

## Lesson 1 – Pinyin

### A few tricky sounds:

q – sounds like 'ch', but say it with your teeth

x – sounds like 'sh', but say it with your teeth

zh – sounds like 'j', but curl your tongue back when you say it

Say it with your teeth:	=	Say it with your tongue curled back slightly:
j	=	zh
q	=	ch
x	=	sh

r – sounds like an English 'r', but the tongue is curled back slightly

z – sounds like 'dzzz'...the sound a bee makes

c – sounds like 'ts' in 'cats'

a – sounds like 'o' in 'octopus'

e – sounds like 'u' in 'under'

ai – sounds like 'i' in 'ice'

ei – sounds like 'a' in 'ate'

ao – the sound you make when someone punches you Ǿw

ou – sounds like 'o' in 'open'

★ ong – first say 'oh'; then end with 'ng' from 'song'

i – sounds like 'ee' in 'sheet'

ie – sounds like 'yeah'

iu – sounds like 'yo' in 'yo, wazzup?'

★ **ian – this one is tricky**, it should actually sound like 'yen', the Japanese currency

uai – sounds like 'why'

**un – this one is tricky**, it should actually sound like 'when' wen or one

**ü – this one is tricky**. It's not 'u'—it is called 'umlaut'. Make the sound by saying 'ee' in 'cheese' for a long time. As you're saying 'ee', make your lips as if you're getting ready to kiss someone

★ **üe – this one is tricky**—first look at the above explanation for 'ü'—make that sound and follow it with a 'e' in 'end'. This should sound like you're throwing up.

★ **üan – this is really tricky! The 'a' is misleading—it should actually sound like 'üe' from above with an 'n'**

★ **ün – this is also really tricky! It should sound like the 'ü' sound followed by 'een' in 'queen'**

### Exceptions:

**bo, po, mo, fo** – should actually sound like 'bwo', 'pwo', 'mwo', 'fwo'

**zhi, shi, chi** – should actually sound like 'jr', 'shr', 'chr'

**ri, zi, ci, si** – should actually sound like they don't have vowels—'rrr', 'dzzz', 'tsss', 'szzz'

**yu, ju, qu, xu** – the 'u' in these should be read as 'ü'

**yue, jue, que, xue** – the 'ue' in these should be read as 'üe'

★ **yuan, juan, quan, xuan** – the 'uan' in these should be read as 'üen'

yung, jung, xun – the 'un' in these should be read as 'ün'

## Lesson 2 – Tones

In Chinese, a change in the pitch or tone of a word will change its meaning. For example, the word 'ma' could mean 'mother', 'horse', 'to scold', or indicate a question just by differences in the way 'ma' is said.

So, you could say “māma mà mǎ ma?” (妈妈骂马吗?), and it would mean, “Did mother scold the horse?”

There are four tones in Chinese (plus a no-tone):

1. This is the first tone: 

The first tone is higher pitched and flat. It should sound like you are signing one note continuously. Sing: “Ah.....”

2. This is the second tone: 

The second tone is a rising pitch. It sounds like you can't believe what you've just heard. Say: “What?!”

3. This is the third tone: 

The third tone starts quite low, then drops down and then rises up slightly. This sound is different than English sounds—it sounds like it's broken into two parts. Listen to the teacher say it.

4. This is the fourth tone: 

The fourth tone is a falling pitch. It sounds like you're angry. Say, “NO!!!” Notice that your voice falls from a high pitch to a low pitch very quickly.

5. When there is no tone, just say the sound very quickly in the mid-pitch range—don't give it any emphasis or pitch change.

Let's try saying some tones together. Say each of these three times each:

- bā
- gūo
- zhūan
- tāng
  
- ráo
- péng
- rùn
- méi
  
- mǎn
- dùn
- shǔai
- qiǎn
  
- fàng
- dào
- bì
- wàn

Let's try a few combinations:

- horizontally* • lābā (1, 1)
- bow* • kētóu (1, 2)
- comma* • yīngüo (1, 3)
- to have* • shānghài (1, 4)
  
- tomorrow* • míngtiān (2, 1)
- open* • chángcháng (2, 2)
- chinese* • huáyǔ (2, 3)
- your in trouble* • wándàn (2, 4)
  
- to get lost* • zǒudiū (3, 1)
- to solve* • jiějúe (3, 2)
- hi* • nihǎo (3, 3)
- a result* • fǎnyǐng (3, 4)
  
- day after tomorrow* • hòutiān (4, 1)
- last year* • qùnián (4, 2)
- com.* • gòngchǎn (4, 3)
- put it down* • fàngxià (4, 4)

Extra-Mile:

- Máozédōng
- Lǐxiǎolóng
- Fǎlúngōng
- Chéngbǎoróng