I Can Read Thai

(Book I)

Warne of student

Sumaa Language and Culture Institute

by

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I Can Read Thai (Book I)

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Foreword

I CAN READ THAI (Book I) is prepared as a textbook for a Thai reading course. This book is suitable for use as a part of instruction. However, interested individuals can also use this textbook as a self-study material. In this case, assistance from a native speaker of Thai is recommended during reading aloud practice, to ensure that learners' pronunciation is accurate.

Recognizing the five tones is the key to learning Thai reading and writing. Therefore, this book concentrates on the tone rules along with three classes of consonants. Throughout the twenty-five chapters in this textbook, consonants and vowels are introduced in a systematic manner. Each chapter is accompanied by reading exercises to check learners' understanding of rules and ensure that reading objectives are met.

Certain explanations of rules are tailored for foreigners' ease of understanding. These adjustments do not distort the system of the language and therefore, the rules remain correct.

This book is also used by the Sumaa Language and Culture Institute. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact www.sumaa.net or sumaa48@gmail.com.

Basic Ideas of Reading and Writing Thai

Reading and writing Thai is about the **combination** of a consonant, a vowel, a final consonant (optional), and a tone in a syllable. For example,

There are rules that tell us how to combine these elements.

Basic Ideas of Thai Consonants, Vowels, and Tone Markers.

Consonants (เสียงพยัญชนะ)

There are forty-four letters in the Thai alphabet. However, since some letters represent the same sound, Thai has only twenty-one distinct consonant sounds.

According to the rules of reading and writing Thai, we divide the forty-four letters into three classes which are High Consonants (อักษรสูง), Middle Consonants (อักษรกลาง), and Low Consonants (อักษรต่ำ). These three classes use different rules of tone. Moreover, we can also class the forty-four letters by the place of articulations.

Place of	Velum	F	Palate	Alve	eorus	L	ips	Dental	Glottal
Articulation and	(เพดาน	(6	พดาน	์ (ปุ่ม		(ริม		(ฟัน)	(เส้น
Class of	อ่อน)		ขึ้ง)	เหจื	อก)	ฝีปา	ก)		เสียง)
Consonants			,		,		,		,
High Consonants	/kh/ ใ	/c	า/ นิ	/th/	ព,ฐ	/ph/	M	/s/ ର୍ଗ, ଧ୍ୟ, ମ	
(อักษรสูง)	/h/ ¾					/f/	N		
Middle Consonants	/k/ r	/c	/ ৭	/d/	ด,ฏ	/b/	ป		/?/ 0
(อักษรกลาง)				/dt/	ต,ฏ	/bp/	ป		
Low Consonants	/kh/ คิ,ฆ	/c	า/ ช,ฌ	/th/	ท,กั	/ph/	พ,ภ	/s/ ซี	
(อักษรต่ำ)	/h/ ୧	/y	/ ៗ,លូ		M,M	/f/	W		
	/ŋ/ Ś			/n/	น,ณ	/m/	ม		
				/1/	ର,ଐ	/w/	3		
				/r/	วิ				

Note:

- 1. There are forty-two letters shown in the table, because the letters 1 and P are obsolete.
- 2. Most of the letters that share the same sound are used to write borrowed words which come mostly from Pali and Sanskrit language.
- 3. The term for the place of articulation in this table has been simplified to make it is more friendly for learners who are not used to the technical language of linguistics.

<u>Vowels</u> (สีวิะ)

There are twenty-eight vowel sounds in Thai excluding four syllabic consonants $(\eta, \eta, \eta, \eta, and \eta)$ which inherit the vowel sounds in themselves.

Thai vowels can be placed in many positions.

Positions of Vowels in Thai

Position	Vowel Form	Example
Front Position	/ee/ \-	เก, เค, เง
	/ææ/ Ll-	แก, แค, แง
	/00/	โก, โค,โง
	/ay/ \[\]-	ไก, ไค, ไง
	/ay/ % -	ใก, ใค, ใง
	(I- and I- used to be pronounced differently in the old days.)	(There are only 20 words written with ใ)

/aa/	- 7	กา, คา, งา
/a/	- %	จะ, ฉะ, ดะ
/33/	-0	กอ, คอ, งอ
/ii/	a _	กี, คี, จี
/i/	-	बै, बै, बै
/i/	ଅ -	จี, ฉี, ดี
/uu/	_ ข	กู, คู, งู
/u/	- 9	ବ୍, ଜ୍, ଧ୍
/ii/	7 - 0	กือ, คือ, งือ
/ua/	<u>-</u> J	กัว, คัว, งัว
/am/	<u>-</u> 1	กำ, คำ,งำ
/ua?/	[⊸] ີ່ ວ່າ	จัวะ, ฉัวะ, ดัวะ
/၁၁/	l-0	เกอ, เคอ, เงอ
/aw/	l- ∩	เกา, เคา, เงา
/e/	∖- ॐ	เจะ, เฉะ, เดะ
/æ/	ll −°	แจะ, แฉะ, แดะ
/0/	Ĵ- 彰	โจะ, โฉะ, โดะ
/ɔ/	เ-าะ	เจาะ, เฉาะ, เดาะ
/ə/	l-0°	เจอะ, เฉอะ, เดอะ
/ia/	[-[เกีย, เคีย, เงีย
/ i a/	(-0	เกือ, เคือ, เงือ
/ia?/	ر ا_قائ	เจียะ, เฉียะ, เดียะ
/ia?/	เ-ีอะ	เจือะ, เฉือะ, เดือะ
	/a/ //33/ /ii/ /ii/ /ii/ /uu/ /ui/ /ii/ /ua/ /ua	/a/

Each Thai vowel sound occurs in both long and short forms.

Long Vowels	Short Vowels
-7	-%
f-	్ల°
FF -	ll−\$
Ĩ-	ີ່ - ຈັ
-0	เ-าะ
- -	<u> </u>
_ _ ~	න -
_ qı	-
<u>-</u> 3	-J.s.
เ− อ	l-0°
[- ₆]	ر ا- قامی
เ–ือ	เ–ีอะ

Note:

Vowels $\mathring{-1}$, $\mathring{1}$ -, $\mathring{1}$ - and $\mathring{1}$ -1 are short. However, we can prolong the final sound since each of them contains a final consonant sound.

$$-\hat{1}$$
 is pronounced as /am/ or /- $\frac{3}{4}$ / + /m/

$$l-1$$
 is pronounced as /aw/ or /- $\frac{v}{r}$ + /w/

Nine vowels will change their forms when a final letter applied. The changed vowels are $-\mathfrak{r}$, $-\mathfrak{d}$, and $-\mathfrak{d}$ (only when \mathfrak{d} is the final letter.) For example, \mathfrak{d} + $-\mathfrak{r}$ + \mathfrak{d} does not combine into $\mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{r}\mathfrak{d}$, but $\mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{d}\mathfrak{d}$, meaning "to bite."

<u>Tone Markers and Tone Sounds</u> (วรรณยุกตั้)

There are five tones in Thai, but only four tone markers, because no tone marker is applied for the middle tone. The tone markers are always put above an initial consonant, except when the initial letters are a cluster, in which case we put it above the last consonant of the cluster.

As for the tone sounds, the tone actually applies only to the sound of the vowel, not the consonant.

Final Sounds (เสียงตัวสะกด)

There are eight final sounds in Thai which are /k/, /t/, /p/, / η /, /n/, /m/, /y/, and /w/.

In Thai, most letters can be used as both initial and final letters. For example, the word nnn, the first letter n is an initial letter and the second n is a final letter. Both of the n letters are pronounced with the same sound which is /k/. This kind of final letter is called a regular final consonant.

However, some letters are not pronounced the same when they appear as an initial letter and a final letter. For example, in the word nn, n as an initial letter is pronounced /c/ but as a final letter is pronounced /t/. This kind of final letter is called an irregular final consonant.

Irregular final consonants are usually used in words we borrow from the Pali, Sanskrit, Khmer, and English languages.

The letter ฉ, ฌ, ฝ, ฝ, ท, อ, and ฮ are not used as final consonants.

Open Syllable and Closed Syllable (พยางค์เปิดและพยางค์ปิด)

An open syllable is a syllable that can be prolonged without any obstruction when pronounced. A syllable with a long vowel makes an open syllable. A syllable with a final sound /n/, /m/, /y/, / η / and /w/ is also considered an open syllable. Moreover, a syllable spelled with vowels $-\$ 1, \(\cdot\)-, \(\cdot\)- and \(\cdot\)-1 is considered an open syllable as well.

A closed syllable is the opposite of the open syllable. A closed syllable cannot be prolonged when pronounced. It is combined with a short vowel or with a final sound /k/, /t/, or /p/.

The Tone Rules

The Tone Rules

The key indicators of the tone in the Thai syllable are:

- 1. Classes of consonants (Middle, High or Low Consonant)
- 2. Tone marks (máay ?eek ්, máay thoo ẳ, máay trii ఀ, and máay cattawaa ៎)
- 3. Kinds of syllable (open or closed syllable)

The Tone Rules of Middle Consonants

Tone	Middle Tone	Low Tone	Falling Tone	High Tone	Rising Tone
Kind of Syl.					
Open	กา	ก่า	ก้า	ก๊า	ก๋า
Syllable	No tone mark	් is used for	ំ is used for	៊ី is used for	ਂ is used for
	for middle tone.	low tone.	falling tone.	high tone.	rising tone.
Closed		กะ	กับ	ก๊ะ	There is no
Syllable		110	70		closed syllable
Cylidadio	No written	No tone mark	ి is used for	៊ី is used for	with rising
	form.	for low tone.	falling tone.	high tone.	tone that has
			0,		meaning in
					Thai.

The Tone Rules of High Consonants

Tone	Middle Tone	Low Tone	Falling Tone	High Tone	Rising Tone
Kind of Syl.					
Open		ข่า	ข้า		ขา
Syllable	No written form.	් is used for	ឺis used for	No written form.	No tone mark
		low tone.	falling tone.		for rising tone.
Closed		୩ ୪	There is no		There is no
Syllable	No		closed syllable	No	closed syllable
Cymale 10	written form.	No tone mark	with falling tone	written form.	with rising tone
		for low tone.	that has		that has
			meaning in		meaning in
			Thai.		Thai.

The Tone Rules of Low Consonants

Tone	Middle Tone	Low Tone	Falling Tone	High Tone	Rising Tone
Kind of Syl.					
Open	คา		ค่า	ค้า	
Syllable		No written	்is used for	ैं is used	No written
		form.	falling tone.	for high tone.	form.
Closed Syl.			คาบ	ค้าบ	There is no
(long vowel)					closed syllable
	No written	No written	No tone mark.	ឺis used	with rising tone
	form.	form.		for high tone.	that has
					meaning in
					Thai.
Closed Syl.			ค่ะ	คะ	There is no
(short vowel)			710	7,10	closed syllable
	No written	No written	'is used for	No tone	with rising tone
	form.	form.	falling tone.	mark.	that has
		5			meaning in
		80)		Thai.

In other words, the Middle Consonants in an open syllable, can be written in five forms: without a tone marker, with máay ?èek ं, máay thoo ઁ, máay trii ؒ and máay càttawaa ៎. When a tone marker is not applied, a Middle Consonant is pronounced with the middle tone. With máay ?èek ਂ, a Middle Consonant is pronounced with the low tone. With máay thoo ˇ, a Middle Consonant is pronounced with the falling tone. With máay trii ˇ, a Middle Consonant is pronounced with the high tone. And With máay càttawaa ゼ, a Middle Consonant is pronounced with the rising tone. It is only Middle Consonants that can be written with máay trii ˇ and máay càttawaa ゼ and pronounced with high and rising tones respectively.

As for an open syllable of High Consonants, they can be written in three forms: written without a tone marker, with máay ?eek or with máay thoo . When a tone marker is not applied, a High Consonant is pronounced with the rising tone. With máay ?eek o, a High Consonant is pronounced with the low tone. And with máay thoo o, a High Consonant is pronounced with the falling tone.

Lastly, an open syllable of Low Consonants can be written in three forms: without a tone marker, with máay ?eek and with máay thoo . When a tone marker is not applied, a Low Consonant is pronounced with the middle tone. With máay ?eek a Low Consonant is pronounced with the falling tone. And with máay thoo , a Low Consonant is pronounced with the high tone.

In conclusion, for an open syllable, the middle tone is pronounced with Middle and Low Consonants. The low tone is pronounced with Middle and High Consonants. The falling tone is pronounced with all classes of consonants. The high tone is pronounced with Middle and Low Consonants. And the rising tone is pronounced with Middle and High Consonants.

Considering the occurrence of the tone sound in the open syllable, we can see that the falling tone occurs across all three classes of consonant. By contrast, the middle, low, high and rising tones are occurred in only two classes of consonant.

Middle Tone	Low Tone Falling Tone		High Tone	Rising Tone
	High Con. ข่า	High Con. ข้า		High Con. ขา
Middle Con. กา	Middle Con. ก่า	Middle Con. ก้า	Middle Con. ก๊า	Middle Con. ก๋า
Low Con. คา		Low Con ค่า	Low Con. ค้า	

As for the occurrence of the tone markers, máay ?èek and máay thoo occur with all classes of consonant, while máay trii and máay cattawaa occur with Middle Consonants only.

No Tone	máay ?èek	máay thoo	máay trii	máay càttawaa	
Marker		័	್	<u></u>	
	High Con. ข่า	High Con. ข้า			
Middle Con. กา	Middle Con. ก่า	Middle Con. ก้ำ	Middle Con. ก๊า	Middle con. ก๋า	
Low Con. คา	Low Con. ค่า	Low Con. ค้ำ			

For the closed syllable, máay ?èek is applied only to Low Consonants to make the falling tone. Máay thoo is applied to Middle Consonants to make the falling tone and to Low Consonants to make the high tone. Máay trii is applied only to the Middle Consonants to make the high tone.

There are closed syllables that do not have a tone marker. A closed syllable of Middle and High Consonants without a tone marker inherits the low tone, while the closed syllable of Low Consonants without a tone marker has two categories. Those with the long vowel have the falling tone and those with the short vowel have the high tone.

Tones That are Possible for Closed Syllables

Middle Tone	Low Tone	Falling Tone	High Tone	Rising Tone
	High Con. ขะ			
-	Middle Con. กะ	Middle Con. กั้ะ	Middle Con. ก็ะ	-
		Low Con. ค่ะ	Low con. คะ	
		คาบ	ค้าบ	

Table of Tones

Middle Consonant Class (อักษรกลาง)

กจบปอดตฎฎ (9 ตัว)

Tone	Middle	Low	Falling	High	Rising
Kind of Syl.					
Open	กา	ก่า	ก้า	ก๊า	ก๋า
Syllable	111	11 1	111	11 1	11 1
Closed		กะ	ก้ะ	ก็	
Syllable		שוו	1 192	1192	

High Consonant Class (อักษรสูง)

ขขฉถฐผฝศษสห(11 ตัว)

Tone	Middle	Low	Falling	High	Rising
Kind of Syl.					
Open		ข่า	ข้า		ขา
Syllable		וט	וט		200
Closed		ๆอ		X	2
Syllable		ПФ		20	

Low Consonants (Paired) (อักษรต่ำคู่)

ค ฅ ม ช ฌ ฑ ฒ ท ธ พ ภ ฟ ช ฮ (14 ตัว)

Low Consonants (Unpaired) (อักษรต่ำเดี่ยว)

งนณมยญรลฟัว (10 ตัว)

Tone	Middle	Low	Falling	High	Rising
Kind of Syl					
Open	คา		ค่า	ค้า	
Syllable	711		711	711	
Closed Syl.			คาบ	ค้าบ	
(long vowel)			FI I L	ri i L	
Closed Syl.			6 2	คะ	
(short			FIE	FID	
vowel)					

	สระ					
อา	9 %					
อี	อิ					
อื่อ	อื่					
ବ୍ୟ	ପ୍					
เอ	เอะ					
แอ	แอะ					
โอ	โอะ					
ออ	เอาะ					
เออ	เออะ					
เอีย	เอียะ					
เอื้อ	เอื้อะ					
อัว	อัวะ					
อำ						
เอา						
ไอ						
ใอ						

Lesson 1

Letters ก and จ

with Sara 1 and 3

and the Final Consonant 4

In this lesson we will learn how to read the Middle Consonants 1 and 1 in an open syllable.

As mentioned in the Introduction of this book, there are two kinds of syllables in Thai, open and closed. Whether the syllable is open or closed is the key to identifying the tone of the syllable. An open syllable means a syllable prolonged without any obstruction when pronounced. An open syllable is one with any of these characteristics:

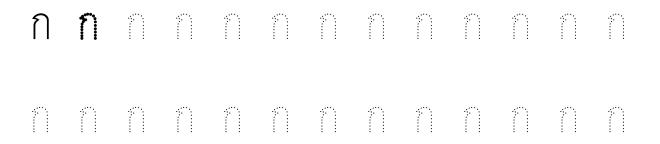
- 1. A syllable with a long vowel without a final consonant.
- 2. A syllable with a final sound /n//m//y// η / or /w/.
- 3. A syllable with one of the vowels ീ, ് ി, റ െ ി.

The long vowels sarà î /aa/, and sarà i/ii/ with the final consonant ¼ will be used in this lesson.

Initial Letters in the Group of Middle Consonants

กัไก่ /kɔɔ kày/

This letter is the /k/ sound. Thai people pronounce it /kɔɔ /with the name /kày/ which means a rooster, so we call this letter / kɔɔ kày/. ñ is a letter in the group of Middle Consonants.



จ จาน /cวว caan/

This letter is the /c/ sound. Thai people pronounce it /c3/ with the name /caan/ which means a plate, so we call this letter /c3 caan/. 9 is a letter in the group of Middle Consonants.



Long Vowels

Sarà 1 /aa/ is a long vowel placed after a consonant.

Sarà ¹ /ii/ is a long vowel placed on top of a consonant. ::::: :::::<u>:</u>:::: :::::<u>:</u> :::::: .::::::::: Read and Write the Combination of an Initial Consonant and a Vowel. กา Tone Markers There are four tone markers in Thai. They are always placed above the initial consonant of the syllable or the last letter of an initial consonant cluster. ไม้เอก/máay ?eek/ ÷ ÷ ไม้โท/máay thoo/ Ç./ Q./

ไม้ตรี/máay trii/ ่

ไม้จัดวา/máay cattawaa/ ்

+ + + + + + + + + + +

Write the Combination of an Initial Consonant, a Vowel, and a Tone Marker

The Tone Rules of Middle Consonants in an Open Syllable

| Open Syllable | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--|--|
| Middle Tone | Low Tone | Falling Tone | High Tone | Rising Tone | | |
| กา / จา | ก่า / จ่า | ก้า / จ้า | ก๊า / จ๊า | ก๋า / จ๋า | | |
| No tone mark | ් is used for | ំis used for | ឺis used for | ਂ is used for | | |
| for middle tone. | low tone. | falling tone. | high tone. | rising tone. | | |

อ่านภาษาไทย (Read Phaasaa Thai)

 กา
 ก่า
 ก้า
 ก้า
 กี
 <th

The Final Consonant 11

ใน หนู /nวว nǔu/

This letter is the /n/ sound. Thai people pronounce it /nɔɔ/ with the name /nuu/ which means a mouse or a rat, so we call this letter/nɔɔ nuu/.

 $\mbox{$\mbox{$\mbox{$\mathcal{U}$}}$ can be used as either an initial consonant or a final consonant. As a final consonant, it has the /n/ sound as well. A syllable which ends with <math display="inline">\mbox{$\mbox{$\mathcal{U}$}$ is an open syllable.}$

Note: 4 as an initial letter is in the Low Consonant class.

| <u>อ่าน</u> | <u>ภาษา`</u> | <u>ไทย</u> | (Read | d Phaasaa Th | ai) | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| กา | ก่า | ก้า | ก๊า | ก๋า | กาน | ก่าน | ก้าน | ก๊าน | ก๋าน |
| กี | ลี | ล้ | ត្ត | ลี่ | กีน | กิ่น | กิ้น | ก็น | กิ๋น |
| จา | จ่า | จ้า | จ๊า | จ๋า | จาน | จ่าน | จ้าน | จ๊าน | จ๋าน |
| <u>ଅ</u> ବ | - ্ব | <i>ع</i> [(و | _{है (} (द | [‡]
ब | จีน | จิ่น | จื้น | ลืบ | จิ๋น |

<u>ฝึกอ่านคำที่มีความหมาย</u> (Practice Reading Words with Meaning)

ก ไก่

| กา | a crow, | ก้าน | a stem | - <u>a</u> | How many? |
|----|----------|------|--------|------------|-----------|
| | a kettle | | | | How much? |

จ จาน

| จาน | a plate | จีน | China, |
|-----|---------|-----|---------|
| | | | Chinese |

<u>นึกอ่านคำหลายพยางค์</u> (Practice Reading Words with Many Syllables) กี่ ก้าน กี่ จาน กากี