

UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University
Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)
Daily English Practice

Week 10

#147 How to speak with the right intonation in English

Skills/ Objectives: Reading, Listening and Writing Skills

PART 1: Before you read...

Preparatory questions

- What would you compare English intonation to?
- What is the use of intonation in English?

Vocabulary

- script (noun): words of a movie or play
- authentic (adj): true and real
- aficionado (noun): a person who is very interested in a subject

PART 2: Article for Reading

Are you aware of the rules for stress in speaking English? Check them out from the following article written and posted by Brita Haycraft on 9 October 2013. You will benefit and improve yourself:

Why is teaching word stress in spoken English important?

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/teaching-how-stress-words-spoken-english-important>

To help your understanding of the article, try to answer the following questions before reading it:

Qt1: What did the article writer Fazle Muniem compare intonation to?

Qt2: What other features of pronunciation can be found in a language other than intonation?

Qt3: What are two major functions of intonation in English?

The answers to Qt1 - 3 will be provided in the next set of exercises.

The answers to relevant question in the preceding set PART 3 of exercises (How to speak with the right stress in English words) are as follows:

Qt1: What effect will be caused on the attitude of the speaker if he speaks each word with equal stress in English?

Ans: This confuses English listeners and can also sound a bit rude.

Qt2: What words should be stressed in speaking English?

Ans: In speaking English, the logical words should be stressed.

Qt3: What are the less important sounds, a,o and u, compressed into in spoken English?

Ans: While speaking in English, people often compress the less important sounds, a,o and u, into the sound / ə / (pronounced weakly as “er”).

Qt4: What wrong meanings can be generated in speaking English if we do not compress the less important sounds of a,o and u?

Ans: If we do not compress the less important sounds, a,o and u, while speaking English, we sound robotic or too insistent. It also affects the clarity of our meaning.

Qt5: What are typically the American ways of compressing unstressed sounds in the following sequences: “going to” and “want to”?

Ans: In American English, “going to” and “want to” are typically pronounced as “gonna’ and “wanna”.

PART 3: Listening Comprehension

Try to learn more about the use of intonation in English while practising your listening skills at the same time. Watch the short video “How to Speak with Correct Intonation in English- Speak like a Native English Speaker!” posted on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeBHE9-rGcA>

PART 4: Writing Practice

Did you notice the use of the expression “Another instance of... is” in the passage? As you know, the word “instance” here means the same as “example”. So, the expression simply means giving another example of the subject.

It is advisable to vary your use of expressions in writing. This gives better style to your writing and makes it more interesting. Just imagine how boring it could look if you keep writing “for example” repeatedly in your passage. Besides “another instance”, you can also express the same meaning with the following other expressions to vary your style. Give them a try and make an appointment to discuss your writing with a SEE U teacher:

A case in point

e.g., Modern technology has not just brought benefits but also harms to human beings. A case in point is the creation of supervirus due to people’s misuse of anti-biotics.

An illustration of

e.g. An illustration of how Chinese culture has cast its influence on Japanese culture can be found in Japanese customs and writing.

A case in point

An illustration of
