

Classes

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1: ??: "J Q X" and "Zh Ch Sh"

?? (sh?ngm?): "J Q X" and "Zh Ch Sh"

Tones in Mandarin

Each syllable in Mandarin has a tone, which can completely change its meaning:

Tone	Mark	Example	Different Meanings
1st (High)	ā	mā	妈 (mother)
2nd (Rising)	á	má	麻 (hemp)
3rd (Low-dipping)	ǎ	mǎ	马 (horse)
4th (Falling)	à	mà	骂 (scold)
Neutral	a	ma	吗 (question particle)

?? (sh?ngm?) - ?? (qián y?n): "J Q X"

Chinese Sound	Similar to (but not equivalent)	Important Notes
j	"ge" in "regime"	Tongue position closer to "ee" sound. Keep tongue raised near front of mouth
q	Same as 'j' but with blocked air release	Like 'j' but aspirated (extra puff of air when released)
x	"sh" with tongue in "ee" position	Tongue raised and forward against roof of mouth, like "ee" position

?? (sh?ngm?) - ??? (ju?n shé y?n): "Zh Ch Sh"

Chinese Sound	Similar to (but not equivalent)	Important Notes
zhi	"jr" sound with curled tongue	Tongue curls back (retroflex). Keep tip pointed up and back

Chinese Sound	Similar to (but not equivalent)	Important Notes
chi	"chr" with curled tongue	Retroflex position, stronger aspiration than "zhi"
shi	"shr" with curled tongue	Retroflex position, but with friction rather than aspiration

Important Rules

- J, Q, X can only be used with 'i' and 'ü' sounds and their variations
- Zh, Ch, Sh work with most other vowels
- Q is the aspirated version of J (same sound but with extra puff of air when released)

Individual Characters

Character	Pinyin	Meaning
声	shēng	sound/voice
母	mǔ	mother
前	qián	front
音	yīn	sound
卷	juǎn	roll/curl
舌	shé	tongue
妈	mā	mother
爸	bà	father
早	zǎo	early/morning
上	shàng	up/above
好	hǎo	good
山	shān	mountain

Exercise

Using the individual characters above, can you:

1. Break down these phrases into their individual characters and explain what each character means:
 - 声
 - 母
 - 前
2. Explain how the tones work in each character of these phrases:

- māma
- bàba
- zǎoshàng hǎo

2: ??: i, u, ü

Basic Finals and Common Phrases

Final	Description	Tips
i	Similar to "ee"	Keep tongue high and forward
u	Like "oo"	Round lips
ü	Like German "ü"	Say "ee" and round lips

Note: ü is sometimes written as u with dots (ü) or as 'v' in some texts

Important Rules

- Practice 'e' sound before attempting 'ü'
- ü (with dots) is pronounced like "yu"
- 'u' finals are typically the most challenging for beginners
- Tone Change Rule: When two third tones (ǎ) occur together:
 - The first syllable changes to second tone (á)
 - Only the second syllable keeps the third tone (ǎ)
 - Example: 你好 (nǐ hǎo) is actually pronounced as (ní hǎo)
 - This is called tone sandhi

Individual Characters

Character	Pinyin	Meaning
你	nǐ	you
好	hǎo	good
谢	xiè	thank
我	wǒ	I/me
很	hěn	very
也	yě	also
鱼	yú	fish
韵	yùn	rhyme
母	mǔ	mother

Exercise

Using the individual characters above, can you:

1. Break down these phrases into their individual characters and explain what each character means:
 - 好
 - 你好
 - 您好
 - 您好吗
 - 您好
2. Explain how the tones work in each character of these phrases:
 - nǐ hǎo (pronounced as ní hǎo due to tone change rule)
 - xiè xie nǐ
 - wǒ hěn hǎo
 - wǒ yě hěn hǎo
 - yùn mǔ

3. Pronouns and Their Forms

Pronouns and Their Forms

Base	With 们 (Plural)	With 的 (Possession)	Notes
我 (wǒ) - I/me	我们 (wǒmen) - we/us	我的 (wǒ de) - my/mine	
你 (nǐ) - you	你们 (nǐmen) - you all	你的 (nǐ de) - your/yours	
他 (tā) - he	他们 (tāmen) - they	他的 (tā de) - his	
她 (tā) - she	她们 (tāmen) - they (female)	她的 (tā de) - hers	Same pronunciation as male form

New Vocabulary

Character	Pinyin	Meaning	Notes
鸡	jī	chicken	
七	qī	seven	
西	xī	west	
西瓜	xīguā	watermelon	Second syllable often unstressed in casual speech
们	men	plural marker	Never used alone; attaches to pronouns
很	hěn	very	Used between subject and adjective
也	yě	also/too	Comes after subject
的	de	possession marker	Pronounced like "duh"

Grammar Particles

Particle	Pinyin	Usage	Example
吗	ma	Question marker	你好吗 (nǐ hǎo ma?) - How are you?
的	de	Possession	我的 (wǒ de) - mine
们	men	Plural	我们 (wǒmen) - we

Important Rules

- 你 (men) is only used with pronouns and some animate nouns
- Word order: Subject + 你 (yě) + Rest of sentence
- Possession: Owner + 的 (de) + Object
- In casual speech, second syllables of common words (like 西瓜 xīguā) are often unstressed

Finals Review

- i, u, ü (German ü with dots)
- Character structure often has left and right radicals

Character Components

- Most Chinese characters are composed of radicals
- Common structure: left radical + right radical
- Understanding radicals helps with character recognition and memorization

Common Phrases and Combinations

Chinese	Pinyin	Literal Meaning	Actual Usage
你好	nǐ hǎo	you good	Hello
你好吗?	nǐ hǎo ma?	you good [question]?	How are you?
我好	wǒ hǎo	I very good	I'm very well
你呢?	nǐ ne?	you [question]?	And you?
我也好	wǒ yě hǎo	I also very good	I'm good too
早上好	zǎo shang hǎo	morning up good	Good morning
大家好	nǐmen hǎo	you [plural] good	Hello everyone
我们的	wǒmen de	we [plural] [possession]	our/ours
他们的	tāmen de	they [plural] [possession]	their/theirs
你们的	nǐmen de	you [plural] [possession]	your/yours (plural)

4. Family Members & "?" (To Be)

New Vocabulary

Character	Pinyin	Literal Character Meaning	English Usage
是	shì	be	am/is/are
弟弟	dìdì	younger + younger	younger brother
哥哥	gēge	older + older	older brother
谁	shéi	who	who
绿	lǜ	green	green
吕	lǚ	(surname)	surname Lü

Possessive Phrases with Family Members

Chinese	Pinyin	Character-by-Character	English Usage
我妈妈	wǒ māma de	I + mother + mother + possessive	my mom's
我的妈妈	wǒ de māma	I + possessive + mother + mother	my mom
他妈妈	tā de māma	he + possessive + mother + mother	his mom
她爸爸	tā de bàba	she + possessive + father + father	her dad
我们妈妈	wǒmen de māma	I + plural + possessive + mother + mother	our mom
他们妈妈	tāmen de māma	he + plural + possessive + mother + mother	their mom

Important Sentence Patterns

Chinese	Pinyin	Character-by-Character	English Usage
他是我的弟弟	tā shì wǒ de dìdì	he + be + I + possessive + younger + younger	He is my younger brother
我是哥哥	wǒ shì gēge	I + be + older + older	I am the older brother

Chinese	Pinyin	Character-by-Character	English Usage
我是 Jack	wǒ shì Jack	I + be + Jack	I am Jack
他是谁?	tā shì shéi?	he + be + who	Who is he?
他们是谁?	tāmen shì shéi?	he + plural + be + who	Who are they?

Pronunciation Notes

J, Q, X with ü Sound

Character	Pinyin	Notes
ü	lǜ	Uses ü sound
ü	lǚ	Uses ü sound

- The ü sound is written as 'u' after j, q, x
- The dots are only written in other cases (like in 绿 lǜ)

Grammar Points

? (shì) Usage:

- Links subject with predicates
- Used for identification
- Cannot be used alone like English "yes"

Possession Patterns:

- Both Person + family member + 的 and Person + 的 + family member are correct
- 们 (men) indicates plural
- 的 (de) indicates possession

Looking Ahead

Next concept: 认识 (rèn + shi) = recognize + know → to know/recognize someone

Common Pattern Notes

- Family terms are doubled (爸爸, 妈妈) with second character in neutral tone
- Possessive marker 的 comes after the owner
- Plural marker 们 comes after the pronoun
- Question word 谁 (shéi) comes at the same position as the answer would be

5. Key Grammar Elements

Character	Pinyin	Function	Usage
是	shì	to be	Links subject with identity/description
的	de	possessive marker	Shows ownership/relationship
叫	jiào	to be called/named	Used specifically for names

Family Relationships & Introductions

Chinese	Pinyin	Literal Meaning	English Usage
弟弟	dìdì	younger + younger	younger brother
哥哥	gēge	older + older	older brother
妈妈	māma	mother + mother	mom/mum
爸爸	bàba	father + father	dad
老婆	lǎopó	old + wife	wife
老公	lǎogōng	old + husband	husband

Basic Sentence Patterns with Literal Translations

Chinese	Pinyin	Literal Translation	English Usage
他是弟弟	tā shì dìdì	he + is + younger-brother	He is the younger brother
他是我的弟弟	tā shì wǒ de dìdì	he + is + I + possessive + younger-brother	He is my younger brother
我是他的哥哥	wǒ shì tā de gēge	I + is + he + possessive + older-brother	I am his older brother
她是我的妈妈	tā shì wǒ de māma	she + is + I + possessive + mother	She is my mum
他是我的爸爸	tā shì wǒ de bàba	he + is + I + possessive + father	He is my dad
她是我的老婆	tā shì wǒ de lǎopó	she + is + I + possessive + wife	She is my wife

Chinese	Pinyin	Literal Translation	English Usage
你是我的老婆	nǐ shì wǒ de lǎopó	you + is + I + possessive + wife	You are my wife
我是你的老公	wǒ shì nǐ de lǎogōng	I + is + you + possessive + husband	I am your husband

Name Introduction Patterns

Chinese	Pinyin	Literal Translation	English Usage
我叫 Jack	wǒ jiào Jack	I + called + Jack	My name is Jack
杰克	jié kè	Jack (Chinese form)	Chinese version of "Jack"
蔡一鸣	cài yì yīng	Cai (surname) + Yi + Ying	Chinese name (surname: 蔡)

Sentence Structure Patterns

1. Basic Identity (是)

Subject + 是 + Noun

他是弟弟

tā shì dìdì

he + is + younger-brother

"He is the younger brother"

2. Possession with 的

Subject + 是 + [Person/Pronoun + 的] + Noun

他是我的弟弟

tā shì wǒ de dìdì

he + is + I + possessive + younger-brother

"He is my younger brother"

3. Name Introduction (我叫)

Subject + 叫 + Name

我叫 Jack

wǒ jiào Jack

I + called + Jack

"My name is Jack"

Important Grammar Rules

1. 是 (shì) Usage

- Used for identity and description
- Cannot be used alone as "yes"
- Must be followed by a noun or noun phrase
- Pattern: Subject + 是 + [Noun/Description]

2. 的 (de) Placement

- Always comes after the possessor
- Links possessor to the thing possessed
- Pattern: Owner + 的 + Object
- Example: 我是妈妈 (wǒ de māma) = I + possessive + mother = "my mother"

3. 叫 (jiào) vs 是 (shì)

- Use 叫 specifically for names
- Use 是 for relationships and identities
- Never mix: 我是 Jack (incorrect for names)
- Correct: ✓ 我叫 Jack (correct for names)

Advanced Pattern Examples

她是我的妻子

tā shì wǒ de lǎopó

she + is + I + possessive + wife

"She is my wife"

我是你的丈夫

wǒ shì nǐ de lǎogōng

I + is + you + possessive + husband

"I am your husband"

When to Use Each Structure

1. Use 是 (shì) when:

- Stating someone's role/identity
- Describing relationships
- Making equivalence statements Example: 他是弟弟 (He is the younger brother)

2. Use 的 (de) when:

- Showing possession
- Indicating relationships
- Pattern: Possessor + 的 + Thing possessed Example: 我是妈妈 (my mother)

3. Use 叫 (jiào) when:

- Introducing names
- Asking someone's name

- Telling your own name Example: □□ Jack (My name is Jack)