

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:

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 new People's Congress

接

Putonghua pronunciation: *jie1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *jip3*

Meanings: adjacent, touching, continuous, receive, handover, takeover

接 (radical 扌 = 手 *shou3*, hand) = 連接 (*lian2 jie1* = linked~touching), 接受 (*jie1 shou4* = accept~tolerate). Neighboring countries 接壤 (*jie1 rang4* = touch~territories, share borders). Lovers 接吻 (*jie1 wen3* = touch~mouth = kiss). 接近 (*jie1 jin4* = close~near) means approach (verb), nearby/close (adjective). Basketballer 接球 (*jie1 qiu2* = takes/catches~ball). Buses 接送 (*jie1 song4* = take~send = transport) commuters. Host 迎接 (*ying2 jie1* = faces~welcomes/receives) guest. 接機 (*jie1 ji1* = receive~air-plane) = see/welcome someone landing at airport. At 交接 (*jiao1 jie1* = pass-on~accept = handover) ceremony, newcomers 接替 (*jie1 ti4* = takeover-from~replaces) outgoing team. 青黃不接 (*qing1 huang2 bu4 jie1* = green~yellow~no-link = between green/new and yellow/old crops) describes gap/discontinuity between old and new talents/generations.

by Diana Yue