

# Character Builder 您好學? 呀

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 rainstorms

豪

Putonghua pronunciation: *hao2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *ho4*

Meaning: extraordinary, grand, rich, luxurious, lavish, bold, unrestrained, heroic

豪 (radical 豕 *shi3*, pig) = enormous/extravagant/bold: 豪爽 (*hao2 shuang3* = generous-straightforward), 豪華 (*hao2 hua2* = grand-extravagant), 豪傑 (*hao2 jie2* = outstanding-heroes/winners), 豪門 (*hao2 men2* = rich-household/family), 豪雨 (*hao2 yu3* = big/heavy-rainfall), 文豪 (*wen2 hao2* = writing-great) = great/prolific writer/novelist.

豪客 (*hao2 ke4* = generous-guest) = big spenders. 豪賭 (*hao2 du3* = bold/extravagant-gamble) means play/gamble with big stakes, or take big risk. Slangily, 豪乳 (*hao2 ru3* = big-milk/female-breast) means sex-bomb's big boobs.

土豪惡霸 (*tu3 hao2 e4 ba4* = local-tyrant-fierce-bully = village/neighborhood's bad/powerful guys) 巧取豪奪 (*qiao3 qu3 hao2 duo2* = cleverly-take-powerfully-snatch = rob others unscrupulously). PRC's 土豪 (uneducated/vulgar nouveau-riche) typically like 豪宅 (*hao2 zhai2* = grand-houses/homes), 豪華 (*hao2 che1* = expensive-cars),

by Diana Yue