

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 feeling good



Putonghua pronunciation: *xing1, xing4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *hing3*

Meanings: rise, prosper, thrive, interest, pleasure, enthusiasm, fondness, mood

Verb 興 (*xing1*) means rise/boost. 興學 (*xing1 xue2* = rise~school) = boost/expand education. New technologies 興起 (*xing1 qi3* = rise-up). Empires 興衰 (*xing1 shuai1* = prosper~decline), 興亡 (*xing1 wang2* = rise-and~fall). 生意興隆 (*sheng1 yi4 xing1 long2* = livelihood~ideas~rise~prosperous) = business thrives.

Success makes us 高興 (*gao1 xing4* = high~enthusiasm), 興奮 (*xing1 fen4* = enthusiasm~excitement = pleased/excited/elated). 有興趣 (*you3 xing4 qu4* = have-interest~pleasure) = feel interested/curious. 興起 (*xing4 qi3* = interest-rise) = feels like doing something.

酒興 (*jiu3 xing4* = wine/alcohol-mood) = mood for drinking. 詩興大發 (*shi1 xing4 da4 fa2* = poetry-enthusiasm~big~develop) = in the mood for reciting/writing poetry. Rain during picnic 掃興 (*sao4 xing4* = sweep-away-enthusiasm = spoils the fun).