

Stress in Complex Words

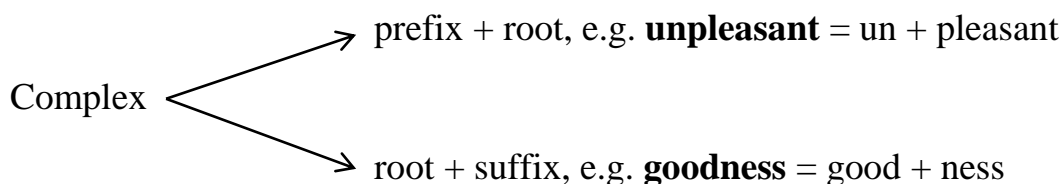
Complex Words:

In the previous section, simple word stress was explained with many rules and with different parts of speech. Simple word means word which is composed of only one grammatical unit (root or stem) while complex words are composed of two or more than two grammatical units, e.g. **carefully**, **carelessness**, this kind of words are called **polysyllabic words**. Some of English words are derived from Greek language as the words “**catalogue**, **analogue**, **dialogue** and **monologue**” in which the prefixes “cata--”, “ana--”, “dia--”, and “mono--” cannot be considered as separate grammatical units of English.

Complex words are of two major types:

- 1- Words made from a basic word form (stem) with addition of an affix.
- 2- Compound words, which are made of two or more independent English words.

Complex word consists of affix + root, it can be: prefix + root OR root + suffix, i.e



Compound —————> root + root, e.g. **armchair** = arm + chair

Affixes might influence the placement of the stress in three basic ways:

- 1- The affix itself receives the primary stress, e.g.: **circle** /'sə:kɪ/, **semicircle** /'semisə:kɪ/.
- 2- The word (root) is stressed just as if the affix is not there, that means the affix has zero effect, e.g.: **pleasant** /'pleznt/ —> **unpleasant** /ʌn'pleznt/.
- 3- The stress remains on the stem (root) not on the affix but it is shifted to a different syllable, e.g.: **magnet** /'mægnət/ —> **magnetic** /mæg'netik/, in this case, the stress changes its place within the root itself.

Suffixes carry the primary stress if the root consists of more than one syllable. There will be a secondary stress on one of the syllable of the root and if it is necessary moved to an earlier syllable, e.g.: **Japan** —> /dʒə'pæn/ **Japanese** /dʒæpə'ni:z/.

Suffixes that carry the primary stress:

- ee
- eer
- ese
- ette
- esque

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Suffixes that do NOT affect stress placement:

- able
- age
- al
- en
- full
- ing
- like
- less
- ly
- ment
- ness
- ous
- fy
- wise
- y

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- ish ---- (in the case of adjectives does not affect stress placement: **devil** /devɪ/, **devilish** /devɪʃ/ while verbs with stems of more than one syllable immediately preceding 'ish' as in the verb **replenish** /rɪplenɪʃ/ and **demolish** /dɪmɒlɪʃ/.

Suffixes that influence stress in the stem:

- eous
- graphy
- ial
- ic
- ion
- ious
- ty
- ipe

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prefixes

The stress in word with prefixes is governed by the same rules as those for polysyllabic words without prefixes.