

## STRESS RULES for English Syllables

1. **Stress the first syllable of:**
  - Most two-syllable nouns (examples: CLImate, KNOWledge)
  - Most two-syllable adjectives (examples: FLIPpant, SPACious)
2. **Stress the last syllable of:**
  - Most two-syllable verbs (examples: reQUIRE, deCIDE)
3. **Stress the second-to-last syllable of:**
  - Words that end in *-ic* (examples: ecSTATic, geoGRAPHic)
  - Words ending in *-sion* and *-tion* (examples: exTENSion, retriBUTION)
4. **Stress the third-from-last syllable of:**
  - Words that end in *-cy*, *-ty*, *-phy* and *-gy* (examples: deMOCracy, unCERTainty, geOGRAPHy, radiOLogy)
  - Words that end in *-al* (examples: exCEPTional, CRItical)

For more detailed rules see Really Learn English

See this website.

<http://www.really-learn-english.com/word-stress.html>

---

### 1. Two-Syllable nouns and adjectives

---

In most two syllable [nouns](#) and [adjectives](#), the first syllable takes on the stress.

**Examples:**

- SAMples
- CARton
- PURple
- RAIny
- CHIna
- HAPpy

---

### 2. Two-Syllable verbs and prepositions

---

In most two syllable [verbs](#) and [prepositions](#), the stress is on the second syllable.

**Examples:**

- reLAX
- reCEIVE
- diRECT
- aMONG
- aSIDE
- beTWEEN
- deCIDE

---

### More about word stress on two-syllable words

---

- About 80% of two-syllable words get their stress on the first syllable.

- There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but very few nouns and adjectives get stress on their second syllable.
- Verbs and prepositions usually get stress placed on the second syllable, but there are exceptions to this too.

## Note:

There are many two-syllable words in English that can be pronounced in two different ways. The stress change also changes the part of speech of the word.

### Examples:

- PREsent = a gift ([noun](#)); non past or future ([adjective](#))
- preSENT = to give something to someone ([verb](#))
- OBject = something you can see and touch ([noun](#))
- obJECT = to disagree with something ([verb](#))

## 3. Three-Syllable words

For three-syllable words, look at the word ending (the [suffix](#)), using the following as your guide:

## 4. Words ending in er, ly

For three-syllable words ending with the suffixes **er** or **ly**, the stress is placed on the first syllable.

### Examples:

- ORderly
- SIently
- LOvingly
- MAnager
- GARdener
- EAsier

## 5. Words ending in consonants and in y

If there is a word that ends in a **consonant** or in a **y**, then the first syllable usually gets the stress.

### Examples:

- RARity
- OPTimal
- GRAdient
- GENorous

## 6. Words with various endings

Take a good look at the list of suffixes below (suffixes are word endings).

The stress is going to be on the syllable right before the suffix. This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

### Examples:

1. **able:** ADDable, DURable, LAUGHable
2. **ial:** differENTial, SOcial, fiNANCial
3. **cian:** muSICian, phySICian, cliNICian
4. **ery:** BAKery, SCENery

5. **ian:** coMEDian, ciVILian, techNICian
6. **ible:** reSISTible, imPOSSible, TERRible
7. **ic:** arCHAic, plaTonic, characteRISTic
8. **ics:** diaBETics, paediATrics, TOpics
9. **ion:** classifiCation, repoSition, vegeTation
10. **ia:** MEdia, bactERia, vicTORia
11. **ient:** inGREdient, PATient, ANcient
12. **ious:** mySTERious, reLIgious, VARious
13. **ish:** SELfish, ENGLISH, PUNish
14. **osis:** hypNOSis, diagNOSis, osMOSis

## 7. Words ending in **ade, ee, ese, que, ette, oon**

Words that use the suffix **ade, ee, ese, eer, que, ette, or oon** have the primary stress actually placed on the suffix.

This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

### Examples:

1. **ade:** lemoNADE, cruSADE, arCADE
2. **ee:** aGREE, jamborEE, guaranTEE
3. **eer:** sightSEER, puppeTEER
4. **ese:** SiamESE, JapanESE, chEESE
5. **ette:** cassETTE, CorvETTE, towelETTE
6. **que:** unIQUe, physIQUe
7. **oon:** baLOON, afterNOON, carTOON

## 8. Stress on the second from the end syllable

You put stress on the second syllable from the end of the word with words ending in **ic, sion, and tion**.

### Examples:

- iCONic
- GRAPHic
- hyperTENSION
- teleVISION
- nuTRITION
- reveLATION

Note: Native English speakers don't always agree on where to place the stress on a word. For example, some people pronounce **television** as "TElevision" while others say "teleVISION."

## 9. Stress on the third from end syllable

You put stress on the third from end syllable with words that end in **cy, ty, phy, gy** and **al**.

### Examples:

- deMOcracy
- geOGRAPHy
- ALLergy
- NAUTical
- CLARity
- CRITical

## 10. Word stress for compound words

### A. Compound noun

A compound noun is a noun made out of two [nouns](#) that form one word. In a compound noun, the most stress is on the stressed syllable of the first word.

**Examples:**

- SEAfood (sea + food)
  - ICEland (ice + land)
  - TOOTHpaste (tooth + paste)
  - FOOTball (foot + ball)
  - BAsketball (basket + ball)
- 

## **B. Compound adjectives**

---

A compound adjective is an [adjective](#) made of at least two words.

Often, hyphens are used in compound adjectives. In compound adjectives, the most stress is placed in the stressed syllable of the second word.

**Examples:**

- ten-MEter
  - rock-SOLid
  - fifteen-MInute
  - old-FAsioned
- 

## **C. Compound verbs**

---

A compound verb is when a subject has two or more [verbs](#). The stress is on the second or on the last part.

**Examples:**

- Matilda loves bread but deTESTS butter.
  - Sarah baked cookies and ATE them up.
  - Dogs love to eat bones and love to DRINK water.
- 

## **D. Noun + compound nouns**

---

[Noun](#) + compound Nouns are two word compound nouns. In noun + compound noun, the stress is on the first word.

**Examples:**

- AIRplane mechanic
  - PROject manager
  - BOARD member
- 

## **11. Proper nouns**

---

[Proper nouns](#) are specific names of people, places or things. For example: Jeniffer, Spain, Google.

The second word is always the one that takes the stress

**Examples:**

- North DAKOTA
- Mr. SMITH
- Apple INCORPORATED

---

## 12. Reflexive pronouns

---

[Reflexive pronouns](#) show that the action affects the person who performs the action. For example: I hit myself.

The second syllable usually takes the stress.

**Examples:**

- mySELF
- themSELVES
- ourSELVES

---

## 13. Numbers

---

If the number is a multiple of ten, the stress is placed on the first syllable.

**Examples:**

- TEN
- FIFty
- ONE-hundred

## Word stress and dictionaries

Another great tip for beginning English learners is to grab a [dictionary](#).