

Zhuang



tones

Zhuang is a tonal language ('tonal quality' refers to the raising and lowering of pitch on certain syllables). Tones in Zhuang fall on vowels. The same combination of sounds pronounced with different tones can have a very different meaning.

Zhuang has nine tones. In our pronunciation guide they've been simplified to six tones, indicated with accents on the letters, as shown in the tables below for the vowel 'a'. We've represented the following tones with one symbol: high flat, high even and high even short (eg \bar{a}); high rising and high rising long (eg \acute{a}); mid flat and mid flat short (eg a). The last value for all three tones applies when the syllable ends in *k, p* or *t*.

Higher tones involve tightening the vocal cords to get a higher sounding pitch, while lower tones are made by relaxing the vocal cords to get a lower pitch. Bear in mind that the tones are relative to the natural vocal range of the speaker, eg the high tone is pronounced at the top of one's vocal range. Note also that some tones slide up or down in pitch.

high flat \bar{a}	high falling \hat{a}	high rising \acute{a}	mid flat a	low falling \grave{a}	mid rising \check{a}