

Cantonese is the prestige variety of Yue Chinese, spoken in Hong Kong, Macau, and parts of southern China. It is a tonal language – the Hong Kong and Macau dialects distinguish 6 tones. It is usually written using Chinese characters, but other writing systems exist, including many romanisations (systems using the Latin alphabet).

1. *Central & Western, jūng sāi*

a.

	●	●	·	·	●	·	·
●	·	●	·	·	●	●	·
●	·	·	·	·	●	●	·

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

၁၃

	● ●	● ●	. .	● ●	. .	. .
	● ●	. .	. .	. .	. ●	. .
	. ●	. ●	● .	● ●	● ●	. .

h.

i.

j.

k. 

1.

m. 

	●	●	·	●	·
n.	·	●	·	●	·
	●	·	●	·	●

$$0. \begin{array}{cccccccc} \bullet & \bullet & & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\ & & & & & & & \\ \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & & \bullet & & \bullet & \bullet \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & \bullet & & \bullet & & \bullet & \bullet \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & \bullet & \bullet & & \bullet & & \bullet \end{array}$$

Q 5.2 Using Cantonese Braille, write the Cantonese names of the three districts not in list a–o. Draw one Braille character in each box provided – there may be more boxes than you need. Only draw the raised (larger) dots (e.g. a cell with no raised dots should be left blank).

Q 5.3 The Cantonese name for Macau is written in Braille as $\begin{smallmatrix} \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet \\ \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet & \bullet\bullet \end{smallmatrix}$. How is this written in the romanisation?

Problem 5. Cantonese Braille Answers

For **Q5.1** write the corresponding letter under each item. If the Braille version of the name is not given, draw a cross in the corresponding box.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
o	i	h	×	g	k	e	l	a	c	n	×	b	j	×	m	d	f

District name (English)		District name (Cantonese Braille)										
5.2	Kowloon City											
	Tai Po											
	Wan Chai											

5.3	ou mún
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Maximum 36 pts.

Q 5.1 Max 18. 1 pt per correct box. Note that for 4, 12, and 15, any indication that none of a–o are the answer is acceptable (a cross, a line, etc). A blank box scores 0 pts.

If the student has written 1–15 instead of a–o, do not penalise this. E.g., 15, 9, 8, ... scores full marks.

Q 5.2 Max 14. First, identify which row refers to which district. The three districts (rows) can be given in any order. Do not penalise misspellings of the English names of the districts. If a row does not refer to one of the three districts *Kowloon City*, *Tai Po*, or *Wan Chai*, award 0 pts for that row. Students may have given the Cantonese names: **gáu lùhng sìhng**, **daaih bou**, and **wāan jái** respectively, in which case these should also be accepted (and misspellings tolerated).

For the row referring to *Kowloon City*, award 6 pts for a fully correct solution. Deduct 1 pt per mistake, down to a minimum of zero. A mistake is any of a missing, extra, or incorrect character. NB: two extra/missing dots within a character is a single mistake; that is, mistakes are at the level of characters, not at the level of dots.

For the rows referring to *Tai Po* or *Wan Chai*, award 4 pts for a fully correct solution. Deduct 1 pt per mistake, down to a minimum of zero.

Students should only draw the raised (bold) dots. Thus the third cell of *Wan Chai* should be left blank.

Be fair about dot positioning, and do not expect students to draw dots in perfect grids. However, enforce reasonable differentiation between grid positions. For example, the third characters in *Kowloon City* and *Tai Po* must be clearly distinct.

Q 5.3 Max 4. Award 0 pts if the answer is more than 2 words. Otherwise, for each word, award 2 pts if correct or 1 pt with one mistake. If the answer is only 1 word, compare to **ou**.

Problem 5. Cantonese Braille Commentary

In Cantonese, a syllable consists of three components: an initial consonant (onset), a rime (a vowel and possibly a final consonant), and a tone.

In Cantonese Braille, each of these is a single cell, so every syllable contains exactly 3 cells. In order, these are the onset, rime, tone. If there is no onset, the blank cell is used. Similarly, the high-level tone is marked with a blank cell. Note this means that the same Braille cell can represent multiple different phonemes: for example, the onset **y** and the rime **eu** are both marked by ⠠.

The romanisation used here is a simplified version of the Yale system, one of the most popular among learners of Cantonese. However, the archaic distinction between high-level tones **ā** and high-falling tones **à** has been ignored, and all syllables have been separated with a space.

Initials:

m	n	t	ch	kw	b	d	j	g	s	l	w	y
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠

Rime:

	∅	-i	-u	-m	-n	-ng	-k
aa		⠠		⠠	⠠		
a	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠			⠠
e		⠠					
i				⠠	⠠	⠠	
o			⠠			⠠	
u					⠠	⠠	
eu		⠠					
yu					⠠		

Tone:

ā	á	a	àh	áh	ah
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠

References and further reading:

- Jennie Lam Suk Yin *Confusion of tones in visually-impaired children using Cantonese braille*. 2003. [Link](#).
- Braille (hotglue.me). [Link](#).

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