

# 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 warlords

據

Putonghua pronunciation: *jü4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *gui3*

Meanings: depend, occupy, seize, appropriate

據 = dependence/basis. 證據 (*zheng4 jü4* = proof-basis) = evidence. 據聞 (*jü4 wen2* = depend-hear) = according to hearsay, 據說 (*jü4 shuo1* = depend-say) = allegedly. 票據 (*piao4 jü4* = ticket-basis/proof) = bills/receipts etc.

Warlords 佔據 (*zhan4 jü4* = appropriate-occupy = take over) others' territories/properties, 據為己有 (*jü4 wei2 ji3 you3* = took-as-self-own = appropriate them). In chess/warfare, indecisive side 進退失據 (*jin4 tui4 shi1 jü4* = advance-retreat-lose-dependence/basis = makes inconsistent moves).

In ROC-PRC Civil War, national government 據有 (*jü4 you3* = possess-has = held) most resources. Chinese Communists established 據點 (*jü4 dian3* = occupation-points/bases), used 延安 (*Yan2 An1* = Yen'an) as 革命根據地 (*ge2 ming4 gen1 jü4 di4* = change-fate-root-dependence/basis-land = revolutionary base).