

1.content words are stressed

LES MOTS LEXICAUX (=contenant du sens) sont accentués

2.structure words are unstressed

LES MOTS OUTILS (=liant les mots) ne sont pas accentués

3.time between stressed words is always the same

le temps entre les mots accentués est toujours le même

The following tables can help you decide which words are **content words** and which words are **structure words**:

1- Content words – stressed/ Mots lexicaux - accentués

WORDS CARRYING THE MEANING	EXAMPLE
main verbs	SELL, GIVE, EMPLOY
nouns	CAR, MUSIC, MARY
adjectives	RED, BIG, INTERESTING
adverbs	QUICKLY, LOUDLY, NEVER
negative auxiliaries	DON'T, AREN'T, CAN'T

2- Structure words – unstressed / Mots outils – non accentués

WORDS FOR CORRECT GRAMMAR	EXAMPLE
pronouns	he, we, they
prepositions	on, at, into
articles	a, an, the
conjunctions	and, but, because
auxiliary verbs	do, be, have, can, must

Exceptions (lorsque le locuteur accentue pour faire du sens)

The above rules are for what is called "neutral" or normal stress. But sometimes we can stress a word that would normally be only a structure word, for example to correct information. Look at the following dialogue:

"They've been to Serbia, haven't they?"

"No, **THEY** haven't, but **WE** have.

Note also that when "be" is used as a main verb, it is usually unstressed (even though in this case it is a content word).