

Stress matters: Which word?

Level: All
Target age: Adults and teenagers
Time needed: 30–45 minutes
Summary: This lesson focuses on word stress.

Exercise 1

- On the board, write up the following two sentences and play them from the recording.
I took part in the big protest on Saturday.
Why do you protest so much?
- Ask your students what they notice about the word stress of the underlined word in each sentence. Elicit that in the first sentence the stress is on the first syllable and in the second sentence it's on the second syllable.
- Explain to the students that you will play a recording of eight sentences. Students should listen and decide on the stress pattern for the underlined word in each sentence.
- Hand out the worksheet and play the recording.
- Put students in pairs and get them to check their answers together. Then ask them to discuss the question under the sentences.
- If necessary, play the recording again.
- Check the answers and see if any of the students noticed anything (i.e. the nouns are stressed on the first syllable and verbs on the second). There is no need to point this out if they haven't noticed; tell them the next exercise will help.

Audioscript:

- I'm sorry, but I refuse to listen to you any more.*
- Wow! What a lovely present.*
- If you bring it back, we'll give you a full refund.*
- Can you record my unhappiness with the decision?*
- It hasn't rained for months and everything is as dry as a desert.*
- I don't understand what it is you object to.*
- All our produce is fresh.*
- We import a lot of our fruit from Spain.*

Key:

1. b; 2. a; 3. a; 4. b; 5. a; 6. b; 7. a; 8. b

Exercise 2

- Tell the students to look back at the sentences from Exercise 1 and, working with their partner, try to complete the chart in Exercise 2.
- Monitor and help if necessary.

- Check the answers with the class. This time, someone should have noticed that the nouns are all stressed on first syllable and the verbs on the second. Go over this with the students as it gives them a pattern, although there are some nouns/verbs where the stress doesn't move, i.e. *promise, reply, visit*.

Key:

noun	verb
present	refuse
refund	record
desert	object
produce	import

Exercise 3

- On the board, write up the following sentence:
All our refuse is collected on Mondays.
- Ask a student to read it out.
- Make sure they are stressing the underlined word correctly, i.e. ● ● .
- Drill the sentence with the class and then with a few individual students.
- Explain that they're going to look at the sentences in Exercise 3. You want them to sit with a partner and take turns reading the sentences to each other, concentrating on the stress of the underlined words in each sentence.
- Get the students to take turns reading the sentences to their partner.
- Monitor and help where necessary.
- Finally, play the recording and get a few students to repeat each sentence so that you can hear that they are getting the word stress right.

Audioscript:

- All our refuse is collected on Mondays.*
- We're going to present the certificates now.*
- I'm sorry, but I can't refund your money.*
- Amazing! He broke the world record by almost ten seconds.*
- I just hope my luck doesn't suddenly desert me.*
- The boat hit an underwater object and sank.*
- We produce a lot of good quality clothes.*
- Last month imports increased by 5%.*

Pronunciation activities: Part 11

by Adrian Tennant

Stress matters: Which word?

Worksheet

Exercise 1



Listen to the sentences and choose the correct stress for the underlined word.

- | | | |
|--|--------|--------|
| 1. I'm sorry, but I <u>refuse</u> to listen to you any more. | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 2. Wow! What a lovely <u>present</u> . | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 3. If you bring it back, we'll give you a full <u>refund</u> . | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 4. Can you <u>record</u> my unhappiness with the decision? | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 5. It hasn't rained for months and everything is as dry as a <u>desert</u> . | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 6. I don't understand what it is you <u>object</u> to. | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 7. All our <u>produce</u> is fresh. | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |
| 8. We <u>import</u> a lot of our fruit from Spain. | a) ● ● | b) ● ● |

Look at the sentences again. Do you notice anything?

Exercise 2

Look at the sentences from Exercise 1 again and put the underlined words in the correct column.

noun	verb

Now look again. Do you notice anything about the word stress?

Exercise 3

Look at these sentences. Now say each sentence out loud.

- All our refuse is collected on Mondays.
- We're going to present the certificates now.
- I'm sorry, but I can't refund your money.
- Amazing! He broke the world record by almost ten seconds.
- I just hope my luck doesn't suddenly desert me.
- The boat hit an underwater object and sank.
- We produce a lot of good quality clothes.
- Last month imports increased by 5%.



Listen and check.