Listening and Speaking: 
Intonation – Polite vs. Rude Pronunciation

1. In the Writing & Reading Center, go the section with computers for listening
2. Double click on ESL Applications
3. Double click on the “Pronunciation” Folder
4. Scroll down and click to open the last resource that is listed: “Larry Ferlazzo's Best Web Sites for Learning English” under the heading “Do you want more?”
5. On this website click on “Spoken Skills”
6. Under the “General” category click on “Intonation: Polite vs. Rude Pronunciation (By: Ovient English)”
7. Listen to the examples carefully. Take notes on the pitch patterns you hear in the space provided.

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8. Next look for the “Listen, Record, and Practice” box on the screen. Record your voice. Press stop when you are finished. To listen to your recording press “Preview.”
9. Compare your voice recording with the examples.

Language Note: In English, the pitch pattern used can show a polite or rude tone. See the examples below.

Example 1: Can you please hold? (polite)  
Example 2: Can you please hold? (rude)
10. Find an instructor or tutor. Practice the following sentences with an instructor.

   a. Wait a moment. (polite)

   b. Wait a moment. (rude)

   c. I need to speak to Ben, please. (polite)

   d. I need to speak to Ben, please. (rude)

   e. What do you want? (polite)

   f. What do you want? (rude)

   g. I'll do what I can. (polite)

   h. I'll do what I can. (rude)

   i. That's impossible. (polite)

   j. That's impossible. (rude)

   k. What did you say? (polite)

   l. What did you say? (rude)