

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 reunion gatherings

感

Putonghua pronunciation: *gan3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *gam2*

Meanings: feel, sense, emotion, mood, be moved

感 (radical 心 *xin1*, heart) means feel/sense, feeling/sensation. Eyes/nose are 感官 (*gan3 guan1* = sense-organs). Body 感覺 (*gan3 jue2* = feels~senses) cold/warmth. 感冒 (*gan3 mao4* = feel~emerge) = catch influenza.

敏感 (*min2 gan3* = clever/alert~feel) means allergic or sensitive. 多愁善感 (*duo1 chou2 shan4 gan3* = many~sadness~good-at~feel) describes sentimental persons. Artists need 靈感 (*ling2 gan3* = spirit/soul~feel = inspiration).

Husband-and-wife have 感情 (*gan3 qing2* = emotions~love = emotional bond), feel 感動 (*gan3 dong4* = feel~move = moved) at wedding anniversary. Old friends感謝 (*gan3 xie4* = feel~thankful = thank) reunion's organizer, exchange past decade's 感受 (*gan3 shou4* = feel~receive = impressions/revelations), 百感交集 (*bai2 gan3 jiao1 ji2* = hundred~feelings~cross~assemble = are overwhelmed by many mixed feelings).

by Diana Yue