

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 the digestive system

飽

Putonghua pronunciation: *bao3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *baau2*

Meanings: satiated, full, satisfied, enough

飽, 餓 (*e4*, hungry) both have radical 食 (*shi2*, eat/food). When 肚子餓了 (*du4 zi0 e1 le0* = tummy/stomach~diminutive~hungry~ed = stomach feels hungry), we 飽餐一頓 (*bao3 can1 yi1 dun4* = full~meal~one~round = have a full meal), 打飽嗝 (*da3 bao3 ge2* = hit/produce~full~belch = belch with full stomach).

飽讀詩書 (*bao3 du2 shi1 shu1* = full~read~poetry~books) describes well-read/educated scholar. Well-paid workers 吃得飽 (*chi1 de0 bao3* = eat~can~full = have enough to eat), 睡個飽 (*shui4 ge0 bao3* = sleep~one~full = sleep to their hearts' content) on Sundays. 飽滿 (*bao3 man3* = full-filled) describes plump face/figure or robust spirit.

過飽 (*guo4 bao3* = pass~full = over-stuffed/over-eating) harms body. 半飽 (*ban4 bao3* = half~full) is best.