

The Level of Stress

There are three types of stress; however, various types of stress can be distinguished when the prominence of the syllable resulted from the pitch movement or tone. These types are:

- 1- **Tonic strong stress** (primary stress): is represented in transcription with high mark before the syllable not on the letter.
- 2- **Non-tonic stress** (secondary stress): is represented in transcription with low mark.
- 3- **Unstressed syllable** (doesn't have any permanency comparatively with other two types). It is regarded as being the absence of any recognizable amount of prominence.

Penultimate: means the placement of stress. In words which have more than two syllables, the one which is before the last is called (**penultimate**). It is the last syllable but one in multi-syllable word, e.g.:

Photographic /ˌfəʊtə 'græ fɪk/
 ↓
penultimate

The Placement of Stress within the Word

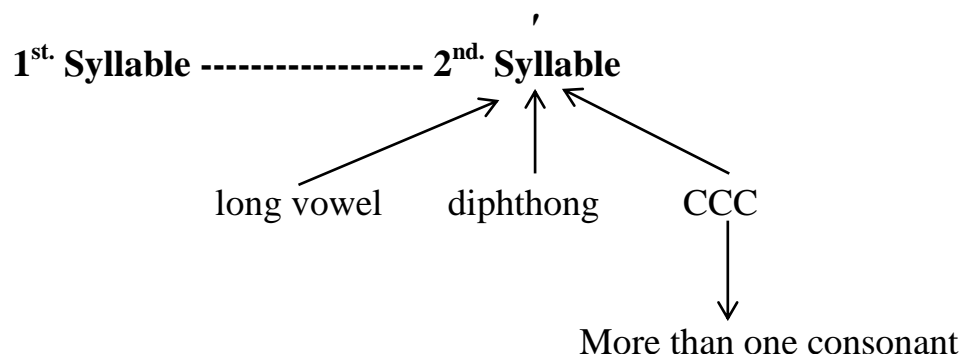
In some languages, the position of stress is known according to the type of language. In English language, stress does not have a fixed position. It might fall in the first, second, third or fourth syllable. There have been some attempts to write some rules about the position of stress in English language.

These rules are thought to be useful for the learners of English language. One of these theories which had designed such rules is the theory of **Generative Phonology**. The rules are based on four types of criteria:

- 1- The morphological structure of the word, whether the word is simple (has one root), complex (root + affixes) or compound (root + root + root).
- 2- The number of the syllables of the word (does the word has one or more than one syllables?).
- 3- The grammatical category of the word (part of speech, i.e. n., v., adj., adv., pronoun, etc...)
- 4- The phonological structure of the syllable (does the syllable have short vowel, long vowel or diphthong?).

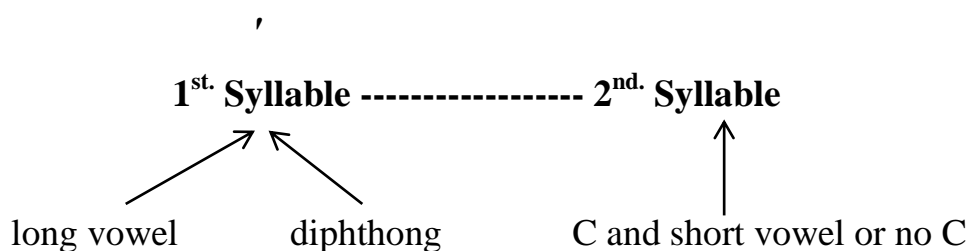
Rules of Stress in Two Syllable Words

- 1- **VERBS:** either the first or the second syllable will be stressed (**not both**), the basic rule is that if the second syllable of the verb is a strong syllable, then the second syllable is stressed, e.g.



Apply /əpl 'ai/, **arrive** /ər 'aiv/

If the final syllable is weak, then, the first syllable will be stressed, e.g.



open /'əʊpən/, **equal** /'i:kwəl/

Exception: The final syllable is unstressed if it contains /əʊ /:

follow /'fɒləʊ/, **borrow** /'bɒrəʊ/.

According to the rules, the word “**permit**” /pə: 'mit/, the stress should be on the first syllable but here the stress is on the second because this word contains two parts (per) and (mit), it has affixes, therefore, it is exception. The rules are on simple words only that have no affixes.

2- ADJECTIVES:

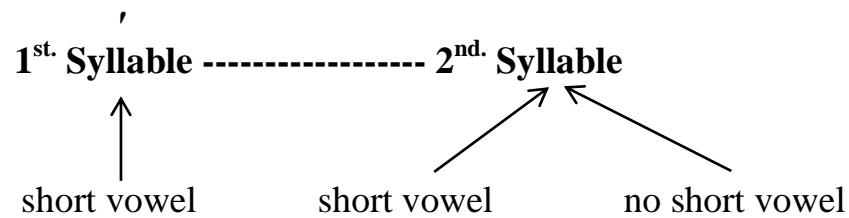
Simple two syllable adjectives follow the same rules, e.g. the word:

Divine /di 'vain/. It is a simple two syllable adjective, the second syllable contains diphthong so the second syllable is stressed. Another example is: **Alive** /ə 'laiv/.

3- NOUNS:

Nouns require different rules:

If the second syllable contains a short vowel, the stress will be on the first syllable. Otherwise, the stress will be on the second syllable, i.e.



e.g. **product** /'prɒdʌkt/, **money** /mʌni/, **design** /di'zain/, **balloon** /bəlu:n/. Other two syllable simple words such as adverbs and prepositions follow the same rules.