

BASIC THAI LANGUAGE

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION



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ABOUT THIS BOOK

The BASIC THAI LANGUAGE eBook is designed to help beginners develop a strong foundation in Thai pronunciation, tones, and phonetics. Thai is a tonal language, meaning that small variations in pitch can change the meaning of a word entirely. This eBook simplifies these concepts, making them easier to understand and practice.

Through structured lessons, practical exercises, and comparative insights between Thai and English, learners will develop a clearer understanding of Thai consonants, vowels, and tones. The book also highlights common pronunciation challenges faced by non-native speakers and provides strategies to overcome them.

Whether you are learning Thai for travel, work, or personal interest, this eBook will guide you step by step toward mastering the Thai sound system with confidence.

Happy learning!

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THAI SOUND SYSTEM

The Thai sound system is unique, comprising 44 consonants, 32 vowels, and 5 tones, which play a crucial role in differentiating meanings. Unlike English, Thai is a tonal language where pitch variations affect word interpretation. Vowel length also changes meanings, and consonants are categorized into three classes—mid, low, and high—influencing tone rules. Additionally, Thai lacks final consonant clusters and strong stress patterns, making pronunciation distinct from English. Mastering these elements is essential for clear and accurate communication in Thai.

1. Overview of Consonants, Vowels, and Tones

Thai is a tonal language that consists of a unique set of sounds, including consonants, vowels, and five distinct tones. Mastering pronunciation in Thai is essential for clear communication since a change in tone can alter the meaning of a word entirely.

Consonants

Thai has 44 consonant letters, each belonging to one of three consonant classes (low, mid, and high), which influence the tonal pronunciation of words. These consonants also have different sounds depending on their position in a word—initial or final.

Vowels

Thai vowels come in short and long forms, significantly affecting word meanings. The language has simple vowels, diphthongs, and compound vowels that modify pronunciation patterns.

Tones

Thai has five tones:

1. Middle tone: neutral sound
2. Low tone: spoken with a lower pitch
3. Falling tone: starts high and drops
4. High tone: spoken with a higher pitch
5. Rising tone: starts low and rises

Each tone gives words different meanings, even if the consonants and vowels remain the same.

2. Differences Between Thai and English Sounds

Thai pronunciation differs from English in several key ways:

1. **Tonal System:** Unlike English, Thai uses pitch changes to distinguish word meanings.
2. **Aspiration:** Some Thai consonants (such as ก [kh] and ป [p]) have aspirated and unaspirated forms, which can be difficult for English speakers.
3. **No Ending Consonant Clusters:** Unlike English, Thai words generally do not have consonant clusters at the end.
4. **Different Vowel System:** Thai vowels are more varied in length and combination than English vowels.
5. **No Strong Stress Patterns:** English uses stress to emphasise syllables, while Thai maintains an even rhythm.

Understanding these differences will help learners adjust their pronunciation and develop an authentic Thai accent.

Here are some sample words and phrases to illustrate the differences between Thai and English sounds:

1. Tonal system (same spelling, different meanings based on tone):

มา (maa) - "to come" (mid tone)

ม้า (máa) - "horse" (high tone)

หมา (mǎa) - "dog" (rising tone)

ม่า (mâa) - "grandmother" (falling tone)

2. Aspiration (aspirated vs. unaspirated consonants):

ปา (paa) - "to throw" (unaspirated)

พา (phaa) - "to bring" (aspirated)

3. No ending consonant clusters (compared to English words like "help" or "desk"):

รัก (rák) - "love" (ends with a single consonant sound)

นก (nók) - "bird" (ends with a single consonant sound)

4. Different vowel system (short vs. long vowels):

ปะ (pà) - "meet" (short vowel)

ป้า (pâa) - "aunt" (long vowel)

กิน (kin) - "to eat"

keen (keen) - incorrect but illustrates vowel distinction

5. No strong stress patterns (compared to English stress on syllables):

ประเทศไทย (prà-thêet-thai) - "Thailand" (all syllables have relatively even stress)

English example: "Thailand" (THAI-land, with stress on the first syllable)

CONSONANTS (พยัญชนะ)

There are 44 consonants in the Thai language, but only 21 distinct initial consonant sounds. The consonants are arranged based on the traditional Indian alphabet system. Each consonant has a specific name, which can be useful when asking how to spell a word. Additionally, many consonants undergo pronunciation changes when they appear at the end of a word.

1. Categorisation of Thai consonants.

Thai consonants can be categorised into initial and final sounds, which influence pronunciation and meaning.

1.Initial Consonants (พยัญชนะต้น): These appear at the beginning of a syllable and are essential for tone determination.

2.Final Consonants (พยัญชนะท้าย): Thai final consonants have limited sounds, mainly consisting of -k, -t, and -p sounds, unlike in English where consonants can be fully pronounced at the end.

Thai consonants are also divided into three tonal classes:

Consonant Class	Number of Consonants	Characteristics
Mid-class consonants (กลาง)	9 consonants	- Most stable in tone rules. - Follow a straightforward pattern with tone marks. - Can produce all five tones in Thai.
High-class consonants (สูง)	11 consonants	- Generally produce higher-pitched sounds. - Follow a unique tone rule with different tonal shifts. - Can create high-rising or high-falling tones with certain tone marks.
Low-class consonants (ต่ำ)	24 consonants	- Generally produce lower-pitched sounds. - Require different tone marks for certain tones compared to mid- and high-class consonants. - Some come in pairs: one unpaired (e.g., u b) and one aspirated counterpart (e.g., w ph).

The table below categorises consonants based on their classes (high, mid, low) as they affect tone rules.

Table of Thai Initial Consonants (พยัญชนะต้น)

Consonant Class	Thai Consonant Symbol / IPA	Pronunciation	Example Word
High-class (11 consonants)	ข, ข* (kh)	khḥw	ของ - khḥwng (thing)
	ฉ (ch)	chḥw	ฉัน - chǎn (I)
	ฐ, ถ (th)	thḥw	ถาม - thaǎm (ask)
	ผ (ph)	phḥw	ผม - phǒm (I, hair)
	ฝ (f)	ḥw	ฝัน - fǎn (dream)
	ศ, ษ, ส (s)	sḥw	สวย - suǎi (beautiful)
	ห (h)	hḥw	หาย - haǎi (lost, missing, disappear)
Mid-class (9 consonants)	ก (k)	kw	กิน - kin (eat)
	จ (j/c)	จก/คก	จาก - jaak (from)
	ด, ฎ (d)	kw	ดำ - dam (black)
	ต, ฏ (t)	kw	โต - too (big)
	บ (b)	kw	บิน - bin (fly)
	ป (p)	kw	ไป - pai (go)
	อ (acts as a silent placeholder for vowel-only syllables)	kw	ออก - kwk (leave, go out, depart, issue)
Low-class (24 consonants)	ค, ค*, ฆ (kh)	khkw	คำ - kham (word)
	ช, ฌ (ch)	chkw	ชอบ - chḥwḥb (like)
	ซ (s)	kw	ซ้าย - sǎai (left)
	ถ, ฐ, ฑ, ฒ (th)	thkw	ทาง - thaang (way)
	พ, ภ (ph)	phkw	พา - phaa (bring, take)
	ฟ (f)	kw	ฟัน - fan (teeth)
	ฮ (h)	kw	ฮิต - hít (popular)
	ง (ng)	kwng	งู - ngu (snake)
	น, ณ (n)	kw	ใน - nai (in)
	ม (m)	kw	มา - maa (come)
	ย, ญ (y)	kw	ยาย - yaai (grandma)
	ร (r)	kw	รัก - rák (love)
	ล, ฬ (l)	kw	ลิง - ling (monkey)
	ว (w)	kw	วาด - wâat (draw)

The table below shows Thai final consonants follow a strict rule where only 8 sounds can appear at the end of a syllable.

Table of Thai Final Consonants (พยัญชนะท้าย)

Final Sound	Thai Consonant Symbol	Example Word
-k	ก, ข, ค, ฆ	มาก - mâak (very much) เลข - lèek (number, mathematics, digit)
-t	จ, ฉ, ช, ฌ, ต, ฏ, ท, ถ, ฐ, ฑ, ฒ, ษ, ฒ, ศ, ษ, ฌ	มีด - mīit (knife) ขวด - khùat (bottle)
-p	บ, ป, ผ, พ, ฝ, ฟ, ภ	บาป - bàap (sin) กับ - kap (with)
-m	ม	ลม - lom (wind)
-n	น, ณ, ญ, อ, ฬ	งาน - ngaan (work, task, job) สำคัญ - samkhan (important)
-ng	ง	เก่ง - kèng (excellently, expert, skillful, proficiently)

Summary Table of Thai Consonant Symbols: Initial and Final Consonants

Thai consonants symbol	International phonetic alphabet (IPA)	
	Initial consonants	Final consonants
ก	k	k
ข ค ฆ	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ	j,c	t
ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t
ญ	y	n
ด ฐ	d	t
ต ฏ	t	t
ถ ฐ ท ฑ ฒ	th	t
น ญ	n	n
บ	b	p
ป	p	p
ผ ฝ ภ	ph	p
ฟ ฝ	f	p

ม	m	m
ย	y	-
ร	r	n
ล ฬ	l	n
ว	w	-
ซ (นร) ศ ษ ส	s	t
ห ฃ	h	-
อ	-	-

Why Are These Classes Important?

The classification determines the tone rules in Thai pronunciation. Thai has five tones (mid, low, falling, high, rising), and the consonant class affects how each tone is formed. Understanding these classes helps learners correctly pronounce Thai words and use tone marks properly.

2. Common pronunciation mistakes for non-native speakers

1. Confusing aspirated and unaspirated consonants

Example: "คา" (khaa) vs. "กา" (kaa) – The first has an aspirated "kh" sound, while the second is unaspirated "k"

2. Mispronouncing final consonants

Example: "รัค" (rák) – The final "k" is unreleased and softer than in English.

3. Ignoring tonal changes

Example: "มา" (maa – to come) vs. "หมา" (mǎa – dog) – The first has a mid-tone, while the second has a rising tone, changing the meaning

Example Sentences

Thai	Transliteration	English
กาต้มน้ำ	kaa-nám	Teapot (unaspirated "k")
ขาว	khǎao	White (aspirated "kh")
บ้าน	bâan	House (mid-tone "b")
หมา	mǎa	Dog (rising-tone "m")

By understanding these consonant categories and practicing their pronunciation, learners can improve their Thai-speaking skills effectively.

3. Consonants Exercises

Exercise 1: Identify the Consonant Class

Match the following consonants with their correct tonal class
(Mid, High, or Low):

1. ก (_____)
2. ข (_____)
3. ฃ (_____)
4. ค (_____)
5. พ (_____)
6. ฅ (_____)
7. ฉ (_____)
8. ฌ (_____)

Exercise 2: Aspiration Practice

Pronounce the following pairs aloud, paying attention to the aspirated vs. unaspirated sounds:

1. ฃ (khaa) vs. ก (kaa)
2. พ (phaa) vs. ข (baa)
3. ฃ (thāam) vs. ฅ (taam)

Exercise 3: Word Completion

Fill in the blanks with the correct Thai consonant to complete the word:

1. _ ำ (Teapot) » ก or ข?
2. _ ะ (White) » ข or ฃ?
3. _ ิ (Love) » ส or ฉ?

VOWELS (สระ)

Thai vowels play a crucial role in the Thai script, combining with consonants to form words. Categorised into three main groups:

- 1.Monophthongs (single vowels): Comprising 18 vowels, these include both short and long vowel sounds.
- 2. Diphthongs (Complex Vowels): Formed by combinations of two vowel sounds within a single syllable.
- 3. Special Vowels (Extra Vowels): Unique vowel structures that extend beyond basic and diphthong classifications.

1. Monophthongs or single vowels (สระเดี่ยว)

Thai vowels are divided into short vowels and long vowels, affecting pronunciation and meaning.

Short vs. long vowels sounds

Short vowels are pronounced quickly, while long vowels are held for a longer duration.

Short Vowels	Vowel Symbol	Pronunciation	Long Vowels	Vowel Symbol	Pronunciation
a	ะ, ั	a	aa	า / ำ	aa
i	ิ	i	ii	ี	ii
u	ุ	u	uu	ู	uu
e	เ, ะ	e	ee	เอ	ee
ε	แ, ะ	ε	εε	แ	εε
o	โ, ะ	o	oo	โ	oo
ɔ	อ, ะ	ɔ	ɔɔ	อ	ɔɔ
ə	อ, ะ	ə	əə	อ	əə

2. Diphthongs or complex vowels (အဲဒါပဲဒါပဲ)

Diphthongs are vowel sounds that glide from one vowel sound to another in a single syllable.

Short Vowels	Vowel Symbol	Pronunciation	Long Vowels	Vowel Symbol	Pronunciation
ai	ၼ, ၼ	ai	aai	ၼၼ	aai
ao	ၼၼ	ao	aaο	ၼၼၼ	aaο
ua (rarely used)	ၼ (sounds like a combination of ၼ and ၼ)	ua	ua	ၼ (sounds like a combination of ၼ and ၼ)	ua
ia (rarely used)	ၼ (like 'ear' in 'year' but short with silent 'r')	ia	ia	ၼ (like 'ear' in 'year' but with silent 'r')	ia
ea (rarely used)	ၼ (sounds like a combination of ၼ and ၼ)	ea	ea	ၼ (sounds like a combination of ၼ and ၼ)	ea
ui	ၼ, ၼ	ui	uai	ၼၼ	uai
iu	ၼၼ	iu	οi	ၼၼ	οi
ea	ၼ (ၼၼ)	ea	οi	ၼၼ	οi
ai	ၼၼ	ai	ၼၼ	ၼၼ	ၼၼ
ai	ၼၼ	ai	ၼၼ	ၼၼ	ၼၼ
eo (rarely used)	ၼၼ (sounds like a combination of ၼ - ၼ and ၼ - ၼ but short sound)	eo	eeο	ၼၼ	eeο
iao	-	-	iao	ၼၼၼ	iao

3. Special vowels or extra vowels (ສະເກົ່າ)

Some vowels are combined with additional sounds, forming extended vowel structures.

Combination	Pronunciation	Example
ຳ	am	ນ້ຳ - nám (water)
_s	ຈັກ	ພສ - phັຈັກ (blessing)
_ss _	a	ກສມ - kam (karma, object)
_ss	an	ກສໂກຣ - kan-krai (scissors)
ຸ, ຸຳ	ຸຸ, ຸຸຸ, ຸຸຸຸ	ຸຸ - ຸຸduu (season) ຸຸຸ - ຸຸຸsii (hermit)
ຸ, ຸຸ	ຸຸ, ຸຸຸ	(Rarely used - found in ancient texts)

4. Summary

1. Monophthongs (single vowels) are categorised into short and long vowels.
2. Diphthongs (complex vowels) involve vowel glides that produce unique sounds.
3. Special vowels (extra vowels) incorporate consonantal elements to create extended sounds.
4. A vowel cannot stand alone; it must be attached to at least one consonant.
5. Vowels are written in various positions relative to consonants—before, after, above, below, or surrounding them—but are always pronounced after the initial consonant.
6. When followed by a final consonant, some vowels change form or disappear entirely, while their pronunciation remains the same. For example:
 - ກ + ະ + ມ = ກັມ (kap, meaning "with")
 - ກ + ື + ະ + ມ = ກມ (khon, meaning "person" or "people")
7. Some vowels cannot be followed by a final consonant when forming a word. These include ຳ, ື, ື, and ື

5. Vowels exercises

1. Mark which of the following words contain diphthongs.

1. เสีย (____)
2. เก (____)
3. เมือง (____)
4. ตัว (____)
5. ไทย (____)
6. กลัว (____)
7. เถิน (____)
8. เสือ (____)

2. Create words using given vowels. Use the following vowels to form Thai words.

Given Vowel Example Word

1. ใ _____

2. ี _____

3. เ _____

4. ัว _____

5. ุ _____

6. ื _____

7. อย _____

TONES IN THAI

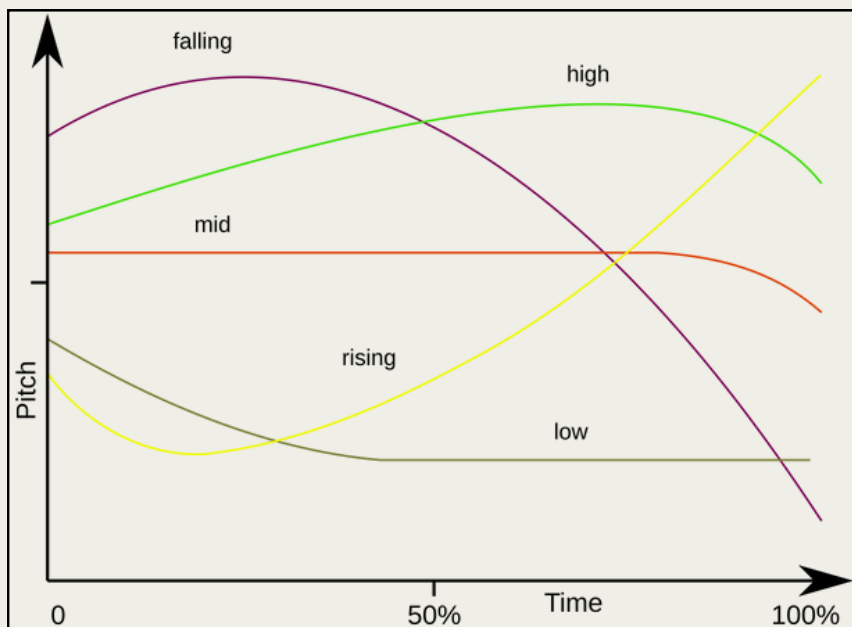
1. Thai is a tonal language, meaning that the pitch of a word affects its meaning. There are five tones in Thai:

Table of Thai Tones

Tone	Thai Tone Marks	Tone Symbol (IPA)	Example
Middle	none	none	มา (maa) - come
Low		ˊ	มา (màa) - (-)
Falling		ˋ	มา (mâa) - (-)
High		ˊˊ	มา (máa) - horse
Rising		ˊˊˊ	มา (mǎa) - dog

How to Pronounce Thai Tones

- Middle Tone – Spoken with a normal, flat voice without any pitch change.
- Low Tone – Spoken with a pitch lower than the normal voice.
- Falling Tone – Starts high and then gradually drops to a lower pitch.
- High Tone – Spoken with a pitch higher than the normal voice, but not excessively high.
- Rising Tone – Begins low and then gradually rises to a normal or higher pitch.



2. Important usage notes

Initial consonant class	A syllable is considered open if it ends in a long vowel or closed syllable if it ends with a <u>sonorant</u> (live) consonant.	An open syllable contains a short vowel	A closed syllable ends with a stop (dead) consonant		Tones				
			Short vowel	Long vowel	middle	ˊ	ˊˊ	ˋ	ˋˋ
					-none-	ˊ	ˊˊ	ˋ	ˋˋ
	Live syllable	Dead syllable			-none-	ˊ	ˊˊ	ˋ	ˋˋ
<u>Mid</u> n, ɹ, ʁ, ʁ (ɹ, ʁ) ɹ, ɹ, ɹ	Middle	Low			yes	Low	Falling	High	Rising
<u>high</u> ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ	Rising	Low			no	Low	Falling	no	yes
<u>low</u> ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ, ɹ	Middle	High	Falling		yes	Falling	High	no	no

Adapted from Ian Brown <https://ian-b.com/thai-tone-cheat-sheet-flow-chart-pdf/>

Explanation

- Only mid-class consonants (e.g., *n, ɲ, ŋ, t, u, ʊ, ə*) can be combined with all five tones.
- The base tone (Mid) has no tone mark.
- Adding tone marks (*ˊ, ˋ, ˋˊ*) changes the meaning and pronunciation.
- Live syllables (ending in a long vowel or sonorant) follow different tonal rules than dead syllables (ending in a stop consonant).
- High-class consonants generally form rising tones and cannot produce some tones without tone marks.
- Low-class consonants often produce falling tones when combined with tone marks.

3. Example:

1. Mid-Class Consonants (กลาง)

Mid – Class Consonants	Tones			Live syllable	Dead syllable	
ก, จ, ฎ, ฏ (ก, ฌ) ข, ฃ, ฅ		Symbol	Mark		Short vowels	Long vowels
	Middle	none	none	ข่า <u>paa</u> (<i>throw</i>)		
	Low	◌̣	◌̣	ข่า <u>pàa</u> (<i>forest</i>)	ขั๊ก <u>pàk</u> (<i>stick, put in</i>)	ข่า <u>pàak</u> (<i>mouth</i>)
	Falling	◌̣̌	◌̣̌	ข่า <u>pǎa</u> (<i>aunt</i>)		
	High	◌̣̌̌	◌̣̌̌	ข่า <u>páa</u> (-)		
	Rising	◌̣̌̌̌	◌̣̌̌̌	ข่า <u>pǎa</u> (-)		

2. High-Class Consonants (สูง)

High – Class Consonants	Tones			Live syllable	Dead syllable	
ข, ฃ, ฅ, ฆ, ก, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ		Symbol	Mark		Short vowels	Long vowels
	Low	◌̣	◌̣	ข่า <u>khàa</u> (<i>Galangal</i>)	ขั๊ก Khàp (<i>drive</i>)	ข่า <u>Khàak</u> (<i>spit</i>)
	Falling	◌̣̌	◌̣̌	ข่า <u>khǎa</u> <i>I</i> (<i>old word</i>)		
	Rising		◌̣̌̌	ข่า <u>khǎa</u> (<i>Leg</i>)		

3. Low-Class Consonants (ต่ำ)

High – Class Consonants	Tones			Live syllable	Dead syllable	
ก, ฌ, ข, ฃ, ฅ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ, ฌ		Symbol	Mark		Short vowels	Long vowels
	Middle	none	none	ข่า <u>naa</u> (<i>Rice field, farm</i>)		
	Falling	◌̣	◌̣̌	ข่า <u>nǎa</u> (<i>Should</i>)		ข่า <u>nǎak</u> (<i>otter</i>)
	High	◌̣̌	◌̣̌̌	ข่า <u>náa</u> (<i>Aunt, uncle</i>)	ข่า <u>nák</u> (<i>used before a verb to describe profession</i>)	

4. Tone Exercises

Exercise 1: Identify the Correct Tone

Match the following words with their correct tone (Mid, Low, Falling, High, or Rising):

1. ក (_____) – "Crow"
2. ឡ (_____) – "Galangal"
3. គី (_____) – "Rice"
4. ថ្មី (_____) – "New"
5. ច្រើន (_____) – "A lot"

Exercise 2: Minimal Pair Practice

Pronounce the following words, focusing on their tone differences:

1. មា (maa) vs. ម៉ា (măa)
2. ម៉ាក (mâak) vs. មា (maa)
3. ម៉ៃ (măi) vs. ថ្មី (mài)
4. ខ៉ា (khàa) vs. មា (khăa)
5. តា (taa) vs. ថា (tàa)

PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

1. Practice: Vocabulary Pronunciation & Sentence Writing

Write a simple sentence using each vocabulary word using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

1. Words with mid-tones

Thai	English	Simple sentences
เรียน (rian)	to study	
กิน (kin)	to eat	(chăn kin plaa) – I eat fish.
ดี (dii)	good	
ปลา (plaa)	fish	
คน (khon)	person	

2.Words with low-tones

Thai	English	Simple sentences
สี่ (sìi)	four	
หนึ่ง (nèng)	one	
ผิด (phìt)	wrong	
จะ (jà)	will	
เจ็ด (jèt)	seven	

3. Words with falling-tones

Thai	English	Simple sentences
มาก (mâak)	a lot, very much	
เข้า (khâo)	to enter	
ข้าว (khâao)	rice	
ส้ม (sôm)	orange	
ไม่ (mâi)	no, not	

4. Words with high-tones

Thai	English	Simple sentences
ซื้อ (súu)	to buy	
รัก (rák)	love	
รู้ (rúu)	to know	
ใช้ (chái)	to use	
ฟ้า (fáa)	sky	

5. Words with rising-tones

Thai	English	Simple sentences
สูง (sǔung)	tall, high	
หนังสือ (nǎngsǎm)	book	
ขาว (khǎao)	white	
เสือ (sǎa)	tiger	
เขา (khǎo)	He, horn or mountain	

2. Thai words: different tone, different meaning

Table 1

Thai	English
ไม้ (mâi)	wood
ใหม่ (mài)	new
ไม่ (mâi)	no, not
ไหม้ (mâi)	to burn
มัย (mái)	Informal question marker (.....right?)
มา (ma:a)	to come
ม้า (máa)	horse
หมา (mǎa)	dog
เขา (khǎo)	he, horn, or mountain
เข้า (khâo)	to enter

Table 2

Thai	English
เข่า (khàò)	knee
ขาว (khǎao)	white
ข้าว (khâao)	rice
ข่าว (khàao)	news
คาว (khaao)	fishy
เสื่อ (sǎa)	mat
เสื้อ (sǎa)	shirt
เสือ (sǎa)	tiger
อยาก (yàak)	to want
ยาก (yâak)	difficult

Table 3

Thai	English
ยา (yaa)	medicine
อย่า (yàa)	don't
ย่า (yâa)	grandmother
ปู (puu)	crab
ปู่ (pùu)	grandfather
มี (mii)	to have
ผิ (mii)	dry noodle
หมี (mii)	bear
บาร์ (bar)	bar
บ่า (bàa)	shoulder
บ้า (bâa)	mad, crazy
นา (naa)	rice field
หน้า (nâa)	face, season, in front
หนา (náa)	thick

Short and long Vowels

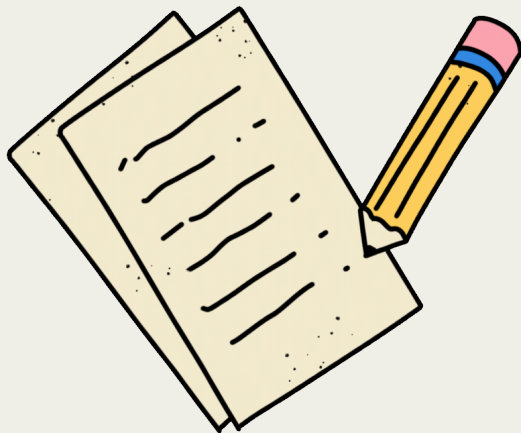
Short	Example (Thai - Transliteration - Meaning)	Long	Example (Thai - Transliteration - Meaning)
a	จะ - ja - will	aa	จาก - jàak - from
i	สิบ - sìb - ten	ii	สี่ - sìi - four
u	ดู - du - blame, scold	uu	ดู - duu - watch, look, see
๕	ดึก - dèk - late at night	๕๕	ดื่ม - dèm - drink
e	เตะ - te - kick	ee	เซ - see - stagger
ε	และ - lε - and	εε	แลก - lǎεk - exchange
ə	เลอะ - lə - dirty	əə	เจอ - jəə - meet
o	โต๊ะ - to - table	oo	โต - too - big
ɔ	เกาะ - kə - island	ɔɔ	กอด - kəɔd - hug

Table 2: Complex Vowels (Diphthongs)

Diphthong	Example (Thai - Transliteration - Meaning)	Diphthong	Example (Thai - Transliteration - Meaning)
ai	ไม่ - mâa - not	aai	ตาย - taai - die
ao	เขา - khǎo - he, horn, mountain	aao	ขาว - khǎao - white
ia	เบียร์ - bia - beer	iao	เขียว - khǐao - green
ua	ตัว - tua - body	uai	สวย - sǔai - beautiful
๕a	เรือ - r๕a - boat	๕ai	เหนื่อย - n๕ai - tired
ɔi	น้อย - nòi - little	ɔɔi	คอย - khɔɔi - wait
ooi	โดย - dooi - by	əɔi	เนย - nəɔi - butter
ui	คุย - khui - chat, talk	iɯ	หิว - hǐu - hungry
eo	เร็ว - reo - fast	eeo	เลว - leeo - bad
εεo	แล้ว - l’εεo - already		

3.Practice Thai Tones and Sounds

Thai is a tonal language, meaning that pronouncing a word with a different tone or vowel length can change its meaning entirely. Below are some Thai tongue twisters and tone exercises to help you develop clear pronunciation and accurate tones.



Sound	Thai	Sentence (Thai)	Sentence (Transliteration)	Meaning
khǎw	ข	เขา เข้า ไป อ่าน ข่าว และ กิน ข้าว ขาว	kháo khào pai àan khàao lé kin khào khào	He enters to read news and eat white rice
nguw	ง	งู เหงา งง ง่วง ง่าย งู งง ทำงาน ง่าย ไม่ได้ เงิน	nguu ngǎo ngong nguàng ngaâi, nguu ngong tham- ngaan ngaâi mǎi dâi ngon	A lonely sleepy but lazy snake does not understand why when he works half- heartedly, he does not get much money
kwk/bkw	ป/บ	ป้า ป๊า พา ปู่ ไป ป่า ปู่ และ ปลา ใน ป่า	pâa bâa phaa pùn pai paa puu lé plaa nai pàa	The crazy aunt took grandfather to throw crabs and fish into the jungle
phák/ phàk / phâak	พัก/พัก/ภาค	คนไทยไปพักผ่อน ผักและพืชไทยที่ ภาคใต้	khon Thai pai phák kin phàk lé Phàd-Thai thii phâak tâi	Thai people go on vacation to eat vegetables and Phàd-Thai in Southern Thailand
klai/klâi	ใกล้/ไกล	ไก่ อยู่ ใกล้ กับ อยู่ ไกล	The chicken is nearby, the shrimp is far away	The chicken is nearby, the shrimp is far away
pèt / phèt /pɛ̌t	เปิด/เปิด/ภาค	เอา เปิด เปิด เปิด 8 จาน	ao pèd phèd- phèd pɛ̌d jaan	May I have eight plates of spicy duck, please?
sùa/súa/súa	เสื้อ/เสื้อ/เสื้อ	เสื้อ ใส่ เสื้อ สี ส้ม นั่ง บน เสื้อ สวย	súa sài súa sǐi sôm nāng bon sua suái	A tiger wears an orange shirt and sits on the beautiful mat

