

Syllable Stress and Reduced Sounds

Task 1: Syllable Stress Review

A key concept in phonetics is the idea of stress. All words have at least one syllable and in multisyllabic words, one of the syllables receives more emphasis than the others. This syllable has what we call “primary stress”. Look at the words below. For each one, write the number of syllables it has and mark the primary syllable in **bold**. The first is done for you.

Teacher	2	Monday	2	Contradict	3	Attractive	3
Repeat	2	Appear	2	Medicine	3	Introduce	3
Allow	2	Enemy	3	Ambulance	3	Recommended	4

Task 2: In your homework you learned that the wedge /ʌ/ is the schwa sound in stressed syllables. Read the transcriptions below and change the schwas /ə/ in stressed syllables to wedges.

I was chewing some bubble gum.	/aɪ wʌz tʃuːwɪŋ sʌm bʌbəl ɡʌm/
My cousin is my uncle's son.	/maɪ kʌzən ɪz maɪ ʌŋkəlz sʌn/
The schwa vowel occurs in unstressed syllables.	/ðʌ ʃwə vəwəl əkʌz ɪn ʌnstrest sɪləbəlz/

Task 3: Read the dialogue between Gus and Justine. Mark all the words with a wedge /ʌ/ sound in bold.

- **Gus:** Hi, Justine! How's my **fun**-loving **cousin**?
- **Justine:** My bus **got stuck** in the mud, and I lost some money. I should carry something for luck!
- **Gus:** Yes. Here's some other advice. Never walk **under** ladders. And run from black cats. They're nothing **but** trouble.
- **Justine:** Oh, **Gus**. You **must** be a **nut**! Do you really believe such mumbo jumbo?
- **Gus:** Don't make **fun**, **Justine**. **Customs** come from many **countries**. You **must** know some **others**!
- **Justine:** Well the number 13 is unlucky. And a blister on the tongue means someone is lying!
- **Gus:** Right! But you can have good luck, too. **Discover** a four-leaf **clover** or find **bubbles** in your **coffee cup** and you'll get a **sum** of money.
- **Justine:** Ok, **Gus**. Maybe I'll have some luck this month. Knock on wood!

Task 4: The sound /ɜ:/ occurs in stressed syllables and /ə/ in unstressed syllables. Read the words below. Mark the ones that are pronounced with /ɜ:/ in bold and underline words with /ə/. Do any words have both?

Turkey	Surplus	Weather	Thursday	Church
<u>Mirror</u>	Nature	Journey	Permanent	Flowerpot
<u>Silverware</u>	Curtain	Surfer	Dirty	Backward

Task 5: Transcribe the phrases and sentences below. Mark the primary stress in multisyllabic words.

Birds of a feather flock together.	
Actors perform better after rehearsing.	
The grammar teacher worked on verbs.	
The drivers were careful with the dangerous curve.	
The preacher gave a sermon in church.	

Task 6: Find all of the examples of “r-coloring” in the paragraph below. Mark words that have /ɜ:/ in **bold** and underline words with /ə/.

Pearls

The pearl is one of the world’s most treasured gems. Pearls are formed inside the shells of oysters. The largest pearl fisheries are in Asia. Cultured pearls were developed by the Chinese in the twentieth century. They are larger than nature’s pearls. A perfect pearl that is round and has great luster is worth a lot of money. Perhaps “diamonds are a girl’s best friend,” but pearls will always win a woman’s favor!

IPA Transcription Guide

Voiced / Voiceless Pairs		Nasals	Monophthongs	Reduced Vowels
/ b /	/ p /	/ m /	/i/ Green Tea	/ ə / Beautiful Photograph
/ d /	/ t /	/ n /	/ɪ/ Silver Pin	/ ə / Later Alligator
/ g /	/ k /	/ ŋ /	/ɛ/ Red Dress	Diphthongs
/ v /	/ f /	Approx.	/æ/ Black Cat	/aʊ/ - Brown Cow
/ z /	/ s /	/ l /	/ɑ/ Coffee Pot	/oʊ/ - Rose Coat
/ ð /	/ θ /	/ ɹ /	/ɔ/ Auburn Dog	/eɪ/ - Gray day
/ ʒ /	/ʃ /	/ j /	/u/ Blue Moon	/aɪ/ - White tie
/ dʒ /	/ tʃ /	/ w /	/ʊ/ Wooden Hook	/ɔɪ/ - Turquoise toy
		/ h /	/ ʌ / Mustard Cup	Primary Stress [']
			/ ɜ / Purple Shirt	Secondary Stress [,]