

Word stress

Introduction

In this activity, students explore groups of words and try to deduce a common rule for the placement of the stressed syllable in the word. They then practice saying the words and try to find other words that follow the rule.



This activity draws on materials and ideas presented by Clark von Heller in his presentation ‘Composing music to enhance pronunciation.’

Webinar time reference: 21:20 – 23:40

Level: B1+ Secondary

Time: 25 – 30 minutes

Aim: To make students aware of word stress and some of the ‘rules’ of word stress.

Preparation:

- Make copies of the four worksheets from the materials section.

Procedure

- Write up these words on the board: progress – television – artistic – zoology
- Ask students to think about how the words sound.
- Ask the students how many syllables each word has.
- Get their feedback (Answers: progress = 2 – television = 4 – artistic= 3 – zoology=4)

- See if the students can count the syllables on their fingers as they say the word.
- Now ask them which syllable is loudest in each word.
- Say the words and elicit the answers. (progress = first – television = 3rd – artistic = 2nd – zoology = 2nd)
- Tell the students that the loudest syllable is the ‘stressed’ syllable, and that knowing which syllable is stressed is an important part of pronunciation.
- Now tell the students there are some rules that can help them know where the stressed should be.
- Divide the class into four groups and give each group one of the four worksheets.
- Ask them to identify the stressed syllable in each word, and then to try to see what the rule is.
- Give the students time to work together.
- Put the students into groups of 4 with one student from each of the groups.
- Ask them to show the other students the words and tell them what they think the stress rule is.
- Get some feedback from the groups and clarify the answers.
- Answers:
 - Nouns that can be verbs** = 1st syllable stressed for noun and 2nd syllable stressed for verb.
 - Words ending in sion/tion** = penultimate syllable is stress
 - Word ending in tic** = penultimate syllable is stressed
 - Words ending in ology** = antepenultimate syllable is stressed
- Ask the students to try to think of other words that fit into each of the four groups.
- Get some feedback and get them to share the other words.

Answers

Nous that can be verbs

1. conduct vs conduct
2. produce vs produce
3. export vs export
4. escort vs escort
5. object vs object
6. refund vs refund

Words ending in sion/tion

1. attention
2. relation
3. obsession
4. projection
5. collection
6. admission
7. instruction
8. correction
9. expression
10. explosion

Word ending in tic

1. romantic
2. domestic
3. magnetic
4. scientific
5. historic
6. artistic
7. dramatic
8. strategic
9. dynamic
10. exotic

Words ending in ology

1. Archaeology
2. Astrology
3. Biology
4. Criminology
5. Ecology
6. Musicology
7. Morphology

Additional resources

Teaching pathways: How to teach pronunciation

- Our free course 'Teaching pathways - How to teach pronunciation' helps you develop your skills in teaching pronunciation effectively to your students.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-pathways-how-teach-pronunciation>

What to teach before you teach sounds

- The British Council sponsored the live-streaming of the IATEFL Pronunciation SIG - NATECLA London conference 'Accentuate: bringing pronunciation to the fore'. Here we have the session given by Piers Messum on 'What to teach before you teach sounds'.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/what-teach-you-teach-sounds>

Doing things with sounds: Practical pronunciation activities for your classroom

- This is a series of short videos, Mark Hancock shows you a range of pronunciation activities you can use with your students.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvCfA99qTst_VcAJVRAW4lrZYYWcFC61p