

Series 1 – No.2 Face

Audioscript

Welcome to **Words Alive**. The **Words Alive** series helps with the pronunciation of, and listening to, words and their examples in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. **Words Alive** is written and recorded by Richard Cauldwell, and brought to you by Cambridge University Press.

Part 1 Today's Word

Today's word is 'face'. The dictionary gives five entries for 'face' – three nouns, and two verbs. We will work with the first verb, 'face' in its 'deal with' or 'confront' meaning. When stressed, and spoken clearly and slowly, it is easy to hear, but like all words when unstressed and spoken quickly it is difficult to hear. But let's start with the word on its own. It is a single syllable word 'face', and the dictionary tells us 'If you face a problem, or a problem faces you, you have to deal with it.' The dictionary gives us a total of nine examples. We will work with four of them.

Part 2 Examples

Listen to these four examples for the word 'face' – in three of them it will be stressed and easy to hear, in one it will be unstressed. In which one is it unstressed?

Example 1

Passengers could face long delays.

Example 2

I think Phil has to face the fact that she no longer loves him.

Example 3

We have to face facts here - we simply don't have enough money.

Example 4

I can't face walking up all those steps again.

In which example was it most difficult for you to hear the word 'face'? I suspect it was example number 4 'I can't face walking up all those steps again.' In this example, 'face' is very short and quick and part of 'facewalkingupallthose'. These five words 'FACE, WALKing, UP, ALL, THOSE' are crushed together so that they fit between the two highlighted words – 'CANT' and 'STEPS'. 'FACE' becomes shorter and sharper 'face'; 'walking up' becomes close to 'walkyup'; and 'all those' gets close to 'allose'.

Part 3 Practice

Let's work with the fourth example at different speeds, to help with fluent pronunciation, and help listening to natural speech. Imagine first that you are on holiday, but tired at the end of a long day's sightseeing. But your friend wants you to go up a long line of steps to see a view. You have climbed the steps before, have seen the view, and don't like it very much. So, you are really tired, really angry, and want to make it really clear that you will never be persuaded to go up the steps. So you stress all the words:

Example 3A

// I CAN'T FACE WALKing UP // ALL THOSE STEPS aGAIN. //
Now say it as if you are gently trying to persuade them in a nice way, stressing just four of the words:

Example 3B

// i CAN'T face WALKing up // ALL those STEPS again. //
Now we will say it in a more matter of fact way, with all the words in one speech unit, and with just the words 'CAN'T' and 'STEPS' highlighted. We will do it at three different speeds 120, 200, and 300 words per minute:

Example 3C

C1// i CAN'T face walking up all those STEPS again. // 120

C2// i' CAN'T face walking up all those STEPS again. // 200

C3// i' CAN'T face walking up all those STEPS again. // 300

The last version, at 300 words per minute, may seem too fast for you. But these kinds of speeds are very common in natural speech. Remember it is very common for words to be gabbled, when they are not highlighted – 'FACE WALKing UP ALL THOSE' becomes 'facewalkyupallose', 'facewalkyupallose', 'i CAN'T face walking up all those STEPS again'.

Part 4 Pairwork

To end with, let's add a reply in which your friend encourages you to change your mind:

Example 3D

A // i'CAN'T face walking up all those STEPS again //

B // oh COME ON // YOU can DO it //