

Possible Pronunciation Problems

English sentence-level stress patterns may not be used the same way as in your language. In English, specific words within a sentence are emphasized or spoken louder to make them stand out. ("It's not **his** house; it's **her** house.") Your language may use its grammar instead of word stress to convey the same meaning. Consequently, you may be confused about when to use strong stress (and when not to use it!) in English sentences. Using the stress patterns of your native language when speaking English will contribute to your foreign accent.

1. If you place the stress on the wrong word, you will:

a. completely change the meaning of your statement.

EXAMPLE

"He lives in the green **house**" (the house painted green) will sound like
"He lives in the **greenhouse**" (where plants are grown).

b. distort your intended meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLE

"**Steve's** my cousin" (not Sam) will sound like
"Steve's my **cousin**" (not my brother).

2. If you give too much or equal stress to unimportant or "function words":

EXAMPLES

"I'm in the **house**" will sound like "I'm **in the** house."
"He's at the **store**" will sound like "**He's at the** store."

After reading the explanations and listening to the CD a few times, you will begin to understand the use of English sentence stress patterns. YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF YOURSELF. YOU'VE ALREADY COME A LONG WAY!