

LESSON 4

Features of English Speech

English speech is characterized by certain features which need to be acquired so that our speech is understood by all. These features also help to bring fluency and rhythm in speech. These features can be observed at two levels – the word level and the sentence level as is shown below.

WORD LEVEL

Stress – primary and secondary
Stress shift
Stress change
Silent letters

SENTENCE LEVEL

Stress
Intonation
Weak forms
Contracted forms

We are going to discuss and practise these one by one:-

(i) What is stress?

In order to use stress correctly we should be aware of the syllables in a word.

(ii) Words: Phonemes and Syllables

A word is made up of a group of sound units. These sound units are also called phonemes. We know that in the English language there are 44 phonemes. Phonemes are of two types: vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes.

Words consist of various combinations of vowel and consonant phonemes. However, when saying a word, these phonemes are not pronounced individually but in small pronounceable groups of phonemes known as syllables. For example, the word ‘teacher’ consists of five phonemes /t/, /i:/, /tʃ/, /ə/ and /r/. While pronouncing the word these phonemes are grouped into two pronounceable units or syllables, /ti:/ and /tʃ ə r/. There may be one or more consonant phonemes in a syllable but the vowel phoneme should be only one. Thus, if there are two or more vowel phonemes in a word, it has correspondingly two or more syllables.

A word is considered short if it consists of only one vowel phoneme and therefore, only one syllable.

Exercise 1

Read the following words and indicate the vowel sounds and the number of syllables in them.

Hint: You can determine the number of syllables in a word by counting the number of vowel phonemes contained in it.

Gone, carry, light, sing, beat, bell, leaf, master, teacher, milk, black, swim, swear, read, delight, object, record, increase, waste, family, suppose, never.

N.B. Observe the spellings of the following words: leaf, wait, seat, suit, see.

You will see that these words consist of two vowel letters. But the sound produced by these vowel letters is a single vowel sound. Therefore, each of these words consists of one vowel phoneme. Thus, these are all single syllable words.

When the words consist of only one vowel sound, they are called short words or words of one syllable

(iii) Word stress

When we pronounce a word having more than one syllable, we speak these syllables with a variation in the breath force. Some syllables of a word are more prominent (pronounced more loudly) while others are uttered with weak force of breath. The syllables which are uttered with greater force of breath are called stressed syllables. Thus, we can say that stress is the degree of force used to pronounce a syllable.

Read the words given below, giving greater stress to the part which is underlined.

behind, alone, able, bicycle, captain, delight, battle, beautiful, fever, yellow, perform, actor, cover, attend, advance.

It is important to know that there are only some rules to guide which syllable of the word is to be stressed. However, every good dictionary indicates which syllable of the word should get stressed. So, it is necessary to consult a dictionary to find out the stress pattern of any unfamiliar word.

The stressed syllable in a word is shown by putting a small vertical bar above and in front of the syllable to which it refers, e.g. 'older.

Read the following words and note the stressed syllables in these words. Note the small vertical bar shown above and in front of the stressed syllables.

be'cause, a'bout, sub'mit, 'delicate, a'llow, her'self, 'instrument, 'human, 'factory, 'bigger, 'drama, a'broad, 'nature, 'doctor, ad'vance, 'father, 'order, 'famous, re'late, 'answer, ex'amine.

Thus, we have come to know that words can consist of one or more syllables. The number of syllables of a word can be known by finding out the number of vowels used in them. A syllable may be stressed or unstressed.

Patterns of stress in words

As has already been described, there are no fixed rules governing the stress pattern of different words. Therefore, it is advisable to consult a good dictionary to find out the correct stress pattern in words. However, there are a few rules related to the system of stress/accent in words. These are given below:

■ Words beginning with weak syllables are stressed on the root word,
e.g. : a'broad, a'lone, be'cause, be'low

(Note: The 'basic' words are called the 'root' words.)

■ When the verb suffixes – ed, – es, and –ing are added to the words, the stress (also known as accent) remains on the same syllable, e.g. :

Word	Word with suffixes (-ed, -es, -ing)
recom'mend	recom'mended
sub'mit	sub'mitted
com'pose	com'poses
di'sease	di'seases
'reason	'reasoning
ad'vance	ad'vancing

- When we add the suffixes -age, -ance, -en, -er, -ess, -ful, -hood, -ice, -ish, -ive, -ly, -ment, -or, -ship, -ter, -ure, and -zen at the end of words the accentual pattern does not change.

Read the suffixes along with the words and note the stressed syllables

Suffix	Word	Word with Suffix added
-age	lcover, lmarry	lcoverage, lmarriage
-ance	an'noy, per'form	an'noyance, per'formance
-en	l'bright, l'tight	l'brighten, l'tighten
-er	at'tend, pre'tend	at'tender, pre'tender
-ess	l'actor, l'author	l'actress, l'authoress
-ful	l'beauty, l'duty	l'beautiful, l'dutiful
-hood	l'brother, l'child	l'brotherhood, l'childhood
-ice	l'coward	l'cowardice
-ish	l'fever	l'feverish
-less	l'bottom	l'bottomless
-ly	l'certain	l'certainly
-ment	l'manage	l'management
-ness	l'useful	l'usefulness
-or	col'lect	col'lector
-ship	l'author	l'authorship
-ter	l'laugh	l'laughter

- Words ending in -ion take stress on second from the last syllable, e.g. : admi'ration, appli'cation, deco'ration
- Words ending in -ity take the accent on the third syllable from the last, e.g. : a'bility , ca'pacity, electri'city,
- Words ending in -ic, -ical, -ically, -ious, -al, -ially are accented on the syllable preceding these suffixes, e.g. : pa'thetic, bio'logical, che'mically, no'torious, com'munal, confi'dentially

Exercise 2

Read the words given below and put stress marks at the appropriate places. Consult the dictionary to verify.

basket, answer, entertain, father, knowledge, deliver, duty, committee, backward, beside, liberty, effect, famous, doctor, deceive, because, possess, recommend, sentence.

Stress shift

Read the following words and note the shift in stress according to change in word form.

aca'demy	academic	a cade'mician
politics	po'litical	poli'tician
advertise	ad vertisement	
photograph	pho'tographer	photo graphic
res ponsible	re sponsi'bility	

Primary and secondary stress

We also notice in the above list of words that vertical lines are marked both above the syllable and below the syllable. The vertical line above the syllable indicates primary stress while the vertical line below the syllable points out the secondary stress.

Thus, we can conclude that there are two types of stress. These are:

Primary stress

The syllable which gets the maximum breath force or stress in a word is said to have primary stress. This is indicated by putting a vertical bar above and before the syllable which is stressed (').

Secondary stress

The other stressed syllables of the words pronounced with lesser breath force than the primary syllable are said to have secondary stress. This is indicated by putting a vertical bar below and before the syllable which is stressed (|).

Besides the syllables which receive the primary and secondary stresses, there may be other syllables which are uttered without any stress. These are called unstressed syllables.

Exercise 3

Read the following words and indicate the primary stress. Use a dictionary if needed.

inferior	inferiority	
superior	superiority	
examine	examination	
confirm	confirmation	
educate	education	
register	registration	
classify	classification	
benefit	beneficent	beneficial
personal	personify	personality
family	familiar	familiarity

Stress change according to function (use of the word in the sentence)

Different syllables of the same word can be stressed depending on its use in the sentence (that is, as a noun, adjective, verb, etc.)

Read the following sentences and note the underlined syllables which are stressed in the words.

- He speaks lperfect English.
- She needs to perlfect her skills before taking up the job.
- His previous criminal lrecord is an obstacle in his future life.
- The papers re|cord that the inflation has dropped.
- There has been very little lprogress in this semester.
- Their work pro|gresses slowly but steadily.
- He was labsent from the class last week.
- You should not ab|sent yourself from the class.
- His friends defended his lconduct.
- He will con|duct the test.
- They could see every l|detail in the picture.
- He couldn't de|tail all the facts.

Note: In the underlined words the pattern of stress changes. For example in the first sentence, we see that the stress is at the beginning of the word 'perfect' but, in the second sentence the stress is on the second syllable of the same word.

The pattern of stress in words depends upon its use in the sentence. If the word is used as a noun or adjective the stress is on the first syllable of the word but, if it is used as a verb the stress is on the second syllable. This can be seen in the words 'perfect, record and progress, absent, conduct, and detail' used as different parts of speech in these sentences.

Read these words and note the stress pattern used as nouns/adjectives and verbs in a good dictionary.

content, discount, confine, reject, permit, subject, protest, progress, present, increase.

Exercise 4

Read the following sentences and mark the stressed syllables in the underlined words.

1. Greater investment in education leads to an increase in the number of students.
2. He increased his speed to overtake the bus.
3. She is an absent-minded person.
4. He absented himself from the meeting.
5. A digest of the news was presented.
6. He could not digest the news.
7. A careful contrast of the two plans shows minute differences.
8. It is interesting to contrast the two pictures.

Stress in compound words

Words composed of two separable words are called compound words. There may or may not be a hyphen between them. In compound words generally the stress is on the first word or at the beginning.

Read the following compound words and note that the stress in them falls on the first part.

ˈblackbird, ˈblackboard, ˈrain-coat, ˈpostman, ˈschool-bus, ˈmailbag, ˈfootprint, ˈbathroom, ˈlampshade, ˈsandbox.

■ **There are some compound words in which the stress is on the second part** e.g.: herˈself, whatˈever, themˈselves.

■ **There are some compound words in which the stress is on both the parts of the word** e.g.: ˌafterˈnoon, ˌhome-ˈmade, ˌgood-ˈlooking, ˌbad-ˈtempered.

Note: In the noted words above both the parts of words are stressed but the primary stress is on the second part of the word.

(iv) Stress in Phrases

A phrase is a group of words which forms a part of a sentence and adds some meaning to it. However, this meaning is not complete by itself.

Read the following phrases and note the words/syllables which are stressed.

Buy him one, **Pay** for it, **Send** us one, **Think** of it, **Answer** me, **Go** away, **Can** you come? **Cup** of tea, **As** you like, **Do** it now, **Not** at all, **Talk** to him, **That's** enough, **Thank** them please, **Ought** to know, **Wait** a bit, **Show** me one, What's the **time**?, Put them **down**, **Take** them all, A **railway** engine, A **shoe** repairer, **Another** question, **Can't** have seen them, A **cup** of cocoa, **Think** it over, A clever **answer**, A **pretty** picture, **Do** it again, **Over** the hills, Not before **eight**, Couldn't **believe** it, **Order** it for them, **Dinner** at eight, **Difference** between them, **Talking** about you, **Writing** about it.

(v) Stress in Sentences

A sentence consists of a number of words arranged in a systematic order and conveys some meaning.

In sentences we find that all the words are not spoken with the same force of breath. Some words stand out from others because they receive greater force of breath. The words which receive greater force of breath are called stressed words. The words that are stressed are usually the words that the speaker thinks are the more important for communicating the meaning.

Read the following sentences and note the words that are stressed. The stressed words are written in bold type.

- You **came** to **see** him.
- We **bought** an **interesting** **book**.
- It was **good** to **speak** to him about it.
- I can't **come** now.
- Tell her to **put** it **down**.
- He **wrote** the **letter** on **Monday** morning.
- He **cut** the **bread** with a **sharp** **knife**.
- I **doubt** if he can **read** it.
- **Who** did it?
- **This** **pen** is **mine**.

Exercise 5

In the sentences given above note the stressed and unstressed words. Which parts of speech do these words belong to ?

Exercise 6

In the sentences given below, some words are prominent, or stand out from the rest. Put stress marks in the prominent words in each sentence.

1. I'm tired.
2. Who cooked dinner?
3. What time is it?
4. She bought a radio.
5. Do you think she'll like it?
6. I'll have some sandwiches.
7. It's getting late.
8. She's my aunt.
9. She's in the kitchen.
10. He asked me to do it.

(vi) Rhythm

Rhythm denotes the element of music in speech which is produced by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed words in sentences. In English speech when words are combined to form sentences the stressed syllables tend to occur at regular intervals. Thus, the time interval between beginnings of strong (stressed) syllables is roughly the same. The unstressed syllables between the two stressed syllables are reduced. This feature gives rhythm to English speech.

To understand this let us read the sentence given below:

¹This is the ¹house that ¹Jack ¹built.

In this sentence the stressed syllables are: '**house**', '**Jack**' and '**built**'. In sentences generally the content words carry the stress (e.g. nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.). The time gap between the stressed syllables should be roughly the same when we say this sentence.

Poems and nursery rhymes can help us to practise rhythm in English speech (which is not confined to poems, but characterizes all speech in English).

To get some practice in English rhythm, let us read the poems given below giving stress as indicated:

- ¹Jack and ¹Jill ¹went up the ¹hill,
To ¹fetch a ¹pail of ¹water,
¹Jack fell ¹down and ¹broke his ¹crown,
And ¹Jill came ¹tumbling ¹after.
- ¹One, ¹two, ¹three, ¹four, ¹five. ¹Once I , ¹caught a ¹fish a¹live.
¹Six, ¹seven, ¹eight, nine, ¹ten. ¹Then I ¹let it ¹go a¹gain.
¹Why ¹did you ¹let it ¹go? Be¹cause it¹ bit my ¹finger, ¹so.
¹Which ¹finger ¹did it ¹bite ? The ¹little ¹finger ¹on the, ¹right.

Read the sentences stressing the prominent syllables and reducing the unstressed syllables.

- This 'pencil is 'sharp.
- I have 'lived in' Bengal since 'childhood.
- She is not 'fond of 'coffee.
- Super'ficial 'knowledge 'does a 'lot of 'harm.
- He will be 'glad to 'get a 'book as a 'gift.
- I couldn't 'come to 'college as 'I was 'ill.
- He 'does his 'work on 'time.
- 'All the 'thieves have been ar'rested.
- He is 'going to the 'market to 'buy some 'books.
- 'Why don't they 'tell me the 'plan?

(vii) Intonation Patterns

Intonation refers to pattern of pitch in a sentence. When we hear someone speaking we realize that he does not speak on the same note. We notice variation in the pitch of his voice. Sometimes his pitch rises and at other times it falls. This pattern of variation in the pitch of voice is called intonation. There are mainly two types of intonation patterns followed in English language. These are:

a. Falling tone: indicated by the symbol 

b. Rising tone: indicated by the symbol 

Falling intonation pattern

The tone in these sentences usually falls before the last word/segment of utterance. This is used:

- **In ordinary statements:**

It's 'seven o'  clock.


The' milkman hasn't  come.

I didn't  do it.

The 'water is  cold.

The 'postman was  looking for you.

- **In questions beginning with the question words** — what, when, where, how etc. — when asking for information in a matter-of-fact manner.

'Why did you  do it?

'Where are they  going?

'How do they  come here?

'When are they  shifting?

'What's the  time?

What do you like best?

How are you?

Who's coming with me?

Why don't you listen?

When can you come?

■ In commands

Do as I say.

Shut the door.

Go a way.

Sit down.

Bring a 'glass of water.

■ In tag questions

It's a lovely day, isn't it?

You can swim well, can't you?

He has a lot of books, hasn't he?

He didn't come, did he?

You're there, aren't you?

This is the one you asked for, isn't it?

You're not going to play, are you?

To-morrow is Monday, isn't it?

Read the conversation using falling tone. The important words are written in capital letters. Notice how the voice falls at the end (Note the slanting line placed before the words.)

WHAT'S your FAVOURITE COLOUR?

RED.

WHAT'S YOURS?

MY favourite's BLUE.

Repeat each of the following words in falling intonation:

No, Push, Speak, Next, Sure, Which, Right,

Repeat the following sentences / phrases according to the pattern shown below:

Pattern :

We're late they've come you're right he can't

You must just now at school from here

Read the following sentences using falling tone, stressing the prominent words and paying attention to the stress marks shown.

I must get my hair cut.

It would be better to leave it.

We went for a ride in a car.

I'm looking for a paper and a pencil.

We'll meet you at the station.

I took away my coat to be cleaned.

She's gone for a walk in the park.

Rising intonation patterns

Here the voice rises towards the end of the sentence. It is used in the following cases:

■ Incomplete utterances

It's seven o'clock (but the milkman hasn't come yet)

The house is empty (for many years in the past)

When I reached there (he had left)

■ In questions which demand an answer in 'yes' or 'no'

Are they going?

Will he be there?

Have they done it?

Is she studying?

Has he started?


Have you heard the news?

Do you know?

May I try?

Couldn't you ask?

!Aren't you  well?

!Can you do it  now?

!Does it  work?

!Are you  ready?

!Did he  enjoy it?

■ **In questions which begin with the question words but said in a polite or friendly manner.**


It is also used when we politely ask a person to repeat the information which we have not clearly heard or understood, e.g.

A: They are coming from Delhi  tomorrow.

B: When are they  coming? (Asking for repetition)

!How is your  sister?


!Why didn't you !come to the  party?

!What is !wrong with  you?

!When're you  coming?

■ **In polite requests:**

!Would you !open the  door?

!May I !have your  pen?

!Would you !mind !giving me your  pencil?

!Will you !sit  down?

!Please sit  quietly.

Repeat the following questions using the rising tone. The important words are written in capital letters. Notice how the voice rises at the end.

Are you  TIRED?

Are you  READY?

Have YOU seen my  KEYS?

Could I borrow a  RUPEE?

Wasn't that a  GREAT SHOW?

- In subordinating clauses (but falling tone is used in the main clauses as shown below).

'When he came I asked him to wait.
 In spite of the rain they all came as they had promised.
 If you like I will send the car for you.
 Since you refuse help I must do it all alone.
 When you are ready we can go.

(viii) Contracted forms

Some verbs have long as well as contracted forms. These forms are used more in speaking than in writing, but they are often used in writing that shows conversation. Contracted forms are used to maintain rhythm in connected speech. Many words have more than one contracted form. Read the words given in the following table and practise speaking their contracted forms. Also say the sentence using the contracted form of the verbs.

Long form of Verbs	Contracted form(s) pronounced as	Contracted form used in sentences
Am	/m/	I'm not going today.
Are	/r/, /ər/	They're coming today.
Is	/s/, /z/, /ɪz/	What's the matter?
Has	/s/, /z/, /ɪz/	She's done the work.
Have	/v/, /əv/	They've taken their dinner.
Had	/d/, /ɪd/	He'd reached the station.
Would/could	/d/, /ɪd/	He'd like to join the army.
Do	/d/	What d'you think about it?
Will/shall	/l/, /əl/	He'll definitely come.

Exercise 7

Read the sentences given below using contracted forms as shown. Also write the full forms of these words in the brackets.

1. When's he expected back? (_____)
2. He says he's needed in this case. (_____)
3. It's time to go. (_____)
4. They think it's he. (_____)
5. You're very beautiful. (_____)

6. They're not going to wait all day. (_____)
7. You'll feel much better if you rest. (_____)
8. He'll open the gate for her. (_____)
9. It'll warm up soon. (_____)
10. There'll be no fun without them. (_____)
11. They've got something for the boy. (_____)
12. What I've always wanted was his presence. (_____)
13. If they've passed how have their friends failed? (_____)
14. It's gone. It's not here. (_____, _____)
15. I think he'd have tried. (_____)
16. They'd left early. (_____)
17. It'd eaten the cake. (_____)
18. She'd like a cold drink. (_____)
19. It'll be difficult to tell this to him. (_____)

There are also some contracted forms of verbs with 'question words' and with 'here, there' and 'that', for example

who's, what's, where's, when's, how's' who'd, what'll, here's, there's, that's, there'll, there'd, that'd

■ **Sometimes we can contract either the verb or 'not'**

'He is not lazy' can be expressed as — 'He isn't lazy.' or 'He's not lazy.'

'You will not accept it' can be expressed as — 'You'll not accept it.' or 'You won't accept it'.

■ **Uses of the contracted forms 's' and 'd' :**

's' can be used in place of 'is' or 'has'.

'd' can be used in place of 'had' , 'would' or 'did'.

Exercise 8

Read the sentences given below and write the full form of 's' and 'd'.

1. She's short. She's got long hair.
2. It's embarrassing to reach late for the party.
3. He's left the job.
4. They'd come to stay with us.
5. Where's she gone?
6. He'd already gone when I reached there.
7. It'd be difficult to explain.
8. If he'd known he'd have told me.
9. It's time to mend our ways.

Contracted form of negatives

When 'not' is used after the helping verbs 'not' is reduced to "n't" and combined with the helping verb coming before it. This is illustrated below.

They haven't yet finished their work.

She hasn't accepted the offer.

Students aren't attentive in the class.

He won't return before Sunday.

Read the following words using the contracted form of 'not'.

aren't, isn't, wasn't, weren't, haven't, hasn't, hadn't, don't, doesn't, didn't, won't (will not), shan't (shall not), can't, couldn't, mustn't, needn't, mightn't, shouldn't, wouldn't, daren't.

Given below are a set of sentences in which the contracted form of 'not' is used.

Read these sentences aloud using the contracted form of 'not'.

1. Don't open that, please.
2. Please open the door, if you don't mind.
3. He isn't alone.
4. Isn't it a fine day?
5. They aren't playing cards.
6. We aren't doing anything tonight.
7. You haven't seen him I suppose.
8. Hasn't the doctor come yet?
9. She hadn't got the time to speak.
10. They wouldn't lower the price at all.
11. She knew you'd come. He won't help her.
12. We won't forgive him.
13. He couldn't have said this but to keep peace.

Note: We can't use 'n't' when we use the pronoun 'I'. We say 'I'm not sure' instead of saying 'I am n't sure'

(ix) Consonant clusters

When two or more consonant letters come in sequence, they form clusters. These consonants occur in the beginning or at the end of a syllable and are difficult to pronounce for those learning English as a second language.

Read the words given below and note the consonant clusters occurring at the beginning of these words.

Word	Consonant cluster	Word	Consonant cluster
1 blue	bl	15 state	st
2 train	tr	16 flood	fl
3 glass	gl	17 grow	gr
4 spell	sp	18 tutor	/tj/
5 smile	sm	19 twelve	tw
6 sweet	sw	20 draw	dr
7 cry	cr	21 duty	/dj/
8 fresh	fr	22 clip	/kl/
9 slow	sl	23 queen	/kw/
10 pray	pr	24 glass	gl
11 few	/fj/	25 sprain	spr
12 throw	thr /θr/	26 strain	str
13 snake	sn	27 scream	skr
14 squeeze	sq /skw/	28 please	pl

Given below is another set of words. Read these words and note the consonant clusters at the end of these words

Word	Consonant cluster	Word	Consonant cluster
1 bulb	lb	9 orange	ng
2 lamp	mp	10 self	lf
3 clasp	sp	11 revolve	lv
4 past	st	12 fifth	fth
5 hand	nd	13 cubs	bs
6 ask	sk	14 maps	ps
7 milk	lk	15 sins	ns
8 branch	nch	16 killed	ld

Exercise 9

Read these words and find out which consonant clusters are used.

Note: You may find them in the beginning, middle or at the end of the words.

scrapbook, blackboard, postman, screwdriver, earthquake, long-lived, middle-aged, goldsmith, churchyard, accident, occupation, require, liquid, vaccination, frequent, taxi, equal, application, scrub, shrink.

Exercise 10

Read the following sentences and underline the consonant clusters.

1. Sandeep went for camping in Hilton Park. He set up a camp and walked through the meadows. He bought a candy from the shopkeeper.
2. Kamla asked him to stop quarrelling and be quiet.
3. It's difficult to be a king.
4. Will you sing a song?
5. I can't sing, but I can beat the drum and you can sing along.
6. Bring him along and play Ping-Pong for the whole day long.
7. Squishy Squirrel and Quincy Duck were squabbling in the Quality Park.
8. He squeezed the squirrel so tight that it squealed in fright.
9. We get scabs on our skin if we have scurvy.
10. When he is scared he screams.
11. The eagle swooped swiftly from the sky.

Exercise 11

Here are some more sentences in which consonant clusters occur at different places in words. Read these sentences and locate the consonant clusters.

1. Fluffy went flip-flop all over the floor.
2. In a flash, it flew out of the window.
3. Here are some flowers and a flask of tea of your favourite flavour.
4. Smita fell ill with flu.
5. My friend is frightened of frogs.
6. Thumbelina stumbled out of the bush. She heard a rumble and a cry.
7. 'Climb up', said Tom.
8. Freedom needs to be fought for.
9. Children were munching crunchy French fries.
10. Monkeys were lunching on bunches of banana.

Exercise 12

Given below is another set of sentences. Read these sentences and underline the consonant clusters.

1. Great grandma was grumpy one day.
2. She was groaning in bed and grunting away.
3. She grumbled that she was hungry.
4. She wants grapes from the grocer's shop.
5. They have a grand plan to get her up.
6. Watch the patch and catch the thief.
7. Clasp your hands and clench your teeth.
8. Due to a clash of opinion a break in the party was felt.

9. Cricket drives the spectators crazy.
10. She cried and screamed but nobody listened.
11. They threatened him three times.

(x) Silent letters

Read the following words and note their pronunciation.

write, wrapped, knight, knife, psychology, wrinkle, balm, worm, calm, would, should, bright, straight.

In all of these words we see that a group of consonants are used in sequence but when we pronounce these words some of the consonants remain silent. As some of the consonant sounds are not heard, we can say that there are no consonant clusters due to silent consonant letters.

Exercise 13

Read the following sentences and note the consonant sounds which remain silent when we read those words.

1. He wrapped a muffler round his neck and sat down to write.
2. He said that he would wring her wrinkled neck.
3. She says that her notes are all wrong.
4. I know a boy whose name is Knight.
5. She likes kneeling while knitting.
6. She knocked the door, turned the knob and entered.
7. This is a knotty problem, but you know what you can do if you remain calm.
8. I would if I could.
9. If you could then you should.
10. Calm down and sit by these palms.
11. Here comes a calf.
12. Get me some balm.
13. I bought eight nuts for my daughter.
14. I thought Santa brought gifts for everyone.
15. This isn't the right thing to do.
16. He jumped straight and landed on a bough.

Exercise 14

Read the following words and note the consonant clusters. Put them in appropriate columns in the table given below according to their pronunciation.

psychology, pseudo, psalm, prudent, protect, prosper, wriggle, wring, write, wrong, trim, triple, trend, true, stroke, stroll, strive, caught, bought, night, sight, walk, talk, born, bundle, turn.

(xi) Weak forms

Words with consonant clusters	Words without consonant clusters (with silent letters)
eg: Prudent	eg: Write

This is another characteristic of English speech. There are a number of words in English which have two forms, the strong form and the weak form. When these words are emphasized (stressed) or when they are pronounced in isolation, strong forms of these words are used. When they are unstressed or when they are spoken in sentences, the weak forms of those words are used. Weak forms possess the following features:

- Reduction of the length of the sound
- Weakening of the vowel sound used in them
- Absence (elision) of the vowel sound and consonant sounds used in them.

Given below is a list of common words with their two forms written in phonetic symbols. Practise reading the strong and weak forms of these words

Category	Words	Strong form	Weak form
Articles	a	eɪ	ə
	an	æn	ən
	the	ði:	ði, ðə
Auxiliary verbs	am	æm	əm, m
	are	ɑ:	ə
	can	kæn	kən
	could	kud	kəd
	does	dʌ z	dəz
	do	du:	du
	had	hæd	həd, d
	has	hæz	həz, z
	have	hæv	həv, v
	is	iz	z
	must	mʌst	məst , məs
	shall	ʃæl	ʃəl, ʃl
	will	wil	l
	would	wud	əd, d
	was	wɔz	wəz, z
	were	wɜ:	wə
Prepositions	at	æt	ət
	for	fɔ:	fə

Category	Words	Strong form	Weak form
	from	fɹɒm	fɹəm
	of	ɒv	əv, v
	to	tu	tə, t
Conjunctions	and	ænd	ənd, n
	as	æz	əz
	than	ðæn	ðən
	that	ðæt	ðət
	but	bʌt	bət
Others	been	bi:n	bin
	some	sʌm	səm
	there	ðeə	ðə
	him	him	im
	her	hɜ:ɪ	hə
	his	hiz	iz
	who	hu:	hu
	you	ju:	ju
	sir	sɜ:ɪ	sə
	we	wi:	wi
	she	ʃi:	ʃi

Read the following sentences aloud using the weak forms of the helping verbs.

1. Why I am going to visit him is not known to me either.
2. The bus has already gone.
3. The man was extremely kind.
4. All their money had gone.
5. It is raining now.
6. Children are going to school.
7. They have finished their assignment.
8. He will see her tomorrow.
9. They would never get such an opportunity.
10. Mohan is not staying here.
11. We shall come and see you.

Exercise 15

Here is another set of sentences containing weak forms of some words. Read these sentences and identify the words which should be read using the weak forms.

1. The lion is the king of beasts.
2. This is the same building.
3. Punjab is a rich province.
4. A crow sat on the branch of a tall tree.
5. An apple a day, keeps the doctor away.
6. Hardy is famous for his novels.
7. He is grateful to her for many reasons.
8. She is qualified for the post.
9. He said that he was ill.
10. Raman and his sister are invited to the party.
11. Anand wanted him to wait till he returned.
12. She needed some money.

Given below is another set of sentences written using the strong forms. Practise the sentences using the weak forms where needed.

1. I am going to Delhi.
2. She met her friend after an interval of seven years.
3. Why do you not mind your business?
4. Where can you find him?
5. They both are lawyers.
6. He was looking at the children in the park.
7. I was at home at six o'clock.
8. He was not at home.
9. How is Raman these days?
10. He took his dog for a walk in the park.

(xii) A few tips to pronunciation

■ **Silent 'e':** When a silent 'e' is put at the end of a word having one syllable, the vowel before it says its name. Look at the following examples.

bath	bathe	fir	fire
cloth	clothe	plum	plume
strip	stripe	grim	grime

■ **Words ending in 'ar' sound like /eər/ on adding the silent 'e'. For example:**

bar	bare	car	care
far	fare	star	stare
mar	mare	scar	scare

■ **In words containing 'ea' the sound produced is /i:/. For example:**

 speak, stream, and sneak.

■ **'a' before 'l' is pronounced as /ɔ:/. For example:**

 walk, talk, chalk, halt, salt.

■ **'ay' is pronounced as /eɪ/ if it comes at the end of a word. For example:**

 pray, tray, day, say, gay, hay, lay.

■ **'ai' is pronounced as /eɪ/ if it comes at the beginning or middle of a word. For example:**

 rail, snail, pail, tail, ail, rail, fail, train, pain, rain, wait, maid, paid, claim.

■ **When 'ow' comes at the end of a word it is pronounced as /əʊ/. For example:**

 crow, throw, snow, blow, bow, row, glow, grow, below.

■ **In words containing 'oa' the sound produced is /əʊ/. For example:**

 goat, coat, throat, float, boat, toad, load, coal, moan, loan, soak, clock.

■ **In words containing 'oe' the sound produced is /əʊ/. For example:**

 toe, hoe, foe.

■ **'y' if it comes at the end of the word, it is generally pronounced as /aɪ/. For example:**

 my, reply, July, rely, occupy, why, satisfy, multiply.

■ **In words containing 'igh' the sound produced is /aɪ/. For example:**

 sigh, flight, plight, right, fight, light.

■ **In words containing 'ie' the sound produced is /aɪ/. For example:**

 pie, tie, die, lie.

■ **In words containing 'oo' the sound produced is /u:/. For example:**

 loop, tooth, spoon, room, school, tool, roof.

■ **In words containing 'ou' the sound produced is /u:/. For example:**

 youth, group, soup, route.

■ **In words containing 'ir' and 'ur' the sound produced is /ɜ:/. For example:**

 shirt, skirt, bird, burn, turn, church, purple, curtain, surface.

■ **In words containing 'ov' the sound produced is /ʌv/. For example:**

 glove, above, dove, cover.

■ **'o' and 'u' are good friends and they often change their places but the meaning also changes. For example:**

son	sun	some	sum	none	nun
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- The letter 'g' in a word followed by 'e' 'i' or 'y' is pronounced as /dʒ/. For example:
gentle, gypsy, gesture, ginger, general, gem, genius.

Note: There are some exceptions to this rule, e.g. geese, gear, get, give, girl, gift, gynaecology.

Exercise 16

Given below is a list of words. Read these words and put them into two columns of sounds /g/ and /dʒ/.

gender, gain, give, get, gone, gill, gift, gap, gypsy, gym, agree, arrangement, origin, agent, manager, baggage, luggage.

Words containing /g/ sound	Words containing /dʒ/ sound

- 'g' followed by 'u' in a word is pronounced as /g/. For example:

guilt, guess, guy, gulf, guide, vague, guilt.

- 'k' followed by 'e' and 'i' in a word is pronounced as /k/. For example:

keep, kick, keen, kidney, key, kettle, king, kind.

- 'c' and 'ic' are pronounced 'k' if it comes at the end of words having more than one syllables. For example:

music, picnic, havoc, cubic, public, rustic, critic, heroic, elastic, dramatic.

- 'que' and 'ch' are pronounced as 'k' in words having more than one syllable. For example:

unique, physique, school, echo, stomach.

- 'c' is pronounced as 's' if it followed by 'e' or 'i', otherwise it is pronounced as 'k'. For example:

service, notice, prince, justice, urgency, proficiency, advance, glance, chance, circular, cube, call, come, clay, crowd.

Exercise 17

Read the words given below and then put them in appropriate columns on the basis of the pronunciation of the letter 'c'.

character, cinema, cattle, caught, cold, cell, central, civil, celebrate, city.

Words containing /s/ sound	Words containing /k/ sound