

## Tone

An identifiable movement or level of **PITCH** that is used in a linguistically contrastive way.

### Examples for English

In English, tone forms the central part of **INTONATION**, and the difference between, for example, a rising and a falling tone on a particular word may cause a different interpretation of the sentence in which it occurs, e.g.:

- ▶ it was <sup>ˈ</sup>cold  
(meaning 'it was cold')
- ▶ it was <sup>ˌ</sup>cold  
(meaning 'was it cold?')

There are often recognised as being at least five tones in English: a fall, a rise, a fall-rise, a rise-fall and a level tone.

Meanings are frequently ascribed to each tone; the scope of this panel does not allow us to discuss this further.

In intonation, tone may be spread over many syllables. E.g., in:

- ▶ his <sup>˘</sup>car could have broken down  
(in which the pitch movement falls on *car* and rises on *down*)

### In other languages

In some languages (known as 'tone languages') the linguistic function of tone is to change the meaning of a word: in Mandarin Chinese, for example, [ma] said on a high pitch means *mother* while [ma] said on a low rising tone means *hemp*. It is usual to identify tones as being a property of individual syllables.

**toile** tʰwa:l, twɔ:l ⑤ tʰwa:l -s -z  
**toilet** tɔɪ.lət -s -s 'toilet ,bag; 'toilet ,paper; 'toilet ,roll; 'toilet ,training; 'toilet ,water  
**toiletly** tɔɪ.lɪ.tli -lə -ies -iz  
**toilette** tʰwa:l'let -s -s  
**toilsome** tɔɪl.səm -ly -li -ness -nəs, -nɪs  
**toilworn** tɔɪl.wɔ:n ⑤ -wɔ:n  
**to-ing and fro-ing** tʰu:ɪŋ.ənd'frəʊ.ɪŋ ⑤ -'frʊ: -to-ings and fro-ings ,tʰu:ɪŋ.ənd'frəʊ.ɪŋz ⑤ -'frʊ:  
**tokay** (T) təʊ'keɪ, -'kaɪ, '-; tɒk'aɪ, -'eɪ ⑤ tʊu'keɪ  
**Tokelau** tɔk.ə.ləʊ, tɒk.ə- ⑤ tʊu.kə-  
**token** tɔu.kən ⑤ tʊu: -s -z -ism -ɪ.z<sup>ə</sup>m  
**Tokharian** tɒk'əʀ.ɪ.ən, təʊ'keə-, -'kaɪ- ⑤ tʊu'ker.ɪ-, -'kæɪ-  
**Toklas** tɒk.ləs, t'əʊk-, -ləs ⑤ tʊuk.ləs  
**Tokley** tɔu.kli ⑤ tʊu-  
**Tokyo** tɔu.ki.əʊ ⑤ tʊu.ki.əʊ  
**Toland** tɔu.lənd ⑤ tʊu-  
**told** (from tell) tɔʊld ⑤ tʊʊld  
**toledo blade**: tə'li:ː.dəʊ, tɔl'i:ː- ⑤ tə'li:ː.dʊʊ -s -z  
**Toledo** in Spain: tɔl'eɪ.dəʊ, tə'leɪ-, -'li: ⑤ tə'li:ː.dʊʊ, -'leɪ- in US: tə'li:ː.dəʊ ⑤ tʊu-  
**tolerability** tɔl.'ɹ.ə'bɪl.ə.tɪ, -ɪ.tɪ ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə:ə'bɪl.ə.tɪ  
**tolerable** tɔl.'ɹ.ə.bɪl ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə- -ly -li -leness -l.nəs, -nɪs  
**tolerance** tɔl.'ɹ.ənts ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə-  
**tolerant** tɔl.'ɹ.ənt ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə- -ly -li  
**tolerate** tɔl.'ɹ.ɪ.ət ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə'ɪ.ət -ates -eɪts -ating -eɪ.tɪŋ ⑤ -eɪ.tɪŋ  
**toleration** tɔl.'ɹ.ɪ.ət ⑤ -eɪ.tɪd  
**toleration** tɔl.'ɹ.ɪ.ət ⑤ tɑ:ː.lə'reɪ-  
**Tolkien** tɔl.ki:n, -'l- ⑤ tʊʊl.ki:n, tɑ:l-

**toll** tɔʊl ⑤ tʊʊl -s -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d -er/s -ə/z ⑤ -ə/z 'toll ,bridge; 'toll ,call  
**toll booth** tɔl.bu:θ, t'əʊl-, -bu:ð ⑤ t'əʊl- -booths -bu:θs, -bu:ðz  
**Tollemache** tɔl.mæf, -ma:ʃ ⑤ tɑ:l-  
**Tollesbury** t'əʊl.z.b'ɹ.i ⑤ t'əʊl.z.ber-, -bə-  
**Tolleshunt** t'əʊl.z.hənt ⑤ t'əʊl-z-  
**Tolley** tɔl.i ⑤ tɑ:ːli  
**toll-free** t'əʊl'fri:, t'əʊl- stress shift: ,toll-free 'call  
**tollgate** t'əʊl.gert ⑤ t'əʊl- -s -s  
**tollhouse** t'əʊl.haʊs ⑤ t'əʊl- -ses -zɪz  
**Tolpuddle** tɔl.pʌd.l ⑤ locally also: -pɪd- ⑤ tɑ:l-  
**Tolstoy** tɔl.tʰɔɪ ⑤ tɑ:l-, t'əʊl-  
**Toltec** tɔl.tek ⑤ tɑ:l-, t'əʊl- -s -s  
**tolu** (T) tɔl'u:, təʊ'lu:, -'lju: ⑤ tʊu'lu:  
**toluene** tɔl.ju:ɪn ⑤ tɑ:l-  
**Tolworth** tɔl.wəθ, -wɜ:θ ⑤ tɑ:l.wəθ, -wɜ:θ  
**tom** (T) tɔm ⑤ tɑ:m -s -z, 'Tom 'Collins; ,Tom, 'Dick and 'Harry; ,Tom and 'Jerry; Tom 'Thumb  
**tomahawk** tɔm.ə.hɔ:k ⑤ tɑ:ː.mə.hɔ:k, -hɔ:k -s -s -ing -ɪŋ -ed -t  
**Tomalin** tɔm.'ɹ.lɪn ⑤ tɑ:ː.m<sup>ə</sup>l-  
**tomán** təʊ'ma:n ⑤ tʊu-, tə- -s -z  
**tomato** tə'mɑ:ː.təʊ ⑤ -meɪ.təʊ -es -z  
**tomb** tu:m -s -z  
**tombola** tɔm'bəʊ.lə ⑤ tɑ:m'bʊ-, 'tɑ:m.b<sup>ə</sup>l.ə -s -z  
**tomboy** tɔm.bɔɪ ⑤ tɑ:m- -s -z  
**tombstone** (T) tʊ:m.stəʊn ⑤ -stəʊn -s -z  
**tomcat** tɔm.kæt ⑤ tɑ:m- -s -s  
**tone** təʊn ⑤ tʊʊn -s -z  
**Tonemy** t'ɔm.'ɹ.ti ⑤ -tɪ

**tomfool** tɔm'fu:l ⑤ tɑ:m- -s -z -ery -ɹ.i ⑤ -ɹ.i  
**Tomintoul** tɔm.ɪn'təʊl, -ən' - ⑤ tɑ:m-  
**Tomkins** tɔmp.kɪnz ⑤ tɑ:mp-  
**Tomlinson** tɔm.lɪn.sən ⑤ tɑ:m-  
**tommy, tommy (T)** tɔm.i ⑤ tɑ:ː.mi -ies -iz 'tommy ,gun  
**tommy-gun** tɔm.i.gən ⑤ tɑ:ːmi- -s -z  
**tommyrot** tɔm.i.rɔt, -rɔt- ⑤ tɑ:ːmi.rɔt  
**tomogram** təʊ.mə.grəm, tɔm.ə- ⑤ tʊu.mə- -s -z  
**tomography** tə'mbɔr.ɹə.fɪ ⑤ tʊu'mɑ:ː.grə-, tə'-  
**tomorrow** tə'mɔr.əʊ, tʊ- ⑤ -'mɑ:ɹ.əʊ -s -z to ,morrow after'noon; to ,morrow 'evening; to ,morrow 'morning; to ,morrow 'night  
**Tompion** tɔm.pi.ən ⑤ tɑ:ːm-  
**Tompkins** tɔmp.kɪnz ⑤ tɑ:mp-  
**Tomsk** tɔmpsk ⑤ tɑ:mpsk  
**tomtit** tɔm.tɪt, -tɪ- ⑤ tɑ:m'tɪt, -tɪ- -s -z  
**tom-tom** tɔm.tɔm ⑤ tɑ:ːm.tɑ:m -s -z  
**ton** weɪght: tʌn -s -z  
**ton** fashion: tɔ:ŋ ⑤ tʊʊn  
**tonal** təʊ.nəl ⑤ tʊu-  
**tonality** təʊ'næl.ə.tɪlɪ, -ɪ.tɪlɪ ⑤ tʊu'næl.ə.tɪlɪ, tə- -ies -iz  
**Tonbridge** tʌn.brɪdʒ, t'ɔm- ⑤ t'ɔm-  
**tonje** tɔʊn.tɔn -es -z -ing -ɪŋ -ed -d  
**tone-deaf** təʊn'def ⑤ tʊʊn-, -'l- -ness -nəs, -nɪs stress shift, British only: ,tone-deaf 'person  
**toneless** təʊn.ləs, -lɪs ⑤ tʊʊn- -ly -li -ness -nəs, -nɪs  
**tonematic** təʊ.nɪ'mæt.ɪk ⑤ tʊu.nɪ'mæt.ɪk -s -s  
**tonem** təʊ.nɪ:m ⑤ tʊu- -s -z  
**tonemic** təʊ'nɪ:mɪk ⑤ tʊu-, tə- -s -z  
**toner** (T) təʊ.nəɹ ⑤ tʊu.nə- -s -z