

Pronunciation Keys and Syllable Stress

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

A dictionary entry shows how to say a word. Dots break the word into syllables (*gen·er·ous*). The mark ■ BEFORE a syllable means PRIMARY stress (say it louder). A schwa ■ sounds like the soft “uh” in *about*.

PRACTICE

Use the dictionary entry shown to choose the best answer.

1. Entry: **gen·er·ous** \■jen-(■-)r■s\

How many syllables does **generous** have?

- A. 2 (you can blend the middle into the last)
- B. 4 (counting an extra schwa)
- C. 3 (gen · er · ous)
- D. 5 (one per letter group)

2. In **gen·er·ous** \■jen-(■-)r■s\, which syllable gets PRIMARY stress?

- A. gen
- B. er
- C. ous
- D. all syllables equally

3. The symbol ■ (schwa) sounds most like the underlined sound in —

- A. cat (short /a/)
- B. about (unstressed soft “uh”)
- C. tree (long /e/)
- D. night (long /i/)

4. Entry: **com·pu·ter** \k■m-■pyü-t■r\

Which syllable is stressed?

- A. com
- B. all syllables equally
- C. ter
- D. pu



5. Entry: **el-e-phant** \e-l-fnt\

How many syllables?

- A. 2 (you can blend the middle)
- B. 3 (el · e · phant)
- C. 4 (counting an extra beat)
- D. 5 (one per letter cluster)

6. Entry: **vol-ca-no** \völ-k-n\

Which syllable is stressed?

- A. vol
- B. ca
- C. no
- D. all stressed equally

7. Entry: **hap-py** \ha-p\

Which syllable is stressed?

- A. hap
- B. py
- C. neither (both unstressed)
- D. both stressed equally

8. Entry: **ba-nan-a** \b-na-n\

Which syllable is stressed?

- A. all stressed equally
- B. ba
- C. na (the last syllable)
- D. nan (the middle syllable)

9. Which BEST describes what the ■ symbol tells you?

- A. the word is plural
- B. this syllable should be skipped
- C. say this syllable louder (primary stress)
- D. whisper this syllable

10. Entry: **im-por-tant** \im-p-r-tnt\

Which syllable is stressed?

- A. por
- B. im
- C. tant
- D. all stressed equally



Answer Keys

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Explanations	
1. C	The dots split it into THREE syllables: gen · er · ous. A merges syllables; B and D add extra ones that aren't marked.
2. A	The ■ mark sits BEFORE <i>jen</i> , so the FIRST syllable <i>gen</i> is stressed. The other syllables are unstressed.
3. B	Schwa is the soft, unstressed “uh” heard in <i>about</i> . The others are clear, stressed vowel sounds (short a, long e, long i).
4. D	The ■ mark falls before <i>pyü</i> , the middle <i>pu</i> syllable. The first syllable <i>com</i> uses a schwa (unstressed); <i>ter</i> ends in a schwa-r and is unstressed.
5. B	Three syllables shown by the dots: el · e · phant. A merges; C and D add syllables not in the entry.
6. B	The ■ mark falls before <i>k■</i> — the middle <i>ca</i> syllable. The first and last syllables are unstressed.
7. A	The ■ mark precedes <i>ha</i> , so the first syllable <i>hap</i> is stressed. Two-syllable words usually have one stressed and one unstressed syllable.
8. D	The ■ mark precedes <i>na</i> in the middle, which spells the <i>nan</i> syllable. The first and last syllables are schwa-sounds (unstressed).
9. C	■ = PRIMARY STRESS — the syllable said louder/stronger. Plurals aren't marked in pronunciation keys; syllables aren't skipped or whispered.
10. A	The ■ mark precedes <i>p■r</i> , the middle <i>por</i> syllable. <i>im</i> and <i>tant</i> are unstressed.

