

# Norwegian on the Web



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**Norwegian** speech sounds compared to **Chinese**

## Chinese and Norwegian speech sounds compared

Below you will find a comparison between Norwegian (NO) and Chinese (CH) speech sounds, that is consonants, vowels and diphthongs.

### Consonants

The column **Consonant** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian consonant sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Chinese (CH) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the consonants in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian consonant is **quite similar** to the Chinese one
- ~ The Norwegian consonant is **to a certain extent similar** to the Chinese one
- The Norwegian consonant has **no counterpart** in Chinese

Chinese consonants of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Consonant	Norwegian	Chinese	Overlap	Comments
/p/	på	婆	+	
/b/	bind	宾	+	Often classified as CH unaspirated /p/
/t/	ti	替	+	
/d/	di	敌	+	Often classified as CH unaspirated /t/
/t̥/	smart	-	–	
/d̥/	ferdig	-	–	
/k/	kai	开	+	
/g/	god	故	+	Often classified as CH unaspirated /k/
/m/	må	没	+	
/n/	ni	泥	+	
/n̥/	barna	-	–	
/ŋ/	sang	丧	+	
/f/	få	佛	+	
/v/	voll	-	+	
/s/	sa	卅	+	
/ʃ/	skei	谁	+	
/ç/	kinn	信	+	
/j/	ja	亚	+	
/h/	hei	黑	+	
/r/	ro	入	~	“American r”, tongue tip curled up and back
/l/	lin	吝	+	
/l̥/	jarl	-	–	

Below you will find the same data in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian consonant is quite close to the Chinese one
- Grey: The Norwegian consonant overlaps to some degree with the Chinese one
- Black: The Norwegian consonant has no counterpart in Chinese

p	b	t	d	t̥	d̥	k	g	l	l̥	r
m	n	ŋ	ŋ	f	u	s	ʃ	ç	j	h

The speech sounds in black and grey cells are sounds that Chinese-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.

## Vowels

The column **Vowel** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian vowel sounds of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Chinese (CH) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the vowels in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian vowel is **quite similar** to the Chinese one
- ~ The Norwegian vowel is **to a certain extent similar** to the Chinese one
- The Norwegian vowel has **no counterpart** in Chinese

Chinese vowel of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Vowel	Norwegian	Chinese	Overlap	Comments
/i/	bind	揆	~	CH vowel between short and long NO vowel
/i:/	mi	密	+	Final CH vowel is close to long NO vowel
/y/	sky	续	~	CH sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/
/y:/	sky	续	~	CH sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/
/e/	enn	摠	+	
/e:/	sen	-	-	
/ø/	sønn	-	-	
/ø:/	ør	二	~	
/æ/	-		~	CH sound in between NO /æ/ og /ɑ/
/æ:/	sa	卅	~	CH sound in between NO /æ:/ og /ɑ:/
/ɑ/	sann	散	~	CH sound in between NO /æ/ og /ɑ/
/ɑ:/	ta	踏	~	CH sound in between NO /æ:/ og /ɑ:/
/ʉ/	sunn	-	~	CH sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/
/ʉ:/	sju	续	~	CH sound in between NO /y/ og /ʉ/
/u/	vond	-	~	CH vowel between short and long NO vowel
/u:/	do	都	+	Final CH vowel is close to long NO vowel
/o/	sånn	-	~	CH vowel between short and long NO vowel
/o:/	må	没	+	Final CH vowel is close to long NO vowel

In general the duration of Chinese vowels appears to be longer than short Norwegian vowels. In closed syllables the vowel is half long, in open syllables the duration of Chinese vowels is close long Norwegian vowels, cf. words like 密, 都 which appears to be very close to Norwegian "mi, do".

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian vowel is quite close to the Chinese one
- Grey: The Norwegian vowel overlaps to some degree with the Chinese one
- Black: The Norwegian vowel has no counterpart in Chinese

i	e	æ	ɑ	y	ʉ	ø	u	o
i:	e:	æ:	ɑ:	y:	ʉ:	ø:	u:	o:

The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Chinese-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian. Observe that /æ/ and /ɑ/ are two different sounds in Norwegian. The Chinese /ɑ/ is somewhere in between, maybe a little closer to Norwegian /ɑ/.

## Diphthongs

The column **Diphthong** in the table below demonstrates Norwegian diphthongs of Central East Norwegian. Column 2 and 3 show words of Norwegian (NO) and Chinese (CH) that sound similar or quite similar. The words may have different meanings. In these words the diphthongs in question are used. The degree of similarity is indicated by +, ~ or – in the column **Overlap**:

- + The Norwegian diphthong is *quite similar* to the Chinese one
- ~ The Norwegian diphthong is *to a certain extent similar* to the Chinese one
- The Norwegian diphthong has *no counterpart* in Chinese

Chinese diphthongs of the two first categories may be used when speaking Norwegian. Use of the second category implies stronger degree of foreign accent.

Diphthong	Norwegian	Chinese	Overlap	Comments
/ai/	hai	害	~	NO /a/ is more back
/æi/	hei	嘿	~	NO /æ/ is more open
/øy/	høy	-	-	
/æu/	haus	-	-	
/oy/	koie	-	-	
/uy/	hoie	-	-	Rare in NO
/uy/	huie	-	-	Rare in NO

The table above is presented below in a shorter version using colour codes:

- White: The Norwegian diphthong is quite close to the Chinese one
- Grey: The Norwegian diphthong overlaps to some degree with the Chinese one
- Black: The Norwegian diphthong has no counterpart in Chinese

/ai/	/æi/	/øy/	/æu/	/oy/	/uy/	/uy/
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The sounds in black and grey cells are speech sounds that Chinese-speaking students should practice more in order to obtain a proper pronunciation of Norwegian.