

**Intonation**

- Music has a tune, or melody – the sounds or notes go up and down.
- Languages also have a tune or melody.
- In English, this helps us understand the speaker's attitude
- It tells us what the speaker is really thinking.

***How important is it?***

*attitudinal* content of spoken language

- Wording 7%
- Intonation 38%
- Non-verbal 55%

**Comparing languages for intonation:**

- In English, intonation is considered to play a relatively major role in the construction of meaning; it is also the language which has been most widely researched in this respect. (few cross-linguistic studies.)
- However, research of English as a Lingua Franca sees this differently.

**5 Tones:**

**Say this 5 different ways:**

**'Lectures begin tomorrow'**

- Change the tone to mean different things ..
  - exactly what it says (a statement)
  - 'are you sure' or 'do they' (a question)
  - .. and you have more to say
  - You're not sure it is right (doubt)
  - 'that's great' (excitement)

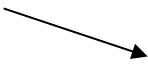

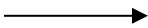
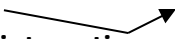
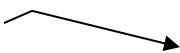
**Why is it important?**

Intonation is a layer of meaning beyond words and helps speakers communicate meaning through the rise and fall of the voice. The patterns of rise and fall are described as ‘tones’. The different types of meaning intonation communicates include:

- grammatical meaning e.g. different tones for types of questions
- status of information e.g. main or subordinate, finished or unfinished
- attitude e.g. whether we’re certain or not, have doubts or reservations
- feelings e.g. whether we’re confident, happy, enthusiastic, sad, bored etc
- relational e.g. how ‘open’, friendly or ‘closed’ we are towards a listener, or to communicate empathy or shared feeling.

**How does it work?**

Like stress, intonation operates on a system of contrasts. But now the contrast is between the movement of the voice UP (↗) or DOWN (↘). Intonation can change the meaning of what a person says even when the same words are used.

<b>Example</b>	<b>Communicative purpose and function</b>
 It was <u>interesting</u>	You are giving information. You are certain and confident about the information. This is a statement.
 It was <u>interesting</u> (?)	This intonation could indicate that this is a question even though the grammar indicates a statement. It could also indicate that you aren’t sure or that you haven’t finished yet. Question or incomplete statement.
 It was <u>interesting</u> ...	You have more to say. Incomplete statement.
 It was <u>interesting</u> ...	You have some doubts or reservations or you want to qualify this with more information. You may also be referring to what has already been said or will be said.
 It was <u>interesting</u> !	You want to emphasise this. Depending on the context, you may feel enthusiastic, happy or surprised. Or you may want to contrast or contradict what someone else has said. Exclamation.

**What will happen if I don't use intonation appropriately?**

You may mislead your listener or your audience. For example, repeatedly using high rising intonation at the end of speech chunks and sentences can be irritating and confusing. Listeners can also get confused because they can't distinguish between what information is finished and what is not. The speaker may also give the impression of seeking feedback or approval and therefore lacks confidence.

To get a feeling of how this works, try saying the following:

I **went** to the **lecture** ↗ / it was **great** ↗ / the **lecturer** was **clear** ↗ /  
she **asked** if we had **questions** ↗ / but **everyone** just **sat there** ↗ //

If you don't finish off with a falling intonation at some point, the listener is left 'hanging', waiting for the 'story' to end. Now try a different intonation:

I **went** to the **lecture** ↘ / it was **great** ↘ / the **lecturer** was **clear** ↗ /  
she **asked** if we had **questions** ↗ / but **everyone** just **sat** there ↘ //

**Note:** High rising intonation is common in casual conversation and in this context is not a problem. It often indicates that the speaker is 'open' or wants to 'connect' with the listener.

**What's wrong with using a lot of high rising intonation in presentations?**

In a presentation, a series of high rising tones may communicate that:

- you haven't finished a piece of information. This can be confusing for listeners because they need to understand each piece of information so they can build understanding as they progress through the presentation with the speaker.
- you are uncertain or tentative about what you are saying. This can be a problem if you want to communicate your thoughts with confidence.

Tonal Languages:

Over half the world's languages, located mainly in SE Asia, large parts of West and South Africa, and in Central America.

- Chinese (Mandarin - 4 tones; Cantonese - 5 tones); Vietnamese (North and Central - 6 tones; South - 5);
- Thai and Lao. (5-6 tones depending upon dialect).

Each syllable has an *invariable* tone. A change in the tone results in a change in the lexical meaning.

- For example, in Thai, the word /klai/ uttered with a midlevel tone signifies "far" in English; with a falling tone, it signifies "near".
- The word /ma:/ in Thai spoken with a high tone means "horse"; and with a fall-rise, "dog".
- Control of tones from around 2.5 - 3 years, with occasional errors same as all children learning language.
- In tonal languages such as these, intonation is mostly used for meaning of words, rather than attitude.

Non-tonal languages:

- English and the great majority of European languages.
- In English, speakers use intonation for different functions:
  - **Organise** and **emphasise** information
  - Show their **attitude** to the topic being discussed

Changes of intonation are **the speaker's choice**. They are not governed by a clear set of rules.

## New/old information:

- It's too expensive. ↓ (new information)
- Well, it's expensive ↑, but it's worth it. (idea has already been introduced)

5 tones – see handout in Student Booklet

## Think about:

- Has the speaker finished, or is there more information to come?
- Is this a yes/no question?
- Is the speaker feeling strongly or neutrally?
- Is the speaking expressing doubt or certainty?
- How polite was the intonation?

Intonation helps speakers communicate meaning through the rise and fall of the voice.

**Lester: Test 3 – Part 2 (scroll down to find Test 3)**

Listen to Lester describing the public transport system of Hong Kong:

<http://legacy.australianetwork.com/passport/lester.htm>

Mark in the intonation at the end of each chunk:

falling intonation ↘

rising intonation ↗

level intonation →

In Hong Kong we've got a very well developed transportation system.

We've got buses,

double-deck buses,

taxis, trams, ferries, underground metro and minibus.

It's, minibus is about half the size of a bus

and takes around sixteen people.

A lot of people take them 'cos they're a bit faster than normal buses.

And we use the ferry for carrying people across the harbour

because Hong Kong is formed by an island

and a peninsula.

- a) Does Lester vary his intonation?
- b) What is your impression of his intonation?
- c) Why do you think he chooses this pattern of intonation?
- d) What would be an alternative pattern of intonation for a talk in a formal situation?
- e) What would be the difference in the effect on the listener?

**Suggested answers**

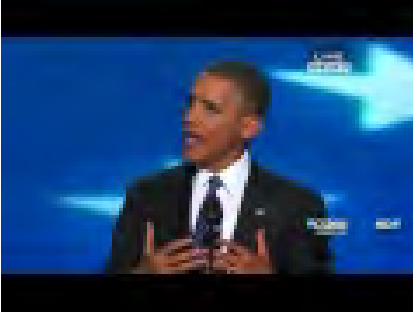
In Hong Kong we've got a very well developed transportation system. ↗  
We've got buses, ↗  
double-deck buses, ↗  
taxis, trams, ferries, underground metro and minibus. ↗  
It's, minibus is about half the size of a bus ↗  
and takes around sixteen people. ↗  
A lot of people take them 'cos they're a bit faster than normal buses. ↗  
And we use the ferry →  
for carrying people across the harbour ↗  
because Hong Kong is formed by an island ↗  
and a peninsula. ↗

- a) Lester uses predominantly rising intonation in this segment.
- b) Sentences appear unfinished. He could appear as though he is not confident about what he is saying.
- c) This is a common pattern in colloquial spoken Australian English, especially among young people.
- d) He could use falling intonation at the end of each statement, rising intonation for pauses within the sentence.
- e) He would come across as a more confident, convincing speaker. The listener would know when he has finished a statement.

***To listen to intonation for different types of questions go to Clarity English***

Click on <http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/help/english-language> and follow the links to ***Clear Pronunciation 2, Standard Intonation***

**Practice Text**

**Barack Obama in Berlin speech**

Listen to it on Youtube (starts at around 2.50)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhse6js54aw>

Here, for thousands of years, the people of this land have journeyed from tribe to principality to nation-state; through Reformation and Enlightenment, renowned as a “land of poets and thinkers,” among them Immanuel Kant, who taught us that freedom is the “unoriginated birthright of man, and it belongs to him by force of his humanity.”

Here, for two centuries, this gate stood tall as the world around it convulsed — through the rise and fall of empires; through revolutions and republics; art and music and science that reflected the height of human endeavour, but also war and carnage that exposed the depths of man’s cruelty to man.

It was here that Berliners carved out an island of democracy against the greatest of odds.

**HELPS Pronunciation Fact Sheet**

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**Connected speech**

**Why is it important?**

We use the term Connected Speech to refer to sound changes that occur when we are speaking. Understanding these changes can dramatically improve your understanding of fluent native speakers of English. And if you don't use at least some of the features of connected speech yourself, you may sound stilted and formal. This can be a barrier to communication, particularly in informal situations. Formal presentations without the features of connected speech may also be a strain on a native speaker audience.

**What are the features of connected speech?**

Basically, there are three features of connected speech.

**Unstressed words** As the name implies, these words are usually 'smaller', less important words than the stressed information words which carry most meaning in English. Unstressed words are usually pronounced more lightly and softly than stressed words and many are pronounced with the indefinite or schwa vowel sound /ə/. For example, *I'm a student at UTS* has 3 unstressed words: *I'm, a, at* 2 information words: *student, UTS*

Stressed words are usually 'content' words such as nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

**Why is it important to know how to pronounce unstressed words?**

Unstressed words are important because they make stressed information 'stand out'. Saying unstressed words more quickly and lightly also gives the speaker time to lengthen the stressed syllables in key words and make clear intonation contours. Here is a summary list of common unstressed words.

- articles
- auxiliary verbs
- and, but



## HELPS Pronunciation Fact Sheet

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**Linking** Fluent speech at normal speed is spoken without breaks between words. The sound at the end of one word is joined or linked to the beginning of the next word. Often these words sound like one word. There are basically three different ways of linking in English.

### **Consonant + vowel**

#### **ords together?**

Yes. Speak as much as possible in phrases and try to keep your breath and your voice going as you 'move' from one word to the next.

## Connected Speech

Weak forms can be said with stress, depending on context.

Eg. Did he throw the ball to you? No, he threw it **AT** me. Try the sentences below, changing the stress.

### Box 42 Teacher reference

1

(Sentences with weak forms marked)

- |    |  |                                |
|----|--|--------------------------------|
| 1  | He threw the ball <u>at</u> me.  | /hi/ ... /ət/ ...              |
| 2  | You <u>must</u> come over <u>for</u> dinner soon.                        | ... /məs/ ... /fə/ ...         |
| 3  | Bill <u>and</u> Mark <u>have</u> left.                                   | ... /ən/ ... /əv/ ...          |
| 4  | <u>Have</u> you got more <u>than</u> Tom?                                | /həv ju/ ... /ðən/ ...         |
| 5  | I <u>was</u> <u>at</u> home <u>from</u> five o'clock.                    | ... /wəz ət/ ... /frəm/ ...    |
| 6  | <u>We</u> <u>could</u> talk about it <u>at</u> lunch.                    | /wi kəd/ ... /ət/ ...          |
| 7  | Ask <u>them</u> <u>to</u> come <u>to</u> the party.                      | ... /ðəm tə/ ... /tə/ ...      |
| 8  | <u>Can</u> you tell <u>us</u> now?                                       | /kən ju/ ... /əs/ ...          |
| 9  | <u>We</u> <u>were</u> going <u>to</u> <u>the</u> park.                   | /wi wə/ ... /tə ðə/ ...        |
| 10 | When <u>do</u> you get the results <u>of</u> your tests?                 | ... /də jə/ ... /əv jə/ ...    |
| 11 | <u>There</u> <u>should</u> <u>be</u> <u>some</u> more in <u>the</u> box. | /ðə ʃəd bi səm/ ... /ðə/ ...   |
| 12 | When <u>are</u> you taking <u>him</u> <u>to</u> see <u>her</u> ?         | ... /ə ju/ ... /ɪm tə/ ... /ə/ |

Consonant clusters are often difficult to say. Often a 't' or 'd' sound is left out. Eg. *mostly* – can't hear the 't'. Try the words and phrases below. Are there any 't' or 'd' sounds left out?

### Box 45 Student handout

2

#### Part A

postman correctly wastepaper facts restless lastly exactly  
friendly kindness handshake hands landscape blindness  
grandmother

#### Part B

- |    |                       |    |                      |
|----|-----------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1  | It was next morning.  | 13 | Did I hurt you?      |
| 2  | Hold tight.           | 14 | We reached Berlin.   |
| 3  | She's world champion. | 15 | She arrived there.   |
| 4  | It was just him.      | 16 | We crossed over.     |
| 5  | It's in first gear.   | 17 | I phoned Keith.      |
| 6  | Take a left turn.     | 18 | It moved towards us. |
| 7  | I heard singing.      | 19 | They're second hand. |
| 8  | She changed clothes.  | 20 | He finished first.   |
| 9  | I'll send Lucy.       | 21 | I slept badly.       |
| 10 | It was hard work.     | 22 | I found Ruth.        |
| 11 | They kept quiet.      | 23 | I understand this.   |
| 12 | It looked good.       | 24 | I felt bad.          |

When words are said slowly all vowels are pronounced but in natural speech vowels can be left out. Eg. family – you don't hear the 'i'. Try the words and phrases below.

**Box 46 Student handout**

3

**Part A**

camera definite every factory family favourite history  
 marvellous police recovery reference secretary separate  
 similar strawberry traveller

**Part B**

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 A ..... friend.  | 9 A ..... officer.  |
| 2 Modern .....     | 10 A digital .....  |
| 3 A ..... plant.   | 11 Absolutely ..... |
| 4 A car .....      | 12 A frequent ..... |
| 5 ..... time.      | 13 A ..... book.    |
| 6 A great .....    | 14 A ..... answer.  |
| 7 Remarkably ..... | 15 Entirely .....   |
| 8 A personal ..... | 16 An amazing ..... |

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**Linking - Consonant and Vowel**

4.1

74 Listen to these phrases and repeat them, linking the words together where this is indicated.

- a) divide\_in two
- b) historical\_evidence
- c) as soon\_as possible
- d) take\_over control
- e) it'll\_end next week
- f) the Data Protection\_Act
- g) a wide\_area
- h) keep\_up with\_it
- i) an\_increase\_in crime
- j) the main\_aim

4

Hewings, M. 2004 *Pronunciation Practice Activities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Linking - Consonant and Consonant

Box 32 Student handout

5

A	B	C
1 hot <u>u</u>	a hot <u>u</u> pizza	a hot <u>u</u> oven
2 good <u>u</u>	a good <u>u</u> excuse	a good <u>u</u> price
3 seven <u>n</u>	seven <u>n</u> languages	seven <u>n</u> people
4 short <u>t</u>	a short <u>t</u> boy	a 'short <u>t</u> way
5 red <u>d</u>	a red <u>d</u> bike	a red <u>d</u> apple
6 brown <u>n</u>	a brown <u>n</u> suit	a brown <u>n</u> beard
7 white	white wine	white coffee
8 bad <u>d</u>	a bad <u>d</u> cold	a bad <u>d</u> illness
9 ten <u>n</u>	ten <u>n</u> cars	ten <u>n</u> letters
10 light <u>t</u>	light <u>t</u> rain	light <u>t</u> green
11 wide	a wide river	a wide gap
12 green <u>n</u>	a green <u>n</u> sofa	green <u>n</u> grass

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**Linking – Vowel and Vowel: when 2 vowels are together often a /w/, /j/ or /r/ sound is inserted.**

77 Listen to these phrases and decide if a /w/, /j/ or /r/ sound needs to be inserted. Mark them in the correct places. Then listen and repeat the phrases, inserting the sounds where appropriate.

- a) try out
- b) agree on this
- c) two of them
- d) extra income
- e) radio operator
- f) media event
- g) high above the earth
- h) How does this tie in?

Hewings, M. 2004 *Pronunciation Practice Activities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Linking – Vowel and Vowel: when 2 vowels are together often a /w/, /j/ or /r/ sound is inserted.

**Box 33 Student handout**

A

- 1 Where are you going?
- 2 When?
- 3 Why?
- 4 Who is he?
- 5 Have you got cousins there, too?
- 6 How will you get there?
- 7 How long will it take?
- 8 Have you been there before?
- 9 How long will you be there?
- 10 Why don't you stay longer?
- 11 Will you take Adam a present?
- 12 Why an umbrella?

B

- a By air.
- b I grew up there.
- c Yes, a new umbrella.
- d He asked me for one.
- e Tomorrow afternoon.
- f I'll stay a week.
- g They all live in France.
- h It's too expensive.
- i To see Adam.
- j A few hours.
- k My uncle.
- l To Austria.

7



**Martin Luther King's speech at Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC on 28 August, 1963.**

Watch on youtube at  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s\\_mEqnklfYs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_mEqnklfYs)

So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.'

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today