

Pin Yin - Pronunciation



VOWELS

a as the 'a' in 'father'

e as the 'u' in 'fur'

i as the 'ee' in 'see';

after **c**, **s** or **z**, more like the 'e' in 'her'

o as the 'o' in 'or'

u as the 'u' in 'flute';

like **ü** when preceded by **q**, **j** or **x**

ü as the French 'tu' or the German 'für'. Place your lips as if you were going to whistle and say 'ee'.

ai

as the 'y' in 'fly'

ao

as the 'ow' in 'now'

ei

as the 'ay' in 'day'

ia

as the 'ya' in 'yard'

ie

as the 'ye' in 'yes'

iu

as the 'yo' in 'yolk'

ou

as the 'ow' in 'low'

ua

pronounced *wah*

üe

as the 'you a' in the words 'you ate'

ui

as the word 'way'

uo

as the word 'war'

iao

as the 'iao' in 'miaow'

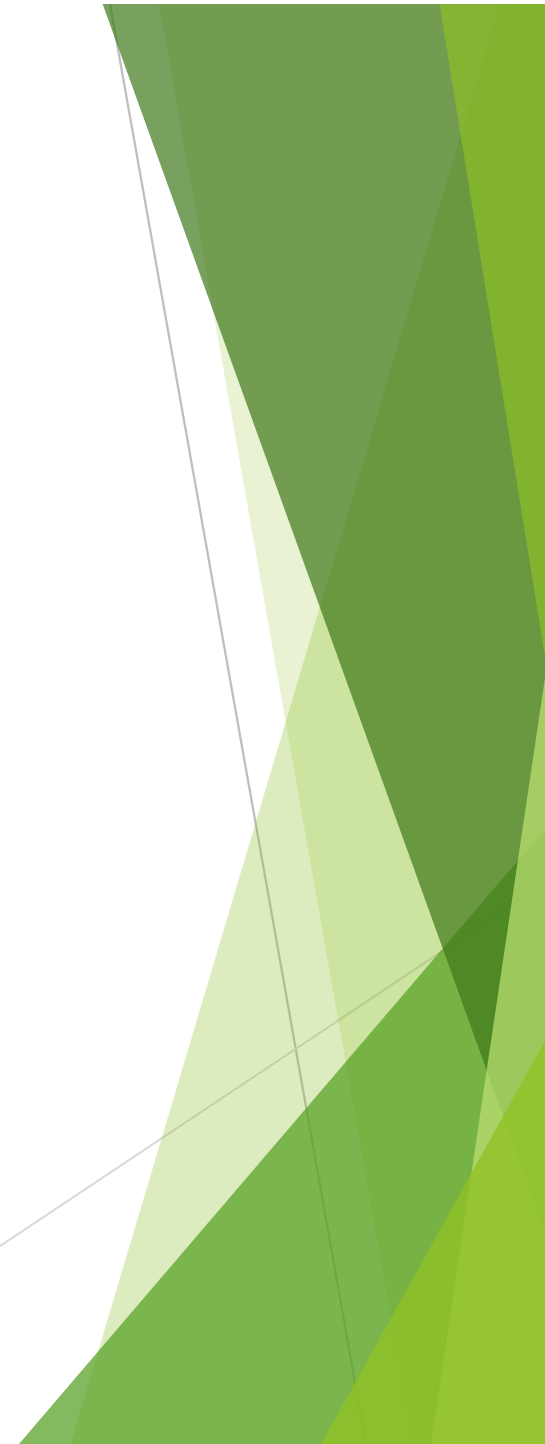
uai

as the word 'why'



COMBINED LETTERS

an	as the 'on' in 'upon'
en	as the 'en' in 'broken'
eng	pronounced <i>ehng</i>
er	as the 'er' in 'her' (the 'r' is pronounced)
ian	as the word 'yen'
iang	pronounced <i>yahng</i>
in	as the word 'inn'
ing	pronounced <i>eeng</i>
iong	pronounced <i>yohng</i>
ong	pronounced <i>ohng</i>
uan	after j, q and x, pronounced <i>oowen</i> ; elsewhere pronounced <i>oowan</i>
un	pronounced <i>ohng</i>
uang	pronounced <i>wong</i>
üan	as the words 'you an'
ün	pronounced <i>yuen</i>



CONSONANTS

as the 'ts' in 'cats'

as the 'g' in 'gone'; never as the 'g' in 'gentle'

as the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch' or German 'Bach'

as the 'j' in 'jeans'

as the 'ch' in 'cheese'

as the 's' in 'sir'; never as the 's' in 'pleasure'

as the 'sh' in 'shock'

as the 'ds' in 'fads'

Retroflex Sounds

Retroflex sounds are formed by curling the tongue over and pressing it onto the roof of the mouth. The following consonants are always pronounced in this way.

ch	as the 'ch' in 'cheese'
sh	as the 'sh' in 'shock'
zh	as the 'j' in 'jeans'
r	as the 'r' in 'radio'

When the vowel *i* appears after a retroflex consonant, it's always pronounced as 'r'.

chi	pronounced <i>chr</i>
shi	pronounced <i>shr</i>
zhi	pronounced <i>jr</i>
ri	a growling sound like 'rrrr'

The word **ma** can have five different meanings, depending on the tone, and whether a tone is used at all.

high	mā	mother
rising	má	hemp/numb
falling-rising	mǎ	horse
falling	mà	scold/swear
no tone	ma	marks a sentence as a question

high (ˉ)

high, flat, continuous tone

rising (ˊ)

rising tone similar to the intonation used in the question 'What?'

falling-rising (ˇ)

tone that falls then rises. You'll hear many Mandarin speakers 'swallow' the rising sound, only giving it a clear falling-rising pattern for emphasis.

falling (ˋ)

falling tone, similar to the one used when yelling 'Damn!'