



Canadian Pronunciation

Word Stress and Syllables

- English is a stress-timed language. Intonation rises and falls to emphasize important words. Practice and enjoy the music of English!
- Word Stress: There is only one stress in an English word.
- Word Stress: Vowels are stressed, not consonants.
- A syllable is a chunk of a word that contains one vowel sound. (Examples: cream, ba-na-na, bur-ger) Tapping out syllables helps with pronunciation and spelling.
- Stress the first syllable in two-syllable nouns and adjectives. (Example: PREsent, EXport TENDER, THINner)
- Stress the last syllable in two-syllable verbs. (Example: preSENT, beGIN, exPORT)
- In words ending in SION, TION and IC, stress the second-to-last #syllable. (Example: photoGRAPHic, conTENTion, comprehension)
- For words ending in CY, TY, PHY, GY and AL, stress the third-to-last #syllable. (Example: photOgraphy, dependaBility, demOcracy, crtical)
- For compound nouns, stress the first part of the word.)Example: BLACKboard, NEWSpaper, BEDroom)
- For compound adjectives, stress the second part of the word. (Example: bad-TEMPered, old-FASHioned)



- For compound verbs, stress the second part of the word. (Example: underSTAND, overFLOW)
- an extra syllable to the verb. (Example: plant, planted; rent, rented; float, floated)
- For verbs that end in “t”, the past tense ending “ed” adds an extra syllable to the verb. (Example: plant, planted; rent, rented; float, floated)
- “Chocolate” sounds like it should have three syllables (choc-o-late.) In North America, however, it is pronounced as a two-syllable word (choc-late.)
- In a sentence, the syllable in the most important word is stressed. (Example: What’s your NAME?)
- Raise the pitch and volume of your voice slightly when saying the stressed syllable in a word.
- When you say a single word (not a sentence) one syllable in the word is stressed – it is longer than the other syllables in the word. Think of stretching an elastic band between your fingers. (Example: ba-nA-na)
- Indicate the most important words in a sentence by raising the pitch of your voice slightly and by lengthening the strong syllables in the important words.
- When a syllable with “a” or “u” has two L’s, the vowel sound in the syllable is a schwa. (Examples: WALL-ow, PULL-over, BALL-room)
- When a syllable with “e” or “i” has two L’s, the vowel sound in the syllable is relative. (Examples: FELL-ow, PILL-ow, HELlo)
- When weak syllables contain the letter “l”, it is pronounced like the relative vowel “u”. (Examples: pencil, sandwich, utensil)
- The word “or” is another weak syllable in English and is pronounced “er”. (Example: Would you like coffee or tea? = Would you like coffee er tea?)



- The word “and” is treated as a weak syllable in English and sounds like the “n” in “no”. (Burger and fries = burger n fries; arts and crafts = arts n crafts; Tom and Joe = Tom n Joe)
- The word “of” is a weak syllable in English and is pronounced like the relative “u” sound. (Examples: cup uh coffee; piece uh paper)