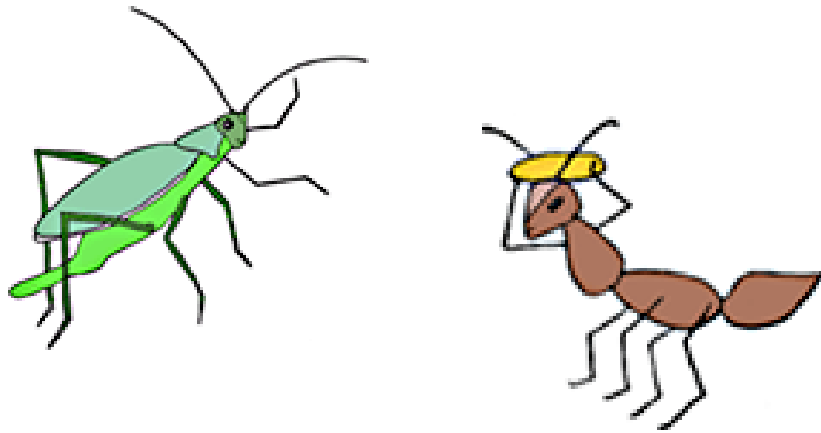
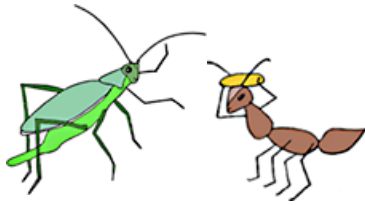


Focus 1

The Beat of Stress & Unstress



**Aesop's Fable:
The Grasshopper and the Ants**

**Language Objectives:**

- ◆ to **understand** stressed and unstressed syllables
- ◆ to **understand** and produce the /ə/

Approx Time: 90 minutes

Materials:

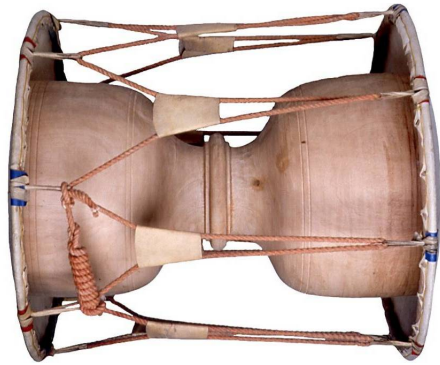
- ◆ **Music of English SLIDE**
- ◆ **The Grasshopper and the Ants Fable** for each learner
- ◆ **Listening Worksheet** for each learner
- ◆ **unstressed vowel SLIDE**
- ◆ **Snap Cards** for each pair of learners
- ◆ **Word Stress Pattern Wall Cards**

The Beat of Stress & Unstress

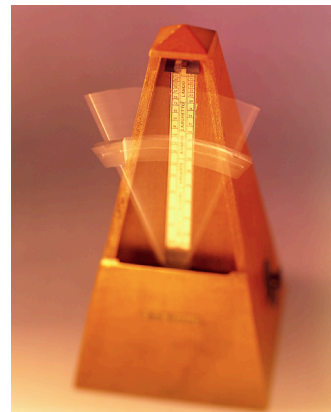
Instructions:**Part A:** *Introduction*

1. A Spanish speaking language professor once said that English was his favourite language because of its musical sounds like songs – *that beautiful singing of birds!*
2. Explain to the learners that pronunciation has two main aspects:
 - a) The individual sounds of vowels and consonants – the smaller pieces
 - b) The ‘melody’ and tone of phrases, sentences and longer pieces of language (also called ‘prosody’).
3. Vowel and consonant segments combine into syllables; syllables combine into words; and words combine into phrases and sentences. But the process of producing connected speech affects the pronunciation of several of these segments in a number of interesting ways producing a beautiful but meaningful melody.
4. In this course we will focus on how to produce the meaningful melody of English:
 - the beat of stressing and reducing syllables and/or words,
 - the rhythm of differing time given to sounds,
 - and the rising and falling tones applied to words, phrases and sentences.

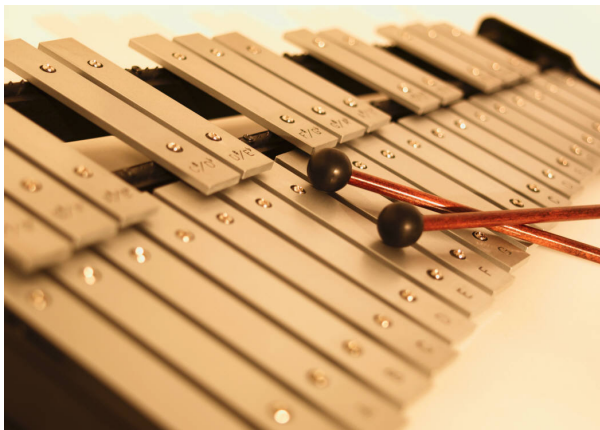
Loudness & Softness of Beat



Length of Time



Pitch Changes



Music of English SLIDE

Part B: *Listening to a Story*

1. Hand out the Aesop fable, **The Grasshopper and the Ants**, to each learner. You may want to explain that this story is an Aesop Fable.

Note to Instructor: **Aesop** (c. 620–564 BC) was a story teller credited with a number of fables now collectively known as *Aesop's Fables*. *"They were among the first printed works in the vernacular European languages, and writers and thinkers throughout history have perpetuated them to such an extent that they are embraced as among the essential truths about human beings and their ways."*

-D.L. Ashliman

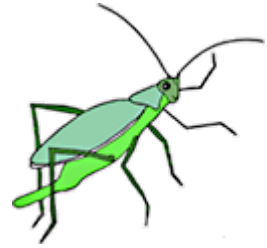
2. Read the fable.
3. Discuss the fable and what it means.
4. Point out that each word has its own beat (soft or loud) that produces the rhythm of English. Read the fable again for them to notice that rhythm.

The Grasshopper and the Ants

2 **Aesop:** One fine day in winter some ants were busy drying their
store of corn, which had got rather damp during a long spell of
rain. Presently up came a grasshopper and begged.

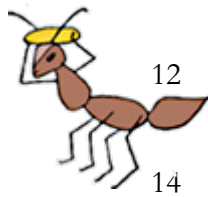
4

6 **Grasshopper:** Please spare me a few grains, for I'm
simply starving.



8 **Aesop:** The ants stopped work for a moment,
though this was against their principles.

10



12 **Ants:** May we ask what you were doing with yourself
all last summer? Why didn't you collect a store of food
for the winter?

14

16 **Grasshopper:** The fact is I was so busy singing that I hadn't the
time.

18 **Ants:** If you spent the summer singing, you can't do better than
spend the winter dancing.

20

22 **Aesop:** And they chuckled and went on with their work.

Prepare today for the needs of tomorrow.

The Grasshopper and the Ants Fable

Part C: *Syllable Structure*

1. Explain to the learners that we are going to look at the structure of English words so that they too can produce the appropriate beat when they speak English.
2. Point out that vowels and consonants typically do not act alone; there are very few words or word-like noises which consist of only one sound.
 - The vast majority of English words contain a combination of vowels (V) and consonants (C), such as CV (go), CVC (cat), CCVCC (stops), and CCCV (screw).

Note to Instructor: Many languages have only the CV syllable structure so the variety of syllable structures in English may be difficult to grasp at first.

- The combined units are called syllables.
- People are able to count the number of syllables in a word, by beating out its rhythm.
- The rule is basically simple: each syllable contains one vowel or vowel-like nucleus.

3. Explain the concept of syllables by demonstrating with words of one, two and three syllables.

Ask the learners to tap the desk for each *beat*.

1	2	3	4
one	busy		
fine	drying	grasshopper	consequently
day	rather	presently	demonstrating
grain	during	principles	mismanagemnt
last	moment	tomorrow	understanding
why	summer	yesterday	consistently
do	winter		
	collect		

Practice hearing the number of syllables by leading them in a Snap activity for matching the number of syllables.

4. Explain and/or give out the rules.

Rules:

- a. The aim of the activity is to win more cards than your partner(s).
- b. Deal the cards equally between players keeping the cards face down in a pile.
- c. Take turns to turn the cards face up in a pile in the centre of the table, making sure that the player cannot see the card before the others.
- d. If you notice that the number of syllables of the word on a card is the same as the word on the card before, you can win all the cards in the pile. To do this, put your hand on the pile quickly and say Snap!
- e. After you have won the pile, put the cards to one side and begin again taking turns to put cards on the table. Shuffle and deal the cards on the table again when you no longer have any cards in your hands.
- f. The player with the most cards when all the cards have been paired off is the winner.

Stress Snap Cards - Cut on the dotted lines



one	why	during	grasshopper	consequent
one	why	during	grasshopper	consequent
fine	do	moment	presently	repeatedly
fine	do	moment	presently	repeatedly
day	busy	summer	principles	mismanage
day	busy	summer	principles	mismanage
grain	drying	winter	tomorrow	industrious
grain	drying	winter	tomorrow	industrious
last	rather	collect	yesterday	consistent
last	rather	collect	yesterday	consistent

Part D: *Stress Pattern*

1. Every content word has one syllable with more stress. The vowel in that syllable is said clearer, louder and longer.

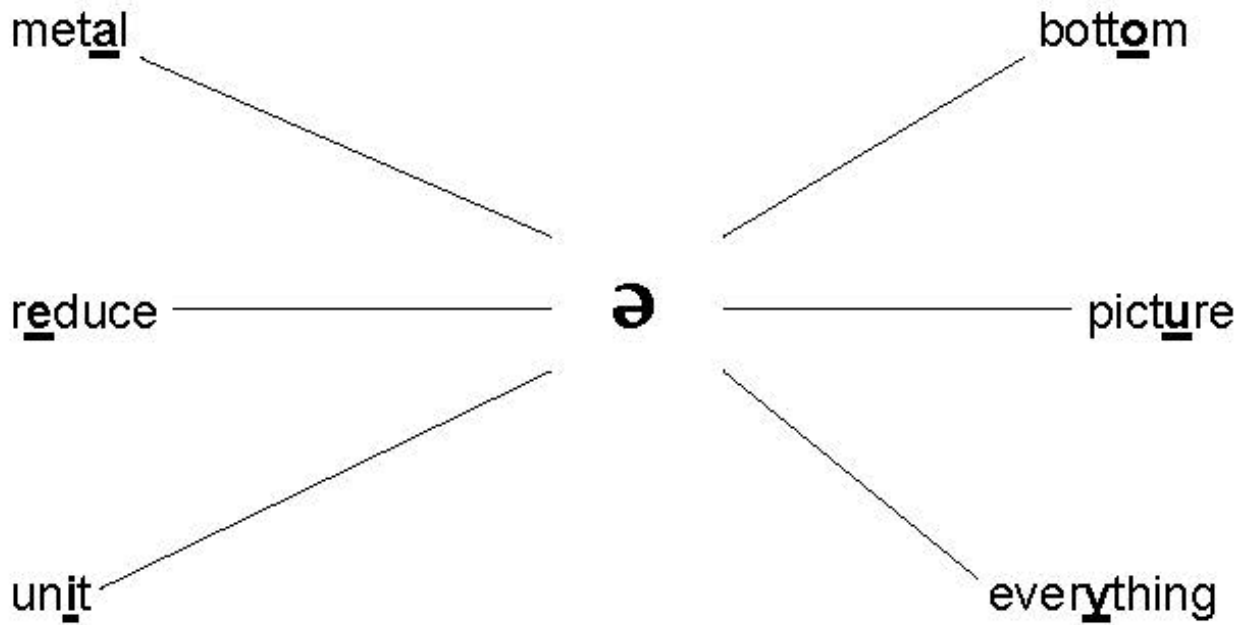
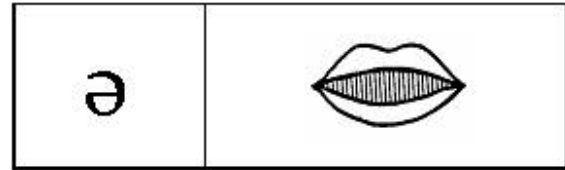
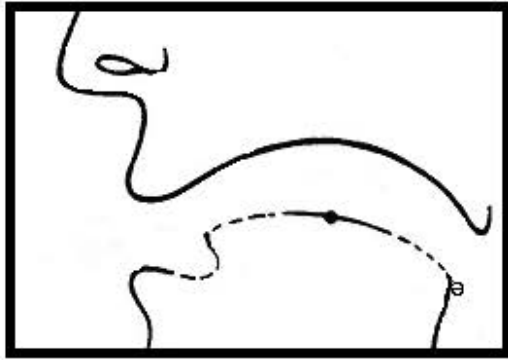
Note to Instructor: Content words are naming words [nouns], action words [verbs], and description words [adjectives and adverbs].
Function words (determiners, personal pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions) are usually unstressed.

2. Ask the learners to notice the stress patterns. Ask them to repeat as the list is read:

● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●
winter	grasshopper	collect	tomorrow
1 st syllable	1 st syllable	2 nd syllable	2 nd syllable

(The larger ● indicates the stressed syllable.)

3. The other syllables' vowels are unstressed vowels: mid central, unclear, quick. Use **Unstressed Vowel SLIDE**. (*Show that all the written vowel letters may be pronounced as unstressed or as Schwa- unclear, quick*)



- adapted from *Vowel Dimensions*, Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1983.

Unstressed Vowel SLIDE

Part E: *Listening*

1. Point out that there are several word stress patterns: where the stressed and unstressed syllables are in a word. Although most English words have the stress on the 1st syllable, there are many words that have a different pattern. Illustrate with 2 words such as *again* and *tomorrow*.
2. Hand out a copy of the **Listening Worksheet** for listening discrimination. Read each row across and ask the learners to mark with a check (✓) **D** for Different or **S** for Same.

<i>Answer Key:</i>			
Listening Discrimination		D	S
again	listen	✓	
learning	teaching		✓
collect	singing	✓	
consistent	mismanage		✓
unit	receive	✓	
behind	water	✓	
around	winter	✓	
Superstore	tomorrow	✓	
follow	dancing		✓
unless	empty	✓	
restaurant	grasshopper		✓
internal	together		✓
another	yesterday	✓	
supply	picture	✓	
summer	before	✓	

Check (✓) the **D** if the stress pattern is **Different** or the **S** if the stress pattern is the **Same**.

Listening Discrimination		D	S
again	listen		
learning	teaching		
collect	singing		
consistent	mismanage		
unit	receive		
behind	water		
around	winter		
Superstore	tomorrow		
follow	dancing		
unless	empty		
restaurant	grasshopper		
internal	together		
another	yesterday		
supply	picture		
summer	before		

Listening Worksheet

Part F: *Stress Snap**

1. Attach the following words with their stress pattern cards on the wall:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 ● | 2 ●● | 3 ●● | 4 ●●● | 5 ●●● | 6 ●●●● |
| ant | winter | before | principle | tomorrow | Canadian |

2. Using one set of the **Stress Snap Cards**, hand out words to the learners, having them say the word and then place it under the correct stress pattern card on the wall. Once the whole set is on the wall drill each pattern three times.

<i>Answer Key:</i>					
●	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
one	busy	collect	grasshopper	tomorrow	industrious
fine	drying	before	principles	consistent	repeatedly
day	rather		yesterday	mismanage	
grain	during		presently		
last	moment		consequent		
why	summer				
do	winter				

* Idea adapted from Hancock, Mark. *Pronunciation Games* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995

3. Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a pack of **Stress Snap Cards (from Part B)**. (The activity could also be played by learners in groups of three if necessary.)

Note to Instructor: Make each set of cards in a different colour for ease of sorting.

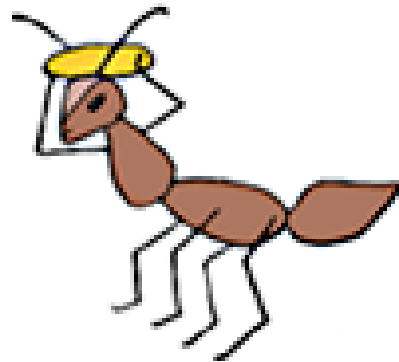
4. Explain and/or give out the rules.

Rules:

- a. The aim of the activity is to win more cards than your partner(s).
- b. Deal the cards equally between players keeping the cards face down in a pile.
- c. Take turns to turn the cards face up in a pile in the centre of the table, making sure that the player cannot see the card before the others.
- d. If you notice that the stress pattern of the word on a card is the same as the word on the card before, you can win all the cards in the pile. To do this, put your hand on the pile quickly and say Snap!
- e. After you have won the pile, put the cards to one side and begin again taking turns to put cards on the table. Shuffle and deal the cards on the table again when you no longer have any cards in your hands.
- f. The player with the most cards when all the cards have been paired off is the winner.
- g. If you cannot agree with your partner(s) about the stress patterns of words, check with the lists on the wall.

1 ●

ant



2 ● ●

winter



3 ● ●

before

4 ● ● ●
principle

5 ● ● ●
tomorrow

6 ● ● ● ●
Canadian



Word Stress Pattern Wall Cards pg2

Part G: *Reading*

1. Read aloud the fable: **The Ants and the Grasshopper**.
2. Divide the class into 3 groups.
 - Assign one part to each group: Aesop, Grasshopper, and Ants.
 - Ask the group to mark the strong beats in the words of their part.
3. Make new groups with one member from each of the previous groupings so that you have an Aesop, Grasshopper and Ants in each group.
 - Have them read the fable as a drama in the small group
 - Ask some of the groups to read it for the whole class.

NOTES