

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 Japanese Invasion



Putonghua pronunciation: *qin1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *cham1*

Meanings: intrude, invade, bully

侵 = intrude/invoke/bully. 侵佔 (*qin1 zhan4* = intrude~occupy) = misappropriate/rob. 侵權 (*qin1 quan2* = intrude~right) = tort. 性侵犯 (*xing4 qin1 fan4* = sex~invade~offend) = sexual assault.

In WWII, 德意志 (*De2 Yi4 Zhi4* = “Deutsch”-transliterated = 德國 *De2 Guo2* = Germany), 意大利 (*Yi4 Da4 Li4* = “Italy”-transliterated), 日本 (*Ri4 Ben3* = Japan) launched 軍事侵略 (*jün1 shi4 qin1 lüe4* = army~affairs~invade~loot = military invasions).

日軍 (*Ri4 jün1* = Japanese~army) 入侵 (*ri4 qin1* = entered~invaded) China, helped by 漢奸 (*Han4 jian1* = Han-Chinese~wicked = Chinese collaborators). Chinese army 撤退 (*ce4 tui4* = yield~retreat = retreated). Refugees left 淪陷區 (*lun2 xian4 qü1* = drowned~fallen~region = Japanese-occupied areas/cities), 逃難 (*tao2 nan4* = fled~disaster/persecution).