

Character Builder 您好學? 欣

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:

1st tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

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

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

4th 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 celebrations

欣

Putonghua pronunciation: *xin1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yan1*

Meaning: cheer, glad, joyous, happy

欣 (radical 欠 *qian4*, strain upper-body) means cheerful/glad. Girl wooed by boy feels 欣悦 (*xin1 yue4* = glad-happy). Scholar wins top honor, 欣喜若狂 (*xin1 xi3 ruo4 kuang2* = glad-happy-resemble-mad = is mad with joy), friends feel 欣佩 (*xin1 pei4* = gladness-and-respect), mentor expresses 欣慰之情 (*xin1 wei4 zhi1 qin2* = glad-comforted-'s-feeling = joyous consolation). Violinist wins audience's 欣賞 (*xing1 shang3* = glad-appreciate = admiration), 欣然接受 (*xin1 ran2 jie2 shou4* = glad-ly-takes-accepts) standing ovation.

Invader is defeated, nation 歡欣 (*huan1 xin1* = joy-glad = rejoices), 欣慶 (*xin1 qing4* = gladly-celebrate = feels fortunate) peace is restored. In economic up-swing, industries 欣欣向榮 (*xin1 xin1 xiang4 rong2* = cheerfully-cheerfully-towards-prosperity = pick up growth, prosper).

by Diana Yue