

# 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 corruption

賄

(radical 貝 *bei4* = sea-shell/money)

Putonghua pronunciation: *hui4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *fooi2*

Meanings: money (old meaning), bribe, bribery

賄 = 賄賂 (*hui4 lu4* = money~bribe) = bribing/bribery. 行賄 (*xing2 hui4* = walk/act~bribe = giving bribes) = 輸送利益 (*shu1 song4 li4 yi1* = transport-send~advantage~benefit = giving advantages). 受賄 (*shou4 hui4* = accepting~bribes) = 收受利益 (*shou1 shou4 li4 yi1* = receive~accept~advantage~benefit = accepting advantages).

Mafia operatives 賄選 (*hui4 xuan3* = bribe~elect = buy votes). Electors/voters 收黑錢 (*shou1 hei1 qin3* = accept~black~money = accept graft money).

Police launches 反貪污 (*fan3 tan1 wu1* = reverse-greed-dirty = anti-corruption) actions, applies 防止賄賂條例 (*fang2 zhi3 hui4 lu4 tiao2 li4* = prevent-stop~bribe~bribe-item~rule = Prevention of Bribery Ordinance) to charge 疑犯 (*yi2 fan4* = doubt~commit = suspects) for 貪污 (*tan1 wu1* = greed~dirty = corruption).

by Diana Yue