

Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 61 [English]

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: [Hello everyone](#) . I'm [Kirin](#) . [Welcome to lesson 61](#) .

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.

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. 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 the 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: [The five tones](#) .

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

Kirin: [tone](#) .

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 first tone in Chinese is:

Kirin: [The first tone](#) .

Adam: The second tone is

Kirin: [The second tone](#) .

Adam: The third tone is

Kirin: [The third tone](#) .

Adam: And the fourth tone is

Kirin: [The fourth tone](#) .

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

Kirin: [The fifth tone](#) .

Adam: Now in our course, we'll refer to the neutral tone as the fifth tone. But in Chinese, they call it the neutral tone which is [the neutral tone](#) .

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: [Character](#) .

Adam: Again

Kirin: [Character](#) .

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

Kirin: [What tone does this character use ?](#)

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

Kirin: [What tone does this character use ?](#)

Adam: So I could start by asking:

Kirin: [What tone does “zi” use ?](#)

Adam: And how would you answer that?

Kirin: [”Zi” uses the fourth tone](#) .

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

Kirin: "Shēng", what tone does this character use ?

"Shēng" is the first tone .

Adam: So again, literally, she answered: **sound** is first type of tone.

Kirin: "Shēng" is the first tone .

Adam: Alright, and let me ask:

Kirin: "Diào", what tone does this character use ?

"Diào" is the fourth tone .

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 **tone** . So Kirin why don't you pick a word we've learned before and ask us what tones are used there.

Kirin: Ok, zuótiān, "zuó" is which tone ?

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

Kirin: "Zuó" is the second tone .

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

Kirin: Which tone is the "hàn" in hànǎo ?

Adam: So yet another way to ask this same question. The "hàn" in hànǎo means the **transliteration from "hamburger" in hamburger** .

Kirin: Which tone is the "hàn" in hànǎo ?

Adam: Which tone ? You may remember that **how many** means "how many?" So the literal form of this question is the **transliteration from "hamburger" in hamburger** is "which tone?" as in "which position number?"

Kirin: Which tone is the "hàn" in hànǎo ?

Adam: So how would you answer that?

Kirin: "Hàn" is the fourth tone .

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

Kirin: [The five tones](#) .

Adam: The five tones.

Kirin: [The first tone](#) .

Adam: The first tone.

Kirin: [The second tone](#) .

Adam: The second tone.

Kirin: [The third tone](#) .

Adam: The third tone.

Kirin: [The fourth tone](#) .

Adam: The fourth tone.

Kirin: [The fifth tone](#) .

Adam: The fifth tone, or the neutral tone.

Kirin: [The neutral tone](#) .

Adam: Neutral tone.

Kirin: [Which tone](#) ?

Adam: Which tone?

Kirin: [Character](#) .

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.

As this is the first lesson of level two, some of the premium features are available for free to try out. So take a look that on our website and then decide whether or premium subscription suits you, then join us again next time for lesson 62.

Kirin: [Goodbye](#) .