

Character Builder 您好嗎? 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 translation

誘

Putonghua pronunciation: *you 4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yau 5*

Meanings: guide, advise, entice, attract, lure, tempt, seduce

誘 = 引誘 (*yin3 you4* = lead/guide-lure) = attract/tempt. Perfume has 誘人 (*you4 ren2* = attractive/luring) fragrance. 誘惑 (*you4 hua4* = lure~fascinate = temptation) is hard to resist. Teachers 諄諄善誘 (*chun2 chun2 shan4 you4* = sincerely~sincerely~good/kind~advise = patiently teach/advise students to be good).

Poetry 誘發 (*you4 fa1* = attract~start = stimulates) imagination. Contents/style of original poem 誘導 (*you4 dao3* = guide/prompt~steer) translator as he translates.

Fisherman/hunter uses 誘餌 (*you4 er3* = attract~food = bait/decoy) to 誘捕 (*you4 bu3* = lure~catch) prey. Crooks 誘騙 (*you4 pian4* = lure~deceive), 誘拐 (*you4 guai1* = lure~kidnap), 誘姦 (*you4 jian1* = lure~rape) young girls. Triad gangsters 威逼利誘 (*wei1 bi3 li4 you4* = force~pressurize~benefit~lure = threaten and bribe) accomplices.

by Diana Yue