

# 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 attires

褲

Putonghua pronunciation: *ku4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *foo3*

Meanings: trousers, pants, slacks

褲子 (*ku4 zi0* = trousers-diminutive) include 長褲 (*chang2 ku4* = long~pants), 短褲 (*duan3 ku4* = short~pants), 三角褲 (*san1 jiao3 ku4* = three~corner~pants = briefs), 泳褲 (*yong3 ku4* = swim-ming~pants/trunks), Charles Chaplin's 燈籠褲 (*deng1 long2 ku4* = lamp~cage~pants = baggy pants), cowboy's 牛仔褲 (*niu2 zai3 ku4* = cow-boy~denim-trousers).

Girls wear 褲裙 (*ku4 qun2* = pant~skirts), 熱褲 (*re4 ku4* = hot~pants), 襪褲 (*wa4 ku4* = stockings~pants = panty-hoses).

Toddlers wear 開襠褲 (*kai1 dang4 ku4* = open~crotch~trousers with hole for peeing).

Whores 解褲頭 (*jie3 ku4 tou2* = untie~pants~waist = let men fuck them). Coward takes 胯下之辱 (*kua4 xia4 zhi1 ru3* = stride~below~'s~humiliation = crawling under challenger's stride/trousers = outrageous open insult) submissively.