

## HSK 0 · Light syllables and common tone changes

Pre-HSK foundations; classroom examples, not official exam items.

## Lazy mouth, careful ears

Lazy mouth, careful ears: syllables lighten and tones bend when they meet.

## The light tap

### Strong beat, light tap

妈妈 māma: MA-ma.

谢谢 xièxie: XIE-xie.

爸爸 bàba: BA-ba.

## 不 rises

Two falls are clumsy

不是 (bú shì): not is.

不去 (bú qù): not go.

不好 (bù hǎo), 不喝 (bù hē): stays bù.

## 一 bends

Alone yī; bending in company

一个 (yí gè): before a fourth tone, yí.

一天 (yì tiān), 一年 (yì nián): before others, yì.

第一 keeps yī: ordinal, no bending.

## Double third

Written nǐ hǎo, spoken ní hǎo

你好 written nǐ hǎo, spoken ní hǎo.

很好 written hěn hǎo, spoken hén hǎo.

The writing keeps the marks; only the mouth changes.

## Watch out

### Two guards

A neutral tap is shorter than a quiet full tone, and never carries a mark.

你好 keeps its written tones; retrain the ear, not the spelling.

## Check yourself

### Four checks

Which syllable of 妈妈 is the light tap?

不是: bù or bú?

一个: yī, yí or yì?

你好 written nǐ hǎo: what does the mouth do?