

# UFO Sighting: Practice with falling and rising intonation

[For intermediate to advanced levels]

Directions for the teacher:

**Step 1** – Engage students in brief discussion with the following questions.

1. What does UFO stand for?
2. Do you believe in UFOs?
3. What do UFOs usually look like in works of fiction?
4. Are some people mistaken when they say they saw a UFO?
5. What can people mistake for a UFO?
6. Have you ever seen a UFO?

**Step 2** – Read the discussion questions once more, and ask students to identify the intonation pattern used with each one. The pattern will either be falling or rising intonation. When the correct pattern is identified, note it on the board with an arrow (↘ or ↗) next to the given question.

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1. falling | 4. rising  |
| 2. rising  | 5. falling |
| 3. falling | 6. rising  |

Note that *wh*- questions generally use falling intonation, and yes-no questions use rising intonation. Recall student answers to the questions, repeat them, and note that answers generally use falling intonation.

**Step 3** – Copy and cut out the role cards. (See next page.) If you have more than 12 students, make duplicate cards. Very large classes can do this activity in groups.

**Step 4** – Explain that students will role play according to their cards. As reporters, they must ask their questions with correct intonation. As witnesses, they must answer the questions with falling intonation. Reporters should speak to at least three different witnesses. Encourage the witnesses to have fun and be creative in their responses. Require each interview to begin with an introduction by the reporter: “Hello. (↘) I’m a reporter from [the City Tribune]. (↘) May I ask you a few questions? (↗)” OR “I’d like to talk to you about the UFO sighting.” (↘)

**Step 5** – Optional: Allow rehearsal time, and then record individual interviews. With simple editing software (e.g., iMovie or Window Movie Maker), you can turn these recordings into a pseudo-documentary, complete with a title slide and soundtrack. The playback will allow students the opportunity to self-evaluate.

VARIATION: If you wish, you can teach the use of rising intonation with *wh*- questions.

- Explain that this pattern is used when a question is repeated in order to confirm it was heard correctly: “What time did I see it? (↗) Is that what you asked? (↗)”
- Similarly, rising intonation is used with requests, such as “Excuse me. (↘) What did you just ask? (↗)”
- Rising intonation is also used sometimes to sound less direct and more polite, especially when speaking to a stranger. “You mentioned a neighbor. (↘) What was his name? (↗)”

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Reporters	Witnesses
<p>[newspaper: City Tribune]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you see anything unusual last night?</li> <li>2. Did the object move fast?</li> <li>3. What do you think it was?</li> </ol>	<p>You saw a bright light in the sky last night around 10 pm. It wasn't big, but it moved faster and in circles. At the time, no one else was around to see this strange object with you. You were returning home from a trip to the pharmacy when you saw the light.</p>
<p>[magazine: What's New?]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you witness a UFO sighting last night?</li> <li>2. Where were you exactly?</li> <li>3. Was anyone else with you when you saw the UFO?</li> </ol>	<p>Around 9:30 last night, you were outside talking with a neighbor on the sidewalk. You both heard a strange sound in the sky. It was like a whistle. When you looked up, you both saw two lights moving around the sky in slow circles. It lasted for about 10 minutes.</p>
<p>[magazine: Our Week]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are you a witness to the UFO sighting last night?</li> <li>2. What time was it?</li> <li>3. What did the object look like?</li> </ol>	<p>You were taking out the trash last night just past 10 pm. You looked up at the sky and saw a bright light. At first it was small, and then it got bigger. It moved fast, but it stayed still in the sky for a few minutes. You wanted to run in for your camera, but you didn't want to miss anything.</p>
<p>[newspaper: City Beat]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are you one of the witnesses to the UFO sighting last night?</li> <li>2. Can you describe what you saw?</li> <li>3. Were you alone when you saw this object?</li> </ol>	<p>You were out walking your dog around 9:45 pm last night when you saw a bright blue light in the sky. It moved slowly, and then it changed to green and began to move faster. It made silent circles. It was far away. You're sure it wasn't a plane or helicopter.</p>
<p>[newspaper: Today's World]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you see a UFO last night?</li> <li>2. What were you doing when you saw the object?</li> <li>3. What did you feel when you saw it?</li> </ol>	<p>It was a little after 9 pm when you arrived home from work. You were tired, but you became excited when you saw two strange lights in the sky. They were blue and small. They moved slowly across the sky, and then began to make fast circles before they disappeared.</p>
<p>[magazine: News Now]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you see anything unusual in the sky last night?</li> <li>2. Did the object make any sound?</li> <li>3. How did the object move?</li> </ol>	<p>Around 10:30 last night, you were sitting on your patio listening to music. You saw a strange green appear in the sky. It made one slow circle and then came closer. The object had the shape of an oval. It seemed to be the size of a helicopter, but it moved quietly.</p>