Sentence Stress & Rhythm

- Compare the stress patterns below:

volunteer	*She can hear.*
presented	*He sent it.*
economics	*in the comics*
approximate	*a box of it*
electrification	*She went to the station.*

- Syllable-timed language (e.g. Korean, Spanish): The number of **syllables** determines the length of an utterance.

- Stress-timed language (e.g. English): The number of **stresses** determines the length of an utterance.

CATS CHASE MICE.
The CATS CHASE MICE.
The CATS have CHASED MICE.
The CATS have CHASED the MICE.
The CATS have been CHASING the MICE.
The CATS might have been CHASING the MICE.

- Although the sentences above differ in the number of syllables, they all take roughly the same amount of time.
- Content words vs. Function words: Rhythm in English is created by stressing content words and reducing function words.

DA	di	di	**DA**	di	di	**DA**
Bill	*is*	*in*	*front*	*of*	*the*	*room.*
Ann	*is*	*a*	*way*	*for*	*the*	*day.*
Nice	*is*	*a*	*town*	*by*	*the*	*sea.*

- Find the right matches.

a.	di **DA** di	i.	Try to sleep.
b.	di **DA** di di	ii.	You promised to phone.
c.	di **DA** di **DA**	iii.	I'd like to help.
d.	di **DA** di di **DA**	iv.	It's broken.
e.	**DA** di **DA**	v.	I stepped on it.

*Stresses in *English *tend to oc*cur at *regular

*intervals of *time. It is *perfectly *possible to

*tap on the *stresses in *time with a

*metronome. The *rhythm can *even be *said to

de*termine the *length of the *pause between *phrases. (Prator)