

The Four Tones

M: Welcome 欢迎 to LCN. 我是 ML I'm ML, woshi ML.

S: 欢迎大家, woshi S. Let's quickly revise what we did in lesson 1.

M: Well, first, Chinese has four tones. Stuart?

S: 1,2,3,4. You say it at home. 1,2,3,4. Remember, flat, rising, down and up, and down. And remember, different tone, different meaning

M: And Chinese has many classifiers, like tiao for long, thin things. So, for example, it's one tiao snake, two tiao snakes etc., or one ge person, three ge people.

S: There are lots of compound words, like fire chicken 火鸡 turkey, and fire mountain 火山 volcano. And we use pinyin to write down the sounds with the abc.

M: One thing about writing Pinyin. To show what tone a word is, we put a small horizontal dash over the vowel part to show it's 1st tone, a small line going up 45 degrees from left to right for the second, one going down and then up for the 3rd, and one going down from left to right for the fourth.

S: Some sounds don't always have a tone. They are pronounced lightly, with no particular stress, like 了 or 吗.

M: Welcome back. Got a pencil and notebook ready? Write what you learn down – helps you to remember. Now for a quick tone practice, and we'll learn a bit of pinyin, don't worry about the meaning. First, your ears must get used to the sounds of Chinese.

S: Guess how XI is pronounced? XI. It's xi. So the X is not pronounced X, it's more like "she". Now for XI in the four tones. Don't forget, you must try to repeat everything we say in Chinese.

M: Xī xí xǐ xì. Again, all together. Xī xí xǐ xì.

S: Hear the difference? One more. XIAO. So it's XI, with AO on the end. The AO is pronounced /au/, so XIAO is pronounced xiao. In the four tones:

M: xiāo xiáo xiǎo xiào. All together now, xiāo xiáo xiǎo xiào, Again, xiāo xiáo xiǎo xiào. Very good, 很好。

S: As we said, it's important to hear the difference between the tones, so we'll practice a few more. Don't worry about meaning. Get used to the sounds of Chinese first. And you MUST repeat them with us. How about the sound /a:/, easy pinyin, it's spelt A. Ok, a in the four tones.

M: ā á ǎ à. All together, ā á ǎ à. Again, ā á ǎ à. Very good, hen hao.

S: And another sound. The pinyin is AO, and, remember, it's pronounced ao. So, here we go.

M: āo áo ǎo ào. All together. āo áo ǎo ào. a

. Again āo áo ǎo ào.

S: 很好 very good finish to the lesson. We'll see you next time. Until then, 再见.

M: Zai jian.