

A.C. Gimson:

Section 4 A practical course of E pronun- Accentuation and rhythm ciation

4.1 Accentuation of the word (IPE 9.01-9.05)

Notes:

(a) In polysyllabic English words, one syllable carries the main (primary) accent. The situation of the primary accent varies from word to word, e.g. *ɪnˈdʒɪ:*

on the last syllable: *ɪnˌbɔɪ* *behind, result, cigarette*

on the penultimate syllable: *ˌɪnˌdʒɪː* *answer, together,*
important

on the ante-penultimate syllable: *ˌjɛstəˈdeɪ, ˌɑːftəˈwɜːdɪz,*
critical, etc.

If easy intelligibility is to be achieved, it is extremely important to give words their correct accentual pattern and characteristic rhythm.

(b) When a syllable is accented, it is made more prominent than its neighbours by means of any or all of four factors: stress, pitch, quality, quantity. Of these, pitch prominence, associated with stress (loudness for the listener), is the most important.

(c) It is a crucial feature of English pronunciation that syllables which are unaccented tend to have weak and obscure qualities. Thus, /ə/ and syllabic /l, m, n/ occur typically only in unaccented syllables; /ɪ, ʊ/ occur frequently in both accented and unaccented syllables. All other vowels and diphthongs (hereafter referred to as 'strong vowels') may occur in syllables other than those carrying the primary accent, but will often have a secondary degree of accent associated with them.

(d) In the drill patterns which follow, the syllable carrying the primary accent will be shown as **ˈ**; unaccented syllables as **˙**; syllables with strong vowels and secondary accent as **ˑ**; syllables with strong vowels but with weak accent as **ː**.

(e) In phonetic transcriptions and in ordinary orthography, accents will be shown as follows:

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primary accent: '
secondary accent: ,
unaccented: no mark

4.2 **Accentual patterns: 2-syllable words**

4.2.1. *Patterns: . \, \ .*

A1 *Listen*

lɪ'lɪ 'lɪlɪ lɪ'lɪ lɪ'lɪ 'lɪlɪ

A2 *Identify* the accentual patterns given for /lɪlɪ/; check in Appendix p. 76.

A3 *Listen* to the words given; transcribe them, marking the accent; check in Appendix p. 76.
annoy armour sofa police marble below

A4 *Listen and repeat*

(. \) alone machine behind
(\ .) over under husband

4.2.2. *Patterns: . \, \ .*

Notes:

- (a) The patterns resemble those above, but the syllable not carrying the primary accent has a strong vowel.
- (b) When the syllable containing the strong vowel precedes \, a secondary accent may be associated with it (•); when the syllable containing the strong vowel follows \, there is no secondary accent (o).

A5 *Listen*

'laɪlɑː ,lɑː'lɑː ,lɑː'lɑː 'laɪlɑː

A6 *Listen and repeat*

(• \) unknown idea antique

A7 *Listen and repeat* (comparison . \ and • \)

contain canteen ado undo until untie

A8 *Listen and repeat*

(\ •) female programme window

A9 *Listen and repeat* (comparison ↘ . and ↘ ◦)
 never nephew pillar pillow hostel hostile

4.3 Accentual patterns: 3-syllable words

4.3.1 *Patterns:* ↘ . . , . ↘ .

A10 *Listen*
 'laxlələ lə'laxlə lə'lɪlɪ 'lɪlɪ

A11 *Identify* the accentual patterns of the nonsense items given;
 check in Appendix p. 76.

A12 *Listen* to the words given; transcribe them, marking the
 accent; check in Appendix p. 76.

'quality enormous container
 'solution 'luckily 'character

A13 *Listen and repeat*

(↘ . .) yesterday bachelor quantity
 (. ↘ .) important relation eleven

4.3.2 *Patterns:* . . ↘, ↘ . . , . ↘ . , . ↘ ◦

Note: When a syllable containing a strong vowel immediately
 follows ↘, there is no secondary accent; in other cases, a syllable
 containing a strong vowel (but not carrying the primary accent)
 has a secondary accent.

A14 *Listen*

ˌlaxlə'lax 'laxlə,lax ˌlax'laxlə lə'laxlax

A15 *Identify* the accentual patterns of the nonsense items given;
 check in Appendix p. 76.

A16 *Listen and repeat*

(. . ↘) understand cigarette [ˌsɪgə'reɪt] afternoon
 (↘ . .) appetite photograph telephone
 (. ↘ .) uncertain re-entry substandard
 (. ↘ ◦) tobacco tomato projectile

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4.4 **Distinctive accentual patterns: 2-syllable words**

Note: Certain 2-syllable words distinguish their noun/adjective form from their verb form by a difference of accentual pattern, the noun/adj. form having ˈ . (or ˈ ˌ ˌ) and the verb . ˈ .

4.4.1 *Distinction by stress/pitch alone:*

A17 *Listen and repeat.*

'import (n.) im'port (vb) in'sult (vb.) 'insult (n.)

4.4.2 *Distinction by stress/pitch + changes of quality:*

A18 *Listen*

<i>n./adj.</i>	<i>vb.</i>
'frequent	fre'quent
'object	ob'ject
'present	pre'sent
'rebel	re'bel
'conduct	con'duct

A19 *Identify the noun/adjective or verb forms of the words given; check in Appendix p. 76.*

(1) ˈpresent (2) ˌobject (3) ˈconduct (4) ˈrebel
(5) ˈpresent (6) ˈrebel (7) ˈconduct (8) ˈobject

A20 *Listen and repeat*

subject (vb.) 'present (adj.) record (n.)
convict (n.) conduct (vb.) perfect (adj.)
refuse (vb.) object (vb.) 'refuse (n.)

Note: Some 2-syllable words do not follow this general rule, or show signs of instability, e.g.:

comment has ˈ ˌ /'kɒment/ for both noun and verb

contact has ˈ ˌ /'kɒntækt/ for the noun, and ˈ ˌ or ˌ ˈ
/kɒn'tækt/ for the verb

dispute has . ˈ for both noun and verb, but increasingly ˈ ˌ
/'dispju:t/ is used for the noun.

4.5 **Distinctive accentual patterns: 3- or 4-syllable words**

Note: Some words of 3 or more syllables also show distinctive accentual patterns in their noun/adjective and verb forms:

- (a) with a shift of the primary accent and associated sound changes
- (b) with the primary accent constant, but with sound changes.

A21 Listen and repeat

	<i>n./adj.</i>	<i>vb.</i>
(a) alternate	/,ɔ:l'tɜ:nət	'ɔ:ltə,neɪt/
envelope	/'envə,ləʊp	ɪn'veləp/
attribute	/'ætrɪ,bjʊt	ə'trɪbjʊt/
(b) associate	/ə'səʊʃɪət	ə'səʊʃɪ,eri/
compliment	/'kɒmplɪmənt	'kɒmplɪ,ment/
separate	/'sepəreɪt	'sepə,reit/
prophesy	/'prɒfəsi	'prɒfɪ,səri/

4.6 Accentual patterns: 4-syllable words

A22 Identify the accentual patterns of the nonsense items given; check in Appendix p. 76.

A23 Listen and repeat

(. \ . .) remarkable impossible photography

A24 Listen and repeat

(. \ . .) unfortunate rhinoceros^{sərəs} subliminal

A25 Listen and repeat

(. . \ .) unimportant photographic circulation

A26 Listen and repeat

(. \ . .) acclimatize negotiate solidify

A27 Listen and repeat

(\ . . .) caterpillar criticism melancholy

A28 Listen and repeat

(\ . . .) educated helicopter prophesying⁽ⁿ⁾

A29 Listen and repeat

(\ . . .) capitalize counterattack

A30 Listen and repeat

(. . . \) superimpose aquamarine

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4.7 **Recapitulation: 2- to 4-syllable words**

A31 *Listen and repeat* (transcriptions with accentual patterns are given in Appendix p. 76).

enumerate thirteen constipated alone
invitation paragraph under automobile
Morocco sub-normal searchlight superintend

4.8 **Accentual patterns: 5- to 8-syllable words (a selection)**

A32 (5 syllables)

Listen and repeat

(↘) capitalism cannibalism
(. ↘ . . .) administrative catholicism
(. . . ↘ .) consideration apotheosis
(. . . ↘ . .) objectivity aristocracy
(. . . ↘ . .) incapacitate inexactitude
(. . . ↘ . .) counterproductive interdependence

A33 (6 syllables)

Listen and repeat

(. . . ↘ . .) inferiority impossibility
(. . . ↘ . .) variability meteorological
(. . . ↘ . .) ceremoniously indistinguishable
(. . . ↘ . .) onomatopoeic palatalization
(. . . ↘ . .) personification electrification

A34 (7, 8 syllables)

Listen and repeat

(. . . . ↘ . .) intelligibility
(. . . . ↘ . .) unilateralism
(. . . . ↘ . .) industrialization
(. . . . ↘ . .) internationalization

4.9 **Suffixation and accentuation**

Note: The word accentual pattern is determined by the type of certain suffixes. The following is a selection of common types of suffix which attract the primary accent of the base word, with frequent qualitative changes.

4.9.1 *Attracting the primary accent to the penultimate:*

- A35 (Suffix *-ial* /-iəl/)
Listen and repeat
 proverb proverbial | 'colony colonial
 tutor tutorial
- A36 (Suffix *-ian* /-iən/)
Listen and repeat
 civil civilian comedy comedian
 grammar grammarian Canada Canadian
- A37 (Suffix *-ic* /-ɪk/)
Listen and repeat
 atom atomic drama dramatic strategy strategic
- A38 (Suffix *-ion* /-(ə)n/)
Listen and repeat
 communicate communication operate operation
 supervise supervision execute execution

4.9.2 *Attracting the primary accent to the antepenultimate:*

- A39 (Suffix *-ity* /-əti/)
Listen and repeat
 captive captivity curious curiosity
 final finality inferior inferiority

4.10 Compound words (IPE 9.03)

Note: The accentual patterning of compounds is as significant as that of simple words. The most common type of compound accentuation has a primary accent on the first element.

4.10.1 *2-syllable compounds:*

(1) In a few words, the weaker element undergoes an obscuration of vowel quality giving a pattern ˘ ..

- A40 *Listen and repeat*
 (˘ .) postmān chairmān saucepān

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(2) More frequently, the vowel of the second element remains strong, giving a pattern \ . .

A41 *Listen and repeat*

(\ .) cardboard earthquake
windscreen teapot

(3) Other, less numerous 2-syllable compounds carry the primary accent on the second element, the first element having a secondary accent.

A42 *Listen and repeat*

(. \) downstairs full-grown
mince-pie first-class

4.10.2 *3-syllable compounds:*

Again, either the first or the second element may carry the primary accent.¹

A43 *Listen and repeat*

(\ . .) grasshopper grandfather newspaper

A44 *Listen and repeat*

(\ . .) buttonhole chambermaid honeymoon

A45 *Listen and repeat*

(. \ .) archbishop blackcurrant field-marshal

A46 *Listen and repeat*

(. . \) country-house gingerbeer second-hand

4.10.3 *4- or 5-syllable compounds:*

(1) *4-syllables*

A47 *Listen and repeat*

(\ . . .) 'booking-office 'season-ticket
(\ . . .) musical-box catherine-wheel
(. \ . .) despatch-rider machine-minder
(. . \ .) easy-going indiarubber
(. \ . .) vice-chancellor postgraduate

¹ When the second element of a compound is a polysyllable, it may carry a full secondary accent even though it immediately follows the primary accent.

(2) 5-syllables

A48 Listen and repeat

- (\) fire-extinguisher
 (\) cabinet-maker
 (. \ . . .) hot-water-bottle

A49 Listen and repeat (a selection of different compound patterns)

chatterbox shop-window free-wheel washstand
 power-station mass-production waiting-room

4.11 Compounds and noun phrases

Note: The accentual patterns of compounds must be distinguished from those of noun phrases (*adj. + n.* or *n. + n.*), which have typically a secondary accent + primary accent.

A50 Listen and repeat (comparison: noun phrase and compound)

<i>noun phrase</i>		<i>compound</i>
a black bird (. . \)		a blackbird (. \ o)
a light ship (. . \)		a lightship (. \ o)
a cross word (. . \)		a crossword (. \ o)
a grand father (. . \ .)		a grandfather (. \ . .)

Note: In place names, such words as *Road, Square* (e.g. *Euston Road*) carry a primary accent; *Street* is either unaccented with a strong vowel (e.g. *North Street*— \ o) or carries a secondary accent (e.g. *Oxford Street*— \ . o).

4.12 Variation of word accentual patterns (IPE 11.03)

Note: Words carrying more than one accent may exhibit a weakening of the primary accent when used attributively (i.e. they are affected by the larger accentual/rhythmic context).

A51 Listen and repeat

- thirteen (. \) thirteen pounds (. o \)
 afternoon (. . \) afternoon tea (. . . \)