

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:

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 rainstorms

傾

Putonghua pronunciation: *qing1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *king1*

Meaning: bend, slant, tip, lean, leaning, incline, pour, topple, collapse, adore

傾 (radical 亻 = 人 *ren2*, person) means lean/pour. 傾斜 (*qing1 xie2* = lean-slant), 傾側 (*qing1 ce4* = lean/topple-sideways), 傾聽 (*qing1 ting4* = bend-ear-listen-attentively), 傾向 (*qing1 xiang4* = leaning-inclination), 右傾 (*you4 qing1* = rightist/conservative-leanings), 左傾 (*zuo3 qing1* = leftist/radically-inclined).

傾 means tip and pour out a: 傾吐 (*qing1 tu4* = bend-pour-say = confess feelings), 傾銷 (*qing1 xiao1* = pour-se = dumping), 傾囊以授 (*qing1 nang2 yi3 shou4* = pour-purse-to-give/teach) = generously giving another all money/knowledge. 一見傾心 (*yi1 jian4 qing1 xin1* = one-see-bend-heart) = love at first sight.

In 傾盆大雨 (*qing1 pen2 da4 yu3* = heavy/pouring rain), guerrillas 傾巢而出 (*qing1 chao2 er2 chu1* = pour-nest-and-out = all advance), launch surprise attack.

by Diana Yue