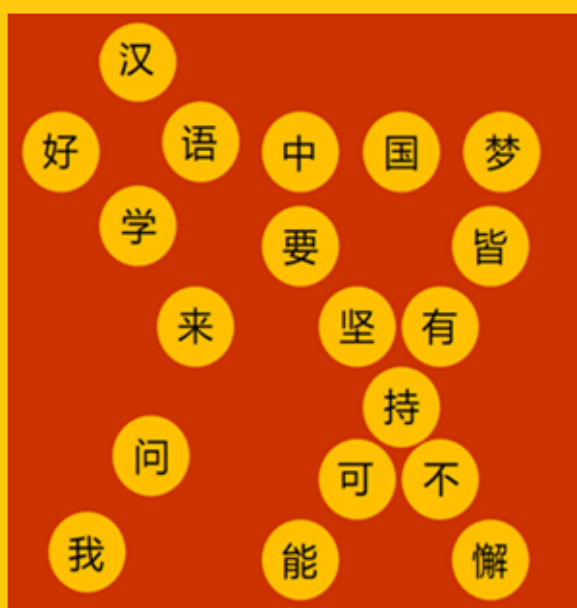


CHINESE LANGUAGE COURSE



STUDY OF CHINA AND CHINESE LANGUAGE

PRONUNCIATION AND TONES

1) SOME PRONUNCIATION BASICS:

1.1) z, c, s

- "z" is pronounced like "ts" in "cats",
- "c" is pronounced like "ts" in "cats", with aspiration,
- "s" is pronounced like "s" in "see".

1.2) zh, ch, sh

- "zh" is pronounced as "j" in "jerk" but with the tip of the tongue curled farther back,
- "ch" is pronounced like "ch" in "church", but with the tip of the tongue curled farther back,
- "sh" is pronounced as "sh" in "ship", but with the tip of the tongue curled farther back.

1.3) e

"e" is usually pronounced as "e" sound at the end of the word "problem": "me", "de", "te", "ne", "le", "ge", "ke", "he", "ze", "ce", "se", "zhe", "che", "she", "re". It is only in the case of the syllable "ye", that "e" is pronounced as a broad ê (as in "yay").

1.4) i

In the cases of "zi", "ci", "si", "zhi", "chi", "shi" and "ri", the sound "i" is pronounced in a special way similar to the sound of a bee, clenching the teeth and putting the tongue to the front of the teeth. In all other cases (for example "ji", "qi", "xi", and "yi") it is pronounced as "ee".

1.5) j, q, x

- "j" is pronounced as "j" in jam and jump, but softer and the tongue touches the lower front teeth,
- "q" is pronounced as "chee" in "cheese", but softer and the tongue touches the lower front teeth,

- "x" is pronounced as "shee" in "sheep", but softer and the tongue touches the lower front teeth.

1.6) u

Sound "u" is pronounced as "oo" sound in the word "boot". In the following exceptions it is pronounced as "ü": "ju", "qu", "xu", "yu", "jue", "que", "xue", "yue", "juan", "quan", "xuan", "yuan", "jun", "qun", "xun", "yun". We make this sound by rounding our lips as much as possible. It's better to over-exaggerate than to make the wrong sound.

1.7) ng

The suffix "ng" is barely hearable. Instead, it looks like we "eat" the letter "g" before we pronounce it.

1.8) r

Sound "r" is pronounced as in "right", but with lips unrounded, and the tip of the tongue curled farther back.

1.9) Difference between q&ch in x&sh

2) TONES:

Knowing and using tones correctly is crucial for effective communication in Chinese language. If we use the wrong tones, it can happen that the person opposite of us will not understand us or we may even say something that we did not intend to.

In Chinese language, there are four tones and one neutral. These four tones denote 413 syllables, which are further expanded to several thousand characters.

