Date: Nov., 11-15
Class: Classes 1, 2 & 3, Grade 2011
Subject: English Pronunciation for Communication

Purpose:
The students will learn stressed words & unstressed words in a sentence in English.

Objectives: Students will be able to:
1. Define - in their own words a definition for stressed words & unstressed words in a sentence. It is a revision and therefore, easy for most of the students;
2. Compare – based on the understanding of the basic concept, compare stressed and unstressed syllables in words and sentences;
3. Practice – imitate the stress patterns and do practice.

Resources/Materials:
2. Handouts: illustration of stress patterns and rhythmic pattern;
3. Recordings of native speakers

Activities and Procedures:
1. Warming-up: Asking the class to read the following phrases in falling tone and rising tone, pay attention to the stressed words & unstressed words in a sentence.
   
   tap pet sit myth tape Pete site my arm
   warm her first care here there fire
   Do you think reading English is like singing a song?

2. Display examples by playing the recording of the native speakers showing the typical pronunciation in English.

3. Have the students notice the definition of syllables, rhythm and stress in focus.
   ● Syllables: A unit of spoken language consisting of a single uninterrupted sound formed by a vowel, diphthong, or syllabic consonant alone, or by any of these sounds preceded, followed, or surrounded by one or more consonants.
   ● Rhythm: The pattern or flow of sound created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables in accentual verse or of long and short syllables in quantitative verse.
   ● Stress: The relative force of sound or emphasis given a syllable or word in accordance with a metrical pattern.

4. Have the students to read the following words by oneself and then in pairs, paying attention each word’s pronunciation in different syllable.
Pair work:
A: time type home new huge hot pet met let
B: term nursery or party cure pure more fire

5. Have the students listen to the conversations recorded by native speakers of English and try to get the sounds in focus correct in their pronunciation.

6. Have the students practice the guided conversation. Ask them to pay special attention to the rhythm.
   Practice:
   come here look out what for
   no more speak up
   send him away give him a book
   what is the time sing us a song
   I think it will be fine. I wanted you to know.
   I think you are a good teacher.

7. Have the students practice the guided conversation. Ask them to pay special attention to the stress.
   Practice:
   An elephant is an animal.
   Her skirt is blue and white.
   John is nine.
   Mary loves her dolls.
   He speaks English slowly and carefully.
   Dear me!

8. Comment on the students’ performance by highlighting the achievement of the students and the efforts they need for the improvement.

9. Give advice to the students.
   ● The sentence with four rhythm groups(four stressed syllables )
     eg. They said they had to go at once.
   ● The sentence with three rhythm groups(three stressed syllables )
     eg. I think he did it carefully.
   ● The sentence with two rhythm groups(two stressed syllables )
     eg. Go there. I want to go
   ● The sentence with one rhythm group(one stressed syllable )
     eg. It’s fine. I am busy.

10. Ask the students to do more practice after class and get ready for presentation during the next session.

11. Summary of the English Back Vowels: The English back vowels have the following features in common:
   ● In a sentence such words are stressed as noun, numeral, adjective, notional verb, adverb, pronoun, interjection; on the other side, such words are not stressed in a sentence as article, pronoun, conjunction and preposition.
   ● The rhythm of a sentence depends on the numbers of stressed syllables in the sentence.
   ● There are four kinds of syllables: open syllables, closed syllables, -r syllables
and –re syllables.


Notes for Teachers

Stressed Words & Unstressed Words in a Sentence

In this unit we will learn how to pronounce stressed and unstressed syllables together in sentences.

We have made some general observations regarding the location of stress in isolated words. But since speech is made up of words strung together, we must also look at these words in groups, in phrases, or in sentences in order to observe what happens to the stress pattern. Sentence stress refers to the word or words in sentence that receive a strong accent. In most sentences you will find a series of both stressed and unstressed words.

In a sentence, English speakers joint stressed and unstressed syllables together smoothly. Stressed syllables are long, have a pitch change and have full vowel sounds while unstressed syllables are short and often have a reduced vowel sound. A reduced vowel sound is a short, unclear vowel sound. The short vowel sound in unstressed syllable is very often the sound /a/, which is the most common of all sounds in English.

Now, say the following words:
leader
lecture
marker

These words all contain the schwa /a/ in the second syllable. Try to pronounce it as a relaxed and easy sound. And since it is in the weak syllable, /a/ is much shorter than the vowel in the stressed syllable.

Any English vowel letter can be pronounced with the schwa /a/:
allow
firemen
possible
command
support

What to stress in a sentence?

In an English utterance, stressed words give information to the listener and unstressed words join the information words together. Correct pronunciation of stressed and unstressed words is thus extremely important for effective communication in English.

Information words and function words
Information words are usually nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They give information about who, what, when, where, why, and how. They express the main idea or content of the phrase or sentence. They carry the message and therefore usually stressed. Unstressed words are usually function words like articles, pronouns, possessives, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, and conjunctions. These words connect the information words to form grammatical sentences.

If you stress all the words in an utterance, you may sound unpleasant or even cause misunderstanding because:

1. You are giving too much information, and
2. English speakers usually stress all words only when they are impatient or angry.