Dinner Party



Activity One – Imagine you are having a dinner party.

With your partner brainstorm all the items you would use to lay and decorate the table. Name the items and describe which IKEA products you would chose and why.

1. **A family dinner with lots of young kids.**
2. **Dinner party for your boss and her husband.**
3. **Informal dinner with some old friends.**
4. **Dinner for colleagues from your team.**

Activity Two – Review.

What new vocabulary did we brainstorm? Did we leave out any dinner table items?

Activity Three – Making Conversation at the Dinner Table.

When making conversation with colleagues or friends who are English speaking you can make what you are saying more interesting and easier to follow by paying attention to your intonation and pronunciation. Let's read some information about stress first.

Intonation - Stress Types,

Improving sentence intonation is one of the key elements in your English pronunciation. Let's discuss the four basic types of word stress that lead to proper intonation in English.

* tonic stress
* emphatic stress
* contrastive stress
* new information stress

If you are unfamiliar with intonation and stress here are a number of resources on the site to help you understand the basics:

Tonic Stress

Tonic stress refers to the syllable in a word which receives the most stress in an intonation unit. An intonation unit has one tonic stress. It's important to remember that a sentence can have more than one intonation unit, and therefore have more than one tonic stress. Here are some examples of intonation units with the tonic stress bolded.

He's **wai**ting
He's **wa**iting / for his **friend**
He's **wa**iting / for his friend / at the **station**.

Generally, the final tonic stress in a sentence receives the most stress. In the above example, 'station' receives the strongest stress.

There are a number of instances in which the stress changes from this standard. Here are short explanations for each of the changes with example sentences to illustrate.

Emphatic Stress

If you decide to emphasize something, you can change the stress from the principal noun to another content word such as an adjective (big, difficult, etc.), intensifier (very, extremely, etc.) This emphasis calls attention to the extraordinary nature of what you want to emphasize.
For example:
That was a difficult test. - Standard statement
That was a **difficult** test. - Emphasizes how difficult the test was

There are a number of adverbs and modifiers that tend to be used to emphasize in sentences that receive emphatic stress.

Extremely terribly		completely utterly		especially etc.	

Contrastive Stress

Contrastive stress is used to point out the difference between one object and another. Contrastive stress tends to be used with determiners such as 'this, that, these and those'.

For example:

I think I prefer **this** colour.
Do you want **these** or **those** curtains?

Contrastive stress is also used to bring out a given word in a sentence that will also slightly change the meaning.

* **He** came to the party yesterday. (It was he, not someone else.)
* He **walked** to the party yesterday. (He walked rather than drove.)
* He came to the **party** yesterday. (It was a party not a meeting or something else.)
* He came to the party **yesterday**. (It was yesterday not two weeks ago or some other time.)

New Information Stress

When asked a question, the requested information is naturally stressed more strongly.

For example:
Where are you from? - I come from **Seattle**, in the USA.
What do you want to do? - I want to go **bowling**.
When does class begin? - The class begins at **nine** o'clock.

Use these various types of stress to help improve your pronunciation and understand ability.

By Kenneth Beare

Activity Four: Role Plays.

Simulate a dinner party conversation with a colleague. Try to pay attention to your intonation. You have a choice of conversation starters with some examples:

Subjects of conversation:

- **The weather**

It's been lovely weather this week hasn't it…
I can't believe the weather, it's so changeable!

- **Films you have seen**

I saw a great film…
Have you seen…

- **Politics**

What do you think about…

- **The Montpellier Store**

Things are difficult right now…
Were you impressed by…

- **Your background**

I've been with IKEA for five years but before that…



- **Families**

My children go to the local school not far from here…

- **Holidays**

What are your plans for this summer?
Did you stay at home for the holiday weekend?

Activity Five: Video

First we will read the questions together. This is the information that you need to look out for when you watch the video next.

1. How does Betty feel about her table decoration?
2. What was wrong with it?
3. What is Betty worried about?
4. Whose birthday is it?
5. What does Bob do with his napkin?
6. How do the guests feel?
7. Why is etiquette important according to the narrator?
8. What does Bob do wrong when the food comes?
9. What is the other guests waiting for before they begin?
10. Why don't the other guests show they think Bob is impolite?
11. What are Betty's problems?
12. What does Floyd do with the olive?
13. What does Helen do with the soup plate?
14. What does Bob ask himself about serving?
15. What does the narrator say about learning?
16. Which questions does Betty have about the salad?
17. Why doesn't Bob start eating first with the salad course?

- What did you think about this video?
- Which etiquette rules were referred to in this film?
- Do you think that these rules of etiquette still apply today?
- Which do you follow