



## Sentence Stress

1. Practice reading the following paragraph, placing stress on the words in bold.

While **word** stress is decided by language **rules** and can be thought of as ‘pronunciation **fact**’, **sentence** stress is decided by speaker **choice**. The **speaker** usually chooses to stress **content** words, which carry the **information** and not **structure** or **function** words, such as **auxiliary** verbs, **pronouns**, **prepositions** and **determiners**, although this is not **always** the case.

Smith & Margolis, 2007, *English for academic study: Pronunciation*, Garnet Publishing Ltd., Reading, UK.

2. Say the following sentence in 4 different ways:

I think you're right

Choose how you say it:

- General agreement
- I agree with you, but not with other people
- I agree, but I still have doubts
- I agree with you even if others don't

## Sentence Stress

I think you're **RIGHT**

General agreement

I think **YOU'RE** right

I agree with you, but not with other people

I **THINK** you're right

I agree, but I still have doubts

**I** think you're right

I agree with you even if others don't

## Stress Timed Languages

Some pronunciation researchers talk about languages being stress timed or syllable timed. Others question the importance of this. *What do you think?*

### Stress Timed Languages

- The rhythm is created using stressed and unstressed syllables
- Syllables are 'squashed' together so that stressed syllables are regular.

#### 1. English speakers **SQUEEZE** weak grammar words together



#### 2. English speakers **STRETCH** the information words



Zawadski, H.1994, *In Tempo An English Pronunciation Course*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, Sydney

**Other languages** with greater or lesser tendency to **stress timing** include:

- **Cousins** of English: German and Dutch
- Scandinavian languages: Swedish, Norwegian, Danish
- Russian, Serbian
- Mandarin Chinese (especially in the formal register)

### Syllable-timed languages:

- The rhythm is spread evenly across all syllables
- **'More of a patter than a wave'**
- *Romance languages:* French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish
- Indian subcontinent: Hindi, Urdu, Bengali
- The majority of East and South East Asian languages including
  - Cantonese and all dialects of Chinese except Mandarin
  - Vietnamese, Lao, Thai, Khmer, Burmese
  - Indonesian, Malay
  - Japanese, Korean

**What time does your plane leave?**

I know what time the airport bus leaves, but when does your plane leave?

My plane leaves at midnight. What about yours?

1

**How long have you worked here?**

I want to know how long you've worked here, not how long you've lived here!

I've told you how long I've worked here, now you tell me.

2

**Are you Joe Smith?**

Which member of the Smith family are you?

I can't believe that's your surname!

3

**Why didn't he tell me he was hungry?**

He told everybody else, why not me?

Why did you have to tell me? Can't he speak for himself?

4

**Why don't we go to the cinema tonight?**

I don't want to go to the theatre.

I can't wait until tomorrow.

5

**Are you going to get him a present for his birthday?**

Or just a card?

I know you got him a present for Christmas; are you going to do the same for his birthday?

6

**What do you want to do this evening?**

I've told you what I want to do; now you tell me.

I know what you want to do tomorrow evening but what about today?

7

**Do you ever go to rock concerts?**

I know you go to classical concerts.

Or do you just watch them on the video?

8

## Pausing and Focus Stress

### TED presentation by Richard St John - *The 8 secrets of success*

This presentation is given on the website

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/richard\\_st\\_john\\_s\\_8\\_secrets\\_of\\_success.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/richard_st_john_s_8_secrets_of_success.html)

This segment begins at 1.00 of a 3.33 minute presentation.

Richard St. John describes himself as an “average guy who found success doing what he loved”. He spent more than ten years interviewing people he considered successful to find out the reasons for success. These ‘secrets’ were then distilled into 8 words, 3 minutes and a successful book.

#### Task 1 Listening

Listen to the presentation and write down the 8 secrets to success.

- |     |      |
|-----|------|
| i   | v    |
| ii  | vi   |
| iii | vii  |
| iv  | viii |

#### Task 2 Controlled speaking

Listen to the following extract from the presentation.

- Mark the pauses with a slash (/).
- Highlight or underline the focus words.
- Practise reading the transcript using pausing and focus stress.

#### Transcript

And the first thing is passion. Freeman Thomas says, "I'm driven by my passion." TED-sters do it for love, they don't do it for money. Carol Coletta says, "I would pay someone to do what I do." And the interesting thing is, if you do it for love, the money comes anyway.

**Task 1**

i	passion	v	serve(service)
ii	work	vi	ideas
iii	focus	vii	persist(ence)
iv	push	viii	(being) good//

**Task 2**

And the first thing is / passion. / Freeman Thomas says, / "I'm driven by my passion". /

TED-sters do it for love, / they don't do it for money. / Carol Coletta says, / "I would

pay someone / to do what I do." / And the interesting thing is /, if you do it for love, /

the money comes anyway!!

**Note:** There may be some discussion about the pausing here.

It is interesting to note that St John sometimes runs on to the next point without pausing in the usual place, perhaps because he's trying to squeeze his presentation into 3 minutes. However, he does pause to great effect after the most important focus words.

UTS/ELSSA/Pronunciation Resources/Homework/MW 2010'

## Chunking and pausing

### Why are chunking and pausing important?

Pausing and chunking are vital communication tools for both listeners and speakers. Speakers divide speech into 'pieces' or 'chunks' to communicate a thought or idea or to highlight information they think is important. This is the simplest and most effective way to 'package information' for the listener. Dividing information into chunks makes it easier for listeners to understand.

### What exactly are speech chunks?

A speech chunk can be a word, a phrase or a whole sentence. Speech chunks can be signalled in different ways:

- pauses - moments of silence, sometimes very short
- slowing down
- strong stress on the last key word in the chunk

When you are working with a written version of a spoken text, it's handy to mark short pauses with a single slash / and a double slash // for longer pauses.

### When should I use chunking and pausing?

You can use pausing and chunking to:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• state information</li> <li>• give an opinion</li> <li>• emphasise a point</li> </ul> | <p>This is a powerful /<br/>but unfortunately flawed /<br/>argument //</p>                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put forward a criticism</li> </ul>   | <p>The main problem with the argument is /<br/>the lack of hard / statistical evidence //</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• soften a criticism</li> </ul>  | <p>I do understand /<br/>that collecting data / is difficult //</p>                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contrast a point</li> </ul>  | <p>However / ...</p>  |



## Chunking and pausing in presentations

When you give a presentation, it's important to pause enough to signal that you are introducing a new topic. Pause at the end of one section and before you start a new one. Then state the new topic and pause so the listener can get ready for new information.

### What will happen if I don't use chunking and pausing?

Speech without pauses and speech chunks can overwhelm the listener with 'too much information'. The listener may feel 'lost' in a 'forest' of words. Without chunking and pausing, it will be hard for listeners to follow your meaning and know where they are in your presentation.

Try reading the examples below. Which one do you think a listener would find easier to understand?

#### Example 1

*Does it really matter whether people speak with an accent as long as they can be easily understood many people now believe that in an increasingly globalised world we should accept variations in pronunciation that is accent however there's no point is speaking with an accent if people can't understand you is there?*

#### Example 2

*Does it really matter /  
whether people speak with an accent /  
as long as they can be easily understood?//  
Many people now believe /  
that in an increasingly globalised world /  
we should accept variations in pronunciation /  
that is / accent //  
However / there's no point is speaking with an accent /  
if people can't understand you / is there?//*



**You are going to listen to the man above making a speech.**

**Who is he?**

**Where is he from? What is his first language?**

# Chunking and pausing

## Kofi Annan Listening Worksheet

**Speech sample** BBC Learning English, website  
Talk about English, Better speaking, Episode 3 – Kofi Annan  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/webcast/tae\\_betterspeaking\\_archive.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/webcast/tae_betterspeaking_archive.shtml)

BBC presenter, Callum Robertson, and language teacher, Richard Hallows, listen to a clip from the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. They talk about what makes Kofi Annan an effective speaker of English and ways you can practise and improve your English pronunciation.

Callum Robertson [1:28 mins]: *Kofi Annan is from Ghana in West Africa, and ... uses English as an international language, in a highly effective way. In this excerpt from a speech on globalization, he's asking his listeners to make sure that the process of economic globalization helps everybody in the world, the poor as well as the rich.*

### Task 1 Pronunciation and communication strategies

Listen to Kofi Annan speaking. Do you think he is an effective speaker of English? Comment on the features below.

- intelligibility: easy to understand, speaks clearly (example)
- speed: \_\_\_\_\_
- pausing: \_\_\_\_\_
- vocabulary: \_\_\_\_\_
- stress or emphasis: \_\_\_\_\_
- overall impression: \_\_\_\_\_

### Task 2 Chunking and pausing

Listen and read the transcript below [1:48].  
Mark the pauses with a slash (/) (// for longer pauses).

*It is a much tougher sell out there in a world where half of our fellow human beings struggle to survive on less than two dollars a day. Try to imagine what globalisation can possibly mean to half of humanity that has never made or received a phone call. The simple fact of the matter is this. If we cannot make globalisation work for all in the end it will work for none.*

## Kofi Annan Listening Activity Answers

### Task 1

intelligibility:	easy to understand, speaks clearly. Some sounds are 'nonstandard'.  Eg. /z/ in 'less' [1:57] and /s/ in 'has' [2:08] but this does not interfere with intelligibility.
speed:	slower than for a conversation, very deliberate
pausing:	uses definite pauses
vocabulary:	varied, mixes words like 'humanity', 'fellow human beings', + use of 'a much tougher sell'
stress or emphasis:	stresses words to emphasise and contrast ideas 'all' and 'none'
overall impression:	has a strong opinion about the topic, wants to get his ideas across clearly & effectively

### Task 2

It is a much tougher sell / out there / in a world where half / of our fellow human beings / struggle to survive on less than two dollars a day. // Try to imagine / what globalisation can possibly mean / to half of humanity / that has never made or received a phone call. // The simple fact of the matter is this. // If we cannot make globalisation work for all / in the end / it will work for none. //

Stimulus question: *Kofi Annan pronounces some sounds a little differently from an Australian, American or British speaker. Does this matter? What about you?*

Kofi Annan pronounces /s/ instead of /z/ and vice versa – Eg. 'has', 'less'. This doesn't matter here because we understand what he's saying and these aren't important content words. It might matter in some other situations where the difference in sounds is important for vocabulary Eg. 'peas' vs 'peace', 'rice' vs 'rise' 'loose' vs 'lose'. 'advice' vs 'advise'.

Interestingly, Richard, a native English speaker, also pronounces 'none' and 'one' differently from an Australian or American speaker. However these are only a couple of words and we understand him perfectly.

**Kevin Rudd's apology speech**

Listen to it on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3TZOGpG6cM>

I move that today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations — this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

...To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

## Word and Focus Stress Practice

Read the following item aloud then underline words that you think should have focus stress. Then mark the word stress for those words you have underlined.

Primary stress should be marked before the stressed syllable above the line and secondary stress below the line.

E.g. pro,nunci'ation.

### **Australia and the Global Financial Crisis**

A year ago, Australians were preparing themselves for a long period of recession. Many companies began belt-tightening in the expectation of poor consumer demand, while individuals also started to reduce their debt in case they were to lose their job. Well, some companies did suffer, and unemployment did rise, but not nearly as much as expected. In fact, technically, Australia has not been in recession and consumer confidence seems to be rising.

So, why has Australia escaped the worst of the global recession? There are several possible reasons. One is that the Federal Government almost immediately began to introduce stimulus packages by giving handouts and by providing for a range of infrastructure projects. These measures have increased retail sales and stimulated sections of the construction industry. Moreover, China's economy has continued to grow, so sales of resources to China have not fallen as much as expected. Other reasons are that the Australian economy was in surplus before the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), our banks are well-regulated and the government agreed to guarantee bank deposits for the short-term. Economists are reasonably optimistic that Australia will weather the crisis better than most countries.

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