

# Character Builder 您好學嗎?

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 contracts

違

Putonghua pronunciation: *wei2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *wai4*

Meaning: disobey, revert, violate, offend, oppose, opposite, depart from

違 (radical 辵 *chuo4*, walk) means violate: 違反 (*wei2 fan3* = violate-oppose) regulations, 違抗 (*wei2 kang4* = oppose-resist) orders, 違背 (*wei2 bei4* = oppose-revert = go against) one's own conscience. Speaker making 違心之論 (*wei2 xin1 zhi lun4* = against-heart-'s-argument = insincere remarks) doesn't believe himself.

違約 (*wei2 yue1* = violate-contract) = default, Selling 違禁品 (*wei2 jin4 pin3* = violate-ban-objects = illegal goods) is 違法 (*wei2 fa3* = against-the-law), 違紀 (*wei2 ji3* = breach-of-discipline). 違憲 (*wei2 xian4* = violate-the-constitution) = unconstitutional.

Police dismantle 違章建築 (*wei2 zhang1 jian4 zu2* = violate-rules-build-construct = illegal structures). Sheriff imposes curfew: “違者斬!” (*wei2 zhe3 zhan3* = oppose-person-chop = “Whoever ignores/violates it will be beheaded!”)