

Lecture No. 5 (Second Year)

Chapter Ten: Stress in Simple Words (pages-77-79)

Three-syllable Words

After we have discussed the process of stress placement on two-syllable words, it is time to discuss how to place stress on three-syllable words, which is more complicated as we have three options as any one of the three syllables can be stressed.

Verbs:

In dealing with simple verbs (no affixes added to the verb), we use the same direction we used with two-syllable words i.e. we start looking at syllables from right to left. This means we need to start with the final syllable.

- If the final syllable is strong, give it stress.
- If the final syllable is not strong leave it unstressed, and give stress to the syllable before the final one if it is strong.
- If both final and before the final syllables are weak, leave them unstressed and give stress to the first syllable if it is strong.

Examples:

1. entertain /en.tə. 'teɪn/

In this verb, the final syllable is strong with the diphthong /ei/, so we give it stress.

2. encounter /ɪŋ. 'kaʊn.tə/

In this verb, the final syllable is weak with /ə/, so we go back to the syllable before the final and give it stress as it is strong with the diphthong /au/.

3. parady /'pæ. rə. di/

In this verb, the final and the one before the final syllables are both weak with /ə/ and /i/, so we go back to the first syllable and give it stress if it is strong /æ/.

Nouns:

- With regard to nouns, the tendency is to give stress to the first syllable if it is strong.
- If the first syllable is weak, we go to the second syllable and give it stress if it is strong.

- If the first and the second syllables are weak and the last one is strong, we don't normally stress the final one but we go back to the first and give it stress.

Examples:

1. quantity /'kwon. tə. ti/

This noun has a strong first syllable with the vowel /o/ plus the consonant /n/, so we give it stress.

2. disaster /di. 'Za:s.tə/

In this noun, the first syllable is weak with short /i/, so we go to the next syllable, which has the long vowel /a:/ plus the consonant /s/, and give stress because it is strong.

3. intellect /'in.tə. lekt/

In this noun, both the first and the second syllables are weak and the final syllable is strong. The final syllable of a noun may not be given stress even if it is strong and the other two syllables are weak. In this example, we give stress to the first syllable.

Adjectives:

Adjectives require the same rules of nouns. This means stress is given to the first syllable even if that syllable is weak.

Examples:

opportune /'o.pə. tu:n/

For more examples, refer to the bottom of page 78 in your text book.

The rules of stress placement given so far apply only to the basic parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, which are the content words. Function words such as articles, prepositions, linking words, etc. are going to be dealt with later.