

English Pronunciation: Sentence Stress

Level B1 · Lesson 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 44

Language Focus: Content Words vs Function Words

In natural English speech, we don't stress every word equally. We give more stress to words that carry **meaning**, and we say words that carry **grammar** more quickly and quietly.

Type	Word classes	Stress
Content words	Nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs	Usually stressed
Function words	Articles, prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions	Usually weak

Why it matters: Native speakers judge rhythm by stressed content words, not by counting words. This is why English can sound "fast" — the function words are squeezed in quickly between the important, stressed words.

See it in a sentence

The **bold, underlined** words are the content words — these carry the sentence's meaning and get the stress.

The **TEACHER** **QUICKLY** **CLOSED** the **DOOR**.

She **WANTS** a **COFFEE** and a **SANDWICH**.

Notice that "the", "a", and "and" are said quickly and quietly — they are not stressed.

Exercise 1: True or False (8 points)

1. "teacher" is a content word. True / False
2. "the" is a content word. True / False
3. "quickly" is a function word. True / False
4. "and" is a function word. True / False
5. "decide" is a content word. True / False
6. "of" is a content word. True / False
7. "beautiful" is a function word. True / False
8. "was" is a function word. True / False

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice (8 points)

Circle whether each word is a content word or a function word.

1. **house** a) Content word b) Function word
2. **in** a) Content word b) Function word
3. **run** a) Content word b) Function word
4. **is** a) Content word b) Function word
5. **yesterday** a) Content word b) Function word
6. **he** a) Content word b) Function word
7. **buy** a) Content word b) Function word
8. **but** a) Content word b) Function word

Exercise 3: Matching (8 points)

Say each word aloud. Write **a** or **b** next to each word to show its type.

a) Content word **b)** Function word

Word	Type (a or b)
1. coffee	_____
2. on	_____
3. always	_____
4. a	_____
5. garden	_____
6. do	_____
7. happy	_____
8. it	_____

Exercise 4: Word Sort (12 points)

Write each word in the correct box: teacher, house, quickly, beautiful, run, decide, the, a, to, in, and, but.

Content Word	Function Word

Exercise 5: Gap Fill (8 points)

Write "content" or "function" to classify each word.

1. "**buy**" is a _____ word.
2. "**of**" is a _____ word.
3. "**yesterday**" is a _____ word.
4. "**was**" is a _____ word.
5. "**happy**" is a _____ word.
6. "**he**" is a _____ word.
7. "**garden**" is a _____ word.
8. "**and**" is a _____ word.

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Exercise 1: True or False — Answers

1. "teacher" is a content word. — **True**
2. "the" is a content word. — **False**
3. "quickly" is a function word. — **False**
4. "and" is a function word. — **True**
5. "decide" is a content word. — **True**
6. "of" is a content word. — **False**
7. "beautiful" is a function word. — **False**
8. "was" is a function word. — **True**

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice — Answers

1. **house** — correct answer: **a) Content word**
2. **in** — correct answer: **b) Function word**
3. **run** — correct answer: **a) Content word**
4. **is** — correct answer: **b) Function word**
5. **yesterday** — correct answer: **a) Content word**
6. **he** — correct answer: **b) Function word**
7. **buy** — correct answer: **a) Content word**
8. **but** — correct answer: **b) Function word**

Exercise 3: Matching — Answers

- coffee — **a) Content word**
- on — **b) Function word**
- always — **a) Content word**
- a — **b) Function word**
- garden — **a) Content word**

do — **b) Function word**

happy — **a) Content word**

it — **b) Function word**

Exercise 4: Word Sort — Answers

Content Word: teacher, house, quickly, beautiful, run, decide

Function Word: the, a, to, in, and, but

Exercise 5: Gap Fill — Answers

1. buy — **Content word**

2. of — **Function word**

3. yesterday — **Content word**

4. was — **Function word**

5. happy — **Content word**

6. he — **Function word**

7. garden — **Content word**

8. and — **Function word**