

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

抗

Putonghua pronunciation: *kang4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *kong3*

Meanings: object, counter, resist, oppose

抗 (radical 扌 = 手 *shou3*, hand/arm + 亢 *kang4*, high/excited) = object/resist. Lamb cannot 抵抗 (*di3 kang4* = fend-off-resist) tiger. Ascetic 抗拒 (*kang4 ju4* = resist-refuse = resists/refuses) temptation. 抗菌藥 (*kang4 jun4 yao4* = resist~germs~medicine) = anti-virus drugs.

壓迫 (*ya1 po1* = press-force = oppression) triggers 反抗 (*fan3 kang4* = revolt~resistance). Dissidents 抗議 (*kang4 yi4* = object~discuss = voice objection). Rebels 違抗 (*wei2 kang4* = disobey~resist = disobey) commander, launch 對抗 (*dui4 kang4* = face/oppose~resist = challenge/opposition).

During 八年抗戰 (*ba1 nian2 kang4 zhan4* = eight~years~resistance~war = War of Resistance, 1937-1945), China 抗日 (*kang4 Ri4* = fought~Japan). During 抗美援朝 (*kang4 Mei3 yuan2 Chao2* = resist~A“mer”rica~transliterated~aid~Chaoxian/ Korea = Korean War, 1950-1953), China supported North Korea.