

Character Builder 您好學？

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 Alzheimer's disease

Putonghua pronunciation: *wang4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *mong5*

Meaning: unreasonable, confused, conceited, preposterous, rash, absurd, deluded

妄 (radical 女 *nü3*, woman) describes 虛妄 (*xū1 wang4* = empty/conceited) words/ideas, 狂妄 (*kuang2 wang4* = mad-conceited = brassy/arrogant) behavior, Sage warns against 妄言 (*wang4 yan2* = conceited-speech), 妄念 (*wang4 nian4* = wild/improper-thoughts), 輕舉妄動 (*qing1 jü3 wang4 dong4* = hasty-gestures-rash-move = indiscreet/rash actions).

妄自尊大 (*wang4 zi4 zun1 da4* = absurdly-self-honor-big = self-conceited/self-centered) person 任意妄為 (*ren4 yi4 wang4 wei2* = allow-intention-unreasonable-do = acts brashly). 妄顧後果 (*wang4 gu4 hou4 guo3* = dismiss-care-for-later-result = is reckless).

阿茲海默氏病 (*a4 zi1 hai3 mo4 shi4 bing4* = "Alzheimer" 's-transliterated-disease = Alzheimer's disease) patients may develop 妄想 (*wang4 xiang3* = unreal-thoughts = delusions), 譫妄 (*zhan1 wang4* = talk-non-stop-deluded = acute confusional state = deliriums).

by Diana Yue