## Character Builder 4





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

 $2^{nd}$  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 The Water Margin



Putonghua pronunciation: bo2, bo1
Cantonese pronunciation: bok6
Meanings: to park, anchor at, stay, lake, marsh

Verb 泊 (bo2, radical ) = 水 shui3, water) means parking/anchoring boat/vehicle. Boat 泊岸 (bo2 an4 = parks-at-shore). 泊位 (bo2 wei4 = park-seat) = car/boat's parking space. Exiles 飄泊 (piao1 bo2 = float/drift-park = drift, staying here and there). Colloquially, 泊碼頭 (bo2 ma3 tou2 = park-at-pile-head = park at wharf) means finding boss/sugar daddy.

Noun 泊 (bo1) means lake: 湖泊 (hu2 bo1 = lake-lake), 沼泊 (zhao3 bo1 = marshes-lakes). Stabbed person lies in 血泊 (xüe3 bo1 = blood-lake = pool of blood). Adjective 泊 (bo2) means quiet as water. Hermit 生活淡泊 (sheng1 huo2 dan4 bo2 = life-living-light/plain-quiet = lives quietly/plainly).

Novel The Water Margin is set in 梁山泊 (*liang2 shan1 bo1* = Liang-Mountain-Marsh) in Shan-dong Province.

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