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P21: Prominence

Student Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

For media links in this activity, visit [the LLC ESL Tutoring website for Upper Level SDLAs](#). Find your SDLA number to see all the resources to finish your SDLA.

Section 1: Introduction

Every language has its own intonation or *melody*. In English, it is important to understand this melody, including the way our voices rise and fall and which words are stressed within each sentence. You may know that individual syllables within a word can be stressed. When we stress syllables or words, we say them louder and slower. P18: Word Stress teaches you how to stress syllables in a word.

This SDLA will focus on how to stress words within a sentence, or *sentence stress*. Sentence stress is also called *prominence*. The words that are stressed are called *prominent words*. Prominent words are the key or important words in sentences. They provide most of the information.

Watch the [Section 1 Video](#) to learn more about prominent words. After you watch, answer the question.



In your own words, what is sentence stress? Why is it important?



Section 2: Choosing Prominent Words

Look at the following statements and questions. Notice that the prominent words are written in capitals letters.

1. WHO cooked DINNER?
2. This GIFT is for HER.
3. WHAT does DAN do?
4. WHAT'S the WEATHER like?
5. DONNA BOUGHT a HOUSE.
6. Is THIS your FRIEND?
7. Are you FEELING OK?
8. What TIME is it?
9. WHERE'S MARY?
10. Do you THINK she'll LIKE it?

Rewrite the following statements, using capitals to show which words are prominent. Then, match these sentences with the statements/ questions above. Note that the prominent words in the responses below give information to answer the questions/statements above. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Question/Statement	Response	Response with Prominence
This GIFT is for HER.	A. It's beautiful. B. I'm tired. C. Tom did. D. It's getting late. E. I'm sure she will. F. He's my brother. G. He's a student. H. It's raining again. I. She's at work. J. She told me about it.	It's BEAUTIFUL.



Section 3: New Information vs. Old Information

In conversations, prominence of words will change depending on whether it is new or old information. The new information will be stressed, while the old information is not stressed. Look at the example below. Notice how the prominent word is stressed.

Conversation 1: Borrowing Money

Julie: Hey. Can I **BORROW** some **MONEY** (new)?

Tom: How **MUCH** money (old) do you need?

Julie: I need to borrow **TEN DOLLARS** (new).

Tom: I'm sorry, but I **DON'T** (new) have ten dollars (old).

Julie: Okay. I'll ask **SOMEONE** (new) else.

Conversation 2: Vacation in Hawaii

Jack: Hi. **HOW** was your **VACATION**?

Tim: Our vacation was **GREAT**!

Jack: **WHERE** did you **GO**?

Tim: We went to **HAWAII**. Hawaii is a **FANTASTIC** place.

Jack: I'm **GLAD** you had a **GOOD** time in Hawaii.

You Try!

Now make 2 similar conversations with the given cues. Be sure to capitalize the prominent words and follow the same pattern as in the sample conversations. You will practice these conversations with the tutor.

Conversation 3: See a movie/yesterday

Conversation 4: Do homework/library



Section 4: Listening Practice

Listen to the following parts of the Section 4 Conversation between two men about an English Language Center.

Fill in the blanks with the words you hear. Can you hear the stress on these prominent words?

Part 1: (00:00-00:52)

Man 1: English Language Center. How may I help you?

Man 2: Yes, I'm calling to find out _____ information about your program. For example, what kinds of _____ do you offer?

Man 1: Well, first of all, the _____ of our program is to provide language learning opportunities to this area's community. Whether a student's goal is to master basic functional language skills, let's say for his or her job or to study _____ to enter a U.S. college or university.

Man 2: Okay. I'm calling for a _____ who's interested in attending a U.S. university.

Man 1: And that's the kind of instruction that we provide from basic communication courses to content-based classes such as computer literacy, intercultural communication, and business English.

Man 2: Great! What are your _____ deadlines for the next semester?

Man 1: Well, we ask applicants to apply no later than _____ months before the semester begins. This gives us _____ to _____ the application and _____ the student's I-20.

Part 2 (01:06-01:43)

Man 2: What is the _____ for a full-time student?

Man 1: It's \$2,030.

Man 2: And how does one apply?

Man 1: Well, we can _____ you an application, and you can _____ that to us, or you can _____ our application that's online on our website.

Man 2: And are there other materials I would need to send in in addition to the application form?

Man 1: Yes. You would need to send in a _____, non-refundable application fee, a _____ form indicating who will be responsible _____ for the student while studying in our program, and a _____ statement showing that you or your sponsor has sufficient funds to cover tuition and expenses and _____ costs for the entire year of study.







Section 5: Practice with a Passage

Read the passage below. Which words you think have prominence? Take time to read over the passage and practice stressing the prominent words.

Good morning. We are happy to be presenting on how to improve English pronunciation. Practice is important. Therefore, we need to be intentional in how we practice. Attention should be given to learning the rules. Then time and energy should be put into practice. Practice with someone who can give you feedback so that you are not wasting your time practicing incorrectly. Let's get started on improving your pronunciation.

Section 6: Student Self-Assessment

Complete this table BEFORE meeting with a tutor.

Communication Skill	I can't do this YET. 	I can do this WITH help. 	I can do this WITHOUT help. 	I can TEACH this to a classmate. 
I can recognize which words are stressed in a sentence.				
I can decide which words to stress in a sentence based on the rules of prominence.				

Here are some words/phrases I need to practice.

Good Job!

Now make an appointment

with a tutor on the LLC ESL Tutoring Website

(www.mtsac.edu/lc/passportrewards/lctutoring).



Section 7: Practice with a Tutor!

Meet with a tutor, and share this activity with the tutor. To make sure you understand prominence, you will practice the conversations you wrote in Section 3 and read the passage from Section 5 to the tutor. You may also ask the tutor any questions that you might have.

Grading Rubric

Table with 4 columns: Possible Points, Need Practice (0-1 Point), Good Job (2-3 Points), Excellent Work (4-5 Points). Rows include Content, Skill: Speaking, and Oral Fluency.

*Students must receive at least 10 points to move on

Possible Points: _____ / 15

Tutor Comments:

[] Congratulations! Keep going.

You have successfully completed this SDLA and are ready to continue to the next.

[] Work on this more.

You have not yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that you complete it again.

Tutor Signature: _____

Date: _____