

# Suzanne's Quick Tips

Episode #3: Stressin' Out



**Culips English Podcast**

# Transcript

Hey guys, this is Suzanne and you're listening to Culips. Today's episode is a Quick Tip and we are talking about stressing nouns over adjectives. Before we get started remember that becoming a member of Culips, you will have access to so many materials so check it out and become a member.

All right, so today we're talking about stress, word stress. So in a sentence when you're trying to put emphasis on a word, it can be a little confusing, it can be a little jarring. A little confusing right in the moment when you're trying to communicate. Well, have you ever been caught stressing an adjective more than a noun? Like, maybe RED car or LARGE jacket.

So for example, when you have descriptive word followed by a noun, so like red car. **It's actually important to stress the noun.** So the word in this case, car more so than the adjective which in this case is red. Red CAR instead of RED car. Can you hear the difference there? Can you hear the rhythm? Red car, she was driving a red CAR instead of she was driving a RED car.

Now, think of a noun phrase with an adjective, so like red car, like a mountain. The peak of the mountain is the noun and the adjective is about half way up the mountain. So it's stressed, but it isn't stressed as much as the noun would be. So the adjective is actually stressed half way up the mountain and the full height of stress should be for the noun. For example, pink HAIR, dusty WINDOW, boring CLASS. Do you see how we're stressing hair, window, class? Because that's actually the most important information.

Now, sometimes an adjective is stressed more and this will happen in two scenarios. One, **if you are clarifying something like a concept or a fact or comparing nouns, then you will have to stress the adjective**, like PINK car. Not the BLUE car, right? So in that case I'm clarifying that I don't want to buy the blue car, I want to buy the pink car. I want to buy the PINK car today, not the BLUE car, OK?

Now another scenario would be that maybe you would **stress an adjective if the adjective and the noun are actually part of a compound noun**. Like BLACKboard or JUMP rope. In this case, you hear the adjective first: BLACKboard, JUMP rope and you hear it louder, you hear it more emphasized. This is because you have to stress the adjective in this case because it is

actually giving you information. It's telling you what kind of rope, right? What kind of rope? It's a jump rope. What kind of board you're talking about, it's a blackboard.

Now this can get a little confusing, why wouldn't you do it in a noun phrase? Well, in a compound word you have two different words, that are meaning something separately that when they come together create an actual noun. Create a whole new object, so like you have the word black and you have a board, but if you put that together and make it a compound word, blackboard, it actually becomes a different concept, completely different concept, completely different thing. So in that case, we need to stress black because you are actually explaining what kind of board it is. You're explaining what kind of new object you've created.

If you're just using it as a noun phrase, it's just describing the situation. It's not changing it into a whole new thing. Into a whole new object. See if I say, "I wanna buy a pink car today", I'm not changing the item, it's still a regular car that just happens to be pink. But, if I were to say, "I wanna buy a boxcar today." A boxcar is actually a whole different item, it's not just any car, it's actually a little thing that attaches to a motorcycle and it's a very specific kind of little car. So this is why it would be stressed in a compound word, OK? **So the key is to know whether it's a noun phrase or a compound word.**

So, let's recap and look at the takeaways. So first, in most cases nouns will be stressed more than the adjectives that describe them. For example, red CAR, blue CAR, pink HAIR, dusty WINDOW, boring CLASS. The second thing to remember is the only times that adjectives might be stressed more than the noun would be in two scenarios, a comparison situation or a clarifying right? So you're kind of saying I want the PINK car over the BLUE car. I'd like the MEDIUM steak over the LARGE steak. Or when the adjective is part of the compound noun, like BLACKboard or JUMP rope.

So let's try a couple: Lost CAR, back ROADS, hungry KIDS.

Now, let's try them in some compound words: BLACKboard, SHORTcut, COMMON room.

All right. So try this at home, try stressing your nouns more than your adjectives and see how it sounds and feels.

Thank you so much for listening to our Quick Tip about stressing nouns more than adjectives.

# Quick Tip Takeaways

1. In a noun phrase, for example, red car, the noun will usually be more stressed or emphasized. In this case, the word car.
2. In a compound noun that contains an adjective, for example, blackboard or black box, the adjective or the first word is usually stressed.
3. The only time you stress an adjective more than a noun in a noun phrase is when you are clarifying or comparing. For example: I don't like the RED jacket, I prefer the BLACK one.

## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had difficulty with stress in English? What aspects of stress are difficult?
2. If we stress nouns over adjectives in a noun phrase, what do you think the stress would be in a verb phrase? (Eg., quickly ran, suddenly jumped)
3. What are some ways we can tell if a noun phrase is indeed a phrase versus a compound noun?

# Study Challenges

1. Practice some noun phrase stress! Use a rubber band and hold it in both hands. Allow yourself to pull the rubber band and stretch it when you stress your noun.

<b>Late paper</b>	<b>Trick question</b>	<b>Crazy movie</b>
<b>Open door</b>	<b>Big party</b>	<b>Unfortunate situation</b>

2. Practice stress with compound nouns. Remember that the stress should be on the first part or the adjective/noun. Use the rubber band and stretch it to reflect the stress on the first word.

<b>Black box</b>	<b>Pocket book</b>	<b>Desktop</b>
<b>Greenhouse</b>	<b>Redhead</b>	<b>Software</b>

3. Practice your stress at home by using a rubber band to help illustrate the expansion and contraction of the word and sentence stress.

## Credits

Music: If by Broke for Free; Things to Come by Broke for free

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