

# 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 accidents

傷

Putonghua pronunciation: *shang 1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *seung 1*

Meanings: injury

Construction workers may have 工傷意外 (*gong1 shang1 yi4 wai4* = work~injury~idea/intention~beyond = injured in accident on work site): 輕傷 (*qing1 shang1* = light/slight~injury), 重傷 (*zhong4 shang1* = heavy/serious~injury), 內傷 (*nei4 shang1* = internal~injury = internal organs injured), 外傷 (*wai4 shang1* = external~injury = skin/flesh/bones injured).

受傷 (*shou4 shang1* = receive~injury) means get injured: 打傷 (*da3 shang1* = beaten~injured), 扭傷 (*niu3 shang1* = twisted~injured), 撞傷 (*zhuang4 shang1* = collided~injured), 刺傷 (*ci4 shang1* = pricked~injured), 燒傷 (*shao1 shang1* = burned~injured). After 傷癒 (*shang1 yu4* = injury~healed), 傷口 (*shang1 kou3* = injury~mouth = wound) leaves 傷疤 (*shang1 ba1* = injury~scar).

“大家小心!” (*da4 jia1 xiao3 xin1* = big~family~little~heart) means “Everyone be careful!”

by Diana Yue