

Chinese Pinyin 101

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Consonants	Examples		
J - j ump	Jiang = ji-ah-ng	Ji = jee	
X - sh eeep	Xi = shee	Xiao = shee-aw	
Q - ch eeese	Qi = chee	Qun = ch-when	
R - pleas ur e	Ran	Ren	
C - cat s	Cai = tsai	Can = tsan	Cong = ts-uh-ng
Z - dz	Zai = dz-eye		
Y - y ou	Yuan = you-one	Yang = young	
Zh - j og	Zhang = j-ah-ng	Zheng = j-uh-ng	
Ch - ch ange	Chang = ch-ah-ng	Chu = choo	
Simple vowels	Examples		
A - f ather	Ma = mah	Chang – rhymes more with “bong” than “bang”	
E - uh	He = huh		
I - bee	Li = lee		
O - or	Bo (starts out like “war” then changes into an “aw” or “uh”)		
U - boo	Wu = woo		
After j, q, x and y, as a German ü	Yu = yü	Xu = shü	
Compound vowels	Examples		
AI - eye	Mai = m-eye	Tai = t-eye	
AO - awe	Cao = ts-awe	Shao = sh-awe	
EI - may	Mei = may		
EN - en	Chen = chen		
IA - chia	Xia = shee-yah	Qiang = ch-yah-ng	
IE - ee + yet	Xie = shee-yeh		
IU - you	Liu = lee-you		
IAO - ee + awe	Liao = lee-awe	Xiao = shee-awe	
IAN - yen	Xian = shee-yen	Qian = chee-yen	
OU - oh	Hou = h-oh	Lou = low	
ONG - uh ng	Cong = ts-uh-ng	Rong = r-uh-ng	
UA - oo+ah	Hua = who-ah		
UE - oo+eh	Xue = shoo-eh	Yue = yoo-eh	
UI - way	Hui = hoo-ay	Sui = soo-ay	Rui = ray
UO - water	Guo = g-wa		
UAI - oo+eye	Huai = hoo-eye	Shuai = shoo-eye	
CHI/SHI/ZHI - sh irt (say shirt but stop just as the “r” sound is beginning)	Chi = chr	Shi = shr	Zhi = jr
Zi/Ci/Si/Ri - i is a silent uh	Zi = zuh	Ci = tsuh	Si = suh