

RHYTHM

In English we speak with a natural rhythm, accenting certain words or syllables of words. We can change the meaning of a word by changing which syllable we stress:

For the record, I only record original music.

Poets arrange the words in the lines of their poetry to create patterns of rhythm, which enhances the flow of their poems. The most common pattern echoes natural speech and is alternating stressed and unstressed syllables:

Charlie, Charlie, in the tub
Charlie, Charlie pulled the plug
Oh my goodness, oh my soul,
There's goes Charlie down the hole

A line with more unstressed syllables usually gives a sense of a faster pace. Can you hear the horses' hooves and the boom of the cannon in this verse from Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade"?

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred:
'Forward the Light Brigade.
Charge for the guns,' he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Transparency promoted as asset'

Scan through the headlines in today's edition of *your newspaper* for words of two or more syllables. Cut them out and paste them in the appropriate spaces below. Indicate which syllable is stressed by writing / over the stressed syllable.

Two syllables	Three syllables	More than three syllables

As a bonus, cut out one whole headline and paste it in the space below. See if you can work out which syllables would be stressed if the headline were read aloud. Can you find any headlines with a regular rhythm?

Jennifer Hind, "Rhythm," *The Royal Gazette*, Bermuda, 2003.