

Character Builder 您好學? 呀

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 hair

型

Putonghua pronunciation: *xing2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *ying4*

Meanings: model, mould, type, form, style

型 (radical 土 *tu3*, earth) = 類型 (*lei4 xing2* = type-form = category-type): 血型 (*xue3 xing2* = blood-type), 模型 (*mo2 xing2* = mould-form) = mould/model, 新型 (*xin1 xing2* = new-model/style), 型號 (*xing2 hao4* = type-number) = machine/garment's model/type. “有型” (*you3 xing2* = has-style) describes stylish/chic person.

Machine-parts manufacturer fine-tunes 鑄造模型 (*zhu4 zao4 mo2 xing2* = cast-make-mould-form = casting model). Hero 樹立典型 (*shu4 li4 dian3 xing2* = tree-stand-classic-style = establishes exemplary model).

髮形師 (*fa3 xing2 shi1* = hair-style/form-master = hairstylist) studies client's 臉型 (*lian3 xing2* = face-shape), suggests 髮型 (*fa3 xing2* = hair/coiffure-style): 直髮 (*zhi2 fa3* = straight-hair), 鬈髮 (*quan2 fa3* = curly-hair), 馬尾 (*ma3 wei3* = horse/pony-tail).

by Diana Yue