

Dr. Md. Sharique Haider
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Maharaja College

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Intonation in English

Intonation refers to the rise and fall of the voice while speaking.

It is an important feature of spoken English that shows meaning, emotion, attitude, and intention beyond the actual words.

Correct intonation helps listeners understand whether a speaker is:

Asking a question

Giving information

Showing surprise, anger, happiness, or doubt

Ending or continuing a thought

Thus, intonation makes speech natural, clear, and expressive.

1. Importance of Intonation

Intonation plays a vital role in communication because it:

Shows the speaker's feelings and mood

Helps distinguish statements, questions, and commands

Makes speech interesting and meaningful

Prevents misunderstanding

Improves fluency and pronunciation

Without proper intonation, speech sounds flat and unnatural.

Functions of Intonation

Intonation serves several functions in speech:

(i) Grammatical Function

It helps identify sentence type:

Falling → statement

Rising → yes/no question

(ii) Attitudinal Function

It shows emotion or attitude:

Happiness

Anger

Sarcasm

Politeness

(iii) Discourse Function

It shows whether the speaker has finished speaking or will continue.

(iv) Emphatic Function

It highlights important words in a sentence.

Example:

I did finish the work. (stress on "did")