

## Module 4-1: Basic Intonation Patterns – Word Level

In this module:

- You will learn basic word-level intonation in Japanese.
- You will listen to different intonation patterns.

Speech consists of not only consonants and vowels but also melodies and rhythms. Both melodies and rhythms are important components of intonation. Watch the following video to learn about intonation:

<http://enunciate.arts.ubc.ca/japanese/intonation/introduction-to-intonation/>.

In many languages, including English, high (H) pitch is assigned to an accented syllable. In Japanese, on the other hand, high (H) or low (L) pitch is assigned to each mora as shown in the following example.

Examples 1:  4-1-1

Japanese

マクドナルド  
L H H H L L

English

mc.**don**.alds  
H

Let's watch the video to learn pitch patterns in Japanese:

<http://enunciate.arts.ubc.ca/japanese/intonation/pitch-word-level/>.

It is important to assign the correct pitch pattern because the meaning of some words can change depending on their pitch pattern. For example, あめ with LH pitch is “candy,” but あめ with HL pitch is “rain.”

Examples 2:  4-1-2

1. あめ (candy)  
L H

2. あめ (rain)  
H L

3. かき (persimmon)  
L H

4. かき (oyster)  
H L

5. はし (bridge/corner)  
L H

6. はし (chopsticks)  
H L

7. きる (to wear)  
 L H

8. きる (to cut)  
 H L

There are two important rules you should know about Tokyo Japanese (Japanese spoken in the Tokyo area):

Examples 3:  4-1-3

- The first and second mora should have different pitches. If the first mora is HIGH, then the second mora is LOW; if the first mora is LOW, then the second mora is HIGH.

○ ○ ○ ○  
 L H H H

○ ○ ○ ○  
 H L L L

1. にほんご (Japanese)

2. こんばん (tonight)

- Within a word/phrase**, once the pitch goes down it never goes back up. The sentence final particles (ね、よ、か) , however, are exceptions to this rule.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 H L →Keep LOW

**NEVER HAPPENS**  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
 H L H 

3. ありがとう (Thanks.)

4. ありがとう 

5. いいですね (That's good.)



Listening Practice: You will hear a set of 4 words. For each set, choose the one that has a different pitch pattern from the others.

	A	B	C	D
1  4-1-4	あさ	ひる	よる	けさ
2  4-1-5	ねこ	いぬ	とり	うま
3  4-1-6	これ	それ	あれ	どれ
4  4-1-7	そと	なか	した	まえ
5  4-1-8	よむ	のむ	いく	くる
6  4-1-9	ダンス	ゲーム	マンガ	テレビ
7  4-1-10	きおん	よほう	くもり	てんき
8  4-1-11	わたし	なまえ	しごと	こんど
9  4-1-12	せかい	みんな	しごと	なまえ
10  4-1-13	きょねん	きのう	いつも	こんど
11  4-1-14	つらい	あつい	すごい	きれい
12  4-1-15	かえる	たべる	おきる	およぐ
13  4-1-16	うどん	さかな	おかし	やさい
14  4-1-17	だいがく	としょかん	こうこう	がっこう
15  4-1-18	りょうりする	そうじする	メールする	りょこうする