

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 feeding of the five thousand

飽

Putonghua pronunciation: *bao3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *baau2*

Meanings: satiated, full, satisfied

飽 (radical 食 *sh2*, eat/food) is opposite of 餓 (*e4*, hungry). 吃個飽 (*chi1 ge4 bao3* = eat~a~full) = stuff yourself to the full. 看個飽 (*kan4 ge4 bao3* = look/watch~a~full) = look/watch as much as you want. Having been 餵飽 (*wei34 bao3* = fed-to-the-full), baby 打飽嗝 (*da3 bao3 ge2* = give-out~full-burp = burp with full stomach).

People want 溫飽 (*wen1 bao3* = warm~full = enough clothing/shelter and food = minimal/modest standard of living). 吃不飽 (*chi1 bu4 bao3* = eat~not~full) = not having enough to eat. 飽了 (*bao3 le0* = full-ed) = I'm full.

飽滿 (*bao3 man3* = satiated~full) describes plump cheeks/figure. 飽歷風霜 (*bao3 li4 feng1 shuang1* = fully~experienced-wind-frost) = has had a hard life.