



Stress on syllable preceding ending

-ative, -itive, -cient, -ciency, -eous, -ety, -ian, -ial, -ic, -ical, -ident, -inal, -ion, -ital, -itous, -itude, -ity, -ive, -ual, -ular, -uous, -wards /wədʒ/, e.g. *al'ternative*, 'positive, 'ancient, de'ficiency, ou'trageous, pro'priety, pe'destrian, super'ficial, melan'cholic, 'radical, 'accident, 'criminal, o'ccasion, con'genital, infe'licitous, 'multitude, incre'dulity, a'ttentive, per'petual, 'secular, con'spicious, 'outwards. Note that many of these lead to antepenultimate stressing.

Stress in English compounds

Incorrect stressing of compounds doesn't normally hinder intelligibility, yet this area is a very significant source of error – even for advanced non-native learners. To provide a complete guide is impossible since there are indeed many irregularities. But knowing a few simple guidelines can make compound stress very much easier for non-natives to learn. Even if you still have to use some guesswork, it allows you to get things right, perhaps, nine times out of ten.

Compounds in English are of two types: those which have their main stress on the *initial* element of the compound and those which have the main stress on the *final* element.

- **Initial Element Stress (IES)** with main stress on the first part of the compound, e.g. 'apple pip, 'office boy, 'Russian class.
- **Final Element Stress (FES)** with main stress on the last element of the compound, e.g. apple 'pie, office 'desk, Russian 'salad. Note that many books term this 'double stress' or 'equal stress'.

Stress guidelines for compounds

(1) Word shape

Compounds written as *one word* nearly always have IES, but those written as *two words*, or with a *hyphen*, can be of either stress type.

(2) The Manufactures Rule (FES)

The most useful guides in terms of allocating stress in compounds are the 'Manufactures Rule' and the 'Location Rule'.

The **Manufactures Rule** implies that if the compound includes a material used in its manufacture (e.g. an *apple pie* is a pie made of apples), then FES applies, e.g. apple 'pie, plum 'brandy, paper 'bag, cotton 'socks, diamond 'bracelet. Compare non-manufactured items, which instead take IES, e.g. 'apple-tree, 'paper clip, 'plum stone, 'cotton-reel, 'diamond cutter.

(3) Location Rule (FES)

The **Location Rule** describes the strong tendency for a compound to take FES if location is in some way involved.

(a) FES applies if the first element is the name of a country, region or town: e.g. *Turkish* de'light, *Russian* rou'lette, *Burmese* 'cat, *Scotch* 'mist, *Lancashire* 'hotpot, *Bermuda* 'shorts, *Brighton* 'rock, *London* 'pride.

(b) The vast majority of place-names, geographical features etc. have FES. This category includes:

- regions, towns, suburbs, districts, natural features, e.g. *East 'Anglia, New 'York, Castle 'Bromwich, Notting 'Hill, Silicon 'Valley, Land's 'End, Botany 'Bay.*
- bridges, tunnels, parks, public buildings and sports clubs, e.g. *Hyde 'Park, (the) Severn 'Bridge, Paddington 'Station, Carnegie 'Hall, Manchester U'nited.*
- all street names, except *street* itself, e.g. *Church 'Road, Trafalgar 'Square, Thorner 'Place, Churchill 'Way, Fifth 'Avenue.* Cf. *'Church Street, Tra'falgar Street, etc.*

(c) **Parts of a building** tend to have FES, e.g. *back 'door, bedroom 'window, garden 'seat, office 'chair.* **Exceptions:** compounds with *-room* are IES, e.g. *'living room, 'drawing room* (but *front 'room*).

(d) FES applies where **positioning** of any sort is involved, e.g. *left 'wing, Middle 'Ages, upper 'class, bottom 'line.* Time location also tends to FES, e.g. *morning 'star, afternoon 'tea, January 'sales, April 'showers, summer 'holiday.*

Activity ★

91

Think of more examples of the Location Rule. Can you think of any counter-examples not already mentioned?

Further useful guides related to the above

(1) The vast majority of **food items** have FES, e.g. *poached 'egg.* Note that these are often covered by either the 'Manufactures Rule' or the 'Location Rule', e.g. *Worcester 'sauce, Welsh 'rabbit, Christmas 'pudding, fish 'soup.* **Exceptions:** some items take IES because they can also be regarded as part of the living plant or animal, e.g. *'chicken liver, 'orange juice, 'vine leaves.* Other significant exceptions are: *-bread, -cake, -paste,* e.g. *'shortbread, 'Christmas cake, 'fish paste.*

(2) Names of **magazines, newspapers,** etc. have FES (many involve place or time and are covered by the 'Location Rule'), e.g. (the) *Daily 'Post, (the) Western 'Mail, (the) Straits 'Times, Vanity 'Fair, (the) New 'Statesman.*

Other stress patterns

(3) IES applies to compounds including the names of **academic subjects, skills,** etc, e.g. *'technical college, 'French teacher* (i.e. a person who teaches French).

(4) Nouns formed from **verb + particle** take IES, e.g. *'make-up, 'come-back, 'look-out, 'backdrop.* **Exceptions** are few, but note: *lie-'down, look-'round, set-'to.* These patterns have changed in the recent history of the language. See Section C5.

(5) Nouns ending in **-er** or **-ing + particle** take FES, e.g. *hanger-'on, passer-'by, washing-'up.*