FyF

# Word Stress

This handout is to help you with the pronunciation of some words which crop up frequently when you are talking about Literature and Linguistics.
The words here were collected in the Advanced Oral Proficiency Class which focuses on topics from Literature and Lingistics; they are frequently mispronounced. The focus of this handout is not on individual sounds but on where the stress goes within a word.
Example:
The word “contents “ has two syllables “con“ and “tents “ so which gets the stress?

This handout has three parts:
(1) Test yourself
(2) The right answers
(3) Some tips

## (1) Test yourself

Mark clearly the stressed syllable:

abbreviate

abbreviation

also

although

analogy

analyse

analysis

analyst

appalling

appropriately

Arabic

association

autobiography

categorical
category
Catholic
compound (noun)
contents
decade
decadent
differentiate
display
epitome (careful, it has 4 syllables)
facet
Homer
indistinct
lexeme
metaphor
morpheme
morphology
mosaic
narrate
narrative
narrator
origin
original
parentage
philosophical
philosophy
phoneme
phonemic
proprietor
romance
simile (careful, it has 3 syllables)
variable
variety
vary

## (2) The right answers

I have capitalised the stressed syllable to make it really clear.
Please note that there are differences of opinion on how words are divided into syllables. Do we pronounce “morpheme“ as *mor – pheme*? Or do we pronounce it as *morph – eme*? Is is *a – bbrev – i – a –tion*? Or is it *ab – brev – i –a – tion*? See the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary for a discussion of this. No matter, the stressed syllable remains the same.

aBBREViate

abbreviAtion

ALso

alTHOUGH

anALogy

ANalyse

aNALysis

ANalyst

aPPALLing

aPPROPriately

ARabic

associAtion

autobiOGraphy

cateGORical

CATegory

CATHolic

COMpound (noun)

CONtents

DECade

DECadent

diffeRENtiate

disPLAY

e-PIT-o-me (careful, it has 4 syllables)

FACet

HOMer

IndisTINCT

LEXeme

METaphor

MORpheme
morPHOLogy
moSAIC
naRRATE
NARRative
naRRATor
ORigin
oRIGinal
PARentage
philoSOPHical
phiLOSophy
PHONeme
phoNEMic
proPRIetor
roMANCE
SIMile (careful, it has 3 syllables)
VARiable
vaRIety
VARy

## (3) Tips

If there are any of these you had problems with you can

(1) check the pronunciation in the Cobuild

(2) mark the stressed syllable with a highlighting pen

(3) say it out loud several times

(4) convince yourself it is right (e.g. if you have been saying "~~caTEGory~~" or "~~anaLYSis~~" all your life, it can be quite hard to convince yourself that "CATegory" and "aNALysis" is correct English.)

(5) put the word with the correct syllable stress in a sentence that makes sense to you and use it

These tips may look obvious or childish, but they are useful.The point is that working through this list once will not get the correct pronunciation into your memory and onto your tongue if you have been mispronouncing it for years. There has to be some effort made, and not just once.

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