

# Intonation - It Does Matter!

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This is a fun, game-like activity that helps students see just how important intonation is.

## Introduction

As ESL instructors we realize how important intonation is, but at least, often in my experience, students are skeptical that developing good intonation is crucial to being properly understood. This activity helps them to see just how important intonation is. Also, it is fun and works as a good filler, or "wake-up/attention getter" activity.

You could copy-paste the worksheet below to distribute to students, or simply cut the dialogs up and pass them out.

## Why Does Intonation Matter?

Often when speaking a foreign language, we concentrate on grammar and disregard intonation. However, intonation is very important for conveying meaning.

Do each dialog once for each different situation. Don't be afraid to exaggerate the intonation patterns.

### Dialog One

A: Yes

B: No

A: Yes

B: No!

### Situations

1. Two frustrated people are having a minor argument.
2. Two angry people are fighting.
3. Two love struck people are having a playful argument.

### Dialog Two

Hi, how are you today? I haven't seen you in a long time.

### Situations

1. Two friends who haven't seen each other in a while meet.
2. You spot a friend's baby. You bend over and start talking to the small child.
3. Two lovers meet. The guy is really angry because his girlfriend has been ignoring him completely.

### Dialog Three

A: The house is on fire.

B: Go tell the neighbor.

## Situations

1. Two people live near each other and have been trying to commit insurance fraud. When their plan finally succeeds, they are so happy.
2. Two friends panic when they see a house on fire. They want to warn the neighbor so that he will be safe.
3. You are in your yard sunbathing. All of a sudden, some person in a panic runs up to you, and demand to use your phone to call 911. You don't want to be disturbed. You suggest that he bother your neighbor.

## Questions for Discussion

1. How can intonation affect your daily communications in English?
2. What intonation pattern(s) should be you be using for your daily communication?
3. What are some steps that you can take to improve your intonation?

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<http://iteslj.org/>

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<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Allen-Intonation.html>