



Some tips and rules

1. **-ed inflectional ending** (past simple regular, past participles and adjectives)
 - ending in voiced sound = we add /-d/
 - ending in voiceless sound = we add /-t/
 - ending in /-t / /-d/ = we add /-ɪd/

Some exceptions to this rule are: naked, wrecked, rugged, ragged, wicked.

Whether they function as verbs or adjectives, most English words ending in –ed suffix follow the same phonological rules as the past tense inflectional ending. However, look at these words ending in –ed: *blessed, beloved, learned, dogged, legged*. They can also function either as verbs or adjectives. But, do they have the same pronunciation in both cases?

He blessed us.	The blessed virgin
She's beloved by him	She's his beloved wife
We learned a lot	He's a very learned man
They dogged my steps	She has a dogged determination
We legged him out of there	He's sitting on a three-legged stool

2. **-s inflectional ending** (plurals, genitive case, 3rd person singular PrS)
 - ending in voiced sound = we add /-z/
 - ending in voiceless sound = we add /-s/
 - ending in sibilant = we add /-ɪz/

Exception to previous rule: house /**haus**/ - houses /**haʊzɪz**/



More tips and rules

1. **Sounds /ɜ:/ and /ə/** are of exactly the same quality. Consequently, the difference between them is strictly functional: while vowel 11 is **ABSOLUTELY ALWAYS** in a stressed position, the schwa **ABSOLUTELY NEVER** is!
2. Spelling “-ook” = always /-ʊk/
3. Spelling “NG” = /ŋg/ in the middle of a morpheme
/ŋ/ at the end of a morpheme

Exception to previous rule: comparatives and superlatives

4. /ŋ/ is never ever preceded by a long vowel
5. Letter “a” + 1 consonant = usually /æ/
Letter “a” + 1 consonant + letter “e” = usually /eɪ/
Letter “a” + double consonant = usually /æ/
(example: mat, mate, matter)
6. Letter “i” + 1 consonant = usually /ɪ/
Letter “i” + 1 consonant + letter “e” = usually /aɪ/
Letter “i” + double consonant = usually /ɪ/
(example: bit, bite, bitten)
7. Letter “i” alone is hardly ever said with vowel number 1 /i:/. Some exceptions to this rule are: machine, technique, boutique, unique, police.
8. Double consonant = never a diphthong
(some exceptions: roll, gross, bass)
9. Prefix “ex-” if unstressed - /ɪks/ when followed by voiceless sound (i.e: ex’port)
- /ɪgz/ when followed by voiced sound (i.e: ex’am)
if stressed = ALWAYS /eks-/ (i.e: ‘exit, ‘expert)
10. **Letter “b” is silent** when it’s final in the syllable and (1) preceded by a bilabial nasal (ex: bomb, combing, climber) ; OR (2) preceded by a vowel and followed by a plosive (ex: doubt, debt)
11. **Letter “t” is silent** when preceded by /s/ and followed by a lateral or nasal (ex: listen, castle)
12. **Letter “l” is silent** in the cluster “-ould” (ex: would, could, should); and when it is preceded by a long vowel AND followed by a consonant in the same syllable (ex: walk, palm)



13. The linking “r” /r/ NEVER links a semivowel with another sound, it’s only intervocalic
14. Suffix “-sion” - after a vowel letter = /ʒ^ən/
- after a consonant letter = /ʃ^{ən}/
15. Suffix “-ate” - stressed /-ert/ when it’s a verb (ex: to complicate)
- unstressed /-ɪt/ when it’s a noun (ex: the First Certificate)
16. Contracted auxiliaries (like *can’t*, *don’t*, *doesn’t*) are ABSOLUTELY ALWAYS strong
17. The word “use” - as a noun /ju:s/
- as a verb /ju:z/ past tense /ju:zd/
- for habits in the past “used to” /ju:stə/
18. /æ/ is ABSOLUTELY ALWAYS spelt with letter “a”
/ʌ/ is ABSOLUTELY NEVER spelt with letter “a”
19. Always make sure that you control high frequency words such as numbers, days of the week, months, everyday objects, structural words, etc



Complex word stress³

Complex words are of two major types:

- i) words made from a **stem** (basic word form) with the addition of an **affix** (either **prefixes** or **suffixes**), and
- ii) **compound words**, which are made of two (or occasionally more) independent English words.

i.a) Suffixes and stress

1. Suffixes carrying primary stress themselves

“-ade”		escap <u>ade</u>	
“-ee”		refuge <u>ee</u>	
“-eer”		mountaine <u>er</u>	
“-ese”		Portug <u>ese</u>	
“-ette”		cigaret <u>ette</u>	
“-esque”		picture <u>esque</u>	
“-ation”		examin <u>ation</u>	

2. Suffixes that do not affect stress placement

“-able”		comfort - comfortable	
“-age”		anchor - anchorage	
“-al”		refuse – refusal	
“-ard”		drunk - drunkard	
“-ance” “-ence”		appear – appearance exist – existence	
“-en”		wide – widen	
“-er” (adj. or n.)		big – bigger ; lead - leader	
“-ess”		lion - lioness	
“-est”		big – biggest	
“-ful” (adj.) ⁴		wonder – wonderful	
“-ing”		amaze – amazing	

³ Adapted from Cruttenden, A.(1997) “The Word”, Chapter 10 in *Gimson’s Pronunciation of English*. Great Britain, Arnold Int and Roach, P.(2000) “Complex Word Stress”, Chapter 11 in *English Phonetics and Phonology*. UK, CUP

⁴ “-ful” (noun) mouthful, spoonful



“-ish”(adj.) ⁵		devil – devilish	
“-ism”		alcohol – alcoholism	
“-ist”		separate - separatist	
“-ize”		circular – circularize	
“-like”		bird – birdlike	
“-less”		power – powerless	
“-ly” (adv.)		hurried – hurriedly	
“-ment” (noun) ⁶		punish – punishment	
“-ness”		yellow – yellowness	
“-ous”		poison – poisonous	
“-fy”		glory – glorify	
“-wise”		other – otherwise	
“-y” (adj. or noun)		fun – funny	
“-y” (or “-ie”) e.g. “-ary” “-ery” “-ory” “-cy” “-acy” “-ty”		aunt – auntie (infml.) custom - customary pot – pottery explanation – explanatory bankrupt - bankruptcy private – privacy difficult - difficulty	

3. Suffixes that influence stress in the stem

“-ate” (verb) ⁷		Operate	
“-eous”		advantage - advantageous	
“-graphy”		photo - photography	
“-al”		medicine - medicinal	
“-ic”		climate – climatic	
“-ion”		perfect – perfection	
“-ious”		injure – injurious	
“-ity”		tranquil – tranquillity	
“-ive”		reflex – reflexive	

⁵ This is the rule for adjectives, verbs with stem of more than one syllable always have the stress on the syllable immediately preceding “-ish”, e.g. replenish, demolish

⁶ “-ment” (verb) experiment, compliment || **Exceptions:** coment, lament, torment, ferment

⁷ “-ate” (adj.) separate, accurate, moderate



When the suffixes “-ance” (“-ence”), “-ant”, “-ary” are attached to single-syllables stems, the stress is almost always placed on the stem.

When the stem has more than two syllables, the stress is on one of the syllables in the stem. If the final syllable of the stem is strong, that syllable receives the stress. Otherwise the syllable before the last one receives the stress.

“-ance”		im <u>port</u> ance vs. in <u>her</u> itance	
“-ant”		im <u>port</u> ant vs. <u>cus</u> tomary	
“-ary”		cent <u>en</u> ary vs. <u>mil</u> itary	

i.b) Prefixes and stress

Prefixes applied to free stems do not generally affect stress placement.

“de-”		defoliate	
“dis-”		disagree	
“in-”		incorrect	
“il-”		illegal	
“im-”		immature	
“ir-”		irreverent	
“mal-”		malfunction	
“mis-”		misunderstood	
“pseudo-”		pseudoscientific	
“re-”		redesign	
“sub-”		substandard	
“un-”		unnecessary	

**ii) Compound words****1. Compounds functioning as nouns**

`guidebook, `shopping centre, `bull's eyes, `windsurf, `pickpocket, `shoplifting, `burn-out, `check-in

Exceptions: apple `pie, chocolate `biscuit, Christmas `pudding, London `Road (cf. `Oxford Street), acid `rain, junk `food, fifty p. `change, bay `window, Channel `ferry, kitchen `sink, morning `paper, office `party, trade `union

2. Compounds functioning as adjectives and verbs

a. adjectives: `seasick, `carefree, `sunlit

but sky-`blue, stone-`dead, tax-`free, stone-`deaf, easy-`going

b. verbs: `babysit, `headhunt, `sidetrack

but out`number, over`sleep, under`go

3. Pseudo-compounds

homo`phobic, `microwave, `telegram, `antithesis, `circumflex, ka`leidoscope, `prototype

Variation in the accentual patterns of words

ˈθɪrˌtiːn but ˈθɪrtiːn ˈpɛns

ˈWɛstˌmɪnstər but ˈWɛstmɪnstər ˈɒbiː

ˈfʊlˌɡrɒn but ˈfʊlɡrɒn ˈmæn

ˈɑːftərˌnuːn but ˈɑːftərnjuːn ˈtiː

Vowel # 1 – Prefixes, suffixes and endings

“de-”		Dehumanize	
“re-”		Remake	
“pre-“		pre-judge	
“-ee”		Employee	
“-ice”		caprice , police	
“-ine”		machine, rutine	
“-ique”		unique, antique, oblique	

Vowel # 2 or Schwa? - on non-final unaccented syllables

“-ity”		Quality	
“-itive”		Positive	
“-ily”		Happily	
“-ate”(adj. or n.) ⁸		fortunate, chocolate	

⁸ “-ate” (verb) evaluate, congratulate, separate



“-ible”		Possible	
“-em”		Problem	
“-ess”		Useless	
“-ace”		Palace	
“-age”		Manage	
/k,g,tʃ,dʒ/ + “-et”		Pocket	
“-let”; “-ret”		bracelet; claret	
“be-” ⁹		begin, between, become	
“de-”		deposit, deny, device	
“se-“		sedition, select	

Schwa – Endings

“-am” “-em” “-om” “-um”		madam problem custom vacum	
“-some”		handsome	
“-ture”		furniture, future, temperature	
“-us”		circus	

⁹ But believe, belong, behave