

Character Builder 您好學? 呀

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 the Manchurian people

Putonghua pronunciation: *lie4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *lip6*

Meaning: hunt, pursue, seize

獵 (radical 犳 = 狗 *gou3*, dog/hound) means hunt. 漁 (radical 氵 = 水 *shui3*, water) means fish/acquire. 滿人 (*Man3 ren2* = Man-people/race = the Manchus/Manchurians) in 東北 (*dong1 bei3* = east-north = NE China) lived by 漁獵 (*yü2 lie4* = fishing-and-hunting) on rivers e.g. Ussuri River, in mountains e.g. Greater and Lesser Khinghan Ranges.

獵人 (*lie4 ren2* = hunt-ers) use 獵刀 (*lie4 dao1* = hunting-knives), 獵鷹 (*lie4 ying1* = hunting-eagles/hawks/falcons), 獵犬 (*lie4 quan3* = hunting-dogs/hounds). 狩獵 (*shou4 lie4* = winter-hunt-hunt) = hunting sport. Manchurians 獵虎 (*lie4 hu3* = hunted-tigers), 獵鹿 (*lie4 lu4* = hunted-deer) in 獵場 (*lie4 chang3* = hunting-grounds).

獵艷 (*lie4 yan4* = hunt-for-beautiful-women), 漁色 (*yü2 se1* = acquire/fish-for-women-with-good-looks) is what womanizers do.

by Diana Yue