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ac·cent  (ăk sěnt')

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n.

1. The relative prominence of a particular syllable of a word by greater intensity or by variation or modulation of pitch or tone.
2. Vocal prominence or emphasis given to a particular syllable, word, or phrase.
3. A characteristic pronunciation, especially:
 - a. One determined by the regional or social background of the speaker.
 - b. One determined by the phonetic characteristics of the speaker's native language carried over to that speaker's use of another language.
4. A mark or symbol used in the printing and writing of certain languages to indicate the vocal quality to be given to a particular letter: *an acute accent*.
5. A mark or symbol used in printing and writing to indicate the stressed syllables of a spoken word.
6. Rhythmically significant stress in a line of verse.
7. *Music*
 - a. Emphasis or prominence given to a note or chord, as by an increase in volume or extended duration.
 - b. A mark representing this.
8. *Mathematics*
 - a. A mark used as a superscript to distinguish among variables represented by the same symbol.
 - b. A mark used as a superscript to indicate the first derivative of a variable.
9. A mark or one of several marks used as a superscript to indicate a unit, such as feet (') and inches (") in linear measurement.
10.
 - a. A distinctive feature or quality, such as a feature that accentuates, contrasts with, or complements a decorative style.
 - b. Something that accentuates or contrasts something else, as a touch of color that makes the features of an image stand out.
11. Particular importance or interest; emphasis: *The accent is on comfort*. See Synonyms at [emphasis](#).

tr.v. (ăk sěnt', ăk-sěnt) **ac·cent·ed, ac·cent·ing, ac·cents**

1. To stress or emphasize the pronunciation of: *accented the first syllable in "debacle."*
2. To mark with a printed accent.
3. To focus attention on; accentuate: *a program that accents leadership development*.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *accentus*, accentuation : *ad-*, *ad-* + *cantus*, song (from *canere*, to sing; see **kan-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots).]

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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