

Chinese names are ordered differently from the West. The surname comes first and is followed by either a one or two syllable given name. China doesn't operate on 'first name terms' as much as in the West, so don't be surprised if people just tell you their surname. Note the use of 'Nǐ ne?' in the following dialogue, to ask 'And what is your name?'

Dialogue

Wǒ jiào Míng.
Nǐ ne?

Wǒ jiào David
(My name is David)

The Literal Translation

wǒ = I
jiào = to be called

Pronunciation

In the word 'jiào' the 'iao' combination might look intimidating as it is three vowels in a row, but say it as if you are in pain. Try saying 'ow'..... 'ee ow'..... 'jiào'

1st Tone	2nd Tone	3rd Tone	4th Tone	Neutral tone
—	/	∪	\	
a single, constant pitch, almost like you are singing	a rising tone	a dipping tone	an 'angry' tone, abruptly falling in pitch	Neutral tone words are said lightly and without emphasis
		wǒ	jiào	



Extension

Other ways of saying your name:

- 1) Wǒ xìng 'Y' = My surname is 'Y'
- 2) Wǒ shì X. = I am X
- 3) Wǒ de míng zi shì X = My name is X