

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 right and wrong

判

Putonghua pronunciation: *pan4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *poon3*

Meanings: judge, verdict

判 = judge/assess. Examiners 判斷 (*pan4 duan4* = judge~ decide) candidates' proficiency. Doctors 研判 (*yan2 pan4* = study~assess) patient's situation. 錯判 (*cuo4 pan4* = erroneous~ assessment), 冤判 (*yuan1 pan4* = wrongful-judgment) have serious consequences.

裁判官 (*cai2 pan4 guan1* = assess~judge~official = adjudicator/magistrate) 判案 (*pan4 an4* = try/judge~cases). The accused 被判有罪 (*bei4 pan4 you3 zui4* = receive~judgment-has~sin/guilt = is found/pronounced guilty), 判刑 (*pan4 xing2* = judge-pronounce~sentence = is given sentence), 判罰款 (*pan4 fa2 kuan3* = judge-pronounce~punish~money = is fined).

所羅門王 (*suo3 luo2 men2 wang2* = "Solomon"-transliterated-king = King Solomon) 判斷是非 (*pan4 duan4 shi4 fei1* = adjudicated~decided~right-and~wrong). Christians fear 最後審判 (*zui4 hou4 shen3 pan4* = ultimate~last~trial-judgment = the Last Judgment).

by Diana Yue