

1. Every word in isolation must have one **primary** stress. In longer words there may be a **secondary** stress, which usually falls 2 syllables before the primary stress:

'leu co'penia, in semi'nation, mi cro'scopic, psycho'logical

2. In general the stress is on the root of the word:

di'sorder, bi'lateral, con'genital, 'tubule, re'gult, in'hibit, ex'crete, 'membrane, 'failure

Note that prefixes are usually weak as are Anglo-Saxon endings:

'Kingdom, 'scholarship, 'handsome, 'holiness etc.

3. Certain Romance suffixes **fix the stress** in whatever word they are added to. The most frequent of these stress-fixing suffixes are the following:

**-ic:**

**-fixes the stress on the preceding syllable:**

Pedi'atric, ortho'pedic, antibi'otic, neph'ritic, hyper'dermic

**-There are only 8 common exceptions:**

'catholic, 'heretic, 'lunatic, 'arsenic, 'politics, a'rithmetic, 'Arabic, 'rhetoric

**-ion:**

**-also fixes the stress on the preceding syllable:**

contra'ception, gest'ation, re'action, ab'lacion, dimi'nution, per'fusion

but this is only a particular case of a much more general rule :

**Suffixes of the form: .’i / u + vowel’ fix the stress on the preceding syllable:**

**-ia:** anaes'thesia, septi'caemia, claustr'o'phobia, dys'lexia

**-ian:** phy'sician, ma'gician, I'talian

**-ial :** 'radial, po'tential, myo'cardial, arti'ficial, differ'ential

**-ious:** sus'picious, un'conscious, am'phibious, ma'larious

**-ior:** an'terior, in'ferior, ex'terior

**-ient:** de'ficient, pro'ficient, im'patient, convenient

**-ual:** 'gradual, per'petual, con'tinual, re'sidual

**-uous:** am'biguous, im'petuous, con'spicious

**-ium:** po'tassium, bac'terium, epi'thelium, de'lirium

**-ity fixes the stress on the preceding syllable:**

'quantity, e'quality, de'formity

**But this is again only a particular case of a general rule:**

## Word Stress

**Nouns (mainly abstracts) in -y have antepenultimate stress (third syllable from the end):**

insuf'ficiency, 'dysentery, ma'lignancy, gynae'cology, radi'o'graphy, ac'cessory, va'sectomy, 'therapy, osteo-ar'thropathy, lapa'roscopy, lo'botomy, co'lostomy.

**A notable exception to this rule is the ending-plasty, which is stressed:**

orcheo'plasty, rhino'plasty, mammo'plasty etc...

**-itis, -osis, -esis are also stressed:**

derma'titis, cirr'hosis, amniocen'tesis

**4. These rules fixing the stress according to the suffix cause the position of stress in a word to change in its derived form.**

In the following table the words in column 2 have weak endings and keep the same stress as the root forms of column 1. In the 3rd and 4th columns, the words have stress-fixing suffixes with displacement of the stress.

1	2	3	4
'physics	'physical(ly)	phy'sician	
'person	'personal(ly)	per'sonify	perso'nality
'photograph		pho'tography	photo'graphic(ally)
'democrat		de'mocracy	demo'cratic
'maths,		mathe'matics	mathema'tician
'regular	'regularly	regu'larity	
'grammar		gram'marian gram'matical	grammati'cality
con'tinue	con'tinuous	conti'nuity	

**Exercise: Mark the stress in the following words**

conscientious, arthritic, claustrophobia, endoscopy, meningitis,  
orthopedic, deficient, intellectual, arteriosclerosis, hyperdermic,  
innoculation, hemiplegia, arsenic, epithelium, enterocentesis,  
psychological, deciduous, malarious, orchioplasty, urography, proficient,  
delirium, amniotic, dermatitis, inflammation, necrosis, impetuous,  
superior, lunatic, gestation, lobotomy ; anti-diuretic, conjunctivoplasty  
transfusion, physician.