

# 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 stockmarket gambling

賭

Putonghua pronunciation: *du3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *do2*

Meanings: bet, gamble, take chances, run risks

賭 = 賭博 (= 賭搏 *du3 bo2* = gamble~wrestle/bet) = gamble. 賭錢 (*du3 qian2* = gamble~money) = play for money. 博奕 (*bo2 yi4* = wrestle~chess) = play chess-game.

賭徒 (*du3 tu2* = gambler~ers) play in 賭場 (*du3 chang3* = gamble~field/enclosure = casinos), 股市 (*gu3 shi4* = stock~market), 匯市 (*hui4 shi4* = currency~market), study “孫子兵法” (*Sun1 Zi3 bing1 fa3* = Sun~zi~soldier/war~method = Sun~zi's The Art of War), 博奕論 (*bo2 yi4 lun4* = wrestle~chess~discuss = game theory).

Gamblers 下錯注 (*xia4 cuo4 zhu4* = down~wrong~stakes = place wrong stakes), 莊家通通殺 (*zhuang1 jia1 tong1 sha1* = controlling~bank~home/side~through~kill = bank takes all).

Truly, 十賭九輸 (*shi2 du3 jiu3 shu1* = among~ten~gamblers~nine~lose).