

1: 一: "J Q X" and "Zh Ch Sh"

二 (shǒngmǔ): "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)

三 (shǒngmǔ) - 前 (qián yǎn): "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

四 (shǒngmǔ) - 四 (jù shé yǎn): "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:

- Break down these phrases into their individual characters and explain what each character means:
 - 声音
 - 妈妈
 - 早上好
- Explain how the tones work in each character of these phrases:

- māma
 - bàba
 - zǎoshàng hǎo
-

Revision #8

Created 11 December 2024 10:19:40 by Jack Waterhouse

Updated 13 December 2024 06:59:05 by Jack Waterhouse