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Section: C

Subject: English

Topic: Word Stress/Accent

Stress/Accent

Stress or Accent means the application of a greater breath force in producing a syllable. In linguistics, stress or accent is relative prominence given to a certain syllable in a word, or to a certain word in a phrase or sentence.

Types of Stress/Accent

- i) Word Stress
- ii) Sentence Stress

Word Stress/Accent

Word stress is an important feature of English. It is the extra force given to a syllable. In other words, a syllable which is produced with a greater breath force is called a stressed or accented syllable. **Word stress** or accent is the idea that in a **word** with more than one syllable, one (or more than one) syllable will be **stressed** or accented. **Stressed** or accented syllables will be

- i) higher in pitch
- ii) longer in duration
- iii) generally a little louder than unstressed or unaccented syllables.

An accent is shown by placing a short vertical bar placed above and in front of the accented syllable. For example, in the word backbone /'bæk.bəʊn/ the first syllable “back” is stressed or accented.

Word Stress Rules

There are two very simple rules about word stress:

- **One word has only one stress.** (One word cannot have two stresses. If you hear two stresses, you hear two words. Two stresses cannot be one word. It is true that there can be a "secondary" stress in some words. But a secondary stress is much smaller than the main [primary] stress, and is only used in long words.)
- **We can only stress vowels, not consonants.**