



**Cantonese I
Week 1**

Cantonese I assessments

- Attendance: maximum 1 unexcused absence
- Conversation (final exam)

What is Cantonese 廣東話

- Originates from Canton 廣東 region (Guangzhou 廣州) and its surrounding area in Southeastern China
- Also known as Yue 粵語
- Spoken in Canton region, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Chinese communities all over the world
- Estimated about 70 million Cantonese speakers around the globe
- Cantonese varies in different places
- This course focuses on Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGJCa12IxeU>

Pros and cons.....

Pros: no tenses, no genders, no cases!

Cons: many tones and words

Cantonese dictionary

<https://www.cantonese.sheik.co.uk/dictionary/>

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捷克
zit6 hak1 jyutping
jie2 ke4 pinyin
[n] Czech, Czech Republic

地
place

Level: 4
This term is used in both Cantonese and Mandarin/Standard written Chinese.
捷克

This word has been viewed 2353 times since 30th Oct 2012, was added by bybell on 29th Jan 2007 05:54 and last [edited](#) on 30th Oct 2008 19:03
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Characters in this word:

捷 zit6 - victory; swift

克 hak1 haak1 - vanquish; restrain; can; gram

2 compounds containing this word:

YOU ALREADY KNOW

SOME CANTONESE

memegenerator.net

English

Cantonese

Jyutping

Dim sum

點心

Dim² sam¹



English

Bok Choy

Cantonese

白菜

Jyutping

baak⁶ choi³



English	Cantonese	Jyutping
lychee	荔枝	lai6 zi1



English

Char siu

Cantonese

叉燒

Jyutping

Cha¹ siu¹



6 Tones

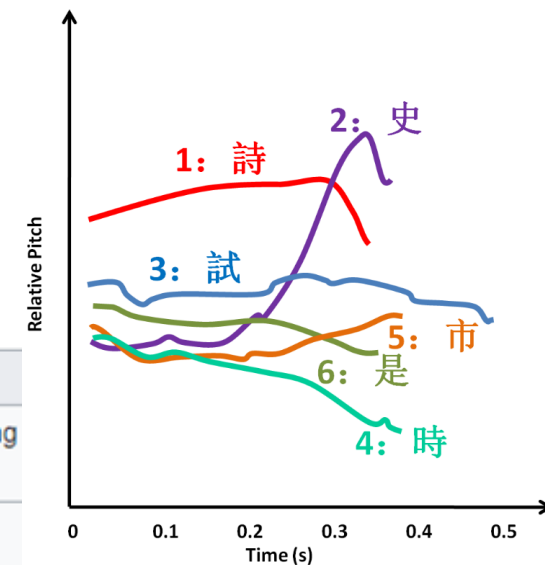
	1. high level	2. high rising	3. mid level	4. low falling	5. low rising	6. low level	
							High
							Middle
							Low
<i>Jyutping</i>	saam ¹	wun ²	sai ³	ngau ⁴	naam ⁵	min ⁶	
<i>Meaning</i>	三 <i>three</i>	碗 <i>bowl</i>	細 <i>small</i>	牛 <i>beef</i>	腩 <i>brisket</i>	麵 <i>noodle</i>	
<i>Tone no. Mnemonics</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Diacritics</i>	sāam	wún	sǎi	ngàu	nǎam	mǐn	

Note: The keyboard-like column on above left gives learners an idea about the range of relative pitches in Cantonese.

① This section is quoted from “Cantonese for Everyone – Jyutping version (2009)”, pages 17-20.

Exercise:

Syllable type	Open syllables						Checked syllables		
Tone name	dark flat (陰平)	dark rising (陰上)	dark departing (陰去)	light flat (陽平)	light rising (陽上)	light departing (陽去)	upper dark entering (上陰入)	lower dark entering (下陰入)	light entering (陽入)
Description	high level, high falling	medium rising	medium level	low falling, very low level	low rising	low level	high level	medium level	low level
Yale or Jyutping tone number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (or 1)	8 (or 3)	9 (or 6)
Example	詩, 思	史	試	時	市	是	識	錫	食
Tone letter	siː1, siːʔ	siː2	siː3	siː4, siːʔ	siː5	siː6	sek1	sek3	sek6
IPA diacritic	síː, sîː	síː	sîː	sǎː, sǎːʔ	sǎː	sǎː	sék	sék	sék
Yale diacritic	sī, sî	sí	sî	sǎh	sǎh	sǎh	sĭk	sĕk	sĭhk



reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantonese_phonology

Tone check

diu 鷓diu1 𠵼 diu2 吊diu3 diu4 diu5 調diu6
 Hai 鬪hai1 喺hai2 hai3 兮hai4 𠵼 hai5 係hai6
 Sam 心 Sam1 孃sam2 滲sam3 sam4 sam5 甚sam6
 siu 燒siu1 小siu2 笑siu3 迢siu4 siu5 紹siu6
 dim dim1 點dim2 掂dim3 dim4 dim5 𠵼 dim6

Six Tones	bc ^① Marks	Pitch
1	—	<i>high level</i>
2	/	<i>high rising</i>
3	◦	<i>mid level</i>
4	\	<i>low falling</i>
5	∨	<i>low rising</i>
6	└	<i>low level</i>

① The diacritics are devised by the author, Chow Bun Ching

Conversation exercise

A: 你好。最近點呀？ (You good. Recently how ar?)

nei5 hou2. zeoi3 gan6 dim2 aa3?

B: 非常好 (very good)

fei1 soeng4 hou2

幾好 (quite good)

gei2 hou2

一般 (average. normal)

jat1 bun1

唔係幾好 (not quite good)

m4 hai6 gei2 hou2

好差 (very bad)

hou2 caa1

Jyutping or Yale?

Yale romanization of Cantonese

Limitation: unable to describe all vowels being used in Cantonese

Syllable

Onsets (Initials)

b~	p~	m~	f~	
d~	t~	n~		l~
g~	k~	ng~	h~	
gw~	kw~			w~
z~	c~		s~	j~

+

Nuclei^②

aa	e	i	o	u
oe	yu	a~	eo~	

+

(Codas)

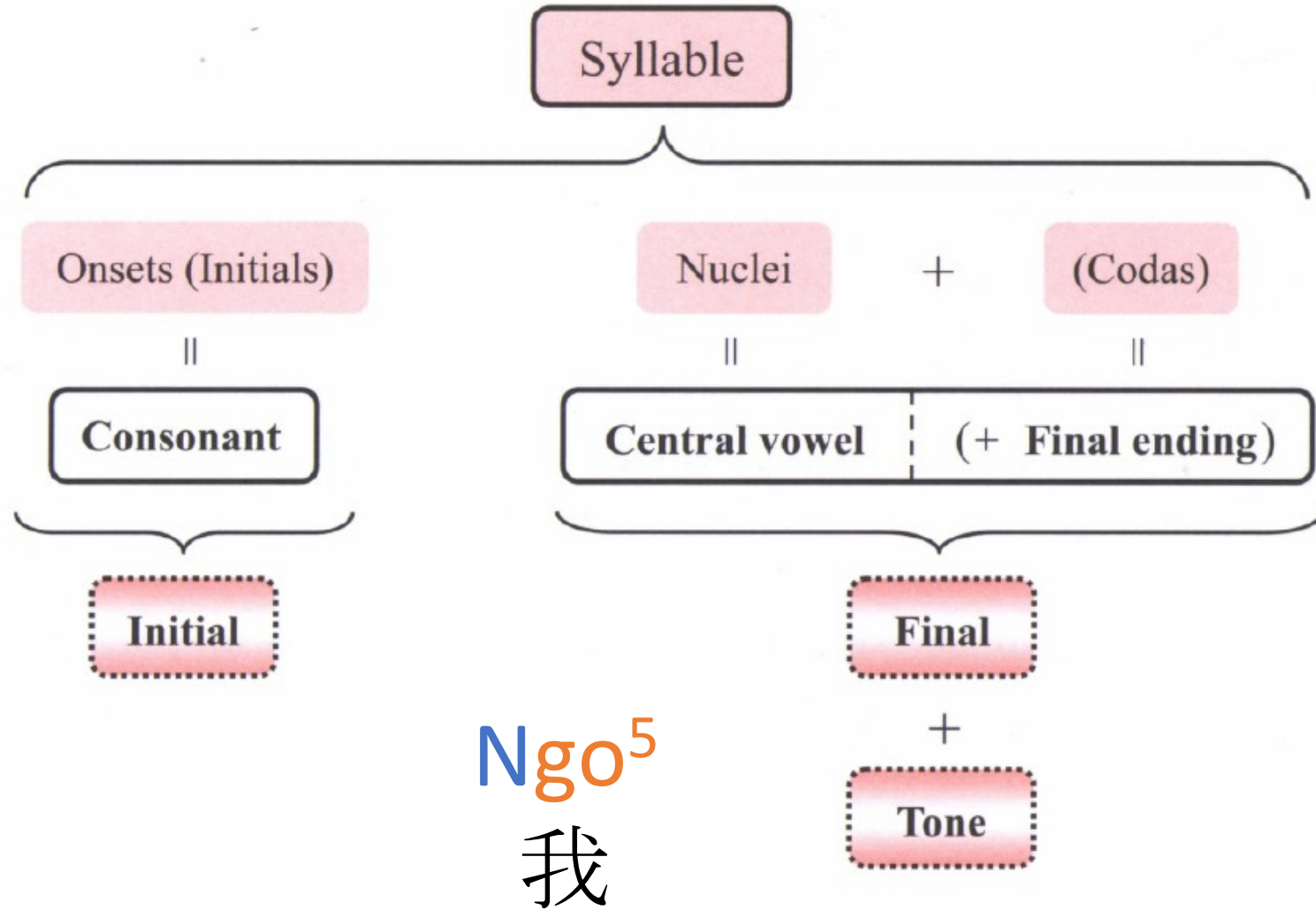
~i	~u	
~m	~n	~ng
~p	~t	~k

+

Tones

~1	~2	~3
~4	~5	~6

Jyutping



Difference between Jyutping and Yale in initial consonants

Jyutping	Yale
z	j
c	ch
j	y

Difference between Jyutping and modified Yale in vowels

Jyutping	Yale
aa	a
oe	eu
oeng	eung
oek	euk
eo	eui
eon	eun
eot	eut
eu	/
em	/
en	/
ep	/
et	/

https://hongkongvision.com/tool/cc_py_conv_zh

19 Initials

We shall start with the initials of Cantonese syllables. There are 19 distinctive initials and they can be divided into five groups as seen in the summary table below: 🎧 (Track 011)

1. Non-aspirated Voiceless			2. Aspirated Voiceless			3. Voiced Nasals			4. Fricatives & Continuants			5. Semi-vowels		
b~	(<u>s</u> py)	波	p~	(<u>p</u> an)	婆	m~	(<u>m</u> y)	媽	f~	(<u>f</u> or)	花			
d~	(<u>s</u> ty)	多	t~	(<u>t</u> an)	拖	n~	(<u>n</u> o)	癩	l~	(<u>l</u> ine)	拉			
g~	(<u>s</u> ky)	哥	k~	(<u>k</u> it)	騎	ng~	(<u>h</u> ang)	牙	h~	(<u>h</u> all)	蝦			
gw~	(<u>s</u> quad)	瓜	kw~	(<u>q</u> uiet)	誇							w~	(<u>w</u> est)	蛙
z~	(<u>b</u> ids)	遮	c~	(<u>b</u> its)	車				s~	(<u>s</u> ee)	蛇	j~	(<u>y</u> es)	夜

Note: the similar pronunciation in U.K. English and the Hanzi (Chinese characters) shown in brackets are for sounding reference.

51 Finals

Table of 51 Common Finals

With similar pronunciation in U.K. English 🎧 (Track 012)

	long	short	long	short	long	short	long	short	long	short	long	short	long
Central vowel / Final ending	aa <i>father</i>	(a~)	e <i>cherry</i>		i <i>see</i>		o <i>law</i>		u <i>mood</i>		oe <i>her</i>	(eo~)	yu <i>(dessus)</i>
~i	aai <i>aisle</i>	ai <i>fight</i>		>ei <i>day</i>			oi <i>boy</i>		ui <i>ruin</i>			eoi <i>(deuil)</i>	
~u	aa <u>u</u> <i>now</i>	au <i>shout</i>			iu <i>few</i>			>ou <i>go</i>					
~m	aam <i>arm</i>	am <i>sum</i>			im <i>seem</i>								
~n	aan <i>aunt</i>	an <i>sun</i>			in <i>seen</i>		on <i>lawn</i>		un <i>soon</i>			eon <i>London</i>	yun <i>(une)</i>
~ng	aang [a:ŋ]	ang <i>rung</i>	eng <i>length</i>			>ing <i>sing</i>	ong <i>long</i>			>ung <i>(achtung)</i>	oeng <i>(learning)</i>		
~p	aap <i>sharper*</i>	ap <i>supper*</i>			ip <i>deeper*</i>								
~t	aat <i>starter*</i>	at <i>butter*</i>			it <i>eater*</i>		ot <i>sorter*</i>		ut <i>footer*</i>			eot [et]	yut <i>(chute)</i>
~k	aak <i>marker</i>	ak <i>trucker*</i>	ek <i>checker*</i>			>ik <i>thicker*</i>	ok <i>locker*</i>			>uk <i>cooker*</i>	oek <i>jerk*</i>		

Note that the words with * indicate non-aspirated at the end. The words shown in bracket are French or German.

Basic Greetings 🎧 (Track 015)

1. 🗨️ nǎi⁵ hóu²

你 好
you/ good/

= *Good day. Hello! (slightly formal)*

= *How do you do! Hello! (1st time meeting)*

2. 🗨️ hāa¹ lóu²!

哈 佬!

[sound transcription from English]

= *Hello! (informal)*

3. 🗨️ wai³!

喂!

hey/

= *Hi! Hey! (between closer acquaintances)*



B: 非常好 (very good)

fei1 soeng4 hou2

幾好 (quite good)

gei2 hou2

一般 (average. normal)

jat1 bun1

唔係幾好 (not quite good)

m4 hai6 gei2 hou2

好差 (very bad)

hou2 caa1

zeoi3 gan6 dim2 aa3?

最近點呀?

How are you lately?

Greetings: How are you? 🎧 (Track 016)

1. 🗨️ nǎi⁵ hóu² mǎa³?

你 好 嗎?
you/ good/ PT

= *How do you do!*

= *How are you?*




(Form a formal question: Statement + mǎa³?)

Greetings: How are you? (Track 017)

Answers:


1.  géi² hóu², jǎu⁵ sān¹.
幾 好，有 心。
quite/ good/ have/ heart
= *Not bad. Thank you for asking.*
2.  hóu² hóu².
好 好。
very/ good
= *I'm fine.*
3.  màa⁴ máa² déi².
麻 麻 咁。
so-so
= *Just so-so.*
4.  m⁴ hǎi⁶ géi² hóu².
唔 係 幾 好。
not/ be quite/ good
= *Not so good.*



5.  m⁴ hóu².
唔 好。
not/ good
= *Not good.*

Your turn: Introduce yourself

 (Track 019)

1.  ngǒ⁵ hǎi⁶ + Identity
我 係
= *I am ... (e.g. student: hǒk⁶ sāang¹ 學生)*
2.  ngǒ⁵ giu³ + Full Name.
我 叫
= *My name is ... (e.g. Mǎk⁶ Wàa⁴ Fū¹ 麥華夫)*
3.  (něi⁵) giu³ ngǒ⁵ + Preferred name
to be addressed + lāa¹!
(你) 叫 我
= *You can call me ... (e.g. wàa⁴ zái² 華仔)*



Nei5 ne1 ?
你呢?
And you?

Nei5 giu3 me1 meng2
你叫咩名
What is your name?

English	Cantonese	Jyutping
Thank you	多謝	Do ¹ ze ⁶
Student	學生	hok ⁶ saang ¹

Greetings around mealtimes

(afternoon or evening) 🎧 (Track 021)

Lan2 撚

Q: 1. 🎧 sīk⁶ zó² fāan⁶ mēi⁶ āa³?

食 咗 飯 未 呀?
eat/ done/ rice/ yet/ PT/

= Have you eaten yet?
(How's it going?).



Answers:

Lan2 撚

1. 🎧 sīk⁶ zó² lāa³.

食 咗 喇。
eat/ done/ PT/

= Yes, I've eaten.

2. 🎧 mēi⁶ āa³.

未 呀。
not yet/ PT/

= Not yet.

Lan2 撚

Gau1 𠵼

Saying Good-bye 🎧 (Track 022)

1. 🎧 zòì³ gín³. (slightly formal)

再 見。
again/ see/

= See you! Goodbye.

2. 🎧 bāai¹ bāai³.

拜 拜。
[sound transcription from English]

= Bye-bye.

3. 🎧 tīng¹ jāt⁶ gín³.

聽 日 見。
tomorrow/ see/

= See you tomorrow.

4. 🎧 jāt¹ zān⁶ gín³.

一 陣 見。
one moment/ see/

= See you later.

5. 🎧 māan⁶ máan² hàang⁴.

慢 慢 行。
slowly/ walk/

= Mind your step. Take care.



English	Cantonese	Jyutping
Good morning	早晨	zou ² san ⁴
Good afternoon	午安	ng ⁵ on ¹
Good evening	晚安	maan ⁵ on ¹