

Prosody Practice Sheet: Stress & the Schwa

The first time you do this practice sheet, run through all the exercises. Take note of the aspects that are most challenging. These are what you should focus on when practicing. Feel free to add to your practice any other phrases with that you have had trouble with. I recommend making your own examples as well to practice with!

Identify the content words in these sentences. These are where you will speak a little bit louder, longer, and higher in pitch.

Let's meet at five.

The milk is in the fridge.

I already did my homework.

Can't we do it later?

Now, identify the content AND function words in these sentences. Remember to reduce the function words with a schwa!

Let's meet at five. = Let's meet 't five.

The milk is in the fridge. = Th' milk's 'n th' fridge.

I already did my homework. = I already did my homework.

Can't we do it later? = C'nt we do 't later?

Now, identify the content, function, AND focus words in these sentences. Where will the most stress go in each sentence?

I go to the park every day after school at six.

My sister is a terrible driver and doesn't stop at the stop signs.

Can you help me with something later when you have time?

Put the chairs over there with the big, black table.

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Challenge time!

To keep practicing your prosody skills....

- Choose a paragraph from a book, online article, newspaper, etc.
- Record yourself reading it how you would naturally now.
- Take 5 - 10 minutes to mark all of the content, function, and focus words. Practice rehearsing the paragraph implementing these new stress patterns and introducing the schwa into function words.
- Record yourself again and save it to compare the difference between your initial pronunciation and your pronunciation after a bit of analysis.

Good luck!