

Every consonant sound Mandarin syllables can start with, shown with a real word and how to say it.

b bo 包  bāo — bun	p po 苹果  píngguǒ — apple	m mo 妈妈  māma — mom	f fo 飞机  fēijī — airplane	d de 蛋糕  dàngāo — cake
t te 兔子  tùzi — rabbit	n ne 牛奶  niúniǎi — milk	l le 老虎  lǎohǔ — tiger	g ge 狗  gǒu — dog	k ke 可乐  kělè — cola
h he 河马  héma — hippo	j ji 鸡蛋  jīdàn — egg	q qi 汽车  qìchē — car	x xi 西瓜  xīguā — watermelon	zh zhi 猪  zhū — pig
ch chi 长颈鹿  chángjǐnglù — giraffe	sh shi 狮子  shīzi — lion	r ri 热狗  règǒu — hot dog	z zi 枣  zǎo — jujube	c ci 草莓  cǎoméi — strawberry
s si 三明治  sānmíngzhì — sandwich	y yi 鱼  yú — fish	w wu 乌龟  wūguī — turtle		

Every vowel sound that follows an initial, shown with a real word and how to say it.

a 阿姨 āyí — auntie	o 哦 ó — oh	e 鹅 é — goose	i 衣服 yīfu — clothes	u 五 wǔ — five	ü 鱼 yú — fish
ai 爱 ài — love	ei 黑 hēi — black	ui 灰色 huīsè — grey	ao 猫 māo — cat	ou 狗 gǒu — dog	iu 六 liù — six
ie 姐姐 jiějie — sister	üe 月亮 yuèliang — moon	er 耳朵 ěrduo — ear	an 伞 sǎn — umbrella	en 门 mén — door	in 心 xīn — heart
un 云 yún — cloud	ün 裙子 qúnzi — skirt	ang 糖 táng — candy	eng 灯 dēng — lamp	ing 星星 xīngxīng — star	ong 龙 lóng — dragon

ā

1ST

flat & high

á

2ND

rising

ǎ

3RD

dip then rise

à

4TH

sharp fall

a

NEUTRAL

short & light

Pitch shapes at a glance



1st



2nd



3rd



4th



neutral

One syllable, four meanings: “ma”

mā 妈
— mother

má 麻
— hemp

mǎ 马
— horse

mà 骂
— to scold