

# 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 assassins



Putonghua pronunciation: *jü3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *lgui2*

Meanings: raise, lift, erect, act, choose, deed, action, elect, enumerate, whole

舉 shows arms raising load: 舉動 (*jü3 dong4* = lifting/gestures~movements), 舉手 (*jü3 shou3* = raise~hands, show of hands), 舉例 (*jü3 li4* = name/give~example). Drinkers 舉杯 (*jü3 bei1* = raise~cups/glasses). Impotent guy 不舉 (*bu4 jü3* = won't~erect). 舉重 (*jü3 zhong4* = lift~heavy) means weight-lifting, but 舉重若輕 (*jü3 zhong4 ruo4 qing1* = lift~heavy~resemble~light) describes competent person performing difficult task with ease. 舉棋不定 (*jü3 qi2 bu4 ding4* = hold-high~chess-piece~can't~decide) describes person hesitating over next move.

Assassin 舉鎗 (*jü3 qiang1* = raises~gun), aims. Revolutionaries 舉事 (*jü3 shi4* = launch~endeavor/attack), 一舉成功 (*yi1 jü3 cheng2 gong1* = one~action~complete~ achievement = succeed after single action), 舉世震驚 (*jü3 shi4 zhen4 jing1* = whole~world~shocked-terrified = stun the world).

by Diana Yue