

Prominence

Review

- Word stress: There is always at least one syllable that is strongly stressed.
- Sentence stress: Some stress tends to fall on all content words in an utterance.
- Vowels are reduced in unstressed syllables and in function words.
- Word stress and sentence stress combine to create the rhythm of an English utterance.

e.g.) *The movement of pitch within an intonation unit is referred to as the intonation contour.*

Thought groups / Intonation units

- are longer in rapid speech but shorter in deliberate speech
- are grammatically & semantically coherent
- are often set off by pauses
- have one prominent element
- have its own intonation contour

Linking & blending occur within, NOT across, thought groups.

Four levels of sentence stress

1. unstressed syllable
2. lightly stressed (content words)
3. strongly stressed (prominent element)
4. extra strong (contrastive / emphatic stress)

How would you say, “**I am listening**”?

Which word is the most prominent in a thought group?

1. New or important information, usually the last content word, in a neutral phrase

What are you doing?

Here's a package for you.

There's too much traffic.

He doesn't understand her.

Please record it for me.

2. Emphatic stress on a particular element

MATTHEW'S hair is blue.

Matthew's HAIR is blue.

Matthew's hair IS blue.

Matthew's hair is BLUE.

3. Contrastive stress on two parallel elements

Is this a HIGH- or LOW-intermediate English class?

HIGH-intermediate

Is this the low-intermediate ENGLISH class?

No, it's the HIGH-intermediate class.

Circle the words that receive the most stress.

A: Hi, how are you?

B: Pretty good, how are you?

A: What did you think of the movie?

B: It was really good. What did you think?

A: I'll get it.

A: Thank you.

B: No, I'll get it.

B: Thank you.

A: How was the movie?

B: It was too long.

A: Was it a long drive?

B: Yeah, it was too long.

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