

COURSE MATERIALS

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING SKILLS

MODULE 1

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PRONUNCIATION

**Secció d'Anglès
FIB**

INTRODUCTION. REFLECTING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRONUNCIATION

Watch Emilio Botín's speech and reflect on the following as you discuss with your partner:

1. What was your first reaction as Mr. Botín started to speak? Did you find it funny? Why?

I had so much fun.
It seems like he's not even understanding what he is saying.

2. Do you think his speech is effective? Why?

Only for Spanish speakers -> the pronunciation is the Spanish one

3. Do you think your English sounds like Mr. Botín's? What is different in your accent?

NO.
My accent is more likely to the native one.

4. What are your objectives concerning English pronunciation? Do you intend to sound like a native speaker?

I want to seem a native speaker

5. Make a list of features of English pronunciation that, in your opinion, Mr. Botín should improve. What sounds "foreign" (vowels, consonants, etc)?

Try to follow the basic rules of pronunciation.
Understand what he is saying -> emphasise
Stress

r
tunai
bicaus
iuromonei
ivinin
iear
possible
ul (would)
do
beter

1.1 PHONETICS AND PRONUNCIATION

As you probably know, phonetic symbols are a great help when it comes to learning to pronounce English words correctly. Any time you open a dictionary, you can find the **correct pronunciation** of words you don't know by looking at their phonetic transcription. English phonetic symbols are useful to practice the pronunciation of words.

Many words in English can have the same pronunciation but can be written differently with different meanings. For example, "to, two, and too" all have the phonetic transcription /tu:/. Sometimes, words can be written similarly but have different pronunciations as in the "ough" combinations in *thought*/ɔ:/, *though*/əʊ/, *bough*/au/ and *through*/u:/.

Another factor in pronunciation is how the word is stressed, which can also be checked in a dictionary with the help of the phonetic transcription. See, for instance, the stress in these words:

concept (noun)	conception (noun)
electron (noun)	electronic (adj.)

But it may even become a bit more difficult for Spanish / Catalan speakers to pronounce sentence stress appropriately since English rhythm is different from Spanish and Catalan. For example, try to pronounce these sentences aloud:

I like to make an appointment

Neither of us can swim

So in this module you will find an introduction to basic aspects of pronunciation and phonetics that can help you improve some features of your pronunciation in English and avoid some of the common weaknesses of Spanish / Catalan speakers. We will focus on phonetics for two main purposes:

- To help you become aware of the sounds of English and how pronunciation may affect comprehension of a message in English.
- To use phonetic transcription to check the correct pronunciation of words in the dictionary.

We will mainly look at the segmental level, but we'll also consider some main aspects of suprasegmental features of English pronunciation. These are the main aspects:

- The sounds of English: vowels, consonants, diphthongs
- IPA (International Phonetics Association) transcription. How we "write" the pronunciation of a word.
- Sounds in isolation
- Sounds in connected speech
- Word stress and sentence stress
- Intonation

Key to phonetic symbols

Vowels and diphthongs

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. i: as in see /si:/ | sheet, beat | 11. ɜ: as in fur /fɜ:(r)/ | curve, earth, birth |
| 2. ɪ as in sit /sɪt/ | finish, pick | 12. ə as in ago /ə'gəʊ/ | terrible, balloon, zebra, farmer |
| 3. e as in ten /ten/ | dress, lake | 13. ei as in page /peɪdʒ/ | |
| 4. æ as in hat /hæt/ | ash, pack | 14. əʊ as in home /həʊm/ | |
| 5. a: as in arm /ɑ:m/ | calm, clock, hot | 15. aɪ as in five /faɪv/ | |
| 6. ɒ as in got /gɒt/ | top | 16. aʊ as in now /nau/ | |
| 7. ɔ: as in saw /sɔ:/ | fall, hall, caught | 7. ɔɪ as in join /dʒɔɪn/ | |
| 8. ʊ as in put /put/ | book, put | 18. ɪə as in near /nɪə(r)/ | |
| 9. u: as in too /tu:/ | could, drew, boot | 19. eə as in hair /heə(r)/ | |
| 10.ʌ as in cup /kʌp/ | some, sun, but | 20. ʊə as in pure /pjʊə(r)/ | |

Consonants

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. p as in pen /pen/ | 13. s as in so /səʊ/ |
| 2. b as in bad /bæd/ | 14. z as in zoo /zu:/ |
| 3. t as in tea /ti:/ | 15. ʃ as in she /ʃi:/ |
| 4. d as in did /dɪd/ | 16. ʒ as in vision /'vɪʒn/ |
| 5. k as in cat /kæt/ | 17. h as in how /hau/ |
| 6. g as in got /gɒt/ | 18. m as in man /mæn/ |
| 7. tʃ as in chin /tʃɪn/ | 19. n as in no /nəʊ/ |
| 8. dʒ as in June /dʒu:n/ | 20. ŋ as in sing /sɪŋ/ |
| 9. f as in fall /fɔ:l/ | 21. l as in leg /leg/ |
| 10. v as in voice /vɔɪs/ | 22. r as in red /red/ |
| 11. θ as in thin /θɪn/ | 23. j as in yes /jes/ |
| 12. ð as in then /ðen/ | 24. w as in wet /wet/ |

The phonemes of English and Spanish

<i>English vowels and diphthongs</i>
British English (BE)
i: ɪ e ə eɪ əʊ ɔ: ʊ ʊə ʌ ɜ: ə
ei əʊ əɪ əʊ ɔɪ ɪə eə ʊə əʊə əɪə
American English (AmE)
i ɪ e(eɪ) ε ə e əʊ (oʊ) ʊ ʊə ʌ ɜ: ə
ai au ɔɪ ar ɔr ir ər ʊr aʊr aɪr
Spanish vowel and diphthongs
i e a o u
ei ai oi ui iu eu au ia ua ie ue io uo

Table 1. English / Spanish vowels and diphthongs

See how transcriptions are found in the dictionary:

com·pu·ta·tion /kəm'pjū:tēʃn/ *n* (a) [C, U] (*fml*)
 (act of) computing; calculation: *A quick computation revealed that we would not make a profit.* ◦ *Addition and division are forms of computation.* ◦ *It will cost £5000 at the lowest computation.* (b) [U] use of a computer for calculation.
 ▷ **com·pu·ta·tional** *adj* [usu attrib] using computers: *computational linguistics.*

com·pute /kəm'pjū:t/ *v* [Tn, Tn-pr] ~ sth (at sth)
 1 calculate sth with a computer: *Scientists have computed the probable course of the rocket.* 2 (*fml*) calculate sth; work sth out: *He computed his losses at £5000.*
 ▷ **com·put·ing** *n* [U] operation of computers: [attrib] *a computing course.*

com·puter /kəm'pjū:tə(r)/ *n* electronic device for storing and analysing information fed into it, making calculations, or controlling machinery automatically: *Is the information available on the computer?* ◦ *The accounts are processed by computer.* ◦ *a digital computer* ◦ [attrib] *a computer programmer* ↗ illus.
 ▷ **com·pu·ter·ize**, -ise /-təraɪz/ *v* [Tn] (a) provide a computer to do the work of or for (sth): *The accounts section has been completely computerized.* (b) store (information) in a computer: *The firm has computerized its records.* **com·pu·ter·iza·tion**, -isation /kəm'pjū:tərəzɪʃn; US -ri'zɪʃn/ *n* [U].

See this table for a comparison between Spanish and English consonants

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	E	p b			t d				k g	
	S	p b		t d					k g	
Fricative	E		f v	θ ð	s z		ʃ ʒ			h
	S		f	θ	s				x	
Affricate	E						tʃ dʒ			
	S						tʃ			
Roll	E									
	S				r					
Flap	E									
	S				r					
Liquid	E				l					
	S				l		ʎ			
Nasal	E	m			n				ŋ	
	S	m			n			ɲ		
Approximant	E					r				
	S									
Glide	E	w						j		
	S							j	w	

Table 2. English and Spanish consonants

Try this site for more information about the articulation of English sounds (American)

The Sounds of Spoken Language

<https://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/main/english>

(Click on "monophthongs" for the vowels). Here, with the help of an animated diagram, you can visualize the shape that the vocal tract takes for the American English sounds.

Exercise 1

Read the following transcriptions aloud. Write down the words that they correspond to.

1. /kəm'pjyu:tə/ _____ computer
2. /dɪ'lɪ:t/ _____ delete
3. /'dɪdʒɪtəl/ _____ digital
4. /'ju:zə(r)/ _____ user
5. /endʒ'niər/ _____ engineer
6. /'prəʊgræm/ _____ program
7. /'prəʊsesɪŋ/ _____ processing
8. /pækɪdʒ/ _____ package
9. /ɪn'strʌkʃn/ _____ instruction
10. /'deɪtəbeɪs/ _____ database
11. /'spredʃɪ:t/ _____ spreadsheet
12. /'ʌpgreɪd/ _____ upgrade
13. /'enədʒi/ _____ energy
14. /'waɪə/ _____ wire

In order to check the pronunciation of words (and listen to it), you can also use the following online dictionaries:

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

<http://www.wordreference.com/>

For more British and American pronunciation, visit this website
Antimoon.com Learning English Pronunciation

<http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc.htm>

Find the sounds of English and the IPA and see differences between British and American English.

1.2 PRONUNCIATION. VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Vowel Sounds

Exercise 1

Listen to the recording and say whether the words are the same (S) or different (D).

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. <u>S</u> | 6. <u>S</u> |
| 2. <u>D</u> | 7. <u>D</u> |
| 3. <u>D</u> | 8. <u>D</u> |
| 4. <u>S</u> | 9. <u>D</u> |
| 5. <u>D</u> | 10. <u>S</u> |

Exercise 2

a) Pronunciation: the letter a. Can you pronounce these words?

1. bad had happen rang man (/æ/)
2. darling afternoon rather ask glass (/a:/)
3. came strange day say train (/eɪ/)
4. call talk saw (/ɔ:/)

b) Put these words in group 1, 2, 3 or 4.

wait, hate, hard, glass, start, law, car, bath, late, ball, black, make, paid, arm, rain, tall, hat, part, happy, half, past, awful, may, all, stand, walk

1. black, hat, happy, stand
2. hard, glass, start, car, bath, arm, part, half, past
3. wait, hate, late, make, paid, rain, may
4. law, ball, tall, awful, all, walk

c) Special pronunciations:

1. what wasn't want watch swan (/ɒ/)
2. many any again says said ate (/e/)
3. about America England umbrella (/ə/)

Exercise 3

Pronunciation /əʊ/. Say these words and expressions:

know	so
go	hope
don't	won't
I know	I hope
I won't	I don't know
I hope so	I won't go

Exercise 4

These words all have the letter e in the first syllable. In some of the words, e is pronounced /eɪ/; in others, it is pronounced /ɛ/. Can you divide the words into two groups, according to the pronunciation of e? What is the reason for the difference?

become	depend	democracy	demonstration	economy	effect	election
employment	end	every	held	medal	president	reform
relations	return	revolution	secretary	separate	seven	vegetable

Exercise 5

Vowel number 12 (also called schwa) is a very important sound because it is very often pronounced in unstressed syllables. It is similar to “vocal neutra” in Catalan.

- a) Decide which ten of the following words contain the sound /ə/

iron	century	paper	correct	Germany	adults
fibre	replaced	pulp	machine	industry	exported
Africa	countries	Norway	needed	serious	shortage

- b) In all of these words, the last syllable is pronounced /ə/. Look at the spellings. Then say the words after the recording.

heater	cooker	computer	calculator	transistor	mirror	similar	sugar
centre	theatre	departure	figure	there	here	where	hear
wear	hair	their	Africa	cinema	idea		

Exercise 6

- a) Pronouncing the letter ‘u’. Listen to the pronunciation of each group of words and try to make a rule. After you have worked out all the rules, say which group each of the words in the box belongs to.

- ^ 1. bus cut drug much dustman under
- ju 2. university music tune produce fuel cure communicate
- u 3. rule ruin suitcase superstition blue glue
- ɔ 4. nurse turn church

burglary	introduce	stupid	jump	universe	hut	butter	fruit	suit
amused	burn	customs	use	true	computer	purpose	run	

- b) Notice these common exceptions.

put pull push busy business

- c) Of course, ‘u’ is usually pronounced /ə/ when it is not in a stressed syllable, as in these words:

figure literature (and other words ending in -ure
suppose surprise until industry fortunate)

Exercise 7

Pronunciation of au and ou. Say these words after the recording

1. /ɔ:/ automatic cause daughter fault authority dinosaur
2. /au/ without housewife hours sound bound accountant
3. /ɔ:/ pour your four course
4. /ə/ unconscious previous serious colour neighbour favour

Exceptions:

/ə:/	-	aunt	laugh	draughtsman
/o/	-	because	cough	
/ə/	-	should	could	would
/ʌ/	-	trouble	double	couple cousin enough
/u:/	-	you	through	group
/əʊ/	-	although		
/ɔ:/	-	journalist		

Exercise 8

Listen and circle the words you hear. Then write the sounds that are being compared.

A		B		C		D	
low	law	white	wait	now	know	here	hair
so	saw	lied	laid	loud	load	beer	bare
boat	bought	file	fail	found	phoned	steered	stared
close	claws	like	lake	doubt	dote	ears	airs
coke	cork	rise	raise	towns	tones	really	rarely
/əʊ/	/ɔ:/	/aɪ/	/eɪ/	/əʊ/	/əʊ/	/ɪə/	/eə/

Consonant sounds

Exercise 1

Listen to the recording and circle the words you hear.

1. works / **worked**
2. rains / **rained**
3. **starting** / started
4. **there's** / there was
5. smells / **smelt**
6. **stops** / stopped
7. there's / **there was**
8. try / **tried**
9. **puts** / put
10. **using** / uses

Exercise 2

Identify the following sounds in the words and say which words have the sound.

- a) Identify the **/ʃ/** sound
Show treasure teach **push** **ambition**
- b) Identify the **/dʒ/** sound
Edge leisure rich **age** **jeep**
- c) Identify the **/tʃ/** sound
Chew **fortune** **which** wishes cash
- d) Identify the **/ʒ/** sound
Vision pressure **explosion** **occasion** relation
- e) Identify the **/s/** sound
Place plays bus buzz **loose**
- f) Identify the **/z/** sound
His hiss as **prize** price
- g) Identify the **/θ/** sound
Thin this **thought** those **thank**
- h) Identify the **/ð/** sound
Three **these** **breathe** both **they**

Exercise 3

- a) You will hear nine pairs of words. If the two words are the same, write 'S'. If they are different, write 'D'.

1. _____ 3. _____ 5. _____ 7. _____ 9. _____
2. _____ 4. _____ 6. _____ 8. _____

b) Can you hear a /ð/ or a /θ/? Listen and circle the words you hear.

1. then / den
2. there / dare
3. think / sink
4. thing / sing
5. those / doze

Exercise 4

The letter 'r' comes in all of these sixteen words. In standard British English, 'r' is only pronounced in six of these words. Which six?

picture
first
fourteen

potter
part
foreign

pottery
far
tired

painter
real
modern

runs
try

hurry
word

Exercise 5

Pronunciation of regular verbs (simple past, past participle): -ed = /t/, /d/, /ɪd/

1. /t/ is pronounced after voiceless consonants: /k, s, p, f, θ, tʃ/ + /t/
2. /d/ is pronounced after voiced consonants: /b, g, v, z, ʒ, l, m, n, ð/ + /d/
3. /ɪd/ is pronounced after words ending in /t, d/

Now Write the verbs in the correct column according to the sound of their –ed ending.

ask	record	check	adjust	remix	shape
add	use	produce	control	master	play
invite	depart	live			

1

2

3

/ɪd/

/d/

/t/

For more practice on the pronunciation of regular verbs, visit:

<http://www.evaeaston.com/t-d-Id-pattern.html>

Work through the three sections on the left-hand menu (*Pattern*, *Practice*, *Quiz*). Look at (and listen to) the examples, do the exercises and then take the quiz.

Exercise 6

What sounds are being compared? Write down the corresponding transcription of compared sounds.

A		B		C		D	
sink	zinc	place	plays	fast	vast	send	sent
said	Zed	coarse	cause	feel	veal	joined	joint
sawn	zone	loose	lose	fail	veil	sins	since
seal	zeal	niece	knees	few	view	lamb	lamp
Sue	zoo	price	prize	fear	veer	complained	complaint
/s/	/z/	/s/	/z/	/f/	/v/	/d/	/t/

Weak and strong forms

There are quite a number of words which have two different pronunciations, depending on whether they are stressed or not. They are **grammatical** words: pronouns, prepositions, auxiliary verbs and conjunctions. Most often they are unstressed, and so the **weak form** is much more common than the **strong form**. You shouldn't overuse the **strong form**, which is pronounced with the written vowel. Weak forms usually have /↔/ or no vowel at all.

Examples of words with weak and strong forms:

must (/məst, ms/; /mʌst/)

can (/kən, kn/; /kæn/)

have (/həv, əv/; /haev/)

was (/wəz, wz/; /woz/)

that (/ð(ə)t/; /ðæt/)

than (/ð(ə)n/; /ðæn/)

and (/ənd, ən, n/; /ænd/)

but (/bət/; /bʌt/)

am (/ɪ(m)/; /æm/)

are (/ə(r)/; /ɑ:(r)/)

us (/əs/; /ʌs/)

them (/ð(ə)m/; /ðem/)

from (/fr(ə)m/; /frɒm/)

for (/fə(r)/; /fɔ:(r)/)

Exercise 1

Which pronunciations do you think **must**, **can**, **have** and **was** have in these sentences?

1. I **must** go soon.
2. Oh, **must** you?
3. I really **must** stop smoking soon.
4. Yes, you **must**.
5. We **must** get some more milk.
6. I **can** swim, but not very well.
7. Yes, I **can**.
8. Nobody **can** understand what he says.
9. Where **have** you been?
10. What time do you **have** breakfast?

11. We've been talking about you.
12. Oh, have you?
13. I was late for work this morning.
14. That was nice – thank you very much.
15. Sally was here this afternoon.
16. Oh, was she?

You can find more about strong and weak forms on the following website:

<http://www.evaeaston.com/index.html>
<https://www.evaeaston.com/>

Find a section on “Reduction” and practise a bit

Exercise 2

What's the difference in pronunciation? Remember there may be no differences. In that case those words are **homophones**.

1. sheep / ship /i:/ /ɪ/
2. well / whale /while /e/ /eɪ/ /aɪ/
3. pressure / leisure /ʃ/ /ʒ/
4. hurt / heart / hut /ɜ:/ /a:/ /ʌ/
5. loud / low / law /aʊ/ /əʊ/ /ɔ:/
6. thus / thumb /ð/ /θ/
7. some / sum /ʌ/ /ʌ/
8. here / hear / hair /hɪər/ /hɪər/ /hɪər/
9. four / for /ɔ:/ /ɔ:/
10. male / mail /eɪ/ /eɪ/
11. so / saw /səʊ/ /sɔ:/
12. sing / sin /ŋ/ /n/

You can check for more minimal pairs on the following websites:

<http://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/index.htm>

1.3 PRONUNCIATION. STRESS AND INTONATION

There are two important aspects to think about when we put words and sentences together: **stress** and **intonation**. They are very important ways of making your English *sound* English.

Word stress

In words which have more than one syllable, one of the syllables sounds more important than the others. This is the **stressed syllable**. Every word has its own stress and this never changes. Unfortunately, there are no rules to help you with word stress. When you learn a new word, you must also learn how it is stressed.

However, there are some patterns which you should bear in mind:

- a) **Different stresses on related words:** We may find words which have different stresses but derive from the same stem.

e.g. **'photograph** pho'**t**ographer photo'**g**raphic
 in'fɔrm infor'mation

- b) **Same word with different stresses:** Sometimes the same word has two different stresses and this may imply a change of meaning.

e.g.

<u>Nouns</u>	<u>Verbs</u>
‘record (A written account; report; recording)	re’ c ord (To write down; register)
‘present (A gift)	pre’sent (To give; to show)
‘project (A task; assignment)	pro’ j ect (To estimate or guess)
‘convict (A criminal)	con’ v ict (To find guilty)
‘object (A thing; a purpose)	ob’ j ect (To oppose; disagree with)
‘upgrade (A later version of software)	up’ g rade (To replace/modernize software with a later version)

The most usual example of this change of stress is when the same word can act both as a noun and a verb.

- c) **Compound nouns:** Compound nouns are usually stressed on the first part of the word, not the second.

e.g. **'bedroom** 'book**st**ore 'light**bul**b 'stop**sign**

Word groups

When we talk, we do not talk in single words and stop after each one. In English —unlike Spanish— we talk in **groups** of words and each group is about the length of a breath. When we make sentences we stop between them, but we also take short stops at the end of word groups. Look at the word groups in this sentence:

On Monday / I went to catch the train, / but when I got to the station / the trains were on strike.

Sentence Stress

In these groups of words, some of them are **stressed**; that is, they are pronounced harder and sound more important. They are the words that stand out when you listen to a sentence. To show the stresses we will use marks like ‘ and put them in front of the stressed syllable. So the mark on the word ‘Monday means that the syllable “Mon” is the one that is stressed and sounds more important.

The stresses in the sentence we looked at earlier are:

On ‘**M**onday / I ‘**w**ent to ‘**c**atch the ‘**t**rain, / but when I ‘**g**ot to the ‘**s**tation / the ‘**t**rains were on ‘**s**trike.

There are eight stressed words in this sentence. In each word group, one of the words sounds the most important and this is called the *nucleus*. We can change the meaning of a sentence by moving the nucleus, that is, by putting more stress on a different word and so making it the nucleus—and giving it more emphasis. For example, if you say:

I like your ‘**n**e**w** coat → this means that you like the new coat but not the old one.

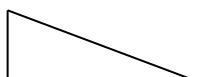
I like your new ‘**c**o**a**t → this means that you like the coat but perhaps not the new shoes or hat.

Intonation

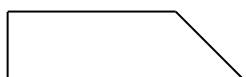
Now that we have learnt about stress we must also learn about tones. **Tones** are the way your voice moves up and down; every word group has a tone. The way we use these tones is called **intonation**, and it is the English intonation which makes English sound really English. You must learn the shapes of the English tones and also their meanings. It is possible in English to say the same sentence in different ways and so change the whole meaning.

When we are thinking about tones we must listen out for the nucleus of the word group; that is, the most important word. This is the word in which the voice moves most. If the nucleus is at the beginning of a sentence and it goes down, then the rest of the sentence continues to go down. If the nucleus is at the end of the sentence, then most of the sentence is level and then goes up or down at the end. Look at the diagrams:

→ ‘He’s got a new car.



→ Jane’s gone to ‘London.



Types of tones

There are two main types of tones; **falling tones** (down tones) and **rising tones** (up tones). Sometimes they go together and make **rise-fall tones** (up-down tones) or **fall-rise tones** (down-up tones). Often certain tones are used for certain types of sentences. Here are some notes to help you.

1. Falling tones:

- a) When we make a statement this is the tone we usually use. For example:

He's very **old**.
It's a nice **house**.
It's on the big **table** over there.

- b) Questions that begin with a question word: e.g. *what*, *where*, *who*, and so on

Why's he doing **that**?
Who was that **man**?
What's he **doing**?

2. Rising tones

- a) These tones are usually used when you ask questions without a question word, for example:

Is he **coming**?
Are they on the **table**?
Does he come **every week**?

The answers to these questions would probably have a falling tone.

- b) **Tag questions** are a little bit different. Look at this sentence:

He's **very** good, **isn't** he?

The question tag in this sentence is not really a question because the speaker is just checking the first statement. Both parts of the sentence have a falling tone.

Now look at this sentence:

He's **very** good, **isn't** he?

In this example the speaker is not very sure of the first statement and so makes it into a question. The first part of the sentence has a falling tone and the second part has a rising tone.

3. Fall-rise tones:

With this tone the voice goes down first and then it goes up. We use this tone to show surprise.

John's got a new car.

 **Really**. He had a new one last month.

This tone also sounds *questioning*, as if to say 'This is so surprising. Are you sure?

4. Rise-fall tones:

This tone is the opposite of the fall-rise tone. With this tone the voice goes up first and then down. This tone is used also for surprise but in a more definite way, without any question.

Susan's going to Paris.

 **Really**, she's very lucky.

This tone shows that you are *impressed*; the second person thinks it's good that Susan is going to Paris.

This is only a very short guide to stress and intonation, but it should help you when you listen to spoken English. Here are a few notes to help you:

- Try to break the sentences up into word groups when you speak. Take a breath between word groups.
- Listen for the sentence stress; that is, the rhythm of English.
- Listen for the most important word in each word group. This is the word which has the most stress, and where the tone changes.
- Listen for the tones. Does the voice go up or down? Does it go up then down, or down then up? Use the rules above to help you.

EXERCISES (Stress and Intonation)

Exercise 1

The stress pattern in the words below can cause problems for students of English. Say each of them to yourself and underline the syllable that you think carries the main stress. Then check your answers in a dictionary.

occur
purpose
technique

academic
development
event

concentrate
process
laboratory

Exercise 2

A) Mark the stress on the following pairs of words.

operate	operation
corporate	corporation
introduce	introduction
produce	production
install	installation
explain	explanation

B) Pronounce the words above. Which of the vowel sounds in the pairs of words are different (e.g. *inform* /ɔ:/ /*information* /ə/)? And what do you notice about the position of the stress in all the words ending in -tion?

verb: /ɔ:/ the stress is always before the -tion
noun: /ə/

C) Study the verbs and the two related nouns below. One noun is used for a component. The other is an abstract noun used for a property.

amplify

amplifier

amplification

Fill the gaps in the table below:

VERB	NOUN	NOUN
absorb		ab'sorption
attenuate	attenuator	attenu'ation
co'mmunicate		communication
conduct	conductor	conductivity
in'duct	inductor	in'duction
modulate	modu'lator	modulation
reflect	reflector	re'flexion
resist	re'sistor	re'sistance

Now, listen to the words in the table and mark the stressed syllable

Exercise 3

A) Read the following sentences aloud. Carefully pronounce the stress pattern differences between the **boldface** words in each sentence.

1. Please **record** the **record**.
2. I **object** to that ugly **object**.
3. She will **present** you with a **present**.
4. We **project** that John will carry out a good **project**.
5. The judge will **convict** the **convict** again.

B) Read the following sentences aloud. On the line to the right of each sentence, indicate whether the boldface word is a noun or a verb and underline the stressed syllable.

1. I usually read “Reader’s **Digest**”. _____ noun
2. The **convict** escaped from jail. _____ noun
3. They signed the **contract**. _____ noun
4. Never **desert** a friend in trouble. _____ verb
5. Don’t **convict** me for something I didn’t do. _____ verb

C) Try to find a few more examples of this pattern —different stress on nouns and verbs. Use your dictionary.

INCREASE. “There’s been an ‘increase in the number of students.’ // “Numbers are in’creasing.”
IMPORT. “This is a cheap ‘import.’ // “They im’port their oil from the UK.”
INSULT. “Your offer is so low it’s an ‘insult.’ // “Don’t in’sult me!”

Exercise 4

Read the following sentences aloud. On the line to the right of each sentence, draw the correct intonation arrow (**fall**, **rise**).

1. **Can** you sing? _____
2. **I** feel fine. _____
3. **When**’s your birthday? _____
4. **Did** you see my friend? _____
5. **Why** did Tom leave? _____
6. **We** like to travel. _____

Exercise 5

Are these real questions or not? Listen to the sentences and draw the correct intonation arrow (**fall**, **rise**).

1. **It**’s a lovely day, isn’t it?
2. **You**’re French, aren’t you?
3. **She**’s got fatter, hasn’t she?
4. **The** train leaves at 4.13, doesn’t it?
5. **Children** always like cartoon films, don’t they?
6. **It**’s your birthday next week, isn’t it?
7. **Hotels** are expensive here, aren’t they?
8. **Ann** said she’d phone, didn’t she?

Exercise 6

Say these sentences. Pay attention to stress, rhythm and linking¹.

1. My **brother** and I are very **different**.
2. He's **not nearly** as old as me.
3. He's **much** taller than **me**.
4. His interests are different from mine.
5. He **looks** like our father, but I look like our mother.
6. He **likes** football, but I don't.
7. He enjoys parties **much more** than I do.
8. He's interested in computers, but I'm not.
9. My sister and I are quite similar.
10. We **both** have fair hair, and we are both left-handed.
11. Her eyes are the **same colour as** mine.
12. We **both** play the piano.
13. She **sings** better than I do.
14. We were **both born in** September.
15. She **likes** travelling, but I don't.
16. Both of us play tennis.
17. Neither of us can swim.
18. She is a bit taller than **me**.
19. We are both rather **shy**, and we **both** like living alone.

Exercise 7

Identify the stresses in the following sentences. Listen to the recording to check your answers.

e.g. I 'wondered if you were 'free on 'Tuesday.

1. In the afternoon?
2. I'd like you to meet her.
3. I'm trying to fix the Director's meeting.
4. Can you tell me what days you're free...
5. Friday's a bit difficult.
6. I'd like to make an appointment...
7. There's a lot to talk about.
8. It'll take a couple of hours...
9. I'll call you back in about half an hour...
10. I'm playing tennis until a quarter past.

¹ -Underlined text indicates linking
-Bold type indicates stressed syllables