

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 feeling miserable

怒

Putonghua pronunciation: *nu4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *no6*

Meanings: anger, fury, rage, profuse, energetic

怒 (radical 心 *xin1*, heart) = bursting with fury/energy: 怒氣 (*nu4 qi4* = angry~air = fury), 怒火 (*nu4 huo3* = angry~fire = fiery rage), 怒海 (*nu4 hai3* = angry/tempestuous~sea), 怒放 (*nu4 fang4* = profusely~blooming) flowers. 憤怒青年 (*fen4 nu4 qing1 nian2* = bursting~anger~green~years) = angry young man.

Looters 犯眾怒 (*fan4 zhong4 nu4* = offend~majority~anger = arouse everyone's anger), 激怒 (*ji1 nu4* = stimulate~angry = enrages) bystanders. Demonstrators 怒吼 (*nu4 hou3* = angrily~roar/shout), 遷怒 (*qian1 nu4* = move~anger = shifts anger/blame on) police.

Buddhist deities 金剛怒目 (*Jin1 Gang1 nu4 mu4* = Vajra/Diamond~angrily~stares = fierce-looking warrior) and 菩薩低眉 (*Pu2 Sa3 di1 mei2* = Bodhisattva/Pusa~lowers~eyebrows = gently-watching goddess) symbolize Buddhism's bi-focal teaching: punishment and mercy.

by Diana Yue