

The Stress-Timed Rhythm of English

Resource 1: Analysis

Task: First mark the stress patterns of the words on the left as in the example, then match the words with phrases on the right that have the same stress pattern.

Example: education

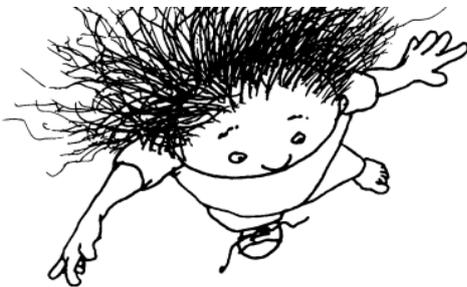
Mary saw you

1	mother	do it	a
2	confer	Gary bought it	b
3	commander	forks are in the drawer	c
4	guarantee	with her?	d
5	legislation	go to India	e
6	personality	I think he's got it	f
7	communication	have some beans	g
8	personalization	We found it	h

Resource 2: Listening discrimination



Task: 1-a) Listen as the teacher reads the following rhythmical poems and over-lace the lines of the poem with stress dots. b) Listen again and tap the stress. c) Now read the poem chorally with the teacher.



FALLING UP

I tripped on my shoelace
 And I fell up—
 Up to the roof tops,
 Up over the town,
 Up past the tree tops,
 Up over the mountains,
 Up where the colors
 Blend into the sounds.
 But it got me so dizzy
 When I looked around,
 I got sick to my stomach
 And I threw down.



SNOWBALL

I made myself a snowball
 As perfect as could be.
 I thought I'd keep it as a pet
 And let it sleep with me.
 I made it some pajamas
 And a pillow for its head.
 Then last night it ran away,
 But first—it wet the bed.





Task: 2) Listen to the following words, phrases and sentences, identify the pattern as either a) da'DA'da'da or b) DA'da'da'DA and place the appropriate letter a) or b) next to the utterance.

- (a) Now we are alone _____
- (b) A little one _____
- (c) Send him away _____
- (d) Especially _____
- (e) A pair of them _____
- (f) Leave it behind _____
- (g) Not before tea _____
- (h) To borrow it _____
- (i) Lots to be done _____
- (j) Prepare for it _____

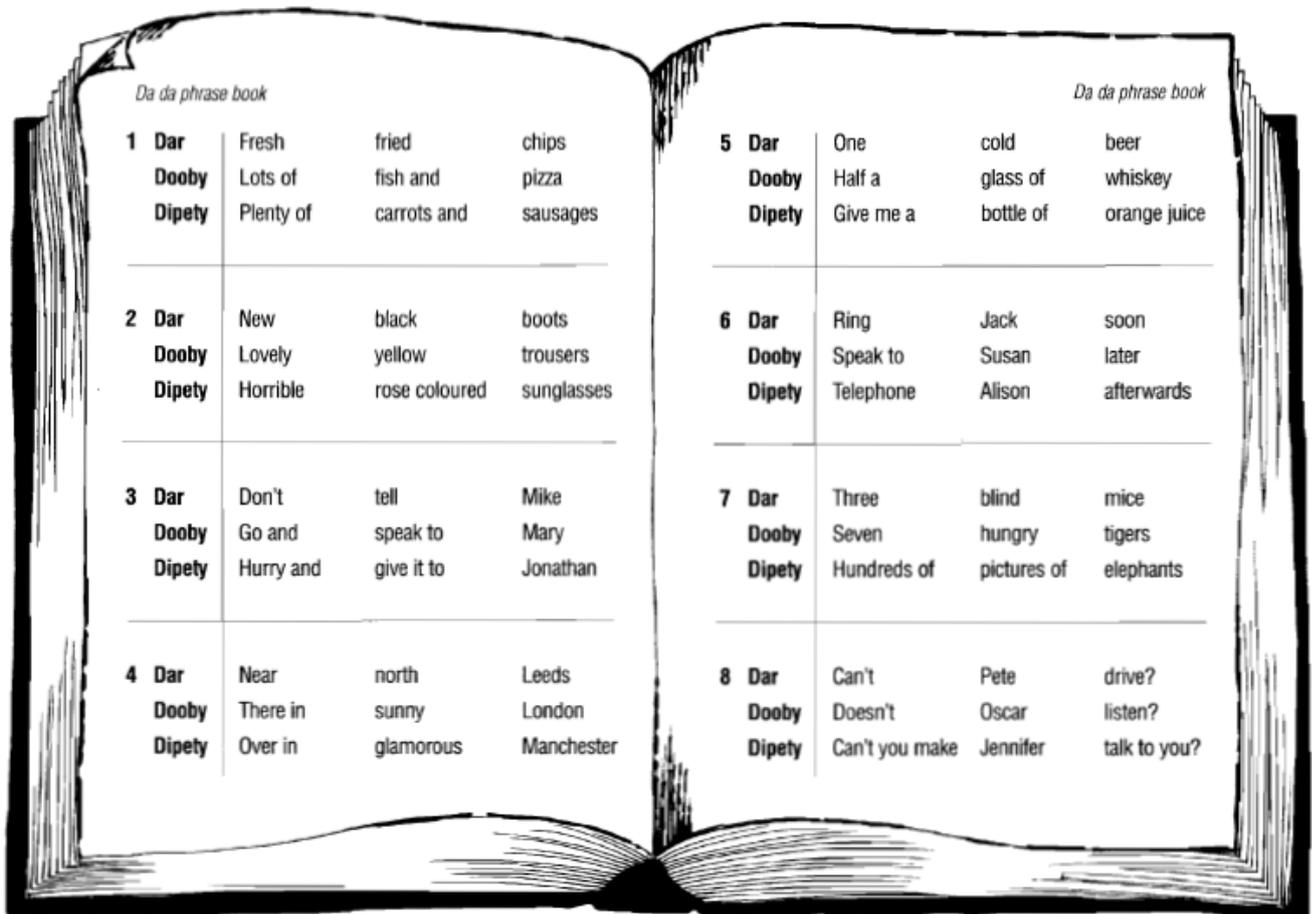
Examples: HARD'ly e'NOUGH	b)
It's BEAU'ti'ful	a)

Resource 3: Controlled practice

Task: 1) Go together in pairs and agree on one box between 1 and 8. One of you makes a "sentence" taking one coded word from each column, e.g. "dar dooby dipedy" or "dar dar dooby". In these three "words", the first syllable is stressed and the other two unstressed. Your partner then translates this coded language into a sentence. E.g. in box no. 5, "dar dooby dooby" would be "one glass of whiskey". The real words have the same stress pattern. Switch roles and do a number of boxes.

From Pronunciation Games by Mark Hancock © Cambridge University Press 1995

PHOTOCOPIABLE



Task: 2) Listen to your teacher reading the following dialogue. Go together with a partner and practice reading it, switching roles a couple of times. Focus on making stressed syllables longer and more prominent (using pitch) and on reducing unstressed syllables.

Discuss stress placement and give each other feedback on their production.

Bob: Joe, your cell's ringing.
Joe: Really? Are you sure?
Bob: Dude, don't you hear it? Just answer it.
Joe: That's not *my* phone. Must be *yours*!
Bob: Geez, you're right. Sorry man!

Resource 4: Guided practice

Task: 1-a) Get up and ask several people in the room the question "Who do you admire?". Take a few quick notes as you hear the answer. When you answer the question, do it in the following format (changing the underlined formation):

"I admire my grandmother because she's 90 years old and still really active.

Please remember monitoring your production for accurate rhythm & stress.

Task: 2) Report to another person what you've been told.

For instance: "Sasha admires his grandmother because she's ninety years old and...".

Resource 5: Communicative practice

Task: Go together in groups of 3 and prepare a role-play of a late night talk show. One of you will be the host, another a guest and the third will monitor the other two's production and provide feedback at the end.

Do three role-plays shifting roles. The guest gets role cards of people who have done "crazy things". The host starts off asking questions like "what is your name?", "what did you do?", "when/where/why/how did you do this?". The guests will answer spontaneously with the bits of information on the role card while the host asks further questions as it goes.

You ate 30 pancakes in a cab while driving up 5th avenue.

You hiked through the Scottish Cairngorm mountains for 3 days in January.

You tried to live for a week only on moon energy instead of eating.