

PHONETICS

STEP 1 – LISTEN & HIGHLIGHT THE STRESSED WORDS

Instructions: Listen to these extracts. While listening, highlight or click the words you hear as stressed (stronger and clearer).

A. Castle on the Hill – Ed Sheeran

I found my heart and broke it here
Made friends and lost them through the years

I'm on my way
Driving at ninety down those country lanes

B. Take Me Home, Country Roads – John Denver

Almost heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong

***Tip:** Content words (nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs) are usually stressed. Function words (articles, prepositions, auxiliaries) are usually not.*

STEP 2 – SPEAK THE LINES WITH THE RIGHT RHYTHM

Task: Listen to the whole songs and highlight the stressed words in the lyrics below.

Castle on the Hill, Ed Sheeran :

When I was six years old I broke my leg
I was running from my brother and his friends
And tasted the sweet perfume of the mountain grass I rolled down
I was younger then, take me back to when I

Found my heart and broke it here
Made friends and lost them through the years
And I've not seen the roaring fields in so long, I know I've grown
But I can't wait to go home

I'm on my way
Driving at 90 down those country lanes
Singing to "Tiny Dancer"
And I miss the way you make me feel, and it's real
We watched the sunset over the castle on the hill

Fifteen years old and smoking hand-rolled cigarettes
Running from the law through the backfields and getting drunk with my friends

Had my first kiss on a Friday night, I don't reckon that I did it right
But I was younger then, take me back to when

We found weekend jobs, when we got paid
We'd buy cheap spirits and drink them straight
Me and my friends have not thrown up in so long, oh how we've grown
But I can't wait to go home

CHORUS

One friend left to sell clothes
One works down by the coast
One had two kids but lives alone
One's brother overdosed
One's already on his second wife
One's just barely getting by
But these people raised me
And I can't wait to go home

And I'm on my way, I still remember
Those old country lanes
When we did not know the answers
And I miss the way you make me feel, it's real
We watched the sunset over the castle on the hill
Over the castle on the hill
Over the castle on the hill.

Take Me Home, Country Roads, John Denvers :

Almost Heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads

All my memories gather 'round her
Miner's lady, stranger to blue water
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky
Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye

CHORUS

I hear her voice in the mornin' hour, she calls me
The radio reminds me of my home far away
Drivin' down the road, I get a feelin'
That I should've been home yesterday, yesterday

CHORUS

- Practise saying the lyrics aloud with a partner. You can clap or tap the beat as you speak.

STEP 3 – CHANT THE LYRICS

Chant or rap the lyrics using a steady beat (your teacher may provide a metronome or instrumental background).

STEP 4 – REFLECT & COMPARE

Discussion Questions:

- How is English rhythm different from French?
- What does it mean that English is "stress-timed"?
- How does this affect the way you speak or sing in English?

Key Idea: *English rhythm is based on stressed syllables. French gives nearly equal time to each syllable. This creates very different musicality!*

STEP 5 : SING YOUR VERSE

Practise with the verse you have written earlier. Write it down and highlight the words you think are stressed. Check with your teacher and then practise saying it with the right stress pattern.