

# 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 feeding of the five thousand



Putonghua pronunciation: *yü2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yue4*

Meanings: fish

魚 has radical 氵 (= water, *shui3*). 一尾魚 (*yi1 wei3 yü2* = one-tail~fish) = a fish. 魚米之鄉 (*yü2 mi2 zhi1 xiang1* = fish~rice~'s ~homeland) = areas rich in agriculture and fisheries.

Verb 漁 (*yü2*) = 打魚 (*da3 yü2* = hit/kill~fish) = 捕魚 (*bu4 yü2* = catch~fish) = to fish. 漏網之魚 (*lou4 wang3 zhi1 yü2* = drip~net~'s~fish) describes lucky escapee from trap/persecution. 釣魚 (*diao4 yü2* = hook-up~fish) = angling.

Jesus' disciples were 漁夫 (*yü2 fu1* = fisher~men) in 加利利海 (*jia1 li4 li4 hai3* = "Ga-li-lee"-transliterated~sea = Sea/Lake of Galilee). Jesus told them: I will make you 得人如得魚 (*de2 ren2 ru2 de2 yü2* = get~people~resemble~get~fish = "I will make you fishers of men").