



FREE ONE-PAGE REFERENCE

# Read Jyutping. Hear the tones.

A beginner guide to the letters and six tone numbers used for Cantonese.

## One syllable = letters + tone number

nei5 = n (start) + ei (vowel sound) + 5 (tone)

Write the number at the end, at normal size. Keep one number with each syllable: nei5 hou2.

## The six tones

Pitch is relative to the speaker. The sample word is one beat inside a recorded phrase.

|                                            |                  |       |    |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|-------|----|
| 1                                          | high and level   | baai1 | 拜拜 |
| In baai1 baai3 / first beat of the phrase  |                  |       |    |
| 2                                          | rises high       | hou2  | 你好 |
| In nei5 hou2 / second beat of the phrase   |                  |       |    |
| 3                                          | middle and level | baai3 | 拜拜 |
| In baai1 baai3 / second beat of the phrase |                  |       |    |
| 4                                          | low and falling  | san4  | 早晨 |
| In zou2 san4 / second beat of the phrase   |                  |       |    |
| 5                                          | rises from low   | nei5  | 你好 |
| In nei5 hou2 / first beat of the phrase    |                  |       |    |
| 6                                          | low and level    | ze6   | 多謝 |
| In do1 ze6 / second beat of the phrase     |                  |       |    |

## Try it in two minutes

1. Play a complete phrase. Listen for the first or second beat shown above.
2. Compare baai1 with baai3 in the same “bye”; then nei5 with hou2 in “hello”.
3. Say the phrase once, then replay. Use the listening check online.

[cantoschool.com/learn/tone-trainer](https://cantoschool.com/learn/tone-trainer)