

## Summary of Primary Stress Rules

### Stress the Contrasts

When explicit contrasts are made, the primary stress and pitch move belong on the contrasting elements, even if they are old information. If an element is more than one word, the primary stress and pitch move go on the last content word if there is one. If not, they go on the last function word. If more than one contrast is in a sentence, use a rise-to-mid melody for the first and a low-range melody for the second. Five types of contrast and one type of comparison are important:

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|--------|---|--|
| Types: | 1. Choice questions                             | 4. Contradictions                      |
|        | 2. <i>Either ... or ...</i>                     | 5. Contrasts in parallel phrases       |
|        | 3. [ <i>x, not y</i> ], [ <i>not x, but y</i> ] | 6. Noun (comparative) <i>than</i> noun |

### Stress the Last Content Word of New Information

If there is no contrast, look for new information. Place primary stress on the last content word or construction of the new information.

New information: Words or ideas that are new to the conversation - not used before or already obvious to the speakers

Content Words: Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs

Constructions: Compound nouns, compound numbers, phrasal verbs

### Stress the Last Function Word of New Information

If there is no content word or construction in the new information, place primary stress goes on the last function word in the new information.

Function Words: Prepositions, auxiliaries, pronouns, negatives, all forms of the verb *to be*, question words, etc.

## Special Uses of Primary Stress and Intonation: Lists and Series

In a list or series of items, each item is a message unit which has its own primary stress and a pitch move. The primary stress goes on the last content word of the new information, or on the last function word if there is no new content word.

A rise-to-mid melody is used for each message unit in the list or series except the last, to indicate an incomplete message. The last message unit in the series has a low-range melody to signal finality or completion.

## Special Uses of Primary Stress and Intonation: Questions and Answers<sup>†</sup>

Type	Structure	Primary Stress	Intonation	Example
Information Q	QW+Aux+Subject+Verb QW+Verb+ ...	Last content word in new info, or last function word	Low-Range	<i>Why don't we get stárted?</i> <i>Who got a different answer?</i>
Narrowed Q	Like Information Question	On question word or <b>second</b> part of question phrase	Low-Range	A: <i>I think we have problems with valídity.</i> B: <i>What t́ype of validity?</i>
Yes/No Q	Aux+Subject+Verb+ ...	Last content word in new info, or last function word	Low-Range High-Range	<i>Do you have any quéstions?</i>
Yes/No Answer	To indicate yes or no about the verb, use modals with or without old information verb head	Positive answer: On first modal  Negative answer: On <i>not</i> or negative contraction	Low-Range	A: <i>Did you take his pícture?</i> B: <i>I míght have.</i>  B: <i>No, I dídn't. / I did nó.</i>
Repetition Q	Information Q Structure → Yes/No Q Structure } Statement Q Structure )	On question word or <b>first</b> part of question phrase  Stress last unclear or challenged word	High-Range	<i>Hów many points?</i> <i>Did you say the médian?</i> <i>He conquered the Íncas?</i>

<sup>†</sup>See the workbook for information on the stress and intonation of answers to each type of question.