

Stress, Intonation and Fluency

English Skills for Academic Staff

1. Tongue Twisters

- ★ She sells seashells on the seashore.
- ★ How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?
- ★ If a clam can cram into a clean cream can, then a clean cream can can cram in a clam.
- ★ Betty Botter bought some butter, but she said the butter's bitter. If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter. But a bit of better butter will make my batter better.
- ★ I thought a thought. But the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought.

2. Stress, Intonation and Rhythm

A) Word Stress

photo - photographer - photography - photographic

(to) record Vs (a) record

(to) present Vs (a) present

How do you pronounce these?

hotel

event

command

circumstance

engineer

today

prepare

Europe

/ə/ = /eh/ for not stressed vowels

B) Intonation

You like this colour (. / ?)

- bored
- excited
- questioning (disbelief, curiosity, horrified)
- knowing (you know the person well)
- the other person tried to deny - you know better

C) Sentence Stress

Shows meaning and/or highlights important information

- I never said she stole my money. (default - what's important?)
- I never said she stole my money.
Meaning =
- I **never** said she stole my money.
Meaning =
- I never **said** she stole my money.
Meaning =
- I never said **she** stole my money.
Meaning =
- I never said she **stole** my money.
Meaning =
- I never said she stole **my** money.
Meaning =
- I never said she stole my **money**.
Meaning =

D) The Rhythm of English

The beat of English

da-DUM-da-DUM-da-da-DUM

I like to walk in the rain.

da-DUM-da-(da-DUM)-da-da-DUM-da

He plays the guitar in a rock band.

da-DUM-da-da-da-DUM-da-DUM

She walked along the sandy beach.

3. Playing with Sentence Stress, Tone and Rhythm

Practice saying these with your partner with the right sentence stress and intonation. Listeners: critique the speech. How did it make you feel?

- 1) So, how's the high school teaching project going?
(casual, friendly tone)
- 2) Can you give me an update on the teaching timetable?
(neutral tone)
- 3) Let's talk about payroll.
(serious, business-like tone)

- 4) What's the status of the classroom management guide?
(neutral tone)
- 5) Are we involving students in the democratic process of determining classroom rules?
(concerned, questioning tone)
- 6) What are your short and long term goals for yourself this year?
(encouraging, supportive tone)
- 7) What are your short and long term goals for your students this year?
(encouraging, supportive tone)
- 8) Are we monitoring progress on and completion of assignments?
(concerned, questioning tone)
- 9) How are we doing on accountability procedures?
(curious, inquisitive tone)
- 10) How are we doing on monitoring progress on completion of assignments?
(curious, inquisitive tone)
- 11) Is our daily schedule accommodating you?
(concerned, questioning tone)
- 12) How are we doing on student completion rates?
(curious, inquisitive tone)
- 13) What are some different questions, problems, or situations we can generate?
(curious, inquisitive tone)
- 14) How are we doing on the materials design for this project?
(curious, inquisitive tone)
- 15) Are we ready to finish the project?
(encouraging, supportive tone)