

# Mandarin

- Classes

- 1: 声母 : "J Q X" and "Zh Ch Sh"
- 2: 韵母 : i, u, ü
- 3. Pronouns and Their Forms
- 4. Family Members & "是" (To Be)
- 5. Key Grammar Elements

# Classes

## Classes

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 (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
  - 再见
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 |

| Chinese | Pinyin          | Character-by-Character | English Usage          |
|---------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 哥哥      | wǒ shì gēge     | I + be + older + older | I am the older brother |
| 哥哥 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 (哥哥 , 弟弟 ) with second character in neutral tone
- Possessive marker 的 comes after the owner
- Plural marker 们 comes after the pronoun

- Question word 誰 (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      | māmā    | 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 māmā | 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              |

| Chinese | Pinyin               | Literal Translation                 | English Usage     |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 她是我的老婆  | tā shì wǒ de lǎopó   | she + is + I + possessive + wife    | She is my wife    |
| 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       | jiékè        | 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 (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: 我叫 Jack (incorrect for names)
- Correct: ✓ 我是 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: 我的妈妈 (my mother)

3. Use 叫 (jiào) when:

- Introducing names
- Asking someone's name
- Telling your own name Example: 我叫 Jack (My name is Jack)