

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3



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Phonetics

Introduction:

Language has a very important social purpose, because it is mainly used for linguistic communication. A language can be used in two ways for the purpose of communication. It can be spoken or written. Linguistics is a systematic study of language. Phonetics is a branch of linguistics and it is the branch dealing with the medium of speech. It deals with the production, transmission and reception of the sounds of human speech.

Speech sounds are very broadly divided into two categories, namely, Vowels and Consonants. There are 20 Vowel sounds and 24 Consonant sounds.

Vowels are further divided into two categories that are Monophthongs (Pure Vowels) and Diphthongs (Vowel Glides).

A vowel is described taking into account the following criteria:

- (a.) The part of the tongue raised during its articulation. (Front, Central, Back)
- (b.)The height to which it is raised. (Close, Half-close, Half-open, Open)

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

(c.) The position of the lips (Unrounded and Rounded)

Pure Vowels: 12

1. Front Vowels: /ɪ /, /i:/, /e/, /æ/
Eg:- lid, lead, said, sad
2. Central Vowels: /ə/, /ʌ /, /ɜ:/
Eg:- alert, shut, shirt
3. Back Vowels: /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɒ /, /ɔɪ/, /ɑ:/
Eg:- full, fool, cot, caught, calm

Diphthongs: 8

During the articulation of a diphthong, the tongue starts in the position required for the articulation of a particular vowel and moves in the direction of the position required for the articulation of a different vowel. Hence it is also called a vowel glide.

- Glide towards /ɪ/ : /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/
Eg:- late, site, toil
- Glide towards / ə / : /uə/, /ɪə/, /eə/
Eg:- poor, fear, air
- Glide towards /u:/ : /au/, /əu/
Eg:- shout, open

There are 24 consonant sounds in English. They are described in terms of their articulation.

- **Plosives:** Sounds with Complete Closure and Sudden Release.

/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/

E.g.: pin, bin, tin, din, kin, gun

- **Affricates:** Sounds with Complete Closure and Slow Release.

/tʃ/, /dʒ/

E.g.: chin, jam

- **Nasal:** Sounds with Complete Oral closure.

/m/, /n/, /ŋ/

E.g.: sum, sun, sung

- **Trill/Roll/Flap:** Sounds with Intermittent closure.

/r/

E.g.: red, very

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

- **Fricative:** Sounds with Close approximation

/f/, /v/, /θ /, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/

E.g.: five, vine, thin, then, sip, zip, sheep, measure, hat

- **Lateral:** Sounds with Partial closure

/l/

E.g.: love

- **Semivowel/Frictionless continuant:** Sounds with Open approximation.

/w/, /j/

E.g.: watch, yes

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

Rules for Accent Pattern:

Rule-1

- Functional Stress: Stress in disyllabic words may change depending upon the function.
- If the word is NOUN & ADJECTIVE- Stress is on the first syllable.
- E.g.- ‘Subject, ‘Visit, ‘Promise, ‘Project
- If the word is VERB- Stress is on the second syllable.
- E.g.- a. He was sub’jected to torture.
b. She was pro’jected as the next big thing in Bollywood

Rule-2

- Disyllabic words with weak prefixes like a-, be-, de-, re- etc are accented on the root. (2nd syllable)
- E.g.- a’mount, be’come, be’yond, be’low, be’side, be’cause, be’tween, de’ceive, de’crease, de’sign, re’turn, re’lieve, re’tire, re’duce.

Rule-3

- Disyllabic VERBS with the prefix ‘dis-’ take the accent on the 2nd syllable.
- E.g.- dis-’miss, dis-’place, dis-’play, dis-’guise, dis-’grace, dis-’cuss, dis-’turb

Rule-4

- Disyllabic VERBS ending in –ate, -ise, & -ct, take the accent on the 2nd syllable.
- E.g.- na-’rrate, a-’ppoint, mi-’grate, com-’prise, bap-’tise, in-’flate, se-’lect, lo-’cate, com-’prise.

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

Rule-5

- ❑ VERBS ending in ‘-ate, -ise, ize, -ify’ having more than 2 syllables the accent is on the 3rd syllable from the end.
E.g.- ‘co-lo-nise, ‘pa-tro-nise, ‘re-cog-nise, cha-’rac-te-rize, ‘e-du-cate, ar-’ti-cu-late, ‘cul-ti-vate, ‘sa-tis-fy, ‘fruc-ti-fy, ‘for-ti-fy, ‘se-pe-rate.

Rule-6

- ❑ Words ending in ‘-tion’ or ‘-sion’ carry the accent on the 2nd syllable from the end also called penultimate syllable.
- ❑ E.g.- com-po-’si-tion, ci-vi-li-’za-tion, cul-ti-’va-tion, ‘ques-tion, sug-’ges-tion.

Rule-7

- ❑ Words ending in ‘-ity’ take the accent on the anti-penultimate syllable.
- ❑ E.g.- e-lec-’tri-ci-ty, mag-na-’ni-mi-ty,
ge-ne-’ro-si-ty, op-por-’tu-ni-ty, cu-ri-’o-si-ty
u-ni-’ver-si-ty

Rule-8

- ❑ Words ending in the suffix ‘-ic’ or ‘-ian’ or ‘-tial’
‘-ical’ or ‘-tically’ or ‘-rial’ take the accent on the syllable before the suffix.
- ❑ E.g.- sci-en-’ti-fic, a-ca-’de-mic,
a-ca-de-’mi-cian, me-’mo-rial, em-’pe-ric-al,
e-lec-’tri-cian, po-li-’ti-cian, po-’li-ti-cally, pre-se-’den-tial

Rule-9

- ❑ Words ending in ‘-ious’ & ‘-eous’ take the accent on syllable preceding the suffix.
- ❑ E.g.- ‘an-xious, la-’bo-rious, mys-’te-rious,

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

si-mul-'ta-neous, 'cour-teous, su-per-'sti-tious,
au-'da-cious

Rule-10

- ❑ Words ending with '-crat' & '-cracy' take the accent on the anti-penultimate(3rd syllable) from the end.
- ❑ E.g.- 'de-mo-crat, 'de-mo-cracy, a-'ris-to-crat

Rule-11

- ❑ Words ending in '-graph' OR '-graphy' take the accent on the anti-penultimate syllable.
- ❑ E.g.-'pho-to-graph, pho-'to-gra-phy,
bi-'o-gra-phy

Rule-12

- ❑ Words ending with '-logy' OR '-meter' take the accent on penultimate syllable.
- ❑ E.g.- zo-'o-logy, bi-'o-logy, psy-'cho-logy,
ki-'lo-metre, pa-'ra-metre

Rule-13

In a Compound Word 1st element is stressed.

- ❑ E.g.- 'Blacksmith, 'Bluestocking, 'Birthday, 'Sunday
- ❑ In some Compound Words both the elements are stressed.
- ❑ E.g.- 'middle-'aged, 'after-'noon

Rule-14

Technical Communication and Soft Skills – Unit 3

- Inflexional Suffix: -ed, -es, -ing, -ful etc &
- Derivational Suffix: -hood, -ship
- These suffixes do not affect the accent pattern.

Rule-15

- The following suffixes carry the Primary Accent.
- aire, -eer, -ain, -escent, -esce, -ique, -esque, -ette, -ade, -ental, -ee, -ever
- E.g.- main'tain, millio'naire, sus'tain, senti'mental,
ciga'rette, engi'neer, gro'tesque, ado'lescence,
pay'ee, interview'ee, lemo'nade, who'ever,
when'ever