

STRESS PLACEMENT IN COMPLEX WORDS: STRESS IN PRE-FIXES & NEUTRAL SUFFIXES

Up to this point, we have considered stress placement in simple words consisting of a single stem. In the following courses, we shall examine the stress placement in complex words, which comprises of a prefix + stem + one or more suffixes.

I. Stress assignment on prefixes

In the words containing prefixes such as: (**a-**, **ab-**, **an-**, **co-**, **de-**, **dis-**, **im-**, **in-**, **re-**, **un-**), the primary stress mostly doesn't fall on the prefix but on one of the stem syllables.

Prefixes	Examples
a-	Aside /ə'saɪd/, Aback /
ab-	Abnormal /æb'nɔ:məl/, Absolve /
an-	Anachronism /ə'nækrənɪzəm/, Anomaly /
co-	Cooperative /kəʊ'prətɪv/, Cohabit /kəʊ'hæbɪt/, coexist /kəʊɪg'zɪst/, Coordinate /
de-	Demotivate /di:'məʊtɪveɪt/, Decode /
dis-	Dislike /dɪs'lʌɪk/, Disagree /dɪsə'grɪ:/, Dispatch /dɪ'spætʃ/, Disable /
im-	Impossible /ɪm'pɒsəbl/, Immortal /ɪ'mɔ:tl/, Imprison /ɪm'prɪzn/, Imbalance /
in-	Intoxicate /ɪn'tɒksɪkeɪt/, Invaluable /ɪn'væljuəbl/, Incorrect /
re-	Resource /rɪ'sɔ:s/, Reorder /ri:'ɔ:də(r)/, Rearrange /
un-	Uncertain /ʌn'sɜ:tn/, Unfaithful /ʌn'feɪθfl/, Unable /

There are many exceptions in English because of the vastness of the language. Thus, stress placement in complex words is not always predictable; however, the rules do work mostly. **E.g.** **Impotent** /'ɪmpətənt/, **impulse** /'ɪmpʌls/, **impudent** /, **infinite** /, **insolent** /.

II. Stress assignment on suffixes

Unlike prefixes, it is possible for a suffix to change the original pronunciation –stress placement- of the word stem when they are affixed. This depends on whether the suffix is stress-neutral, stress-attracting or pre-stressed (stress shifting).

2.1. Stress-neutral suffixes

Stress-neutral (stress-fixing) suffixes don't change the pronunciation of the word stem and do not influence stress placement: (**-able**, **-age**, **-ance**, **-ence**, **-ant**, **-dom**, **-ed**, **-er**, **-ern**, **-ful**, **-hood**, **-ing**, **-ish (adj)**, **-ism**, **-ist**, **less**, **-like**, **-ly**, **-man**, **-ment**, **-ness**, **-or**, **-s**, **-ship**, **-some**, **-wards**, **-wise**).

STRESS-FIXING SUFFIX	EXAMPLES
-able/ -ible (adj)	Considerable /kən'sɪdrəbəl/, Unavoidable /ʌnə'vɔɪdəbəl/, Visible/
-age (adj)	Percentage /pə'sentɪdʒ/, Marriage /'mærɪdʒ/, Passage /
-ance/ -ence (n)	Admittance /əd'mɪtns/, Consistence /kən'sɪstəns/, Dependence /
-ant/ -ent (n)	Reluctant /rɪ'lʌktənt/, Commandment /
-dom (n)	Martyrdom /'mɑ:tədəm/, Wisdom /'wɪzdəm/, Kingdom /
-ern (adj)	Western /'westən/, Eastern /'i:stən/, Northern /'nɔ:ðən/, Southern /
-ed (v)	Adapted /ə'dæptɪd/, Reasoned /'ri:znd/, Condemned /
-er / -ar (n)	Interpreter /ɪn'tɜ:pɪtə/, Commander /kə'mɑ:ndə/, Scholar /
-ful (adj)	Sorrowful /'sɒrəʊfʊl/, Beautiful /'bju:tɪfl/, Merciful /

-hood (n)	Brotherhood/'brʌðəhʊd/, Adulthood/'ædʌlθhʊd/, Neighborhood / /
-ing (gerund)	Educating /'edʒuketɪŋ/, Interesting/'ɪntrestɪŋ/, Consisting / /
-ism (n)	Alcoholism /'ælkəhɒlɪzəm/, Communism / /
-ish (adj)	Childish /'tʃaɪldɪʃ/, Swedish / /
-ist (adj)	Journalist /'dʒɜ:nəlɪst/, Physicist /'fɪzɪsɪst/, Specialist / /
-less (adj)	Bottomless /'bɒtəmləs/, Defenseless /dɪ'fensləs/, Penniless / /
-like (adj)	Autumn-like/'ɔ:təmlaɪk/, Businesslike/'bɪznɪslaɪk/, Native-like/ /
-ly (adv)	Carelessly /'keələsli/, Apparently /ə'pærəntli/, Rapidly / /
-man (n)	Policeman /pə'li:smən/, Fireman /'faɪəmə'n/, Businessman / /
-ment (n)	Development /dɪ'veləpmənt/, Accompaniment / /
-ness (n)	Tenderness /'tendənəs/, Greatness /'greɪtnəs/, Quietness / /
-or (n)	Director /dɪ'rektə /, Survivor /sə'vaɪvə/, Instructor / /
-s (n/v)	Images/'ɪmɪdʒɪz/, Advances/'ædvə:nsɪz/, Forests/'fɒrɪsts/, Damns / /
-ship (n)	Censorship/'sensəʃɪp/, Dictatorship/dɪk'tetəʃɪp/, Sponsorship / /
-some (adj)	Adventuresome /əd'ventʃəsəm/, Quarrelsome /'kwɒrlsəm/, Venturesome / /
-ward(s) (adj, adv)	Backward /'bækwəd/, Southwards /'saʊθwədz/, Forward / /
-wise (adj)	Otherwise /'ʌðəwaɪz/, Cornerwise /'kɔ:nəwaɪz/, Clockwise / /

Exceptions: admirable /'ædmərəbl/, advertisement /əd'vɜ:tɪsmənt/, Catholicism /kə'θɒləsɪzəm/, conference /'kɒnfərəns/, difference /'dɪfrəns/, excellent /'eksələnt/, ignorant /'ɪgnərənt/, reference / /, preferable / /, resident / /.

Practice

Mark the stress in the following complex words:

WORD	TRANSCRIPTION	WORD	TRANSCRIPTION
1. Consider <u>able</u>		14. Fright <u>ful</u>	
2. Comfort <u>able</u>		15. Father <u>hood</u>	
3. Orphan <u>age</u>		16. Prepar <u>ing</u>	
4. Assistan <u>ce</u>		17. Eleventh	
5. Allowan <u>ce</u>		18. Happil <u>y</u>	
6. Defian <u>ce</u>		19. Fearlessl <u>y</u>	
7. Demonstrat <u>ed</u>		20. Clarit <u>y</u>	
8. Servan <u>t</u>		21. Gentleman	
9. Freedom		22. Afterward <u>s</u>	
10. Differen <u>ce</u>		23. Instructo <u>r</u>	
11. Belie <u>ver</u>		24. Troublesom <u>e</u>	
12. Northern		25. Otherwis <u>e</u>	
13. Southern		26. Research	