WORD STRESS PATTERN IN ENGLISH WORDS
**Word stress** and **syllables** are the next important things to learn about English pronunciation and accent.
Syllables

A syllable is a word, or part of a word, which contains a single vowel sound. It is a single unit of speech.

Each word contains one syllable, or more.
1 Syllable
Here are examples of words with a single syllable:

pen, man, pig, cup, hat

In English, a vowel sound can be made of more than one vowel letter. So the following words have a single syllable as well:

feet, moon, cake, have, break, bought

All of these words contain only one vowel sound, and therefore a single syllable.
2 Syllables

A word can have more than one syllable. The following words are examples of words with two syllables. Here are examples of words with 2 syllables. The different syllables are shown on the right, and they are separated with a space.

garden:  gar-den
hotel:  ho-tel
consist:  con-sist
object:  ob-ject
focus:  fo-cus
3 Syllables

Examples of words with three syllables:

September:  **sep-tem-ber**

department:  **de-part-ment**

telephone:  **te-le-phone**

camera:  **ca-mer-a**

Saturday:  **sa-tur-day**

hamburger:  **ham-bur-ger**

vitamin:  **vi-ta-min**
4 Syllables

Examples of words with four syllables:

kindergarten: kin-der-gar-ten

information: in-for-ma-tion

January: ja-nu-ar-y

American: A-mer-i-can

discovery: di-sco-ver-y

That is not all, of course. There can be words with even more syllables. But you get the point, right?
What is Word Stress?
In many languages such as in English, all the syllables in multisyllabic words are not equally stressed (spoken with some kind of a force or strength) when they are pronounced. WORD-STRESS is also sometimes referred to as WORD ACCENT.

In English, we do not say each syllable with the same force or strength. This means that one part of a certain word is said louder and longer than other parts of the same word. In one word, we accentuate ONE syllable. We say one syllable very loudly (big, strong, important) and all the other syllables very quietly.

The syllable which is pronounced with greater force is called the stressed syllable. You can also call it the accented syllable. "Accent" in this case means "emphasis".

English has its typical WORD-STRESS pattern.

It is something that is completely natural for English speakers, but something ESL students can learn from practicing their conversational skills and by learning the rules for using word stress.

When speaking, it is important to put the stress on the correct syllable. Otherwise, it would sound unnatural, and might even be difficult to understand!
Watch the following video for a full explanation and demonstration of word stress:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX1rrFh4OZw

Now, have you read all the explanations and watched the video? Very good!
Here are some examples of the word stress of some common words (the stressed part is in **bold**):

water:  *wa* - ter

people:  *peo* - ple

television:  *tel* - e - vi - sion

together:  *to* - *geth* - er

potato:  *po* - *ta* - to

before:  *be* - *fore*

begin:  *be* - *gin*
A few things to remember:

1. A word can only have one stress. In a very long word you can have a secondary stress but it is always a much smaller stress.

2. Only vowels are stressed, not consonants. The vowels in English are a, e, i, o, and u. The consonants are all the other letters.
You are almost ready to move on to the next lesson, but before that, make sure you know the answers to the following questions:

What is a syllable?

What is a stresses syllable/accented syllable?

How can you know where to put the stress for each word while speaking?

Have you answered the questions? Awesome!
Read for Rules of Word Stress in English at:

https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/word-stress-2.htm

For Phonetics, Pronunciation practice, word stress visit:
http://www.englishmedialab.com/pronunciation/pronunciation%202.htm
Word stress rules

1. Two-Syllable **nouns** and **adjectives**

2. Two-Syllable **verbs** and **prepositions**

3. Three-Syllable words

4. Words ending in **er, or, ly**

5. Words ending in **consonants** and in **y**

6. Words with various endings

7. Words ending in **ee, ese, ique, ette**

8. Prefixes

9. Stress on the **second from the end syllable**

10. Stress on the **third from end syllable**

11. Word stress for **compound** words

12. Phrasal verbs

13. **Proper nouns**

14. Reflexive pronouns

15. **Numbers**
1. Two-Syllable nouns and adjectives

In most two syllable nouns and adjectives, the first syllable takes on the stress.

Examples:
SAM-ples
CAR-ton
Col-or-ful
RAI-ny
2. Two-Syllable verbs and prepositions
In most two syllable verbs and prepositions, the stress is on the second syllable.

Examples:
re-LAX
Re-CEIVE
di-RECT
a-MONG

More about word stress on two-syllable words

About 80% or so 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.

a-SIDE
be-TWEEN
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, or, ly
For words ending with the suffixes er, or, or ly, the stress is placed on the first syllable.

Examples:
DI-Rect/DI-rec-tor
OR-der/OR-der-ly
MA-nage/MA-nag-er

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 gets the stress.

Examples:
RA-ri-ty
OP-ti-mal
GRA-di-ent
CON-tain-er
6. Words with various endings
Take a good look at the list of suffixes below (suffixes are word endings).
Your stress is going to come on the syllable right before the suffix. This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

Examples:
able: ADDable, ARable, DURable
ary: PRIMary, DIary, liBRary
cial: juDlcial, nonSOcial
cian: muSlcian, phySlcian, cliNICian
ery: BAkery, SCENery
graphy: calLlgraphy, bibliOgraphy, stenOgraphy
ial: celesTlal, iniTlal, juDICial
ian: coMEdian, ciVILian, techNIcian
ible: viSlble, terRlble, reSlstible
ic: arCHAic, plaTONic, synTHEtic
ical: MAgical, LOgical, CRItical
ics: diaBEtics, paediAtrics
ion: classifiCAtion, repoSltion, vegeTAtion
ity: imMUnity, GRAvity, VAntity
ium: HElium, ALUminum, PREmium
imum: MI nimum, MAXimum, OPtimum
logy: Biology, CARdiology, RAdiology
tal: caPltal, biCOA stal, reCltal
7. Words ending in ee, ese, ique, ette

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

This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

**Examples:**
- *ee*: agrEE, jamborEE, guarantEE
- *eer*: sightsEER, puppetEER
- *ese*: SiamESE, JapanESE, cheESE
- *ette*: cassETTE, CorvETTE, towelETTE
- *ique*: unIQUE, physIQUE
8. Prefixes
Usually, prefixes do not take the stress of a word.

There are a few exceptions to this rule, however, like: **un**, **in**, **pre**, **ex** and **mis**, which are all stressed in their prefix.

**Examples:**
ex: e-XAM-ple, ex-pla-NAtion, e-XAM-ine
in: IN-side, IN-efficient, IN-terest
mis: MIS-spoke, MI-stake, MIS-spelled
pre: PRE-cede, PRE-ar-range, PRE-li-min-ary
9. 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:
i-CON-ic
Hy-per-TEN-sion
Nu-TRI-tion

10. 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:
de-mo-CRA-cy
TREA-ty
Ge-O-graphy
AL-ler-gy
NAU-ti-cal
11. Word stress for compound words

A. Compound noun
A compound noun is a noun made out of two nouns in order to form one word. In a compound noun, the first word usually takes on the stress.

Examples:
SEA-food
ICE-land
TOOTH-paste

B. Compound adjectives
A compound adjective is an adjective composed of at least two words.

Often, hyphens are used in compound adjectives. In compound adjectives, the stress is placed within the second word.

Examples:
ten-ME-ter
rock-SO-lid
Fif-teen-MI-nute
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 de-TESTS butter.
Sarah baked cookies and ATE them up.
Dogs love to eat bones and love DRIN-king 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:
AIR-plane mechanic
PRO-ject manager
BOARD-room member
12. **Phrasal verbs**
Phrasal verbs are words made from a verb and preposition.

In phrasal verbs, the second word gets the stress (the preposition).

**Examples:**
Black OUT
break DOWN
look OUT

13. **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


14. 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:
my-SELF
Them-SELVES
Our-SELVES

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

Examples:
TEN
FIF-ty
ONE-hundred
Word stress and dictionaries
Another great tip for beginning English learners is to grab a dictionary.

Dictionaries are great tools for learning word stress.

For every word, the dictionary indicates where the stress goes, for example by placing an apostrophe before the stress.

Animation: anɪˈmeɪʃ(ə)n/

Take a look at your dictionary to find out how your dictionary indicates word stress.
Well done! You have completed the Word Stress and Syllables lesson.