

# 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 Mid-Autumn Festival

懷

Putonghua pronunciation: *huai* 2

Cantonese pronunciation: *wai* 4

Meanings: bosom, contain, reminisce

懷 (radical ↑ = 心 *xin*1, heart) means bosom. Women 懷孕 (*huai*2 *yun*4 = contain~pregnancy = get pregnant). Baby sleeps in 母親懷裡 (*mu*3 *qin*1 *huai*2 *li*3 = mother~parent~bosom~inside = mother's bosom). Teachers 關懷 (*guan*1 *huai*2 = concern/care~bosom = care for) students. Youths 滿懷理想 (*man*3 *huai*2 *li*2 *xiang*3 = full~bosom~ideals = are full of ideals).

懷念 (*huai*2 *nian*4 = bosom~remember) = sentimental reminiscences: 懷鄉 (*huai*2 *xiang*1 = reminisce-homeland = yearn for homeland/hometown), 懷舊 (*huai*2 *jiu*4 = recall/cherish-old/past-things = feel nostalgic). Visitors to ancient sites/battlefields 懷古 (*huai*2 *gu*3 = recall~ancient/historical-events). Paranoiacs 懷疑 (*huai*2 *yi*2 = contain~suspicion = suspect) everyone/everything.

Poets 對月抒懷 (*dui*4 *yue*4 *shu*1 *huai*2 = face~moon~express~bosom = pour out sentimental thoughts to the moon).

by Diana Yue