

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 Victoria Harbour



Putonghua pronunciation: *jing3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *ging2*

Meanings: vista, view, scenery

景 = 景色 (*jing3 se1* = view~colour) = 景觀 (*jing3 guan1* = view~sight) = view: 海景 (*hai3 jing3* = sea~view), 山景 (*shan1 jing3* = mountain/hill~view). 景物 (*jing3 wu4* = view~things) = visible landscape/things.

景點 (*jing3 dian3* = view~spot) = tourist spots. 好風景 (*hao3 feng1 jing3* = good~wind~view) means picturesque landscape. 風景畫 (*feng1 jing3 hua4* = wind~view~drawing/painting) = landscape painting. 實景拍攝 (*shi2 jing3 pai1 she4* = real~view~shoot~take) = filming on site.

景象 (*jing1 xiang4* = view~image) means good/bad social scene. 景氣 (*jing3 qi4* = view~breath/energy) = economic wellness, 不景氣 (*bu4 jing3 qi4* = no~view~breath/energy) = economy slowing down. 良辰美景 (*liang2 chen2 mei3 jing3* = good~hour~lovely~scenery) is time for romance.

by Diana Yue