



PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation covers the sounds within individual words and the stresses and patterns in groups of words. To improve your pronunciation, you need to be aware of how words are broken down into syllables, how some words and syllables are stressed more than others and how spoken words are grouped together. As you build up a specialised, academic vocabulary related to your studies, make sure you know how to say new words as well as what they mean.

	What you need to know.....
1. Syllables and word stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you know what a syllable is. English words are made up of syllables, groups of sounds usually built around the vowels <i>a, e, i, o, u</i>, and the letter <i>y</i>. Words like <i>cat</i> and <i>dog</i>, with one vowel sound each, are one syllable words. <i>Tiger</i>, with two vowel sounds, is a two syllable word and <i>elephant</i> is a three syllable word.• Remember that two vowels next to each other can combine to make a single sound while other vowels, like the <i>e</i> at the end of some words, can be silent. The word <i>mouse</i>, for example, is a one syllable word because <i>o</i> and <i>u</i> combine and <i>e</i> is silent.• Learn which syllable takes the stress within a word. Knowing how many syllables a word has and which syllable to stress is essential for pronunciation. This is easy to check in a dictionary or online.• Be aware that syllable stress can distinguish the meaning of words that have the same spelling, like the noun <i>present</i> (PRE-sent) and the verb <i>present</i> (pre-SENT).• Note that the stressed syllable can also move if the form of the word changes, for example <i>photograph</i> (PHO-to-graph), <i>photography</i> (pho-TO-graph-y), <i>photographic</i> (pho-to-GRAPH-ic).
2. Sentence stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use stress within a sentence as well as within words. Sentence stress is usually on words like nouns and verbs that represent things and actions. The sentence 'I saw a man with a dog' would normally be said 'i SAW a MAN with a DOG'.• Remember that stressing one word in a sentence can change its meaning. 'John didn't steal it' could be said 'JOHN didn't steal it', suggesting someone else stole it, or 'John didn't STEAL it', suggesting John did something else with it, like borrow it.• Think about the meaning and context of an entire sentence to determine where to put stress.

<p>3. Chunking and pausing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group words together into chunks when you speak. Separate the chunks with brief pauses. These chunks should be groups of words that communicate an idea. Chunking and pausing makes it much easier for people to understand you. Read these two texts aloud. Leave a short pause at each single slash (/) and a longer pause at each double slash (/). Which do you think is easier for a listener to understand? <p>Text 1 ‘Yesterday I saw my professor dancing in the lecture theatre with a red hat on, I was very surprised.’</p> <p>Text 2 ‘Yesterday / I saw my professor / dancing / in the lecture theatre / with a red hat on, // I was very surprised.’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try copying spoken lines from your favourite TV shows, movies or even TED talks. Record yourself on your phone and listen to how you sound.
<p>4. All these skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to native speakers to improve all the pronunciation skills covered here. Try to find radio shows or podcasts from ABC, Radio National, BBC or PBS that interest you. Even having talk radio playing in the background while you relax will help you to improve stress, chunking and pausing.

Useful links

- Dictionary for checking syllables and stress**

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

- Sentence stress**

<https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/sentence-stress.htm>

- Chunking and pausing**

<http://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/pronunciation/pausing-and-chunking>