

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 younger generation

叛

Putonghua pronunciation: *pan 4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *boon 6*

Meanings: rebel

叛 contains/means 反 (*fan3* = overturn/revolt). 叛逆 (*pan4 ni4* = rebel-counter/disobey) = rebellious. 叛徒 (*pan4 tu2* = rebel-subject = rebels) 策反 (*ce4 fan3* = plan-revolt), lead 叛軍 (*pan4 jun1* = rebel-army), instigate 叛變 (*pan4 bian4* = rebel-change = 叛亂 *pan4 luan4* = rebel/turmoil = rebellion). 叛國罪 (*pan4 guo2 zui4* = rebel-against-state-sin/crime) = treason, 叛黨 (*pan4 dang3* = rebel-party/group/associates) = traitors.

Youngsters show 反叛性 (*fan3 pan4 xing4* = reverse-rebel-nature = rebelliousness by 駁嘴 (*bo2 zui3* = counter-mouth = talking back), 逃學 (*tao2 xue2* = escape-school = playing truant), 離家出走 (*li2 jia1 chu1 zou3* = leave-home-out-run = abandoning home).

Rebellious thinkers/activists 離經叛道 (*li2 jing1 pan4 dao4* = abandon-classics/bible-rebel-against-way/dogma = embrace/preach controversial doctrines).

by Diana Yue