Laowai

Pinyin and Mandarin tones

Choose a syllable online, listen to its recording, then repeat it.

Tone 1

mā

妈

mother

Tone 2



má

麻

hemp

Tone 3



mǎ

马

horse

Tone 4



mà

骂

scold

Tone marks

Mark a first, then e. In ou, mark o. In iu and ui, mark the second vowel: liú, shuǐ.

Spelling ü

Keep ü in nǚ and lǜ. After j, q, x and y, write u without the dots: jù, qù, xū, yǔ.

Neutral tone

A neutral syllable has no tone mark. It is shorter, and its pitch depends on the preceding tone. Listen to māma 妈妈 online.

Connected speech

The third-tone example is the isolated dipping form. In connected speech it often stays low; before another third tone it becomes rising.

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Pinyin syllable reference

Open a linked spelling to hear its available tones in the online chart.

Vowels	a ai an ang ao e ei en eng er o ou
b	ba bai ban bang bao bei ben beng bi bian biao bie bin bing bo bu
p	pa pai pan pang pao pei pen peng pi pian piao pie pin ping po pou pu
m	ma mai man mang mao me mei men meng mi mian miao mie min ming miu mo mou mu
f	fa fan fang fei fen feng fo fou fu
d	da dai dan dang dao de dei den deng di dia dian diao die ding diu dong dou du duan dui dun duo
t	ta tai tan tang tao te teng ti tian tiao tie ting tong tou tu tuan tui tun tuo
n	na nai nan nang nao ne nei nen neng ni nian niang niao nie nin ning niu nong nou nu nuan nuo nü nüe
l	la lai lan lang lao le lei leng li lia lian liang liao lie lin ling liu lo long lou lu luan lun luo lü lüe
g	ga gai gan gang gao ge gei gen geng gong gou gu gua guai guan guang gui gun guo
k	ka kai kan kang kao ke kei ken keng kong kou ku kua kuai kuan kuang kui kun kuo
h	ha hai han hang hao he hei hen heng hong hou hu hua huai huan huang hui hun huo

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j	ji jia jian jiang jiao jie jin jing jiong jiu ju juan jue jun
q	qi qia qian qiang qiao qie qin qing qiong qiu qu quan que qun
x	xi xia xian xiang xiao xie xin xing xiong xiu xu xuan xue xun
zh	zha zhai zhan zhang zhao zhe zhei zhen zheng zhi zhong zhou zhu zhua zhuai zhuan zhuang zhui zhun zhuo
ch	cha chai chan chang chao che chen cheng chi chong chou chu chua chuai chuan chuang chui chun chuo
sh	sha shai shan shang shao she shei shen sheng shi shou shu shua shuai shuan shuang shui shun shuo
r	ran rang rao re ren reng ri rong rou ru rua ruan rui run ruo
z	za zai zan zang zao ze zei zen zeng zi zong zou zu zuan zui zun zuo
c	ca cai can cang cao ce cen ceng ci cong cou cu cuan cui cun cuo
s	sa sai san sang sao se sen seng si song sou su suan sui sun suo
y	ya yan yang yao ye yi yin ying yo yong you yu yuan yue yun
w	wa wai wan wang wei wen weng wo wu

Audio: Chen Wang and Yue Tan; audio-cmn, curated by Hugo Lopez / PLIDAM, INALCO. CC BY-SA 3.0 US. Existing optimized recordings reused unchanged. Laowai teaching text and layout.