

TOEIC® SPEAKING TEST QUESTIONS 1-2: READ A TEXT ALOUD

SAMPLE QUESTION

Directions: In this part of the test, you will read aloud the text on the screen. You will have 45 seconds to prepare. Then you will have 45 seconds to read the text aloud.

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RESPONSE TIME

00:00:45

PRONUNCIATION TIPS: How to improve pronunciation by focusing on the stress-timed nature of spoken English

Rhythm and Sentence Stress

In speaking English naturally, some words are stressed and others are not stressed. The stress placed on words within sentences is called 'sentence stress'. Sentence stress is what gives English its 'rhythm'. Stressed syllables appear at regular intervals. And that is why English is called a stress-timed language. This means that there is an equal amount of time between stressed syllables and usually, the stressed syllables are pronounced longer and louder than the unstressed syllables, and the unstressed syllables between stressed syllables are shortened to accommodate this and pronounced very quickly. In other syllable-timed languages, on the other hand, approximately equal stress is given to every syllable.

The basic rules for sentence stress in English are:

1. content words (the key words of a sentence; carry meaning) are usually stressed.
 2. function words (carry little meaning but which show grammatical relationships) are usually not stressed.
 3. the time between stressed words is always the same.
- Content word examples: Nouns (car, music, Jane), Verbs (sell, give, walk), Adjectives (big, interesting, white), Adverbs (slowly, never, soon), Question Words (why, where, when), Negative Auxiliaries (don't, can't, aren't).
 - Function word examples: Articles (a, an, the), Prepositions (at, on, in), Conjunctions (and, but, that), Relatives (which, that, where), Pronouns (he, she, it), Auxiliaries (will, do, be).
 - Note that when "be" is used as a main verb, it is usually unstressed (even though in this case it is a content word).

A. Listen to your teacher reading the following sentence in two different ways and count how many seconds it takes. What will you do at the meeting tomorrow?

a. In a syllable-timed manner seconds

b. In a stress-timed fashion seconds.

B. Listen to your teacher reading the following sentence in two different ways and count how many seconds it takes. What are you going to do at the meeting tomorrow?

a. In a syllable-timed manner seconds

b. In a stress-timed fashion seconds.

The rhythm in which stressed words are pronounced should be kept constant. The time spent in pronouncing the four unstressed words (are you going to) is the same as the time spent in pronouncing the two unstressed words (will you).

c. Try tapping the desk rhythmically while saying the sentences below from top to bottom. Although the sentences get longer, it should take the same time to say them. The stressed content words are marked with a dot.



What do meeting tomorrow?

What will you **do meeting tomorrow?**

What are you going to **do meeting tomorrow?**

What are you going to **do** at **meeting tomorrow?**

What are you going to **do** at the **meeting tomorrow?**

C. Listen to your teacher reading the following sentence. Underline stressed words and write the name of the parts of speech.

We can hold a meeting on Tuesday at 10.

D. Listen to your teacher reading the following sentence. Underline stressed words and write the name of the parts of speech.

We can't hold a meeting on Tuesday at 10.

E. Read the following silently and underline stressed words.

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F. Read the following aloud in a stress-timed fashion.

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DICTION

1. All livinghave to adapt to changes inconditions.
2. The African Lions are classed as
3. Undoubtedly, continued economic growth the environmentalof the planet.
4. They are trying to raise money for.....
5. The theory has-..... for the future of the planet.