two or three times with or without the text.
 - b. Mark pauses & stresses as in the earlier unit.
 - c. Repeat in the manner of Kennedy.

And you listen to his speech with or without the text, both, and try and listen to it as many times. Or, listen to it until you feel sure that you now understand the spoken word without any assistance from the text. Once you done that, then listen to it one last time with your text, with the text before you, and mark pauses, and again copy the text and mark stresses. This will ensure that you not only understand the content of this great speech, you also understand the language, how it is delivered. What is common between English as spoken by Mahatma Gandhi, Ben Kingsley and Robert Kennedy? Let us listen to the speech by Robert Kennedy, a few minutes only.

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TEXT OF SPEECH- PAUSE

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j2p6P5cSP0&t=1s>
Please listen to the section 00:15- 01:39

I have some very sad news for all of you # for all of our fellow citizens # and people who love peace all over the world# and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight##

Martin Luther King # dedicated his life # to love # and to justice # between his fellow human beings # and he died # in the course of that effort#

In this difficult day # in this difficult time for the United States# it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are # and what direction we want to move in## For those of you who are black# considering the evidence # there evidently is # that there were white people who were responsible #you can be filled with bitterness # with hatred # and a desire for revenge ##We can move in that direction as a country # in great



For want of time, we cannot play the entire thing within this unit. But the link is given, and you can take your time to listen to the entire thing, as many times as you like with and - I am not saying with or - I am saying with and without the text and then, finally, do this exercise. Listen, do this exercise. Listen to this once, one once again, no matter how many times you have done so already. Listen to it once again and number one, mark pauses, all pauses, at the end of the phrase, at the end of the sentence. Use one hash to indicate pause at the end of the sentence, at the end of the phrase and use two hashes to indicate pause at the end of a sentence.

This will to enable you to see the rhythm, and as you listen, your mind without making a deliberate effort will learn and reset itself. So that next time you speak, you will... you will find, you will surprise yourself, when you find that you have already begun speaking in this manner. So, for example look at the first sentence, it says I have some very sad news for all of you. Pause, and then for all of our fellow citizens, pause again and people who have peace all over the world, pause again. And that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight - at the end of the sentence, double pause.

It... it is in the nature of rhetoric, rhetoric is a speaking in public. Rhetoric is speaking to persuade people in a certain sense; it is not an ordinary speech. It is an unusual, extraordinary speech, which is given in public, which is given on special occasions, which is given in moments of great emotional stress. And in such occasions, you may find that sometimes pause groups are very small. As small as maybe one word, two words, three words. Sometimes pause groups are long, as long as including 7 words, 9 words. But you will notice - and this is common to all standard of varieties of English - that they always come in English, in standard English I mean, at the end of a phrase, at the end of a part of a phrase, at the end of a unit.

It is not a random, it is predictable. If you look at it carefully, you will find almost exceptionlessly, it occurs at the end of a phrase or at the end of a smaller unit. But at the end of a unit, not in between.

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TEXT OF SPEECH- STRESS

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j2p6P5eSP0&t=1s>
 Please listen to the section 00:15- 01:39

I have some 'very sad news for all of you, for all of our 'fellow 'citizens, and 'people who love peace all 'over the world, and that is that 'Martin 'Luther King was shot and killed to 'night.

Martin Luther King 'dedicated his life to love and to 'justice be'tween his fellow 'human 'beings, and he died be'cause of that 'effort.

In this 'difficult day, in this difficult time for the U'nited States, it is per'haps well to ask what kind of a 'nation we are and what di'rection we want to move in. For those of you who are black--con'sidering the 'evidence there 'evidently is that there were white 'people who were res'possible--you can be filled with 'bitterness, with 'hatred, and a de'sire for re'venge. We can move in that di'rection as a 'country, in great polari'zation--black people amongst black, white people a'mongst white, filled with hatred toward one another.



You can in this manner listen to the rest of speech and mark pauses wherever you notice them. And you will notice that they always come at the end of a unit - before the beginning of the another, at the end of a phrase, at the end of a sentence, before the beginning of another phrase, another sentence. Training yourself in this manner will be the best way for you to learn to speak standard global English. Nothing can teach you to speak to the entire world more easily and more effectively. So, please, even if it takes time, perhaps you may not do it in one day, perhaps you may take... you do it over two or three or even four days.

But this is the way, this is how you can learn and you can become from a local speaker to a global speaker. So that next time you speak, whether you speak to somebody from your own country, your own locality, from your own district, or from strange land. Because these days, your business partner, you do not know where he or she is going to be. They can be from any part of the world. Speaking English with a lot of similarity with you but some significant differences as well. And one thing that will help you in all such context is practice listening to these things. For pauses, for stresses, for length of vowel sounds and for the variety of... for the varieties of consonants.

So, let us look at the words stresses and see how Kennedy in this case how Robert Kennedy stresses his long words. By long words, I mean words that have 2 syllables or more. In an earlier unit we have already spoken about syllable division of words. If you have any difficulty, any confusion in understanding it, please go back to the relevant unit in this speaking module in English-I part of the course. Here, let us listen to and check if its stresses are alright, please play.

There are many words which are monosyllabic and which are stressed by Robert Kennedy. No confusion there, you do not have to learn anything. They come by the exigencies of speech. When you want to emphasize the fact that somebody needs food, then you do not have to learn how to stress the word food or bread or salt. They are monosyllabic. But, when it comes to water, then you need to learn whether we stress initial syllable 'wa' or the final syllable 'ter'. When we emphasize the word like bitter, then we need to learn whether we emphasize the initial syllable. Is stress on the initial syllable 'bit' or is it on the final syllable 'ter'?

So, that is why you can pay attention to words that are two syllables or longer. And if you do that, you will notice that in words like 'dedicate', it is not dedicate, it is not dedicate, it is dedicate initial syllable. But, 'justice', again initial syllable. Sorry, but, 'between'. It is not 'between', it is not 'between'. It is 'between', the final syllable. 'Human', initial syllable. 'Beings', initial syllable. But 'because', final syllable. That is the...that is the challenge in learning English. It is not that unlike many other languages in the world. It is not that all long syllables are stressed in the same way. Here it differs, giving English a unique sing-song accent.

Look at other words on this slide. 'Difficult', initial syllable. But, 'United States'. So 'United', second syllable from the beginning, not the initial. You do not say 'United', neither do you say 'United'. We say 'United', that is the second syllable from the beginning. Similarly, 'perhaps' non-initial syllable, the final syllable. You do not say 'perhaps.' You say 'per' haps'. 'Per' is short, soft but 'haps' is long, loud, heard clearly. 'Nation' initial syllable, but 'direction' second syllable, 'considering' second syllable, but 'evidence' and 'evidently' initial syllable. 'Bitterness' initial syllable, 'hatred' initial syllable, but 'desire', 'revenge' second syllable.

Or you can say 'desire' final syllable, 'revenge' final syllable. But, come to a word like 'polarization'. Fourth syllable from the beginning, second from the end. This word has 6 syllable 'po-la-ri-za-ti-on'. But, you do not stress 'po' or 'la' or 'ri'. You stress 'zation' in English.

Polarization. You can listen to the rest of speech and you can learn to mark. This may take time in the beginning. You may make mistakes. Check with a dictionary. All dictionaries will tell if this word is stressed, which part of this word is stressed. That is fixed, there is no deviation there and, in the beginning, this may take time.

This maybe a little boring or you might feel tired. But if you go on, this six-minute speech might take about an hour to do it. But, if you spend that hour, you will not only acquire correct stresses on these words. You will acquire correct stresses on other words, also like them, for the rest of your knowledge of the English language. So, we have done these two, the first few words in this in this extract. We have shown how pause is taken. We have shown how stresses are marked. You can do the rest of them and learn. Whenever you have doubts, please look up a dictionary. We have also given you model answers, you can also check with them. But, please resist the temptation of looking at the model answers, before you have done your work.

But, once you have done your work, you can check with the given answers and you can check also with the dictionaries. And if you still have doubts, please call us, mail us. And reach the perfection which you are designed to reach. Thank you very much, good luck.