



Introduction

Part 1 Learn Pinyin My Way

Chinese *Pinyin* is not difficult to learn. It mainly includes three parts: initials, finals and tones. In this chapter you'll be introduced to some basic knowledge of *Pinyin*, how to pronounce them, the differences between *Pinyin* and the English phonetics, and ways to remember them, so that you can read *Pinyin* easily and pronounce them in the later parts of the book. This will help you to study Chinese along with the audios by yourself.

I. Initials

There are 23 initials in Chinese *Pinyin*. Many of them have similar sounds to the English consonants. Please look at Table 1 and compare them with the English version.

Table 1 Chinese initials

Chinese letter	Sound	English word
b	p	as "b" in "book"
p	p'	as "p" in "poor"
m	m	as "m" in "more"
f	f	as "f" in "four"





TALK CHINESE

—— 口语

d	t	as "d" in "dog"
t	t'	as "t" in "text"
n	n	as "n" in "net"
l	l	as "l" in "learn"
g	k	as "g" in "green"
k	k'	as "k" in "kit"
h	x	as "h" in "her"
j	tɕ	as "j" in "jeep"
q	tɕ'	as "ch" in "cheese"
x	ɕ	as "sh" in "shit"
z	ts	as "ds" in "sounds"
c	ts'	as "ts" in "lots"
s	s	as "s" in "sum"
zh	tʂ	as "j" in "journey"
ch	tʂ'	as "ch" in "church"
sh	ʂ	as "sh" in "shirt"
r	ʐ	as "r" in "red"
w	w	as "w" in "woman"
y	j	as "y" in "you"

2. Finals

There are 35 finals in Chinese *Pinyin*. To be more specific, there are six single finals and 29 compound finals. The six single finals are: a, o, e, i, u, and ü. Under each final there are several compound finals. The key to remember them, is to remember the six single finals first, then remember the compound finals of each final as a group. There is a rule in doing it. Look at Table 2 and compare them with the English version.





— TALK CHINESE

— 口语

uo	uo	as “wha” in “what”
uai	uai	why
uan	uan	when
uang	uanŋ	as “wan” in “want”
ü	y	
üe	ye	
ün	yn	
üan	yen	

3. Tones

The Chinese Mandarin has four tones—the first tone “—”, the second tone “ˊ”, the third tone “ˇ”, and the fourth tone “ˋ”. Different tones express different meanings. So it is important to master all four tones in order not to mislead others when you’re speaking.

How does one practice the four tones is a common question. Here is one way to do it: Do you know how to sing songs? Yes, use that to help you. For example: ā, á, ǎ, à, the first tone “ā” is a high tone, so you should sing it high pitched as if you’re saying the word “Hi”; the second tone goes from low to high as if you’re saying the word “what?”; the third tone is like a valley, you can sing it as if saying the word “whoa”; and the fourth tone goes from high to low as if you’re saying the word “Go!” Isn’t it easy? Now let’s practice the four tones.

ā	á	ǎ	à
ō	ó	ǒ	ò
ē	é	ě	è
ī	í	ǐ	ì
ū	ú	ǔ	ù
ǖ	ǘ	ǚ	ǜ

