**English Pronunciation Podcast 14—Syllable Stress**: This podcast teaches you the right way to stress a syllable, and teaches you how to determine which syllable is stressed in 2 syllable words.

In today's podcast, we're going to learn the rules of syllable stress in 2 syllable words. We'll also discuss how to correctly stress a syllable or a word in English.

**What is "stress" and how do we stress a word or syllable in English?**

A lot of people have the wrong idea of how to stress a word or syllable in English. Many students think that you stress a word or syllable by using volume. This is not correct. The real way that Americans stress a syllable or word is using two simple methods:

* raise the pitch of the stressed syllable
* lengthen the vowel of the stressed syllable

**Example**: Put it on the **ta**ble.

The first syllable of" table" has a long vowel and a raised pitch.

**Example**: Have some **co**ffee.

The first syllable of coffee has a longer vowel and a raised pitch.

**How to Determine which Syllable of a Word is Stressed**:

The rules are useful but not the only way to learn syllable stress. Remembering stress through your memory, through the rhythm of the word is great and a lot closer to the way native speakers learn stress. At the same time, knowing the rules is useful for correcting past mistakes and for learning new words which you encounter.

**Rule 1: Two syllable nouns and adjectives are usually stressed on *the first* syllable:**

* determine part of speech (noun, adjective or verb)
* if the 2 syllable word is a noun or adjective, stress *the first* syllable

**Example**: table:   
longer vowel and higher pitch on the first syllable

**Example:** office

Longer vowel and higher pitch on the first syllable

**Exercise: Listen and Repeat the following 2 syllable nouns:**

**pi**lot... **si**lence... **tea**cher ... **stu**dent ...**su**gar...

**Exercise: Listen and repeat the following 2 syllable adjectives:**

**sca**ry ... **si**lent ... **fu**nny ... **pleas**ant ...

**Rule 2:** :**Two syllable verbs may be stressed on the first or the second syllable. If the verb begins with a Latin prefix, don't stress the prefix; stress the root (main part)**.

Examples of prefixes: pre-, com-,

**Exercise: Here are some of the main prefixes which occur in English.** **Listen and repeat the following verbs which contain prefixes.**

ad - ad**mit** ... ad**mire** ...

be- be**come** ... be**tray** ..

com- com**plain** ... com**mit** ...

con- con**vince** ... con**tain** ...

de- de**pend** .... de**ny** ...

mis- mis**treat** ...mis**place ..**.

pre- pre**tend** ...pre**pare** ...

re- re**peat** ...rel**ieve** ...

sub- sub**tract..**. .sub**mit**

sup- sup**port** ... sup**pose** ...

**Exercise**: **Listen and repeat the following verbs which do *not* contain Latin prefixes and are stressed on the first syllable:**

**fi**nish ... **frigh**ten ... **men**tion ...**lis**ten ... **of**fer ... **pur**chase ... **sof**ten ...