

2.7 Word-accent

With the few exceptions that have been noted, words in illustrative lists in the preceding sections have been either monosyllables—taking full stress as citation forms—or simple polysyllabic words in which the initial syllable takes heavier stress than any succeeding syllable. Placement of principal stress has been indicated, and it will be apparent that word-accent in Old English is systemically congruent with that of Modern English: it is the word root that consistently carries principal stress, and it is the initial syllable of the root that is stressed if the root consists of more than one syllable.

A. Word-accent in Old English was also similar to that of Modern English for derivative and compound words. Principal stress remains in the word root in derivational constructions employing suffixes:

sǣd	seed, fruit	mōd	the inner being, spirit, mind
sǣdere	sower, 'seeder'		
sǣdian	(to) sow	mōdiġ	brave, noble-minded
sǣdlīc	belonging to seed, seminal	mōdigian	(to) be proud, exult
		mōd-lēas	spiritless, dull

B. In both compound adjectives and compound nouns, heavier stress is carried by the first root morpheme:

sǣd-bèrende	seed-bearing	mōd-sòrh	sorrow of soul or mind
sǣd-cynn	type of seed	mōd-blind	undiscerning
sǣd-lēap	sower's basket	mōd-ċearu	care of heart, grief
sǣd-tīma	seed-time	mōd-sēoc	sick at heart, distressed
wād-sǣd	woad-seed	ōfer-mōd	pride
līn-sǣd	linseed	glǣd-mōd	of good cheer, pleasant

C. Verbs derived from compound nouns have the same accentual pattern, as **ánd-swàrian** '(to) answer,' but they are few. Quasi-compound verbs with prepositional adverbs preceding verb roots keep accent on the first element: **ín-gān** '(to) enter,' **bī-stāndan** '(to) stand by'; these are learned only from extensive experience in reading Old English. Most verbs formed as compounds with an

initial prepositional adverb—the most common type—have principal stress on the original verb root: **for-béodan** ‘(to) forbid,’ **ofer-cúman** ‘(to) overcome,’ **tō-drīfan** ‘(to) drive away, scatter,’ **ymb-pénčan** ‘(to) consider,’ **ġeond-scīnan** ‘(to) shine upon, illuminate.’ The initial root usually appears in the unaccented form of the morpheme if it differs from the accented form: **æ-wielm** ‘fountain,’ but **ā-weallan** ‘(to) well up’; **bī-genga** ‘inhabitant,’ but **be-ġān** ‘(to) occupy.’

góld-hòrd	treasure	ġeond-séon	(to) examine
læce-cræft	leachcraft	ġeond-ðenčan	(to) reflect upon
glæd-mōd	pleasant	wið-stondan	(to) stand against
mōd-cræft	intelligence	wið-sacan	(to) refuse
ān-mōd	unanimous	for-rīdan	(to) intercept
un-mōd	depression	for-scrifan	(to) decree, proscribe
stið-mōd	brave, resolute	un-bindan	(to) unbind, loosen
wiper-saca	adversary	be-healdan	(to) have, observe
and-swaru	answer	ā-rīsan	(to) arise
and-swarian	(to) answer	ā-cwellan	(to) kill
tō-weard	facing	be-sittan	(to) besiege
in-gangan	(to) go in	be-drīfan	(to) pursue
god-spell	gospel	be-heonan	on this side of
bī-spell	example, story	of-tēon	(to) deprive (of)

D. The prefix **ġe-** is always unstressed.

ġe-bed	prayer	ġe-winn	strife, hostility
ġe-biddan	(to) pray	ġe-winnan	(to) fight, contend
ġe-dāl	division	ġe-hwær	everywhere, always
ġe-dælan	(to) divide	ġe-hwā	each (one), anyone

Consonant clusters within any morpheme that precedes a root morpheme in the same word conform to the same patterns as found in simple words (shown earlier), whether the morpheme that precedes a root is derivational or, in the case of a compound, another root. This characteristic is presumably related to placement of stress in words.

Similarly, distribution of allophones of /n/ and of spirants /s f þ x/ within any morpheme that precedes a root morpheme in the same word is like that in simple words, whether the morpheme that precedes is derivational or another root. The verb *ingān* is made up from *ín* + *gān*, and has [n], not [ŋ], manifesting the first /n/. *Donne ġē ingān on þæt hūs* ‘When ye enter into that house;’ *Ðā hē inēode* ‘When he (had) entered.’ The noun *ingang* ‘entrance, ingress’ is formed similarly, as *in(n)* + *gang*: *ingang* and *ūtgang* ‘ingress and egress.’ While [v] manifests /f/ in *hærfest* ‘harvest, autumn,’ it is [f] in *ārfæst* ‘honorable, virtuous,’ an adjective compound of *ār* + *fæst*. Or, *þenian* ‘(to) stretch’ is combined with *a-* ‘out’ in *apénian* ‘(to) stretch out, extend,’ with the spirant manifest as unvoiced [θ] rather than voiced [ð]. See Richard M. Hogg, *A Grammar of Old English*, Vol. 1: Phonology (1992), sections 2.84–2.91.

corn	grain	æppel	(any kind of) fruit
corn-hūs	granary	æppel-hūs	fruit storehouse
corn-berende	grain-bearing	æppel-cynn	kind of apple
corn-tēoðung	tithe of corn	æppel-berende	apple-bearing
corn-sæd	a grain of corn	æppel-trēow	appletree
		æppel-ðorn	crab-apple tree
pipor-corn	a peppercorn	æppel-wīn	cider
sand-corn	grain of sand	æppel-scrēada	apple parings
		æppel-fæt	vessel for apples
bān	bone, tusk	eorþ-æppel	cucumber
bān-hūs	body, chest	fīc-æppel	fig(-fruit)
bān-hring	vertebra, joint	finger-æppel	finger-fruit, date
bān-sealf	salve for pain in bones	bæð	bath
bān-ġebrec	fracture of a bone	bæð-hūs	bathing place
bān-wærċ	pain in the bones	bæð-sealf	bathing-salve
		bæð-stede	bathing place
palm	palm (tree)	bæð-stōw	bathing place
palm-æppel	date	bæð-fæt	bathing tub
palm-dæg	Palm Sunday		
palm-trēow	palm tree	bōc-hūs	library
palm-twig	palm twig, branch	bōc-cræft	learning, science
hand-bōc	handbook, manual	hand-weorc	handiwork
hand-cræft	manual skill	hand-clāð	handcloth, towel

tōð	tooth	brēmel-brær	bramble-briar
tōð-ece	toothache	brēmel-lēaf	bramble-leaf
tōð-gār	toothpick	brēmel-rind	bramble-bark
tōð-lēas	toothless	brēmel-æppel	blackberry
tōð-sealf	tooth salve		
tōð-sticca	toothpick	candel	lamp, candle
tōð-wærċ	toothache	candel-mæsse	Candlemas
tōð-wyrm	worm in the teeth	candel-mæsse-æfen	Candlemas eve
tōð-rima	a gum	candel-stæf	candlestick
		candel-sticca	candlestick
mynster	minster, nunnery, monastery	candel-trēow	candelabrum
mynster-bōc	minster-book	candel-wēoce	candle-wick, torch
mynster-clūse	monastic close	candel-lēoht	candlelight
mynster-fæder	abbot		
mynster-hām	monastery	bisceop	bishop, high priest
mynster-land	land owned by a monastery	bisceop-hādung	episcopal ordination
		bisceop-hām	bishop's estates
mynster-līc	monastic	bisceop-scl̥r	diocese
mynster-līf	monastic life	bisceop-rōd	bishop's cross
mynster-prēost	priest of a monastery	bisceop-land	diocesan land
mynster-munuc	monk who lives in monastery	bisceop-dōm	bishopric, episcopate
		bisceop-hād	office of bishop

sæ-æġl	sea-eal	sæ-flōd	tide	sæ-rinc	seaman
sæ-bāt	sea-boat	sæ-lāc	sea-spoil	sæ-scell	seashell
sæ-beorg	cliff by sea	sæ-lād	sea-voyage	sæ-sīp	sea-voyage
sæ-burg	seaport town	sæ-lāf	jetsam	sæ-snæġl	sea-snail
sæ-ċeaster	seaport town	sæ-land	coast	sæ-steorra	guiding star
sæ-ċeasel	sea-sand	sæ-lēoð	rowers' song	sæ-strand	foreshore
sæ-clif	sea-cliff	sæ-mann	seaman	sæ-wæter	sea-water
sæ-col	jet	sæ-mearh	'sea-horse,' ship	sæ-weard	coastguard
sæ-cyning	sea-king			sæ-weg	sea path
sæ-earm	arm of sea	sæ-net	fishing net	sæ-weall	sea-wall
sæ-fisc	sea-fish	sæ-ostre	sea-oyster	sæ-wiht	sea-animal