

Chinese

All teachers know that feeling of getting a roster and being overwhelmed trying to figure out how to say the names listed. We've all seen students cringe when their name is said wrong in class and want to avoid coming off as insensitive on the first day. However, we might set ourselves up for failure if we expect to be able to say every student's name right. There are just too many languages and too little time to learn.

Fortunately your students know this too, and they are happy that you even want to try. The best way to learn someone's name is to sit down and have them teach you how to say it themselves. For those who want to feel a bit more prepared going into those conversations JMU's International Student and Scholar Services has put together this brief guide to

pronunciation of the largest second language populations at JMU.

Chinese is a perfect place to start. First, 'Chinese' is not one language. People from most areas of China are required to learn Mandarin language in school. However students of Chinese decent are not just from mainland China, so it is not safe to assume they speak Mandarin. Students from Hong Kong and areas of southern mainland China will likely speak Cantonese, along with a regional dialect which is almost a completely different language.

The good news is Mandarin, Cantonese, and other local languages ethnic Chinese people speak share some common sounds and pronunciation.



Pinyin & Tones.

The best way to find out pronunciation of a Chinese name is to learn the pinyin. Students will be able to write this out for you, including the tones, if you ask them to. Here are some of the pinyin letter pronunciations that are the most difficult for English speakers:

j (te) : like edgy, pronounced further forward toward the teeth (always followed by /i/ or /y/)

q (te^h) : like cheat, pronounced further forward toward the teeth (always followed by /i/ or /y/)

x (e) : like she, pronounced further forward toward the teeth (always followed by /i/ or /y/)

zh (ts) : like jaw, with tongue curled back

z (ts) : roughly like seeds

c (ts^h) : tsunami (with t pronounced)

-i- (j) : you

-u- (w): water

yu-, -ü- (y) : (simultaneous y and w); French nuit

ye/-ie, yue/-üe (e) : roughly like day

en, eng (a) : about

yi/-i, yin/-in (i) : see (short vowel)

si, zi, ci, shi, zhi, chi, ri (i) : roughly like glasses

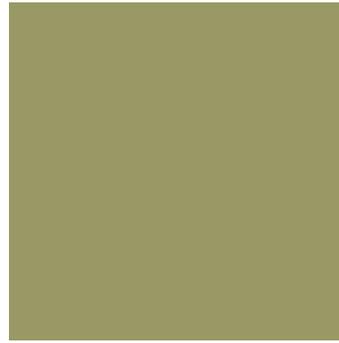
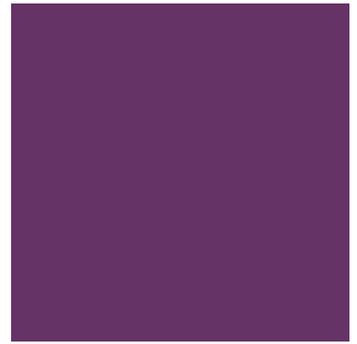
ei, -ui (ei): day

When students write the pinyin they will also write tones on top of the letters to indicate the rise and fall of your voice in certain parts of the word. In most Chinese languages each character has a tone. Tones are crucial because a different tone by itself will completely change the meaning of the word/character. Using tones in pronunciation takes practice, but your students will give you grace as you try. The chart below indicates the four tones for Mandarin.

mā	má	mǎ	mà
妈	麻	马	骂
mother	numb	horse	scold
First tone (flat)	second tone (going up)	third tone (down and up)	fourth tone (going down)

Cantonese has six tones. The symbols for these tones and a brief explanation are given in the chart below.

CANTONESE si			
Chinese Character	Tone symbol	Tone description	English gloss
詩	˥ 55	high level	'poem'
試	˨˨ 33	mid level	'to try'
事	˨˨ 22	low level	'matter'
時	˨˨˨ 21	low falling	'time'
使	˨˨˨˨ 24	low high	'to cause'
市	˨˨˨ 23	low mid	'city'



Vietnamese

Vietnamese uses the Roman alphabet with tones and additional accent features to write the language. Again, Vietnam the country has more than one language and many different ethnic people groups. However, Vietnam has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and most people will also speak standard Vietnamese. Since Vietnam has a systematic alphabet similar to that of English, Vietnamese students will spell their names the same way they would in Vietnamese but without the accents. Once you figure out how to pronounce some of the consonant clusters and tones which are difficult for native English speakers then you should have a reasonably good start. Some of the most difficult sounds for native English speakers are highlighted below.

anh (pronounced before a vowel) (?) : button
(Informal British)

phở (f) : fight

ngâm (before a/o/u [2]); nghe (before e/i/y [1]) (n) : singer

xa (s) : so

thầy (t^h) : top

câu; oanh (w) : we

ga (before a/o/u [2]); ghé (before e/i/y [1]) (ɣ) : No English equivalent ; amigo in Spanish

đa; già (z) : zero

ăn; anh (ă) : almost like cut

về (e) : almost like sit

ân; bênh (â) : person

bơ (ɣ) : almost like sir (British English)

tư (u) : No English equivalent ; unrounded [u]

cô (o) : almost like good

có; xoong (o) : law

viên, bia (iə) : beer (British English)

uống, mua (uə) : sure (British English)

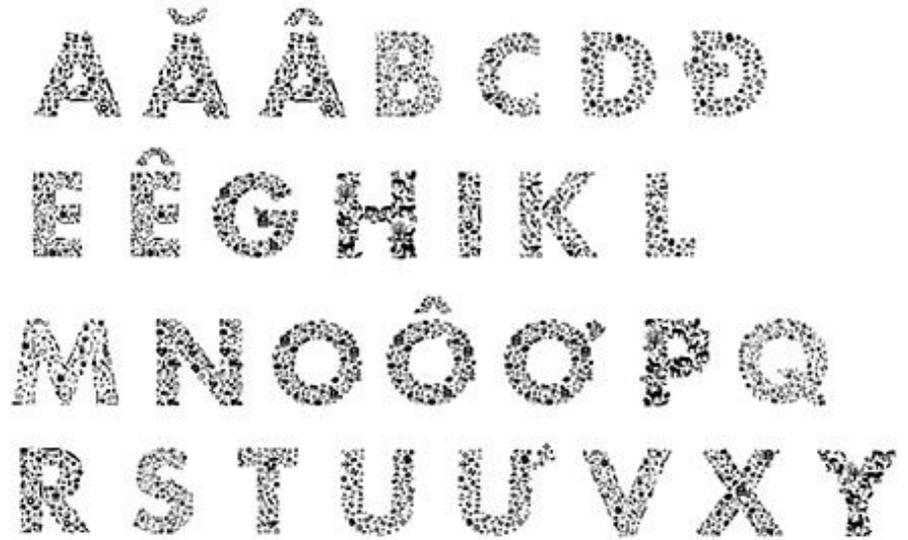


Vietnamese tones

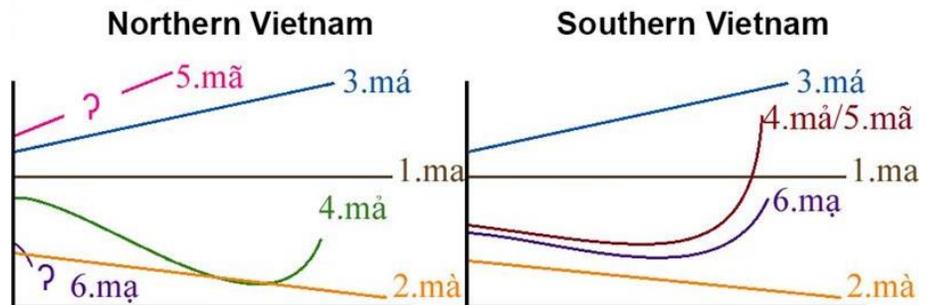
Vietnamese tones do not only rely on pitch contour but also use register as distinguishing factors. There are six tones in Vietnamese. However, these tones vary based on the individual, regional differences, and dialects.

JMU has Vietnamese students who speak Northern Vietnamese, also referred to as Hanoiian Vietnamese after the northern capital. JMU also has a large group of students who speak Southern Vietnamese, which is also referred to as Saigon Vietnamese.

Since there is so much debate about the exact number and nature of tones in Vietnamese it is best to mimic the tone directly from the student. If possible record the student saying their name with the tone so that you can memorize the way their name sounds. Sometimes treating names like a song that needs to be sung the exact same way can make this an easier task.



i	i		ư	ư	—	u	u	⊥	ma	—
ê	e	└	ơ	ơ	└	ô	o	└	má	↗
e	ε	H	â	ê	└	o	o	⊥	mả	↘
					└	a	a	└	mà	↗
					└	ã	a	└	mã	↘
					└				mạ	↗



- 1.Thanh ngang - Level
- 2.Thanh huyền- Hanging
- 3.Thanh sắc - Sharp

- 4.Thanh hỏi - Asking
- 5.Thanh ngã - Tumbling
- 6.Thanh nặng - Heavy



Korean (South Korea)



King Sejong the Great, pictured above, created the Korean script based on the way your mouth moves to say a sound, while incorporating the Confucian principle of balance. These features make Korean writing highly logical as well as fairly easy to learn. Unfortunately there is no standard Romanized system for the Korean language, so each person will spell according to their own preference. This is one of the rare cases where it may just be easiest to learn to read the Korean writing when approaching how to pronounce your students' names. Korean family names are typically one character that is written in English as one name. Given names are usually two separate characters. Often these are written in English as two separate names, but they come as a pair. (There are no middle names in Korean). Sometimes the two characters are written as one. For example: Soo Young or Sooyoung.

The Korean language is very close to the hearts of the Korean people. During Japan's Occupation of Korea they tried to destroy the language as part of their efforts to make Koreans become Japanese. This is something to consider when attempting your Korean students' names. If the student anglicized their name (ex: Bak -> Park) it is possible they do not want you to try their Korean name. It can get tiring hearing your language fumbled every day.

Again, the best way to learn a Korean student's name is to have them teach you how to say it. If they write it in Korean you can use the alphabet to help your pronunciation. Most students will appreciate you taking the time and effort. You may get a Korean language history lesson in the process!

Korean has some consonants that are a combination of two English consonants. Since there is only one sound in Korean you will see the same sound spelled two ways in English. For example:

L/R: Lee or Ree or Rhee

D/T: Dae or Tae

G/K: Gang or Kang

B/P: Bak or Pak

When translating names into English Koreans will sometimes put extra consonant in English name spellings to make them easier for English speakers to say.

(ee) = Yi or Lee

(B/Pak) = Park



Korean (South Korea)

There are some consonants in English that are multiple consonants in Korean based on aspiration/non-aspiration. There is usually a 'hard' version, a 'soft' version, and sometimes a version in between. Again, because there is no standard spelling system these consonants can get spelled a variety of different ways. The only way to know for sure is to have your student write the consonant in Korean. The chart below shows the double consonants that are variations of single English consonants.

The following are some vowels that may be difficult for native English speakers. The Korean character is written next to an English translation of a Korean name or word that uses that character. The vowel itself is in bold.

ㄱ	ㄲ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄸ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅃ
k/g	kk	n	t/d	tt	l/r	m	p/b	pp
[k]	[k']	[n]	[t]	[t']	[l]	[m]	[p]	[p']

ㅅ	ㅆ	ㅇ	ㅈ	ㅉ	ㅊ	ㅋ	ㆁ	ㅍ	ㅎ
s	ss	ng	ch/j	tch	ch'	k'	ŋ	p'	h
[s]	[s']	[ŋ]	[tʃ]	[tʃ']	[tʃʰ]	[kʰ]	[ŋ]	[pʰ]	[h]

네 Ne (e./e) : set; Spanish queso

배 Bae (ɛ/ɛ) : bet; says

채 Choi or oe (ø/ø) : weld

민 Min (i/ i) : mean

Seo (ʌ/ ə) : pearl

Seung or Sung (ʉ/ u:) : somewhat like book; moon, but without rounded lips





Arabic (Saudi Arabia)

Arabic language varies widely based on country and type of use. Many JMU students whose names have Arabic language origin are from Saudi Arabia. It is likely that these students use Peninsular Arabic (also called Southern Arabic) but there are several other dialects and languages commonly used in Saudi Arabia as well. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, and native Jordanians all use Peninsular Arabic. If your student is from Saudi Arabia using Peninsular Arabic pronunciation will help you get a rough approximation of how to say their name. If your student is from another country that speaks Arabic it may be more useful to base your guess off of Modern Standard Arabic or by researching what type of Arabic is used most prevalently in their home country. The chart to the right, continued on the following page, gives examples of how to approach pronunciation of consonant clusters in English spellings of Arabic names.

Written as	Sound in English word	Name Example
a a u i	ram ago Uno inn	Mazen Ahmad Usama Ismael
b ba bu be/bi	tab bat bush bet/bit	Abd Basem Burhan Jaber/Belal
t ta tu te/ti	bat tab tush ten/tip	Fat_hi Tayseer Tunis Rateb/Ibtisam
th tha the/thi	breath thanks theft/think	Othman Thabet Nawather
j ja jo/ju je/ji	taj ajar job/jude jet/jin	Areej Jamal Jomana/Juma' Majed/Jihad
ha hu he/hi	hand humos hen/him	Hamad Husain Helweh/Hilal
d da du de/di	good dad dude den/din	Ahmad Dana Dunia Adel/Izdihar
th tha the/thi	breathe that then/this	latheeth thahab Munther

التسجيل

مجاني، وسيفقى مجاني دائماً.

<input type="text"/>	الاسم الأول:
<input type="text"/>	اسم العائلة:
<input type="text"/>	بريدك الإلكتروني:
<input type="text"/>	أعد إدخال البريد الإلكتروني:
<input type="text"/>	كلمة السر:

يساعدك فيس بوك على التواصل والتشارك مع كل الأشخاص في حياتك.



Written as	Sound in English word	Name Example
r		Mansoor
ra	jar	Randa
ro/ru	ran	Roma/Rubhi
re/ri	Rome/rude	Fares/Rida
	red/rim	
z	blitz	Azhar
za	zap	Yazan
zu	Zulu	Zuhair
ze/zi	zen/zip	Mazen
s	mass	Asma
sa	sad	Samer
su	suit	Sumaya
se/si	send/sip	Yousef/Basima
sh	crash	3Ayesha
sha	shall	Shamel
shu	<u>sure</u>	Shukri
she/shi	shell/ship	Rashed/Inshira7
s	heavy seen	Mostafa
sa	<u>sudden</u>	Wisal
so	soda	Sodqi
se/si	send/sip	Naser
d	heavy dal	ard
da	dark	Nedal
do	dose	Dome
de/di	depth	Fadel/Dirar
a/a'/ya	ago	Adel/Sua'd
o/o'	Over	Omar
e/ee/e'	<u>Eve/ee1</u>	3Emad/3Esam/Saeed/Ismae'1
f	stuff	3Atef
fa	far	Fadel

Arabic (Saudi Arabia)

Written as	Sound in English word	Name Example
qa	heavy k	Qadri
qu	Qatar	Qura~n
qe/qi	quote	Saqer
k	Mark	Malak
ka	karate	Kareem
ku	<u>Kudos</u>	Kurdiyeh
ke/ki	Kent/kiss	Baker/Kifa7
l	fill	Amal
la	lamb	Lateef
lo/lu	lock/Lucy	Lora/Lubna
le/li	lent/list	Khaled/A'dliyah
m	sum	Haytham
ma	mark	Mazen
mo or mu	more/move	Mona/Muna
me/mi	men/mist	Fatmeh/Methqal
n	ran	Wijdan
na	nasty	Naser
nu	<u>noon</u>	Nuha
ne/ni	next/nip	Amneh/Nezam
w	down	Fadwa
wa	Washington	Joseph/Mansoor/Yaqoub/ <u>Wo-</u>
o/oo/ou/wou	John/cool/pour/would	o'ud
we/wi	went/wist	7Helweh/Wijdan
h	blah	Majida or Majidah
ha	hand	Hala
hu	<u>hoot</u>	Huda
he/hi	hen/him	Maher/Hiba
i/y/ee/ai	yahoo	Fadi/Ayman/Reem/Mai
ya/ia	yuo	Yahia/Hadaya
yu	yet	Yusra
ye		Fawziyah





Russian



The basics.

Russian is a Slavic language spoken widely in Europe and Central Asia. At JMU it is a common second language for many students, as well as a first language for our Russian students. For the purpose of pronouncing students' names it may only be of limited help with students who can speak Russian fluently but whose name comes from a different language origin. The Cyrillic alphabet has many shared letters and sounds with the English alphabet which make it easier for native English speakers to learn.



Common Mistakes.

Vladimir a= ahh (Vlahh-dimir)

Vladimir i=eee similar to the end of the English word 'squee' (Vlahh-dee-meer)

Ivan = 'Eeevahhn' (stress on the second syllable).

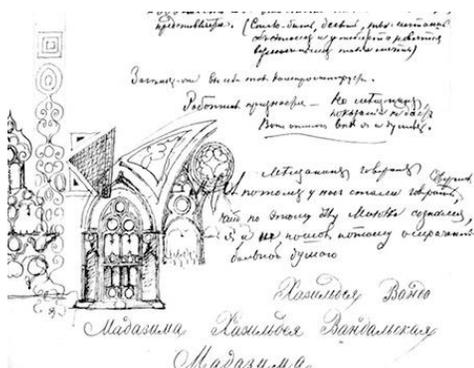
Igor = 'Eegar' (stress on the first syllable). Stress rules change the pronunciation of the letter 'o' in this word, again emphasizing the importance of stress in Russian language.

Boris = 'Bareees' (stress on the second syllable). Lack of stress on the first syllable turns the o into an 'ah' sound.



Stress.

Russian language has free stress and therefore intonation has to be learned making pronunciation of names a bit tricky. For example, Vladimir should have stress on the middle syllable instead of the first or last syllable where native English speakers usually place it. When you ask your student to pronounce their name pay extra attention to the intonation and stress and try to mimic not only the pronunciation of individual letters but the total sound.



Patronymic & Last names.

Family names in Russian are also last names similar to English. In Russian female last names usually end in 'a' and male last names usually end in a consonant. Russian names have a middle name called a patronymic name which indicates they are a daughter or son of their father. If the person whose name you are trying to learn is older than you it would be more appropriate to try to learn this middle name and call them by their first and middle name to show respect.



Sources

This guide was created based off the personal language learning and international teaching experience of its main author. Additional resources listed below were used to add International Phonetic Alphabet information, tonal charts, and other graphics. Thank you to all of the JMU International Students who voluntarily edited portions of this pamphlet.

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