

# 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 China's economic take-off

造

Putonghua pronunciation: *zao4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *jo6*

Meanings: arrive, achieve, construct, produce, create

造 = arrive/achieve: 造訪 (*zao4 fang3* = arrive~visit = visit), 造成 (*zao4 cheng2* = arrive~succeed = cause/achieve), 創造 (*chuang4 zao4* = initiate~make = create). 造化 (*zao4 hua4* = creation~transformation) means wonders of creation or person's luck. 仿造 (*fang3 zao4* = imitate~make) = imitation. 人造絲 (*ren2 zao4 si1* = man-made~silk) = artificial silk. 偽造 (*wei4 zao4* = false~make) = fake/fabrication/forgery.

Chinese economy experienced 改造 (*gai3 zao4* = alter~make = reforms): 造林 (*zao4 lin2* = make~forest = forestation/ reforestation), 造船 (*zao4 chuan2* = make~ship = shipbuilding), 造車 (*zao4 che1* = make~car = car-manufacturing), 建造業 (*jian4 zao4 ye4* = build-make~industry = building/construction).

Brands now boast 中國製造 (*Zhong1 Guo2 zhi4 zao4* = China-produce~make = made in China).

by Diana Yue