



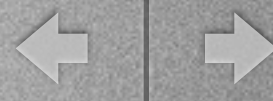
Intonation

Lecture 17



Introduction

Every language has melody in it. No language is spoken on the same musical note all the time. The voice goes up and down and the different notes of the voice combine to make tunes.



Cont.

In English, the **tone** belongs not to the word but to the **words group**.

If you say the word “*No*” with different tones , it is still the same word. But tone plays an important part in English.



We can say a word group:

definitely or we can say it *hesitantly*,

we can say it *angrily* or we can say it *kindly*,

we can say it *with interest* or *without interest*.

**These differences are largely made by the
tones we use.**



Intonation

The words do not change their meaning but the tone we use adds something to the words, and what it adds is the speaker's feeling at that moment. This way of using tone is called intonation.



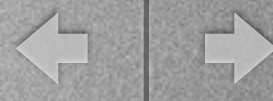
Cont.

English intonation is *English*. It is not the same as the intonation of other languages. You must learn the shapes of the English tones



Tone Shapes

The shape of a tone is decided partly by the **number** of *important words* in the group words, and partly by the **attitude** which the speaker wishes to express.



Cont.

The *important words* carry most of the meaning in a word group.



Example 1

Q: *How was John?*

A: *He was in an *appallingly bad temper.**

- **The *first four words* are not helpful to the meaning and not important.**
- **But the *last three words* are important because they add meaning.**

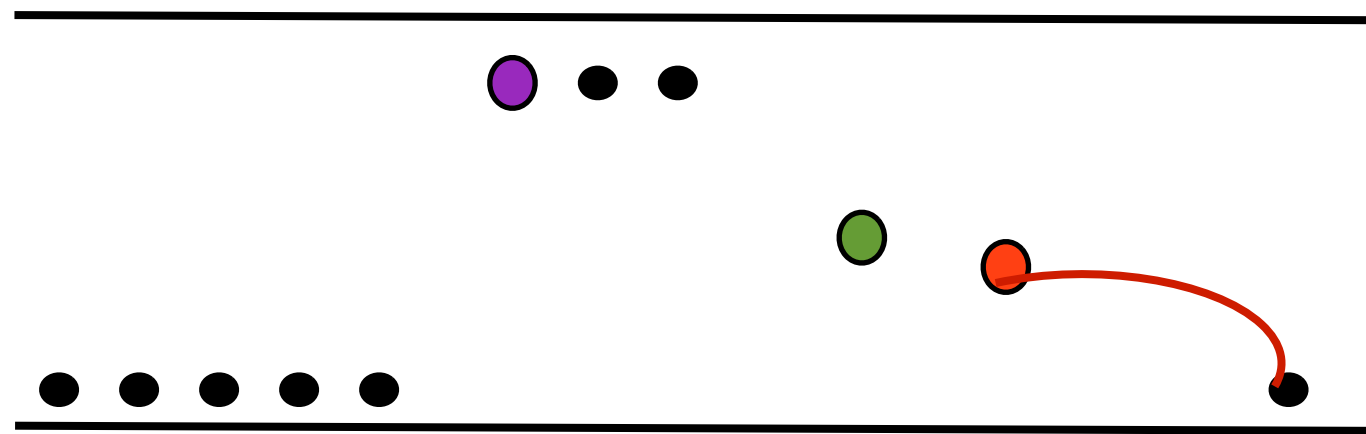
Remeber

- If the speaker considers that all the information is new to the hearer (this is called *broad focus*), then the nucleus will be placed in a ‘**default**’ position.
- For most IPs in English the **default position is the primary stressed syllable of the last content word.**

Cont. Example 1

Q: *How was John?*

A: *He was in an **app**allingly **bad** temper.*



The first five syllables have low pitch. Then there is a jump to the stressed syllable of *appallingly*, and the next two syllables are on the same high pitch. Then *bad* is a little lower and *temper* glides downwards from the stressed to the unstressed syllable.



Example 2

Q: *Was John in a good temper?*

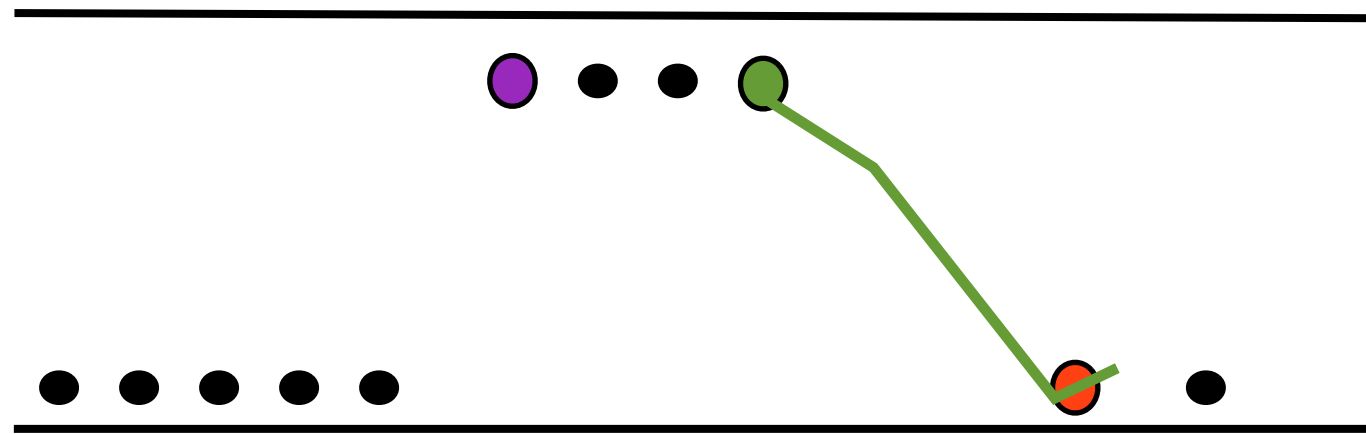
A: *He was in an **appallingly bad** temper.*

- The word *temper* occurs in the question so that it is not that important in the answer.

Cont. Example 2

Q: *Was John in a good temper?*

A: *He was in an **app**allingly **bad** temper.*



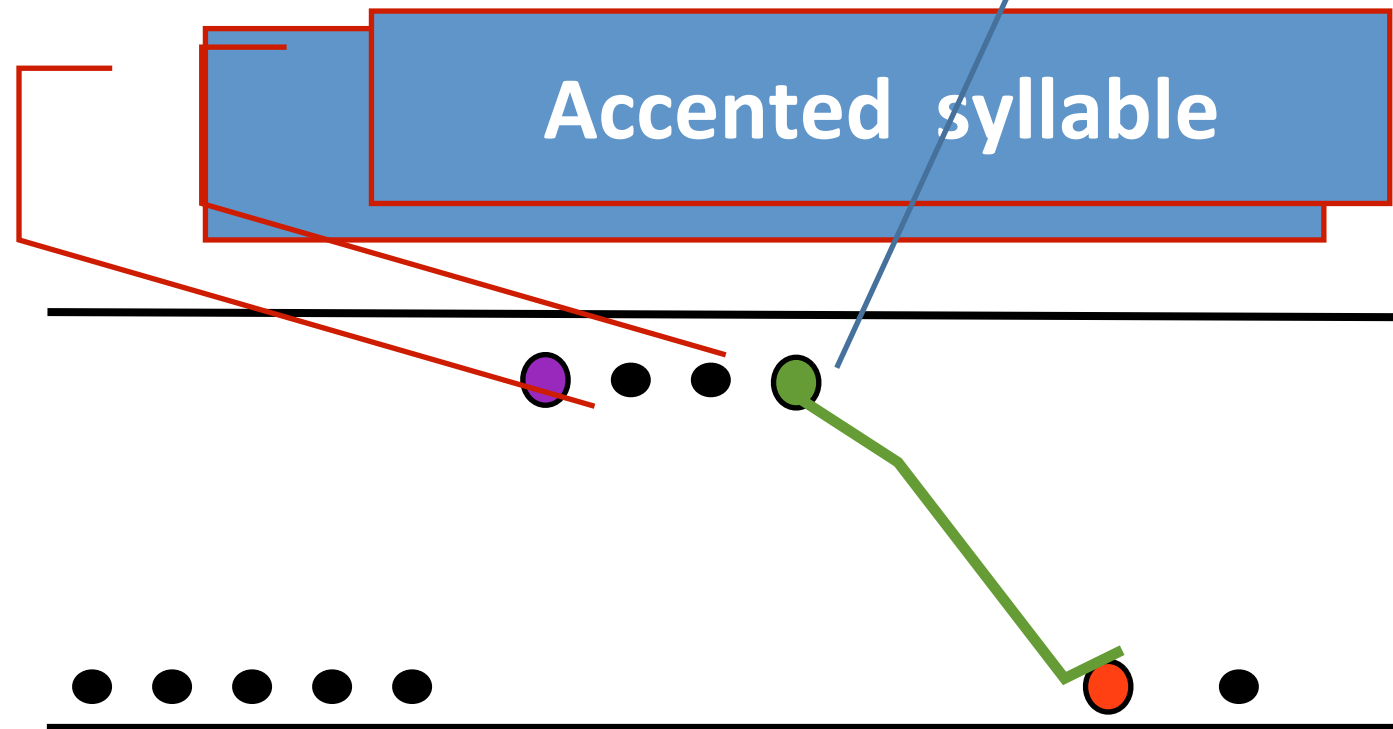
There is only two changes of pitch, connected with the stressed syllables of *app*allingly and *bad*.

Remeber

- **If the speaker considers that some of the information is old or unimportant because it is inferable from the context in which the conversation is taking place, then narrow focus will be used and the nucleus is likely to be placed in a position other than default.**

The nucleus

A: *He was in an app^ˈallingly ^ˈbad temper.*



There is only two changes of pitch, connected with the stressed syllables of *appallingly* and *bad*.



Example 3

Q: *Was John in a bad temper?*

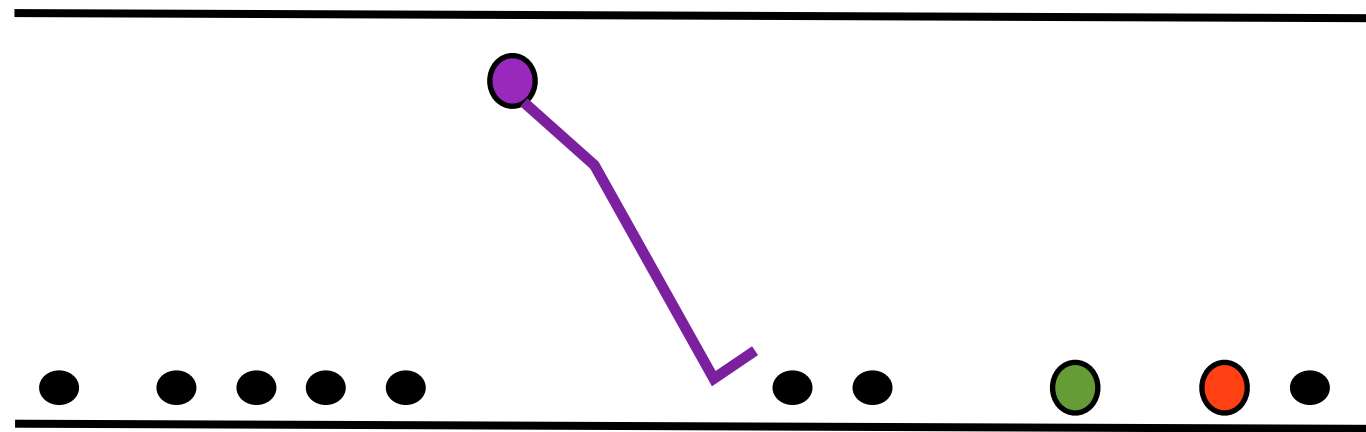
A: *He was in an **appallingly** bad temper.*

- The word **bad** and **temper** occurs are not that important in the answer.

Cont. Example 3

Q: *Was John in a bad temper?*

A: *He was in an app[!]allingly[!] bad[!] temper.*



Both *bad* and *temper* are still stressed, but they are shown to be unimportant because they have no change of pitch.



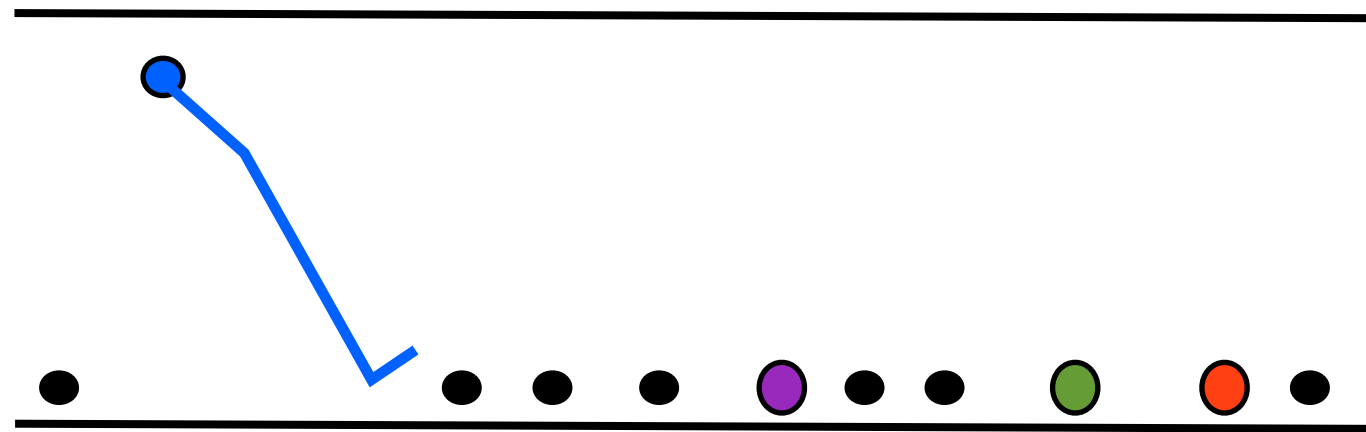
Example 4

- **If the speaker refuses to believe in John's bad temper, he may say:**

He can't have been in an appallingly bad temper.

Cont. Example 4

*He **w**as in an app**p**allingly'**b**ad'**t**emper.*

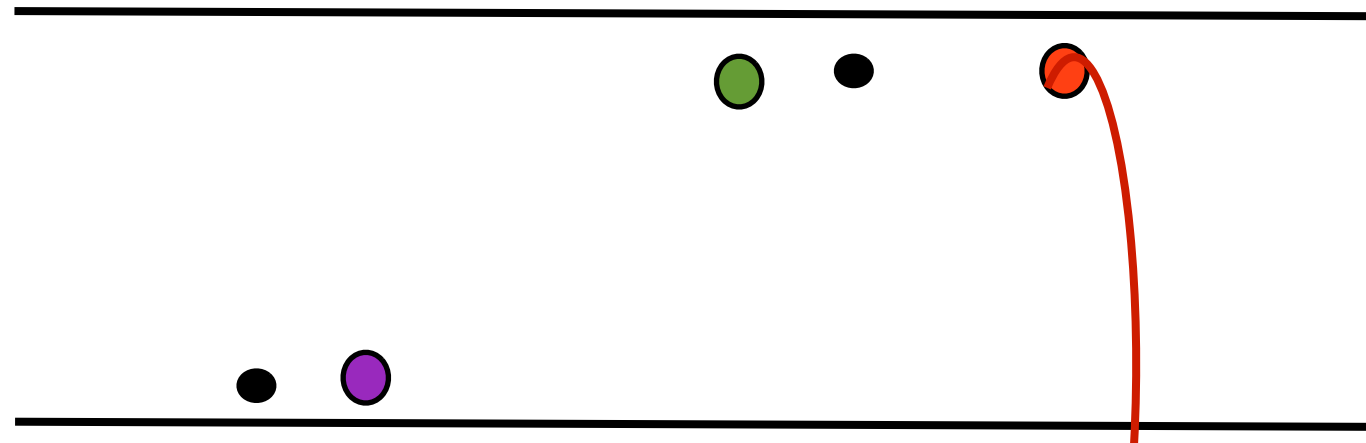


Here the word *was* which is not usually stressed at all has both the **stress** and **change of pitch** which mark it as important.

Example 5

Q: *What is John like?*

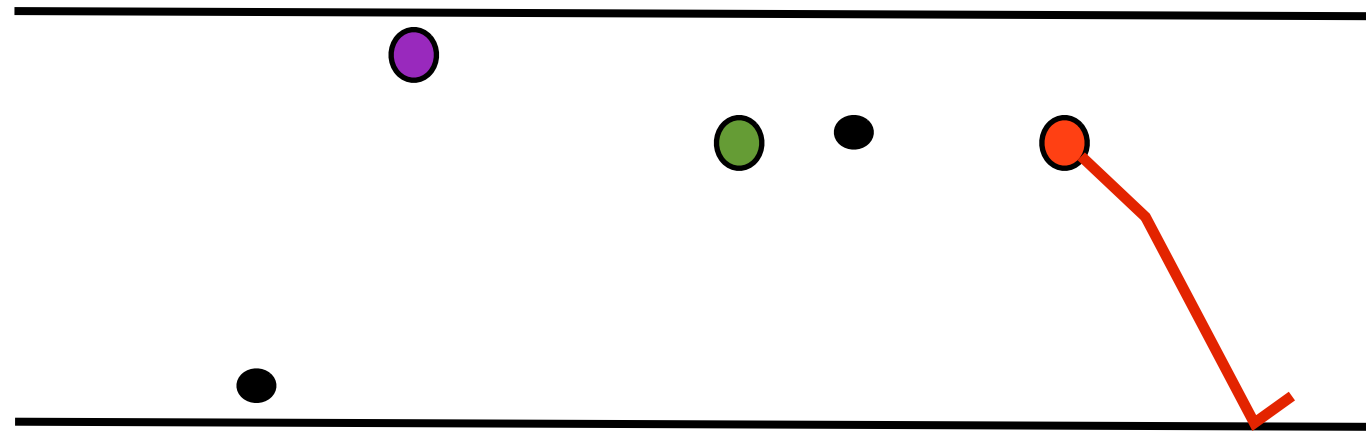
A: *He seems very nice.*



Here *seems* is not marked as important though it is stressed.

Cont. Example 5

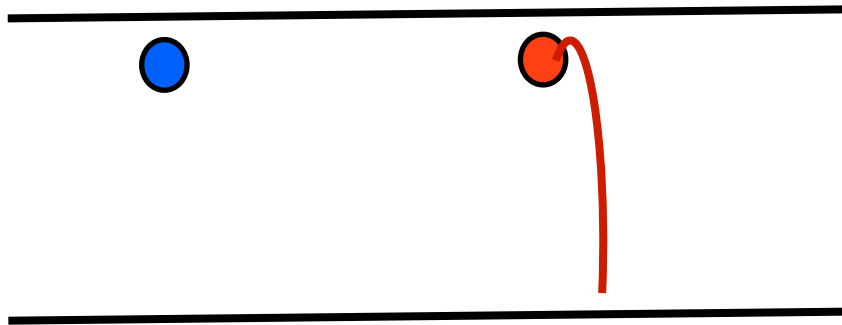
But if it is:



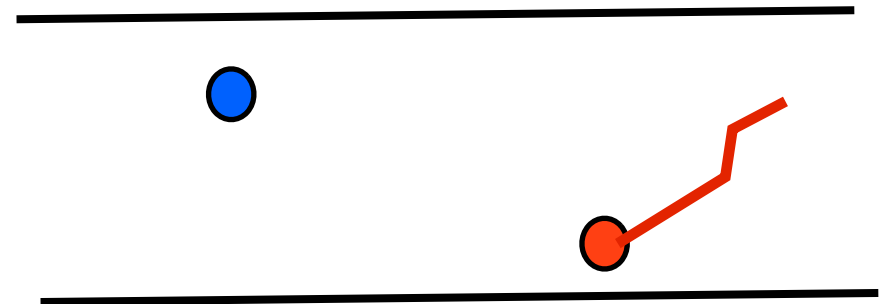
there is much more weight on *seems* because of the jump in pitch. It is understood that the speaker considers it important.

Example 6

'What's *that*?



'What's *that*?



- In both these examples the words *what* and *that* are marked as important.
- *what* is stressed and on a high pitch.
- *that* has a **fall in pitch** in the **first** case and a **rise** in the **second**.



Cont. Example 6

- **So, it is not only the number of important words that which affects the tune-shape. The difference here is a difference of attitude in the speaker.**



Cont. Example 6

- **The first example is rather serious, business-like question.**
- **The second example shows rather more interest and friendliness.**



Remember

So, the attitude of the speaker, his feelings as he says the group, affects the tune-shape, and affects it very much.



Remember

Intonation is a distinctive pattern of tones over a stretch of speech in principle longer than a word. Thus there is a difference in intonation between e.g.

That's `it ('I'm finished') (falling tone)

That's `it? ('Is that all?'). (rising tone)

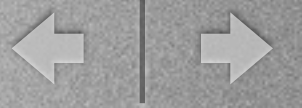


Summary

A description of intonation usually has three main aspects.

First, the relevant stretches of speech must be identified: in that way sentences or utterances are divided into successive intonational phrases (or tone groups).

Secondly, a syllable or series of syllables within each will be described as maximally prominent: this will be a position in the phrase identified by e.g. a rapid change of pitch.



Summary

Thirdly, a specific pattern of tones will be distinguished: this might be described as an overall tune or contour (rising, falling, falling and then rising, etc.) or is alternatively divided into a sequence of smaller units, each with its own pitch level.