

# Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

In Putonghua (the spoken form of Modern Standard Chinese) each *zi* is pronounced in one of four tones:

1<sup>st</sup> tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

2<sup>nd</sup> tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high

3<sup>rd</sup> tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high

4<sup>th</sup> tone: 4 = diacritical mark \ pitch: 5 to 1, highest to lowest)

To pronounce each *zi* below, follow its pinyin and the given tone number. Light-sound words, which have no definite pitch, carry no diacritical mark and are marked by 0.

This week: Words about Moses crossing the Red Sea

追

Putonghua pronunciation: *zhui1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *jui1*

Meanings: trace, trail, pursue, seek, chase, recall

追 (radical 辶 = 走 *zou3*, walk/leave) = trail/pursue/chase speedily/persistently. Man 追求 (*zhui1 qiu2* = chases~woos) woman. Disciple 追隨 (*zhui1 sui2* = follows~accompanies) teacher, 追尋 (*zhui1 xun2* = pursues~seeks) religious truth.

Police 追蹤 (*zhui1 zong1* = pursues~trails) suspect, 追問 (*zhui1 wen4* = persistently~questions) witness. Creditors 追債 (*zhui1 zhai4* = chase/demand~debt-payment). Cars on highway 你追我趕 (*ni3 zhui1 wo3 gan3* = you~pursue~I~chase = competed for speed), caused 追尾事故 (*zhui1 wei3 shi4 gu4* = chase~tail-incident = second car, going too fast, hits front car's rear).

Moses led Israelites to leave Egypt. Egyptian army 窮追不捨 (*qiong2 zhui1 bu4 she3* = exhaust~chase~no~abandon = kept chasing). 窮追猛打 (*qiong2 zhui1 meng3 da3* = exhaust~chase~fierce~beat) = persecution without sparing.

by Diana Yue