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Say It Right

by Denyse Tessensohn

Maintain

I have previously written in this column that, quite often, the noun has the stress on the first syllable, and the verb derived from the same word has the stress on the second syllable. One example is the verb "maintain", which is often mispronounced. The stress in 'maintain' should fall on the second syllable. The corresponding noun is "maintenance", and the stress should fall on the first syllable. When it is pronounced 'main'tainence' it will probably also be spelt incorrectly.

Poor English: I guess it won't be of much difference.

Standard English: 1. I guess it won't make much of a difference. 2. I guess it won't make any difference.

We will answer some of your spoken English language questions in this column, and a book prize will be awarded weekly for the question, anecdote or suggestion most useful to our readers. Email us at

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