

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 islands and atolls

漁

Putonghua pronunciation: *yü2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yue4*

Meaning: fish, fishing, acquire

Verb 漁 (𩺰, water-drops + 魚 *yü2*, fish) = fishing. 漁夫 (*yü2 fu1* = fisher-man) rows 漁舟 (*yü2 zhou1* = fishing-boat/skiff), 釣魚 (*diao4 yü2* = angle-for-fish). 漁民 (*yü2 min2* = fishing-people = fishermen) operate 拖網漁船 (*tuoi wang3 yü2 chuan2* = drag-net-fishing-vessel = trawlers).

漁穫 (*yü2 huo4* = fishing-harvest) = catch. Businessmen 漁利 (*yü2 li4* = fish/catch-profit = reap profit/advantages). Womanizers 漁色 (*yü2 se1* = fish/catch-color = exploit women). 漁業 (*yü2 ye4* = fishing-industry) interests cause clashes in 南中國海 (*Nan2 Zhong1 Guo2 Hai2* = South-China-Sea). Sage warns: 鷸蚌相爭, 漁人得利 (*yü4 bang4 xiang1 zheng1, yü2 ren2 de2 li4*, sandpiper-clam-mutual-fight, fisher-man-takes-advantage = Sandpiper and Clam fight; Fisherman/third-party grabs both!)