

# Phonetics: vowel and stress



Progress test 2 due to 28th of February 2012 Phonetics 1) Transcribe the following sentences. Mark the stressed words and use weak forms where appropriate: ' She can ' swim ' faster than ' I can. (contrast) /' i: k? n ' sw? m ' f? : st? ?? n ' a? k? n/ ' She's from ' Scotland. ' Where ' are ' you from? (contrast) /' i: z fr? m ' sk? tl? nd. ' we? r ? : ' ju: fr? m? / ' Sally's been ' trying to ' send you an ' e-mail. /'s? l? z bin ' tra??? t? ' send ju ? n ' i: me? l/ ' Alastair ' claimed he was ' selling the ' company. /' lester ' kle? md i w? z ' sel?? ? ' k? mp? ni/ 2) What is the difference between a monophthong and a diphthong? Give some examples. The main difference is that a monophthong is a phoneme that consists of only one (" mono" means one) vowel sound and a diphthong is a phoneme consisting of two (" di" means two) vowel sounds that are " connected" or " linked" to each other. The diphthong starts out with one vowel sound and " glides" into the other vowel sound. These " vocalic glides" are always within one syllable. The monophthongs have a quite stable tongue position.

The monophthongs can be either long or short. Some examples of monophthongs: /i:/, /? /, /e/, /? /, /? /, /? /, /? :/ Some examples of diphthongs: /?? /, /?? /, /?? /, /a? /, /e? /, /a? / Which diphthongs in RP do not exist in AE? /?? / (stone), /?? / (ear), /e? / (air), /?? / (poor) Give some examples of diphthongs in RP and AE. Examples in RP: /?? / (stone), /?? / (ear), /e? / (air), /?? / (poor), /?? / (boy), /a? / (nice), /e? / (wait), /a? / (down). Examples in AE: /?? / (boy), /a? / (nice), /e? / (wait), /o? / (old), /a? / (down).

By means of minimal pairs show how a diphthong can change the meaning of a word. Give the spelling and the transcription of your minimal pairs. By replacing a diphthong with another diphthong, some words change their

meaning completely. These are so called minimal pairs, words that are written (phonemic transcription) and spoken the same way except for one phoneme. When we then change this phoneme, the word changes meaning, in this case the diphthongs. For example, day – die: /de? / – /da? /, boy – buy: /b?? / – /ba? /, know – now: /n?? / – /na? /, might – mate: /ma? / – /me? t/. 3)

The rhythm of English is characterized by the alteration of weak and heavy words and syllables. Explain how this system functions by giving examples and classifying different types of words. There are differences between word classes like for instance nouns and verbs when it comes to word stress. In nouns the stress is usually on the 1st syllable (' import), whereas in verbs the stress is usually on the 2nd syllable (im'port). When it comes to two-syllable words the nouns and adjectives are often stressed on the 1st syllable (' sofa, ' lovely).

The verbs are often stressed on the 2nd syllable (de'scribe, per'mit). Words with more than two syllables, so called polysyllabic words, usually have the stress on the 3rd syllable from the end, the so called antepenultimate syllable (' segregate, in'vestigate). There are some suffixes that usually require antepenultimate stress. Nouns: -icy (hy'pocrisy), -ity (in'sanity), -logy (psy'chology). Verbs: -ise (' exercise), -ate (fa'cilitate). Adjectives: -ate (pro'portionate). Prefixes and suffixes are usually not stressed in English (' quietly, de'fective).

Compound words tend to be stressed on the first element (' postman, ' newspaper, ' orangejuice). The stressed syllables recur at regular intervals of time. Speech consists of a mixture of light and heavy elements. There are "heavy words" that contain one fully stressed syllable and there are "weak"

words/light syllables that contain the weak vowels (i, u, ? ). The words with the most important information value will receive stress. This means that content words (lexical words) like nouns, full verbs, adjectives and adverbs have the stress. Read Pronunciation Problems in Egypt essay.

The function words (grammatical words) like articles, auxiliaries, personal pronouns and prepositions will not receive the stress. There are however exceptions to this rule. Sometimes function words receive stress as well: WH- words in questions (WHERE did you go? ), demonstratives (this, that, these, those: I didn't mean THAT! ) and functions words that indicate a contrast (I said give HER the money not HIM). Some function words have weak forms when they are pronounced in unstressed positions, the vowel is weakened, reduced or dropped.

For instance, in the following sentence “ He came for his notes” the preposition “ for” (function word) is unstressed and is transcribed like this /f? r/, the weak form is used, whereas in the sentence “ what did he come for? ” the stress is on the preposition “ for” (the function word) and is transcribed like this /f? :/. Sometimes the use of strong and weak forms may change the meaning of a sentence. For instance the difference between “ four and “ for” can easily be mixed up.