

Sentence Stress & Rhythm

I. Compare the stress patterns below:

<i>overlook</i>	<i>Tell the cook.</i>
<i>guarantee</i>	<i>Can't you see?</i>
<i>approximate</i>	<i>a box of it</i>
<i>identification</i>	<i>We took a vacation.</i>
<i>electrification</i>	<i>She went to the station.</i>

- Just as words have stressed and unstressed syllables, so do phrases and sentences.

II. English is a **stress**-timed language:

MICE EAT CHEESE.

The MICE EAT CHEESE.

The MICE EAT the CHEESE.

The MICE might EAT the CHEESE.

The MICE might have EATEN the CHEESE.

The MICE might have been EATING the CHEESE.

- Although the sentences above differ in the number of syllables, they all take roughly the same amount of time.