

# Word Stress

What is stress?

- volume
- pitch
- length
- vowel quality

Levels of stress

- strongly stressed (primary)
- lightly stressed (secondary)
- unstressed (weak or no)

e.g. Jàpanése      Jàpanése  
         JAPANESE      /ˌdʒæpəˈniːz/

Compare stress patterns:

*French*    *économique*    *organisation*  
*English* *economic*      *organization*

## Where is the stress?

### 2-SYLLABLE WORDS-*usually on the first syllable*

- German origin:

MOTHer    WATer    WISdom

- Latin origin-tendency to move stress to 1st syllable:

MUSic    GRAMmar    REAson

NOTE: Even stronger tendency in British English

BAL•let/bal•LET    GAR•age/ga•RAGE

BUT:

conTAIN    beLIEF    dePEND    WHY?

### PREFIXES

- German origin:

*a-, be-, for-, fore-, mis-, out-, over-, un-, under-, up-, with-*

Verbs-stressed on base/root

unTIE    outRUN    overDO    underSTAND

Nouns-stressed on prefix

FOREsight    OUTcome    Overdose    UNDerwear

*Compare:*

There was an Overload  
of electricity on the  
circuit.

Don't overLOAD  
the circuit!

•Linate origin

(ad-, com-, de-, dis-, ex-, en-, in-, ob-,  
per-, pre-, pro-, re-, sub-, sur-)

verb

(stress on base)

comPLAIN  
exTEND  
disPLAY  
proTECT  
reTURN

noun

(also often on base)

comPLAINT  
exTENSion  
disPLAY  
proTECTion  
reTURN

Part-of-speech alternations:

2-syllable noun/verb pairs (p. 264):

*NOUN*

PROject  
RECord  
INcrease  
CONflict  
OBject

*VERB*

proJECT  
reCORD  
inCREASE  
conFLICT  
obJECT

-ate endings

*NOUN/ADJ.*

graduate  
separate  
fortunate

*VERB*

graduate  
separate  
educate

## SUFFIXES

1. no effect on stress placement;  
stress remains on base/root

-hood      NEIGHborhood

-ship      reLAtionship

-ful      WONderful

-er/or      EDucator

-dom      KINGdom

-ness      apPROpriateness

-able      underSTANDable

2. suffix receives the stress

-aire  
questionNAIRE  
(millionaire)

-ee  
granTEE

-eer  
pioNEER

-ese  
LebaNESE

-esque  
picturESQUE

-ique  
uNIQUE

**-eur**  
chauf**FEUR**

**-oon**  
car**TOON**

**-ette**  
cas**SETTE**  
(cigarette)

**-et**  
bou**QUET**

**3. Suffix causes the stress to move to the syllable preceding it**

**-eous**      **COURage**      cou**RA**geous

**-graphy**      **TELEgraph**      te**LE**Graphy

**-ial**      **SEquence**      se**QUEN**tial

**-ian**      **MAGic**      ma**GI**Cian

**-ic**      **PERiod**      peri**OD**ic

**-ical**      **biOLogy**      bio**LOG**ical

**-ious**      **MYStery**      my**STER**ious

**-ity**      **PUBlic**      pu**BLIC**ity

**-ion**      **ORganize**      organi**ZAT**ion

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