

HEAR IT · MARK IT · SAY IT

Mandarin Tone-Pair Listening & Speaking Lab

A low-ink listening and speaking lab for every two-syllable dictionary-tone combination.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

- 01** Hear which syllable changed when words sound similar.
- 02** Move from a useful word to a phrase and then a sentence.
- 03** Track one specific contrast for your next five-minute drill.

OPEN THE COMPANION PRACTICE

Scan for the current public practice page, audio samples, and any corrections.

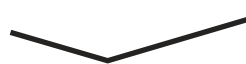
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REFERENCE

See the four contours before you compare pairs.

The tone mark records the dictionary form. Natural connected speech can change the contour you hear; page 9 separates those two layers.

1 high + level 	2 rising 	3 low; dips alone 	4 sharp fall 
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NEUTRAL TONE

Short and light; its pitch depends on the tone before it. It is not a fifth full contour.

HOW TO READ A PAIR

2-4

first syllable = tone 2

second syllable = tone 4

DICTIONARY-TONE MAP

SECOND SYLLABLE

		1	2	3	4
FIRST SYLLABLE	1	1-1	1-2	1-3	1-4
	2	2-1	2-2	2-3	2-4
	3	3-1	3-2	3-3	3-4
	4	4-1	4-2	4-3	4-4

TONE 1 STARTS

Compare the 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4 families.

1 Listen to all four words. 2 Cover the pinyin. 3 Say each word. 4 Put two words into a phrase.

1-1 今天 jīntiān today

1-2 欢迎 huānyíng welcome

1-3 开始 kāishǐ start

1-4 工作 gōngzuò work

MODEL THE TRANSFER

今天见 · jīntiān jiàn · see you today

YOUR PHRASE

Record both phrases. Circle the syllable whose contour needs another try.

TONE 2 STARTS

Compare the 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4 families.

1 Listen to all four words. 2 Cover the pinyin. 3 Say each word. 4 Put two words into a phrase.

2-1 明天 míngtiān tomorrow

2-2 学习 xuéxí study

2-3 牛奶 niúnnǎi milk

2-4 文化 wénhuà culture

MODEL THE TRANSFER

明天学习 · míngtiān xuéxí · study tomorrow

YOUR PHRASE

Record both phrases. Circle the syllable whose contour needs another try.

TONE 3 STARTS

Compare the 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, and 3-4 families.

1 Listen to all four words. 2 Cover the pinyin. 3 Say each word. 4 Put two words into a phrase.

3-1 北京 běijīng Beijing

3-2 旅行 lǚxíng travel

3-3 水果 shuǐguǒ fruit

3-4 努力 nǔlì work hard

MODEL THE TRANSFER

去北京旅行 · qù Běijīng lǚxíng · travel to Beijing

YOUR PHRASE

Record both phrases. Circle the syllable whose contour needs another try.

tone 4 starts

Compare the 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4 families.

1 Listen to all four words. 2 Cover the pinyin. 3 Say each word. 4 Put two words into a phrase.

4-1 放心 fàngxīn rest assured

4-2 问题 wèntí question / problem

4-3 电影 diànyǐng movie

4-4 再见 zàijiàn goodbye

MODEL THE TRANSFER

电影问题 · diànyǐng wèntí · a movie question

YOUR PHRASE

Record both phrases. Circle the syllable whose contour needs another try.

LISTENING LAB

Mark what you hear; reveal the dictionary pair second.

Synthetic Mandarin audio is a listening aid, not a pronunciation assessment. For a natural 3-3 word, the first syllable normally sounds second-tone-like.

- 1 Hear** Write the contour you heard.
- 2 Reveal** Write the word and dictionary pair.
- 3 Repeat** Try slowly, then naturally.



#	HEARD CONTOUR	WORD	DICT. PAIR	SLOW	NATURAL
1				☐	☐
2				☐	☐
3				☐	☐
4				☐	☐
5				☐	☐
6				☐	☐
7				☐	☐
8				☐	☐

WHAT CHANGED?

I confused _____

Next contrast _____

PRODUCTION LAB

Build from word → chunk → sentence.

Say the complete line at a steady pace. The goal is connected meaning, not a perfect isolated syllable.

	WORD	CHUNK	SENTENCE
01	今天 jīntiān	今天见 jīntiān jiàn	我们今天三点见。 Wǒmen jīntiān sān diǎn jiàn. We will meet at three today.
02	文化 wénhuà	中国文化 Zhōngguó wénhuà	我喜欢中国文化。 Wǒ xǐhuan Zhōngguó wénhuà. I like Chinese culture.
03	电影 diànyǐng	看电影 kàn diànyǐng	我们明天一起看电影吧。 Wǒmen míngtiān yìqǐ kàn diànyǐng ba. Let us watch a movie together tomorrow.
04	问题 wèntí	一个问题 yí ge wèntí	我有一个问题。 Wǒ yǒu yí ge wèntí. I have a question.

USE TWO TARGET IDEAS

A 明天一起看电影吗？ Míngtiān yìqǐ kàn diànyǐng ma?

B 可以，但是我有一个问题。 Kěyǐ, dànshì wǒ yǒu yí ge wèntí.

Write the dictionary pair above 电影 and 问题, then read both turns aloud.

CONNECTED SPEECH

Keep dictionary form and heard contour in separate columns.

These five patterns explain why careful dictionary-tone labels do not always match the surface contour of a phrase.

PATTERN	DICTIONARY FORM	HEARD CONTOUR	WHAT TO RECORD
3 + 3	你好 · nǐ hǎo	first syllable sounds like ní	Record the dictionary pair as 3-3.
HALF THIRD	我去 · wǒ qù	wǒ usually stays low	A non-final third tone often does not complete a full dip.
不	不是 · bù shì	normally heard as bú shì	Before tone 4, 不 normally changes to a rising contour.
—	一杯 · yī bēi	normally heard as yì bēi	Before tones 1-3, — is usually yì; before tone 4, usually yí.
NEUTRAL	妈妈 · māma	second syllable is short	Neutral pitch depends on the preceding tone.

SELF-CHECK

Record wǒ alone, nǐ hǎo for 3+3, and wǒ qù for a half third. Describe the contour you actually hear.

ANSWER + NEXT DRILL

Use one mistake to choose the next five minutes.

This reference lists dictionary-tone pairs. Compare it with your heard-contour notes rather than erasing the distinction.

1-1	今天	jīntiān	today	3-1	北京	běijīng	Beijing
1-2	欢迎	huānyíng	welcome	3-2	旅行	lǚxíng	travel
1-3	开始	kāishǐ	start	3-3	水果	shuǐguǒ	fruit
1-4	工作	gōngzuò	work	3-4	努力	nǔlì	work hard
2-1	明天	míngtiān	tomorrow	4-1	放心	fàngxīn	rest assured
2-2	学习	xuéxí	study	4-2	问题	wèntí	question / problem
2-3	牛奶	niúnnǎi	milk	4-3	电影	diànyǐng	movie
2-4	文化	wénhuà	culture	4-4	再见	zàijiàn	goodbye

MY NEXT FOCUSED DRILL

I confuse _____

Useful word _____

My phrase _____

☐ I heard it correctly 4 of 5 times and said it twice in a meaningful phrase.