

## Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 61

Hosts: Adam Menon / Kirin Yang

Adam: ChineseLearnOnline.com Lesson 61: The Four Tones revisited

Hello, and welcome to Lesson 61 of the ChineseLearnOnline.com podcast series teaching Mandarin Chinese. I'm your host Adam.

Kirin: [Dàjiā hǎo](#) . [Wǒ shì Kirin](#) . [Huānyíng láidào dìliùshíyī kè](#) .

Adam: Today's lesson also marks the beginning of level two of our series, which means a slight bump in the level of difficulty used here. Over the next little while we will try and convert more of the lesson teaching into Chinese bit by bit. As always though, transcripts and translations of everything we say here is available in the Premium section of our website ChineseLearnOnline.com.

We're going to begin level 2 by expanding on what was taught in level one. Now if we look back to our first ever lesson, that was on the four tones. And I taught you the four tones as the high tone, rising tone, falling rising tone and the falling tone. There's also a fifth tone which we've come across, which is a neutral tone. By now, you've hopefully mastered the differences between these tones and are comfortable enough to start discussing them in Chinese, so that's what we'll do from here on. So Kirin, how do we say "The five tones" in Chinese?

Kirin: [Wǔ zhǒng shēng diào](#) .

Adam: So let's break that down. Five [zhǒng](#) . You may remember, [zhǒng](#) from lesson 25 is a measure word meaning "kind" or "type." So that gives us five kind [shēng diào](#) which is our first new word of the day and literally means "sound tone."

Kirin: [Shēng diào](#)

Adam: We'll come back to this in a moment. Now the five tones we talked about earlier in English are referred to in the same order as first, second, third, fourth and fifth tones in Chinese. So the high tone in Chinese is the first tone or:

Kirin: [Dìyī shēng](#)

Adam: The rising tone is the second tone or

Kirin: [Dìèr shēng](#)

Adam: The falling rising tone is the third tone or

Kirin: [Dìsān shēng](#)

Adam: We then have the falling tone which is the fourth tone or

Kirin: [Dìsì shēng](#)

Adam: So, hopefully, you get the hang of that. And lastly we have the neutral tone which is:

Kirin: [Dìwǔ shēng](#)

Adam: So when learning Chinese you, of course, will come across new words from time to time and may need to know what tones are used. Now first, I need to make a distinction between “word” and “characters.” In English, of course, words are broken down into letters of the alphabet. The Chinese language doesn’t use letters, of course, it uses Chinese characters. So some words may consist of one or more Chinese characters, each of which uses one of the five tones that we just talked about. So first Kirin, why don’t you tell us how you say “character” in Chinese.

Kirin: [Zì](#)

Adam: Again

Kirin: [Zì](#)

Adam: So if I wanted to know what tone a particular character used, how would I ask that?

Kirin: [Zhège zì shì nǎyī zhǒng shēng diào?](#)

Adam: Which literally means “this character is which kind tone?”

Kirin: [Zhège zì shì nǎyī zhǒng shēng diào?](#)

Adam: So I could start by asking: [zì shì nǎyī zhǒng shēng diào?](#)

Adam: And how would you answer that, Kirin?

Kirin: [Zì shì dìsì zhǒng shēng diào .](#)

Adam: So, hopefully, you see how that works. Let’s go back to [shēng diào](#) which we learned today. This word can be broken down into two characters [shēng](#) and [diào](#) . So let me ask you:

Kirin: [Shēng](#) – Zhège zì shì nǎyī zhǒng shēng diào?

Kirin: [Shēng](#) shì dìyī zhǒng shēng diào .

Adam: So again, literally, she answered: [Shēng](#) is first type of tone.

Kirin: [Shēng](#) shì dìyī zhǒng shēng diào .

Adam: Alright, and let me ask: [Diào](#) – Zhège zì shì nǎyī zhǒng shēng diào?

Kirin: [Diào](#) shì dìsì zhǒng shēng diào .

Adam: Great, so I hope you can get the hang of this.

Now, of course, many times one or more characters are combined to form a word. To keep things clear, we'll separate them as we did with [shēngdiào](#) . So Kirin why don't you pick a word we've learned before and ask us what tones are used there.

Kirin: [Hǎo, zuótiān, zuó shì nǎyī shēng?](#)

Adam: Great, so a little shorter form of that question. And how would we answer that?

Kirin: [Zuó shì dièr shēng](#) .

Adam: So you can see the shorter form is used to answer this as well. Let's try another one.

Kirin: [Hànǎode hàn shì dìjǐ shēng?](#)

Adam: So yet another way to ask this same question. [Hànǎode hàn](#) means the [hàn](#) in [hànǎo](#) .

Kirin: [Hànǎode hàn shì dìjǐ shēng?](#)

Adam: [Dìjǐ shēng?](#) You may remember that [jǐ](#) means “how many?” So the literal form of this question is the [hàn](#) in [hànǎo](#) is “which tone?” as in “which position number?”

Kirin: [Hànǎode hàn shì dìjǐ shēng?](#)

Adam: So how would you answer that?

Kirin: [Hàn shì dìsì shēng](#) .

Adam: You can see more of these examples in the Premium podcast for this lesson. For now though, let's review the new vocabulary taught in today's lesson.

Kirin: [Wǔ zhǒng shēng diào](#)

Adam: The five tones.

Kirin: [Dìyī shēng](#)

Adam: The first tone, which we knew before as “the high tone.”

Kirin: [Dìèr shēng](#)

Adam: The second tone, which we knew before as “the rising tone.”

Kirin: [Disān shēng](#)

Adam: The third tone, which we knew before as “the falling rising tone.”

Kirin: [Disì shēng](#)

Adam: The fourth tone which we knew before as “the falling tone.”

Kirin: [Dìwǔ shēng](#)

Adam: The fifth tone, which we knew before as “the neutral tone.”

Kirin: [Dìjǐ shēng?](#)

Adam: Which tone?

Kirin: [Zì](#)

Adam: Character

So that’s the new vocabulary for you to study today. We’ll be adding more to this in our next lesson; so please join us for that. And if you’re a Premium subscriber, then please take advantage of the Premium podcast available for this lesson, which will review it with more examples; then join us again next time for lesson 62.

Kirin: [Zàijiàn](#) .