

Descriptive Phrases

Nouns and adjectives should generally be stressed in sentences because they carry new information. Practice the following:

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|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. It's a room . | It's small . |
| 2. He's a driver . | He's fast . |
| 3. It was a party . | It was boring . |
| 4. She's a girl . | She's tall . |
| 5. It was a day . | It was long . |
| 6. It's a computer . | It's new . |
| 7. He's a man . | He's young . |
| 8. It's a house . | There are two . |
| 9. She's an actress . | She's good . |
| 10. It's a movie . | It's interesting . |

Now, read the following sentences. Where should the stress go?

A: It's a great book.

B: She's a good mother.

In a noun / adjective pattern, the stress generally falls on the noun. Such a phrase is called a **descriptive phrase**. Practice the rest of these descriptive phrases:

1. It's a small **room**.
2. He's a fast **driver**.
3. It was a boring **party**.
4. She's a tall **girl**.
5. It was a long **day**.
6. It's a new **computer**.
7. He's a young **man**.
8. There are two **houses**.
9. She's a good **actress**.
10. It was an interesting **movie**.

Now, let's take a look at some adverb / adjective descriptive phrases:

A: It's a great book. It's really great.
B: She's a good mother. She's very good.

In an adverb / adjective combination, the adjective is generally stronger. Practice with the phrases below:

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|---|---|
| 1. It's a <u>small</u> room . | It's <u>so</u> small . |
| 2. He's a <u>fast</u> driver . | He's <u>pretty</u> fast . |
| 3. It was a <u>boring</u> party . | It was <u>kind of</u> boring . |
| 4. She's a <u>tall</u> girl . | She's <u>really</u> tall . |
| 5. It was a <u>long</u> day . | It was <u>somewhat</u> long . |
| 6. It's a <u>new</u> computer . | It's <u>brand</u> new . |
| 7. He's a <u>young</u> man . | He's <u>very</u> young . |
| 8. There are <u>two</u> houses . | There are <u>only</u> two . |
| 9. She's a <u>good</u> actress . | She's <u>quite</u> good . |
| 10. It was an <u>interesting</u> movie . | It was <u>really</u> interesting . |

Next, let's put these adjective / noun and adverb / adjective descriptive phrases in natural conversations. The descriptive phrases are underlined and the stressed words are in **bold / italics**.

- A: How is the new **apartment**?
B: It's really **great**.
A: How many **bedrooms** are there?
B: There are only **two** but one of them has a huge **closet**.

C: Check out my new **laptop**.
D: Hey, that's pretty **neat**.
C: Yeah. I'm really **happy** to finally have a good **computer** in the house.
D: Yeah. It looks pretty **expensive**, though. How much was it?

E: That was an interesting **movie**.
F: Yeah, the acting was really **good**.
E: And the special **effects** were just **amazing**.
F: Actually, I thought the effects were too **distracting**.

G: He lives in that small **room** over there with that crazy **dog** of his.
H: That dog is totally **insane**. He pissed on my new **bike** yesterday.

I: So how many new cars have you sold today?

J: Only two.

I: That's not very good.

J: Well, I'm sure tomorrow will be much better.

K: How was the party?

L: It was kind of boring.

K: Really? That's too bad.

L: I know.

M: We'd better go to bed. We've got a long day tomorrow.

N: I think I'm going to get up pretty early to prepare.

M: That's a good idea. That'll also give us a chance to grab some breakfast.

N: Right. I hate working on an empty stomach.

O: Did you see the new secretary?

P: Yeah, she's so tall.

O: I know. She was taller than us and she wasn't even wearing high heels.

P: Right. And we're pretty tall.

Cinderella (revisited):

All the descriptive phrases have been underlined and the stressed words are in bold. All you have to do is practice.

A long time ago, there lived a man who lost his young wife to a terrible sickness. After a few years, the man remarried. His second wife was quite healthy, but also quite unkind. She already had two daughters who were just as nasty as their snotty mother.

The man's first wife had given him a beautiful daughter of his own before she died. Her name was Cinderella. She was very sweet and kind. Unfortunately, her jealous step mother hated her and forced her to do all the hard work around the big house.

Doing all the chores by herself was very tiring for Cinderella. Her lazy step sisters didn't lift a finger to help her. They often just sat around all day in their fine dresses doing nothing, and went to lavish parties in the evenings. However, they grew more ugly as their hearts were very bitter, and this made their round faces quite sour.