

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

# Ultimate Cantonese Pronunciation Guide S1 #8 Cantonese Tones

---

CONTENTS

- 2 Cantonese TONES
- 2 1: HIGH TONE
- 3 2: MID RISING TONE
- 3 3: MID TONE
- 4 4: LOWEST TONE
- 5 5: LOW RISING TONE
- 5 6: LOW TONE

# 8

Hi everyone.

Welcome to The Ultimate Cantonese Pronunciation Guide.

In this lesson, you'll learn about the tones in Cantonese.

Tone is the use of pitch to distinguish meaning.

Just like how mispronouncing a sound or misreading a character can have a huge impact on meaning, using the wrong tone can drastically change the meaning of a word or sentence too.

It's crucial then, that you learn all the tones in Cantonese.

## CANTONESE TONES

There are 6 tones in Cantonese.

絲 (si1)

史 (si2)

試 (si3)

時 (si4)

市 (si5)

是 (si6)

### 1: HIGH TONE

The first tone is a high tone.

巴, 巴 (baa1) (slowly)

It's pronounced high and steady, and the pitch should be kept at the highest range that's comfortable for you.

媽, 媽 (maa1) (slowly)

The key point here is to keep it even across the whole syllable. Listen and repeat after (host name).

啡 (fe1)

司 (si1)

巴 (baa1)

## 2: MID RISING TONE

The second tone is a rising tone.

灑, 灑 (saa2) (slowly)

It has a rising intonation and kind of sounds like you're asking a question. "See?"

史, 史 (si2) (slowly)

You should start from a comfortable range and then rise from there. Listen and repeat after (host name).

把 (baa2)

虎 (fu2)

寫 (se2)

## 3: MID TONE

The third tone is a mid tone.

化, 化 (faa3) (slowly)

It's pronounced in the middle of your range and is steady throughout.

借, 借 (ze3) (slowly)

But don't be fooled. Just because it's in the middle of your range, it doesn't mean that you can pronounce this without practice. The key here is to maintain the same pitch from start to finish and keep it even across the entire syllable. Listen and repeat after (host name).

試 (si3)

破 (po3)

富 (fu3)

## 4: LOWEST TONE

The fourth tone is the lowest tone.

蛇, 蛇 (se4) (slowly)

This is the lowest tone of them all.

茶, 茶 (caa4) (slowly)

Go as low as you can go until you feel a slight vibration at the base of your throat. Listen and repeat after (host name).

扶 (fu4)

爬 (paa4)

爺 (je4)

## 5: LOW RISING TONE

The fifth tone is a rising tone.

我, 我 (ngo5) (slowly)

It starts low, and then rises to the middle of your range.

那, 那 (naa5) (slowly)

It's different from the second tone, which is *\*also\** a rising tone in that it starts from the bottom, instead of the middle of your range. Listen and repeat after (host name).

馬 (maa5)

有 (jau5)

冷 (laang5)

## 6: LOW TONE

The sixth and final tone, is a low tone.

罷, 罷 (baa6) (slowly)

It's pronounced low and steady.

夏, 夏 (haa6) (slowly)

This is often the most difficult tone to master, because it's very similar to the fourth tone, the lowest tone. The trick is to pronounce it low *\*without\** causing noticeable vibrations at the base of your throat, and then keeping it steady. As long as you maintain a low pitch, it should be enough to indicate that you're using the sixth and not

the fourth tone. Okay, now listen and repeat after (host name).

路 (lou6)

木 (muk6)

負 (fu6)

Now you know how to produce all the tones in Cantonese!

In the next lesson, we'll cover tone change rules in Cantonese.

Do you have tones in your language? Please comment and share your thoughts.

See you in the next Ultimate Cantonese Pronunciation Guide lesson!