

Ups and Downs: An activity to practice intonation patterns

Instructions for the teacher:

Step 1 – Review the following patterns with the students.

Falling (↘) What did you do last weekend?

Rising (↗) Did you go anywhere special?

Low-rise, falling (↗ | ↘) When the weather is nice, I play tennis.

Remind students that yes-no questions have rising intonation. *Wh*- questions usually have falling intonation, as do simple sentences. Compound and complex sentences often have a low-rise pattern in the first clause and falling intonation in the second.

Step 2 – Copy and cut out all the statement cards. (See next page.) If you have a large class, make duplicates and have students do this activity in groups. You need one statement card for each student. Be sure to use an equal (or close to equal) number of cards with each intonation pattern. For example, 4 rising, 4 falling, and 4 low-rise.

Step 3 – Students will move around the room and start sorting themselves into three groups according to the patterns on their cards. They may not show their cards to one another. They can make matches only by reading their sentences aloud.

Step 4 – Have students sit in their groups. Each group will take a turn reading their sentences aloud. The class will listen and repeat after each reader. Correct any reader who does not accurately produce the intonation pattern.

Step 5 – Students must pair up with someone from another group. (It is all right to form a threesome if there is an odd number of students.) In these pairs, students will create a dialog of 5 to 7 lines, which include the two (or three) sentences they just practiced.

Model:

A: What did you do last weekend?

B: I played tennis.

A: Do you always play tennis on the weekend?

B: When the weather is nice, I play tennis. Do you play?

A: No.

Step 6 – Students will role play their dialog for the class. The class must take notes during each reading and identify the intonation pattern of each line. Tell them to take notes, using arrows to indicate the patterns heard. At the end of each dialog, confirm the patterns heard.

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Copy and cut out.

What are your plans for the weekend? (↘)	Are you doing anything special on the weekend? (→)
How much studying will you do this weekend? (↘)	Will you spend any time outdoors this weekend? (→)
Where do you like to spend your free time? (↘)	Do you play any sports? (→)
When do you usually study English? (↘)	Is the weather going to be nice this weekend? (→)
Can you cook? (→)	When I can find the time, I like to rollerblade. (→ ↘)
I'd like to have a picnic with some friends. (↘)	If the weather is nice, my family will have a barbeque. (→ ↘)
I enjoy reading walking in the park. (↘)	I'll go hiking with friends, and we'll camp over night. (→ ↘)
I like to stay in shape, so I always make time for jogging. (→ ↘)	I know how to cook, but I don't really enjoy it. (→ ↘)