

## Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 001

Adam: Hello everyone. Welcome to the first ever podcast for Chineselearnonline.com. My name is Adam. I will be your host. We have created a series of podcasts for you that we hope will help you improve your Chinese one lesson at a time. I recommend you visit our website [www.chineselearnonline.com](http://www.chineselearnonline.com) for a background on the approach that we use here on this podcast and how to make the most of it, as it may be a little different from other methods of teaching out there.

Now, when we refer to the Chinese language on this podcast and on our website, we are indeed referring to the Mandarin version of Chinese which is the most common version of the language. With more than eight hundred million speakers around the world it is by far the most spoken language out there so we hope that by listening regularly to our podcasts you will be able to converse with other Mandarin Chinese speakers wherever you are. Now with me today is a special guest who will be helping us along with our lessons.

Kirin: Hello everyone. My name is Kirin from Taiwan. Thank you for listening.

Adam: Ok, thank you Kirin. I think we're ready to get started here. We'll begin with some basics about the Chinese language. The biggest difference between Chinese and English is that Chinese is a tonal language – there are four tones that are used to distinguish words from each other. Really, that's the key to learning the language for if you can master those four tones – you've mastered the hardest part of learning Chinese. In English even if you change tones, the general meaning of a word is still the same. For example with the word “pig” – you could say “pīg, píg, pǐg and pìg” and they'd all be referring to the same thing. In Chinese though if you were to use the word for pig and used those same four different tones you'd actually be saying four completely different words with completely unrelated meanings as you'll hear in a moment. Now because it's so important to get these tones right I highly encourage our listeners to try and repeat the Chinese words as you hear them – we leave a pause for you to do just that. If it's not possible for you to repeat the words out aloud try to do so in your mind. It will make a big difference in the long run.

I'll now proceed to describe the four tones with Kirin helping me sound them out. Now, how do you say ‘pig’ in Chinese, Kirin?

Kirin: Zhū

Adam: Now that's what we term a high tone. Please repeat that for us again, Kirin.

Kirin: Zhū

Adam: Thank you, now that just happens to be the word for “pig” in Chinese. The next tone is a rising tone. Kirin will now demonstrate the rising tone with our example.

Kirin: Zhú

Adam: Ok, one more time...

Kirin: Zhú

Adam: Now that means “bamboo.” So you can see the difference between zhū and zhú . Imagine if you were in a restaurant and were trying to order meat from a pig but you instead asked for meat from a bamboo – that might be a little embarrassing, wouldn't it? Now, the third tone is what we call a falling rising tone. How does that sound, Kirin?

Kirin: Zhǔ

Adam: Alright, again?

Kirin: Zhǔ

Adam: Ok, and that means ‘to cook.’ So wow, completely different meaning again. Now, it's sometimes hard to differentiate between the rising and the falling rising tones so one way we found to tell is that the falling rising tone usually lasts a bit longer. So listen to the two tones and see if you can hear the difference. So first you have the rising...

Kirin: Zhú

Adam: ...and the falling rising...

Kirin: Zhǔ

Adam: So I hope you can hear the difference there. The latter is definitely just a little bit longer. Now the last tone is what we call a falling tone. How does that go, Kirin?

Kirin: Zhù

Adam: Alright. Can we hear it again?

Kirin: Zhù

Adam: Great, and that is the verb ‘to live.’ Isn't that interesting? So let's repeat the four tones again, a couple of times each so we can distinguish between them. Again, please try and say these words out aloud or in your head just so you can get the feel for the different tones. So the first one was a high tone.

Kirin: Zhū , zhū

Adam: The second one was the rising tone.

Kirin: Zhú , zhú

Adam: The third one was the falling, rising tone.

Kirin: Zhǔ , zhǔ

Adam: And the last one was the falling tone...

Kirin: Zhù , zhù

Adam: Excellent! So as you can see from the great difference in meaning between those how important it is to master those tones. Don't worry though, we'll let you know which tones we are using for all new vocabulary introduced on the show. So as long as you try to repeat the words exactly as you hear them, it shouldn't cause too much trouble in the long term.

Now, for those of you using newer generation iPODS or MP3 players that can read lyrics, we've included lesson summaries in our podcasts. So by pushing the center button on your iPOD or viewing lyrics or descriptions on your mp3 players you may be able to see our lesson summaries while you're listening. This is just another tool that we feel should help in your learning.

Now before we go Kirin, why don't you pick a few Chinese words and pronounce them for us. We will then try and identify which tone they are.

Kirin: Ok... Qǐ , qǐ

Adam: Ok, so do you know what tone that was? That was a falling rising tone. Let's try another one.

Kirin: Tīng , tīng

Adam: So what tone does that sound like? It was...the high tone. Let's try another one.

Kirin: Kàn , kàn

Adam: So that was...the falling tone. Let's do one more.

Kirin: Lái , lái

Adam: And that was a rising tone.

Ok, thank you Kirin. I hope that helps you see the difference between the tones. Now that's all the time we're going to take for today's show. We do try to keep our lessons short and sweet so you can review them often. Also please try and visit our website: ChineseLearnOnline.com where you can get much more detailed transcripts of our podcasts to help you follow along. We also welcome any feedback along the way, so please don't hesitate to give us comments on our website or send us emails to let us know what you think. Please join us again for our next lesson.

Kirin: Goodbye!