

# 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 divorce

傷

Putonghua pronunciation: *shang1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *seung1*

Meanings: hurt, wound, injure

傷 (radical 亻 = 人 ren2, person) = 傷害 (*shang1 hai4* = hurt-harm). Bully 傷人 (*shang1 ren2* = injures~person/someone). Victim 受傷 (*shou4 shang1* = receive~wound = is injured). 傷口 (*shang4 kou3* = wound~mouth = open wound) leaves 傷痕 (*shang1 hen2* = wound's~mark/scar).

工傷 (*gong1 shang1* = work/worker~injury) = injury due to industrial accident. Battle causes 傷亡 (*shang1 wang2* = injuries-and-deaths). Difficult problems are 傷腦筋 (*shang1 nao3 jin1* = hurt~brain~tendon = brain-racking). 傷風 (*shang1 feng1* = wound~wind) means common cold.

Alcohol 傷身 (*shang1 shen1* = harm~body = is bad for health). Disputes 傷和氣 (*shang1 he2 qi4* = hurt~peace~breath = mar harmonious relationships). Unfaithful husband makes wife 傷心 (*shang1 xin1* = wound~heart = feel hurt).

by Diana Yue