

14 Help yourself

Pronunciation: word stress reference

Common patterns

There are no simple rules relating to word stress: it is important to learn the correct stress pattern for each new word you learn. Common patterns include:

o O

prefer **suggest** **benign** **contempt**

This pattern is especially common in two-syllable verbs.

O o

easy **station** **worker** **open**

This pattern is especially common in two-syllable adjectives and nouns.

o o O

volunte**er** employ**ee**

o O o

de**posit** ap**art**ment

O o o

difficult op**er**ate

o o O o

ava**r**icious in**for**mation

o O o o

ex**cep**tional unb**ea**table

Words which change meaning

Sometime words with the same spelling are pronounced with different word-stress patterns. Sometime the meaning is related.

Noun

O o

ob**ject**

tr**an**fer

re**co**rd

co**n**trast

Verb

o O

ob**ject**

tr**an**fer

re**co**rd

co**n**trast

Words stress and suffixes

Words which end in suffixes, such as *-tion* and *-ese*, often have predictable patterns of words stress.

-tion

End pattern: O o

o**rgan**ize o**rgan**ization

na**tion**alize na**tion**alization

-grapher, -graphy

End pattern: o O o o

ph**oto**graph ph**oto**grapher

tele**gra**ph tele**gra**phy

-ic, -ical

End patterns: O o or O o o

h**is**tory h**is**toric

phil**oso**phy phil**oso**phical

-ese

End pattern: o O

Ch**ina** Ch**inese**

Ja**pan** Ja**panese**

-ity

End pattern: O o o

equ**al** equ**ality**

act**ive** act**ivity**

Note, however, that some suffixes, such as *-ness*, have no effect on the stress of the root word:

O o O o o

happ**y** happ**iness**

Stress shift in sentences

For some words, where stress is placed depends on their position in a sentence. When the words is spoken alone or at the end of a statement, the stress occurs near the end. When the word occurs before another word in a sentence, the stress occurs earlier.

Over half the students were **Japanese**.

Many people prefer **J**apanese cars.

In some cultures people sleep in the **afternoon**.

An **a**fternoon meeting may be less productive than a morning one.