

AAE103

L14 : Rhythm

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rhythm in the world

- rhythm is the repetition of something
- lots of things have rhythm:

clocks
heartbeat
footsteps
speech

two types of speech rhythm

- syllable-based: each syllable has its own beat
- stress-based: the beat depends on the stressed syllables

syllable-based vs syllable-timed

- previously, the terms stress-timed and syllable-timed were used
- measurements showed the timing was not fixed
- now we tend to talk about stress-based and syllable-based
- rhythm affects more than just timing

French has syllable-based rhythm

c'est absolument ridicule

BrE has stress-based rhythm

go down the path to the end of the canal

feet

- a foot consists of a Strong syllable plus any following weak syllables
- each foot should have about equal duration

marking rhythmic feet

- put 'S' above each strong syllable
- put 'w' above each weak syllable
- put vertical line before each 'S'

go down the path to the end of the canal

now do the same for these

The man in the moon is out for lunch.

David loves to read a book in the evening.

Simon prefers to live on Orchard Road.

alternation of S and W

- English likes an alternation of strong and weak syllables
- two strong together may be avoided
- two weak are OK; but three weak are not good
- these are just tendencies; stress clashes and sequences of three or more weak syllables do occur

avoidance of stress clash

fifTEEN

FIFteen MEN

ChiNESE

CHINese PEOPle

promotion of weak syllables

He's sitting at the back of the class.

may be promoted

- prepositions
- auxiliary verbs

- pronouns are almost never stressed

SgE tends to be syllable-based



this is partly because of the lack of reduced vowels

other kinds of syllable-based rhythm

- BrE sometimes uses syllable-base rhythm: for special emphasis
- rap is syllable-based
- many New Varieties of English (NVEs) are syllable-based
- Crystal (2003: 172) suggests, in the future, standard English may be syllable-based

Readings

- SoE 104-109
- Crystal (2003) *English as Global Language* (2nd ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge Univesity Press