

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 rejuvenation



Putonghua pronunciation: **chong2, zhong4**

Cantonese pronunciation: **chung4, jung6**

Meaning: again, repeat, double, many, layer, From, since, heavy, serious, important

重 (千 **qian1**, thousand + 里 **li3**, Chinese mile) indicates man walking long distance. 重 (**zhong4**) means 重要 (**zhong4 yao4** = main/serious-important), 重 (**chong2**) means repeat: 重逢 (**chong2 feng2** = again-meet), 重建 (**chong2 jian4** = re-build), 重組 (**chong2 zu3** = re-organize), 重生 (**chong2 sheng1** = again-born = rebirth).

Failed student 重考 (**chong2 kao3** = again-takes-exams). 重見天日 (**chong2 jian4 tian1 ri4** = again-see-sky-sun) describes blind-man regaining eyesight or prisoner 重獲自由 (**chong2 huo2 zi4 you2** = again-obtain-self-let = freed).

Tough loser 重來不哭 (**chong2 lai2 bu4 ku1** = since-all-along-no-cry = never cries), 重新 (**chong2 xin2** = again-new = again) assesses situation, 捲土重來 (**juan2 tu3 chong2 lai2** = roll-land-again-come = makes comeback).

by Diana Yue