

# 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 kitchens

廚

Putonghua pronunciation: *chu2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *chue4*

Meanings: kitchen

Standard home has 廚房 (*chu2 fang2* = kitchen-room = kitchen), 飯廳 (*fan4 ting1* = rice/meal-hall = dining room), 客廳 (*ke4 ting1* = guest-hall = sitting room), 睡房 (*shui4 fang2* = sleep-room = bedrooms), 書房 (*shu1 fang2* = books-room = study).

廚 (= 廚子 *chu2 zi0* = kitchen-son/person = cooks) use 廚具 (*chu2 ju4* = kitchen-tools/utensils): 刀 (*dao1*, knife), 勺 (*shao1*, spoon/ladle), 鍋 (*guo1*, pot/pan), 剷 (*can3*, spatula), 蒸籠 (*zheng1 long2* = steaming-cage/basket), 烤爐 (*kao3 lu2* = baking-stove = oven).

Housewives 入廚 (*ru4 chu2* = enter-kitchen = cook meals). Ideal wife 入得廚房, 出得廳堂 (*ru4 de1 chu2 fang2, chu1 de1 ting1 tang2* = enter~succeed-kitchen-room, appear~succeed-hall-foyer = is a good cook, also a presentable lady).

by Diana Yue