

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 fox borringw tiger's majesty



Putonghua pronunciation: *mao4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *mo6*

Meanings: emit, rise, defiant, risking, pretend, disguise, assume

冒 (old character for 帽 *mao4*, hat) means burst/emit. Fountain 冒水 (*mao4 shui3* = emits-water). Furnace/angry man 冒火 (*mao4 huo3* = emit~fire = fumes). Diligent worker 冒出頭來 (*mao4 chu1 tou2 lai2* = rise-out-head-come = distinguishes himself). Young nation 冒起 (*mao4 qi3* = emerge-up = rises). 冒著 (*mao4 zhe0* = wear-hat~-ing) means acting against pressure. 冒雨前進 (*mao4 yu3 qian2 jin4* = against-rain-forward-advance) = pressing ahead despite/in the rain. Daring people 冒險 (*mao4 xian3* = despite-danger = take risks), 冒犯權威 (*mao4 fan4 qian2 wei1* = go-against-defy~power-authority = defy/offend authority).

Lackey 冒充 (*mao4 chong1* = pretends-fill = assumes title of) boss, but is 冒牌貨 (*mao4 pai2 huo4* = pretend-brand-goods = a fake).

by Diana Yue