

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 Chinese tonic medicines

提

Putonghua pronunciation: *ti2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *tai4*

Meaning: raise, lift, pick up, carry, hold in suspension, extract

提 (radical 扌 = 手 *shou3*, hand) means take/lift/extract: 提燈 (*ti2 deng1* = hold-lamp), 提筆 (*ti2 bi3* = take-up-pen = write), 手提 (*shou3 ti2* = hand-carry) luggage, 提款機 (*ti2 kuan3 ji1* = take-out-money-machine = ATM),

CEO 提出 (*ti2 chu1* = raise-bring-up = mentions/suggests): 提前 (*ti2 qian2* = move-earlier) pay-rise, 提高 (*ti2 gao1* = raise-higher) staff morale.

Chinese physician 提醒 (*ti2 xing3* = raise-awaken = reminds) invalid: 提取精華 (*ti2 chu3 jing1 hua2* = take-extract-best-essence) from chicken, 人參 (*ren2 sen1* = ginseng), 藥膳 (*yao4 shan4* = medicine-meal = dishes having medicinal ingredients). Effect is 提氣 (*ti2 qi4* = enhance-breathing/energy), 提神醒腦 (*ti2 shen2 xing3 nao3* = raise-senses-awaken-brain = boost working of brain).