



Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Dato' Razali Ismail

# The English Sound System

A 3-hour course for PPISMP Sem 1 Language Development

Teacher's Manual

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## Introduction

This is a 3-4 hour session for students in PPISMP Semester 1 covering the following topics:

English Sound System: Differentiate and articulate English sounds

- vowels / diphthongs
- Consonants
- Stress
- Intonation

Read for Pronunciation

- The Phonemic chart/symbols
- Phonemic spelt words/sentences
- Stressed and unstressed syllables
- Rising and falling intonation.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the phonemic chart and symbols
- Understand and use rules for word stress
- Develop a clear understanding of sentence stress and intonation
- Learn the necessary skills to distinguish and describe stress and intonation.

## Materials

PowerPoint presentation

Notebooks and writing materials

Phonemic chart

## Procedures

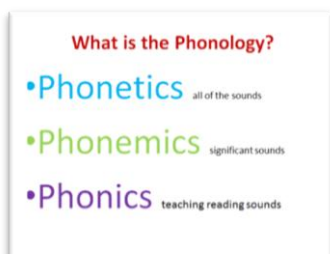
Note: PowerPoint thumbnails are displayed throughout this manual.



The English Sound System is complicated for a number of reasons. One is that English is in fact a “Creole”, a language that has developed from several other languages. In this case, we find many words from England’s nearest neighbours with French, Latin and Greek words being especially common.

As a result, only some English words are phonetic, with each symbol representing a single sound.

## Phonology



**Phonology** is a word that comes from Greek, and means the study of (logos) sound (phono).

**Phonetics** is the writing of sounds, and includes all of the sounds you can hear in a language whether they are significant or not. Phonetic symbols are usually written in square brackets [ ].

**Phonemics** is about the significant sounds in a language, and they are usually written between slash brackets / /.

*For example*, there are a number of different /p/ sounds in English. There is the [p<sup>h</sup>] sound that is generally heard at the beginning of a word along with a small aspiration of air. You can test this by holding a piece of paper in front of your lips when you say words like ‘pit’. But there is also the [p̚] sound that generally occurs at the end of a word, where the sound is not really released at all. You can hear this sound in words like ‘stop’.

➤ ***Can you think of any sounds like this in Bahasa Malaysia?***

**Phonics** applies the phonemes of the language to learning to read. So children are taught to decode the written words by sounding them out letter by letter. Of course, with English this only works with some words. With BM it should be possible with all words.

## Spelling



Spelling is about writing words correctly. This is sometimes a question of using reverse phonics and writing down the sounds you hear. However, with many words other strategies are needed. Some of the problems learners of English have are:

There are a number of different **homonyms**. That is words that have the same (homo) names (nym) whether it is

- the same sound but different spellings (and meanings), or
- the same spellings but different sounds (and meanings).

**Homophones** – words that sound (phone) the same (homo) but have different spellings and different meanings such as ‘there’ and ‘their’.

**Homographs** – words that are written (graph) the same (homo) but have different sounds and meanings such as ‘read’ and ‘read.’

So what are the other ‘-nyms’?

**Synonyms** are two words with similar meanings.

**Antonyms** have opposite meanings.

And a **heteronym** is a word with two different (hetero) pronunciations and meanings. They are homographs which are not homophones.

➤ ***With your partner, write down some homophones and some homographs.***

## How to make sounds



Phonology describes how to use all of your mouth parts to create particular sounds. Studying this can help to correct inaccurate pronunciation.



When describing how a particular sound is made, all of these parts are taken into account.

➤ ***Are you aware of all of them?***

## Vowel Sounds

Simple Vowels			
i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:
sheep	ship	hook	shoot
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:
left	teacher	her	door
æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ
hat	cut	far	can

There are 12 simple vowel sounds in English – bear in mind that there are only 5 letters which act as vowels.

The position on the chart of each symbol indicates how the mouth works to make that sound. For the sounds in the top row your mouth is more closed, and more open for the bottom row. The sounds on the left are made nearer to the front of the mouth, and on the right towards the back of the mouth. On the top row the sounds go from spread lips on the left to rounded lips on the right.

Realising this can help a person to correct their pronunciation when it is pointed out to them what they are saying and what they should be saying.

➤ ***Which of these sounds are found in BM and which are not?***

## Diphthongs

Diphthongs		
<b>ɪə</b> here	<b>eɪ</b> wait	
<b>ʊə</b> tourist	<b>ɔɪ</b> coin	<b>oʊ</b> though
<b>eə</b> hair	<b>aɪ</b> like	<b>aʊ</b> mouth

These eight vowel sounds are often tricky for BM learners of English. Each one is a combination of two other vowel sounds rolled together to make one sound. It is common for BM speakers to not give them enough length.

➤ **Can you accurately pronounce each of these?**

## Consonants

Consonants									
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g		
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ		
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j		

Learning the consonants is generally much easier than the vowels, although there are a few that are different from BM. As teachers in the future you need to be able to help your young students master these accurately.

The chart is arranged according to the 'point of articulation' – whereabouts in the mouth the sound is created.

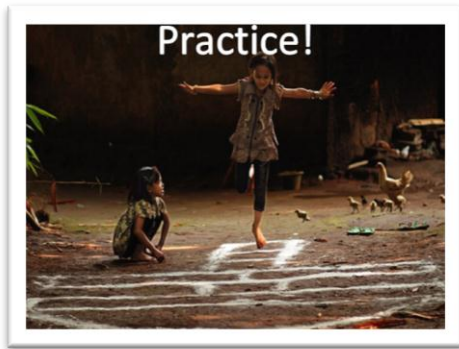
There are several types of consonants:

- 'stops' or 'plosives' – where the air is stopped completely and then released suddenly /p, b, t, d, k, g/
- 'fricatives' – where the air is allowed to pass through slowly, causing friction /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/
- 'affricates' – which are essentially a stop/plosive and then a fricative. /tʃ, dʒ/
- 'nasals' - where the sound resonates in the nose /m, n, ŋ/
- various names used for /l, r/, /w/ and /j/.

Some of them are **voiced** and some of them are **unvoiced / voiceless**.

➤ **Which ones are likely to be a problem for BM learners of English?**

## Practice



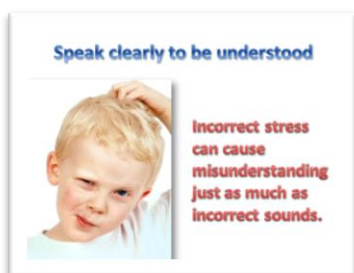
➤ ***We are going to try reading and writing some words in Phonemic script.***



## Word Stress



Word stress can be very tricky.



But it is very important. Incorrect stress can actually cause just as much misunderstanding as incorrect sounds.



How does a stressed syllable sound different from an unstressed syllable?

Can you tell the difference?

A stressed syllable is spoken:

- Longer
- Louder
- Higher



What does an unstressed syllable sound like?

The vowel sound in many (but not all) unstressed syllables becomes a 'schwa' sound.

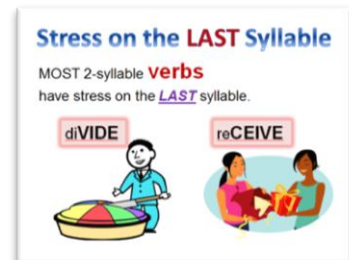
## Rules about Stress



It's important to know what part of speech a word is.

In 2-syllable words:

- nouns and adjectives usually have stress on the first syllable.
- verbs usually have stress on the last syllable.

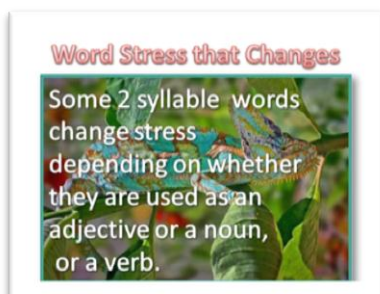


*With a partner, write down as many 2-syllable words as you can think of*

- *Put them into lists of word classes (noun / verb / adjective)*
- *Mark the stress on each one.*

➤ *Is the 'rule' true?*

## Heteronyms and Word Stress that Changes



Some 2 syllable words change stress depending on whether they are used as an adjective, or a noun, or a verb.



Here are some examples.

export	compound	frequent
address	object	conduct
combat	present	protest
insult	decrease	desert
perfect	transport	permit

- ***With a partner, choose 4 of these words.***
- ***Make 2 sentences for each demonstrating the two types of words.***
- ***Read your sentences aloud.***

## Rules for Longer Words



### 1. Certain syllables attract stress to sit next to them.

When you see the '-ic' syllable or the '-tion/-sion/-cion/-xion' syllable, put stress on the syllable just before it.



➤ *With a partner, practise saying each of these.*

➤ *Look for the pattern in these words, and practise saying them.*



Where is the stress in these words?



And what is the pattern?

What do these words have in common?



## 2. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Last Rule



Words that end in a consonant + y (except –ly) have stress on the 3<sup>rd</sup> last syllable.



➤ *With your partner, try saying each of these words with the correct stress.*

## 3. Another 3<sup>rd</sup> Last Rule



Words that end in ‘–ate’ and also ‘–ise/–ize’ also have a 3<sup>rd</sup> last rule.

**Some -ise / ize examples:**

accessorise	acclimatise	idolise	advertise
agonise	anesthetise	anodise	antagonise
apologise	brutalise	legalise	computerise
magnetise	globalise	mobilise	traumatise
organise	dramatise	emphasise	energise
epitomise	fantasise	fertilise	finalise

Some of the '-ate' words are Heteronyms. The stress keeps to the 3<sup>rd</sup> last rule, but something else changes.

**Some -ate examples**

generate	certificate	passionate
graduate	advocate	separate
appropriate	estimate	associate
concentrate	illustrate	participate
immediate	corporate	chocolate
negotiate	communicate	accommodate
advocate	anticipate	delegate


Some of these are heteronyms

➤ **With your partner, how many of the heteronyms can you find and explain?**

## Revision

**Revision:**

- 2 syllable nouns/adjectives: stress penultimate syllable (2<sup>nd</sup> last). (many exceptions)
- 2 syllable verbs: stress ultimate (last) syllable. (most)
- Stress before -ic
- Stress before -tion (-sion, -cion, -xion)
- Stress on ante-penultimate syllable (3<sup>rd</sup> last) for words that end in:
  1. consonant plus *y*, (not -ly)
  2. -ise (/i-ze),
  3. -ate



➤ **How many of the 'rules' can you remember?**

## Sentence Stress



Sentence stress can be difficult to learn because it's difficult to make rules.



But it's very important for people to understand. There is a lot of important information that is carried in the stress – and intonation (later) – alone.

## The meaning is in the stress



The real meaning of a sentence is often conveyed by the stress. This is especially true when we need to correct information, or check that the information is correct.



Here is an example – look at this very ugly cake!

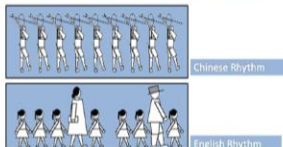
**One Sentence, Different Meanings**

- Are you going to eat **THAT**?  
*[Meaning: it's so big! / it's disgusting!]*
- Are you going to **EAT** that?  
*[Meaning: I'm not sure that it's really 'food!']*
- Are **YOU** going to eat that?  
*[Meaning: I thought you bought it for me!]*
- **ARE** you going to eat that?  
*[Meaning: you are sitting here just looking...]*

Here are four sentences with exactly the same words, but four different meanings because of the stress.

## Stress-Timed Language

**English is stress-timed rather than syllable-timed**



Chinese Rhythm

English Rhythm

The experts argue about whether English can really be called a “Stress-Timed” language, but there is no denying that generally it is true.

**Stress-Timed Language**



- **Dogs** chase cats
- The **dogs** chase cats
- The dogs chase **the cats**
- The dogs will **chase** the cats
- The dogs will be **chasing** the cats

In the first sentence there are only 3 words, and they are all important “content” words. They are each stressed, and each take the same amount of time to say.

However, as we add less important unstressed “function” words between them, the sentence still takes the same amount of time to say. The function words are spoken very quickly.

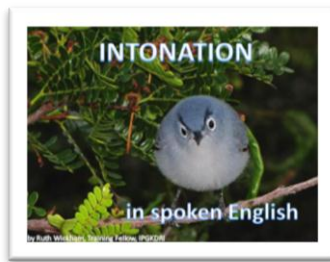




Because of this, English sentences can often be spoken to a beat – the words in between the main words are the rhythm.

➤ ***Can you read each of these sentences to a beat? (Click your fingers to keep time.)***

## Intonation in English



Intonation is closely tied to sentence stress.

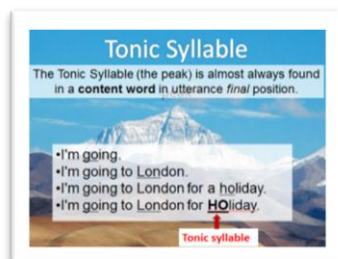


Some words are usually stressed; others generally do not carry sentence level stress.

The types of words that are normally stressed are called “Content” words.

“Function” words are generally not stressed.

## Tonic Syllable



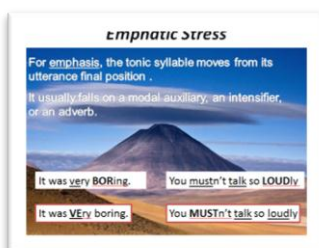
In a sentence the stress and intonation falls on the peak, called the Tonic Syllable. In normal speech, the tonic syllable is right at the end of the sentence.



Look at these sentences and identify the Tonic Syllable.

Remember is the final word has more than one syllable, only one will be stressed.

## Emphatic Stress



For emphasis, the tonic syllable moves from its utterance final position.

It usually falls on a modal auxiliary, an intensifier, or an adverb.

So if you say a sentence and stress the wrong words, people will think you are making an emphatic point.

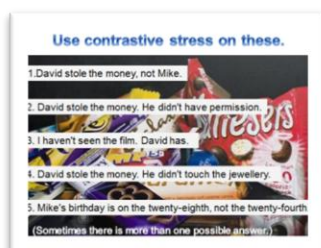


Now say each sentence with the emphatic stress as marked.

## Contrastive Stress



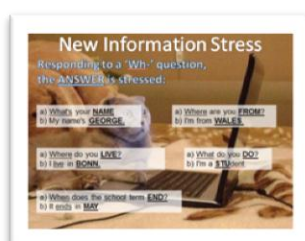
This is another kind of emphatic stress, used to make a contrast between certain words, and the stress can fall on content or function words.



Deduce from the text where the stress should fall.

Try saying each sentence.

## New Information Stress



Words are stressed to indicate that new, important information is being given

Try saying each of these with this kind of emphatic stress.

## Intonation



Intonation is about the changes in tone that go along with the sentence level stress.

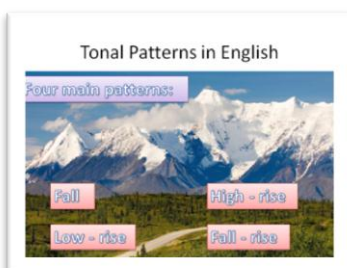
If you get it wrong, people will read your emotions wrong. If you *hear* it wrong you won't know what people are *really* saying.



Intonation varies according to who you are talking to.

Think about how you might say "hello" to a rocket scientist, your grandmother, or a baby.

## Tonal Patterns in English



Describing tonal patterns in English is incredibly complicated, but these four are the most common and easily recognised ones.



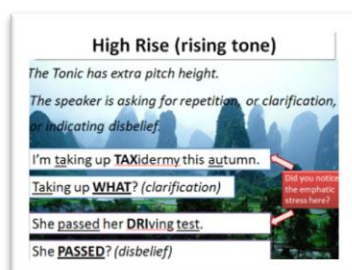
Here are a few examples of a "Fall" tone.

Try saying them.



The "Low-Rise" pattern starts low and rises.

Try copying these dialogues.



The "High Rise" pattern starts high and gets even higher.

The speaker is maybe excited and is asking for repetition or clarification.



The "Fall-Rise" tone is a little more confusing, often being more of a regional or personal variant.

Have you heard this?

## How to show stress and intonation



Here is a little Russian girl, and she speaks with that particular Eastern European 'lilt' – which you may or may not be familiar with, but it becomes obvious to native English speakers.

So how can I describe it to you in writing?

This style of description is chosen because it can all be done on a keyboard without drawing curvy lines.

Notice:

- // // brackets indicate I am showing stress and intonation.
- The underlined words are stressed, but that is not the tonic syllable.
- The TONic Syllable is in capital letters. UNderlining here indicates stronger (emphatic) stress.
- The symbols at the beginning \^ tell about the intonation that occurs on the tonic syllable at the end of that tonal unit (between the // // )
- There is an error ('came' instead of 'come') which is not corrected because that is how she spoke.

## Dictation

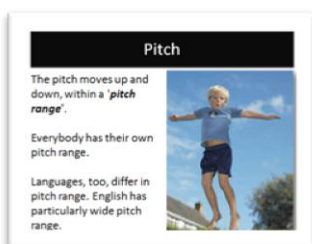


I am going to dictate part of a story.

To make it really easy, the words are actually already written for you.

See in you can mark the stress and intonation on these sentences.

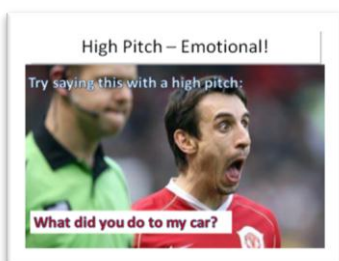
## Pitch



The pitch moves up and down, within a 'pitch range'.

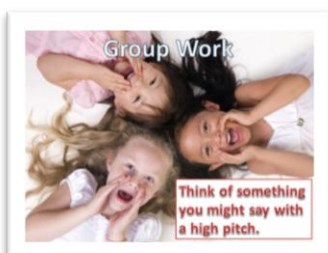
Everybody has their own pitch range.

Languages, too, differ in pitch range. English has particularly wide pitch range.



Sometimes people vary the pitch of their whole conversation.

High pitch indicates a high level of excitement.



What things might people say with a very high pitch?



When would very low pitch be used?



Remember – after all we have learned ...

There are no simple rules for intonation. It comes with practice. Keep listening and noticing.