

Character Builder 您好學？

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 Tibetan people

崇

Putonghua pronunciation: *chong2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *sung4*

Meaning: lofty, high, elevate, admire, revere, advocate, worship

崇 (radical 山 *shan1*, mountain) = high/elevate: 崇高 (*chong2 gao1* = lofty-high) ideals, 崇敬 (*chong2 jing4* = adore-revere) leader. Tibet has 崇山峻嶺 (*chong2 shan1 jun4 ling3* = high-mountains-steep-ranges). Lamas 地位尊崇 (*di4 wei4 zhun1 chong2* = place-position-supreme-high = have supreme status). Christians 崇奉 (*chong2 feng4* = worship-serve) Jesus, 推崇 (*tui1 chong2* = recommend-praise) his teachings. Priest leads 主日崇拜 (*zhu3 ri4 chong2 bai4* = lord's-day-adore-worship = Sunday worship/service).

Youngsters 崇尚 (*chong2 shang4* = admire-prefer) trendy lifestyle, 崇拜 (*chong2 bai4* = adore-worship) trend-setters. Pragmatist 崇實 (*chong2 shi2* = advocates-practical/realistic attitude), criticizes 崇洋 (*chong2 yang2* = adore-ocean/foreign = worship of foreign people/values), 英雄崇拜 (*ying1 xiong2 chong2 bai4* = fine-male/strong-adore-worship = hero worship).

by Diana Yue