ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION · DEEP DIVE

Stress Inside the Word

Every English word of more than one syllable has one strong beat, and putting it in the wrong place can make a word unrecognisable, or turn a noun into a verb.

B1 · pronunciation · word stress · suffixes

one strong syllable

Louder, longer, higher; the others reduce.

PHOtograph · phoTOgrapher

He works as a photographer in London.

suffixes

-ion, -ic, -ity pull the stress to the syllable before.

inforMAtion · ecoNOMic

We need more information about it.

noun / verb

Nouns often stress the first syllable, verbs the second.

a REcord · to reCORD

They will record the concert tonight.

ENDING	EFFECT	EXAMPLE
-ion / -ic / -ity / -ial	stress on the syllable before	inforMAtion, possiBIlity, esSENtial
-ee / -eer / -ese	the ending takes the stress	employEE, engiNEER, JapaNESE
-ment / -ness / -ing / -ed	no change	GOVernment, HAPpiness
compound noun	first part	GREENhouse, BOOKshop, BREAKdown

1 Which syllable?

Write the stressed syllable of the word in CAPITALS.

1 She took a PHOTOGRAPH of the bridge. _____

2 He works as a PHOTOGRAPHER. _____

3 The PHOTOGRAPHIC evidence was clear. _____

4 We need more INFORMATION. _____

5 She trained as an ENGINEER. _____

6 The GOVERNMENT has decided. _____

7 It is an ESSENTIAL part. _____

8 She is a new EMPLOYEE. _____

9 There is a POSSIBILITY of rain. _____

10 I love her HAPPINESS. _____

2 Noun or verb?

Write the stressed syllable of the word in CAPITALS.

1 I bought that RECORD in a charity shop. _____

2 They will RECORD the concert tonight. _____

3 He gave her a PRESENT. _____

4 She will PRESENT the results. _____

5 There has been a small INCREASE. _____

6 Prices will INCREASE next year. _____

7 I OBJECT to that suggestion. _____

8 What is that OBJECT on the table? _____

3 Wrong stress

The CAPITALS show the speaker's stress. Write the word with the right stress in capitals.

1 She works as a photoGRAPHer.

2 I bought that reCORD in a charity shop.

3 We need more INformation.

4 She trained as an ENgineer.

5 I grow tomatoes in the green HOUSE.

6 The goVERNment has decided.

Remember In a dictionary the mark ˈ comes before the stressed syllable: /ˈfəʊtəgrɑːf/, /fəˈtɒgrəfə/.

4 A short text

Write the stressed syllable of each numbered word.

My brother is an [1] _____ (engineer) and my sister is a [2] _____ (photographer). Last year she won a [3] _____ (competition) and they asked her to [4] _____ (present) her work at the [5] _____ (university). The [6] _____ (economic) news was bad that week, but nobody cared: it was the [7] _____ (happiest) day of her life. We had a [8] _____ (celebration) at a little restaurant by the river.

5 Where is the stress?

Sort the words by the position of the stress.

greenhouse · breakdown · happiness · government · employee · engineer · Japanese · cigarette

first syllable	last syllable

Where are the answers?

The answers, with an explanation for each one, are in the LinguaBite app. Open this Deep Dive and scroll to Downloads at the bottom of the article: once you have downloaded this worksheet, its answers appear there after a couple of days, so you do the exercises first. You can choose 1, 2 or 3 days in the app's Settings.

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