

## An Introduction to

# THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOAL

After this unit, you will briefly understand:

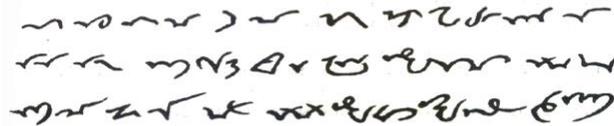
- the history of the Vietnamese language, and
- four principal characteristics of the language.

### □ TÓM LƯỢC – A GLANCE AT THE HISTORY OF THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

The Vietnamese language is believed to have experienced four writing systems during the course of its history.

#### 1. CHỮ VIẾT CÓ HÌNH CON GIUN – The Crawling Worms

Prior to the era of Chinese domination (207 BC – 938 AD) Vietnamese is believed to have had its own writing system whose orthography resembles “crawling worms” (*Thánh Tôn Di Thảo*, after *Cơ Sở Ngữ Văn Hán Nôm*, Lê Trí Viễn, nxb Giáo Dục, 1984:22; *Tiền Hán thư*, a historical document written during the East Han dynasty). The following may be evidence among the many discoveries found in Thanh Hoá province. (Trần Ngọc Thêm, *Tìm về Bản sắc Văn hoá Việt Nam*, 1997: 96).



#### 2. – CHỮ NHO – Sino-originals

When the Han invade Vietnam in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, they impose their writing system on the public, and Han or *chữ Nho* becomes the lingua franca in the royal courts for several centuries. As a result, nearly 70% of the Vietnamese vocabulary consists of Sino-originals (Lý Lạc Nghị&Jim Waters, *In Search of the Origins of Chinese Characters Relevant to Vietnamese*, nxb Thế Giới, 1998:ix. The following example is from the outer back cover of *Sách Tra Chữ Nôm thường dùng*, Lạc Nghị, Hội Ngôn Ngữ Học, 1991), and they co-exist with the indigenous Vietnamese words:

Câu thơ chữ Hán của Đặng Trần Côn:

天地風塵, 紅顏多迤

(Thiên địa phong trần, hồng nhan đa truân)

### 3. CHỮ NÔM – Demotic System

The need for its own writing system after Vietnam gains its independence in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century becomes crucial, and Hàn Thuyên is assumed to be the inventor of a demotic system called *Nôm* in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. This creative work does not seem to work perfectly because of its complication and inconsistency. This demotic system co-exists with *chữ Nho* to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite all the defects, many great works in *Nôm* appear during the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. (The following example is from the outer back cover of *Sách Tra Chữ Nôm Thường Dùng*, Lạc Nghị, Hội Ngôn Ngữ Học, 1991)

Đoàn Thị Điểm diễn *Nôm*:

譟丕坦沒干膾涸  
客鴈紅鵲餒速遭

(Thuở trời đất nổi cơn gió bụi,  
Khách má hồng nhiều nỗi truân chiên)

### 4. CHỮ QUỐC NGỮ – National Script

As early as the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century (1553?), many Catholic missionaries arrive in Vietnam to evangelize Christianity to the masses. They find the Sino-originals and the *Nôm* both “difficult” for their task. In an effort to popularize the evangelization, these missionaries try to render Vietnamese in the Latin alphabet. The first appearance of the romanized orthography is around 1632. In 1909 the romanized Vietnamese becomes official as *chữ quốc ngữ* (national script). This new system of writing proves effective and convenient. However, the tonal marks and the spelling marks are still “pains in the neck” to the modern computerized world. Here are two examples of *chữ quốc ngữ* in its early stages.

1632	1651	2000	English equivalents
aim em	anh em	anh em	brother & sisters
bloèi	blời	trời	sky, heaven
bõe	βợ	vợ	wife
cia	cha	cha	father
ciaùm	chàõ	chồng	husband
ciúa	chúa	chúa	God
con blai	con blai	con trai	boy, son
con gái	con gái	con gái	girl, daughter
đét	đét	đất	earth
mẽ	mẹ	mẹ	mother
nguèi	người	người	human being
thất	thật	thật	true, real

**Table 1** – Stages of national script (After *Les Missionnaires portugais et les débuts de l'Église catholique au Vietnam*, Roland Jacques, Đinh Hương Tùng Thư, 2004:339.)

(Right) The first page of the  
Catechismus  
in Latin and Vietnamese by  
Father Alexandre de Rhodes  
in Vatican, 1651,  
Phan Phát Huân,  
*The History of Catholic Church  
in Vietnam*,  
Cứu Thế Tùng Thư,  
Long Beach 2001:118



## Phép giảng tám ngày

Ngày thứ nhất.

<sup>a</sup> **T**a cầu cữ đức Chúa  
 blời giúp sức cho  
 ta biết rõ tư-ương đáo  
 Chúa là như-ấy nào  
<sup>b</sup> vì đậy ta phải hay ó-  
 thể này chảng có ai sớ-  
<sup>c</sup> lầu; <sup>c</sup> vì chưng kể  
 đến bảy tám mươi rưởi  
<sup>d</sup> chảng cò nhều. <sup>d</sup> vì  
 đậy ta nên tìm đàng  
 nào cho ta được sớ-  
<sup>e</sup> lầu. <sup>e</sup> là kiem hàng sớ-  
<sup>f</sup> đậy: <sup>f</sup> thật là việ người cuen  
<sup>g</sup> rú. <sup>g</sup> khác phép thể  
 gian này, dù mà làm  
 cho người được phú-  
<sup>h</sup> quý: <sup>h</sup> sớ-  
 được cho ta ngày sáu

## ☐ BỐN ĐẶC TÍNH – FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

Vietnamese is a tonal language in the Austro-Asiatic family spoken by approximately eighty-two million in the country and more than three million others abroad. There are four characteristics of the Vietnamese language:

### 1. ĐƠN ÂM TIẾT – MONOSYLLABIC ‘một vần là một chữ’:

The Vietnamese language is *phonologically monosyllabic*. Each word – short or long – is implisively articulated as one syllable.

Examples:

a) Short words:           *A!*   *Ê!*   *em*   *ma*   *con*   *công*   *không*

b) Long words:           *buỳnh*   *nguyên*   *khuyñh*   *nguyệtch*

### 2. THANH GIỌNG – TONES ‘dấu nhằm đổi cao độ của thanh và thay đổi nghĩa của chữ’:

Vietnamese has a total of six tones whose order found in alphabetized dictionaries is as follows: *unmarked*, *high rising*, *low falling*, *low rising*, *high broken* and *low broken*. (Words that are phonotactically non-existent are marked with an asterisk).

a) <b>không dấu</b> ( )	<i>ta</i>	<i>tăn</i>	<i>tân</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>tê</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>to</i>
unmarked	<i>tô</i>	<i>tơ</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>tư</i>	<i>ty</i>		
b) <b>dấu sắc</b> ( ´)	<i>tá</i>	<i>tắn</i>	<i>tắn</i>	<i>té</i>	<i>tế</i>	<i>tí</i>	<i>tó</i>
high rising	<i>tố</i>	<i>tớ</i>	<i>tú</i>	<i>tứ</i>	<i>tý</i>		
c) <b>dấu huyền</b> ( `)	<i>tà</i>	<i>tần</i>	<i>tần</i>	<i>tè</i>	<i>tề</i>	<i>tì</i>	<i>tò</i>
low falling	<i>tồ</i>	<i>tờ</i>	<i>tù</i>	<i>từ</i>	<i>tỳ</i>		
d) <b>dấu hỏi</b> ( ?)	<i>tả</i>	<i>tắn</i>	<i>tắn</i>	<i>tẻ</i>	<i>tể</i>	<i>tỉ</i>	<i>tỏ</i>
low rising	<i>tở</i>	<i>tở</i>	<i>tủ</i>	<i>tử</i>	<i>tỷ</i>		
e) <b>dấu ngã</b> ( ̃)	<i>tã</i>	<i>tắ̃n*</i>	<i>tắ̃n*</i>	<i>tẻ̃*</i>	<i>tể̃*</i>	<i>tỉ̃</i>	<i>tỏ̃*</i>
high broken	<i>tở̃*</i>	<i>tở̃*</i>	<i>tủ̃*</i>	<i>tử̃*</i>	<i>tỷ̃*</i>		
g) <b>dấu nặng</b> ( ˙)	<i>tạ</i>	<i>tặn</i>	<i>tặn</i>	<i>tẹ</i>	<i>tệ</i>	<i>tị</i>	<i>tọ</i>
low broken	<i>tộ</i>	<i>tợ</i>	<i>tụ</i>	<i>tự</i>	<i>tự</i>		

These tonal marks play a crucial part in denoting the meaning of a word. Changing the mark significantly changes the meaning! Here is how these marks affect the meanings:

<b>ba</b>	<b>bá</b>	<b>bà</b>	<b>bả</b>	<b>bã</b>	<b>bạ</b>
(three)	(cling)	(grandma)	(she)	(waste)	(record)
or					
<b>ma</b>	<b>má</b>	<b>mà</b>	<b>mả</b>	<b>mã</b>	<b>mạ</b>
(ghost)	(cheek)	(but)	(grave)	(appearance)	(rice seedling)

### 3. CÁCH THỂ – NON-INFLECTIONAL ‘mỗi chữ có hình thức cố định, đứng riêng rẽ, biểu thị cho một âm & nghĩa nào đó’:

Although the Vietnamese language has been romanized, it has no prefixes or suffixes as do European languages. Everything comes in form of a word, or more specifically, a one-syllable word!

Verb:	<i>đi</i> ‘go’, <i>làm</i> ‘work’
Verb phrase:	<i>đi làm</i> ‘go to work’
Sentence:	<i>Tôi đi làm.</i> ‘I go to work.’
Modals:	<i>đã</i> ‘past tense marker’): <i>Tôi đã đi làm.</i> ‘I <b>already went</b> to work.’ <i>đang</i> ‘progressive marker’): <i>Tôi đang đi làm.</i> ‘I <b>am going</b> to work.’ <i>sẽ</i> ‘will, future marker’): <i>Tôi sẽ đi làm.</i> ‘I <b>will</b> go to work.’
Noun:	<i>việc làm</i> ‘job’, <i>đồ đạc</i> ‘furniture’ <i>sự làm việc</i> ‘working’ <i>sự việc</i> ‘an incident’ <i>bàn</i> ‘table’, <i>ghế</i> ‘chair’ > <i>bàn ghế</i> ‘table and chairs’ <i>nhà</i> ‘house’, <i>cửa</i> ‘door’ > <i>nhà cửa</i> ‘housing’
Adjective:	<i>đẹp</i> ‘pretty’, <i>vui</i> ‘joyful’, <i>khó</i> ‘difficult’, <i>mới</i> ‘new’
Sentence:	<i>Hoa đẹp.</i> ‘Flowers (are) pretty.’ <i>Bộ bàn ghế mới.</i> ‘A new set of table and chairs’
Adverb:	<i>giỏi</i> ‘well’, <i>nhanh chóng</i> ‘quickly’

Nam làm **giỏi**. 'Nam works well.'

Cô ta làm việc **giỏi**. 'She works well.'

Anh ấy làm việc **nhanh chóng**. 'He does the work quickly.'

Preposition: **trong nhà** 'in the house'

**ở nhà** 'at home'

**về mùa hè** 'in summer'

and so on . . .

In other words, Vietnamese does not have any forms like *-ed*, *-ing*, and the plural *-s-es* and so forth.

#### 4. TIỀN VỊ NGỮ – HEAD INITIAL 'chữ chính đứng trước, các chữ bổ nghĩa đứng tiếp theo sau':

Except for cardinal numbers, which always appear before a noun, all other Vietnamese modifiers follow the head-noun they modify. The following examples show how the modifiers of the two languages mirror. The underlined terms are modifiers:

*nhà* 'house'  
*nhà mới* 'new house'  
*nhà mới màu trắng* 'new white house'  
*xe* 'car'  
*xe mới* 'new car'  
*xe mới đắt tiền* 'expensive new car'  
*xe mới đắt tiền màu đỏ* 'red expensive new car'



# Unit One

## THE WRITING SYSTEM

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon finishing with this unit, you will be able to:

- identify the Vietnamese alphabet
- identify the twelve vowel letters of the Vietnamese alphabet
- identify the 17 single and 11 compound initial consonants
- identify the 8 final single and compound consonants

### □ BẢNG MẪU TỰ – THE ALPHABET

Vietnamese basically has **29** letters – **12** single vowel letters and **17** single consonant letters; then **4** additional letters (in frame) are added to transliterate words borrowed from European languages, making the extended alphabet of **33** letters:

<b>Aa</b>	<b>Ăă</b>	<b>Ââ</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>Cc</b>	<b>Dd</b>	<b>Đđ</b>	<b>Ee</b>	<b>Eê</b>	<b>Ff</b>	<b>Gg</b>
<b>Hh</b>	<b>Ii</b>	<b>Jj</b>	<b>Kk</b>	<b>Ll</b>	<b>Mm</b>	<b>Nn</b>	<b>Oo</b>	<b>Ôô</b>	<b>Ơơ</b>	<b>Pp</b>
<b>Qq</b>	<b>Rr</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Tt</b>	<b>Uu</b>	<b>Ưư</b>	<b>Vv</b>	<b>Ww</b>	<b>Xx</b>	<b>Yy</b>	<b>Zz</b>

### □ CHỮ HOA\* – THE CURSIVE FORM

<i>Aa</i>	<i>Ăă</i>	<i>Ââ</i>	<i>Bb</i>	<i>Cc</i>	<i>Dd</i>	<i>Đđ</i>
<i>Ee</i>	<i>Eê</i>	<i>Ff</i>	<i>Gg</i>	<i>Hh</i>	<i>Ii</i>	<i>Jj</i>
<i>k.K</i>	<i>l.L</i>	<i>Mm</i>	<i>Nn</i>	<i>Oo</i>	<i>Ôô</i>	<i>Ơơ</i>
<i>Pp</i>	<i>Qq</i>	<i>Rr</i>	<i>Ss</i>	<i>Tt</i>	<i>Uu</i>	<i>Ưư</i>
<i>Vv</i>	<i>Ww</i>	<i>Xx</i>	<i>Yy</i>	<i>Zz</i>		

\*Capital letters are also called *chữ hoa* ‘flowery character’. *Viết hoa* ‘capitalize’

### PRACTICE 1A

Copy the regular form of the alphabet in the given slots:


## PRACTICE 1B

 Copy the cursive form of the alphabet in the given slots:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The 12 vowel letters are:

**a    ă    â    e    ê    i    o    ô    ơ    u    ư    y**

These 12 vowel letters comprise 11 vowel sounds, as the **i** and **y** are *đồng âm* 'homophones':

[a]    [ʌ]    [ɤ]    [ɛ]    [e]    [i]    [ɔ]    [o]    [ə]    [u]    [ʉ]    [i]

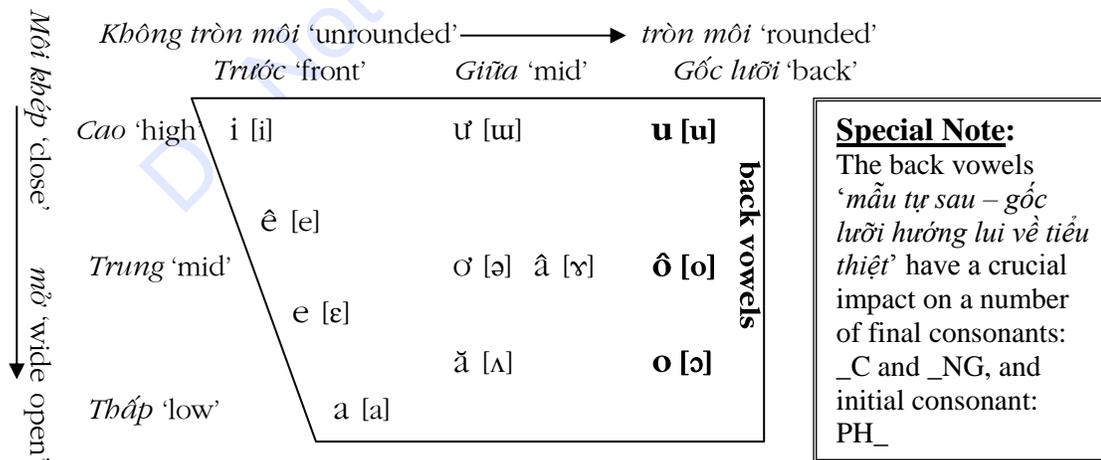
## PRACTICE 1C

 Write these letters, one in the slot below each of them.

a    ă    â    e    ê    i    o    ô    ơ    u    ư    y

\_\_\_\_\_

## ☐ BẢNG CHÍNH ÂM – THE VOWEL SOUNDS CHART



 **Special note:**

The **back vowels O, Ô** and **U** have a crucial impact on a number of final consonants; especially on the final consonant letters \_C and \_NG, and the initial **PH** [f] > [ɸ] in *pho, phô, phu*.

## ☐ CÁC PHỤ TỰ – THE CONSONANT LETTERS

Excluding the four additional letters – **f, j, w,** and **z** – the 17 remaining consonant letters are:

**b c d đ f g h j k l m**  
**n p q r s t v w x z**

### PRACTICE 2A

 Copy the consonantal letters above, one in the blanks below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

There are 11 compound consonant letters; most of them are - *phụ tự ghép* ‘digraph’ or ‘trigraph’ (A *diagraph* hoặc *trigraph* là hai hoặc ba mẫu tự ghép lại với nhau nhưng đọc thành **1** âm: *meat* [mit]; *ghost* [gost], *ghe* [gɛ] nghe [ɲɛ], except **qu** [kw] is a consonantal cluster, called *dyad* (hai mẫu tự ghép và đọc thành **2** âm: > *qua* [kwa:], as in English *quick, queen, quail, ...*):

**ch gh gi kh ng ngh nh ph qu th tr**

### PRACTICE 2B

 Copy the consonantal digraphs above, one in the slot below each of them.

\_\_\_\_\_

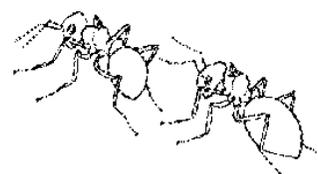
Of the 17 single consonant letters and 11 compound ones, EIGHT can occur finally:

**\_c \_ch \_ng \_nh \_m \_n \_p \_t**

### PRACTICE 2C

 Copy the final consonantal letters in the blanks below.

\_\_\_\_\_



# Unit Two

## LETTERS & SOUNDS

Although the Vietnamese language is highly phonemic, the spelling of a word may be different from its pronunciation. It is a good idea to master the distinction between the letters and the sounds they represent. With a little hard work by the time a learner finishes four units s/he will definitely be able to read **ALL** Vietnamese words!

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon finishing with this unit, you will be able to:

- differentiate the letters and the sounds they represent
- recognize, pronounce, and write the Vietnamese alphabet
- recognize the vowel letters and pronounce the sounds they represent
- recognize and read simple combination of consonant and vowel words
- recognize and read simple combination of consonant-vowel-consonant words
- pronounce words that are consisted of unfamiliar sounds, beginning with consonantal compounds: NG\_, NH\_, TR\_

### PRACTICE 3A



Listen and repeat what you hear. Please take your time to practice the names of these letters in the alphabet. Many of these sounds may not be familiar to you.

<b>Aa</b>	<b>Ăă</b>	<b>Ââ</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>Cc</b>	<b>Dd</b>	<b>Đđ</b>	<b>Ee</b>	<b>Êê</b>	<b>Ff</b>	<b>Gg</b>	<b>Hh</b>
[a]	[ʌ]	[ɤ]	[be]	[se]	[je]	[de]	[e]	[e]	[ef]	[ze]	[hat]
<b>Ii</b>	<b>Jj</b>	<b>Kk</b>	<b>Ll</b>	<b>Mm</b>	<b>Nn</b>	<b>Oo</b>	<b>Ôô</b>	<b>Ơơ</b>	<b>Pp</b>	<b>Qq</b>	<b>Rr</b>
[i]	[zi]	[ka]	[elə]	[emə]	[enə]	[o]	[o]	[ə]	[pe]	[ku]	[erə]
<b>Ss</b>	<b>Tt</b>	<b>Uu</b>	<b>Ưư</b>	<b>Vv</b>	<b>Ww</b>	<b>Xx</b>	<b>Yy*</b>	<b>Zz</b>			
[et]	[te]	[u]	[u]	[ve]	[vedup]	[itsə]	[ijai]	[zed]			

\* Or [i:kret]

### PRACTICE 3B



Write all the pairs of letters of the alphabet above, one in the slot.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ❑ CHÍNH TỰ VÀ CHÍNH ÂM – THE VOWEL LETTERS & SOUNDS

These 12 vowel letters comprise 11 vowel sounds:

<b>a</b>	<b>ă</b>	<b>â</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ê</b>	<b>i, y</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>ô</b>	<b>ơ</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>ư</b>
[a]	[ʌ]	[ɤ]	[ɛ]	[e]	[i]	[o]	[o]	[ə]	[u]	[u]



### NOTES 1:

The two sounds in the frame – **ă** and **â** – are called *âm khuyết* ‘bound vowel sounds’. They **never** ‘không bao giờ’:

- đứng một mình* ‘stand alone by themselves as words’
- đứng cuối chữ* (hay *từ*) ‘occur at the end of any words’.

### PRACTICE 4



Repeat these vowel sounds after the speaker:



<b>a</b>	<b>ă</b>	<b>â</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ê</b>	<b>i, y</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>ô</b>	<b>ơ</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>ư</b>
[a]	[ʌ]	[ɤ]	[ɛ]	[e]	[i]	[o]	[o]	[ə]	[u]	[u]



Write down in the blanks below all the vowel letters in the order in which you heard them:

\_\_\_\_\_



Of these 11 vowel sounds, two are “pains in the neck,” which should be paid more attention: **ă**, **â**. They can only stand either **initially** or **in the middle** of a word. The **ư** requires that you mirthlessly “grin” to pronounce it.

### PRACTICE 5



Repeat these sounds – **ă**, **â**, **ư** – in words:

<b>ă</b>	ăm	ăn	ăng	căn	hăng	tăng	răng	xăng
<b>â</b>	âm	ân	âng	cân	hân	tâng	rân	xân
<b>ư</b>	ưng	bưng	cứng	sưng	hưng	tưng	rưng	xưng

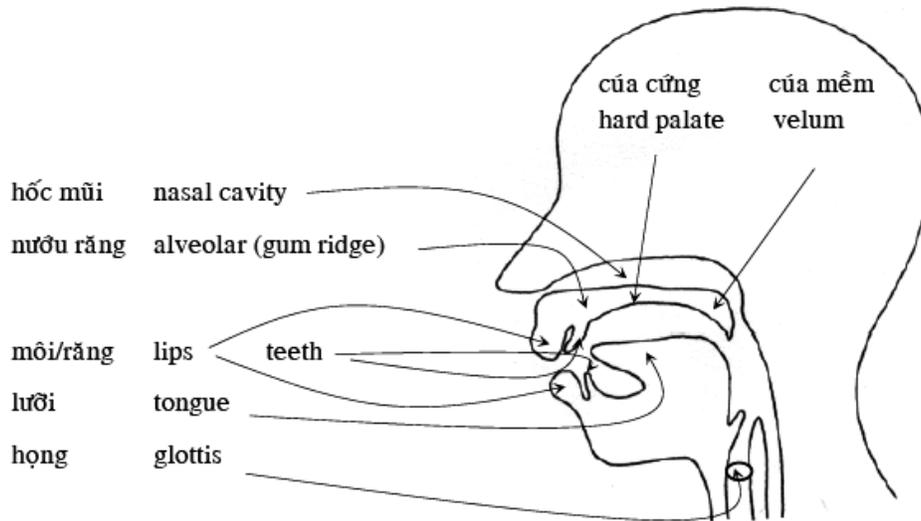


Copy the words in Practice 5 in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ☐ PHỤ TỰ VÀ PHỤ ÂM ĐẦU – THE INTIAL CONSONANT LETTERS & SOUNDS

General terms used for Vietnamese sound system:



The **17** consonant letters and **11** compound ones comprise **23** consonant sounds:

<b>b</b>	<b>c, k</b>	<b>d, gi</b>	<b>đ</b>	<b>g, gh</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>p</b>
[b]	[k]	[j] or [z]	[d]	[g]	[h]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[p]
<b>q, qu</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>v</b>	<b>x</b>				
[kw]	[r]	[ʃ]	[t]	[v]	[s]				
<b>ch</b>	<b>kh</b>	<b>ng, ngh</b>	<b>nh</b>	<b>ph</b>	<b>th</b>	<b>tr</b>			
[ç]	[kʰ]	[ŋ]	[ɲ]	[f, φ]	[tʰ]	[tʃ]			

☐ The bi-labial **b** [b] is the same as English **b** [b]. It can go with all vowels.

**Remember:** All practices with **ă** and **â** like **bă**\_\_ and **bâ**\_\_, ..., which need finals, are for pronunciation purpose only. The *non-phonotactically* 'không đúng phép chính tả' existent words are not spelled out but marked with a hyphen.

### PRACTICE 6



Repeat the **b** [b] in combination with these vowels.

**b**\_   **ba**   **bă**\_\_   **bâ**\_\_   **be**   **bê**   **bi**   **bo**   **bô**   **bơ**   **bu**   **bư**



Write all the words above in the given blank:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Both the velar **c\_** and **k\_** are pronounced [k] but their spelling combinations are different.

**c\_** goes with **a**    **ă**    **â**    -    -    -    **o**    **ô**    **ơ**    **u**    **ư**  
**k\_** goes with **a**    -    -    **e**    **ê**    **i,y**    -    -    -    -    -

### PRACTICE 7

  Repeat these words with **c\_** and **k\_**:

**c\_**    **ca**    **că\_**    **câ\_**    -    -    -    **co**    **cô**    **cơ**    **cu**    **cư**  
**k\_**    **ka-ki** (khaki)    -    **ke**    **kê**    **ki,ky**    -    -    -    -    -

 Write 12 words of your choice above in the given blank:

\_\_\_\_\_

- The palatal **d\_** and **gi\_** are both pronounced [j] as in *young, you*, by majority of Vietnamese (the Central and the South) or [z] as in *zoo, zinc*, by speakers from some parts in the North. They can go with most vowels. Presently efforts to compromise by pronouncing the **d** [z] and the **gi** [j] are under way.

### PRACTICE 8

  Repeat these words with **d\_** and **gi\_** and vowels: **Exception:** *chim gi\** [ʒi:] (name of a bird), *gi'* 'rust, dry nasal mucus'; *gi* [ji:] or [zi:] 'what'.

**d\_**    **da**    **dă\_**    **dâ\_**    **de**    **dê**    **di**    **do**    **dô**    **dơ**    **du**    **dư**  
**gi\_**    **gia**    **giă\_**    **giâ\_**    **gie**    **giê**    **gi\***    **gio**    **giô**    **giơ**    **giu**    **giư**

 Write six words from each line above in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- The alveolar **đ\_** (or a barred **d**) is pronounced like the English **d** [d] as in *do, down, don't*,... It can go with most vowels:

### PRACTICE 9

 Repeat these words with **đ\_**:

**đ\_**    **đa**    **đă\_**    **đâ\_**    **đe**    **dê**    **đi**    **đo**    **dô**    **dơ**    **đu**    **đư**

 Write all the words above in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_



The velar **g\_** and **gh\_** are singly pronounced [g] but their combinations with vowels are different:

**g\_** goes with **a**    **ă**    **â**    -    -    -    **o**    **ô**    **ơ**    **u**    **ư**  
**gh\_** goes with -    -    -    **e**    **ê**    **i**    -    -    -    -    -

### PRACTICE 10

  Repeat these words with **g\_** and **gh\_**. Both are pronounced [g]:

**g\_**    **ga**    **gă\_**    **gâ\_**    -    -    -    **go**    **gô**    **gơ**    **gu**    **gư**  
**gh\_**    -    -    -    **ghe**    **ghê**    **ghi**    -    -    -    -    -

 Write all the words in Practice 10 above in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The glottal **h\_** [h] is exactly like English **h\_** as in *house, home, honk, hiker, ...*, and it can go with all vowels:

### PRACTICE 11

  Repeat these words with **h\_**:

**h\_**    **ha**    **hă\_**    **hâ\_**    **he**    **hê**    **hi, hy**    **ho**    **hô**    **hơ**    **hu**    **hư**

 Write all the words above in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar consonants **l\_**, **m\_**, and **n\_** are universally pronounced the same as those in many European languages, and they can go with all vowels:

### PRACTICE 12

  Repeat these words with **l\_**, **m\_** and **n\_**:

**l\_**    **la**    **lă\_**    **lâ\_**    **le**    **lê**    **li,ly**    **lo**    **lô**    **lơ**    **lu**    **lư**  
**m\_**    **ma**    **mă\_**    **mâ\_**    **me**    **me**    **mi,my**    **mo**    **mô**    **mơ**    **mu**    **mư**  
**n\_**    **na**    **nă\_**    **nâ\_**    **ne**    **nê**    **ni,ny**    **no**    **nô**    **nơ**    **nu**    **nư**



 Select 24 words in Practice 12 above and write them down in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The bi-labial **p\_** is for loan words (mostly from French), scientific and mathematical terms and names of some locations: Pleiku, Pác-bó, Tchepone (Xê-pôn). It usually goes with an **\_h** to comprise *two allophones* ‘biến thái âm vị’:

- a)** [f] (labio-dental) *pha, phã, phâ, phi, phe, phê, phơ, phư* as in **father, fan**, and  
**b)** [ɸ] (bilabial fricative) with back vowels **o, ô** and **u**: *pho, phô, phư*

**PRACTICE 13**

  Repeat these words with **p\_** and **ph\_**:



- p\_** [p] **pan pi (π) Pleiku Plây-cu**
- ph\_** [f] **pha phã phâ phe phê phi - - phơ - phư**
- ph\_** [ɸ] **- - - - - pho phô - phư -**

 Write three words that you find difficult to pronounce in Practice 13 above and write them down in the given blanks.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The **q\_** always goes with a **\_u** creating a diphthong **qu** [k<sub>w</sub>], and it can go with most vowels, except with **u** and **ư**.

**PRACTICE 14**

  Repeat these words with **qu\_** and other vowels. **Quô\_** also needs a final.

- qu\_ qua quã quâ que quê qui, quy - quô quơ - -**

 Copy all the words in Practice 14 above and write them down in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar **r\_** [r] is pronounced plainly with the tongue touching from the mouth roof and slightly dropping down with a vowel. It can go with most vowels.

### PRACTICE 15

 Repeat these words beginning with **r\_**:

**r\_ ra rã\_ rã\_ re rê ri ro rô rơ ru rư**

 Copy all the words in Practice 15 above and in the line below:

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar **s\_** [ʃ] is pronounced like **sh\_** in English as in **she, sheet, machine, ...**

### PRACTICE 16

 Repeat after the speaker these words with **s\_**:

**s\_ sa sã\_ sã\_ se sê si, sy so sô sơ su sư**

 Write all words in the blank below:

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar **t\_** [tʰ] in Vietnamese is like the unarticulated “t” in the **st\_** cluster of English, as in **stay, steal, stamp, ...**. So do not try hard to pronounce it. Just relax. It can go with all other vowel letters:

### PRACTICE 17

 Repeat these words with **t\_**:

**t\_ ta tã\_ tã\_ te tê ti, ty to tô tơ tu tư**

 Write all words in the blank below:

\_\_\_\_\_

The labio-dental **v\_** [v] is very much like English **v** [v] as in **van, vice, vain:**

### PRACTICE 18

  Repeat these words with **v\_**:

**v\_ va vă vâ ve vê vi,vy vo vô vợ vu vư**

 Copy all the words in Practice 18 above in the given blanks.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar, sibilant **x\_** is pronounced like the English **s** [s] as in **sew, sin, seen, ...**

### PRACTICE 19

  Repeat these words with **x\_**:

**x\_ xa xă xâ xe xê xi,xy xo xô xớ xu xư**

\_\_\_\_\_

The palatal **ch\_** [c] is much softer than English **ch\_** for it is more gingival and implosive.

### PRACTICE 20

  Repeat these words with **ch\_**:

**ch\_ cha chă châ che chê chi cho chô chớ chu chư**

 Copy all the words in Practice 20 above in the given blanks below.

\_\_\_\_\_

The velar **kh\_** is like the English **k** [k] or [k<sup>h</sup>] as in **key** but far softer:

### PRACTICE 21

 Repeat after the speaker these words with **kh\_**:

**kh\_ kha khă khâ khe khê khi kho khô khớ khu khư**

 Write all words in the blank below:

\_\_\_\_\_

The velar **ng\_**, **ng\_** share the same pronunciation [ŋ] and their phonotactic constraint is similar to that of **g** and **gh**: **ng\_** with **e, ê, i**; **gh\_** with the rest.

### PRACTICE 22

  Repeat these words with **ng\_** and **ng\_**. Both are pronounced [ŋ].

**ng\_ nga ngă\_ ngâ\_ - - - ngo ngô ngơ ngu ngư**  
**ng\_ - - - nghe nghe nghi - - - -**

 Write all the words in Practice 22 above and write them down in the given blanks.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The palatal **nh\_** is similar to the English **\_ny** [ɲ]– as in **canyon, Kenya**.

### PRACTICE 23

  Repeat these words with **nh\_**:

**nh\_ nha nhă\_ nha\_ nhe nhê nhi nho nhô nơ như như**

\_\_\_\_\_

The alveolar palatal **th\_** is like the aspirated **t<sup>h</sup>** [t<sup>h</sup>] in English **time, tin**, ... but softer.

### PRACTICE 24

  Repeat these words with **th\_**:

**th\_ tha thă\_ thâ\_ the thê thi,thy tho thô thơ thu thư**

 Select six words in 24 above and write them down in the given blanks.

\_\_\_\_\_

The retroflex palatal **tr\_** [ʈ] is typically Vietnamese. Try to make one single sound by curling up your tongue to touch the roof of the mouth as if you were doing the **\_er**

[ə] in **worker, her, herd**, ... and flap down with a [t] on your mind. Remember this is a stop and explosive sound.

### PRACTICE 25

  Repeat these words with **tr\_**:

**tr\_      tra    trã\_\_ trã\_\_    tre    trê    tri    tro    trô    trơ    tru    trư**

 Select six words in Practice 25 above, which you find “difficult” to pronounce, and write them down in the given blanks:

\_\_\_\_\_

The **y\_ [i]** does affect the length of the preceding or following vowel: If it stands before another vowel, it prolongs its follower; if it follows another vowel, it shortens its predecessor and makes itself long.

### PRACTICE 26

  Repeat these words with the **y\_** and **\_y**:

**y\_    yêu [ie:u]    yêm    yên      tay [tai:]    tây    tuy**



 Copy everything you hear in the given blanks below:

\_\_\_\_\_



# Unit Three

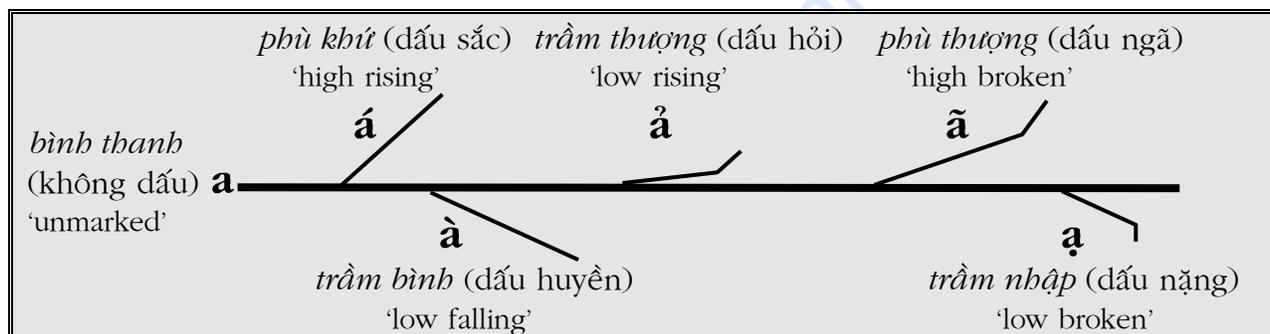
## THE TONES

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon finishing this unit, you will be able to:

- recognize the 5 tones in contrast with the unmarked one
- identify the 5 diacritical marks used with 11 vowel sounds (or 12 letters)
- distinguish the 3 most difficult tones – low rising vs high broken and low broken
- practice and read words with the tones correctly

 Vietnamese has six tones, five of which need diacritical marks. The mark is simply added above or under the primary vowel letter in each word. The dictionary alphabetical sequence is as follows:



Orthographically, all twelve vowel letters receive the tonal marks. Except for **ă** and **a**, others can stand alone.

<b>a</b>	á	à	ả	ã	ạ	<b>ă</b>	ắ	ằ	ẳ	ẵ	ặ
<b>â</b>	ấ	ầ	ẩ	ẫ	ậ	<b>e</b>	é	è	ẻ	ễ	ệ
<b>ê</b>	ế	ề	ể	ễ	ệ	<b>i</b>	í	ì	ỉ	ĩ	ị
<b>o</b>	ó	ò	ỏ	õ	ộ	<b>ô</b>	ố	ồ	ở	ỗ	ộ
<b>ơ</b>	ớ	ờ	ở	ỡ	ợ	<b>u</b>	ú	ù	ủ	ũ	ụ
<b>ư</b>	ứ	ừ	ử	ữ	ự	<b>y</b>	ý	ỳ	ỷ	ỹ	ỵ

Examples:      **ma    má    mà    ả    mã    mạ**  
                     **be    bé    bè    ẻ    bẻ    bệ**

Remember to find the audio file: **03 Practice on Tones** and listen to it. OK?



## PRACTICE 26A



Repeat after the speaker:

<b>a.</b>	ba	bá	bà	bả	bã	bạ
	da	dá	dà	dả	dã	dạ
	đa	đá	đà	đả	đã	đạ
	ga	gá	gà	gả	gã	gạ
	ta	tá	tà	tả	tã	tạ
<b>b.</b>	be	bé	bè	bẻ	bẽ	bẹ
	ghe	ghé	ghè	ghẻ	ghẽ	ghẹ
	me	mé	mè	mẻ	mẽ	mẹ
	re	ré	rè	rẻ	rẽ	rẹ
	xe	xé	xè	xẻ	xẽ	xẹ
<b>c.</b>	chê	ché	chề	chể	chễ	chệ
	hê	hé	hề	hể	hễ	hệ
	nê	né	nề	ne	nễ	nệ
	ghê	ghé	ghề	ghẻ	ghễ	ghẹ
	trê	tré	trề	trể	trễ	trệ
<b>d.</b>	đi	đí	đì	đỉ	đĩ	đị
	nghi	ng hí	ng hì	ng hỉ	ng hĩ	ng hị
	thi	th í	th ì	th ỉ	th ì	th ị
	vi	v í	v ì	v ỉ	v ì	v ị
	xi	x í	x ì	x ỉ	x ì	x ị
<b>e.</b>	đo	đó	đò	đỏ	đồ	độ
	ho	hó	hò	hỏ	hồ	hộ
	ngo	ngó	ngò	ngỏ	ngồ	ngộ
	nhô	nhó	nhò	nhỏ	nhồ	nhộ
	tro	tró	trò	trỏ	trồ	trộ
<b>g.</b>	cô	cố	cồ	cỏ	cỗ	cộ
	đô	đố	đồ	đỏ	đồ	độ
	hô	hố	hồ	hỏ	hồ	hộ
	mô	mố	mồ	mỏ	mỗ	mộ
	rô	rố	rồ	rỏ	rỗ	rộ
<b>h.</b>	bơ	bớ	bờ	bở	bỡ	bợ
	hơ	hớ	hờ	hở	hỡ	hợ
	ngơ	ngớ	ngờ	ngở	ngỡ	ngợ
	quơ	quớ	quờ	quở	quỡ	quợ
	thơ	thớ	thờ	thở	thỡ	thợ

<b>i.</b>	cu	cú	cù	củ	cũ	cụ
	hu	hú	hù	hủ	hũ	hụ
	mu	mú	mù	mủ	mũ	mụ
	phu	phú	phù	phủ	phũ	phụ
	tru	trú	trù	trủ	trũ	trụ
<b>k.</b>	chư	chứ	chừ	chử	chữ	chự
	cư	cứ	cừ	cử	cữ	cự
	ngư	ngứ	ngừ	ngử	ngữ	ngự
	thư	thứ	thừ	thử	thữ	thự
	sư	sứ	sừ	sử	sữ	sự
<b>l.</b>	quy	quý	quỳ	quỷ	quỹ	quỵ
	ty	tý	tỳ	tỷ	tỹ	tỵ
	tuy	tuý	tuỳ	tuỷ	tuỹ	tụy

### PRACTICE 26B

 Try to read these lines if you can:

*Ba tá cà chua.* 'Three dozens of tomatoes.'

*Thư từ đi Mỹ.* 'Letters to be sent to America.'

*Hè về nghe ve kêu.* 'In summer (one) hears cicada('s singing.)

*Ồ ó o o ò.* 'Cock-a-doodle-doo.' (An onomatopoeic expression)

*Quả nho đỏ đỏ.* 'A reddish grape.'

*Tập thể dục mỗi sáng.* 'Do exercises every morning.'



# Unit Four

## FINAL CONSONANTS & SOUNDS

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon finishing this unit, you will be able to:

- recognize the eight final consonants and their sounds
- recognize and pronounce the single and compound final consonants
- distinguish the three different sounds of the final letter ‘-C’
- distinguish the three different sounds of the final compound ‘-NG’
- pronounce these final sounds correctly in a variety of combination

Of the 17 single letters and 11 compound ones, only **EIGHT** letters are finals:

**\_c \_ch \_ng \_nh \_m \_n \_p \_t**

And these eight letters comprise **EIGHT** single sounds: [k<sup>ˀ</sup> c<sup>ˀ</sup> ŋ<sup>ˀ</sup> ɲ m n b<sup>ˀ</sup> t<sup>ˀ</sup>] and **TWO** clusters [k<sup>ˀ</sup>p<sup>ˀ</sup>] and [ŋ<sup>ˀ</sup>m n], which end with a [p<sup>ˀ</sup>] or a [m<sup>ˀ</sup>].

<b>_c</b>	<b>_ch</b>	<b>_ng</b>	<b>_nh</b>	<b>_m</b>	<b>_n</b>	<b>_p</b>	<b>_t</b>
[k <sup>ˀ</sup> c <sup>ˀ</sup> k <sup>ˀ</sup> p <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	[c <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	[ŋ <sup>ˀ</sup> ŋ <sup>ˀ</sup> m n]	[ɲ]	[m]	[n]	[b <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	[t <sup>ˀ</sup> ]



### NOTES:

- a) The little sign ( <sup>ˀ</sup> ) after some of the final sounds above indicates non-aspiration.
- b) The final **\_c** and **\_ng** are bilabialized (with lips closed as in final **p** [b] and **m** [m] in English) when they precede by a **back vowel**: **o**, **ô** or **u**, except **oo**.

### PRACTICE 27



Repeat what you hear.

<b>_c</b> [k <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	ác	ấc	ốc	éc	-	-	-	-	-	-	úc
	các	cấc	cốc	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	cúc
	tác	tấc	tốc	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	túc
<b>_c</b> [c <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	-	-	-	-	-	<b>tíc, bic</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>_c</b> [k <sup>ˀ</sup> p <sup>ˀ</sup> ]	-	-	-	-	-	-	óc	ốc	-	úc	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	cóc	cốc	-	cúc	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	tóc	tốc	-	túc	-



Write all the words in the blanks below in three different groups:

[k<sup>ˀ</sup>] \_\_\_\_\_

[cʰ]

[kʰ]

### PRACTICE 27B



Practice these words with final consonant **\_c**. Remember only **two** tonal marks – high rising ( ́ ) and low broken ( ̣ ) – can go in words with the final **\_c**:

/k/	bác	bạc	bắc	bặc	bác	bậ	bực	các	cắc	đác	đắc	gác	
	khác	khắc	mạc	mặc	mực	nắc	nức	nực	tắc	tức	ngạc	ngắc	
	súc	sác	sắc	xác	xúc								
/kʰ/	bóc	bộc	cóc	cộc	góc	học	nóc	khóc	tóc	bốc	bộc	cốc	cộc
	hộc	mốc	nốc	khốc	tốc	xộc	xộc						
	<i>Khắc thắc mắc.</i>			<i>Bắc bực tức.</i>				<i>Hạc khóc lóc.</i>					

□ The final **\_ch** [c] is more fronted than the initial **ch** previously mentioned. To produce this sound correctly, lightly tap the tongue against the gum ridge and say it fast to shorten the preceding vowel.

### PRACTICE 28A



Let's practice words with final **\_ch**. Repeat what you hear.

<b>_ch</b>	<b>ách</b>	-	-	-	<b>ếch</b>	<b>ích</b>	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>cách</b>	-	-	-	<b>kếch</b>	<b>kích</b>	-	-	-	-	-



Write all the words in the blanks below in groups:



### PRACTICE 28B



Repeat what you hear. Like **\_c**, the final **\_ch** follows vowels receiving **two** tonal marks:

bách	bạch	cách	cạch	chách	chạch	hách	hạch
mách	mạch	nách	nạch	ngách	ngạch	vách	vạch
chếch	chịch	kếch	mếch	thếch	tếch	xếch	xịch
chệch	chịch	kệch	kịch	mích	ních	ngệch	ngịch
mịch	nịch	xệch	xịch	vách	vịch	tếch	tịch

bích kích          bịch kịch          chích chịch          trích trích  
*Bích và Tích thích kịch.                      Bích tinh nghịch.*

**PRACTICE 28C**

  Repeat these pairs with **\_c** vs **\_ch** and **\_ch** vs **\_c** with **two** tonal marks:

bác	bách	các	cách	chác	chách	hạc	hách
mạc	mách	nạc	nách	ngác	ngách	vạc	vách
bạch	bạc	cạch	cạc	chách	chác	hách	hác
mạch	mạc	nạch	nạc	ngạch	ngạc	vách	vác

*Mịch bị Bác Trác trách.                      Thạch đi lạch bạch.*

Basically, the final **\_ng** has two main allophones [ŋ] and [ŋ̃m] depending on the preceding vowels. The third allophone is [n] for words containing **oo**, as in *soong, boong*.

<b>_ng</b> [ŋ]	<b>a_</b>	<b>ă_</b>	<b>â_</b>	<b>e_</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>ơ*</b>	-	<b>ư_</b>
<b>_ng</b> [ŋ̃m]	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>o_</b>	<b>ô_</b>	-	<b>u_</b>	-

**PRACTICE 29A**

  Repeat what you hear.

1- <b>_ng</b> [ŋ]	<b>ang</b>	<b>ăng</b>	<b>âng</b>	<b>eng</b>	-	-	-	-	(*)	-	<b>ưng</b>
	<b>tang</b>	<b>tăng</b>	<b>tâng</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>tưng</b>
2- <b>_ng</b> [ŋ̃m]	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>cong</b>	<b>công</b>	-	<b>cung</b>	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>nong</b>	<b>nông</b>	-	<b>nung</b>	-
3- <b>_ng</b> [n]	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>boong, soong</b>	-	-	-	-

 Write all words in the blanks below in two different groups:

1. **\_ng** without closing the lips:

---

2. **\_ng** ending in bilabialization:

---

 **NOTE:** (\*) Vowel **ơ** precedes **\_ng** only in the diphthong **ươ\_** as in *ường, hương, thương, sường, tương, vường*, etc ...

## PRACTICE 29B

  Repeat these words ending with **\_ng**:

báng bắng	bàng bắng	bảng bắng	cảng cắng
chàng chắng	chàng chắng	khàng khắng	khảng khắng
thung lũng	vũng vắng	song sông	xong xống
lóng nhóng	chống trống	lúng túng	lũng củng
boong boong	boong tàu	soong chảo	lòng thông

The final **\_nh** only goes with three vowels: **a, ê** and **i**.

**\_nh** [ɲ]   **anh**   -   -   -   **ênh**   **inh**   -   -   -   -   -

## PRACTICE 30

 Repeat what you hear with **\_nh** [ɲ].

<b>_nh</b> <b>anh</b>	-	-	-	<b>ênh</b> <b>inh</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>manh</b>	-	-	-	<b>mênh</b> <b>minh</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>nanh</b>	-	-	-	<b>nênh</b> <b>ninh</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>thanh</b>	-	-	-	<b>thênh</b> <b>thinh</b>	-	-	-	-	-

 Write all words in the blanks below:

---



---

## PRACTICE 30A

  Practice these words ending with **\_nh**:

bành bạnh	cành cảnh	chánh ngành	mành nành
nhành sánh	tạnh sạnh	chành ngành	manh nạnh
bênh bệnh	kênh kền	lênh đênh	mệnh lệnh
lênh chên	lênh bênh	lênh kên	lênh nghênh
dinh dín	đinh ninh	hinh hỉnh	khinh khỉnh
linh tίν	tình hình	thình linh	xinh xính

The final **\_m** and **\_n** can follow most vowels:

## PRACTICE 31A

  Repeat what you hear.

1. **\_m**   **am**   **ăm**   **âm**   **em**   **êm**   **im**   **om**   **ôm**   **ơ**m   **um**   -  
**tam**   **tăm**   **tâm**   **tem**   **têm**   **tim**   **tom**   **tôm**   **tơ**m   **tum**   -



2. **\_n an an ân en ên in on ôn ơn un ưn  
ban bản bản ben bên bin bon bên bờn bún**

 Write all the words in the blanks below in two groups:

**m** \_\_\_\_\_

**n** \_\_\_\_\_

### PRACTICE 31B

  Repeat these words ending with **\_m**, **\_n**, and **\_m & \_n**; **\_n & \_m**:

châm chậm	lắm bắm	lắm cắm	tham lam
bầm tím	lịm rịm	mủm mỉm	túm tím
lụm cùm	cùm rùm	lom khom	hom hem
mần mặn	phân vân	lợn cợn	lờn vờn
lận đận	văn vắn	lăn nhắn	cần nhắn
bậm trộn	dậm chận	nhằn lắn	cắm phắn
can đắm	ắn trộm	ắn nằn	tôn nghiênm

### PRACTICE 31C

  Repeat these words ending with **\_n** and **\_ng**. Listen and repeat.

can cang	căn cắng	chân chắng	gắn gắng
giản giắng	thán thắng	hắn hắng	man mang
nạn nắng	phắn phắng	quắn quắng	con sông
vun vung	sún súnng	xôn xónng	con công

The final **\_p** is likely to be pronounced [b]. It follows many vowels but it only accepts two tonal marks: the high rising ( ´ ) and the low-broken ( ˘ ).

### PRACTICE 32A

  Repeat what you hear.

**\_p**      **áp**    **ắp**    **áp**    **ép**    ||    **bếp**    **bíp**    **bóp**    **bốp**    **bớp**    **búp**    -  
          **ạp**    **ắp**    **ạp**    **ẹp**    ||    **bẹp**    **bịp**    **bọp**    **bộp**    **bợp**    **bựp**    -

 Write all words in the blanks below in two different groups:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### PRACTICE 32B

  Practice these words ending with **\_p**. Go by the rows, not the columns.

lấp bắp	cập rập	lập cập	bép xép
bẹp nhẹp	lẹp xẹp	chíp chíp	ọp ẹp
lớp bớp	lộp độp	hớp tớp	lớp chớp
lụp chụp	múp míp	lúp búp	lụp xụp

 The final **\_t** is almost the same as the unaspirated English [t] as in **light breakfast**, **light house**. And, like the final **\_p**, the final **\_t** only take the high rising and low broken tonal marks: ( ' or . ).

### PRACTICE 33A

  Let's practice words with final **\_t**. Let's go by the columns, then the rows.

<b>_t + ' </b>	<b>át</b>	<b>ắ</b>	<b>ất</b>	<b>ét</b>	<b>ế</b>	<b>ít</b>	<b>ót</b>	<b>ố</b>	<b>ốt</b>	<b>út</b>	<b>ứ</b>
	<b>bát</b>	<b>bắ</b>	<b>bất</b>	<b>bét</b>	<b>bế</b>	<b>bít</b>	<b>bót</b>	<b>bố</b>	<b>bốt</b>	<b>bút</b>	<b>bứ</b>
<b>_t + . </b>	<b>ạt</b>	<b>ặ</b>	<b>ật</b>	<b>ệt</b>	<b>ệ</b>	<b>ị</b>	<b>ọt</b>	<b>ộ</b>	<b>ộ</b>	<b>ự</b>	<b>ự</b>
	<b>bạt</b>	<b>bặ</b>	<b>bật</b>	<b>bệt</b>	<b>bệ</b>	<b>bị</b>	<b>bọ</b>	<b>bộ</b>	<b>bộ</b>	<b>bự</b>	<b>bứ</b>

 Copy all words in the blanks below in two different groups:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### PRACTICE 33b

  More practice on the final **\_t**:

bát ngát	phát đạ	lát cắt	bắt phạt	lắt nhắt		
hạt mít	bết bát	bất tất	bất nhất	bất chọt		
lẹ	đệt	chết mệ	lệt bệ	độ	ngộ	
ngộ	ngạt	chút chít	chốt chậ	thút thít	sự	sự

*Căn phòng chậ hẹp ngộ ngạt.*

*Ông Tốt làm ăn phát đạ.*



**PRACTICE 33c**



More practice on the final consonants. Listen and repeat.

<u>_c</u>	<u>_t</u>	<u>_n</u>	<u>_ng</u>	<u>_n</u>	<u>_nh</u>	<u>_ng</u>	<u>_nh</u>	<u>_t</u>	<u>_ch</u>
các	cát	can	cang	can	canh	cang	canh	tít	tích
gác	gát	gan	gang	gan	ganh	gang	ganh	tát	tách
méc	mét	măn	măng	min	minh	thang	thanh	cát	cách
héc	hét	tròn	trông	tên	tênh	vàng	vành	sạt	sạch
ghéc	ghét	nhưn	nhưng	xên	xênh	quàng	quành	xịt	xịch

*Thịnh rất vui tính.*

*Anh Trạc cô đơn*

*Nó không làm việc.*

*Anh Mạnh đi thật nhanh.*

*Ngọc và Minh tranh giành.*

*Con nít đánh đu.*

*Canh cá thật ngon.*

*Bánh mì thật giòn.*

*Bánh đó không nhưn.*

**☐ TÓM TẮT VỀ CÁCH ĐÁNH DẤU TRÊN CÁC CHÍNH TỰ – A SUMMARY OF TONAL MARKS ON SINGLE VOWELS + FINAL CONSONANTS**

SINGLE VOWEL LETTERS	MUST BE WITH ( ' or . ) TONE				POSSIBLE WITH ALL SIX TONES			
	-c	-ch	-p	-t	-m	-n	-ng	-nh
a	ac	ach	ap	at	am	an	ang	anh
ă	ăc		ăp	ăt	ăm	ăn	ăng	
â	âc		âp	ât	âm	ân	âng	
e	ec		ep	et	em	en	eng	
ê		êch	êp	êt	êm	ên		ênh
i		ich	ip	it	im	in		inh
o	oc		op	ot	om	on	ong	
ô	ôc		ôp	ôt	ôm	ôn	ông	
ơ			ơp	ơt	ơm	ơn		
u	uc		up	ut	um	un	ung	
ư	ưc			ưt	ưm	ưn	ưng	

**Table 2** – Tonal marks on single vowels and final consonants



*Ái Nam Quan*  
Nam Quan Frontier Pass

# Unit Five

## DYADS – DIPHTHONGS & TRIADS – TRIPHTHONGS

### ◎ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon finishing this unit, you will be able to:

- recognize the dyads and diphthongs, and how they are grouped
- understand the primary and a semi-vowel or secondary vowel in a diphthong
- add tonal marks on diphthongs correctly
- pronounce, recognize diphthongs and write words with dyads

### □ NHỊ HỢP TỰ & NHỊ HỢP ÂM – DYADS & DIPHTHONGS

A diphthong is comprised of two vowel letters called a dyad, one of which is a primary vowel and the other a semi-vowel or secondary vowel, and sometimes, a semi-consonant. When a tonal mark is needed, it is placed **right above** or **under** the **primary** vowel, **not** on the secondary vowel. Vietnamese basically has 29 pairs of dyads comprising 29 diphthongs. For the purpose of spelling and pronunciation, they are divided into **three** main groups:

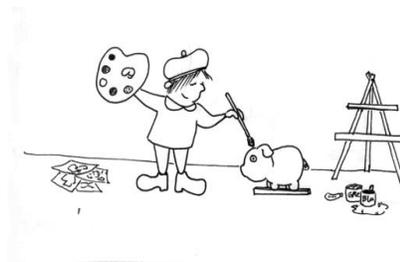
1. **GROUP I** comprises the diphthongs that **never** take a final consonant:

ai	ao	au	ay	âu	ây	eo	êu	ia
iu	oi	ôi	ơ	ua	ui	ư	ử	ừ

Example:

cai    dao    đau    may    sâu    tây    beo    kêu    dịu  
bia    voi    tôi    xôi    thua    sui    mưa    ngủi    sừ

□ In diphthongs of this group the **first** vowels are **primary**, and they do the talking (i.e., they receive the tonal marks). Their followers are secondary. Notice that all the words in the Practices below do not have any final letters. Let's practice some of these diphthongs.



## PRACTICE 34

  Repeat what you hear.

<b>1. ai ay</b>	<b>2. ao au</b>	<b>3. ay ây</b>	<b>4. eo êu</b>
bai bay	bao bau	bay bây	beo bêu
hai hay	hao hau	hay hây	kheo khêu
lai lay	lao lau	ngay ngây	reo rêu
nai nay	phao phau	phay phây	theo thêu
phai phay	rao rau	ray rây	veo vêu
quai quay	sao sau	say sây	treo trêu
sai say	tao tau	tay tây	xeo xêu

## PRACTICE 35a

  Repeat what you hear.

<b>1. iu ui</b>	<b>2. ui ừa</b>	<b>3. iu ừ</b>	<b>4. oi ời</b>
diu dui	cui cừa	chiu chừ	choi chơi
chui chui	chui chừa	hiu hừ	thoi thời
liu lui	trui trừa	thiu thừ	troi trời
thiu thui	sui sừa	siu sừ	xoi xới
<b>5. ời ửi</b>	<b>6. ừa ừ</b>	<b>7. ửi ừ</b>	<b>8. âu êu</b>
cời cửi	cừa cừ	chửi chừ	câu kê
ngời ngửi	chừa chừ	hửi hừ	dâu dêu
khời khửi	khừa khừ	ngửi ngừ	khâu khêu
toi tửi	mừa mừ	gửi gừ	ngâu nghêu
xời xửi	trừa trừ	rửi rừ	râu rêu

To prepare for the addition of tonal marks on the diphthongs, here are some hints to recognize the primary vowels in Vietnamese diphthongs.

In group **I**, all the **first vowels** are primary and the tonal marks should be put **above** or right **underneath** them:

	<b>ai</b>	<b>ao</b>	<b>au</b>	<b>ay</b>	<b>âu</b>	<b>ây</b>	<b>eo</b>	<b>êu</b>	<b>ia</b>	
Example:	<b>cá</b> i	<b>cá</b> o	<b>cá</b> u	<b>cá</b> y	<b>cá</b> u	<b>cá</b> y	<b>ké</b> o	<b>né</b> u	<b>kia</b>	
	<b>câ</b> i	<b>câ</b> o	<b>câ</b> u	<b>câ</b> y	<b>câ</b> u	<b>câ</b> y	<b>kẹ</b> o	<b>đề</b> u	<b>mỉ</b> a	
	<b>iu</b>	<b>oi</b>	<b>ôi</b>	<b>ời</b>	<b>ua</b>	<b>ui</b>	<b>ừa</b>	<b>ửi</b>	<b>ừ</b>	
Example:	<b>đi</b> u	<b>cò</b> i	<b>cộ</b> i	<b>cỏ</b> i	<b>củ</b> a	<b>củ</b> i	<b>củ</b> a	<b>củ</b> i	<b>cự</b> u	
	<b>ch</b> i	<b>m</b> oi	<b>m</b> oi	<b>m</b> oi	<b>m</b> ua	<b>m</b> ui	<b>s</b> ưa	<b>ng</b> ưi	<b>c</b> ưu (trừ	

## PRACTICE 35b



Let's practice words with tonal marks:

<b>1. ai ay</b>	<b>2. ao au</b>	<b>3. ay ây</b>	<b>4. eo êu</b>
bài bày	bào bào	bảy bảy	bèo bêu
gải gảy	gào gàu	giày giầy	kẻo kêu
hãi hẫy	háo háu	háy háy	khèo khêu
lại lạy	láo lấu	ngáy ngáy	rẻo rêu
phải phẩy	ạo ạo	rày rây	vẻo vêu
quái quáy	sáo sáu	sảy sáu	trẻo trêu
<b>5. iu ui</b>	<b>6. uoi ươi</b>	<b>7. iou iu</b>	<b>8. ôi ơi</b>
dội dội	cúi cứa	chịu chửu	chối chới
hủi hửi	lụi lựa	mủi mửu	cối cỏi
chịu chùi	chúi chứa	khúi khứu	cối cỏi
lụi lụi	trúi trừa	thúi thửu	trôi trôi
mủi mửi	rúi rửa	sủi sửu	vội vợi
<b>9. oï ối</b>	<b>10. ươi ườ</b>	<b>11. ối ối</b>	<b>12. âu êu</b>
cối cửi	cửa cửu	cửi cửu	cấu kếu
ngối ngửi	chửa chửu	chửi chửu	dấu dếu
khối khửi	khứa khứu	hửi hửu	khấu khếu
tối tửi	mửa mửu	gửi gửu	ngầu nghêu
xối xửi	trửa trừu	rửi rửu	rấu rếu

**2. GROUP II** comprises diphthongs that **always** need a final consonant. In group **II** the **second vowels** are primary; the tonal marks, therefore, should be above or under them. The digraphs IÊ and OO also need an initial consonant:

<u>iê</u>	<u>oă</u>	<u>oo*</u>	<u>uâ</u>	<u>uô</u>	<u>ươ</u>
-----------	-----------	------------	-----------	-----------	-----------

	<u>iê</u>	<u>oă</u>	<u>oo</u>	<u>uâ</u>	<u>uô</u>	<u>ươ</u>
Example:	chi <u>ế</u> c	o <u>ả</u> ng	so <u>o</u> ng	u <u>â</u> t	u <u>ô</u> n	u <u>ơ</u> n
	bi <u>ê</u> n	ho <u>ả</u> ng	bo <u>o</u> ng	lu <u>â</u> t	mu <u>ô</u> i	h <u>ươ</u> ng
	ti <u>ê</u> n	tho <u>ả</u> ng	to <u>o</u> ng	thu <u>â</u> n	su <u>ô</u> t	th <u>ươ</u> ng



**REMINDER:** Group **II** are of diphthongs that **ALWAYS** need a final consonant.

### PRACTICE 36

  Repeat what you hear.

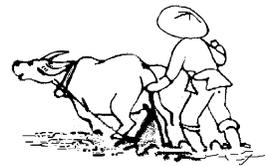
<u>iê</u>	<u>oă</u>	<u>oo</u>	<u>ua</u>	<u>uô</u>	<u>ươ</u>
biết biết	khoăn	boong	khuân	buộc	bước
diêm diệp	hoảng	toong	khuâng	cuộc	được
khiên khiêng	thoăn	soong	lượt	chúc	nước
thiên thiêng	thoảng	goòng	nhuần	chột	sương
việc việt	xoăn		tuần	đuốc	xương

**III. Group III** comprises diphthongs that **optionally** need a final consonant.

oa... oe... uê... uơ... uy...

In group **III** the **second** vowel is primary.

	<b>oa</b>	<b>oe</b>	<b>uê</b>	<b>uơ</b>	<b>uy</b>
Example:	<b>oà</b>	<b>hoè</b>	<b>huế</b>	<b>huơ</b>	<b>huy</b>
	hoà	khoẻ	huệ	thuở	chuy
	hoành	nhoẻn	khuếch	huởn	huỳnh



 **HINTS:** Vowels in group **II** and **III** containing the spelling marks that come after their helpers do the talking. Tonal marks are placed above or below the **second** vowel.

a) Words in group **III** without final consonants:

### PRACTICE 37

  Repeat what you hear.

1. oa hoa loa khoa ngoa thoa xoá thoá xoã
2. oe hoe khoe ngoe toe ngoé khoe xoe toé
3. uê huê thuê khuê huề huế suê huệ thúế
4. uơ huơ thuơ thuở tươ
5. uy chuy khuy suy tuy chủỷ khuỷ suỷ tuy

b) Words in group **III** with final consonants:

### PRACTICE 38

  Repeat what you hear.

1. oa hoăn loạn hoảng khoác khoảng loăng ngoạן
2. oe hoen khoẻn nhoẻn khoét loét ngoém ngoét

3. **\_uê** huệnh chuệch nguếch nguệch tuếch xuênh xuênh  
 4. **\_uơ** huồn huồn huột nguơn  
 5. **\_uy** buýt huỳnh khuỳnh khuỷnh suýt suýt tuyết

### ☐ TÓM TẮT VỀ NHỊ HỢP TỰ – A SUMMARY OF THE DIGRAPHS

NHỊ HỢP TỰ/ÂM – DIGRAPHS/DIPHTHONGS												
→	_a	_ă	_â	_e	_ê	_i	_o	_ô	_ơ	_u	_ư	_y
a_						ai	ao			au		ay
ă_												
â_												
e_												
ê_												
i_												
o_												
ô_												
ơ_												
u_												
ư_												

**Table 3** – Diphthongs. **Note:** Please complete the chart with diphthongs and practice pronouncing them.

### ☐ TAM HỢP TỰ VÀ TAM HỢP ÂM – TRIGRAPHS & TRIPHTHONGS

Vietnamese has approximately 12 triphthongs, of which one always needs a final letter (in frame). The triphthongs are:

<b>iêu</b>	<b>oai</b>	<b>oao</b>	<b>oay</b>	<b>oao</b>	<b>uây</b>
<b>uôi</b>	<b>uya</b>	<b>uyê</b>	<b>uyu</b>	<b>ươi</b>	<b>ười</b>

 **NOTE:** Some other authors consider these: **uau, uâu** as triphthongs, which you won't find in this book because the first “u” belong the “q”: **qu+au, qu+âu**. Not: q+uau.

### PRACTICE 39

  Repeat what you hear.

- iêu** chiều diều điệu hiểu kiều nhiều thiệu
- oai** choai hoai hoài ngoài ngoài ngoài xoay
- oao** ngoao ngoáo quào

4. **o eo**    khoèo    ngoeo    ngoéo    ngoèo    ngoỏo    ngoọo
5. **o ay**    hoay    hoáy    xoay    xoáy
6. **u ya**    khuya    (the only word that has this triphthong)
7. **uây**    khuáy    nguây    nguáy    nguậy
8. **uyê\_\_**    chuyện    duyên    nguyên    nguyên    nguyệt    nhuyển    thuyên
9. **uyu**    khuỷu    khuyu
10. **uôi**    cuội    nguội    muôi    muối    nuôi    xuôi    xui
11. **ười**    bươi    cười    mười    mười    người    tươi    sười
12. **ườu**    bườu    hườu    mườu

## □ NGUYÊN ÂM VÀ BÁN ÂM TRONG MỘT TAM HỢP TỰ – PRIMARY AND SEMI-VOWELS IN A TRIGRAPH

Except for the two trigraphs in frame – **uya** and **uyê** – **all the middle vowels** in the trigraphs are primary.

<b>iêu</b>	<b>oai</b>	<b>oao</b>	<b>aoy</b>	<b>o eo</b>	<b>uây</b>
<b>uôi</b>	<b>uya</b>	<b>uyê</b>	<b>uyu</b>	<b>ười</b>	<b>ườu</b>

Example:

chiêu    chiêu    khoeo    khoèo    ngoai    ngoài    xoay    xoáy    khuây    khuấy  
 nguyên    nguyên    khuyu    khuỷu    nguôi    nguội    người    người    hườu    hườu

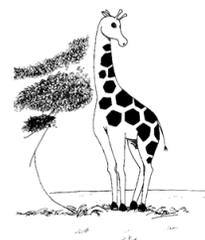
**NOTE:** In two triphthongs – **uya** and **uyê**, the final vowels are primary. Vietnamese has just one word with the triphthong **uya**: **khuya** ‘midnight’ which never needs a tonal mark. The second **uyê** always need a final

**uyê**    luyến    nguyên    nguyên    Nguyễn    nguyệt    nguyệt    quyển

### PRACTICE 40

 Copy the words into the slots right below each of them.

chiêu	khoèo	ngoài	xoáy	khuya	khuáy
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
nguyệt	khuỷu	nguội	người	hườu	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	



❑ TÓM TẮT VỀ TAM HỢP TỰ – A SUMMARY OF TRIGRAPHS/TRIPHTHONGS

TAM HỢP TỰ/ÂM – TRIGRAPHS/TRIPHTHONGS							
↓	iê_	oa_	oe_	uâ_	uô_	uy_	ưỡ_
_a						uya	
_ê							
_i							
_o							
_u							
_ữ							
_y							

Table – 4 Tam hợp âm tiếng Việt ‘Vietnamese triphthongs’

**PRACTICE 41**

 Fill in the blanks in the chart above, then write all of the triphthongs on the lines below:

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE 42**

  Listen to the speaker and add the tonal marks on these words that contain diphthongs of group **I**.

Follow the hints in English to give correct meanings of the unmarked words in the same order as the given Vietnamese words. (See **Practice 48** for all answers from **42** to **47**):

- *comb, be fond of, color, this, head, bleach, candy, funny, there;*
- *mild, ask, urge, invite, season, nose, choose, smell, help*

chai hao mau nay đầu tây keo râu kia  
 diu hoi hôi mới mua mui lựa người cứu

**PRACTICE 43**

  Add the tonal marks on these words of Group **II**. Please refer to Practice 48 for full answers. Follow the hints in English to give correct meanings of the unmarked Vietnamese words of the same order:

- *exhausted, crooked or hooked, to throw, pants, spoon, often*

kiết khoằm quăng quân muông thương

### PRACTICE 44

  Listen and add the tonal marks on these words of Group **III**. Please refer to Practice 48 for full answers. Follow the hints in English to give correct meanings of the unmarked Vietnamese words:

- *disaster, well, tax, the time, depending*

hoa      khoe      thuê      thươ      tuy

### PRACTICE 45

  Listen and add the tonal marks on these words of Group **III**. Please refer to Practice 48 for full answers. Follow the hints in English to give correct meanings of the unmarked Vietnamese words:

- *put on a coat, bore (a hole), develop, leisurely, a surname;*

- *postpone, begin to smile, empty, variant of nguyên 'original', sound of someone running*

khoac      khoet      khuêch      huôn      Huynh  
hoan      nhoen      tuêch      ngưon      huych



### PRACTICE 46

  Listen and add the tonal marks on these words. The English equivalents are in the same order as the given Vietnamese words:

- *gift, broad, distance, trellis, to solve; to reduce,*

- *cripple, to sweep, to strike (a match), cinnamon, to crush to a pulp, to spread or stain;*

- *angry, outside or mother's side, very fine (flour), the moon, printed story, boat*

qua      quang      quang      gian      giai      giam  
que      quet      quet      quê      quêt      quêt  
giân      ngoai      nhuyên      nguyet      truyền      thuyên

### PRACTICE 47

  Listen and add the tonal marks on these words. Please refer to Practice 48 for full answers. Follow the hints in English to give correct meanings of the unmarked Vietnamese words:

- *math, line, to swear, group, a thing, a cold, fever, sick*

- *language, teaching, work or job, factory, workshop, to take, bland, free (time)*

toan      tuyên      nguyên      đoan      cai      cam      sốt      bênh  
tiêng      giao      viêc      hang      xương      lây      nhat      ranh

## PRACTICE 48

 Answers to **Practices 42 to 47**. Play these files again and repeat after the speaker.

- (42) chải háo màu này đầu tẩy kẹo tếu kìa  
dịu hỏi hỏi mời mùa mũi lựa người cứu
- (43) kiệt khoảm quẳng quần muống thường
- (44) hoạ khoẻ thuế thưở tuỳ
- (45) khoác hoét khuếch huởn huỳnh  
hoãn nhoẻn tuếch nguyên huých
- (46) quà quẳng quẳng giàn giải giảm  
què quết quẹt quế quết quệt  
giận ngoại nhuyễn nguyệt truyện thuyền
- (47) toán tuyến nguyệt đoàn cái cảm sốt bệnh  
tiếng giáo việc hăng xướng lấy nhạt rảnh



## PRACTICE 49

 Let's practice pronouncing these words with diphthongs or triphthongs:

1. hoá khoa báo tôi tối sáu tối thứ sáu *báo khoa hoá*
2. lỗi nói oanh việt hỏi với oanh hỏi việt *việt nói với oanh*
3. mai cửa khoẻ người cười tiệm tiệm cửa mai *người khoẻ cười*
4. biết việc được liên kiếm nguyệt nguyệt biết liên *Liên kiếm được việc*
5. tay quay xoay mười vai hương mười quay tay *hương xoay người*
6. khoả khoả giải ngoại khoả tường ngoại khoẻ khoả *tường khuấy khoả*
7. huỳnh suyễn nổi uể oải nguyên nguyên nổi suyễn *huỳnh uể oải*
8. tương hoà giải vời thuyết tuyệt thuyết hoà giải *tương tuyệt vời*
9. viên kiệm quyền toàn tiết chuyên viên toàn quyền *chuyên tiết kiệm*
10. đau tay đầu khuỷu đầu cầu cầu đau đầu *đầu đau khuỷu tay*
11. hoa buổi thoang thoảng hương lâu hương hoa buổi *thoang thoảng lâu*
12. râu thúi thúy ruột thấy sâu thúy thấy sâu *râu thúi ruột*

## PRACTICE 50

 Let's practice pronouncing these phrases.

1. *Ba bà ở quê đi chợ.* 'Three country women go (to) the market.'
2. *Con thương mẹ lắm mẹ ơi.* 'I love you very much, mom.'
3. *Da hồng hào thật dễ thương.* 'The rosy complexion looks so nice.'
4. *Đi đi lại lại trong phòng.* 'Walking back and forth in the room'
5. *Gà con chạy theo gà mẹ.* 'The chicks run after their mother hen.'
6. *Hai tay làm nên sự nghiệp.* 'With two bare hands he has brought the world before him.'
7. *Im lặng là vàng, nói ra là bạc.* 'Silence is gold; talking is silver.'

8. *Không tiền thì phải bó tay.* 'The moneyless person is the weakest.'
9. *Ma cũ bắt nạt ma mới.* 'Old ghosts are bullying new ones.'
10. *Nhà mới trông rất xinh* 'a good-looking new home'
11. *Ong hút nhụy hoa về làm mật.* 'Bees collect nectar for their honey.'
12. *Phải biết dành dụm và tiết kiệm.* 'One'd better be thrifty and save some every month.'
13. *Quãng đường dài hơn mười dặm* 'A distance of more than 20 miles'
14. *Rau trái miền Nam rất nhiều.* Fruit and vegetables are abundant in the South.'
15. *Sáng trưa chiều tối lúc nào cũng được.* 'Morning, noon or afternoon, anytime is possible.'



**Child:** "Mom, What does Viet Nam mean?"

**Mom:** "Viet means 'transcendence'; Nam 'the South'.  
A transcendent people living in the South."

## ❑ TÓM TẮT HỆ THỐNG NGỮ ÂM TIẾNG VIỆT – A SUMMARY OF THE VIETNAMESE SOUND SYSTEM

The Vietnamese language is highly phonemic; however, there are some homophones. Compared to English, Vietnamese has a number of sounds that are unfamiliar to English speakers:

- Initial **ng\_**, **nh\_** and unaspirated **\_**: *ngã, nhỏ, tên*
- Bilabialized **\_c** and **\_ng** when following back vowels: **o, ô** and **u**
- **12** vowel letters comprise of **11** vowel sounds
- **28** single and compound consonantal letters comprise **23** consonant sounds
- Vietnamese final sounds are implosively unaspirated

### 1. PHỤ TỰ VÀ PHỤ ÂM – Consonant Letters and Sounds

- Vietnamese has 17 single and 11 compound consonant letters
- The **d\_** and **gi\_** are homophones. They can be [j] (southerners) or [z] (northerners)
- 11 compound consonant letters are pronounced as single sounds, like *ghost* [gost].
- Terms with final **\_p** [b] only accept two tonal marks—high rising and low broken

**Table 5** – A summary of Vietnamese consonants

Place Manner	Bilabial	Labio- dental	Alveolar	Alveolar- palatal	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Aspirated	p			f (th)				
Unaspirated	b		t d		t̚ (tr)	c (ch)	k̚(k <sup>h</sup> ) k	
Nasal	m		n			ɲ	ŋ	
Trill			r					
Fricative	ɸ	f v	s z	ʃ ʒ			g	h
Approximant						j		
Lateral			l					

### 2. CHÍNH TỰ VÀ CHÍNH ÂM – Vowel Letters & Sounds

- Vietnamese has **12** vowel letters; they comprise **11** sounds for **i** and **y** are homophones.
- All vowels can receive five tonal marks depending on certain combinations.
- Of the **12** vowel letters, **Ă** and **A** are bound: they cannot stand alone and never occur finally.
- Vietnamese has **29** diphthongs. For the purpose of spelling and pronunciation these diphthongs are divided into three groups:
  - 1) group I are diphthongs that *never* need a final;
  - 2) group II are diphthongs that *always* need a final, and
  - 3) group III are diphthongs that *optionally* need a final.

- There are 12 triphthongs, pronounced like a consonant with a diphthong.

**Table 6** – A Summary of The Vietnamese Vowels

Opening levels	Front unrounded	Middle unrounded	Back rounded
1	[i] (bee)	[ɯ] (grinning “u”)	[u] (zoo)
2	[e](bay)		
3		[ə] (come) [ɤ] (rising uh)	[o] (go)
4	[ɛ] (bet)		
5		[ʌ] (Irish ‘but’)	[ɔ] (call)
6		[a] (father)	

### 3. CÁC DẤU THANH – Tonal marks

- Vietnamese has six tones, one of which is unmarked,
- Its musicality requires a little effort of rising and dropping of tones to differentiate the meaning of words,
- The dictionary order of tones and marks are as follows: *không dấu, sắc, huyền, hỏi, ngã, nặng* or unmarked, high rising ( ´ ), low falling ( ` ), low rising ( ˆ ), high broken ( ˘ ), and low broken ( ˙ ) respectively.

**Table 7** – Vietnamese tonal marks

lên giọng (rising tone)		<b>MÁ</b> <b>sắc</b> (high rising)			<b>MÃ</b> <b>ngã</b> (high broken)	
không dấu (unmarked)	<b>MA</b> midlevel					
xuống giọng (dropping tone)			<b>MÀ</b> <b>huyền</b> (low falling)	<b>MẢ</b> <b>hỏi</b> (low rising)		<b>MẠ</b> <b>nặng</b> (low broken)

**Table 8** – A simplified pronunciation chart

<b>a</b> [ah] as in <b>father</b>	<b>b</b> [b] as in <b>beat</b>	<b>ng, ngh</b> [ng] as in <b>doing</b>
<b>ã</b> [u] as in <b>but</b> (stressed)	<b>c, k</b> [k] as in <b>scan</b>	<b>nh</b> [ɲ] as in <b>canyon</b>
<b>â</b> [uh] a rising <b>ơ</b> [uh]	<b>ch</b> [ç] as in <b>chin</b> (soft)	<b>ph</b> [f, ɸ] as in <b>father, photo</b>
<b>e</b> [a] as in <b>man</b>	<b>d, gi</b> [z, j] as in <b>you, zoo</b>	<b>r</b> [r, zh] as in <b>run, rouge</b>
<b>ê</b> [ā] as in <b>cake</b>	<b>đ</b> [d] as in <b>do</b>	<b>qu</b> [kw] as in <b>queen</b>
<b>i, y</b> [i] as in <b>bee</b>	<b>g, gh</b> [g] as in <b>go</b>	<b>t</b> [t] as in <b>stay</b>
<b>o</b> [ô] as in <b>small</b>	<b>h</b> [h] as in <b>home</b>	<b>th</b> [tʰ] as in <b>teen</b>
<b>ô</b> [oh] as in <b>no</b>	<b>kh</b> [k] as in <b>key</b>	<b>tr</b> [tʃ] a palatalized <b>ch</b>
<b>ơ</b> [uh] as in <b>ago</b>	<b>l</b> [l] as in <b>low</b>	<b>v</b> [v] as in <b>van</b>
<b>u</b> [oo] as in <b>zoo</b>	<b>m</b> [m] as in <b>me</b>	<b>s</b> [sh] as in <b>shee</b>
<b>ư</b> [ɯ] a grinning <b>u</b>	<b>n</b> [n] as in <b>no</b>	<b>x</b> [s] as in <b>see</b>

## TEST YOURSELF #1

**Directions:** Read the questions carefully and mark your answer – **a, b** or **c**.

- The Vietnamese alphabet has \_\_\_\_\_ letters.  
a. 28                                      b. 29                                      c. 30
- Which two letters have the same pronunciation when they are spelled out in words?  
a. d gi                                      b. d đ                                      c. d z
- Vietnamese has \_\_\_\_\_ vowel letters?  
a. 13                                      b. 11                                      c. 12
- How many sounds do the Vietnamese vowel letters comprise?  
a. 11                                      b. 12                                      c. 13
- What is special about the letter Y? It is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. a semi-vowel.                      b. pronounced like an “i.”      c. Both **a** and **b** are correct.
- How many single consonant letters does Vietnamese have?  
a. 18                                      b. 19                                      c. 17
- How many compound consonant letters does Vietnamese have?  
a. 12                                      b. 11                                      c. 13
- How many consonant sounds do the 17 single consonant letters and 11 compounds represent?  
a. 23                                      b. 24                                      c. 25
- How many final single and compound consonant letters does Vietnamese have?  
a. seven                                      b. eight                                      c. nine
- Of these final letters and compounds, how many sounds do they comprise?  
a. eight                                      b. six                                      c. seven
- Which four of the final letters of the Vietnamese language take only two tonal marks?  
a. \_c \_ch \_m \_t                      b. \_c \_ch \_p \_n                      c. \_c \_ch \_p \_t
- How many groups are Vietnamese diphthongs comprised of?  
a. three                                      b. two                                      c. four
- In a diphthong, do both vowels receive a tonal mark?  
a. Yes                                      b. No                                      c. Yes and No
- Select the group of diphthongs that **ALWAYS** needs final consonants.  
a. oa ay ui iu ao ây                      b. oa oe uy uê ươ                      c. ươ uâ oă iê oo
- How many triphthongs does Vietnamese have?  
a. ten                                      b. nine                                      c. twelve

16. Where are the tonal marks placed on most triphthongs?  
 a. in the middle vowel      b. on the middle vowel  
 c. on the last vowel of a triphthong
17. There is only one triphthong that exists in the word “midnight.” It is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. uyê                              b. uya                              c. uyu
18. Add the tonal marks above the primary vowels of the words meaning *to see, want* and *look*:  
 a. thây, muôn, nhìn      b. thay, muoi, nhìn      c. thai, muon nhi
19. Fill in the blanks to complete the word, which means *love*:  
 a. t\_\_ư\_\_ \_\_g      b. \_\_h\_\_ư\_\_ \_\_ \_\_      c. t h \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_g
20. Unscramble these letters to make a short sentence that you can think of.  
 nghiệt tiệp hók qáu \_\_\_\_\_.

## A PROVERB A DAY

