

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 moving

運

(radical 辶 = 走 *zou3* = walk)

Putonghua pronunciation: *yun4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *wan6*

Meanings: move, function, convey, transport, fortune

運 means move/function. Planets 運行 (*yun4 xing2* = move~walk = move) in outer-space. Investors 運用 (*yun4 yong4* = move~use = utilize) capital. 運動會 (*yun4 dong4 hui4* = move~motion~meet) = athletics meet. 運輸 (*yun4 shu1* = move~convey = transportation) involves 海運 (*hai3 yun4* = sea~transport), 陸運 (*lu4 yun4* = land~transport), 空運 (*kong1 yun4* = empty/air/sky~transportation = air transport).

搬 (*ban1*) = move/remove site. 搬運公司 (*ban1 yun4 gong1 si1* = move~transport~public~bureau = movers/moving companies) send 貨車 (*huo4 che1* = goods~car = trucks) to help clients 搬家 (*ban1 jia1* = move~home/residence = move house), 運貨 (*yun4 huo4* = transport/deliver~goods).

走私者 (*zou3 si1 zhe3* = run~private~person = smugglers) defy 禁運 (*jin4 yun4* = prohibit~transport = embargo).